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1933

Second Baptist Church Raises Half a Million Dollars

Second Baptist Church, between 1914 and 1933, raised and spent more than half a million dollars in serving the black community in Detroit. Founded in 1836, Second Baptist Church was and still is an active force in Detroit's black community.

Beginning in 1919, Reverend Robert L. Bradby worked with Henry Ford to secure jobs for African American migrants in search of work. During the Depression, Second Baptist Church served as a place of great refuge for the unemployed.

¹ Second Baptist Church.

Courtesy of the Burton Historical Collections, Detroit Public Library

² Reverend Robert L. Bradby

From the Collections of Second Baptist Church of Detroit

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Credits:

Dillard, Angela D. *Faith in the City: Preaching Radical Social Change in Detroit*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007. Print.

McRae, Norman PhD. "The History of Second Baptist Church, 1836-1986." *Second Baptist Church of Detroit, Michigan: 150 Years – Continuing in Service by Faith, 1836-1986*. 48-97. Detroit: Second Baptist Church, 1986. Print.

Meier, August and Elliott Rudwick. *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007. Print.

Keywords/Topics:

Religion

Questions:

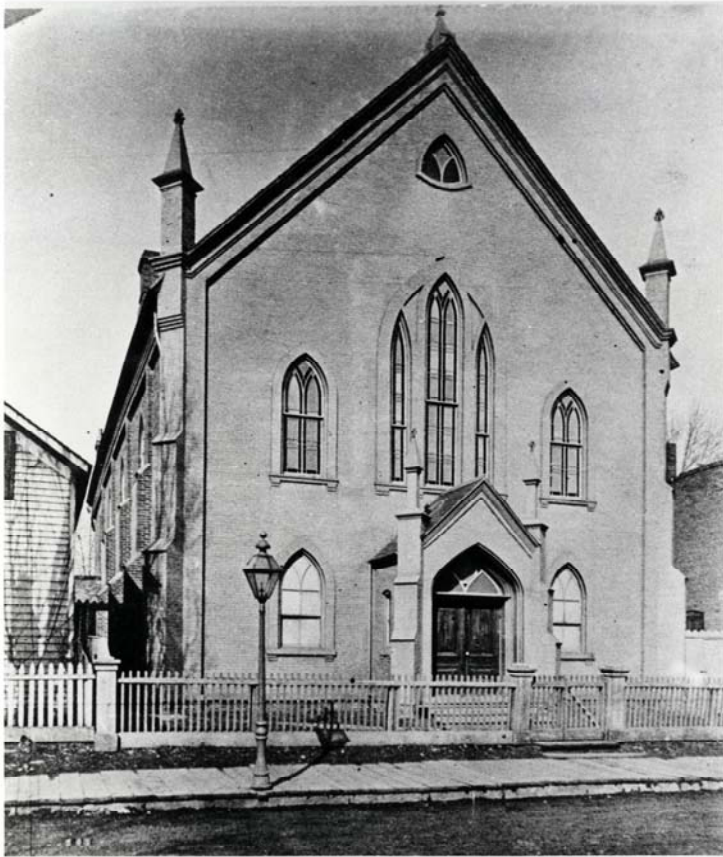
1. How did Second Baptist Church assist the Detroit community?
2. Why was Reverend Robert L. Bradby important within the history of Detroit?
3. Do you recognize any disadvantages to Second Baptist Church forming an alliance with Ford Motor Company?
4. Is the hiring process at Ford Motor Company still similar to that of Rev. Bradby and Ford's criteria for employees?

Links to Internet Websites:

<http://www.secondbaptistdetroit.org/>

<http://bentley.umich.edu/research/publications/migration/ch5.php>

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Courtesy of the Burton Historical Collections, Detroit Public Library

Many of the anti-slavery African American leaders in Detroit belonged to First Baptist Church, but chose to leave this congregational because of racial segregation. Second Baptist Church, founded in 1837 by 13 former slaves, quickly established a reputation of fighting for social justice and assumed a prominent role in assisting the Detroit Community.

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In 1919, Reverend Robert L. Bradby formed a relationship with Henry Ford, where in he established employment for his growing congregation at Ford Motor Company by writing letters of recommendation. Each applicant had to comply with specific Ford criteria, which included being reliable, compliant, and decidedly anti-union. Reverend Bradby and other church leaders were skeptical of workers unions, who, in the past, were exclusionary and did not protect the rights of African Americans along with their own. The alliance with Henry Ford to hire black workers proved advantageous to both parties. As a result, the congregation at Second Baptist Church gained 900 new members and the Ford Motor Company became the leading employer of African American.