

MASSACHUSETTS

WILLIAMSTOWN

Childhood home of Pittsfield-born Hall of Fame baseball player **Frank Grant** **1** who played for the Buffalo Bisons of the International League from 1886 to 1888. Spring Street.

DALTON



In Dalton, a cave beneath the road was possibly used by the Underground Railroad from Lebanon Mountain. At **Wizard's Glen** **2** a small community of Blacks sprang up in the 1820s, in a cluster of nearly a dozen small cabins. Gulf Road passes from Lanesboro Gulf in Lanesboro through Wizard's Glen in Dalton.

LANESBORO



The **Todd House**, believed a station on the **Underground Railroad** **3** transported the enslaved from Sand Lake, NY, in wagons used to pick up loads of sand in Lanesboro for a glass factory. Marked by a plaque on Berkshire Mall Drive.

PITTSFIELD

"Most of my children were born here and the most of them were buried here."—Rev. Samuel Harrison



One of Berkshire County's most ardent abolitionists was minister and formerly enslaved **Samuel Harrison** (1818–1900), who in 1850 became the first minister of the **Second Congregational Church** **13** of Pittsfield (pictured above left), founded in 1846 as the first Black church in the county and presently located at 50 Onota Street (pictured above right).



In 1863 Harrison was appointed chaplain of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment and promptly protested discriminatory pay practices. The **Rev. Samuel Harrison House** **5** 82 Third Street, will soon be accessible to the public. **Rev. Samuel Harrison and Wife** are buried in **Pittsfield Cemetery** **4** 203 Wahconah Street.



Following Second Congregational Church, **Price Memorial A. M. E. Zion Church** **15** 163 Linden Street (pictured), was the second predominantly Black church in Pittsfield, founded in 1958 by Fannie Cooper. Its pastor for more than twenty-five years was

Willard H. Durant, who in 1982 became director of the **Christian Center** **12** 193 Robbins Avenue, a community center for interdenominational worship, established in the 1960s, as was the **Victory Temple United Church of God in Christ** **14** 154 Dewey Avenue.



Alfred K. Persip was the first Black from Berkshire County to enlist at the outbreak of World War I. Brothers Charles (1892–1982) and John "Poppey" Persip (1887–1983) also served in the war. Their maternal grandfather, Charles Hamilton served in the

54th Massachusetts Regiment. In 1983 **Persip Park** **7** corner of North Street and Columbus Avenue, was dedicated to the Persip family, and **Charles A. Persip American Legion Post 68** **10** 41 Wendell Avenue (pictured), was named after Charles Persip.

The **Berkshire County chapter of the NAACP** **6** organized in 1918. Located at 467 North Street during its most active period in the 1960s, it sent residents to participate in the 1963 March on Washington, registered voters during the Freedom Summer of 1964 in Alabama and Mississippi, created affordable housing in Pittsfield, and organized sympathy protests at **Woolworth's** **8** on North Street when the chain refused to serve African Americans at their lunch counters in the South.

In 1863 the Town of Pittsfield engaged a skilled woodsman, Sylvanus Grant (1844–1927), to cut down the most famous tree in town, the **Pittsfield Elm** **9** after it was struck by lightning. Historic marker at the intersection of North and South Streets.

Dorothy Amos Park **11** 310–340 West Street, is named for Dorothy Reid Amos (1929–1974), the first Black guidance counselor in the Pittsfield schools. She founded Pittsfield's Early Childhood Development Center in 1971.

LENOX / LEE

During the Civil War, the all-Black **54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment** was formed in 1863 under Col. Robert Gould Shaw, a member of a prominent Boston abolitionist family. Nearly one-half of the regiment was killed, wounded, or taken prisoner during the assault on Fort Wagner in South Carolina. Shaw and his wife Anna Kneeland Haggerty honeymooned at her father's home in Lenox. Her grave is in the cemetery at **Church on the Hill** **16** Main and Greenwood Streets, Lenox.



Many monuments in the Housatonic River Valley commemorate the men—Black and white—who fought in the Civil War. The largest is in the **Lee Memorial Hall** **19** 33 Main Street. A plaque in the main hall includes 54th Regiment soldiers from Lee.

LENOX

Best known for his Harlem Renaissance pictures, **James VanDerZee** (1886–1983) was the first great African American photographer of the 20th century. He continued working into his nineties, capturing Bill Cosby, Miles Davis, Muhammad Ali, and others on film.



Born in Lenox, he attended school there. Of the three houses owned by his extended family (the VanDerZee, Egbert, and Osterhout families), only the Osterhout house (pictured), now a private residence, remains. The site of the **James VanDerZee Boyhood Homesite** **17** now demolished, is beneath the Route 7 bypass at Hubbard Street.

The **Music Inn** **18** a premier center for jazz education and performance, was a major venue for Black musical talent, and is now **Wheatleigh Hotel**, Hawthorne Road (Stockbridge).

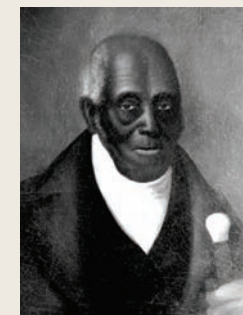
BECKET



Trailblazing African American dancer-choreographers were introduced at the Ted Shawn Theatre, **Jacob's Pillow Dance** **20** 358 George Carter Road at Route 20. The theater's timber beams were felled and hand-hewn by local Black entrepreneur Warren H. Davis (pictured, sixth from the left, with others who built the Ted Shawn Theatre, 1942). Also stop at the **Home of Warren Davis** **27** in Great Barrington. Jacob's Pillow is believed to be a station on the **Underground Railroad** **30**.

STOCKBRIDGE

Mum Bett (c. 1744–1829) was enslaved in the Sheffield home of Col. John Ashley. Her suit for freedom was the first case based on constitutional rights to prevail in Massachusetts. Also, stop at the **Great Barrington Town Hall** **34** site of the courthouse where Elizabeth Freeman filed her "suit for liberty" in 1781.



Agrippa Hull (1759–1848) was a free-born Stockbridge resident who served as aide to General Kosciuszko during the Revolutionary War. He and his wife, Margaret ("Peggy") Timbroke, were among the first Black entrepreneurs in the Berkshires, noted for their catering talents. An oil **Portrait of Agrippa Hull** **25** and a photograph of Peggy hang in the **Stockbridge Library** collection, Main Street.

Elizabeth ("Mum Bett") Freeman is buried in the "Sedgwick Pie" in the northeast corner of **Stockbridge Cemetery** **24** Main Street. **Agrippa Hull** is buried on the western side of **Stockbridge Cemetery** **23** to the left of the first path.

Local Black children served as models for Norman Rockwell's portrayals of landmark civil rights events, such as **The Problem We All Live With** and **New Kids in the Neighborhood**, **Norman Rockwell Museum** **21** 9 Glendale Road, Route 183.

The **David L. and Sinclair Hicks Gunn Home** **22** of local NAACP chairman David Lester Gunn, Sr., probably the first Black coach hired at a public school in Berkshire County, is near the site of the Gunn Homestead. The private residence is located at 2 East Street, east side of Route 7, just before the junction with Route 102.

GREAT BARRINGTON/ALFORD

"In general thought and conduct I became quite thoroughly New England."—W.E.B. Du Bois

Founder of the modern civil rights movement, **W. E. B. Du Bois** led a life of many achievements.



The **W. E. B. Du Bois Birth Site** **32** at the east end of Church Street, is identified by a historical marker, dedicated in 1994. The **W. E. B. Du Bois River Park and Garden** **33** at the River Walk (pictured), east end of Church Street, acknowledges Du Bois's lifelong love of the Housatonic River and Berkshire environment.

The graves of his wife Nina and children Burghardt and Yolande are at the **Mahaive Cemetery** **35** South Main Street (Route 7), at the corner of Silver Street. Historic marker. **The W. E. B. Du Bois Mural** **31** at the Taconic parking lot, off Railroad Street, was painted by Railroad Street Youth Project participants. Information about Du Bois is available at the **Du Bois Center of American History** **36** 684 South Main Street.



The **W. E. B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite** **37** a National Historic Landmark, is the Burghardt homestead where the maternal family of W. E. B. Du Bois lived from the 1820s and where Du Bois himself lived for a time as a young boy. Located on Route 23, 0.25 mile west of the junction with Route 71.

The scenic **Egremont Sheffield Road** **38** between the W. E. B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite and the Col. John Ashley House in Ashley Falls, was the route taken by W. E. B. Du Bois on trips to Great Barrington from New York City. The route passes a monument commemorating the dispersal of **Shays' Rebellion** troops in 1787. Intersects Route 23 from the south, 1.5 miles west of the Du Bois Boyhood Homesite.



James Weldon Johnson—Harlem Renaissance essayist, NAACP leader, and author of the African American national anthem—wrote much of *God's Trombones* from his Great Barrington **Summer Home** **26** now a private residence at Alford and Seekonk Roads (writing shed pictured, now gone), and at the **Mason Library** **30** 231 Main Street.

Since the 1920s, **Rosseter Street/Elm Court** was home to many Black families, although the neighborhood has always been integrated. Land speculator and lumber dealer **Warren H. Davis** **27** lived at number 11 Rosseter Street, presently the Great Barrington office of WAMC Northeast Public Radio. Edgar Willoughby's **Sunset Inn** was a guesthouse predominantly used by Blacks from the New York area as well as by W. E. B. Du Bois.

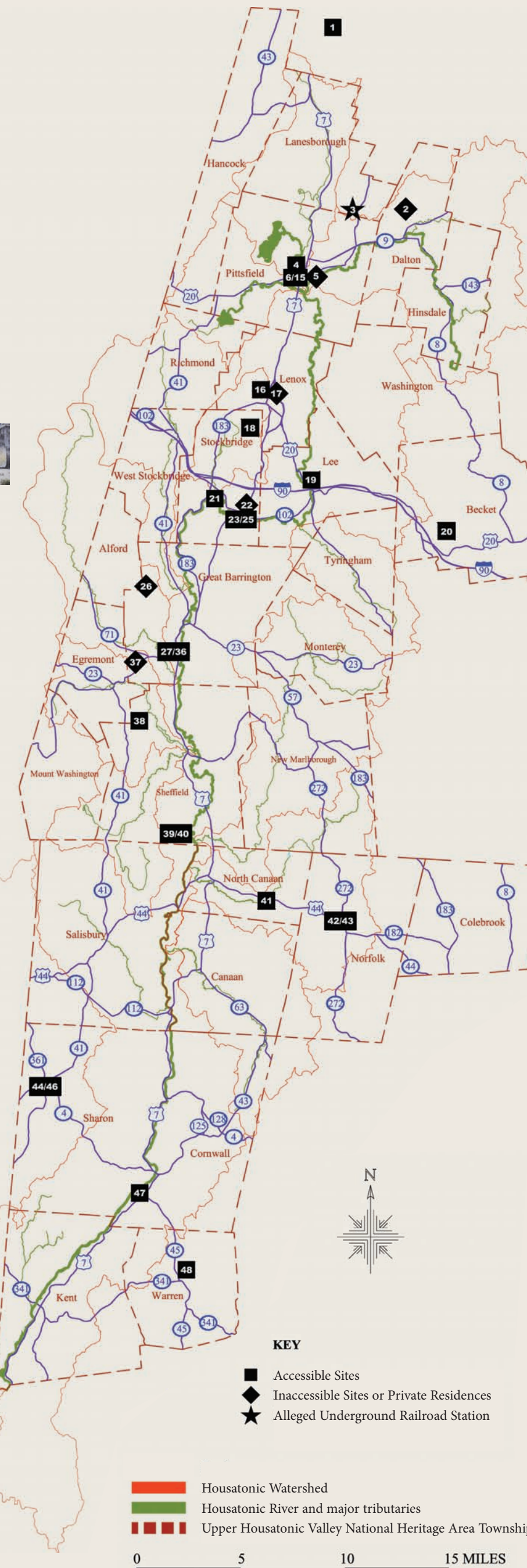


Clinton A. M. E. Zion Church **29** 9 Elm Court (pictured top left), is the oldest Black institutional building in continual use in the county. It was founded as a society in 1870 and opened its church in 1887.



Macedonia Baptist Church **28** 9 Rosseter Street (pictured bottom left), was founded by business entrepreneur (Mrs.) Martha Crawford in 1944. In the mid-20th century, women from the Clinton and Macedonia churches joined with women throughout the county to form a branch of the Council of United Church Women to work for social justice.

The present **Town Hall** **34** 334 Main Street, is the site of the courthouse where Mum Bett (Elizabeth Freeman) filed her "suit for liberty" in 1781.



SHEFFIELD

"Any time, any time while I was a slave, if one minute's freedom had been offered to me, and I had been told I must die at the end of that minute, I would have taken it—just to stand one minute on God's airth a free women—I would."—Mum Bett

In 1735 Col. John Ashley and his wife Hannah moved into their new home, along with **Mum Bett**, who was enslaved. In the Ashley household, a center of Sheffield's social, economic, and political life, Bett was exposed to the freedoms put forth in the new state constitution. Basing her case on these ideals, Bett sued for her own freedom.

The **Ashley House and Freeman Room** **39** 117 Cooper Hill Road, are managed by The Trustees of Reservations. Also, visit Ashley Falls's **Historic District Marker** **40** which recognizes Mum Bett's suit for freedom, on the green in front of the post office.

CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT CIVIL WAR SITES

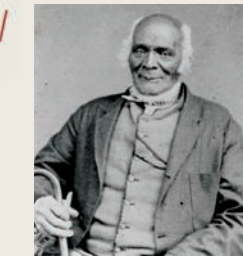


The **grave of Milo J. Freeland** **41** Hillside Cemetery in East Canaan, commemorates the first veteran of the all-Black 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry to fulfill his term. Route 44, about 6 miles west of Norfolk. The **Hillside Cemetery** on Cemetery Hill Road in Sharon holds the **graves of the Bush brothers** **44** who served in the Civil War. They are together with their parents.

In Norfolk is the **Village Green** **43** where a granite monument lists the names of Civil War casualties, including Black soldiers Ensign Prince and Edward Hines. At the **Congregational Church** **43** across the street from the Norfolk green, Rev. Joseph Eldridge's 1861 sermon demonstrated that the Bible does not condone slavery.

The interred remains of Black Civil War veterans—John Lepyon and John L. Watson of Cornwall and Josiah Starr and David Hector of Sharon—can be found in the **Calhoun Cemetery** **47** Calhoun Corners in southwest Cornwall, at the intersection of Routes 7 and 45, on the west (river) side of Route 7. The **Soldiers' Monument** **45** in Sharon lists four of its seven Black casualties in the Civil War. West side of Main Street, where it meets Cemetery Hill Road.

JAMES MARS



The 1864 autobiography of community leader and activist **James Mars** (c. 1790–1880), born enslaved in New Canaan, called attention to slavery in the North and advocated the rights of the enslaved and free Blacks. His grave is in **Center Cemetery** **42** Old Colony Road off Litchfield Road, Route 272.

OTHER CONNECTICUT SITES

A **boulder** **46** on the Sharon town green, across the street from Hotchkiss Library, marks the site of the Congregational Church and the 1777 trial of preacher and formerly enslaved "Black Harry" Hosier. He was charged with a "crime against the peace and good order of society" and found not guilty.

The **grave of Ned**, who died the child of enslaved parents at the age of nine years, is at **Old Cemetery** **48** Warren, center of town on the right side of Cornwall Road (Route 45) heading north.

Some places, including the W. E. B. Du Bois Homesite and Samuel Harrison House, are not accessible at this time. Some are private property, and the privacy of the owners should be respected. Many sites associated with African American history no longer exist and not all sites are included here.