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Birwood Wall

Constructed in 1941, the Birwood Wall divided the existing Black community in the Eight Mile-Wyoming area from Blackstone Park, a newly built White Subdivision. The wall is a reminder of institutionalized racial segregation in the United States. For example the 1936 Federal Housing Administration underwriting manual stated that artificial barriers could protect a neighborhood's value from "adverse influences," such as "inharmonious racial groups." Maps provided by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation labeled Black neighborhoods and other ethnic or low-income communities as "hazardous" for home loans, a process known as redlining. The Reverend Horace White, the first Black member of the Detroit Housing Commission, denounced the wall and led protests against its construction. By the 1950s Black families lived on both sides of the wall.

Significant Date:

Two World Wars and the Depression (1915-1945)

Registry Year: 2021 **Erected Date:** 2022

Marker Location

Address: 20233 Birwood Street

City: Detroit

State: MI **ZipCode:**

County: Wayne

Township: Detroit

Lat: 42.44202900 / **Long:** -83.16606700

Web URL:

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Eight Mile-Wyoming Neighborhood

After World War I the Great Migration brought thousands of southern Blacks to northern industrial cities including Detroit. Black Bottom and Paradise Valley, the city's segregated Black neighborhoods, became severely overcrowded. The Detroit Urban League responded by helping settle Black families on land near the edge of the city, one of the few places in Detroit where Blacks could buy and build their own homes in the 1920s. During World War II the city tried to build temporary defense housing in the area. Burniece Avery, the Carver Progressive Club, and the Eight Mile Road Improvement Association persuaded the Federal Housing Administration to limit war housing and, a rarity for the time, offer home