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# Oral History, Mobile Curation, and African American Memory in Cleveland's Fairfax and Glenville Neighborhoods

Benne Christian  
*Cleveland State University*

Willette Crawford  
*Cleveland State University*

Julie Gabb  
*Cleveland State University*

J. Mark Souther  
*Cleveland State University, m.souther@csuohio.edu*

Regennia N. Williams  
*Cleveland State University, r.williams@csuohio.edu*

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# ***Oral History, Mobile Curation, and African American Memory in Cleveland's Fairfax and Glenville Neighborhoods***

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

**Student Researchers:** Benne Christian, Willette Crawford, and Julie Gabb

**Faculty Advisors:** J. Mark Souther and Regennia N. Williams

## **Abstract**

Fairfax and Glenville are historic neighborhoods with signal importance in the African American community. Too often these neighborhoods are subjected to a simplistic declension narrative that pins their heyday in the 1920s-50s and traces their decline to the convulsive riots of the late 1960s and the subsequent loss of population to the suburbs as middle-class African Americans mirrored “white flight.” Our team conducted over 40 interviews, created story clips, and curated several new sites for the *Cleveland Historical* website and mobile application. Our research, rooted in oral history, exposed an important post-1968 counternarrative of resilience. Our oral histories demonstrate a continuing thread of black/white/Jewish collaborative approaches to community issues, particularly in Glenville, as well as the continuing relevance of the “old neighborhoods” for work, play, and worship long after middle-class suburban flight. They also reveal a selective memory that privileges personal connections to the neighborhood through kinship, friendship, faith, and social activism, yielding a “sense of place” that is not always tied to prevailing assumptions about the neighborhoods.