

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic BLACK METROPOLIS THEMATIC NOMINATION

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number 3539-49, 3619-27, 3647-55 S. State; 3140, 3435 S. Indiana;  
3763 S. Wabash; 3517-33 S. Giles; 3501 S. King Dr. not for publication

King Drive at 35th Street.

city, town Chicago vicinity of

state Illinois code 012 county Cook code 031

## 3. Classification THEMATIC GROUP

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership - - See Individual Inventory Forms

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cook County Recorder of Deeds

street & number 118 N. Clark Street

city, town Chicago, state Illinois

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Multiple (see continuation sheet) has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The buildings which comprise the Black Metropolis Thematic Nomination are located in the Near South community of Douglas, located approximately three miles south of the central business district of Chicago. The boundaries of the Douglas community extend approximately from 26th Street on the north to 39th Street on the south, and from the Dan Ryan Expressway on the west to Lake Michigan on the east. The earliest development of the area was in the 1850s when statesman Stephen A. Douglas started residential development of the lakefront area around the foot of 35th Street. Formal development was sporadic, with early land uses ranging from small residential cluster developments to the construction of Camp Douglas, a Civil War prisoner encampment which was erected in 1861 and removed at the end of the war. By the 1870s the streets were fully laid out in a regular grid system conforming to the street patterns and numbering of the city at large. Although there was limited development of the area with speculative row house projects in the 1870s, full development of the area did not occur until the mid-1880s through 1900, when larger upper-middle class single-family residences nearly filled the available vacant land. While a majority of the properties were two- and three-story masonry row houses, a number of large free-standing brick residential structures were erected throughout the area. Commercial development at that time was limited, being concentrated mainly on 31st, 35th, and State streets, and consisted of buildings incorporating stores on the ground floor and offices or apartments on the floors above.

Between 1900 and 1920, the Douglas community changed from a white upper-middle class community to a predominantly black community with income levels varying from the upper and upper-middle class to the limited finances of many of the people who settled in the area after leaving the South for greater opportunities in Chicago.

While the black population largely occupied existing buildings dating from the late 1800s, the black business community developed a new business district, fronting on the east side of State Street between 35th and 39th streets. Built largely with black capital, several major business buildings were erected at this location between 1908 and 1931, and were reflective of the commercial styles of the time.

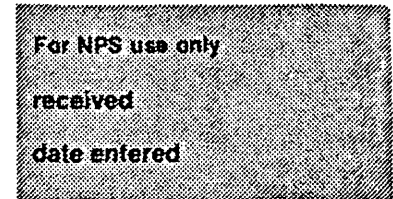
The Great Depression of the 1930s had long-term detrimental effects on the Black Metropolis development, virtually wiping out many of its principal businesses and institutions. Many of the business and residential buildings fell into disrepair, and were subsequently demolished in the 1950s and 1960s as the target of urban renewal land clearances. Institutional developments such as the campus of the Illinois Institute of Technology, Michael Reese Hospital complex, and public housing projects replaced much of the original housing and business stock of the area during that period, but fortunately most of the significant properties associated with the Black Metropolis development still survive. Of the eight properties listed in the Black Metropolis Thematic Nomination, three are partially vacant and in need of stabilization: the Jordan and Overton Hygienic buildings, and the Eighth Regiment Armory, while the remaining structures are presently in active use. Although somewhat deteriorated, the Jordan and Overton buildings and the Eighth Regiment Armory are in restorable condition. While many of the structures which once adjoined the designated Black Metropolis properties have been demolished, the historical and architectural integrity of the remaining structures is very high.

### SURVEY METHODOLOGY:

The selection of significant building for the Black Metropolis Thematic Nomination was determined principally by examination of books and periodicals, both historic and contemporary, which deal with black urban history of the time, and identifying the significant business and institutions of the Black Metropolis movement between 1900 and 1930, centered in the vicinity of State and 35th streets. Site inspections were made of the cited significant buildings, and those which were still standing were photographed and historically documented. Through neglect and subsequent land clearance for urban renewal projects, many of the potentially significant buildings have been demolished, yet enough of the highly significant structures remain intact to present a historical continuity as a thematic group. Of the principal business structures, the highly significant Jordan, Overton Hygienic, Chicago Bee, Chicago Defender, and Liberty Life/Supreme Life Buildings still survive, while the three sites occupied by the Binga State Bank, the National Pythian Temple (designed by black architect Walter T. Bailey), the headquarters of the Chicago Whip and Broad-Ax newspapers have been demolished. Of social and

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OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY

1. JORDAN BUILDING  
3539-49 S. STATE STREET  
Brenda Rowland  
1723 Monterey  
Chicago, Illinois 60643
2. OVERTON HYGIENIC BUILDING /  
3619-27 S. STATE STREET  
Exchange National Bank under Trust #18307  
120 S. LaSalle Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60603
3. CHICAGO BEE BUILDING /  
3647-55 S. STATE STREET  
Ida Overton  
P.O. Box 87639  
Chicago, Illinois 60680
4. WABASH AVENUE Y.M.C.A. /  
3763 S. WABASH AVENUE  
St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
3801 S. Wabash Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60653
5. EIGHTH REGIMENT ARMORY /  
3517-33 S. GILES AVENUE  
Alonzo A. Todd  
1700 E. 56th Street Apt. 3405  
Chicago, Illinois 60631
6. VICTORY SCULPTURE /  
35th STREET AT KING DRIVE  
Paul Karas  
Commissioner  
Department of Public Works  
City of Chicago  
121 N. LaSalle Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60602
7. LIBERTY LIFE/ SUPREME LIFE INSURANCE  
COMPANY  
3501 S. KING DRIVE  
Supreme Life Insurance Company  
of America  
3501 S. King Drive  
Chicago, Illinois 60653
8. CHICAGO DEFENDER BUILDING  
3435 S. INDIANA AVENUE  
LaSalle National Bank under  
Trust #27595  
135 S. LaSalle Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60603
9. UNITY HALL /  
3140 S. INDIANA AVENUE  
Jerusalem Temple Church of God  
in Christ Inc.  
3140 S. Indiana Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60616

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REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS:

ILLINOIS HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY  
1975

depository for survey records: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
405 E. WASHINGTON STREET  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

CHICAGO HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY  
1983

depository for survey records: COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS  
320 N. CLARK STREET  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

HISTORIC RESOURCES OF THE DOUGLAS NEIGHBORHOOD  
1982

depository for survey records: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
405 E. WASHINGTON STREET  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

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political institutions, the Wabash Avenue Y.M.C.A., Oscar DePriest's Unity Hall, and the Eighth Regiment Armory were the most significant at the time of Black Metropolis, and fortunately are among the survivors.

The most helpful sources were nationally based historic periodicals, particularly the Chicago Defender newspaper and The Crisis Magazine. Back files from the early twentieth century clearly identified which structures were contemporarily regarded as significant within the nationwide black community, and offered a basis of comparison with other black commercial and social developments in other parts of the country. Similarly helpful were contemporary articles which were published in the white press of the time, which gave corroborative, yet different, perspectives on the Black Metropolis movement. Sadly, much original documentation, both published and manuscript, has been lost, but has been generally covered in important works such as St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton's *Black Metropolis* published in 1945 and Alan Spear's *Black Chicago* published in 1967.

Private residences and churches were eliminated from the thematic nomination because their locations were not centralized as an integral part of Black Metropolis, and were mainly existing structures which were originally built by the white community which preceded it. An unfortunate casualty of the widespread demolition and land clearance in the area was the virtual elimination of all principal restaurant and club buildings associated with the jazz movement of the 1920s, erasing an important facet of the Black Metropolis from the thematic nomination. Of the significant structures and sites of the Black Metropolis Movement as centered in the vicinity of State and 35th streets in the early part of this century, the nine sites identified in the thematic nomination are unfortunately the sole survivors. Considering the high historic significance of the structures which remain, their survival is indeed remarkable considering the widespread demolition which has occurred around them.

There are eight Contributing Buildings and one Contributing Object in this nomination.

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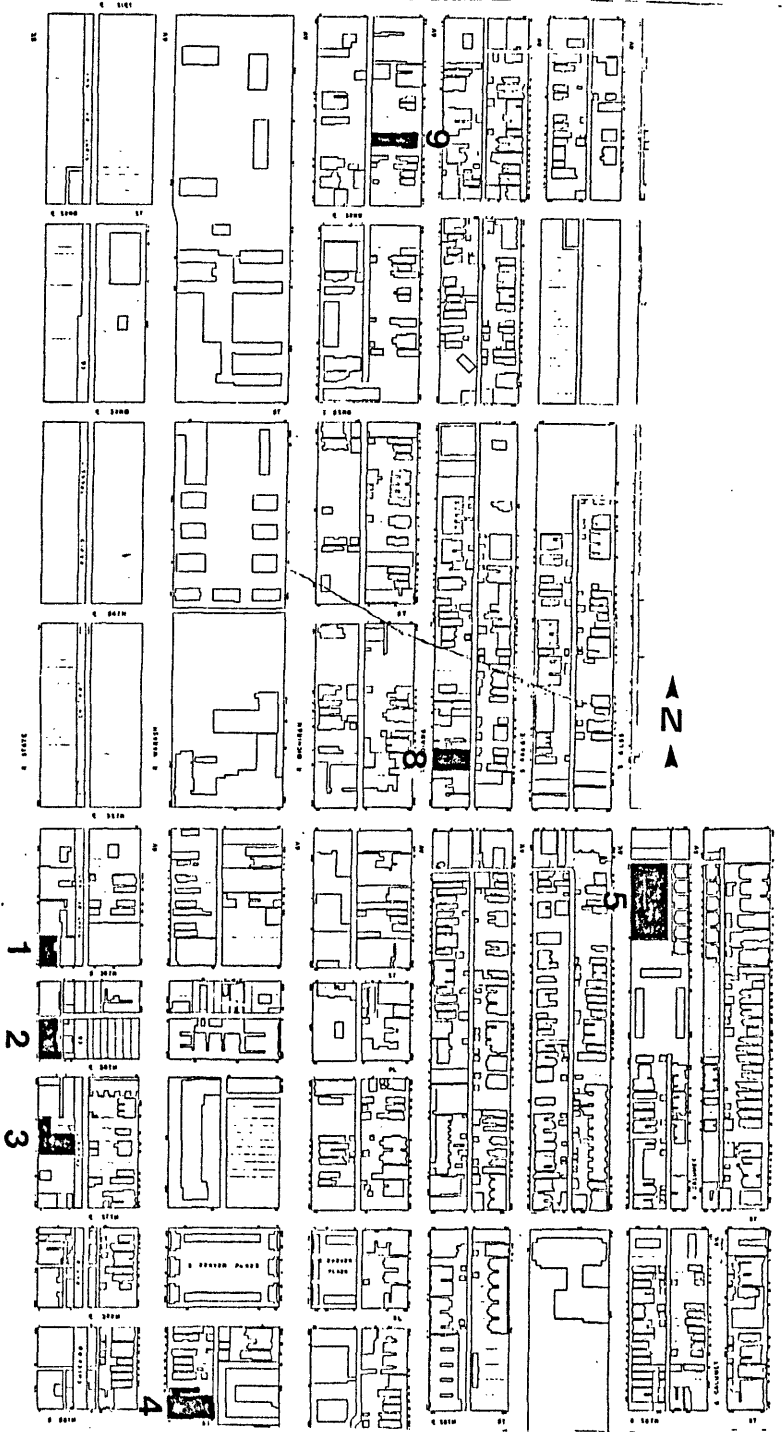
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- 1. JORDAN BUILDING  
3539-49 S. STATE STREET
- 2. OVERTON HYGIENIC BUILDING  
3619-27 S. STATE STREET
- 3. CHICAGO BEE BUILDING  
3647-55 S. STATE STREET
- 4. WABASH AVENUE Y.M.C.A.  
3763 S. WABASH AVENUE
- 5. EIGHTH REGIMENT ARMORY  
3517-33 S. GILLES AVENUE
- 6. VICTORY SCULPTURE  
35th STREET AT KING DRIVE
- 7. LIBERTY LIFE/ SUPREME LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY  
3501 S. KING DRIVE
- 8. CHICAGO DEFENDER BUILDING  
3435 S. INDIANA AVENUE
- 9. UNITY HALL  
3140 S. INDIANA AVENUE



06  
7

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1908-31 **Builder/Architect** (see individual inventory sheets)

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Black Metropolis Thematic nomination is comprised of eight individual buildings and one public monument which collectively represent what are among the most significant landmarks of black urban history in the United States. Centered in the vicinity of State and Thirty-fifth streets on Chicago's Near South Side, these properties are the tangible remains of what was once a thriving "city-within-a-city" created in the early part of this century by the city's black community as an alternative to the restrictions, exploitations, and indifference that characterized the prevalent attitudes of the city at large. In contrast to usual urban development patterns of the time where blacks settled in existing neighborhoods and buildings, the community at State and 35th streets was literally built from the ground up with its own economic, social, and political establishment, directly supported by black enterprise and capital. Contemporarily referred to by residents as "the metropolis," the development had firmly established itself by the turn of the century, and prospered until the 1930s when the Depression and socio-economic conditions virtually halted its further development.

The origin of Chicago's black heritage is synonymous with the origin of the city itself, one of the earliest recorded permanent settlers being Jean Baptiste Point DuSable, a French-speaking black who was engaged in trade with the Indians by the 1780s. Upon Point DuSable's departure in 1800, there was no significant black settlement in the area until the 1840s as Chicago was developing as a rapidly growing Midwestern city. At that time, blacks fleeing oppression in the South began to settle in Chicago, forming the nucleus for what was to develop into the first cohesive black community, which, according to census records, was comprised of 323 persons in 1850 and nearly tripled to 955 persons by 1860. The black community was not assimilated into the city at large, but was concentrated into small pockets throughout the city, the largest settlement being on the Near South Side, adjacent to the western fringes of the central business district. By 1870, the city's black population had grown to 3,691 persons, and steadily doubled in number with each succeeding decade. The boundaries of the South Side black community expanded southward in a long narrow strip, often known as the "Black Belt", bordered by the railroad yards and industrial properties to the west, the affluent residential neighborhoods adjacent to Wabash Avenue to the east, and extending south from Van Buren Street to Thirty-ninth Street, a distance of nearly five miles. The established white business and social communities of Chicago were largely indifferent to the black community, consequently it gradually evolved a complete commercial, social, and political base of its own. As the black community grew, the demand for goods and services was increasingly supplied from within the community itself, and had diversified to such an extent by 1885 that a complete directory of black businesses was published, *The Colored Men's Professional and Business Directory of Chicago*. Similarly, black-supported churches and social organizations proliferated, and evidence of the community's political strength was shown in the election of John Jones, to the Cook County Board of Commissioners in 1874. Jones, a downtown tailor of mixed free-black and white parentage, was supported in his election by both blacks and whites, and was the first black to hold elected office in the State of Illinois.

By 1900, with a population of 30,050 persons, the South Side black community began to take on the characteristics of a small "city-within-a-city," which paralleled the growth and expansion of the City of Chicago at large. A major factor in the growth of "black metropolis" after the turn of the century was its increasing access to financial resources due to the prosperity of the black community. The unwillingness of the established white financial community to support its enterprises ceased to be an impediment to growth. Through the great amount of money generated within the black community, an increasingly independent economic base developed, culminating in the establishment of Chicago's first black-owned bank founded by entrepreneur Jesse Binga in 1908. With greater access to financial resources, the commercial and business interests of Black Metropolis greatly diversified, with a wide range of professional, commercial, and manufacturing interests.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Drake, St. Clair, and Cayton, Horace, Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in the North: New York, 1945. Spear, Alan, Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto 1890-1920: Chicago, 1967. Travis, Dempsey J., An Autobiography of Black Chicago: Chicago, 1981. Travis, Dempsey J., An Autobiography of Black Jazz: Chicago, 1984. files of various periodicals 1900-1940: CHICAGO DEFENDER, HALF CENTURY MAGAZINE; THE CRISIS, CHICAGO DAILY NEWS, CHICAGO TRIBUNE

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property (See individual inventory sheets)

Quadrangle name Englewood, IL and Jackson Park, IL

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References (see individual inventory sheets)

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

See individual inventory sheets

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Timothy Samuelson

organization Commission on Chicago Landmarks

date 4-29-85

street & number 320 N. Clark Street

telephone 744 3038

city or town Chicago,

state Illinois 60610

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Walter Davis*

title State Historian & Director

date Oct-23, 1985

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*Beth Crockett*  
Keeper of the National Register

date 12/10/85

Attest: *See Continuation Sheet for Justification*  
Chief of Registration



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Growth was further intensified by an increase in the black population by 148% between 1910 and 1920, a period often referred to as the "Great Migration" due to the great numbers of blacks who left the South for greater opportunities in Chicago during that time. Despite the fact that it was in large part cut off from the economic and social mainstream of the rest of the city, Black Metropolis, with a population of 109,548 by 1920, had firmly established itself as a virtual self-contained metropolitan development.

Beginning with the establishment of the black-owned Binga Bank at 3633 South State Street in 1908, the vicinity of State and 35th streets was rapidly transformed into the Wall Street of the black community, housing a wide variety of commercial enterprises. Until the time of the Great Migration, the black business community was largely housed in existing residential and small storefront buildings which were adapted for business purposes, often with unsatisfactory results. New construction was limited mainly to a handful of small one- and two-story structures which were erected as investments by white speculators with an eye on the growing potential of the black economic market. This trend was reversed in 1916 when ground was broken for the Jordan Building, at the northeast corner of State and 36th streets, an impressive three-story combination store and apartment building which was commissioned by songwriter and music publisher Joseph J. Jordan. The precedent of the Jordan Building was closely followed by a series of ambitious black-owned and -financed building projects which were carried out along South State Street throughout the 1920s. The most important of these included the Overton Hygienic Building, a combination store, office, and manufacturing building commissioned by the diverse entrepreneur Anthony Overton in 1922; the Chicago Bee Building, also commissioned by Overton in 1929 to house the *Chicago Bee* newspaper; the seven-story Knights of Pythias building erected in 1926 by a prominent lodge order after plans by Chicago's first black architect, Walter T. Bailey; and the quarters of the Binga State Bank and the Binga Arcade Building, erected by Banker Jesse Binga in 1924 and 1929 respectively. Of these buildings, the Jordan, Overton Hygienic, and Chicago Bee buildings still survive, largely as originally designed during the boom time of Black Metropolis.

In marked contrast to the staid banks, insurance companies, and professional offices which conducted business by day on State Street, the area was magically transformed by night by the bright lights and exciting sounds of the numerous nightclubs and all-night restaurants which were interspersed throughout the business district. These were the popular jazz clubs where such notables as King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, and Jelly Roll Morton played and earned Chicago its reputation as a jazz center in the 1920s. Many of the musicians had arrived from New Orleans, St. Louis, and other points south, each bringing with them characteristics of the musical style of their origins, yet the combination of regional styles soon melded into a distinct musical character which was uniquely Chicago. Beginning with Robert T. Motts' Pekin Theater at 2700 South State Street, which opened in 1905, Black Metropolis began to develop numerous music-oriented clubs and cafes during the following decade, reaching their height in the 1920s. Among the most famous were the Dreamland Cafe at 3618 South State Street, the Royal Gardens (later Lincoln Gardens) at 459 East 31st Street, and the Elite Club at 3030 South State Street. A notable and notorious club was the white-owned Panama at the southeast corner of State and 35th streets, where actress and cabaret performer Florence Mills got her start as part of the Panama Trio, and whose pianist was the noted performer and songwriter Tony Jackson, who is best known for composing the million-dollar hit "Pretty Baby" in 1916. The musical intensity of the area was such that it once was suggested that if a horn were held up at the corner of State and 35th streets, it would play itself because of all the musical winds circulating in the area.

Churches played an important role in the development of Black Metropolis, both from a spiritual as well as a social standpoint in the community. Large congregations such as the Olivet Baptist Church and Pilgrim Baptist Church conducted extensive social programs, and were instrumental in securing lodging and employment for the newcomers which arrived from the South during the "Great Migration." Similar programs were conducted at the Wabash Avenue Y.M.C.A. which opened in 1914 through the impetus of philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, the President of Sears, Roebuck & Company, who had considerable interest in black-oriented

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causes. Programs at the Y.M.C.A. included extensive job training programs including such specialized programs as auto repair and manual training.

Organized political alliances gave Black Metropolis increased participation in city government, beginning with the election of Oscar DePriest as the city's first black alderman in 1915. Initially working in alliance with the white Republican bosses who controlled the political destiny of the Black Metropolis wards, DePriest sought to build a political organization of his own, forming the "Peoples Movement Club," with headquarters in a former Jewish social club at 3140 South Indiana Avenue. While DePriest's organization was the most influential of the black political organizations, it faced stiff competition from other organizations and rival political figures within the black community. The political voting strength of the Black Metropolis wards was such that by the 1920s the political control was effectively taken from the white political bosses who formerly controlled them, and put into the hands of political figures from within the black community. Gains were made in representation in municipal government as well as in the state legislature, and in 1928 Oscar DePriest had the distinction of being the first black from the North to be elected to a seat in the United States House of Representatives, serving for three consecutive terms.

The Black Metropolis development gained nationwide publicity as a model of black achievement, with extensive coverage in both the white as well as the black press of the time. Chicago was one of the centers of black journalism, having at different times several black-owner newspapers, including the *Chicago Whip*, *Chicago Bee*, *Broad Axe*, and the *Half Century Magazine*. The most influential of the Chicago publications was the *Chicago Defender*, a newspaper of nationwide circulation which was founded by Robert S. Abbott in 1905. The *Chicago Defender* had a major impact on black thought and development in America by its combination of news items pertinent to blacks nationwide in conjunction with strong editorial viewpoints on a wide variety of civil rights issues. The "Great Migration" of 1910 to 1920 was due in large part to editorials published in the *Chicago Defender* urging blacks to leave the oppression of the South for greater opportunity in Chicago and the North.

Black Metropolis reached the height by the mid-1920s, but its economic vitality began to gradually weaken after 1925 due to socio-economic conditions which were out of the control of its developers. Although the growth and prosperity of Black Metropolis was directly tied to the rapid growth of the black population, particularly during the Great Migration, the sharp decline in new arrivals during the 1920s slowed its development. As employment opportunities did not keep pace with the population increases of the previous decade, unemployment weakened the financial base of the community, adversely affecting the businesses of Black Metropolis which were reliant on support from within the black community. Further deterioration of the financial base occurred when white businessmen who previously had ignored the black community began to realize its economic potential. Rather than attempt to break into the prosperous existing market at 35th and State, an alternate business area was created along 47th Street principally developed and financed by white developers and store owners who controlled the property to such an extent that black-owned and -developed properties and businesses were largely excluded from the area. The introduction of established white chain stores and commercial enterprises along 47th Street gave insurmountable competition to the independent black business of the 35th Street district and progressively siphoned off its energy and self-supporting financial base. The final blow to Black Metropolis came with the Great Depression of 1929 which closed down most of its black-owned banks, insurance companies, and other business interests, while many of the businesses of 47th Street with their broader access to credit and nationwide financial backing remained largely intact. The self-supporting momentum of Black Metropolis, which its backers had hoped would lead to recognition and eventual integration with the established downtown business establishment, was thus dealt a serious blow from which many negative after-effects lingered for decades.

After the 35th Street district lost its principal business interests during the Depression, the area quickly declined, and by 1950 one local writer dismissed the intersection of 35th and State streets as "Bronzeville's skid-row." Deterioration and urban renewal took their toll during the 1950s and 1960s resulting in the demolition of entire blocks along State Street for the construction of public housing projects and the campus of the

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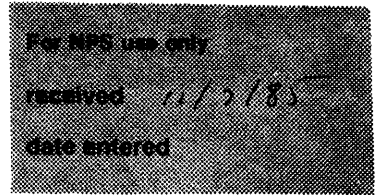
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Illinois Institute of Technology, as well as extensive isolated demolitions throughout the community.

Fortunately, many of the most significant buildings of the Black Metropolis development have survived, although some are in a state of neglect and deterioration. Collectively, these buildings are worthy of recognition and preservation as monuments to the determination of the black urban pioneers who created them.

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Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Black Metropolis Thematic Resources

State Cook County, Illinois

Cook County encl 12/14/85

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- 1. Victory Sculpture **Substantive Review** Keeper Beth Grossman 4/30/86  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Chicago Bee Building **Substantive Review** Keeper Melrose Byrum 4/30/86  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Overton Hygienic Building **Substantive Review** Keeper Melrose Byrum 4/30/86  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Unity Hall **Substantive Review** Keeper Melrose Byrum 4/30/86  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Chicago Defender Building **Substantive Review** Keeper Melrose Byrum 4/30/86  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Wabash Avenue YCA **Substantive Review** Keeper Beth Grossman 4/30/86  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Eighth Regiment Armory **Substantive Review** Keeper Melrose Byrum 4/30/86  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Jordon Building **Substantive Review** Keeper Melrose Byrum 4/30/86  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Liberty Life-Supreme Life Insurance Company **Substantive Review** Keeper Melrose Byrum 4/30/86  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper \_\_\_\_\_  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

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date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

Name Jordan Building (Black Metropolis TR)  
State Cook County, ILLINOIS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

REMOVAL APPROVED

Keeper

*Helmut Byrum* 9/5/86

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