

# City of Pasco - African-American Historic Properties

Category	Race & equity
Jurisdiction	Pasco
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## What makes this project award winning?

In 2017, the City obtained a \$10,000 Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) grant to identify and document properties in east Pasco significant to historic African-American contributions to the City of Pasco and the Tri-Cities area.

The research effort began with Harris Environmental Group (HEG) archaeologist Dana Holschuh, who documented properties with DAHP, and continues with Delia Hagen, PhD Historical Consulting, charged with refining the research and preparing eligible properties for submittal to the National Historic Register of Historic Places.

In the early days of Pasco the railroad tracks divided east and west Pasco; the majority of African Americans in the Tri-Cities, including many of the 6,000 African Americans who were part of the construction work done at Hanford during WWII, lived in east Pasco. Most historically significant African-American sites were demolished during the 1980s era urban renewal.

Perhaps the most notable remaining structures are the Kurtzman Park Community Center building which adjoins historic Kurtzman Park, and the Morningstar Baptist Church, which was the first African American church in the city.

Far more important than the structures, of course, are the stories. As part of the City's "soft match" to the DAHP grant The City of Pasco engaged in a video production project detailing various aspects of the African-American community's contributions to the City of Pasco (available via YouTube: <https://youtu.be/ZYnrW0IpoU>)

With this video, the City was able to capture the flavor of African American life in the early years, and the changes which have occurred over time as local society has evolved. Interviews were conducted with old-time residents who together painted a verbal mural of life on the far side of the tracks, expressing joys, sorrows, resignation and determination in the face of the overt racism of the era.

As a part of our Historic Preservation program, we are engaged in an ongoing effort to preserve the heritage of African-Americans and other underrepresented communities in the City of Pasco.