

Paul Laurence Dunbar House

219 North Summit Street, Dayton

For the last three years of his life, from 1903 until 1906, this brick house was home to Paul Laurence Dunbar, the distinguished African-American poet. His poetic use of dialect to convey both the joys and sorrows of an oppressed people brought him national acclaim. Dunbar was only 34 when he died, and a sense of his frustration at the end of the day is revealed in the two lines of a poem he never finished:

I have asked so little of life.

How strange that she should deny it.

His mother maintained the house in his native Dayton until her death in 1934. It was then bought by the State of Ohio; it is open to the public and is preserved as a loving memorial to the “poet laureate of his race.”