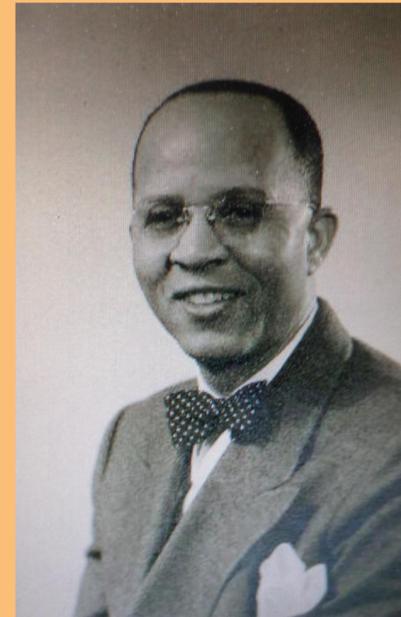
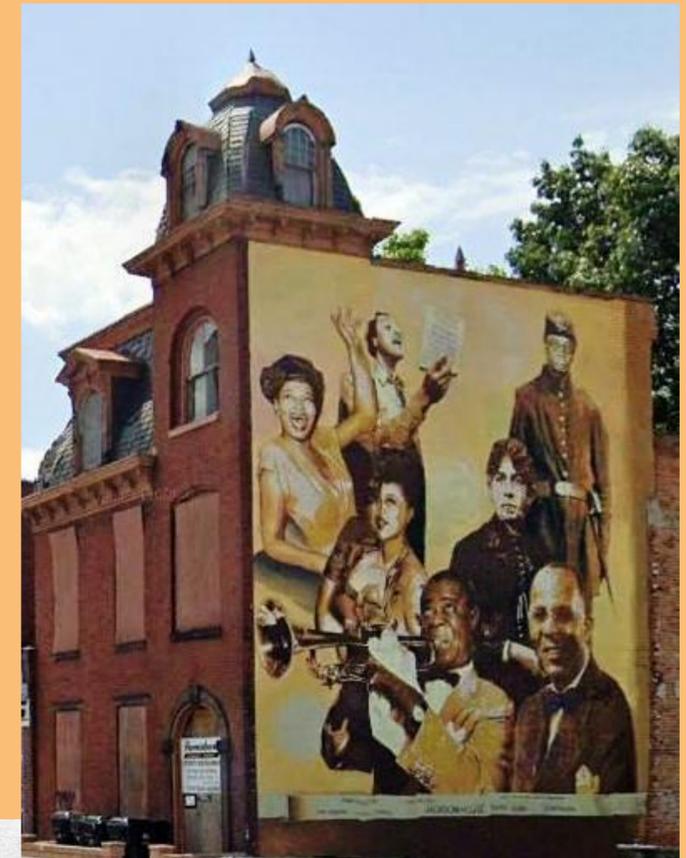


# The African-American Business District that Became “Jackson Square”

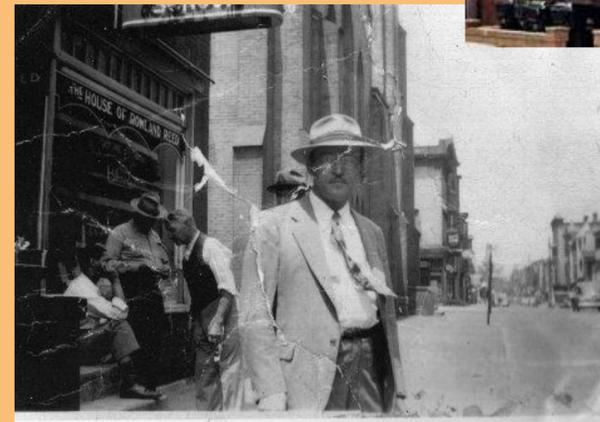
The 1000 Block of North Sixth Street has unique significance on several scores. Architecturally, historically, economically, culturally and politically, this venerable and high-profile block of 19<sup>th</sup>-century buildings communicates a rich and extensive tapestry of America’s and Harrisburg’s multifaceted heritage. The fanciful Dutch-revival-style building at the Boas St. corner served for a time as the parsonage of the former Ridge Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church just a few doors to the north; later, it became part of the thriving 20<sup>th</sup>-century African-American business community that flourished along the Sixth Street corridor. An earlier residential structure on this site was the home of the Rev. Silas Comfort Swallow, a temperance crusader known as “No swallow Swallow,” who was renowned as the only person to run for U. S. President as a Prohibition candidate. To the right, at 1002 N. 6<sup>th</sup> St., lived for many years the family of Calobe Jackson, Sr., as prominent black businessman who operated Jack’s Barber Shop on the ground floor in addition to other business establishments nearby. His son, Calobe Jackson, Jr., gained renown as a Harrisburg civic leader and an authority on African-American and local history. At right, the towering French-second-empire townhouse at 1006 N. 6<sup>th</sup> St., became, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the “Jackson House,” accommodating black travelers (who found its listing in the “Green Book” guide to businesses that welcomed African-Americans in the era of segregation) as well as hosting such famous traveling celebrities as Ella Fitzgerald, Joe Louis, Louis Armstrong and other superstars. They were quietly intercepted by Mr. German Jackson, head doorman at Harrisburg’s then-segregated downtown Penn-Harris Hotel, who steered them to his 6<sup>th</sup> St. hostelry. Mr. Jackson’s restaurant next door, still named the Jackson House, was deeded to Dave Kegriz, whose family maintained the Jackson name and symbol of hospitality into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By then, as the surrounding properties fell into disrepair, and the church that anchored the block was destroyed by fire in 1995, occasional efforts to restore the block were advanced, including a plan for an African-American history museum. At long last, and as the clock was running out, a group of investors assembled by Preservation Pennsylvania came together with plans for rehabbing the vacant buildings and adding new infrastructure as needed. In 2020, on the occasion of Calobe Jackson Jr.’s 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and in honor of the other legendary Jacksons of the neighborhood, the rebirth of this block was officially named “Jackson Square.”



German Jackson, above, opened the Jackson House in 1925.



North wall of the Jackson House a displays striking mural painted by Sprocket Mural Works’ artist Cesar Viveros of famed African-American artists who stayed there.



Calobe Jackson, Sr., stands in front of his barber shop in the 1940’s



Jack’s Barber shop was founded by Calobe Jackson at 10 Aberdeen Street in 1921. It was moved to 1002 N. 6<sup>th</sup> Street in 1933. Offering expert haircuts, shaves and tonsorial grooming, it became a popular destination and the most prestigious African-American meeting place in Harrisburg. The barbershop closed in 1971 upon the death of its owner.



Calobe Jackson, Jr., stands at Jackson Square in front of his boyhood home and father’s former barber shop