



**FINAL DRAFT OF MARKER TEXT FOR APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE OF APPROVAL. Please carefully review this entire document before signing and dating as the text and items below will be reproduced on the marker.** Return the signed text to the Laura Russell, Ohio Historical Markers Program, as soon as possible. Refer to previous working drafts for sources used to verify the text.

Ohio Historical Marker to be erected in Franklin County.  
5/8" text, *different* text on each side

**SIDE ONE:**

**THE BIG WALNUT COUNTRY CLUB**

Established during the Great Migration and intense segregation in Columbus<sup>12</sup>, The Big Walnut Country Club (BWCC) was one of the first Black country clubs in the United States.<sup>3</sup> Conceived in 1925<sup>4</sup> and incorporated two years later,<sup>5</sup> the club encouraged and promoted aquatic and athletic sports by providing the means and facilities otherwise not available to the Black community.<sup>6</sup> Members enjoyed golf, swimming, archery, tennis, badminton, boating, dining, and dancing<sup>7</sup> on the nearly 20 acres of land<sup>8</sup> between the Big Walnut and Rocky Fork creeks.<sup>9</sup> The club was a social, professional, and political hub<sup>10</sup> for Central Ohio's growing Black population<sup>11</sup> in the decades leading to the Civil Rights Movement.<sup>12</sup> The BWCC closed in 1963.<sup>13</sup> Gahanna purchased the land in 1970 and opened its first public park, Friendship Park, the following year.<sup>14</sup> [130 words]

**THE FOUNDING MEMBERS**

The founding members of The Big Walnut Country Club — Nimrod B. Allen, John P. Bowles, Dr. Elijah A. Calloway, Leroy H. Godman, Charles E. Jones, Dr. William A. Method, Dr. R. Milton Tribbitt, and Dr. William J. Woodlin — were prominent attorneys, dentists, doctors, executives, and social workers in 1920s Columbus.<sup>15</sup> In addition to their work with the club, Method and Tribbitt established Alpha Hospital (1920) in the Columbus neighborhood of Bronzeville where



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6 Articles of Incorporation: The Big Walnut Country Club, Ohio Secretary of State Business Records DOC ID A442\_0668 July 11, 1927

7 "Enjoy the Great Outdoors by joining the Big Walnut Country Club," BWCC Membership Brochure, 1939. Yvonne Mattison (granddaughter of Nimrod Allen) personal phone interview on July 20, 2020.

8 *History of Gahanna, 1776-1976* (Rocky Fork Printing Company, 1976, 1985), p. 170, states that the land was purchased in 2 10-acre plots in 1921 and 1924. <https://digital-collections.columbuslibrary.org/digital/collection/p16802coll43/id/561/rec/1>. Accessed April 9, 2021.

9 *History of Gahanna, 1776-1976*, p. 170.

10 Smith, Toni, "African-American Settlements...," p. 66.

11 Griffin, William. *African Americans and the Color Line in Ohio, 1915-1930*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2005. (p.103-104)

12 <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/civil-rights-era.html>

13 Ohio Secretary of State Business Records DOC ID 000000191628 Canceled/Failure to File/Statement Cont. Existence 03/31/1963 <https://businesssearch.ohiosos.gov/#>. Accessed April 9, 2021.

14 *History of Gahanna, 1776-1976*, p. 71. News clippings from Gahanna Parks & Rec: "Citizens Urged to Participate in Park Development, February 25, 1971; "Gahanna Buys 18 Acre Tract for Future Park," April 24, 1970; "Flag Raising at New City Park," April 8, 1971; "Mayor Raises Flag, Officially Opens New Gahanna Park in Sunday Ceremony," April 29, 1971. Accessed 4-15-21.

15 Blount, Roderick, Jr., "Big Walnut Country Club: The First Retreat for African Americans in Columbus," Columbus African American News Journal (February 6, 2015). See also A384\_1049 April 3, 1925, and A442\_0668 July 11, 1927, Articles of Incorporation.

16 "Forty Years," *Journal of Negro History*, pp. 133–154. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/2714730](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2714730). "Alpha Hospital" <https://library.osu.edu/site/mhcb/2011/05/09/alpha-hospital/>. "Alpha Hospital, East Long Street, Columbus, Ohio" <https://digitalcollections.columbuslibrary.org/digital/collection/memory/id/10363/>. Ohio State Monitor, Volume 2, Issue 38, March 6, 1920, p. 1 Accessed April 8, 2021. Smith, Toni. "African-American Settlements and Communities in Columbus, Ohio," p. 27.



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17 Himes, J. S. "Forty Years of Negro Life in Columbus, Ohio." *The Journal of Negro History*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1942, pp. 133–154. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/2714730](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2714730). Accessed April 8, 2021.

18 "City of Columbus." Dr. Nimrod Booker Allen, [www.columbus.gov/Templates/Detail.aspx?id=45124](http://www.columbus.gov/Templates/Detail.aspx?id=45124). "Nimrod Booker Allen biography transcript," Nimrod Booker Allen Collection, Ohio History Connection MSS594\_B1\_F27\_01\_02, <https://digital-collections.columbuslibrary.org/digital/collection/african/id/24047>. Accessed April 9, 2021.

19 Find-A-Grave Nimrod Booker Allen  
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/84556554/nimrod-booker-allen>. Obituary included. Accessed April 8, 2021.

20 "Seventh Annual Ohio Civil Rights Hall of Fame Inductees Announced." OhioMBE, Ronda Watson Barber, 18 September 2015, [www.ohiombe.com/archives/5018](http://www.ohiombe.com/archives/5018).