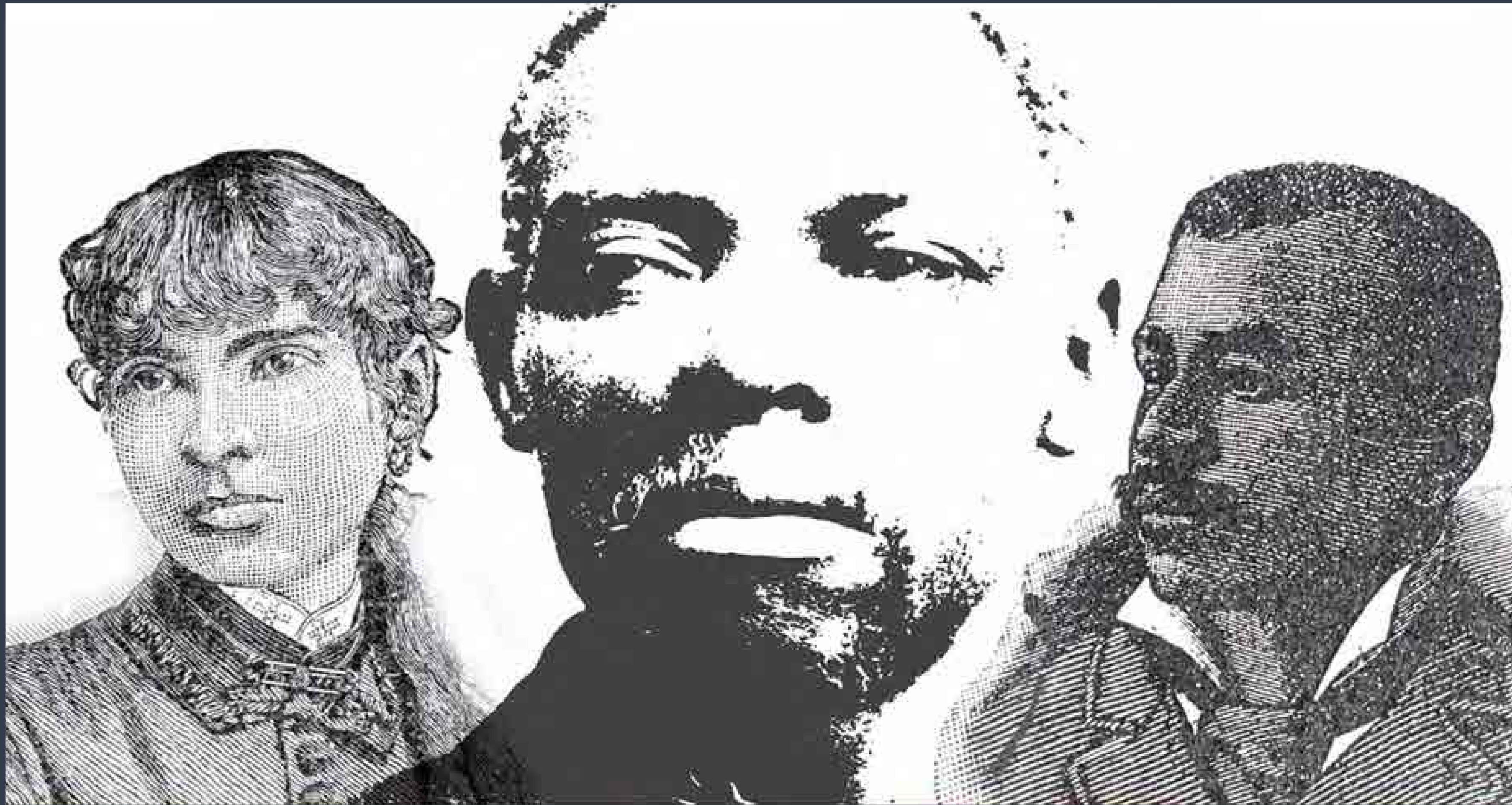


A STONE OF HOPE



BLACK EXPERIENCES IN THE FOX CITIES

“Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history.”

- Carter G. Woodson, *Black historian* (1875-1950)

When Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at UW-Fox Valley in 1967, he challenged the Fox Cities to become a haven for Black families. Today, the area continues to evolve into a diverse community in line with King’s vision, but the journey has been long and difficult.

Appleton’s story adds complexity to the nation’s racial experiences. Many of the city’s residents have been unwelcoming to Blacks who visited on business or tried to make Appleton “home.” Blacks have faced discrimination and segregation. But, as King said, there has always been a stone of hope. Everyday activists have kept the hope of equality alive.



Black slaves worked in small numbers at trading posts and related businesses along the Fox River.

History Museum at the Castle

Fox Cities as a Land of Slavery?

Initially, some free opportunities existed as Europeans began to shape the Atlantic World. Blacks first came to the area in the 1700s to work in the fur trade. Two free Black men operated a fur trading post near present-day Marinette. However, while some lived in freedom, many Blacks along the Fox River were enslaved by French settlers. **French slavery** also included Indians and whites.

After the American Revolution, England surrendered control of the Great Lakes to the United States, including present-day Wisconsin. The Americans organized the region under the **Northwest Ordinance of 1787**, which prohibited slavery within its boundaries. However, federal fugitive slave laws also allowed slave catchers to recapture escaped enslaved people to return them to slaveholders.

Blacks continued to face inequality in Wisconsin after it became a state. The **1848 Constitution of the State of Wisconsin** and **Black Laws** formally excluded Blacks from voting, attending public schools, serving on juries, and serving in the militia. Discrimination was apparent from the state’s beginnings, weakening early hopes for equality.

Acknowledgements



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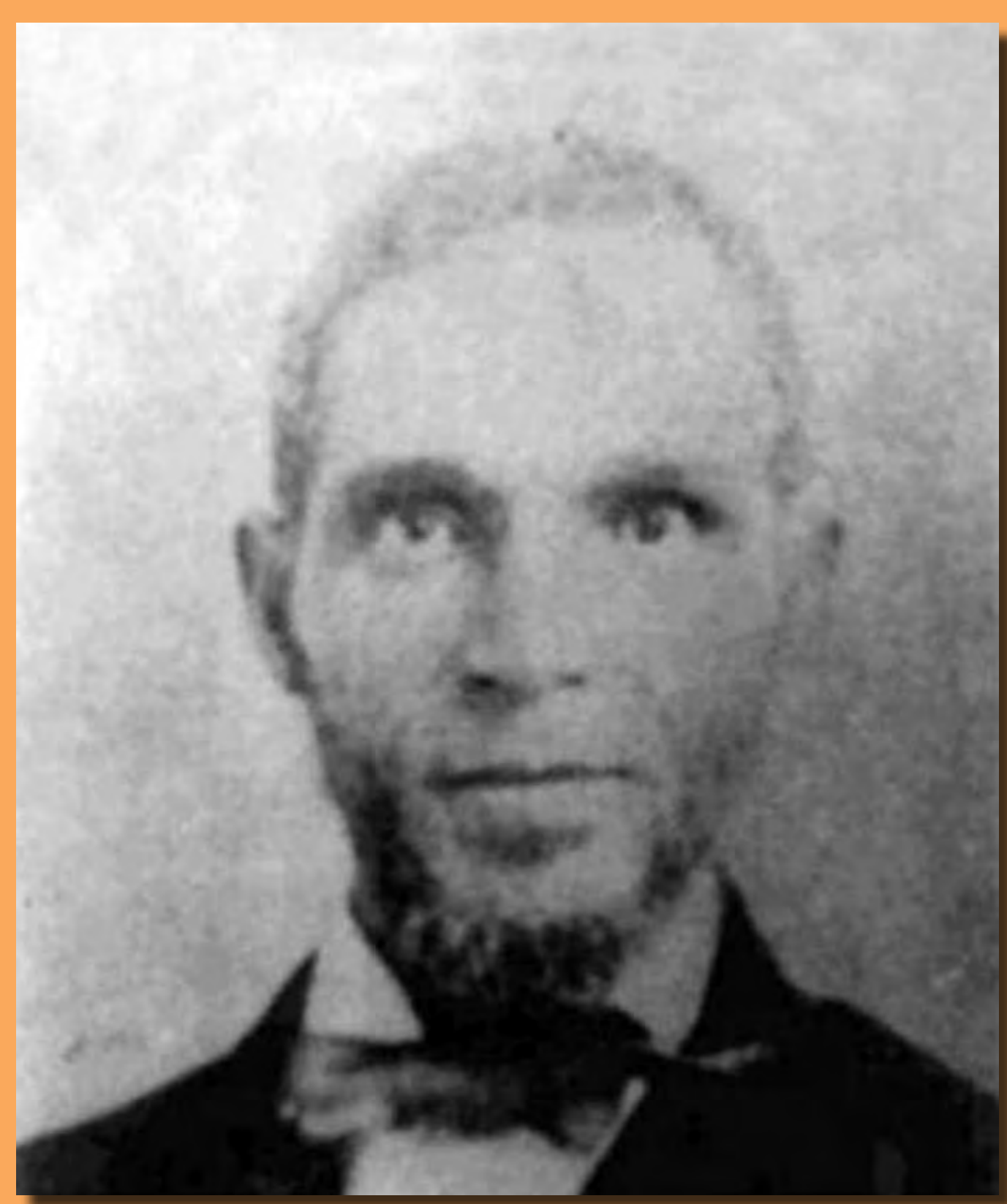
www.myhistorymuseum.org

RENEWAL OF HOPE?

There is no evidence any of the Fox Cities were involved in the Underground Railroad.

Before Emancipation

The experiences and opinions of local Blacks are hard to document in Appleton before the Civil War. Free Blacks occasionally visited the Fox Cities to speak against slavery. In one instance, a free man came to Appleton to raise funds to purchase his family who remained in bondage in North Carolina.



Rev. William P. Newman was a leader in the abolitionist movement. His family relocated to Appleton after the Civil War.

National Underground Railroad Freedom Center

Blacks outside of Appleton were a reliable source of criticism on slavery. Rev. William P. Newman, a Black abolitionist from Ohio and part-time editor of the *Provincial Freeman*, became pessimistic of the limited support offered by the white leaders in the abolitionist movement. Because of discrimination, he argued free Blacks should immigrate to Haiti. After his death in 1866, his spouse Sarah Cleggett relocated their extended family to Appleton.

Some white residents identified with the expanding anti-slavery movement, but they adopted more limited views of equality and instead debated gradual, compensated, or otherwise delayed emancipation. They openly questioned whether free Blacks should return to Africa or immigrate to Canada.

During the debate over the **Negro Suffrage Amendment of 1857**, legislators proposed changing the state constitution to extend suffrage to Black men over the age of 21. Along with the rest of the state, Outagamie County voted in a landslide against the referendum. Robert Pendleton, a young Black student at Lawrence University, challenged the process by voting in the special election. Records indicate his vote was counted in Appleton's historically progressive First Ward.

George McNamee, 227 Union street, Appleton, has already secured a colored servant in his private family, and she is doing nicely. Anyone desiring to receive colored service can address THE COLORED HELP AND HAND MISSION, 79 Fifth street, Milwaukee, Wis.

From the 1850s to 1920, local white families recruited help by advertising to Blacks who lived in Milwaukee. Their tasks included cleaning house, preparing meals, and caring for the children of the household.

Wisconsin Weekly Advocate, April 16, 1903

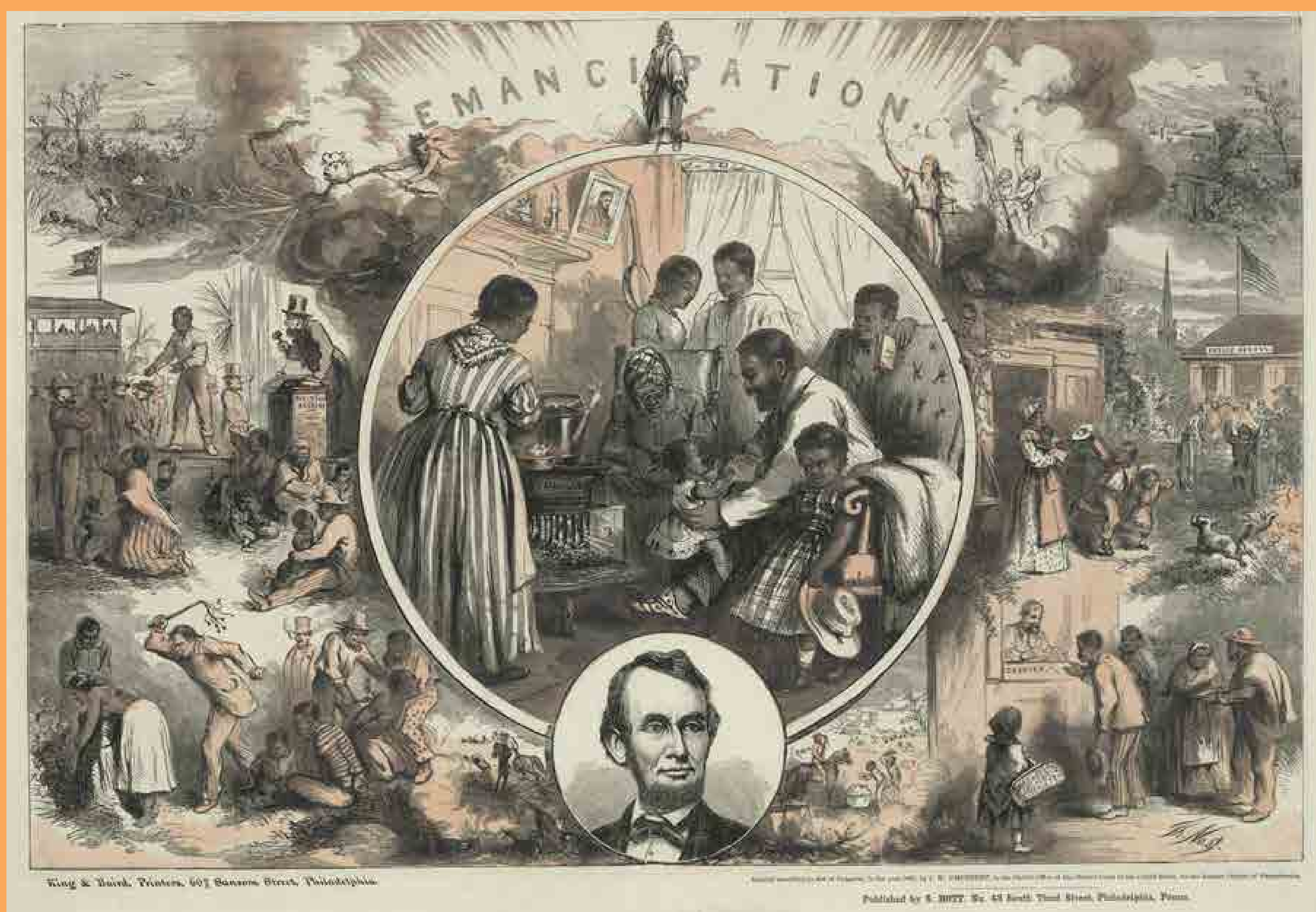
Reconstruction: Minimal Expansion of Rights

With the **Emancipation Proclamation**, many white Northerners slowly began to view themselves as participants in a war for freedom. But how far would the nation's new freedoms reach?

Few whites were willing to support intermarriage, better job opportunities, sharing of public facilities, and other forms of social equality. After the war, during a period known as **Reconstruction**, moments of hope suggested broad changes were still possible. State and federal legislators passed the **14th Amendment** granting citizenship and additional protections to Black people, while the **15th Amendment** ensured equal voting rights only to men regardless of color or prior enslavement.

Robert Pendleton challenged the state constitution by casting a vote for the Negro Suffrage Amendment of 1857.

History Museum at the Castle



Thomas Nast's depiction of emancipation envisioned an optimistic future for free Blacks in the United States.

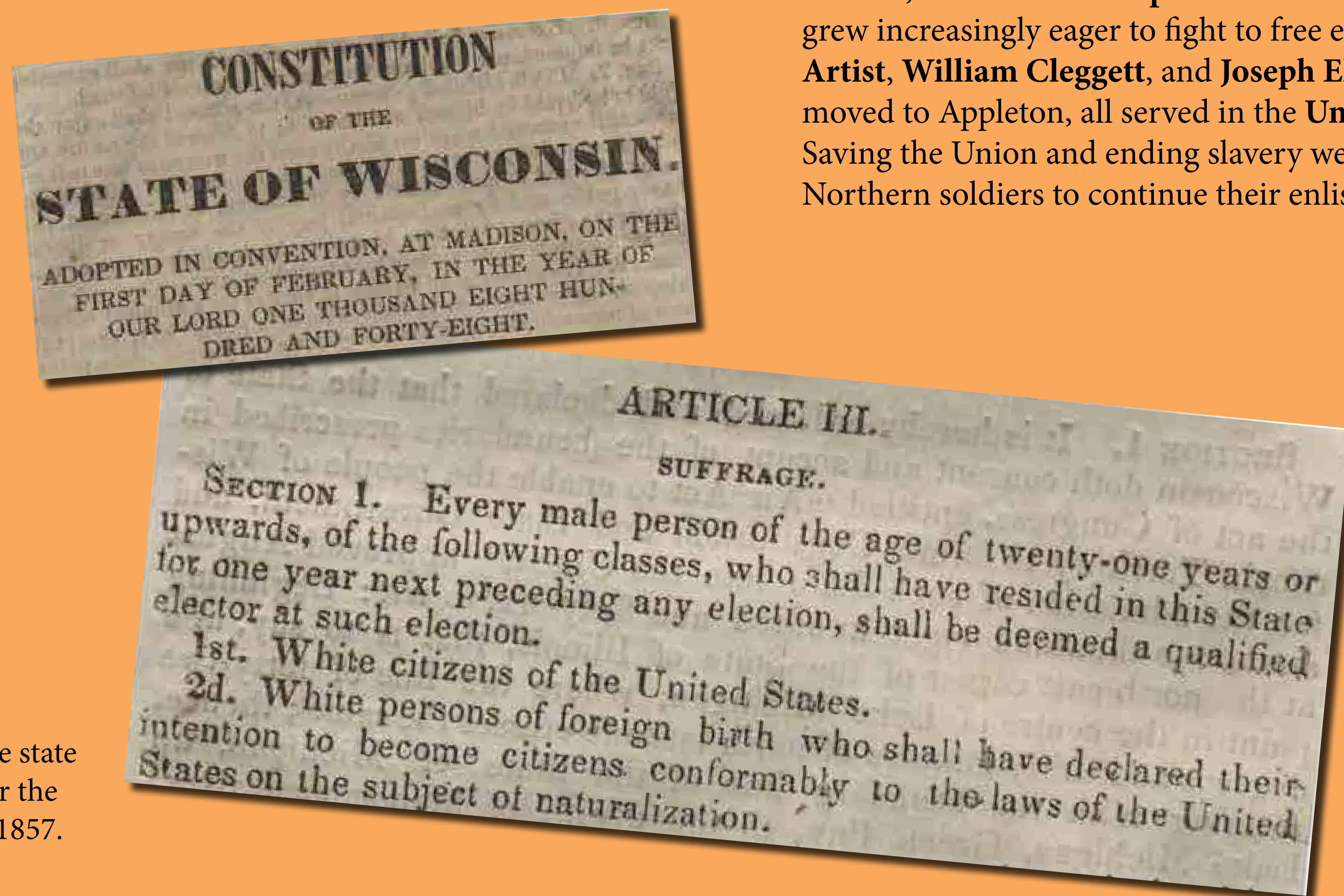
Library of Congress

Before the Civil War, Wisconsin's Black population grew to 1,200 people who lived in all corners of the state. Black pioneers like **Andrew Jackson** helped name the Town of Freedom and **Moses Stanton** helped found Chilton, formerly known as Stantonville.

Entrepreneurial opportunities before the war were limited for Blacks who lived in Appleton. Blacks only had access to a small range of jobs, including barbers, musicians, and factory laborers. In 1860, **Norman Anderson** worked as a barber and **Samuel Johnson** was a fiddler for local businesses. The Appleton Stave Factory employed **William Rollins**. Black women had even less access to local jobs, typically finding work as domestics.

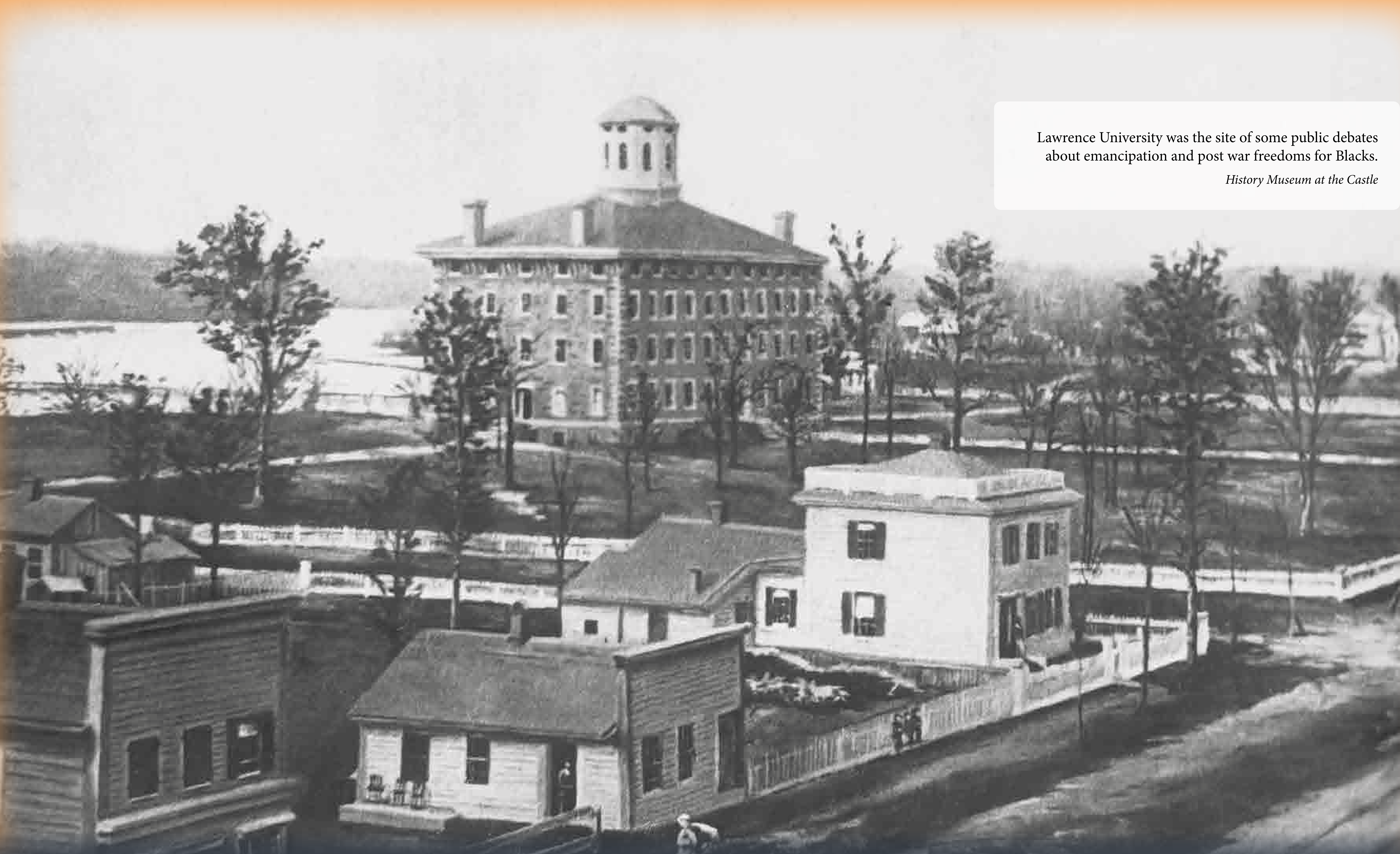
Saving the Union, Ending Slavery

In 1863, after the **Emancipation Proclamation**, Blacks and whites grew increasingly eager to fight to free enslaved persons. **Horace Artist**, **William Cleggett**, and **Joseph Elmore**, all of whom later moved to Appleton, all served in the **United States Colored Troops**. Saving the Union and ending slavery were key motivations for Northern soldiers to continue their enlistment in the Civil War.



Lawrence University was the site of some public debates about emancipation and post war freedoms for Blacks.

History Museum at the Castle



“FREE AIR OF LIBERTY”



Gertrude Louise Hollensworth

Gertrude Louise Hollensworth was born in Neenah in 1887 and worked as a teacher in Appleton.
First Congregational United Church of Christ

Who were some of the early Black families?

Cleggett-Hollensworth Family

The **Cleggett-Hollensworth** families were originally from Ohio and Pennsylvania. **William Cleggett**, his spouse **Rebecca Hollensworth Cleggett**, and their daughter Mary moved west to Stevens Point by 1857. A decade later, Sarah Cleggett moved to Appleton after her husband **Rev. William P. Newman** (a noted Black abolitionist) died. The rest of the family soon followed. At least three Cleggetts operated separate barbershops and salons.

At different times, 11 extended family members lived in Appleton. Mary Cleggett graduated from Lawrence in 1876 before moving to Arkansas to teach. Eventually, she relocated to Gay Head, Massachusetts, where she became the city's postmaster. William Cleggett served in the Civil War and later worked as a barber from his home on State Street.

Ada Cleggett lived the longest in Appleton, appearing in local records until 1920.



Mrs. J. M. Elmore.

Emma Elmore, whose parents came from Mississippi, helped create a sense of community among Blacks living in the Fox Cities by hosting social events.
Wisconsin Weekly Advocate, December 22, 1904

Why Move to Appleton?

Immediately after the Civil War, Blacks began moving to the Fox Cities in significant numbers. Emancipation and Reconstruction created hope for new possibilities. Many Blacks took advantage of opportunities in an attempt to create a new identity and sense of belonging.

In 1899, a Black resident named **Mary Cleggett** described Wisconsin as having the “free air of liberty.” Why did she describe the state as a place of freedom? Cleggett belonged to a group of Black citizens who referred to themselves as the “**Black Aristocracy**.” Each of these families included a Civil War veteran and small business owners with access to integrated secret societies, churches, public schools, and held positions of status.



Horace Artis posed in an official portrait for Appleton's George Eggleston Post of the Grand Army of the Republic.

Wisconsin Veterans Museum

Elmore Family

Joseph and Emma Elmore were considered the political and social leaders of Appleton's Black community. In 1865, Joseph ran away at the age of 15 from his home in St. Paul, Minnesota, to enlist in the Union Army in Milwaukee. He and Emma met after the war and moved to Appleton where they owned a home on College Avenue.

Emma hosted elaborate parties that included Black and white community leaders. Joseph operated a barbershop and was the local distributor for the *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, selling copies to Black and white businessmen and politicians. He remained a staunch Lincoln-Republican until his death in 1913.

Artis Family

Before Emancipation, the Artis family was enslaved near the crossroads of Chuckatuck, Virginia, just outside Norfolk. **Horace and Bercina Artis** were married while in bondage in 1860. During the summer of 1863, the Union Army helped freed enslaves residents around Norfolk. The Artis family hastily moved to Washington, D.C. Horace enlisted in the 31st USCT and saw significant combat before witnessing Robert E. Lee's surrender at **Appomattox Courthouse**.

In 1866, Horace and Bercina Artis moved their family to Outagamie County to work on farm near Shiocton. They relocated to Appleton by 1880 where they purchased a home. Their daughter Nettie attended public school in Appleton and Horace found work as a day laborer.

Fully documenting Appleton's Black population after the Civil War is a challenge due to limited census records. Census workers rarely recorded any working-poor Blacks who lived and worked in the city. Perspectives from their demographic are largely lost to history.

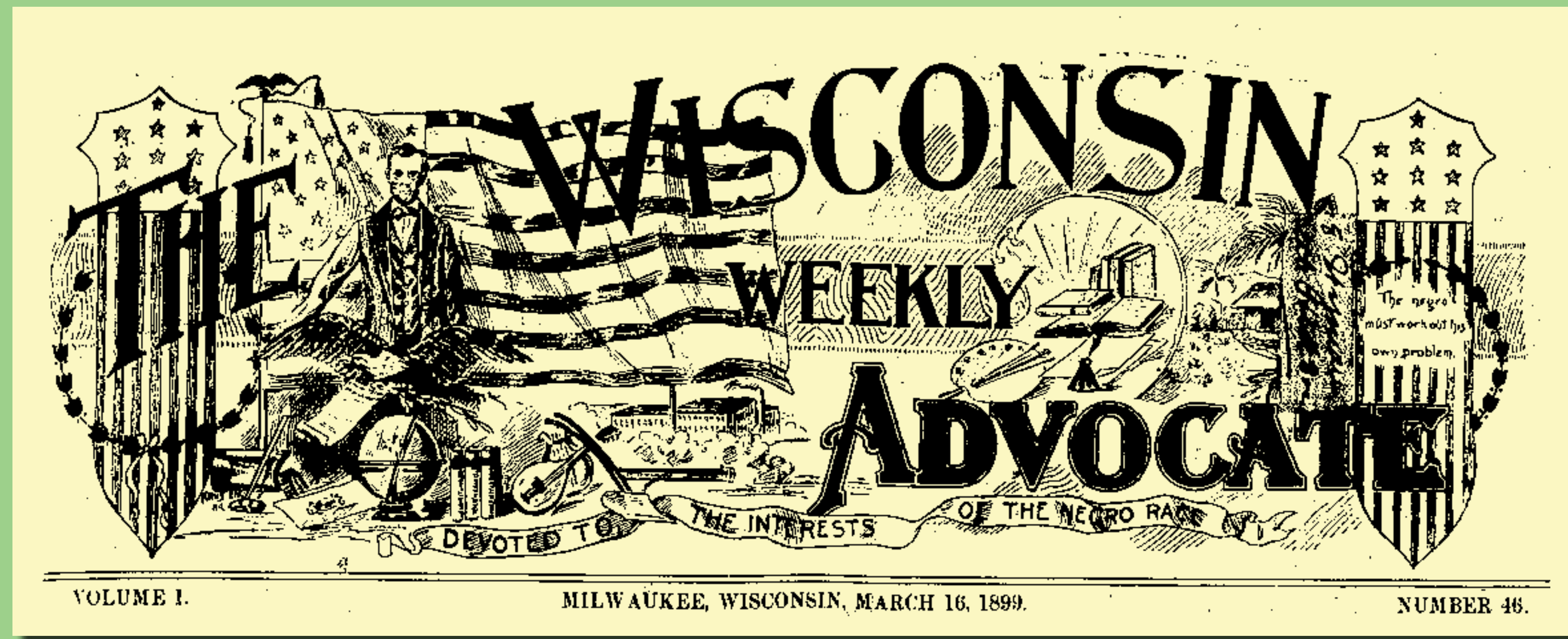
Education Provides Hope

Lawrence University first admitted a Black student, **Robert Pendleton**, in 1857. During the 1870s, **Mary Vanderhoop Cleggett** and **Lucretia Newman Coleman** both attended Lawrence. Newman Colman's father was abolitionist Rev. William P. Newman. Cleggett graduated the school in 1876 and is remembered as an historian of the Gay Head (Aquinnah) Americans Indians.



While enrolled in “Scientific Courses,” **Lucretia Newman Coleman** developed her writing skills and became a contributor to the Black press.

Lawrence University Archives



The *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, a Black-published paper in Milwaukee, covered society, politics, and business throughout the state, including Appleton.

Wisconsin Historical Society

Claude Paris, who grew up in New London, attended Lawrence to study ministry. Claude played on several athletic teams that were among the first interracial collegiate teams in Wisconsin.

Ariel, 1905

HOPEFUL FOR GOOD JOBS

What types of professions were available to Blacks in the Fox Cities?

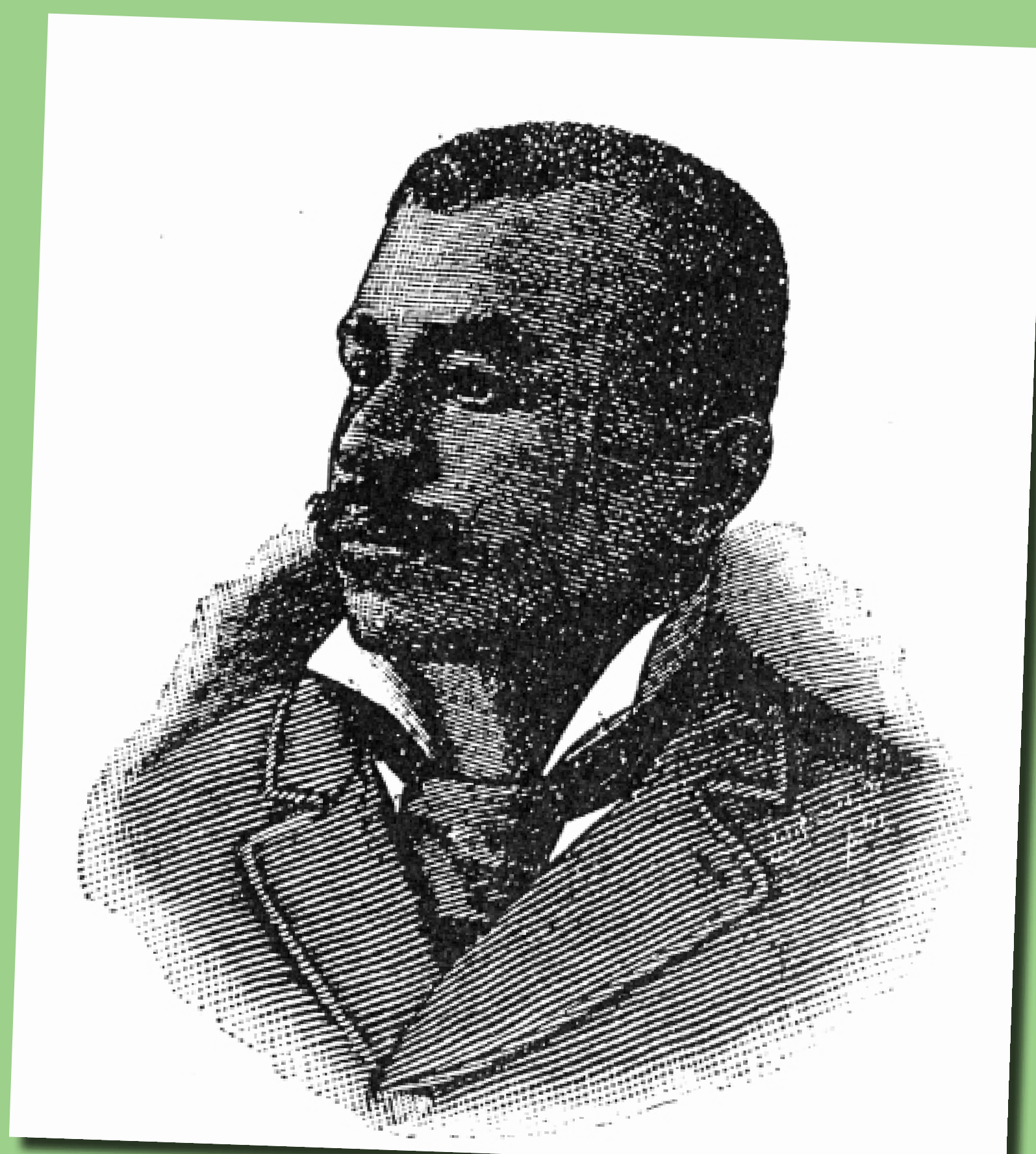
Social Work and Education

In the 1890s, **Emma Hollensworth** worked as the matron for the **Appleton Children's Home**. She provided medical attention, food, and shelter for destitute women and orphans. Hollensworth organized fundraisers and food drives to support the home's residents.

Emma's daughter **Gertrude** and sister **Ada** also worked as teachers in Appleton's schools. Little is known about their careers or positions held in the district.

Ephraim Williams became a show business legend as a pioneer for Black circus performers and managers.

Circus World Museum



Like her father, Emma became a hairdresser and managed a salon on College Avenue in the early 1900s.

Wisconsin Weekly Advocate, June 29, 1899



Destitute women and orphans found care and safety under the leadership of Emma Hollensworth at the Appleton Children's Home.

History Museum at the Castle

Saloonkeepers and Performers

Today, **Ephraim Williams** is heralded by Black circus performers as the "**Black P.T. Barnum**" for his pioneering leadership in show business. His circus career began in 1885 after a stint as a saloonkeeper at the Briggs House Hotel in Appleton.

After joining several circuses, Williams started his own traveling show known as *Professor Ephraim Williams' Traveling Troubadours*. His stage act included "communicating" with horses, but his primary position was managing all aspects of the circus. Late in his career, Williams led a famous circus show called *Silas Green from New Orleans*.

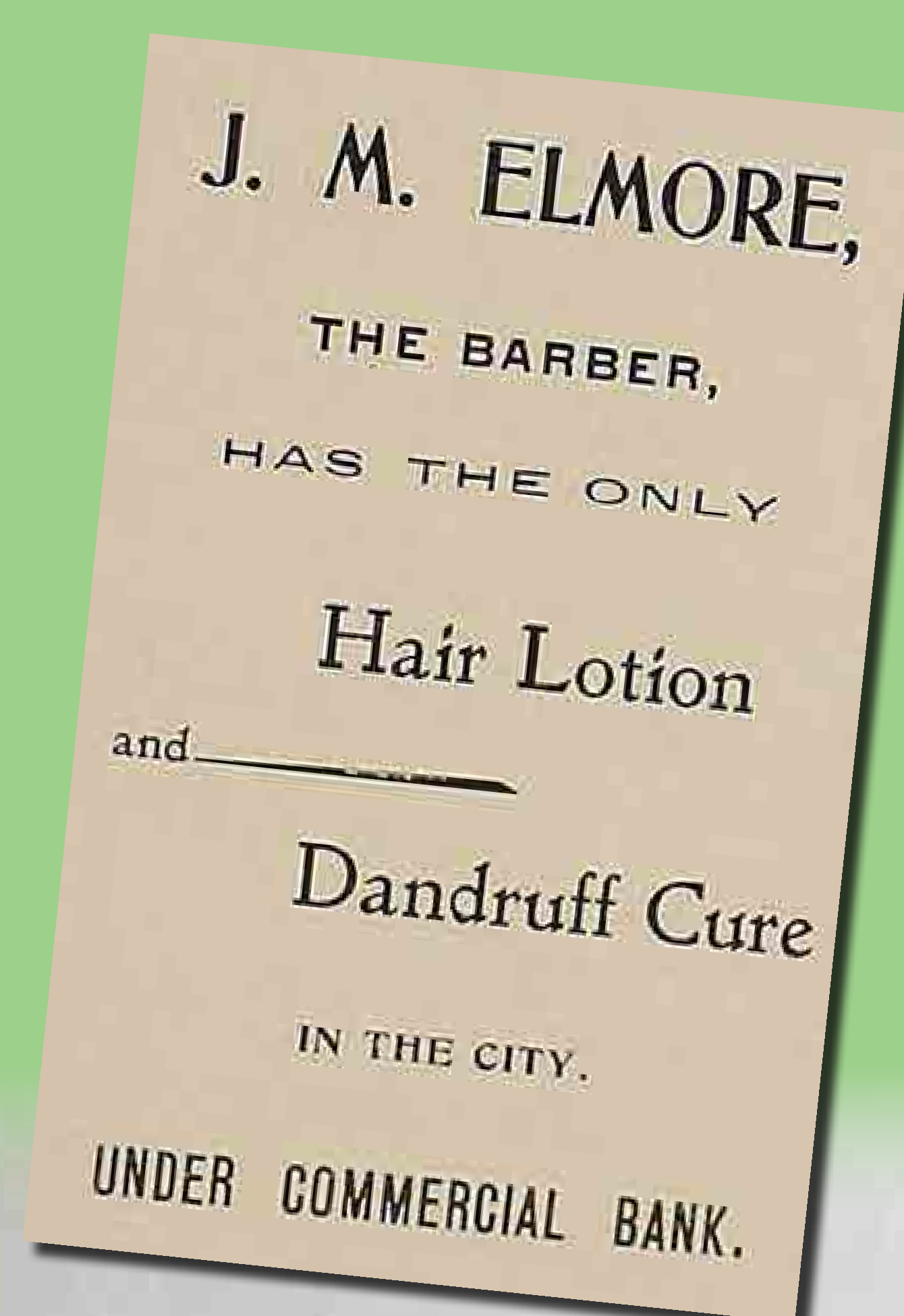


The *Ephraim Williams and Company Railroad Show* traveled the United States and returned to Wisconsin many times.

Circus World Museum

Joseph Elmore was the leading barber in Appleton.

Wisconsin Veterans Museum



Barbers and Hairstylists

Black barbers resisted racism by demonstrating their professional skills and serving an upscale market, often for a white clientele. For many Blacks, hairstyling and shaving were some of the only opportunities to enter the middle class. Members of the Artis, Elmore, and Cleggett-Hollensworth families were employed as barbers or hairdressers.

Joseph Elmore owned the leading barbershop. His shop's prime location next to the former library and city hall grew his patronage among white public officials. Because of his skill and business savvy, Elmore became known as the "Dean of Barbers."

Elmore's barbershop was located beneath the Commercial Bank Building (circled in yellow).

History Museum at the Castle



A MOUNTAIN OF DESPAIR

APPLETON LOSES ONLY NEGRO
(By Associated Press)
Appleton, Wis., May 22.—William S. Cleggett, the only negro in Appleton, died last night. He was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic.

Upon William Cleggett's death in 1916, it was reported that there were no longer any Black people living in Appleton.
Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, May 22, 1916

What happened to Appleton's Black community?

The late 19th century had offered examples of hope for the community, but by the end of World War I, new challenges had re-emerged. Despite some instances of individual opportunity and limited freedoms, there was renewed racism in the Fox Cities. By 1920, Black residents in Appleton experienced racial antagonism and violence perpetrated by whites.

The growing discrimination forced many area Blacks to lose hope and leave for larger Black communities in urban areas.

Historians describe the years from 1877 to the early 1900s as the **Nadir of Race Relations**, meaning the worst period for racism in the United States.

Why did Blacks leave Appleton?

Harassment by Police Officers

Appleton police used an **anti-vagrancy** ordinance to discourage the "foreign element" from settling in the city. In an all-white police department, officers individually applied this law to harass Blacks, Eastern and Southern Europeans, and Oneida from the adjacent reservation.

Nearly every family of the "Black Aristocracy" was targeted at least once. In 1885, Horace Artis, who indisputably owned property in the city, was arrested as a vagrant and spent Christmas in jail.

The *Appleton Evening Crescent* described how many Black newcomers were unfairly targeted. Police officers met incoming trains at the railroad junction and placed suspected vagrants in a wagon for transport to jail. **P.H. Smith**, a Black man who came to Appleton looking for work, described the process, stating that young children yelled racial epithets at the men as they rode to jail.

APPLETON NO CITY FOR "CULLUD FOLKS"

SMITH, COLORED, SAYS HE WAS TAKEN BY MISTAKE—CAME EARLY

A reporter interviewed P.H. Smith and two Irishmen who were unjustly arrested under Appleton's anti-vagrancy law.

Appleton Evening Crescent, May 17, 1915

Hotel Discrimination

In the early 1900s, a few hotels, including the **Northwest House**, advertised to and provided services for Blacks. However, by 1915, hotel owners began denying Blacks service at their establishments. The first known discriminatory occurrence involved the **Tuskegee Singers**, who were barred from staying the night after a performance at Lawrence.

The first report of hotels conspiring to deny Blacks service was reported in the *Appleton Evening Crescent* in 1915.

Appleton Evening Crescent, August 2, 1915

Popular Culture

Racist popular culture had the largest influence on discrimination in the Fox Cities. **Minstrel shows** were among the most popular forms of local entertainment. White performers painted their faces black and spoke in "plantation talk" that stereotyped Blacks. Minstrel performances justified racism and laid the foundation for future discrimination.

Almost every local organization held minstrel performances. Churches used minstrel shows to fundraise and fraternities held shows for recruitment, both reinforcing feelings of **white superiority**.

The Clansman, which was later adapted by D.W. Griffith into *The Birth of a Nation*, played to sellout audiences for several months in 1907.

Appleton Evening Crescent, March 21, 1907

Appleton Theatre
Tuesday, March 26.
"The Play that is Stirring The Nation"

GEORGE H. BRENNAN
PRESENTS

THE CLANSMAN
By
THOMAS DIXON, JR.
From His Two Famous Novels:
"The Leopard's Spots" and "The Clansman."

The Sensation of two seasons north and south.
The question on everybody's lips is, "Have you seen 'The Clansman'?"

Complete New York production, company of forty principals, army of supernumeraries, carloads of scenery, electrical effects, and a troop of cavalry horses.



Home Ownership

After the Civil War, some Blacks had access to home ownership throughout Appleton, but that changed by 1920. New subdivisions began excluding Blacks. However, deeds that denied Blacks property rights were not widespread and appeared mostly in new construction south of the river.

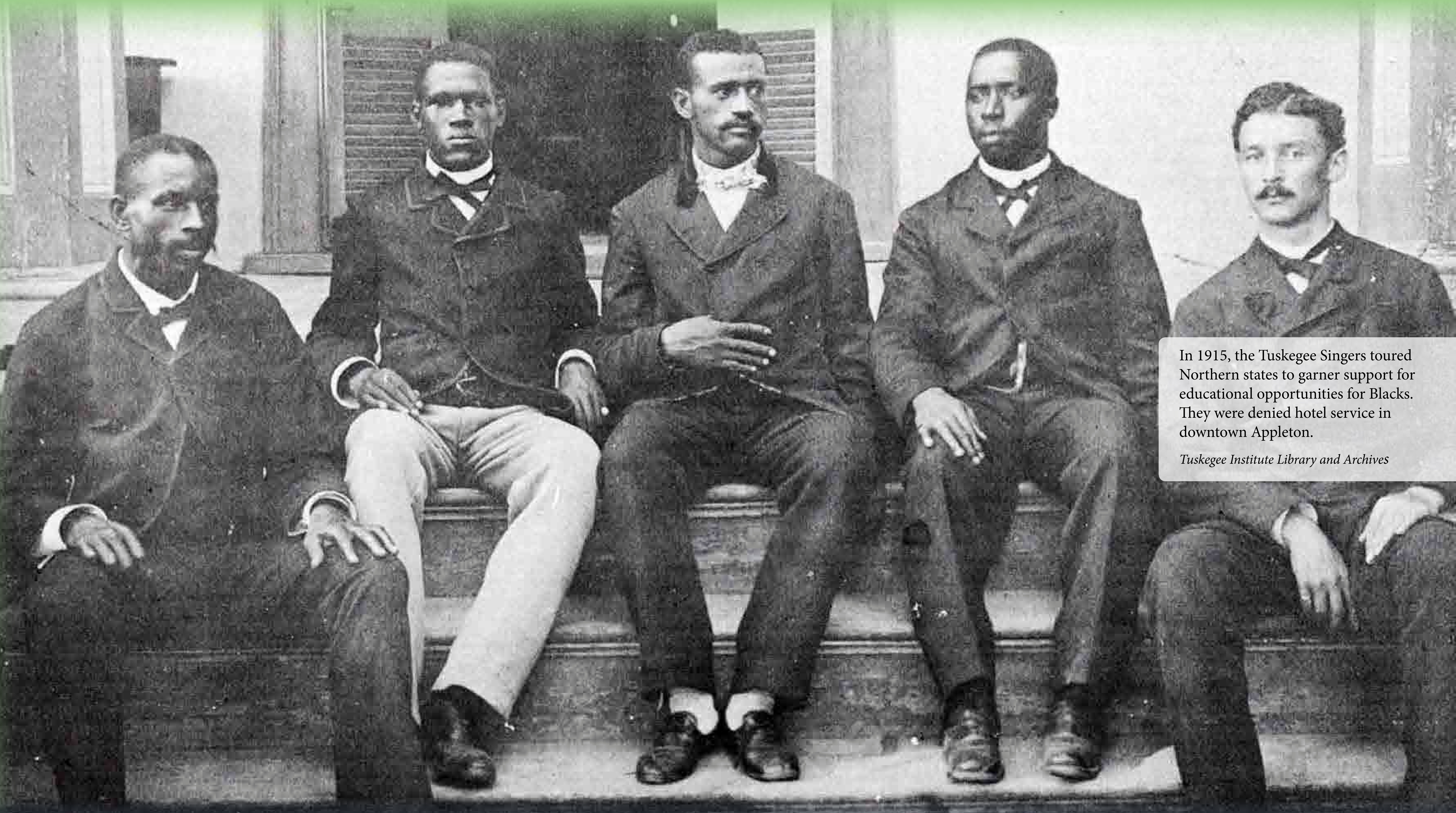
This deed is executed and delivered upon the following conditions and restrictions, binding upon the parties of the second part, to-wit:
(a) No residence shall be erected on the premises hereby conveyed which costs less than four thousand dollars (\$4000.00).
(b) No residence or other building shall be erected on the premises hereby conveyed nearer than forty feet (40') from the East line of said Memorial Drive.
(c) The premises hereby conveyed shall not be sold to Negroes.
(d) No building fully or partly constructed shall be moved from other premises to the premises hereby conveyed.
(e) No tavern or roadhouse shall be erected on the premises hereby conveyed.
(f) There shall not at any time be erected or placed on the premises hereby conveyed, any temporary building except sheds or work-shops used in connection with the building of permanent buildings in the course of construction.
(g) No natural drainage across the premises shall not be obstructed so as to cause damage to surrounding property.

In 1946, the Riverview Country Club reformatted their property deed and included a statement that excluded Blacks from owning the property.

History Museum at the Castle

Lawrence students wore blackface and performed a minstrel show as part of homecoming celebrations in the fall of 1953.

The Lawrentian, November 6, 1953



In 1915, the Tuskegee Singers toured Northern states to garner support for educational opportunities for Blacks. They were denied hotel service in downtown Appleton.

Tuskegee Institute Library and Archives

DARKEST BEFORE DAWN

LOCAL MAN AT LYNCHING SCENE

C. H. SHELDON IN CROWD AT HOT SPRINGS WHEN BLACK IS HUNG AND CREMATED

MURDERED A GIRL

Traced by Blood Hounds—Bullets Riddled His Body as He is Pulled Into Air—Hour Later Cut Down and Oil is Applied

Charles Sheldon described the lynching he witnessed to readers of the *Appleton Evening Crescent*.
Appleton Evening Crescent, June 23, 1913

Witnesses to Murder

Reports of Southern Black lynchings, burnings at the stake, and shootings were common stories in area newspapers. **Appleton editors inconsistently condemned the actions.**

At least two white Appleton residents witnessed vigilante mob killings of Blacks in the South. In 1905, Herman Kamps saw five Black men burned at the stake near Mobile, Alabama. In 1913, while visiting Hot Springs, Arkansas, Charles Sheldon witnessed the lynching of a Black man. In both instances, the men were taken from their jail cells after a mob formed outside and were dragged to a public space for the execution. All six men were never given due process of the law.

Violence against Blacks increased throughout the South, but exploded yet again in the North, as in Marion, Indiana, where two Black men were lynched in 1930.



A rally held in Oshkosh in 1925 demonstrates the size of Klan membership in the Fox Cities.
Oshkosh Public Museum

Klan members in the Fox Cities erected this enormous tabernacle south of Neenah for their primary meeting space.

Oshkosh Public Museum

Segregation Takes Hold Again

Blacks had largely left Appleton before the **Knights of the Ku Klux Klan** formed in the Fox Cities.

After the Civil War, white former Confederates organized the Klan as a secret, oath-bound organization to reinstate white supremacy. After federal indictments against the Klan, the organization began to fall apart, only to be reborn in the Midwest by 1915.

The Klan formed in the Fox Cities in 1923 with the help of fliers distributed to white Protestant men. Local Klansmen targeted Blacks as well as Catholic immigrants and other marginalized people. The Klan held large meetings near Strobe Island, organized chapters in New London and Waupaca, and tried to intimidate their targets by **burning three crosses along College Avenue.**

In 1925, the Ku Klux Klan recruited from the pulpit through religious services at the First Baptist Church, German Methodist Episcopal Church, and Emmanuel Evangelical Church.

Appleton Post-Crescent, January 31, 1925, February 21, 1925, March 7, 1925

Renewed harassment and segregation left many residents without hope. During this period, Black voices almost completely disappeared from local historical records. A few Blacks continued to live in the area. Starting in the 1920s, **Edward Buchanan** worked for thirty years as an executive at the John Strange Paper Company in Menasha.

According to the Federal Census, Appleton's Black population had abruptly declined to zero residents by 1930.

Courage in Migration

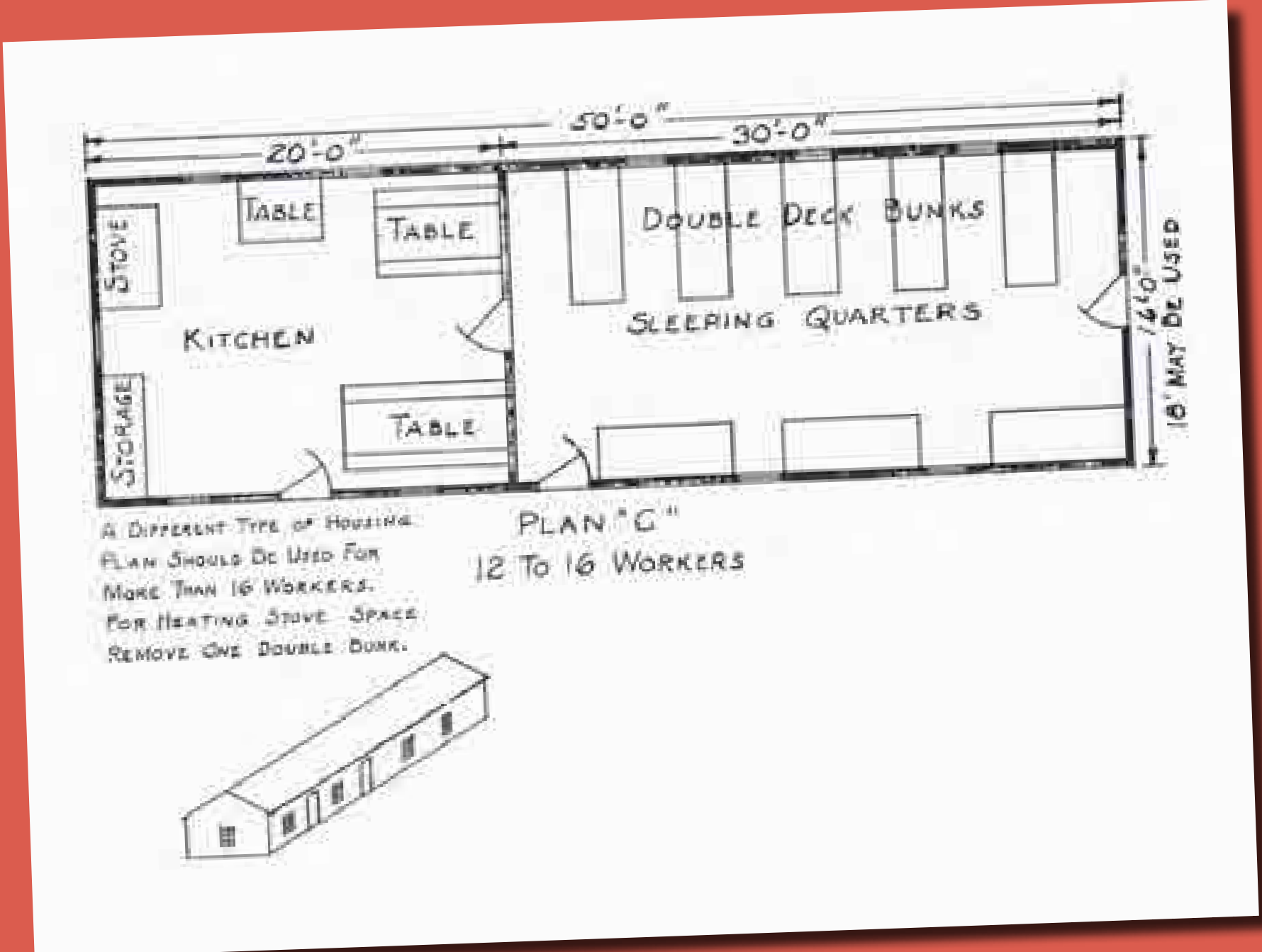
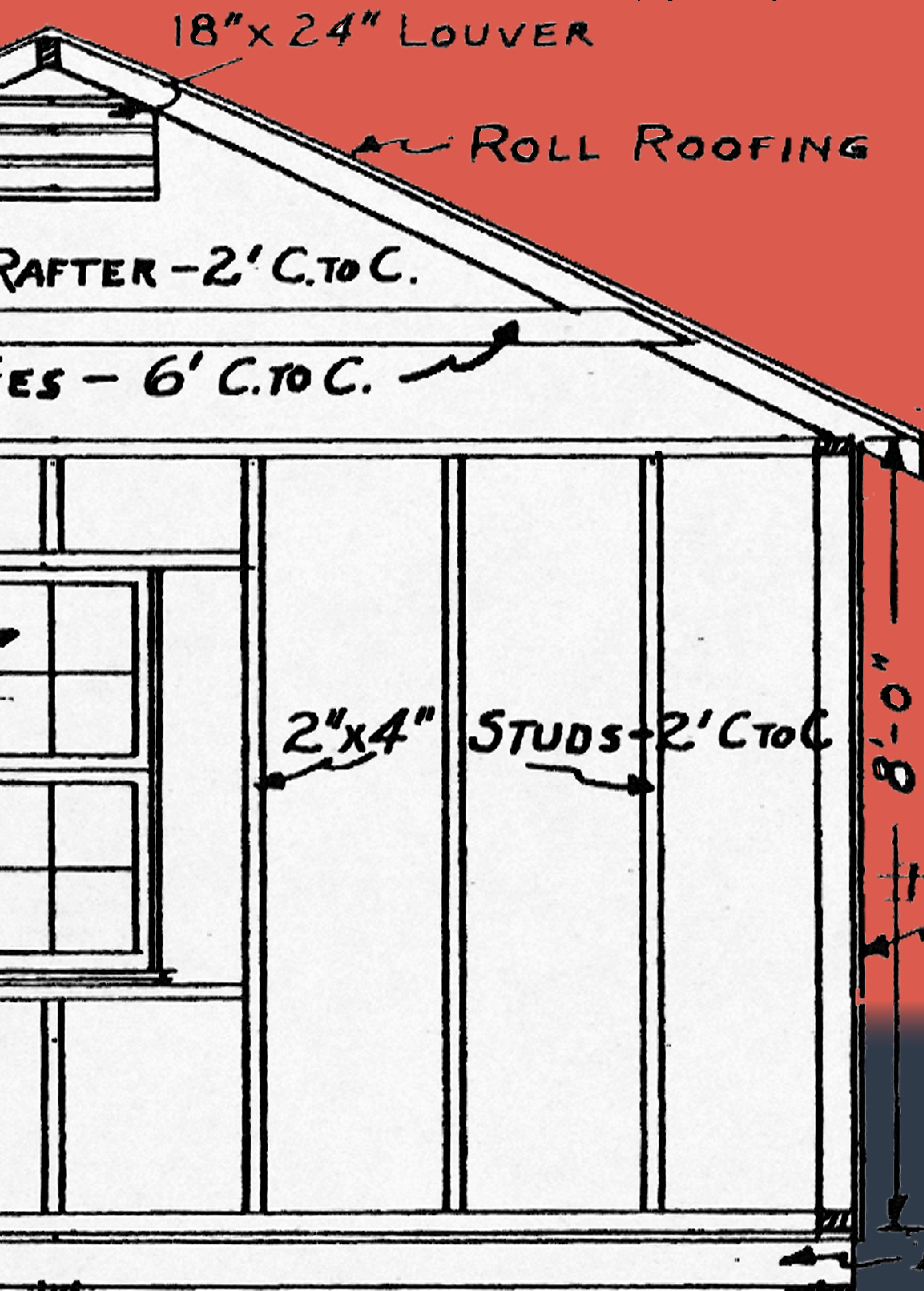
Some Black people were able to find temporary housing and employment in Appleton. Once they arrived in Wisconsin, the workers were often treated as second-class citizens.

White labor shortages during World War II required businesses to hire Black migrant workers from **Jamaica, the Bahamas, and the South.** The federal **Emergency Farm Labor Act of 1943** brought about 150 Black laborers to Appleton who helped harvest and pack at Fuhrmann's Canning Company.

Black migrant workers returned to Appleton throughout the 1950s. The Black press reported widespread racism throughout Wisconsin but noted that unemployed Blacks were willing to travel for the work. Many businesses in tourist regions posted **"whites only"** signs, a common practice in Door County.



A photograph published in the *Appleton Post-Crescent* documented Jamaican migrant workers arriving by bus in June 1946.
Appleton Post-Crescent, June 19, 1946



Migrant workers in Appleton lived in barracks built on the property of their employer.

Emergency Farm Labor Collection, UW-Madison Archives at Steenbock Library

“LILY WHITE APPLETON”



In 1935, **Percy Julian**, a noted Black chemist and Nobel Prize recipient, was offered a job at the Institute of Paper Chemistry in Appleton. Ultimately, Julian declined the offer based on the city's sundown custom.

Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest

What is a Sundown Town?

Sundown towns were communities that required Blacks to leave by sunset. Usually this form of racial exclusion was supported by an ordinance, but sundown also emerged as a custom reinforced by individuals who feared Blacks. Appleton did not have an official ordinance, but many people supported a **sundown custom** of harassing Black visitors or potential residents. The custom was irregularly applied.

Investigating Sundown

During this era, the sundown custom was so widespread and so accepted that **many white residents assumed Appleton had an ordinance.**

In 1947, the First Congregational Church planned a convention that would include Black members from Milwaukee. Congregationalists feared the city's sundown ordinance would prohibit their attendance. They requested a city investigation to research the ordinances and found no evidence of a formal law.

Perhaps the most thorough study of racial exclusion was completed in 1948 by **Rosalie Keller**, a white student at Lawrence. She called local businesses to learn their views on discrimination. Many managers assumed she was Black. Keller reported that the **Conway Hotel** manager became belligerent when asked about Black patrons and reinforced their policy of exclusion. All other rooming houses and hotels shared similar views. Most restaurants said they would only serve “respectable looking” Blacks, while the La Villa Restaurant only allowed Black musicians.

Civil Rights activist Jim Zwerg described his hometown as “lily white Appleton.” He recalled no persons of color living in the city during his childhood. The lack of racial diversity was not a coincidence. Many whites saw Blacks as an inherent problem. Leaders warned about the “**Negro Problem**” and encouraged whites to keep Blacks out of Appleton.

*Many longstanding residents remember Appleton as a **sundown town**.*



At Jake Skalls Colonial Wonderbar, Rosalie Keller learned that Blacks could get service, but they had to order outdoors from the kitchen's back door. Only Black businessmen could eat indoors, but they had to stay in the kitchen.

History Museum at the Castle

Job Discrimination

Factory owners also cited the city's sundown custom as an excuse not to hire Blacks. In 1952, the **Wisconsin Equal Rights Division** investigated discrimination in local businesses. Victor Bloomer, who was president of Appleton Machine Company, refused to hire Blacks because of an “unwritten law which evidently keeps negroes [sic] out of Appleton even for an overnight stay.” Other factory owners reported that Blacks had applied for jobs but were refused based on stereotypes that they were unintelligent or were untrustworthy vagrants.

Referred to the "unwritten law which evidently keeps negroes out of Appleton even for an overnight stay - "I don't know why, but the negroes themselves don't stay" -

Victor Bloomer, president of Appleton Machine Company, cited Appleton's sundown custom as his reason to not hire Black employees.

Wisconsin Historical Society



The Conway Hotel (above, below) had the most exclusive accommodations in Appleton, but unevenly refused to serve Blacks until the 1960s.

History Museum at the Castle



GLIMMERS OF HOPE

Speakers and Performers

Black speakers and entertainers helped fight stereotypes held by many whites who assumed Blacks were uneducated and unable to support themselves. Many major Black celebrities and leaders visited Appleton during the 1890s to 1960s. For example, **Booker T. Washington** spoke at the Methodist Church about Black education and **Jesse Jackson** addressed Lawrence students about campus inequality.

Although Black celebrities had greater support when visiting Appleton, they still experienced racism. In 1941, Lawrence urged the **Conway Hotel** to provide **Marian Anderson** with accommodations despite the hotel's practice of denying Black patrons. To keep her stay a secret, the hotel refused to serve her in public and required her to eat privately in her room. By the 1960s, hotels had loosened their policies and musicians like **Ella Fitzgerald** and **Louis Armstrong** had reservations downtown.

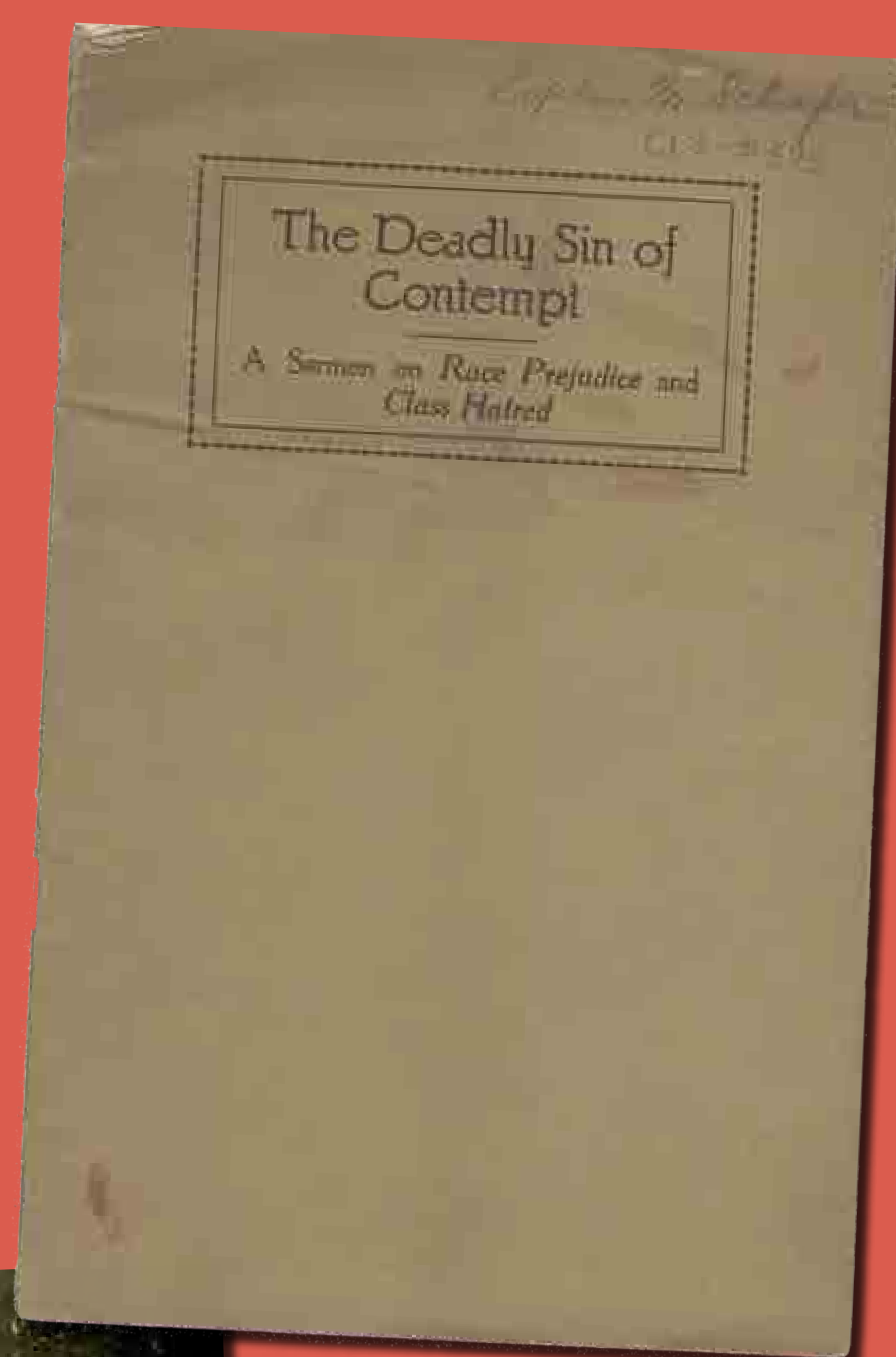


In 1961, a photographer from the *Appleton Post-Crescent* documented Ella Fitzgerald's breakfast at the Conway Hotel in order to show the hotel's relaxed racial policies.

History Museum at the Castle

Marian Anderson sang at Lawrence University's chapel in 1941. She spent the night at the Conway Hotel but was not allowed to eat in the hotel restaurant.

Lawrence University Archives



Rev. George Peabody's sermon about violence toward Blacks during the "Red Summer" was circulated through Appleton in 1919.

First Congregational United Church of Christ

There were people who refused to accept the area's support of segregation.

Discrimination primarily targeted the working-poor, students, and tourists who had no access to legal protection. Black celebrities who visited Appleton had supporters from Lawrence and area churches who helped find accommodations. Everyday activists kept hope for equality alive during the most difficult times.

First Congregational Church

Among the most consistent white advocates against racism was the **First Congregational Church**. Horace and Bercina Artis were active members, along with their daughter Nellie. During the peak years of racial discrimination in Appleton, Reverends Harry Peabody and Dascomb Forbush frequently gave sermons about racism and inequality in the United States.

Church leaders continued to provide a voice of reason as the city grappled with discrimination.

The "Red Brick Church" was home to the First Congregational Church and the site of conversations about racial inequality in Appleton.

History Museum at the Castle



Hope through Reconciliation

By 1949, some white residents acknowledged racism in the community and moved toward reconciliation through a unified association of area churches. A coalition of religious leaders, organized by Dr. Nathan Pusey and Samuel Sigman, formed the **Interfaith Committee on Tolerance and Understanding**. The committee held public lectures and wrote frequent editorials about how the Fox Cities could become a more tolerant community through diversity.

Members of the **Fisk University Chorus** sang at the First Congregational Church and spoke about their career aspirations.

First Congregational United Church of Christ



TEN DAYS IN MAY 1961

People's Forum
**Appleton, Alabama Viewpoints
On Discrimination in North, South**

People's Forum
**Montgomery Writer Criticizes
Outsider Interference in South**

People's Forum
**Lawrence Students Point
Finger at Bigoted Appleton**

The violence that occurred in May 1961 revitalized important conversations about racism in the community.

Appleton Post-Crescent

An Appleton Freedom Rider

A **Freedom Rider** from Appleton was beaten in Montgomery, Alabama, on May 20, 1961. **Jim Zwerg** graduated from Appleton West High School before attending Beloit College. While studying in an exchange program in Nashville, Tennessee, Zwerg joined the Freedom Rider movement when he was 21 years old.

On a protest trip through the south, the bus was stopped in Montgomery, Alabama, where he and fellow riders were violently beaten by a white mob. Circulated images and descriptions of Zwerg's bloodied body forced local whites to talk about inequality. Suddenly, the Civil Rights Movement was not isolated to the South. Debates on segregation began to appear in the *Appleton Post-Crescent's* editorial section.



This Associated Press image of Zwerg's bloodied body brought attention to racial violence in the South.

Corbis Images

Violence on College Avenue

Following Zwerg's beating, tensions were high in Appleton.

The **Des Moines Demons** visited Appleton for a weeklong baseball series against the Appleton Papermakers. Both teams were interracial. Their hard-fought games garnered local attention, but off the field, events would make national headlines.

After the series, on May 30, seven Black ballplayers from the Demons and Papermakers sought respite on College Avenue. Entering **Carl's Tap**, the men were confronted by Carl Ziesmer after they sat at the bar. Carl rushed the men with a leather club and demanded they leave the tavern because they were Black.

**7 Ballplayers Meet
Jim Crow In Wis.**
APPLETON, Wis. — (UPI) — Seven Negro players from the Des Moines and Fox cities teams in the Three-I Baseball League were threatened with a blackjack and ejected from a tavern because of their color, this week.

(Left, right) The incident at Carl's Tap reflected a national wave of violence against Blacks in the spring of 1961.

Chicago Defender, June 9, 1961

Carl claimed he feared the men were Freedom Riders or Jamaican migrant workers, who he believed were "going to ruin [his] business."

Using the state's **anti-discrimination** law, Wisconsin brought charges against Ziesmer. The Des Moines ballplayers, fearing for their lives, declined to return to Appleton to testify, and consequently, Ziesmer avoided any punishment for his actions. Despite the violence and outcome of the event, Appleton began to debate discrimination and how to move the city forward.

Ziesmer put this passively racist sign in his window that accused Blacks of being violent and drunk.

Appleton Post-Crescent, June 14, 1961



BREAKING THE MOUNTAIN OF DESPAIR



George Wallace landed in Outagamie County to launch his presidential campaign in 1964.
History Museum at the Castle

Wallace Labels Civil Rights Bill 'Involuntary Servitude'

Debating Civil Rights in Appleton

Many local whites still supported segregation nationally and within the Fox Cities. On March 17, 1964, Alabama **Governor George Wallace**, a staunch segregationist, arrived in Appleton to launch his presidential campaign. Invited by the Appleton Rotary Club, Wallace spoke at the Conway Hotel and condemned the proposed Civil Rights bill as “the Involuntary Servitude Act of 1963.”

In response to Wallace’s visit and to support the bill, the Student Executive Committee (SEC) at Lawrence hosted a **Civil Rights Week** on campus in April. Several Black leaders spoke at the program, including NAACP leaders **Charles Evers** and **Sydney Finley**.

Wallace returned to the Fox Cities on two occasions. In 1972, he spoke by invitation at the Lawrence University chapel. Black students attended the program and walked out of the lecture to demonstrate their opposition.

'Federal Employment Service'

King Foresees Areas Like Valley as Havens for Negro

Increased involvement by activists helped draw attention to discrimination and violence toward Blacks. Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson pushed forward the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**, which “prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.” Before the bill’s passage, Appleton residents debated the merits of the Civil Rights Act and invited national leaders to speak in favor of or against the legislation.

A Haven for Black Families

In 1966, **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** announced plans to expand the Civil Rights Movement to challenge racism in northern cities. Dr. King criticized Northern housing discrimination and widespread racist employment practices. He launched a lecture series in the summer of 1967 to reach all-white northern communities, including Wausau and UW-Fox Valley.

Dr. King said the Fox Cities could become a haven for Black families, but only if the community worked toward inclusion. He encouraged whites to provide opportunity for housing and jobs. He also challenged whites to judge Blacks by their souls and minds, not by their color.

Citing his strong faith, Dr. King believed that the Fox Cities could emerge from a “mountain of hate” as “a stone of hope.”

Racial Injustice Negro Burden:



King spoke before a sold-out auditorium on the campus of UW-Fox Valley. His message of tolerance and diversity reinforced new anti-discrimination efforts in the community.

UW-Fox Valley Campus Library



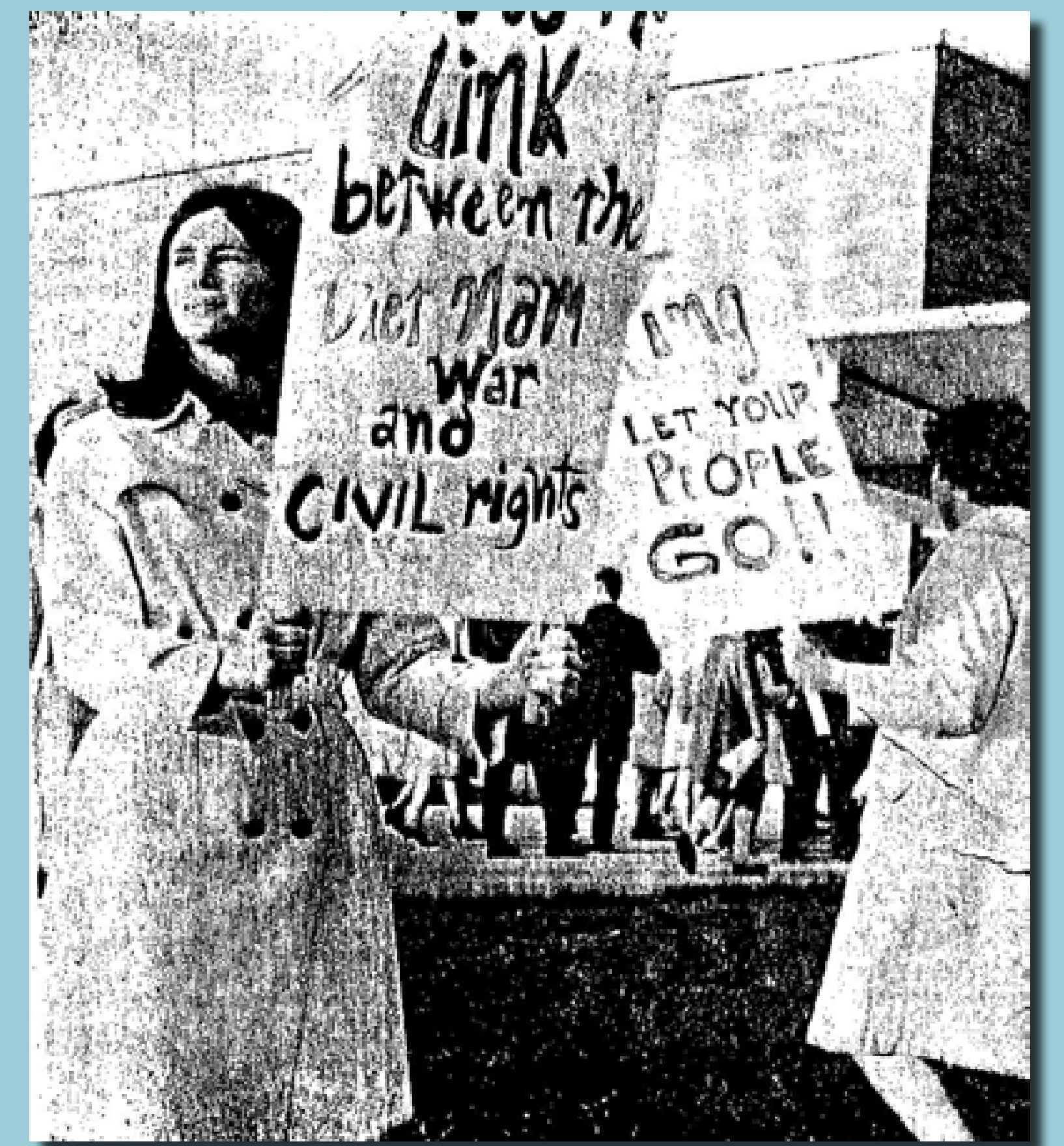
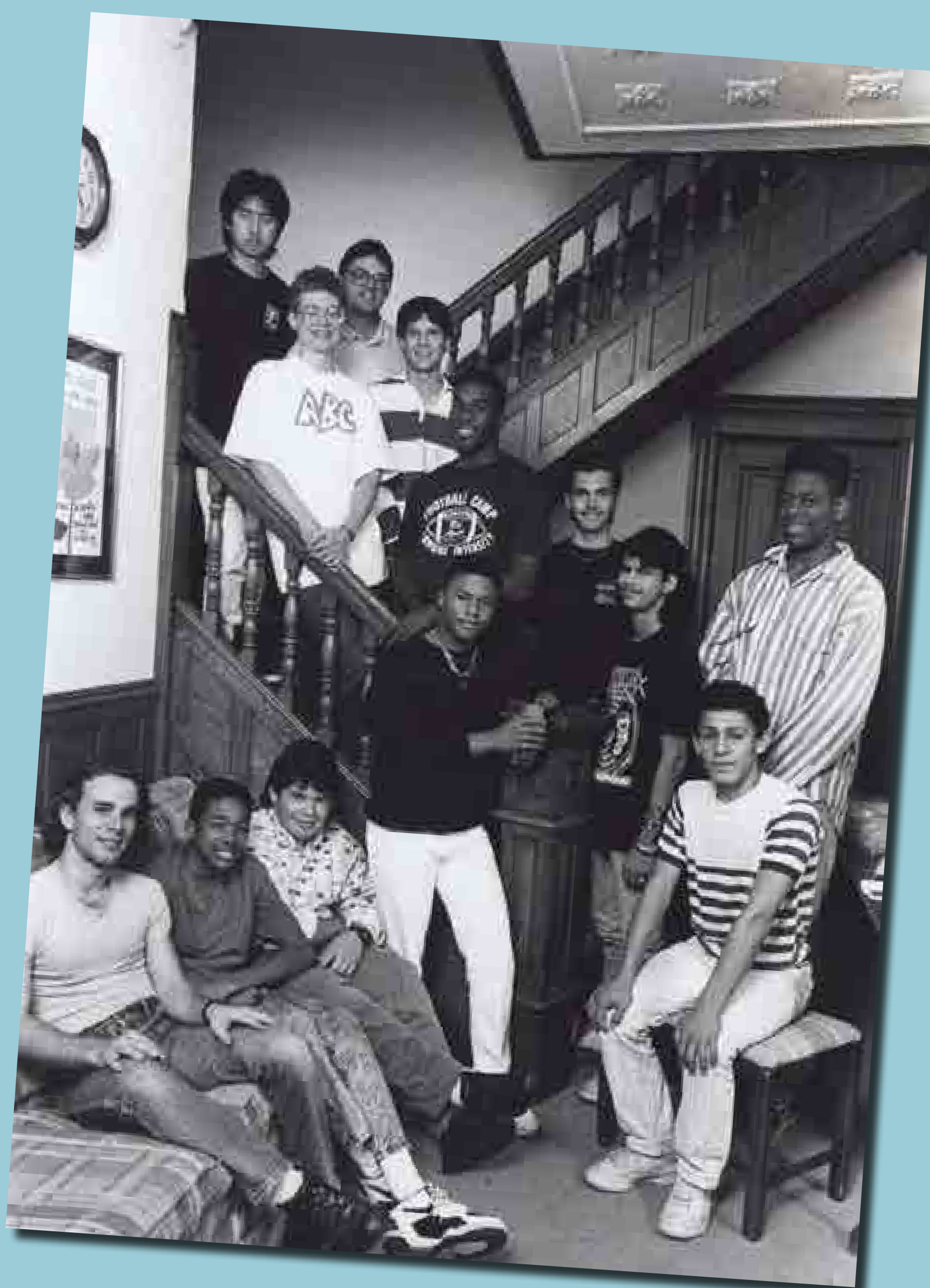
Many ABC students, shown here in the 1980s, stayed with host families, but they also had a residency on the Lawrence campus. Some of Appleton’s notable alumni include soccer player Hayden Knight, booking agent Tony Dorsey, and Armenrah the Mime.

A Better Chance

A Better Chance: Access for Some

With King’s visit, voices against racism grew louder and some organizations in Appleton launched anti-discrimination efforts. The **A Better Chance** program, started in 1964, provided college preparatory education for disadvantaged high school students of color throughout the United States. The program came to Appleton in 1968 and was the first ABC chapter in Wisconsin.

Many students of color continued to face racism and were further discouraged by the city’s lack of Black-owned businesses and cultural institutions.



Outside the auditorium, people gathered to protest King’s stance against the Vietnam War. About 70 police officers were in attendance for King’s safety.

UW-Fox Valley Campus Library

Open Housing Act

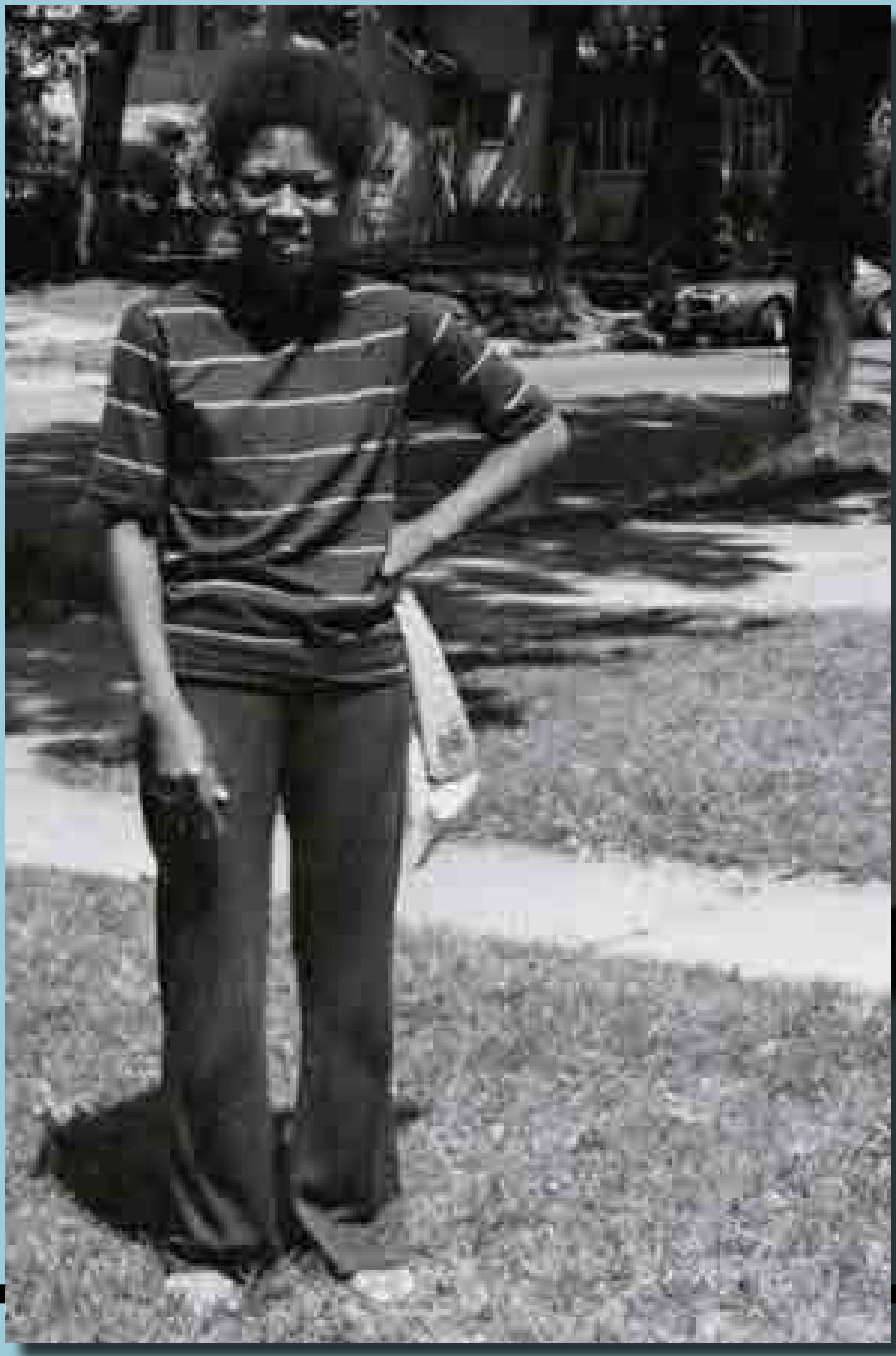
The passage of the **National Fair Housing Act of 1968** influenced the enactment of the **Appleton Fair Housing Ordinance** that same year. The legislation provided equal housing opportunities regardless of race, creed, or national origin. In Appleton, the ordinance was pushed through the city council by Mayor George Buckley with a vote of 16 to 1. The ordinance was modeled after the federal housing law, with the exception that all complaints would be investigated by the city attorney.

These students appeared in a brochure published by the African American Association at Lawrence to attract Black students to the campus in 1970.

Lawrence University Archives



“WE’LL NOT BE IGNORED”



Dorothy Moorer (left) and **Paula Saddler** (right) both signed the “Now or Never” list to address their dissatisfaction with social and educational opportunities for Black students.

Ariel, 1970, 1972

“Now or Never”

A new era of activism at Lawrence began with the formation of the **Association of African Americans** (A.A.A.) in May 1968. On February 24, 1969, the A.A.A. presented a list of 10 demands, known as the “**Now or Never**” list, to President Curtis Tarr. Thirteen out of the school’s 20 Black students signed the list of demands.

The students demanded an increase in the number of Black students on campus, Black representation on the school’s Community Council and in the Office of Admissions, the hiring of a Black dean, and the formation of a Committee on Black Student Affairs.

Due to a lack of campus-wide support and President Tarr’s decision to interpret the list as a series of suggestions, Lawrence changed very little, if at all.

According to the *Lawrence Alumnus* and *Post-Crescent*, the school had about 1,300 students at the time, meaning that Black students represented less than 1.5% of the student body.

The “Now or Never” list demanded changes that are now a part of many campuses and important contributions to the quality of student life.

Lawrence University Archives



Black and white students picketed outside the Administration building to garner public support for racial equality on campus.

Ariel, 1972

The late 1950s to 1960s saw an increase of student-led protests at many college campuses. From the **Little Rock Nine** in Arkansas, to the sit-ins by Black students in Greensboro, North Carolina, all of these influenced local activism in Appleton.

Topics of discord focused on the Vietnam War but expanded into drug policy, free speech, environmental protection, and equality for members of various marginalized groups, including women, members of the LGBTQ community, and Blacks.

The **Black Power** movement inspired many students to become activists. In Wisconsin, protests regarding the unfair treatment of Black students were held on the campuses of Beloit College and UW-Oshkosh, among other Wisconsin schools. **Lawrence University was no exception.**

Occupation of the Administration Building

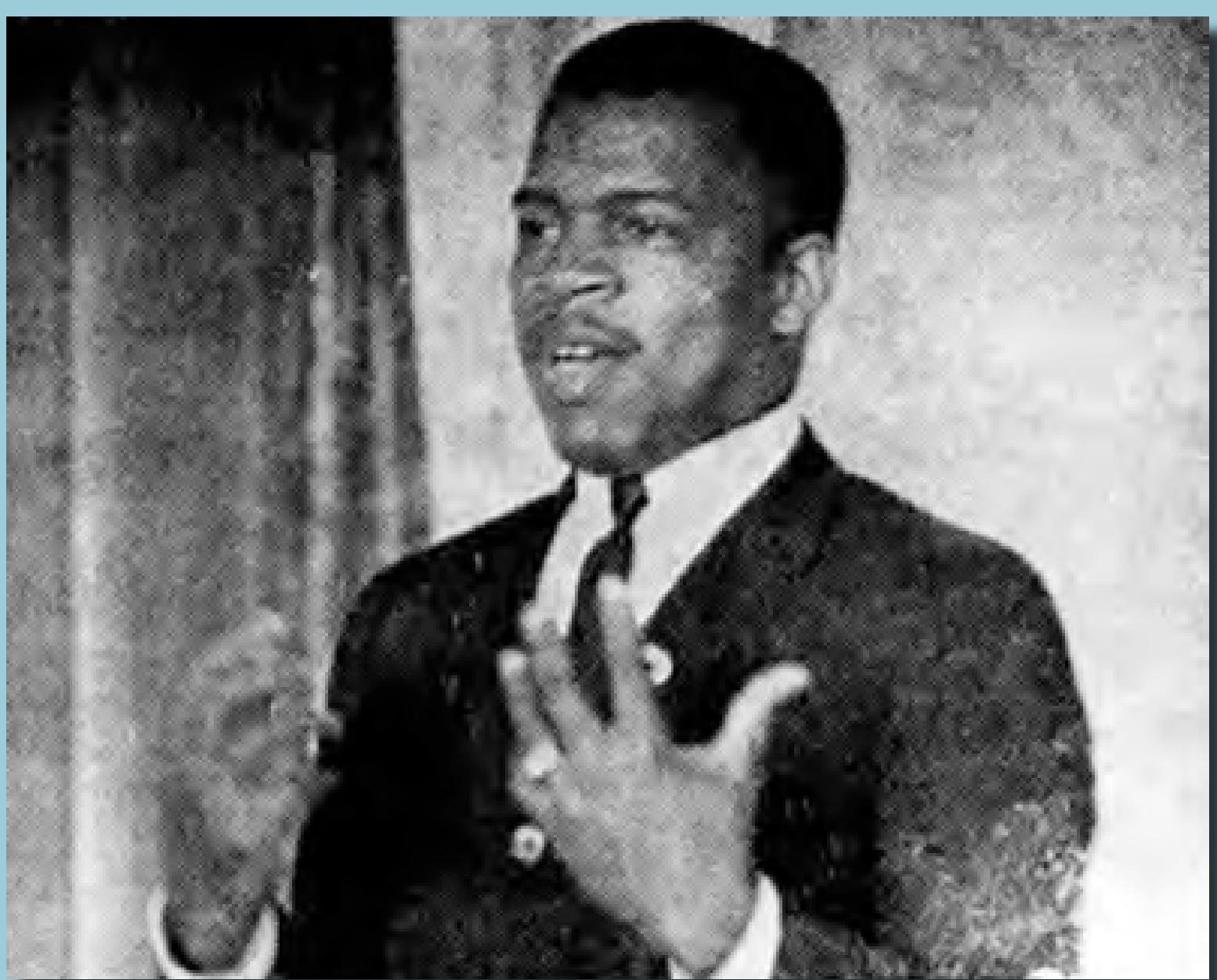
Lawrence students made another attempt to improve Black student life on campus during the early morning of April 17, 1972. Five members of the A.A.A. barricaded themselves in the Administration building. Two young women awakened President Thomas Smith and a student-led march in front of the Administration building gained momentum.

That afternoon, President Smith held a meeting that was open to the entire student body. **Gilbert Bond**, spokesman for the A.A.A., began the meeting by presenting their list of demands. Smith refused to sign the document. In the coming weeks, Smith faced additional protest from faculty who cited “**reverse discrimination**” in his promise to fill open faculty positions with Black instructors.

President Smith was able to implement a transitional program for incoming Black students in the summer of 1972. In *The Lawrentian*, Bond emphasized that the small number of black students on campus would not be able to dismantle the racism that existed at Lawrence. Change would only occur with cooperation and an understanding of the needs of Black students.

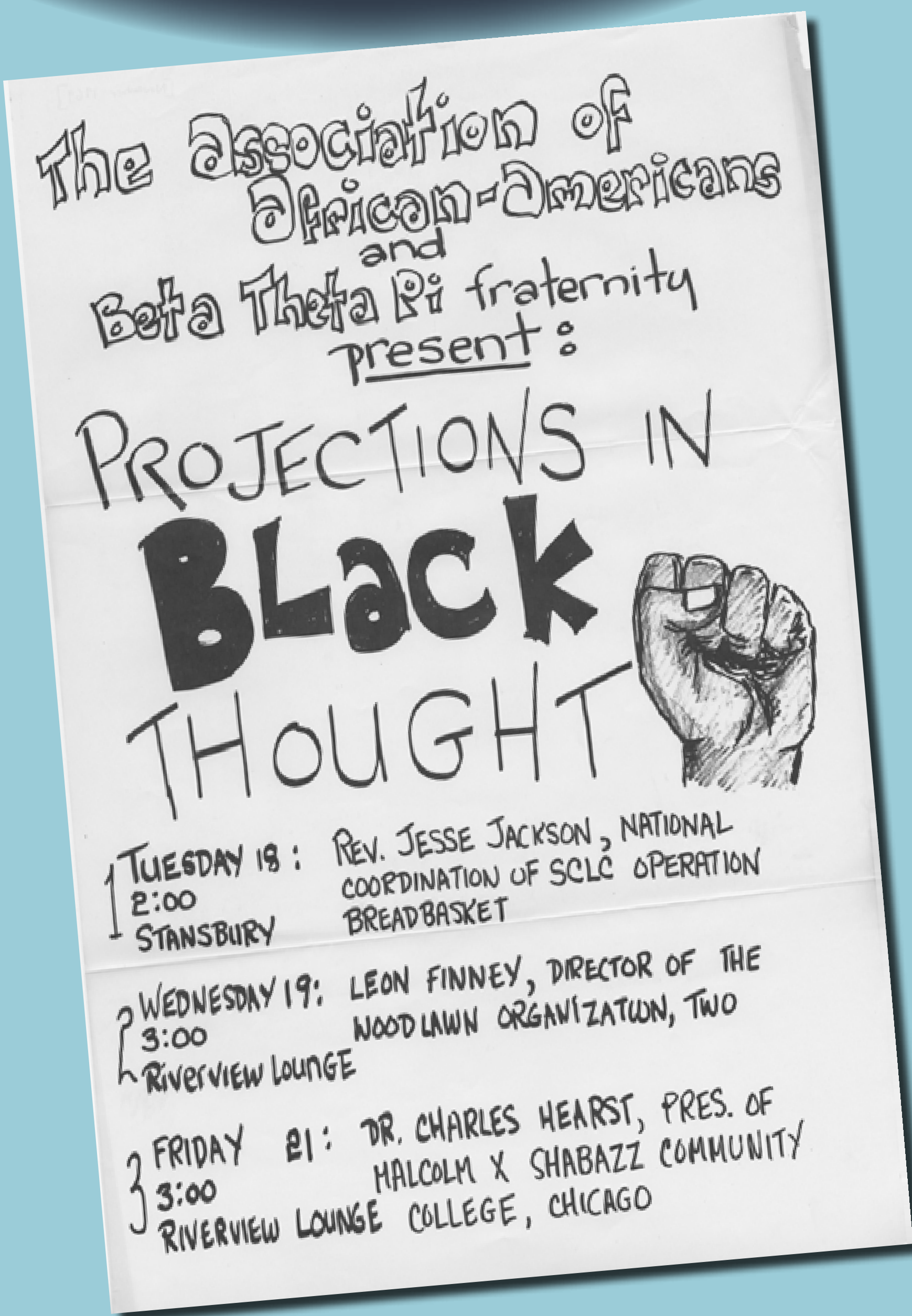
Black Civil Rights leaders including **Leon Finney** and **Jesse Jackson**, visited Lawrence to encourage students to fight inequality on campus.

Lawrence University Archives



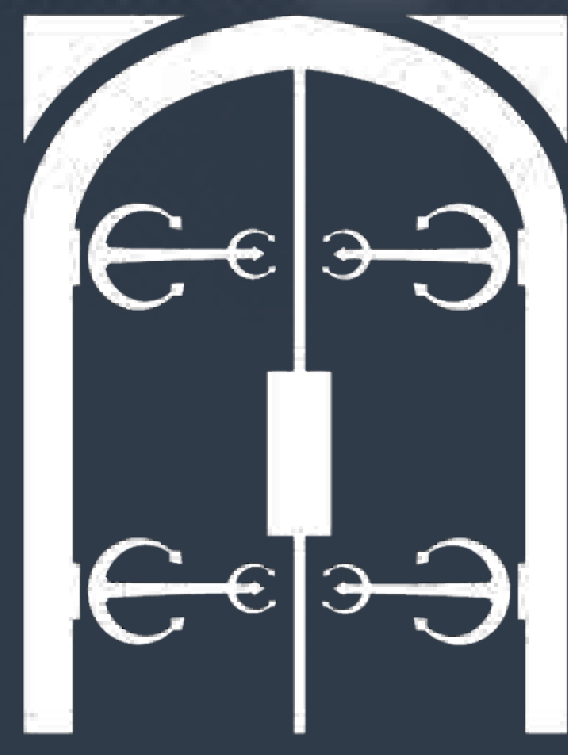
John Lewis, head of the **Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee**, visited Lawrence to encourage students to become active in the Civil Rights Movement.

The Lawrentian, April 24, 1964



Gilbert Bond addressed supporters outside the Lawrence Administration building in 1972.

Ariel, 1972



**HISTORY
MUSEUM**
AT THE CASTLE

WIDENING THE PATH OF HOPE



Henry and Bobbie Tolliver were among the first Black families to relocate to Appleton in the 1970s.

Bobbie Tolliver



In 2002, **Tony Awofeso** was elected to represent District 15 of the Outagamie Board. Awofeso was elected to multiple terms in office. In 2006, **Graeme Rattray** became the first Black elected as alderperson in Appleton.

African Heritage, Inc.

Advocating for Change

Further inspiring growth through inclusion were new cultural and anti-discrimination organizations. In 1993, a diverse coalition of activists formed **Toward Community**, an organization to “promote acceptance” and “fight racism.” Their educational efforts included a pledge drive to make Appleton an anti-discrimination zone. Exclusion still lingered as only 80 businesses signed the pledge (about 54% contacted) and 12 outright refused to commit to non-discriminatory service.

In 1998, Black scientists, professors, business leaders, and community advocates formed **African Heritage, Inc.** The organization encourages educational and cultural exchanges, foster relationships with governmental agencies, and promote cultural harmony in the Fox Cities. Their efforts brought the first ever community-wide Black History Month events that spotlight the history, contributions and experiences of Blacks.

Organizations currently working to encourage diversity and equality at Lawrence include **All is One! Empowering Young Women of Color** and the **Black Student Union**.



White supremacists posted this brochure along College Avenue in 1994. The brochures were also found in Holocaust and diversity books in area libraries.

Toward Community

Even with recent problems of racism, hope is still alive. From 1980 to 2010, Appleton's Black population has grown from 31 to 1,179 people.

Hope for a Better Future

Despite progress toward equality, many challenges still linger for Blacks in the Fox Cities. Blacks continue to face racism in the areas of employment, housing, and education. There is still a need for Black employees and elected officials in local government. Achievement gaps in public schools threaten long-term access to higher paying jobs.

Wisconsin's **incarceration rate** for Blacks is double the national average. About 13% of Wisconsin's Black men of working age are incarcerated. **Appleton's Police Department** is working toward fairness. In 1996, the Police and **Appleton Area School District** created staff positions to promote diversity, inclusion, and to serve minority students, but there is a need for wider support.

City of Appleton officials once discouraged diversity. Today, they embrace and encourage diversity and inclusion. Appleton works to lead by example through dedicated staff time, education, policy work, fair housing, and ordinances.

What brought Blacks back to Appleton?

By the 1960s, Blacks slowly began relocating to the Fox Cities again. High school and college students were the first to relocate to Appleton. Individuals, including **Ira Hadnot**, recalled feeling isolated when whites stared and pointed at her.

Some corporations embraced change and recruited Black professionals. By 1970, Kimberly-Clark began donating to minority education funds and hiring employees of color. The company further helped Black workers feel welcome through their **African American Employee Network** in 1990.

Among the new families were **Henry and Bobbie Tolliver**, who moved from Texas to work for the Farmers Home Administration in 1974. Job opportunities improved as positions in all levels of employment began opening to some Blacks and other people of color.



Appleton's Juneteenth Festival, started in 2010, celebrates Black cultures and the end of slavery in the United States. This event is attended by thousands of people from Northeast Wisconsin.

Ron Page / Post-Crescent Media

Throughout local history, individuals have made personal choices to be either welcoming or exclusionary.

How will you keep hope for equality alive in the Fox Cities?

