

## East Dayton Street

The three buildings in this district, clustered at the corner of East Dayton Street and North Blount Street, represents the last remnant of Madison's first black enclave. All the buildings in the district were moved here from elsewhere in the City.

Prior to the Civil War, very few black families lived in Madison, and those who did lived in rented housing and held odd jobs. Most of their histories were never recorded. By 1900 there were nineteen black households in the City and twenty-five black working men and women. Three black families owned their own homes, including John and Martha Turner who came to Madison from Kentucky in 1898. The Turners organized the Douglass Beneficial Society, a self-help group for Madison's black families, and moved a building to 649 East Dayton Street to house the activities of the Society. The Turners were also instrumental, along with William Miller, in organizing the first black church in Madison. Around 1903, the group purchased a former Norwegian Lutheran church and had it moved to 631 East Dayton Street (no longer extant).

The establishment of the beneficial society and the church, combined with active encouragement from the Millers and the Turners, induced several other black families to move to the neighborhood. In 1910 three of the six black homeowners in Madison lived near the corner of Dayton and Blount, and nineteen of the thirty-nine black households were located in this area.