MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DAY:
A PRINCETON CELEBRATION 2021

ARTS COUNCIL OF PRINCETON
Historical Society of Princeton
at Updike Farmstead
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
"If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way."
MLK
Hello! We are so pleased that this book made its way into your hands.

Each year, the Arts Council dedicates a day of thoughtful conversation, family activities, and acts of service in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day. With COVID-19 preventing us from gathering in the hundreds, as in years past, we embraced an opportunity to acknowledge this important day in a new, creative way.

We launch this book in January 2021 with the intention of celebrating Black Princetonians, and their businesses, stories, and invaluable contributions to this town. Flip through the pages, read the short stories, and learn a little more about how Princeton came to be the place it is today.

The Arts Council of Princeton is proudly located in the Witherspoon-Jackson neighborhood, an area rich in historical significance and a vital part of the fabric of our town. Since the early 19th century, Princeton’s original Black residents lived and worked in this segregated district as a proud, self-sufficient, and self-sustaining community. As Princeton’s 20th Historic District, the Witherspoon-Jackson neighborhood and its residents’ contributions provided inspiration for many of the pages of this book.

This book is recommended as both an educational tool and activity book for children ages 8-13, but we hope that folks of all ages take something away from it and enjoy coloring its pages.

A project such as this would be impossible without the guidance of Shirley Satterfield, Neighborhood Historian and President of the Witherspoon-Jackson Historical and Cultural Society. A sixth-generation Princetonian, Shirley is dedicated to preserving and celebrating the town’s Black history. Her Heritage Tour plaques can be found on 29 designated landmarks around town, telling the rich history of Black establishments in Princeton. We are incredibly grateful for her counsel. To learn more, visit princetonwjhcs.org.

We also extend a heartfelt thank you to the Historical Society of Princeton for their partnership in the creation of this book, providing images, text, and context around each page. Their committed work benefits this town every day and will continue to do so for generations. For more about the Historical Society of Princeton, visit princetonhistory.org, and for further reading, see the back of this book.

We hope this book continues the conversations inspired by Dr. King and immortalized by Shirley, the Historical Society, and all those working to preserve Black history in Princeton. We respectfully thank them for engaging us in that conversation.

Keep the conversation going!
Working on your book? Show us your pages!
Tag us in your photos at @artscouncilofprinceton
After training in Paris, Princeton native Christine Moore Howell returned to town to open a beauty salon, Christine’s Vanity Parlor, on Spring Street. She also developed her own line of cosmetics in a research laboratory in her beauty parlor, including products specifically designed for the hair of Black customers. She was the first Black person appointed to the NJ Board of Beauty Culture Control.
“Almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world better.”
MLK
Paul Robeson was born in the house at 110 Witherspoon Street and often spoke about facing racism and segregation while growing up in Princeton. Robeson achieved fame as a scholar, collegiate and professional athlete, actor, singer, law school graduate, and political activist. Robeson performed benefits around the world for civil rights causes.
James Floyd, Sr. was Princeton Township’s first Black mayor, elected in 1970. For decades, Mr. Floyd was engaged in Princeton’s civic life, advocating for education, civil rights, and housing.

Photo courtesy of Romus Broadway

“The time is always right to do what is right.” MLK
THE WAXWOODS

Howard B. Waxwood Jr. and his wife, Susie Brown Waxwood, were both pillars of the Princeton community. Mr. Waxwood was the principal at the Witherspoon School for Colored Children and the first principal of the newly integrated John Witherspoon Middle School after Princeton’s school integration in 1948. Mrs. Waxwood was the first Black Executive Director of the integrated YWCA.

Photo of Mr. Waxwood courtesy of Shirley Satterfield
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visited Princeton in 1960 and 1962. During his 1960 visit, Dr. King delivered a sermon in the Princeton University Chapel calling for universal brotherhood.
In August 1963, the newly-formed Princeton Association for Human Rights chartered buses to take 250 Black and white Princetonians to the March on Washington, where they heard Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. deliver his historic “I Have A Dream” speech.
THE COLORED YMCA

The segregated Colored YMCA was a hub of activity for Princeton’s Black community. In 1917, the YMCA moved to the location at 102 Witherspoon Street, today the Arts Council of Princeton. The Ys became integrated in the 1950s and moved to their present location on Paul Robeson Place and Bayard Lane.

“The quality, not the longevity, of one’s life is what is important.” MLK
JUGTOWN MARCH

On April 19, 1870, Princeton’s Black residents marched through Jugtown (the neighborhood at Nassau and Harrison Streets) in support of the 15th Amendment, which guaranteed Black men the right to vote. Due to several demonstrations like this one, New Jersey ratified the amendment in 1871, after it already had become law.

Photo courtesy of Katherine Hackl ceramic tile (Princeton Room, Princeton Public Library)
“THERE IS SOME GOOD IN THE WORST OF US AND SOME EVIL IN THE BEST OF US. WHEN WE DISCOVER THIS, WE ARE LESS PRONE TO HATE OUR ENEMIES.” MLK
Griggs’ Imperial Restaurant, owned by Black Princeton resident Burnett Griggs, was known in town for serving everyone, unlike the segregated restaurants along Nassau Street. In the 1950s, the Borough of Princeton designated Mr. Griggs’ building as “blight,” which meant they could seize the property and demolish it. In response, Mr. Griggs successfully sued the Borough, and he continued to own and operate his restaurant in that location until 1971.

Photos courtesy of Shirley Satterfield
CHRISTINE MOORE HOWELL

Christine Moore Howell (1899-1972) was one of the first Black students to graduate from the integrated Princeton High School. She then trained in Paris, returning to Princeton to operate a beauty salon, Christine’s Vanity Parlor, on Spring Street. She also developed her own line of cosmetics in a research laboratory in her beauty parlor, including products specifically designed for the hair of Black customers. The governor of New Jersey appointed Howell as the first Black person on the New Jersey Board of Beauty Culture Control, recognizing the high standard she set for best practices in the beauty industry. While operating her Spring Street beauty salon, she also wrote *Beauty Culture and Care of the Hair* and earned herself a spot in *Who’s Who in Colored America*.

PAUL ROBESON HOUSE

Paul Robeson was born in the house at 110 Witherspoon Street on April 9, 1898. Robeson’s father, the Reverend William Drew Robeson, was the pastor at Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church and the house was provided as a rectory. Paul Robeson achieved fame as a scholar, collegiate and professional athlete, actor, singer, law school graduate, and political activist. Robeson believed that celebrities have a responsibility to fight for justice and he performed benefits around the world for civil rights causes. He eventually left his film career because he was unhappy with the types of roles that were available for Black performers. Robeson was outspoken about growing up in Princeton, including the racism and segregation he and his family experienced in the town.

JIM FLOYD, SR.

James Floyd, Sr. (1922 - 2018) was Princeton Township’s first Black mayor, elected in 1970. Mr. Floyd moved to Princeton after college with his wife, Fannie, who was born in Princeton. Professionally, Mr. Floyd served as a Personnel Executive, first at the Electric Storage Battery Company and then at the Educational Testing Service. For decades, Mr. Floyd was engaged in Princeton’s civic life, advocating for education, civil rights, and housing. Prior to being elected mayor, Mr. Floyd served on the Zoning Board and the Princeton Township Committee. He was a leader in the Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church as well as a founding member of the Princeton Association for Human Rights. In the 1960s, he and his wife participated in the Princeton Family Sponsor Program, in which residents of Princeton offered community to minority students at Princeton University.

THE WAXWOODS

Howard B. Waxwood, Jr. (1904-1977) and his wife, Susie Brown Waxwood (1902-2006), moved to Princeton in 1935. Mr. Waxwood had been hired as the principal of the segregated Witherspoon School for Colored Children. Mr. Waxwood had grown up in Princeton and attended the school himself as a child, graduating from Princeton High School in 1922. After Princeton’s public schools integrated in 1948, Mr. Waxwood served as principal of the integrated Witherspoon Middle School until 1967. Mrs. Waxwood was born in Louisiana and grew up in the South. In oral histories, she remarked on how the racial prejudice she experienced in Princeton was different from what she experienced in the South, saying, “We had an awful time finding housing [in Princeton], and the restaurants were prejudiced. Black people didn’t go into them. There were no signs, but they wouldn’t wait on you if you walked in. In some ways it was worse because you didn’t know what to expect.” Mrs. Waxwood was a pillar of the Princeton community, serving as the first Black Executive Director of the integrated YWCA and was also active in countless community service organizations.

MLK SPEAKS AT THE CHAPEL

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visited Princeton in 1960 and 1962 as part of the Student Christian Association’s Biennial Religious Conference. Princeton’s Dean of the Chapel, Ernest Gordon, invited him. Despite outrage among some Southern Princeton alumni, then-University President Robert Goheen defended Gordon’s invitation of King. Gordon wrote to Goheen, saying, “I have been greatly encouraged by your moral integrity and forthrightness.” During his 1960 visit, Dr. King delivered a sermon in the University Chapel calling for universal brotherhood. An inscription in the stone on the Chapel’s south wall commemorates the occasion. It was reported that 3,500 people attended the service, though this exceeds the capacity of the University Chapel building.
MARCH ON WASHINGTON

The Princeton Association for Human Rights was an interracial civil rights organization founded in May 1963. It tackled local issues related to jobs, housing, education, and discrimination so that “full participation in the life of this community can be achieved by all its citizens.” Three months after its first meeting, PAHR chartered buses to take 250 Black and white Princetonians to the March on Washington. At this march on August 28, 1963, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his historic “I Have A Dream” speech.

One PAHR member and Princeton resident, Consuelo Campbell, recalls what it was like to go to the March: “Going back [to Princeton after the March], you know, passing all these buses and trying to see where they were coming from. That was fascinating to see, ‘oh that one’s way out in Ohio or up in Washington State’ or something like that...It was kind of sad. Sad for me because it was ending. It was a dream and wouldn’t continue, you know. You’d like to be there and be a melancholy situation forever but you do have to come back and face realities and so I think it was like an oasis that gave us a little bit more strength to come back to Princeton because this is where we were coming back to see what more we could do here and there was lots of work for us to do here.”

THE COLORED YMCA

For generations, schools and community institutions in Princeton were racially segregated, including the YMCA and YWCA. The Colored YMCA was a hub for Princeton’s Black community, activities included summer Vacation Bible School, sports, recreation programs, education trips, and other youth activities. The YMCA and YWCA originally met in several buildings within Princeton’s Black community. In 1917, the YMCA became an official branch of the national YMCA organization and moved to the location at 102 Witherspoon Street, today the Arts Council of Princeton. The Works Progress Administration renovated the building in 1939 as a Great Depression-era project, and it later served as Princeton Borough offices. The Ys became integrated in the 1950s and moved to their present location on Paul Robeson Place and Bayard Lane.

JUGTOWN MARCH

The 1870 diary of Princeton resident Mary Brown helps us learn about the history of advocacy on the part of Princeton’s historic Black community. On April 19, 1870, Brown wrote that Princeton’s Black residents “had a parade” and “came down to Jugtown.” Jugtown is the neighborhood in Princeton at the intersection of Nassau and Harrison Streets. Their parade was intended to convince the New Jersey State Legislature to ratify the 15th Amendment, which guaranteed Blacks the right to vote. Due to several demonstrations like this one, New Jersey ratified the amendment in 1871, after it had already become law.

BURNETT GRIGGS

Griggs’ Imperial Restaurant was one of four listings for Princeton in the Negro Motorist Green Book, which helped guide Black travelers to establishments where they would be welcomed. The restaurant was owned by Black Princeton resident, Burnett Griggs (1888-1977) and was established in 1927. Burnett Griggs, a World War I veteran, initially worked in the Princeton University eating clubs and saved money to purchase the building for his restaurant. Open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, the food was good, the portions were generous and the prices were fair. Mr. Griggs was well known in town and served everyone, unlike the restaurants along Nassau Street that were segregated at the time. In the 1950s, the Borough of Princeton designated Mr. Griggs’ building as “blight,” which meant they could seize the property and demolish it. Mr. Griggs sued the Borough, charging that the blight determination was “high-handed and discriminatory.” The case went to the NJ Supreme Court and was decided in favor of Mr. Griggs. He continued to own and operate his restaurant in that location until 1971. Mr. Griggs and his family lived on Witherspoon Street between his restaurant and Toto’s Market, today Terra Momo Bread Company.
The Arts Council of Princeton gratefully acknowledges the support of Princeton University as a sponsor of our Martin Luther King, Jr. 2021 programs. We also thank Stark & Stark for their generous support.