



## 1922

### The Graystone Ballroom opened

In the 1920's ballrooms were a very popular form of recreation for young people in the city. As Paradise Valley emerged near Black Bottom, ballrooms became a very common place for people to go to during leisure times, where they could dance and listen to music. The Graystone, Detroit's largest ballroom, opened on March 7<sup>th</sup> offering nighttime entertainment to the residents of the city. Though segregated, the Graystone was open to African Americans on Monday nights and allowed African American musicians to perform. One of the most popular acts was the McKinney Cotton Pickers, an all African-American jazz band from Detroit. Almost every major jazz sensation of the era played at the Graystone including Duke Ellington, Nat King Cole, and Wynton Marsalis.



<sup>1</sup> The Graystone Ballroom

Courtesy of the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library

<sup>2</sup> Duke Ellington

From the Sam Vinegar Collection, Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History

<sup>3</sup> Cab Calloway

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### Credits:

Bjorn, Lars and Jim Gallert. *Before Motown: A History of Jazz in Detroit, 1920-1960*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001. Print.

### Keywords/Topics:

Entertainment and Recreation

### Questions:

1. Could black Detroiters go to the Graystone any day of the week?
2. Who brought national attention to the Graystone Ballroom?
3. Do you think other bands like the Cotton Pickers disbanded because of the Depression?
4. Why is it important to remember the Graystone?

### Links to Internet Websites:

<http://apps.detnews.com/apps/history/index.php?id=6#ixzz0IHdAbSen>

<http://www.ipl.org/div/detjazz/About.html>

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*Courtesy of the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library*

The Graystone Ballroom was the most elegant ballroom in all of Detroit. Famous bandleader Jean Goldkette brought national attention to the Graystone during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. As jazz music became a sensation of the past, the Graystone was forced to close. It remained vacant for decades until it was demolished in 1980. Its legacy has been preserved through the efforts of James Jenkins, who established the Graystone International Jazz Museum.

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Cab Calloway was born in 1907 to a middle-class family in Rochester, New York. He grew up singing in church and received private voice lessons. Against his family's wishes, he began performing at jazz clubs like the ever-famous Cotton Club in Harlem. He and his band were hired as a replacement for Duke Ellington and his orchestra while they were on tour. His song "Minnie the Moocher" sent him into international stardom and was featured on the Betty Boop animated short properly titled *Minnie the Moocher*. His success spanned decades as he starred in films, Broadway, and TV programs. Cab Calloway died in 1994 from the complications of a stroke.