

An illustration of two hands, one light-skinned and one dark-skinned, both clenched into fists and bound together by heavy metal shackles. The background is a textured, brownish-orange color. A white arch is positioned over the top left of the title.

# Gateway Journalism R E V I E W

Founded 1970 as St. Louis Journalism Review

## The 1857 Project

This special issue examines the history of slavery, segregation and racism in our region. It was produced with the help and financial support of the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

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## The 1857 Project: Extracting the poison of racism from America's soul

by William H. Freivogel

The soul of America is its promise of ever-expanding freedom, equality and opportunity. The paradox of America is that over four centuries our Founders and our leaders reneged on this promise by embracing a devil's bargain with slavery, segregation, racial superiority and racism.

It's like opposite sides of the same coin — good and evil, shiny and tarnished. They are opposite ends of the long arc of the moral universe that the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and President Barack Obama said “bends toward justice.”

Anyone who doubts the centrality of slavery, segregation and racism to the American story — from 1619 through today and for generations to come — isn't paying attention.

Over the past two centuries, perhaps no other region of the country has been so entwined as St. Louis, Missouri and Illinois with America's struggle to extract the poison of 1619 from its soul. Race is at the heart of the biggest stories in St. Louis this century.

Four hundred years after Jamestown colonists brought the first enslaved people to America, our original sin and efforts to redress it play out every day in post-Ferguson reforms and sadly in the heavy death toll COVID-19 claims among blacks.

Since Ferguson, reform-minded prosecutors won elections in St. Louis, St. Louis County and around the country. Municipal court reform, bail reform, police and prosecutorial misconduct, racist police postings on social media — all dominate the news. St. Louis's first black prosecutor filed a lawsuit this year under the Ku Klux Klan Act alleging a conspiracy against her by the white police union and legal establishment to block her reforms. Yes, race is central to it all.

Meanwhile, the first 12 people who died of COVID-19 in St. Louis were black. Seventy percent of those who died in Chicago through the second week of April were black. The inequality in life expectancy between rich and poor zip codes, white and black zip codes, never has been so stark. ([See Weiss, Page 26](#))

Nikole Hannah-Jones' 1619 essay in the New York Times magazine last year on the centrality of race to the American experience is a profound statement of a truth that has long been in plain sight: Slavery, segregation and racism are central to what America means. They are central to the histories of St. Louis, Missouri and Illinois.

It is a continuum running from Jamestown, to the Declaration of Independence, to the Constitution, to the Missouri Compromise, to Dred Scott, to the Lincoln-Douglas debates, to the 1917 East St. Louis race riot, to J. Edgar Hoover's dirty tricks against Rev. King, to the FBI's planting of anti-King editorials in the Globe-Democrat, to the COINTELPRO plots against Black Liberators in Cairo, Illinois, to the Jefferson Bank protests, to the landmark housing discrimination victories won against racial covenants and exclusionary zoning, to the unveiling of the Veiled Prophet, to the nation's biggest school desegregation program, to the legal fights of two Missouri attorneys general to end desegregation, to the Kirkwood City Hall massacre, to the death of Michael Brown on a Ferguson street.

Many of these episodes represent both the good and bad — the evil of racism and the fights to overcome it. The Declaration declared all men equal, but did it include blacks? The Constitution protected slavery but never mentioned it directly. Sen. Stephen A. Douglas said the Founders wanted slavery

“forever;” but Abraham Lincoln called it an evil that had to be expunged because a House Divided could not stand. It didn't.

The nation's biggest legal fights against housing discrimination were here in St. Louis, and African Americans won them. The nation's most expensive court-ordered school desegregation program was here, and it eventually attracted the political and public support to raise graduation rates and college-attendance rates for four decades. Michael Brown died here, but the criminal justice reforms and rekindled racial enlightenment that followed have been transformational.

In a special issue this month, GJR explores the history of race in the Land of Dred Scott. Call it the 1857 project because one of the most important chapters in the nation's story occurred here with the Dred Scott decision reading blacks out of the Constitution and the Lincoln-Douglas debates the next year over whether America could endure part slave and part free.

Consider the long ago history of race before we were born — the Missouri Compromise, the lynching of Francis McIntosh, the murder of abolitionist newspaper editor Elijah Lovejoy, hundreds of freedom suits like Dred and Harriet Scott's, Missouri's ban on teaching black children and refusal to admit free blacks, Illinois' refusal to recognize blacks as citizens, the 1916 housing segregation law passed in St. Louis, the 1917 East St. Louis race riot where about 100 blacks were murdered, the disappearance of Lloyd Gaines who sought a legal education at Mizzou, the Kraemers' refusal to sell a house on Labadie to J.D. Shelley because of racially restrictive covenants, the Fairground swimming pool riot.

And consider the racial history we have witnessed in our lifetimes:

- 2018 — Clayton police racially profile a group of black Washington University students walking home from IHOP and falsely accuse them of not having paid their bills.
- 2017 — St. Louis police illegally “kettle” protesters and spray them with chemical agents as they protest the acquittal of an officer who killed a fleeing suspect.
- 2015 — students at the University of Missouri force President Tim Wolfe to resign after he refuses to talk to

**“ Anyone who doubts the centrality of slavery, segregation and racism to the American story — from 1619 through today and for generations to come — isn't paying attention.”**



them during a Homecoming parade protest against Mizzou's long history of segregation.

- 2014 — Michael Brown is killed by a police officer on a Ferguson street prompting a federal investigation that unearths unconstitutional police tactics, revealing the abuse of municipal courts and opening people's eyes to the long road ahead to racial understanding.
- 2008 — Charles "Cookie" Thornton, once a symbol of integration in a wealthy, white suburb, murders two police officers and three city officials at the Kirkwood City Hall. The city - black and white — searches for racial understanding and reconciliation.
- 2007 — Mayor Francis Slay forces out the first African American Fire Chief, Sherman George when George refuses to make promotions based on a test he thinks discriminated against blacks.
- 1999 — Sen. John Ashcroft blocks the appointment of Ronnie White to the federal bench in St. Louis, misrepresenting White's decisions on capital punishment as soft on crime. He later admits he was wrong and

apologizes to White.

- 1980s and 1990s — Two attorneys general— one Republican and one Democrat — try to kill the St. Louis school desegregation program. Each, Ashcroft and Jay Nixon, uses opposition to desegregation to leverage political advantage.
- 1995 — Nixon persuades the U.S. Supreme Court to bring down the curtain on the era of court-ordered school desegregation in Kansas City, Missouri, even though segregation remains. The decisive fifth vote comes from Clarence Thomas, the former assistant Missouri attorney general.
- 1981 — Ashcroft visits the Justice Department, persuading the new Reagan appointees to oppose St. Louis' inter-district desegregation program.
- 1972 — Percy Green, the civil rights activist who climbed the unfinished Arch in the 1960s to dramatize job demands, organizes a protest of the Veiled Prophet ball that unmasks Monsanto VP Tom K. Smith. The local papers keep Smith's identity secret.
- 1970 — Black Jack incorporates as a

town to keep out blacks. A few years earlier Alfred H. Mayer refuses to sell a house in Paddock Hills to bail bondsman Joseph Lee Jones and his white wife. The federal judges in St. Louis — all hostile to civil rights — back Black Jack and Mayer, only to be overruled by appellate courts and eventually the Supreme Court.

- 1963 — William L. Clay Sr., Norman Seay and others in the Congress of Racial Equality are jailed for blocking the entrance to the Jefferson Bank, which refuses to hire black tellers. The newspapers and local ACLU oppose the protest, but it leads to more than a thousand new jobs.
- 1956 — Dr. Howard Phillip Venable, a noted African American eye doctor, is building a home in Creve Coeur when the city denies him a plumbing license. The city decides suddenly that it needs a new park and takes his land. U.S. District Judge Roy Harper, notoriously opposed to civil rights, tosses out Venable's suit. The park stands where the late doctor

Continued on next page



was building. At least it was recently renamed Venable park.

This modern history of race is based on first-hand observation as a journalist with a front-row seat on civil rights, here and in Washington D.C.

I saw Ashcroft arrive at the Justice Department building on Pennsylvania Avenue to ask Reagan appointee William Bradford Reynolds to withdraw support for St. Louis school desegregation — which he did. I saw a feeble Thurgood Marshall retire from the Supreme Court as Clarence Thomas waited in the wings. I saw Thomas confirmed and watched him bringing down Justice Marshall's legacy of school desegregation. I editorialized against Nixon's attempts to kill the school desegregation program.

I saw Kirkwood reel from the City Hall killings where a friend was shot and reported on months of reconciliation meetings across the city. I remember feeling sick sitting in the St. Louis Public Radio newsroom reading the Justice Department's findings on the

Ferguson police's victimization of its black citizens. I sat in a St. Louis Public Radio studio commenting on the decision not to prosecute Officer Darren Wilson, while the TV screens in the corner of the studio lit up with footage of fires in Ferguson.

And I've seen how events in St. Louis tied into national retreats on civil rights when our presidents catered to racial stereotypes to win elections. Richard Nixon crafted a Southern Strategy to create a solid GOP South. Ronald Reagan opposed the 1964 Civil Rights Act, campaigned against "welfare queens," tried to give segregationist schools like Bob Jones University tax breaks and systematically dismantled civil rights enforcement. GOP leaders across the country passed voting restrictions that disenfranchised voters like the literacy tests and poll taxes of the segregated South.

What has changed for me as a result of Ferguson and the 1619 project is that what once seemed like a triumphal, unstoppable march toward full equality now is revealed

as a centuries-long, bare-knuckle fight where the celebrated champions of freedom and equality — Jefferson and Lincoln — are exposed for their hypocrisies. That long arc bending toward justice has bent so very slowly and so many hundreds of thousands of people have died along the way — from Civil War battlefields, to a century of lynchings, to the basement of the 16th St. Baptist church, to the streets of Ferguson. America has had to be dragged kicking by abolitionists and civil rights advocates to fulfill its promises.

## All Men — We the People

America's two most powerful proclamations of national purpose are the Declaration of Independence's "all men are created equal" and the Constitution's preamble, "We the People." These short, dramatic statements of the equality, power and freedom of the common man are the reason America is a beacon to the world.

Yet the meaning of those words was uncertain at the time they were written, at the time of the Lincoln-Douglas debates on the eve of the Civil War and remains so today in this era of Black and Blue Lives Matter.

Jefferson, who wrote that all men are created equal, owned more than 180 slaves and had six children by his slave Sally Hemings. In addition, all 13 of the original colonies protected slavery at the time of the Declaration.

Jefferson's first draft of the Declaration explicitly criticized the king for slavery. It read:

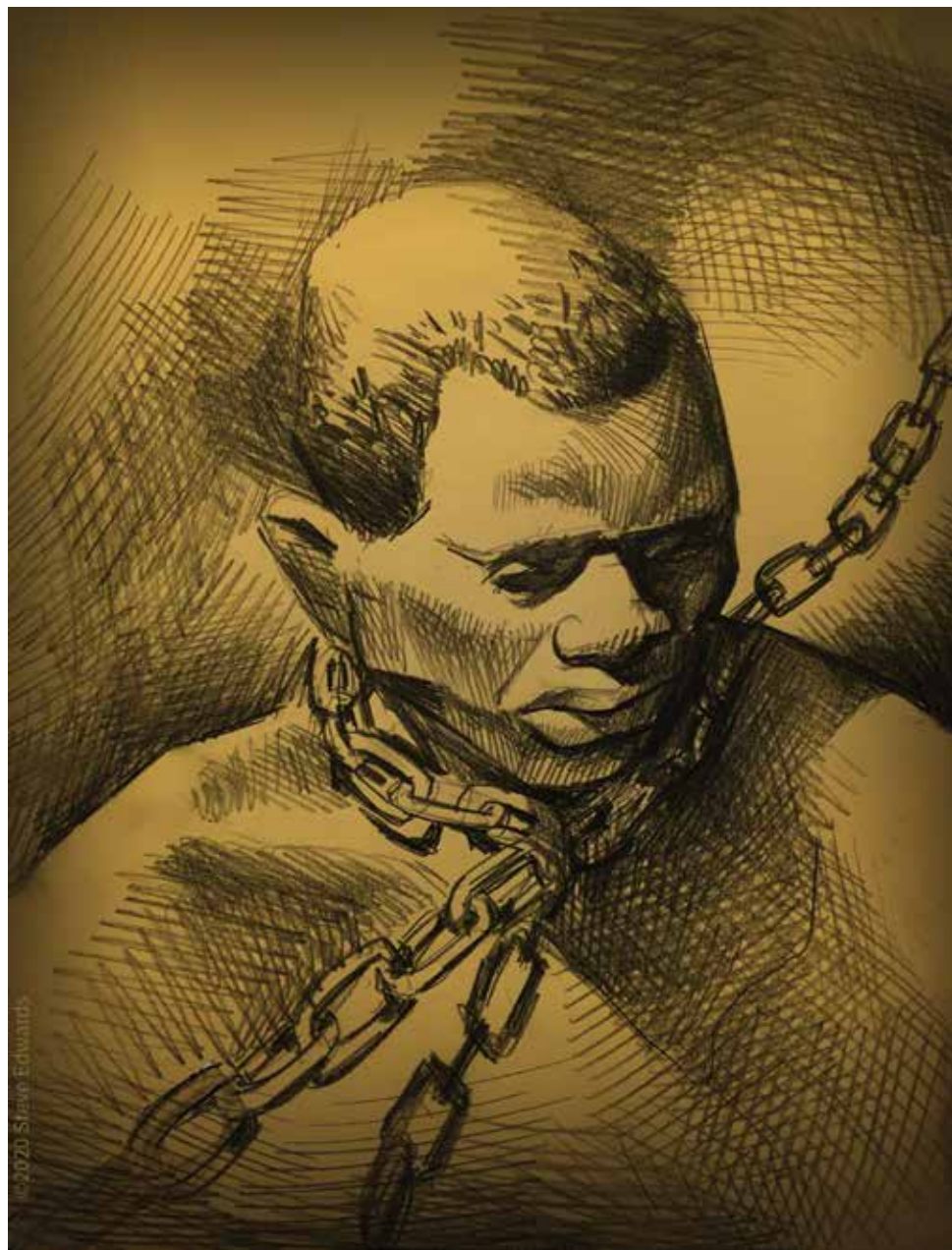
"He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him ... Determined to keep open a market where men should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or restrain this execrable commerce."

But the passage was cut out, the biggest deletion made from the draft document. Jefferson wrote that the passage was struck in "complacency to South Carolina and Georgia who had never attempted to restrain the importation of slaves. Our northern brethren also I believe felt a little tender, because ... they had been very considerable carriers of them."

The simple preamble to the Constitution — We the People — made clear the document was for the common man, not handed down by the divine right of a king. But was everyone included in We?

Based on the values of the times, several groups were clearly not part of "all men" or "We." Women for example. Also, children, Indians and what people of the time called "imbeciles." In addition, eight of the original 13 states were slave states.

One mistake Hannah-Jones made in her New York Times essay on the history of this time was to claim that "Conveniently left out of our Founding mythology is the fact that one of the primary reasons the colonists decided to declare their independence from



Britain was because they wanted to protect the institution of slavery.”

An African American historian the Times engaged to fact-check the essay had warned against this overstatement, but was ignored. Leslie M. Harris, history professor at Northwestern, explained, “Although slavery was certainly an issue in the American Revolution, the protection of slavery was not one of the main reasons the 13 Colonies went to war.”

Hannah-Jones now acknowledges her overstatement and The Times added an Editor’s Note in March stating: “a desire to protect slavery was among the motivations of some of the colonists who fought the Revolutionary War, not among the motivations of all of them.”

What can be said for certain is that the Founding Fathers were entirely aware that they were hedging their great promises of freedom and equality as part of a hellish bargain with slaveholders.

The most important historical moment of the racial history of St. Louis, Missouri and Illinois — the Dred Scott decision and the Lincoln-Douglas debates that followed — establish beyond a doubt that the Founding Fathers failed to include blacks in their experiment in freedom and equality.

Seventy years after the Constitution, the Supreme Court ruled in the Dred Scott decision that blacks were definitely not included in We the People — whether they were free or enslaved. They are “so far inferior,” wrote Chief Justice Roger Taney, “that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect.”

The Dred Scott decision was one of the most hotly debated issues in the summer of 1858 as Lincoln and Douglas ranged from Ottawa in the north to Jonesboro in Little Egypt, and from Charleston in the east to the final debate in Alton.

Douglas argued that the Founding Fathers never meant to include blacks when they wrote the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution. They believed that the United States could endure “forever” half slave and half free, he said.

But Lincoln disagreed. Lincoln pointed out in the last debate at Alton that the Constitution never used the word slavery but instead referred to it in “covert” language so as not to blemish the document they wanted to stand for the ages. This showed, Lincoln said, that the Founding Fathers thought slavery would gradually vanish.

A shocking thing about reading the Lincoln-Douglas debates in 2020 is they often weren’t the high-minded political debates that history texts advertise.

The debates are stained from Ottawa to Alton by appeals to the racism of whites.

Douglas painted the a picture of hundreds of thousands of freed Negro slaves from Missouri turning the beautiful Illinois plain into a Negro “colony.” In Jonesboro he ridiculed abolitionist friends of Lincoln’s, “Why, they brought Fred Douglass to Freeport,” he said, “when I was addressing a meeting there, in a carriage driven by the

white owner, the negro sitting inside with the white lady and her daughter.”

“Shame” murmured the crowd.

As for the Great Emancipator, he was no emancipator. His preference was to send freed slaves back to Africa. But certainly he would not support equality between blacks and whites.

At Charleston he said: “... I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races, (applause) ... I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.”

No one should have been surprised when Lincoln failed at first as president to free the slaves, then freed only slaves in Confederate states where he was powerless and — as Hannah-Jones recounted — invited African American leaders to the White House to pursue his plan of sending freed slaves back to Africa.

### Forgetting is our national pastime

No one questions any longer whether men in the Declaration and We in the Constitution include blacks. But the events of Ferguson demonstrate African Americans are not treated equally by the law on the streets by America’s towns and cities in 2020.

The unfolding events in Brunswick, Georgia, reinforce that truth. It took Georgia authorities four months to charge a former law enforcement officer and his son with murder for shooting Ahmaud Arbery, a 25-year-old African American killed while jogging near his home.

Nothing that has happened in St. Louis during the 21st Century has been as important as the events of the Ferguson protest and its aftermath.

The Justice Department found the Hands Up, Don’t Shoot claim of the activists at the protests was a myth when deciding not to charge Officer Darren Wilson for killing Brown. But the Justice Department also found a scandalous pattern of unconstitutional police practices where the mostly white police department abused the rights of black citizens.

The most important impact from Ferguson was what followed Brown’s death — the sweeping legal reforms, the election of reform prosecutors across the country and a reawakening of Americans to the persistence of racial inequality.

Gardner, elected by Ferguson activists as St. Louis’ first black prosecutor, faces some justified criticism for the way she has

administered the circuit attorney’s office, but race plays an important role.

The action that got Gardner in the most trouble was filing criminal charges against former Gov. Eric Greitens. She filed criminal invasion of privacy charges against Greitens for allegedly taking a photo of his partially nude mistress tied up in his basement.

At first, there seemed to be no racial angle. But Greitens hired powerful establishment lawyers, including Democrat Edward Dowd, to represent him. A complaint by Dowd led to the appointment of a special prosecutor to investigate Gardner’s office for alleged perjury by a Gardner investigator. The special prosecutor appointed in that ongoing investigation was Gerard Carmody. Gardner says Carmody and Dowd are part of an old, white boy’s club. Both have been friends since they graduated in the class of 1967 at Chaminade.

Gardner contends in a lawsuit, based on Section 1985 of the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871 — that elements of the white police union and white legal establishment have set up the “trappings of a legitimate criminal investigation” to punish her for the Greitens prosecution.

The suit says the white legal establishment “leveraged their control of the Special Prosecutor’s office to set up many of the trappings of a legitimate criminal investigation, complete with subpoenas and a grand jury. But the true purpose ... is to thwart and impede her efforts to establish equal treatment under law for all St. Louis citizens ... ; to remove her from the position to which she was duly elected—by any means necessary—and perhaps to show her successor what happens to Circuit Attorneys who dare to stand up for the equal rights of racial minorities in St. Louis ... The United States Congress passed the Ku Klux Klan Act during the aftermath of the Civil War to address precisely this scenario: a racially-motivated conspiracy to deny the civil rights of racial minorities by obstructing a government official’s efforts to ensure equal justice under law for all.”

Gardner probably won’t win her Ku Klux Klan Act lawsuit. She has made mistakes as a prosecutor. Proving a conspiracy among Gardner critics may be impossible and the Supreme Court has been reluctant to approve of expansive use of the KKK law.

But Gardner and the progressive prosecutors around the country who support her believe white police union officials and powerful white judges and lawyers have abused their power to undermine the efforts of St. Louis’ first black prosecutor to bring greater equality to law enforcement on the city streets.

The contrasting reactions of the majority white police union and majority black police association illustrate the persistence of race — in fact the mere existence of separate white and black police groups in 2020 is a powerful statement about race.

The majority white St. Louis Police



**“ They say baseball is the national pastime. Forgetting is the national pastime in the United States. There is nothing more quintessentially American like forgetting. We have no sense of the sweep of history and how current day outcomes are shaped by these baked in disadvantages ... .”**

**— Jason Q. Purnell**

Officers Association said: “This is a prosecutor who has declared war on crime victims and the police officers sworn to protect them. ‘She’s turned murderers and other violent criminals loose to prey on St. Louis’ most vulnerable citizens and has time and time again falsely accused police of wrongdoing. The streets of this city have become the Killing Fields as the direct result of Gardner’s actions and inaction.”

The majority black Ethical Society of Police disagreed: “We have repeatedly highlighted the disparities along racial lines with discipline, promotions, and job placement; therefore, the Circuit Attorney stating she has experienced racial bias at the hands of some SLMPD officers is far from ‘meritless.’”

So, yes, race plays a central role in the life of this city, this state and this nation, just as it has during our entire lives and the entire life of the nation.

Race is also playing a role in the deaths of our citizens. Few events have so clearly shown the deadly consequences of the inequalities that persist as has COVID-19s high toll among blacks.

The heavy toll COVID-19 has taken on the African American community tells the story of the poorer health, lower life expectancy, inferior health care and vulnerable positions that African Americans occupy in our society. Sixteen of the first 19 deaths of St. Louisans were black. Just under 50 percent of the St. Louis County deaths were African American.

Jason Q. Purnell of Washington University’s Brown School found in his 2014 “For the Sake of All” report that the affluent, mostly white population that lived in the 63105 zip code running through Clayton and Washington University lived almost two decades longer than mostly black population living one digit up in 63106 on St. Louis’ near north side. ([Read Weiss, Page 26](#))

That was because of race, segregation, poverty, which makes blacks more vulnerable even to the undifferentiated enemy of a pandemic.

Purnell once said this in an interview:

“The most difficult challenge that we uncovered in this work and has slapped me in the face over and over again is segregation ... if you asked me one thing we need to tackle it would be segregation. I’ve begun saying that St. Louis is an innovator in segregation.

“ ... As an African American man it makes my blood boil. So much of the current

conversation is why don’t people just try harder, but people have been trying hard for a century and at every turn they are blocked ... by personal prejudices, structurally blocked by law and politics.

“They say baseball is the national pastime. Forgetting is the national pastime

in the United States. There is nothing more quintessentially American like forgetting. We have no sense of the sweep of history and how current day outcomes are shaped by these baked in disadvantages ... that you can’t bootstrap your way out of.”







## The Land of Dred Scott: Scenes from our racist history

by William H. Freivogel

The nation's fight about the meaning of America's great promises of freedom and equality played out at St. Louis' Old Courthouse in 1850 and before huge crowds in the seven Illinois towns during the Lincoln-Douglas debates in 1858. It took the death of 750,000 men to settle the issue.

Five paragraphs beyond those stirring words "We the People" is a shock – the three-fifths compromise. Keep reading and you find protection for the slave trade and the fugitive slave provision, although the Framers were careful never to use the word slavery.

When the nation celebrated the 200th anniversary of the Constitution in 1987, Justice Thurgood Marshall, the nation's first black justice, upset quite a few Americans with a less than enthusiastic appraisal of the Constitution.

He said the Constitution "was defective from the start, requiring several

amendments, a civil war and momentous social transformation to attain the system of constitutional government, and its respect for the individual freedoms and human rights we hold as fundamental today.

"No doubt it will be said, when the unpleasant truth of the history of slavery in America is mentioned during this bicentennial year, that the Constitution was a product of its times and embodied a compromise which, under other circumstances, would not have been made. But the effects of the Framers' compromise have remained for generations. They arose from the contradiction between guaranteeing liberty and justice to all, and denying both to Negroes."

Marshall was right. Thirteen of the 55 men who wrote the Constitution were slaveholders – including three of the first four presidents, Washington, Jefferson

and Madison – and all 55 were white and wealthy. Benjamin Franklin was president of a group called the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage. But neither Franklin nor any other delegate called for abolition at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787.

Yet there was pressure mounting for abolition. Thomas Jefferson fell one vote short of getting slavery abolished in the territories. In a compromise, the Congress of the Confederation passed the Northwest Ordinance that same year, 1787, banning slavery north of the Ohio River, including Illinois.

Meanwhile, the framers of the Constitution were struggling with slavery, according to historical accounts including James Madison's diaries. In June of 1787,

Continued on next page

**“ No doubt it will be said, when the unpleasant truth of the history of slavery in America is mentioned during this bicentennial year, that the Constitution was a product of its times and embodied a compromise which, under other circumstances, would not have been made.”**

**— Justice Thurgood Marshall**

the Constitutional Convention came up with the three-fifths compromise stating that representation would be proportioned to the “whole number of white and other free citizens and three-fifths of all other persons except Indians not paying taxes ...”

That didn't mean that slaves were three-fifths of a person. They were property, not persons at all.

The three-fifths referred to the additional political power given white slave owners. White slave owners essentially had their own vote plus three-fifths of the votes of slaves. Jefferson became president in 1800 as a result of the three-fifths compromise. The 15 electoral votes that slaves added to the South provided his margin of victory.

Further on, the Constitution contained more strange wording to express compromises over the slave trade and fugitive slaves. “The Migration or Importation of Such Persons as any of the States now-existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a Tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person.”

And the fugitive slave provision required that persons who escaped from “service or Labour in One State” must be returned to “the Party whom such Service or Labour may be due.”

Alexander Hamilton wrote that without the slavery compromises “no union could possibly have been formed.”

There was a big argument over slavery at the end of August that summer. Luther Martin of Maryland proposed a tax on the importation of slaves, calling slavery “inconsistent with the principles of the revolution.”

John Rutledge of South Carolina responded, “Religion and humanity had nothing to do with this question. Interest alone is the governing principle of Nations ... If the Northern States consult their interest, they will not oppose the increase of slaves which will increase the commodities of which they will become carriers.”

George Mason of Virginia, a tall, white-haired plantation owner and major slave holder, gave the most impassioned and prescient speech about slavery at the

Convention. He said slaves “bring the judgment of heaven on a country. As nations cannot be rewarded or punished in the next world, they must be in this. By an inevitable chain of causes and effects, providence punished national sins by national calamities.”

The national calamity lay seven decades ahead and it ran through Missouri and Illinois.

### **The Missouri Compromise – ‘Like a fire bell in the night’**

Two hundred years ago, while many of the Founders still were alive, Missouri came to the forefront of the slavery fight. It has been inextricably entwined in the nation's struggle over race ever since.

Jefferson, as president, had persuaded Congress to abolish the slave trade at the earliest possible time, 1808. But the slavery issue heated up again with the Missouri crisis of 1819. Northerners were alarmed that Mississippi and Alabama had recently been admitted as slave states. Now Missouri, which was north of the Mason-Dixon line, wanted admission as a slave state too.

Rep. James Tallmadge Jr. of New York passed a House amendment to the Missouri bill that prohibited the “further introduction of slavery” and freed slaves at age 25. Tallmadge had made a name for himself opposing Illinois' black codes denying free blacks the rights of citizenship. But the Senate refused to go along with Tallmadge's amendment.

Missourians were mad at Tallmadge. Southern planters had brought 10,000 slaves to Missouri, many in Little Dixie in Southeast Missouri where they worked on cotton and others in the western part of the state raising hemp.

Every Missouri newspaper opposed the Tallmadge amendment. Thomas Hart Benton's St. Louis Enquirer editorialized: “Suppose the worst came to the worst and Congress actually passed the law to suit the views of the New England politicians, would Missouri submit to it? No! Never!”

Under the Missouri Compromise of 1820, drafted by Sen. Jesse B. Thomas of Illinois, himself a slaveholder, Missouri was admitted as a slave state and Maine as a free state. That retained the numerical balance of slave

and free states. Congress banned slavery in the portion of the Louisiana Purchase above the southern border of Missouri. The compromise passed 90-87.

Jefferson opposed the compromise and expressed forboding that it spelled dissolution of the Union. He wrote a friend, it was “like a fire bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union. it is hushed indeed for the moment. but this is a reprieve only, not a final sentence. A geographical line, coinciding with a marked principle, moral and political, once conceived and held up to the angry passions of men, will never be obliterated; and every new irritation will mark it deeper and deeper.”

St. Louis greeted passage, wrote historian Glover Moore, “with the ringing of bells, firing of cannon” and a transparency showing “a Negro in high spirits, rejoicing that Congress had permitted slaves to be brought to so fine a land as Missouri.”

Pro-slavery politicians overwhelmed opponents and controlled the state constitutional convention in St. Louis in the summer of 1820. One provision of that state constitution guaranteed the perpetuity of slavery, and another barred free blacks and mulattoes from entering the state.

Those provisions threw Congress back into a crisis. It passed a second Missouri Compromise authorizing the president to admit Missouri only after the Legislature promised not to discriminate against citizens of other states.

Missourians again were furious. At an 1821 meeting in St. Charles, the Legislature adopted the resolution demanded by Congress, while at the same time declaring the resolution meant nothing. The state constitution would “remain in all respects as if the said resolution had never passed.” Later, in 1847, the Legislature passed a law declaring “no free negro, or mulatto shall, under any pretext, emigrate to this State from any other State.” In other words blacks could be brought as slaves but not come as free persons.

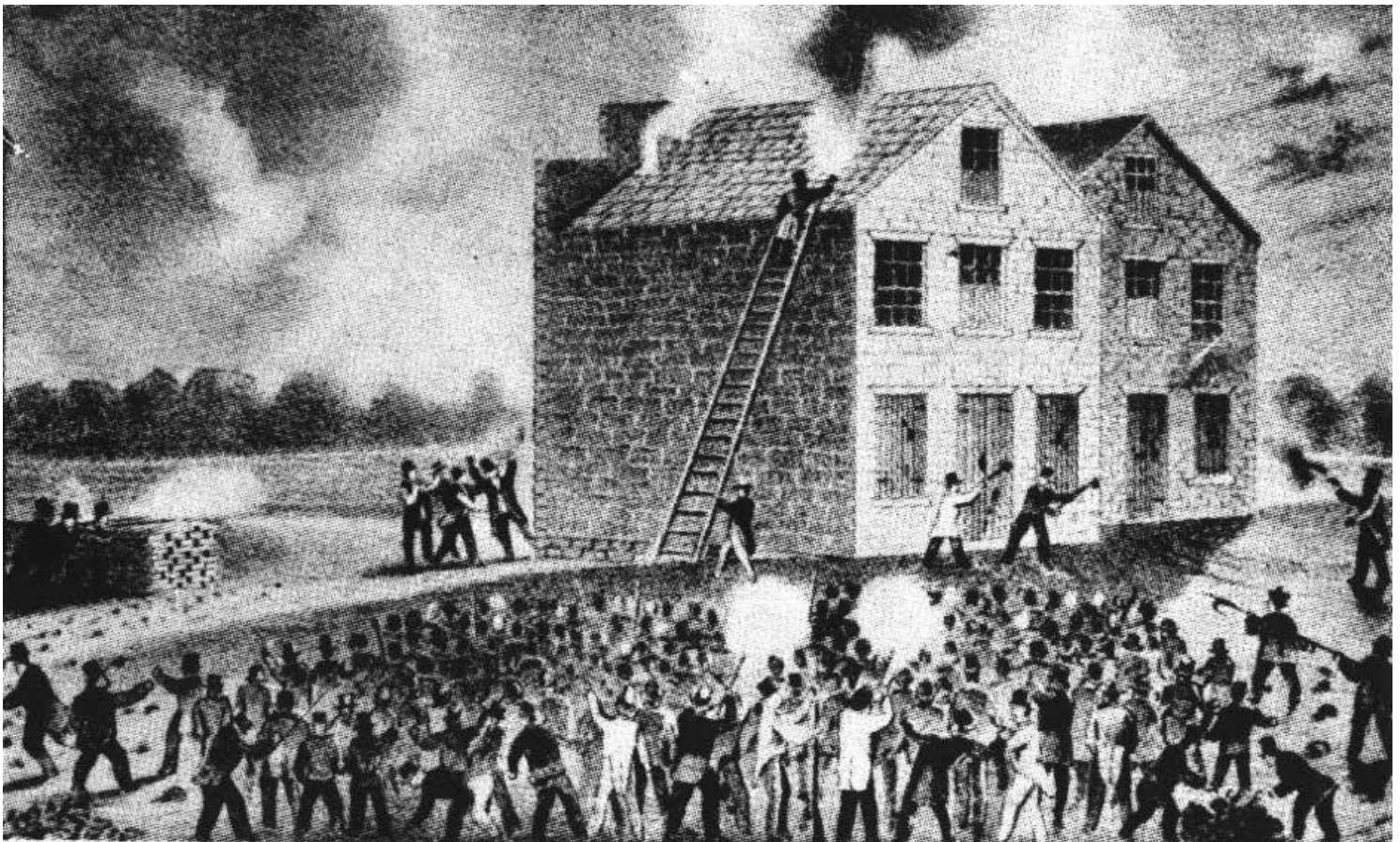
That same year Missouri passed a law making it illegal to teach blacks. “No persons shall keep or teach any school for the instruction of mulattos in reading or writing,” it read. A few brave teachers took skiffs into the Mississippi River to evade the law.

### **Lovejoy to Dred Scott**

St. Louis had both pro- and anti-slavery elements. Elijah P. Lovejoy, editor of the St. Louis Observer, a Presbyterian weekly, angered pro-slavery forces with his abolitionist editorials.

On April 28, 1836, the mulatto cook on the steamboat Flora, Francis McIntosh, was arrested by police in St. Louis for disturbing the peace. When a policeman told him he would spend five years in jail, he stabbed one officer to death and seriously injured another officer. He escaped but a mob found him hiding in an outhouse. The mob, which grew to several hundred, chained him to a tree near 7th and Chestnut, piled wood up to his knees





Riots in 1837 in Alton, Illinois.

and burned him to death while he pleaded for them to shoot him. (The murder was one block from where the bucolic Citygarden Sculpture Park now stands, an urban oasis for St. Louis families and visitors.)

The aptly named presiding judge over the grand jury, Luke Lawless, decided McIntosh's death was the result of a mass phenomenon and that no individuals should be prosecuted. Judge Lawless said McIntosh was an example of the "atrocities committed in this and other states by individuals of negro blood against their white brethren," adding that because of abolitionist agitators "the free negro has been converted into a deadly enemy." Lawless also misinformed the jury that McIntosh was a pawn of Lovejoy's.

A week later, Lovejoy editorialized that the lynching meant the end of the rule of law and the Constitution in St. Louis. Only one lawmaker in Missouri and Illinois condemned the lynching. His name — Abraham Lincoln.

After Lovejoy's May editorial, a mob of toughs from downtown taverns destroyed Lovejoy's press and threw parts into the Mississippi.

Lovejoy moved across the river to Alton, which was officially a free state, although it was also home to slave catchers looking to capture slaves who escaped from Missouri.

In November, 1937, a few weeks after Lovejoy held the Illinois Anti-Slavery conference at his church, a mob burned his warehouse and murdered Lovejoy as he tried to push down a ladder used by the arsonists. His press was thrown out of the warehouse and onto the river bank where it was broken

into parts and thrown in the river.

### Hundreds of freedom suits

Today we hear about only Dred and Harriet Scotts' suit for freedom. But about 300 slaves filed freedom suits in St. Louis during the years from 1805 until the Dred Scott decision. Some won.

Marguerite Scypion brought one of the first "freedom suits" in 1805. She was a daughter of a black slave and a Native American mother of Natchez descent. She and her sisters argued that they were free because Spain had abolished Indian slavery when it controlled St. Louis in the late 18th Century.

Scypion initially won, but appeals courts overturned the decision and she and her family remained slaves, at one point owned by Jean Pierre Chouteau, a prominent merchant and fur trader.

Scypion renewed her family's suit after the Missouri Legislature passed a law in 1824 opening the way for slaves to sue for freedom. She claimed Chouteau had assaulted her and falsely imprisoned her. The case was transferred to Jefferson County because of the Chouteaus' influence in St. Louis. In 1836 she and her family won their freedom and two years later the appeals courts agreed, ending Indian slavery.

### 'No rights which the white man would be bound to respect'

In 1846 Dred and Harriet Scott filed for their freedom arguing they had become free when a former owner took them to free soil

in Illinois and Minnesota.

To say the soil was free across the Mississippi wasn't really true. In 1763 there were 600 slaves in Illinois. The Northwest Ordinance had banned slavery north of the Ohio River, but many Illinois residents, such as Arthur St. Clair, namesake of St. Clair County, had slaves illegally. One way to get around the Northwest Ordinance was to force a slave to put an X on an agreement to become an indentured servant. In essence, Illinois operated as a slave state. (See [Amelia Blakely, Page 33](#))

Illinois passed a draconian Fugitive Slave law in 1819 that empowered whites to stop blacks and challenge their freedom. Slaves were bought and sold in the state until 1845 and involuntary servitude did not end until 1848.

The Scotts' case was tried in the Old Courthouse in St. Louis in a courtroom on the opposite side of the courthouse from the steps facing the Mississippi River where slaves were bought and sold.

The Scotts actually won their case in St. Louis in 1850. But the Missouri Supreme Court ignored its precedents and kept the Scotts in slavery. The judges worried about the growing power of abolitionists, remarking on the nation's "dark and fell spirit in relation to slavery" and adding, " ... Under the circumstances it does not behoove the State of Missouri to show the least countenance to any measure which might gratify this spirit."

The opinion said slaves were far better

Continued on next page



off than the “miserable” African. “We are almost persuaded that the introduction of slavery among us was, in the providence of God ... a means of placing that unhappy race within the pale of civilized nations.”

In the most infamous decision in the history of the U.S. Supreme Court, Chief Justice Roger Taney concluded on March 6, 1857 that blacks “are not included and were not intended to be included, under the word citizens in the Constitution.”

“We the people” did not include blacks. “They had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order,” wrote Taney, “... and so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit ...”

Taney said the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional because Congress had no power to ban slavery in the territories.

Slaves were property protected like any other property by the Fifth Amendment of the Bill of Rights, the court said. So, when the Fifth Amendment said “no person” shall be “deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law” it protected property rights of white people to take away the liberty rights of black people who weren’t people under the Constitution.

A year later, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas drew throngs throughout Illinois as they debated the Dred Scott decision and how blacks fit into the vision of freedom and equality created by the then dead Framers.

Lincoln said the Declaration of Independence’s “All men ...” had included blacks. Lincoln said the Constitution used “covert” words to refer to slavery because the Framers thought slavery would die. But Douglas said they expected the Constitution to endure “forever” with the country half slave and half free. His idea of “popular sovereignty” would give each new state the opportunity to choose slavery or freedom. (See recreation of Lincoln Douglas debate Page 36)

It took the deaths of 750,000 Americans to settle the issue. Settle the issue of slavery that is. Equality is taking a lot longer.

## Reading equality out of the Constitution

After the Civil War, the 13th Amendment banned slavery, the 14th barred states from denying people liberty and equality and the 15th protected voting rights.

But as with the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, the broad promises of liberty, equality and suffrage didn’t mean what they said. Rep. James F. Wilson of Iowa, an author of the 14th Amendment said “equal protection” did not mean “that in all things, civil, social, political, all citizens without distinction of race or color, shall be equal ...”. Nor do they mean that all citizens shall sit on juries or that their children shall attend the same schools.” At the same time Congress approved the 14th Amendment’s equal protection guarantee, it segregated D.C. public schools.

Over the next 40 years the Supreme



“Of course women, black or white, weren’t “persons” protected by the 14th Amendment.”

Court gutted and perverted the post-Civil War amendments. The court said the 14th and 15th Amendments did not give blacks the right to vote or live in an integrated society.

Of course women, black or white, weren’t “persons” protected by the 14th Amendment. The court said in a case from Missouri that St. Louisan Virginia Minor couldn’t vote because the “persons” whose equality was protected by the 14th amendment didn’t include women. Nor could Myra Bradwell be admitted to the Illinois bar because she had no right to take legal actions without her husband’s approval. The U.S. Supreme Court said the 14th amendment didn’t make any difference.

Minor and Bradwell were white, but the Supreme Court read blacks out of the equality guarantee as well.

In the 1873 Slaughterhouse Cases the court said the 14th Amendment gave freedmen the rights of national citizenship, but not the rights of state citizenship.

Three years later the court said the 15th Amendment “does not confer the right of suffrage upon anyone” even though the amendment states explicitly: “The rights of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”

The Civil Rights Cases of 1883 grew out of the refusal of inns in Jefferson City,

Missouri, and Kansas to provide lodging for blacks, a Tennessee train conductor’s refusal to admit a black woman to the ladies car of a train and theatre owners in New York and San Francisco refusing to sell seats to blacks. The court concluded the 14th Amendment’s equality guarantee did not permit Congress to reach this “private” discrimination. That would be “invasion of individual rights.”

Finally, Plessy v. Ferguson — upholding Louisiana’s denial of a seat on the white railroad car to Homer Plessy because he was one-eighth black — enshrined “separate but equal” as the meaning of “equal protection” for the next 58 years until Brown v. Board tossed it in the dustbin of the court’s ignominious decisions along with Dred Scott.

The court said in Plessy the 14th Amendment “could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based upon color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political equality, or a commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either ...”. If one race be inferior to the other socially, the (Constitution) cannot put them on the same plane,” wrote Justice Henry Billings Brown.

St. Louis’ schools were segregated until Brown and after. Before Brown, black students in St. Louis suburbs were denied admission to their local high school and sent to black St. Louis high schools instead. Members of the African American Carter family of Breckenridge Hills told me 50 years ago of the humiliation of having to pay for their own bus fare to Sumner and then to have to lie about their address to be admitted. Kirkwood students also were bussed to Sumner.

At the same time that the Supreme Court was reading blacks and women out of the post-Civil War amendments they were finding plenty of room to protect predatory business practices. The 14th amendment protected the right of contract, the court decided, making minimum wage, maximum hours and child labor laws unconstitutional. In the 1905 Lochner decision it threw out New York’s Bakeshop law limiting bakers’



hours to 10 a day and 60 a week. The court held that the law interfered with the worker's liberty to decide how many hours are "appropriate or necessary for support of himself and his family."

## The 20th Century — 'SAVE YOUR HOME! VOTE FOR SEGREGATION'

In 1916 — just before the deadly East St. Louis race riots — St. Louisans voted by a 3-to-1 margin to pass a segregation ordinance prohibiting anyone from moving into a block where more than three-fourths of the residents were of another race.

A leaflet with a photo of run-down homes said: "Look at These Homes Now. An entire block ruined by the Negro invasion ... . **SAVE YOUR HOME! VOTE FOR SEGREGATION.**"

As so often was the case, supporters of the discriminatory legislation couched it in paternalistic terms of what was good for black people.

The St. Louis supporters said it was needed "for preserving peace, preventing conflict and ill feeling between the white and colored races in the city of St. Louis, and promoting the general welfare of the city by providing...for the use of separate blocks by white and colored people for residence, churches and schools."

The St. Louis ordinance — replicated in a dozen cities from Baltimore to Oklahoma City — fell by the wayside when the Supreme Court struck down a similar law in Louisville in the 1917 *Buchanan v. Warley* decision.

But the court helpfully suggested in another case that real estate covenants, barring sales of houses to blacks, would be a legal way to segregate housing because they didn't involve state discrimination. St. Louis took up the suggestion, widely using restrictive covenants on home deeds, preventing sale to blacks. Many trust indentures excluded "Malays" — along with blacks and Jews — because Malays were displayed in the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis.

By the end of World War II, blacks in St. Louis were mostly segregated within a 417-block area near Fairground Park, partly because of these restrictive covenants. About 117,000 people lived in an area where 43,000 had lived three decades earlier.

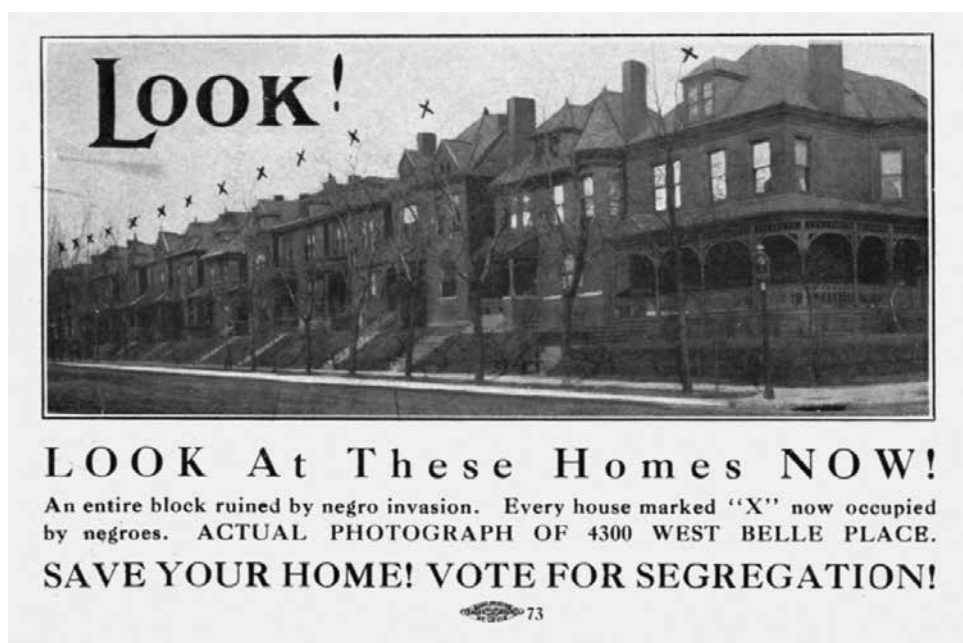
## Biggest race riot of its time

During the great migration of blacks from South to the North, thousands of blacks arrived at the meatpacking town of East St. Louis, just across from America's fourth largest city. Many blacks couldn't get jobs and ended up in shanties in the river bottoms.

Sensationalist newspaper stories led many whites to believe blacks were on a crime spree. But crime and a Wild West atmosphere had long prevailed in East St. Louis. There is little evidence of the "reign of crime" by blacks.

But blacks were competing with whites for jobs. Non-union strikebreakers, some of them black, forced white unions into collapse.

White mobs began to attack blacks



Leaflet urging citizens to vote to prohibit African Americans from moving into predominantly white neighborhoods.

through the spring and summer of 1917 before a wholesale race riot exploded July 2, 1917. By the end of the long, hot day hundreds of blacks had been brutally attacked, thousands fled the city and more than 300 homes and places of business had been destroyed by fire. White rioters threw many blacks from bridges into the Mississippi. ([Read the account of journalist and author Harper Barnes Page 30](#))

The dozens, maybe hundreds of blacks murdered were the biggest racial bloodbath until the Los Angeles riots after the acquittal of police officers in the Rodney King beating 75 years later.

The East St. Louis riot was followed by a violent riot in Houston later in the summer and by the Red Summer of 1919, when two dozen cities and towns experienced deadly riots. And then came Tulsa two years later with an official death toll of 36 people, two-thirds black.

More than 200 African Americans were lynched in Missouri and Illinois in the century from the 1840s to 1940s, often in a carnival-like atmosphere with families watching. The Ku Klux Klan was at a high point of power in the years right after World War I. Klan members in Indiana included the governor, more than half the legislature and 250,000 white men.

## House on Labadie

J.D. Shelley came to St. Louis before World War II and had a job in the small arms factory on Goodfellow during the war. He recalled later, "When I came to St. Louis, they had places like the Fox Theater, no colored could go there; and the baseball diamond up on Sportsman's Park, they didn't allow no colored in there at one time. When they did open up Sportsman's Park for colored, onliest place they could sit was in the bleachers. That changed after the war ... "

In 1945 Shelley wanted to buy a house

at 4600 Labadie for his wife and six children who joined him from Mississippi. But a restrictive real estate covenant barred sale to "persons not of Caucasian race."

Neighbors down the street at 4532 Labadie, Louis and Ethel Kraemer, sought to enforce the covenant. James T. Bush Sr., the black real estate agent who had sold the property to the Shelleys, formed an association to pay for the Shelley's court costs. The lawyer for the association was Bush's promising daughter, Margaret Bush Wilson, who went on to have a storied civil rights career.

George L. Vaughn, a noted African American lawyer, argued Shelley's case to the U.S. Supreme Court. Vaughn said he wasn't seeking integration. "Negroes have no desire to live among the white people," he said. "But we were a people forced into a ghetto with a resultant artificial scarcity in housing."

In the 1948 decision, *Shelley v. Kraemer*, the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed judicial enforcement of racial covenants. The involvement of the state courts in enforcing the covenants made this a state action, not just private discrimination, the court said.

About the same time, the city tried to integrate nearby Fairground swimming pool, a huge pool just north of Sportsman's Park where the Cardinals were winning three World Series in the 1940s. It could accommodate 10,000 swimmers. Forty black children needed a police escort to leave the pool in what *Life* magazine called a "race riot" on the first day of summer 1949. White youths wielded baseball bats and chased black youths through the streets. The *Star-Times* quoted a middle age white man shouting "Kill a n—r and make a name for yourself."

The *Life* story read, "In St. Louis, where the Dred Scott case was tried, the cause of racial tolerance seemed to be looking up last

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Riots in East St. Louis.

week. A negro police judge took office for the first time, and the Post-Dispatch hired its first Negro reporter. But when the city opened all of its swimming pools to Negroes on June 21 ... progress stopped ... police had to escort 40 Negro swimmers through a wall of 200 sullen whites."

The mayor immediately reimposed segregation at the pool. The city's official report said it had been unfair to call the disruption a riot. (I never asked my dad about the riot, which occurred a month before I was born. My dad had been a lifeguard at the pool for many years before the riot and lived with his parents in the janitor's quarters of the Christian Science church across the street.)

### **FHA meant blacks need not apply**

Federal housing policies after World War II discriminated against blacks by subsidizing rapid expansion of all-white suburbs while building largely segregated public housing projects.

Carr Square was built for blacks and Clinton Peabody for whites.

Pruitt-Igoe, built in 1955-6 was Pruitt for blacks and Igoe for whites. Architecture Review praised it as "vertical neighborhoods for poor people." The project quickly became all black and symbolized the failure of public housing when it was blown up in 1972.

In a crusade to clean up the slums, St. Louis displaced thousands of people who lived in the Mill Creek Valley "slum" just west of downtown, near the railroad tracks. But people didn't pay attention to those displaced. By the 1970s and 80s the city began tearing down the bleak, dilapidated public housing towers. Pruitt-Igoe was dynamited in 1972. (I remember as a privileged boy from Kirkwood driving through Mill Creek and throwing a bag of my old clothes out the window. I wanted to help the children, but we were afraid to actually talk to them.)

The words — "FHA financed" — in housing ads were code for blacks need not apply, writes Richard Rothstein in an Economic Policy Institute report on the root causes of the Ferguson protests. An FHA

underwriting manual called for "protection against some adverse influences" adding "the more important among the adverse influential factors are the ingress of undesirable racial or nationality groups."

The U.S. Civil Rights Commission, which came to St. Louis in 1970, concluded: "Federal programs of housing and urban development not only have failed to eliminate the dual housing market, but have had the effect of perpetuating and promoting it."

Through the last part of the 20th century black enclaves in suburban St. Louis were wiped out or carved up by redevelopment in St. Louis County from Clayton to Brentwood to Kirkwood. Praised as urban renewal, they were often actually "Negro removal." (See Richard Weiss's story of a black Clayton neighborhood Page 54)

A black Clayton neighborhood once prospered where the Ritz-Carlton stands. Black Howard-Evans Place in Brentwood gave way to the Promenade near the upscale Galleria. Part of Kirkwood's Meacham Park was gobbled up for a Target and many residents had to move out to north county.



## Need for a playground

Suburban communities used exclusionary zoning to keep out black families. Howard Phillip Venable, a noted African American eye doctor, and his wife Katie were building a house in Spoede Meadows in Creve Coeur in 1956. Dr. Venable was chair of Ophthalmology at Homer G. Phillips Hospital and St. Mary's Infirmary and joined the Washington University Medical School faculty.

Spoede Meadows was an idyllic spot. Other African Americans wanted to buy lots nearby but were dissuaded by a local "white citizens committee."

Venable's application for a plumbing license was denied. Suddenly, the city discovered a need for a new park, right on Venable's property and used eminent domain to take his land. U.S. District Judge Roy Harper, notoriously opposed to civil rights, tossed out Venable's suit. The park stands today where the late doctor wanted to live. Creve Coeur last year recognized the bigotry and renamed the park for the late doctor.

In 1964, Joseph Lee Jones, a bail bondsman and his wife, Barbara, applied for a "Hyde-Park style" house in the Paddock Woods subdivision, five miles due north of the current Canfield Green apartments in Ferguson where Michael Brown died. Alfred H. Mayer Co. refused to sell the home.

Lawyer Sam Liberman took Jones' case to the U.S. Supreme Court, even though the liberal American Civil Liberties Union refused to back the suit because it interfered with private property purchases. Liberman won. The court ruled the Constitution protects "the freedom to buy whatever a white man can buy, the right to live wherever a white man can live ... when racial discrimination herds men into ghettos and makes their ability to buy property turn on the color of their skin, then it ... is a relic of slavery."

Shortly after Jones v. Mayer, the Inter Religious Center for Urban Affairs planned to build Park View Heights, integrated, subsidized townhouses in an unincorporated area of north St. Louis County, not far from the Jones' house in Paddock Woods. Local opposition developed in the area that was 99 percent white and residents incorporated as the city of Black Jack. The new town promptly passed a zoning ordinance that barred construction.

Judge Harper threw out the challenge to this discriminatory zoning. A federal appeals court overturned the decision.

Appeals judge Gerald Heaney, who was as famous for his pro-civil rights decisions as Harper was notorious for opposing civil rights, wrote that when a law had a discriminatory effect, the burden is on the city to show it has a strong, non-discriminatory purpose. Black Jack didn't have such a purpose.

Although residential racial segregation has declined in St. Louis and most other cities, St. Louis was the seventh most racially segregated metropolitan area based on the 2010 census, ranking after other rust



Photo courtesy of Georgia State University Library

Race riot at the Fairground swimming pool, St. Louis, Missouri, June 21, 1949. Original caption for photo was, "News release: NEGRO SWIMMING PERMISSION INCITES RIOT.... St. Louis, Mo. A group of white youths shown crowding around a negro who already has been attacked. Two feet are shown extended as if to kick the negro to the ground. A baseball bat belonging to one of the youths is also visible."

belt cities such as Milwaukee, New York/New Jersey, Chicago, Cleveland and Buffalo.

Leland Ware, a former St. Louisan and professor at the University of Delaware, says the 1968 Fair Housing law was largely a "toothless tiger" with weak enforcement. "Lingering vestiges of segregation remain in the nation's housing markets that 'perpetuate segregated neighborhoods.'"

## St. Louis' Selma – 'Anatomy of an Economic Murder'

There never was a civil rights riot in St. Louis in the 20th century, a fact often cited as a reason St. Louis never seriously grappled with race.

One reason there was no riot was the Jefferson Bank protests of 1963, the birthplace of that generation's black leaders. William L. Clay, who went on to Congress, led the sit-in blocking the bank's doors.

CORE, the Congress on Racial Equality, sparked the demonstrations at Jefferson Bank, which started two days after 250,000 people joined the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s March on Washington, demanding passage of the Civil Rights Act. Other civil rights groups, such as the local NAACP and

Urban League, shunned CORE's tactics.

Clay was a young black alderman at the time. He received the longest of the jail sentences: 270 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine. He often was criticized in the news media for breaking the law, and opponents tried unsuccessfully to oust him as alderman.

Clay recalled in an interview with former reporter Robert Joiner that he never thought of giving up. "I was surrounded by other people with the same kind of commitment. Ivory Perry, Percy Green, Marian Oldham and Bob Curtis — these were people who weren't going to give up, and I certainly wasn't going to give up. We'd been challenging the system for 10 years before Jefferson Bank through demonstrations at other sites in St. Louis, so we had never felt like giving up."

Clay published a 27-page survey called "Anatomy of an Economic Murder." It contained data from major businesses in St. Louis on how many employees they had, and how many were blacks.

The survey showed 37 blacks out of 7,325 workers at breweries; 69 blacks out of 3,107 sales and office jobs at five

Continued on next page

department stores; 51 blacks among 1,505 at nine dairies; 279 blacks (most in menial jobs) among 1,303 soft-drink workers; 277 blacks (99 percent in minimum-wage jobs) of 5,133 at 16 banks; 22 blacks out of 2,141 at seven insurance companies; and 42 blacks out of 2,550 employees at the two major newspapers.

None of the five inner-city car dealers had a black salesman or mechanic. Neither of two industrial firms (each with 900 employees) had a single black on the payroll. No blacks worked as salespersons in downtown department stores, and no black drivers for beer, dairy and soft-drink companies. The electric, gas and telephone companies, employing thousands, did not hire black linemen, telephone operators, meter readers, stenographers or clerks.

Clay was criticized for embarrassing the firms and hurting the image St. Louis had cultivated as a progressive city in race relations.

While Jefferson Bank, which received city revenues, refused to change its hiring policy, other employers did out of fear CORE would target them. Blacks gained about 1,300 jobs as a direct result of the demonstrations.

Police infiltrated spies into CORE to gather intelligence on the group's plans and the bar tried to disbar lawyers involved.

Clay published a book in 2008 called "The Jefferson Bank Confrontation, The Struggle for Civil Rights in St. Louis." The front of the book shows Clay's daughter Michelle picketing with a sign reading, "Give My Mom a Job." Twenty years later, as a candidate for the Missouri Bar, she was interrogated about her role at the bank. She had been 5-years-old at the time she carried the sign.

Jefferson Bank Executive Vice President Joseph H. McConnell said at the time of the protests, "When aldermen and ministers and physicians picket your bank and block police vehicles, we wonder what our society is coming to."

## Climbing the Arch for jobs

CORE's tactics were too militant for St. Louis's businesses, newspapers and even its chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, which was upset the demonstrators were breaking the law by blocking entrance to private businesses.

But CORE's tactics weren't muscular enough for Percy Green, who started ACTION in 1964, calling for "direct action" to gain civil rights. He didn't think the Jefferson Bank protesters had asked for enough jobs and he wanted to show that civil rights protesters would not be frightened off by the harsh court penalties on Jefferson Bank protesters.

Green attracted attention by climbing the partially built Gateway Arch, unmasking of the Veiled Prophet of Khorassan and filing a historic job discrimination case against McDonnell Douglas.

Green and a white friend climbed one leg of the Arch on July 14, 1964 to demand that 1,000 black workers be hired for the \$1 million construction project. There were no black workers on the Arch construction



Photo courtesy of Associated Press

William L. Clay's daughter Michelle picketing with a sign reading, "Give My Mom a Job." She was 5-years-old at the time.

project. He followed up demanding 10 percent of the jobs at utility companies — Southwestern Bell, Union Electric and Laclede Gas.

"Southwestern Bell had no telephone installers at the time," he recalled in an interview. "Laclede Gas had no meter readers ... We managed to expose them to the extent that they had to start hiring blacks in those areas. I think the first black ... telephone installer eventually retired as a top-notch official. At the time the excuse they gave for blacks not being telephone installers ... was they felt that these black men would create problems by going into white homes. That's what the president of the company said and a similar excuse was given me by the president of Laclede Gas."

A month after Green's protest at the Arch, McDonnell Douglas laid him off saying it was part of a workforce reduction. Green thought the company was punishing him for climbing the Arch. ACTION held a stall-in near McDonnell Douglas to protest. Later, Green sued McDonnell. He lost, but the test laid out a national precedent making it easier for people to prove job discrimination.

In 1972, Green organized the unmasking of the Veiled Prophet. The Veiled Prophet ball was a relic of the Old South, with St. Louis's richest leaders in business dressing up in robes that some people thought looked like Ku Klux Klan outfits. Meanwhile, their debutante daughters paraded in evening gowns. (I remember horse-drawn carriages taking the debutantes in their gowns around

the city streets waving like royalty to ordinary families gathered in crowds along Grand Blvd.)

"We realized," Green recalled, "that the chief executive officers who we had met with about these jobs also was a member of this organization and we put two and two together. No wonder these people don't hire blacks because they are socially involved in these all-white organizations ... (And) they auctioned off their daughters ... The fact that I used that language was very disturbing to these people. Here these same chief executive officers, racist in terms of their employment, they also were sexist in not allowing their females to live their lives."

In the late 60s, ACTION had its own black VP ball and the black VP and black queen would try to attend the ball. They would always be denied admission and arrested.

Then in 1972, a woman from ACTION, the late Gena Scott, lowered herself to the stage along a cable and unmasked Monsanto's executive vice president Thomas K. Smith. The city's newspapers did not print Smith's name. Only the St. Louis Journalism Review Published it. After that, the Veiled Prophet took steps to desegregate, but Green makes it clear that his group wasn't seeking entry, but rather was trying to pressure top business leaders to provide more jobs for blacks. ([Read Green's account of unmasking the Veiled Prophet, Page 32](#))

When Green heard about the death of Michael Brown, "deep down I felt this was another outright murder and is no different



from what happened before. ....They (police) say they fear for their life, but at no time does a person fear for their life that they show any indication of taking cover....They say they fear for my life, boom, boom, boom.

"None of this is new," says Green. Law enforcement demonizing black men goes back to slavery, he said. The only way for law enforcement to gain the confidence of people "is for the Establishment to charge, convict and put in jail for long periods of time policemen who murder black folk, black males ... . Prosecuting attorneys should also be jailed for abuse of their authority (for) their conduct to allow for these policemen to get away with murder and then these judges who use their benches to justify policemen executing black males."

### 'No stone unturned' to preserve segregation at Mizzou

Missouri segregated its schools longer than most southern states. It wasn't until 1976 — 22 years after *Brown v. Board* ruled segregation unconstitutional — that Missouri repealed its requirement of separate schools for "white and colored children."

Segregation applied to the University of Missouri as well.

In 1938 the U.S. Supreme Court ordered Mizzou to admit Lloyd L. Gaines to its law school or to create a separate one of equal quality. The state took the latter option, turning a cosmetology school in St. Louis into the Lincoln University School of law.

University of Missouri President Frederick Middlebush promised to leave "no stone unturned" to block admission of blacks to professional schools.

NAACP lawyers planned to challenge the separate law school Missouri set up, but Gaines vanished without a trace on a visit to Chicago. It never was determined if he had been attacked or wanted to escape the spotlight. It was an era when Missouri had the trappings of Southern society. Schools, housing and education were segregated by law. White mobs lynched blacks at Columbia in 1923, Maryville in 1931 and Sikeston in 1942.

Almost 80 years later, when black students blocked former Mizzou President Tim Wolfe during a homecoming parade — he refused to talk to them about the school's history of segregation. He was forced to resign.

### Minnie Liddell's mission

Even though *Brown v. Board* was handed down by the Supreme Court in 1954, it wasn't until the 1980s that the St. Louis area schools began to desegregate in earnest. One reason is that the legal effort to desegregate ran into not only the South's Massive Resistance but also the same hostile federal judiciary in St. Louis that had rejected Dr. Venable and the Black Jack suits. U.S. District Judge James C. Meredith ruled there was no legally imposed segregation. But the federal appeals court in St. Louis found the state of Missouri the "primary constitutional wrongdoer."

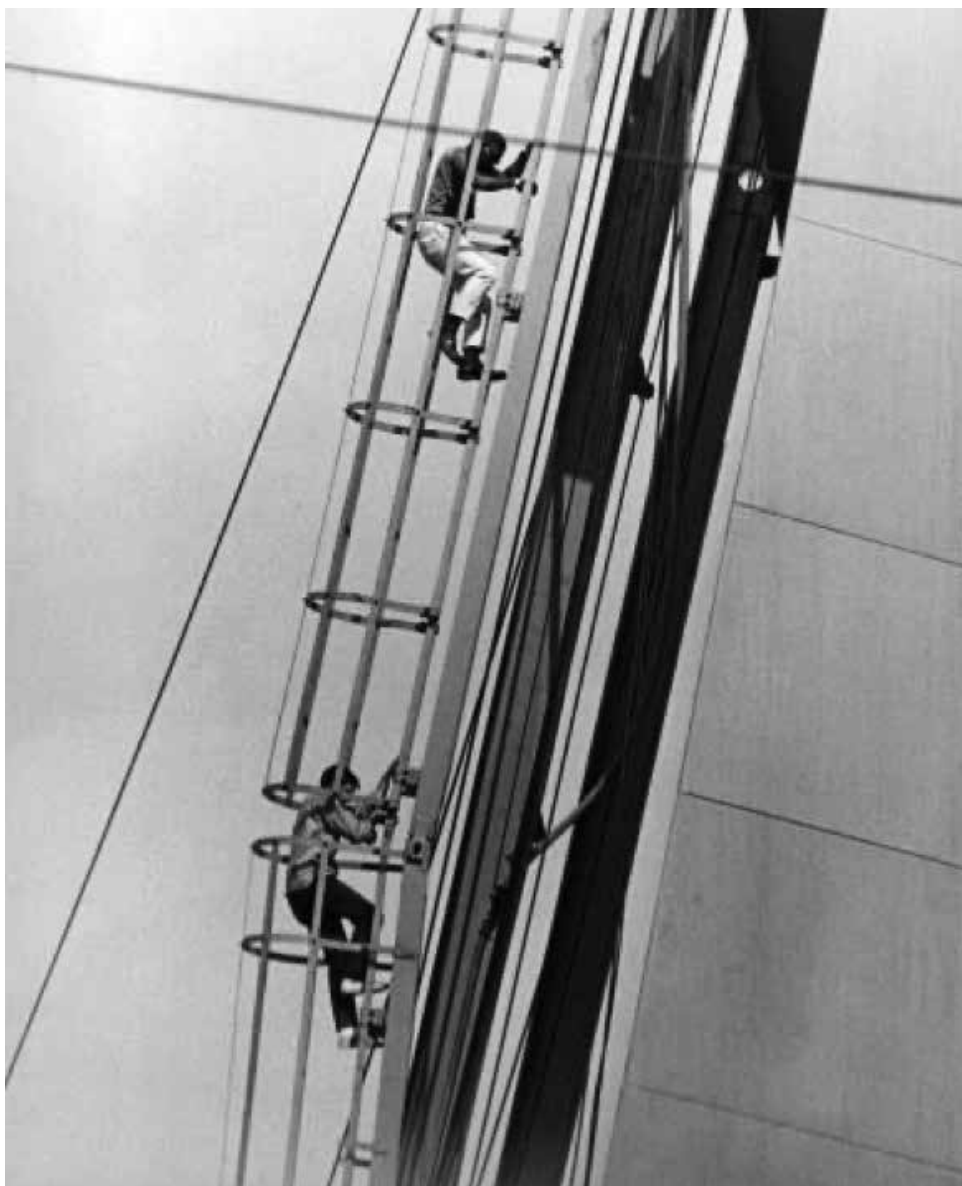


Photo courtesy of [stlpublicradio.org](http://stlpublicradio.org)

CORE demonstrators July 14, 1964, Percy Green (top) and Richard Daly on the Arch. They stayed on the Arch for five hours.

Two of Missouri's most prominent politicians over the past 30 years — John Ashcroft and Jay Nixon — crusaded as attorneys general against the big, ambitious school desegregation plans in St. Louis and Kansas City, each seeking political advantage by attracting opponents of desegregation.

Minnie Liddell wanted her son Craton to attend the nice neighborhood school instead of being bused to a bad neighborhood. Ironically Liddell's lawsuit led to the nation's biggest inter-district voluntary busing program in the nation sending about 14,000 black city students to mostly white suburban schools with several thousand suburban children attending magnets in the city.

NAACP lawyer William L. Taylor had pulled together evidence of the complicity of suburban school districts in segregation. Many suburban districts had bussed their students to all-black St. Louis high schools. Kirkwood, for example, bussed its black students to Sumner.

In 1981, a canny judge and former congressman, William Hungate, put a gun to the head of the suburban districts. Either they would "voluntarily" agree to the inter-district transfer program or he would hear all of the evidence of inter-district discrimination and then probably order a single metropolitan school district. He threw in a carrot to go along with this stick. The state, as the primary constitutional wrongdoer would foot the bill.

The idea of a single metropolitan school district frightened suburban school districts and helped special master D. Bruce La Pierre, a Washington University law professor, persuade them to join the voluntary transfer program.

Ashcroft went to the Supreme Court trying to stop the plan, saying there was nothing voluntary about the court's requirement that the state pick up the tab — which came to \$1.7 billion over the next two decades.

Continued on next page

**“ This feat makes us the first place in the nation where the democratic institutions of government found a way to preserve the gains of the era of desegregation while making it possible to improve the education of all children.”**

**— St. Louis Post-Dispatch editorial**

His opposition to school desegregation helped propel him to the governor's mansion after a primary in 1984 in which desegregation was the leading campaign issue. Ashcroft out demagogued former County Executive Gene McNary in a political ad calling McNary “McFlip-Flop” for supposedly being willing to support the desegregation plan.

Ashcroft called the desegregation plan illegal and immoral and paid for a plane to fly leading anti-busing leaders around the state to attest to his anti-busing bonafides. It was his silver bullet.

### **Nixon on schoolhouse steps**

In the fall of 1997, Attorney General Nixon tried to duplicate Ashcroft's political magic. He appeared on the steps of Vashon High School, a crumbling symbol of black pride in St. Louis. He announced he would press to end the transfer program and spend \$100 million building new black schools in the city. Some black leaders, such as Mayor Freeman Bosley, complained that the transfer program hollowed out city neighborhoods and skimmed off the cream of the students.

Opposition to desegregation did not turn out to be the silver bullet that it had been for Ashcroft. Rep. Bill Clay, the one-time Jefferson Bank protester, convinced President Bill Clinton to pull out of a fundraiser for Nixon. Republican Sen. Christopher S. Bond won a record number of

votes in the African American community to defeat Nixon for the Senate

But, in Kansas City, Nixon did win a big court battle against that city's expansive desegregation plan. This wasn't the Supreme Court of *Brown v. Board*. Gone was Justice Thurgood Marshall, who had won *Brown* as a lawyer. In Marshall's seat on the court was Clarence Thomas, a former Monsanto lawyer who had received his legal training in the Missouri Attorney General John Danforth's office alongside Ashcroft.

Justice Marshall had thought segregated classrooms harmed black children by stigmatizing them as inferior. Thomas had a different idea of stigma. “It never ceases to amaze me that the courts are so willing to assume that anything that is predominantly black must be inferior,” he wrote.

Thomas was the deciding vote in the 1995 decision effectively bringing an end to school desegregation in Kansas City and to court-ordered desegregation nationwide — but not in St. Louis.

Even though Ashcroft and Thomas both were mentored by Sen. Danforth, the Missouri senator was at the same time a strong proponent of civil rights, as the key Republican author of the Civil Rights Act of 1991, along with Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass. That law reversed a series of Supreme Court decisions limiting the reach of job discrimination laws.

### **A political miracle**

In 1998 Attorney General Nixon went to court trying to end the St. Louis program, but U.S. District Judge George Gunn Jr. wouldn't go along. Instead, he appointed William Danforth, former chancellor of Washington University and Sen. Danforth's brother, to find a solution. The result was a settlement, approved by the Missouri Legislature, to continue the transfer program indefinitely. This settlement was built on three extraordinary accomplishments.

First, a coalition of rural and urban legislators in the state legislature combined to pass a law approving the continuation of the cross-district transfer program, even though the program had been politically unpopular in parts of the state.

Second, Chancellor Danforth brought along the St. Louis business community, obtaining the support of Civic Progress, St. Louis' most powerful business leaders. People remember Danforth, a man of few words, getting up at the Civic Progress meeting and telling the captains of business, “We just have to do this.” He pointed to higher graduation rates and college-attendance rates for transferring black students.

Third, taxophobic citizens of St. Louis voted to levy a two-thirds of a cent tax on themselves.

In announcing the settlement of the case, Danforth called it “a historic day” for St. Louis.

Minnie Liddell, the heroic mother whose suit had led to the desegregation plan said, “All I can say is, ‘Yay, St. Louis.’ This has been a long time coming, yet we have just begun. I'm glad I lived to see a settlement in the case.”

Liddell's lawyer, Taylor, wrote that St. Louis' settlement was the best in the nation.

“In many communities around the nation, courts are declaring an end to judicially supervised school desegregation ... . But in St. Louis, the state Legislature has offered a financial package that will enable educational opportunity programs to continue for 10 years or more,” he said.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch editorial (which I wrote) was headlined “Voting for a Miracle.”

“This feat makes us the first place in the nation where the democratic institutions of government found a way to preserve the gains of the era of desegregation while making it possible to improve the education of all children. Imagine. This happened in Missouri.”

Today, two decades later, Minnie Liddell, her son Craton and attorney Taylor are dead. The transfer program continues to exist, although it is winding down and schools are resegregating.

### **Kirkwood's journey**

As a young civic leader, Charles Lee “Cookie” Thornton seemed an unlikely antagonist in a racial drama. Thornton's mother called him “Cookie” because he was so sweet. Kirkwood residents, white and black, remember his broad smile, his embrace and his greeting: “Praise the Lord.” Even a few weeks before the City Hall murders, Thornton would greet friends with his happy-go-lucky attitude and say everything was “FAN-tastic.”

Few African Americans in Kirkwood had so many white friends. He had been a popular track star at Kirkwood High School. In the 1990s, he served on half a dozen civic boards and tutored third and fourth graders at Tillman Elementary School, a mostly white elementary school that had only one black student when I attended in the 1950s and 60s. Thornton ran unsuccessfully for the city council.

In the 1990s, when some Meacham Park residents worried about being annexed by Kirkwood, Thornton favored annexation. When some questioned Kirkwood's redevelopment plan that replaced homes with WalMart and Target stores, Thornton strongly supported the plan.

Those integrationist moves backfired in Thornton's mind. The annexation led to stronger code enforcement and the beginning of his disputes with Kirkwood about parking his trucks near his home. Thornton told friends and relatives he also was bitter about the redevelopment plan because he didn't receive the big, minority set asides on demolition contracts that he thought he had been promised.

By 2003, Thornton had dropped out of civic groups. He also was losing subcontractor jobs and had filed for bankruptcy. He was signing his letters “A free man” and railing about Kirkwood's “plantation mentality” and “slave taxes.”

In early 2003, retired Kirkwood High School principal Franklin S. McCallie spent five months negotiating between his friend Cookie and city officials. McCallie had





Photo courtesy of Brooke Stevens

Cecelia Stearman conducting the Community Gospel Choir at Kirkwood Baptist Church in 2010. "The blacks and whites in the choir have embraced each other and we have come to love and appreciate each other so much," she said.

known Thornton for years, having attended his marriage to Maureen, also an educator.

McCallie has devoted his life to racial justice after seeing racism up close in his boyhood home of Chattanooga, where his family runs an elite private school. (See [McCallie Page 78](#)).

Three loose-leaf binders attest to McCallie's mediation effort. But by May 2003, he admitted he had failed. The city had agreed to waive parking fines of tens of thousands of dollars, but Thornton said he couldn't compromise his principles.

Later, McCallie heard Thornton attack the city council again, hee-hawing for three minutes in what he called "jackass-ese." McCallie rose to say how disappointed he was with his friend's behavior. Thornton still embraced him after the meeting.

A councilman on the receiving end of Thornton's city council tirades was Paul Ward, the second African American to sit on the council. Ward sees a parallel between Thornton and Kevin Johnson, the young Meacham Park resident sentenced to death for the 2005 murder of another white Kirkwood policeman, Sgt. William McEntee.

"The two men believed they had no recourse," Ward said. "Their pain was greater than their respect for life."

Ward and his brother Wallace, who served

on the Kirkwood Board of Education, tried to help Thornton navigate the paperwork required of a subcontractor on the Meacham Park demolition jobs. Still, Thornton thought he was shorted on contracts, Wallace Ward recalls. "I told him to look at his contracts as found money," Ward said. "But he couldn't. He saw it as race, even though it wasn't."

Thornton told friends that a First Amendment suit he had filed without a lawyer would vindicate him and win millions. On Jan. 28, 2008, U.S. District Judge Catherine Perry ruled Kirkwood could remove him from meetings when he engaged in "virulent, personal attacks." Joe Cole, a Meacham Park leader, had dinner with Thornton after the decision. He told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch he found a man defeated. "Everybody said he lost his brain. No, hate got into him. He couldn't stop the hate."

On Feb. 7, Thornton scrawled a note – "The truth will win in the end" – and headed to City Hall with a large caliber handgun. He killed an officer outside City Hall, took his gun and entered the council meeting just after the Pledge of Alliance, holding a placard as he often did during protests. Shouting "Hands in the Air!" 20 times, he corned his victims, murdered three city officials and gravely wounded the mayor. Two police officers killed Thornton in the

chambers.

The day after the murders residents of Meacham Park gathered for two-hours in a meeting filled with such expressions of pain that it seemed impossible this was part of a time when a black man was on his way to be elected president.

Residents complained police had one set of rules for Meacham Park and another for the rest of Kirkwood. White youths who ventured into the neighborhood to see friends were suspected of buying drugs. Complaints to the city's human rights commission went nowhere. The police chief's well-intentioned attempt to reach out to Meacham Park had faltered. The redevelopment of Meacham Park was a land grab, some said, forgetting that Thornton had been one of its strongest proponents.

The Sunday after the shooting, the newspaper headlines talked about moving on, the healing process and the quick remodeling of the City Council chamber. City officials ordered a new coat of green paint to remind residents that this is a town of trees.

Thornton's widow requested the funeral be held at Kirkwood United Methodist Church in the center of town to make the point that Thornton's hometown was the

Continued on next page



greater Kirkwood community. Pastor David Bennett opened the church's doors without a moment's hesitation. "This is who we are, this is what we do," McCallie remembers Bennett saying.

Mourners filled the church and spilled out the door. When McCallie said he hoped the entire city would work together "to make sure this never happens again," the congregation, black and white, rose in spontaneous applause.

Mayor Mike Swoboda, seriously injured in the shooting, seemed at first to be healing. But by fall he was dead. At Christmas we remembered that our friend, with whom we played volleyball at the Kirkwood gym when we were 20-somethings, had done us a good turn the previous Christmas Eve. Our daughter-in-law from out-of-town had gotten lost jogging. She waved down a passing motorist for directions. The motorist was Mike, hurrying to the grocery store. "Get in I'll take you home," he said. "I know everyone in Kirkwood. I'm the mayor."

We wrote a short thank you letter to the Webster-Kirkwood Times about how this only could happen in Kirkwood — never imagining what was about to happen.

The community healed better than Swoboda. The Community for Hope and Understanding held meetings across the city to talk about white privilege and racial understanding. Harriet Patton, the long-time leader of Meacham Park, recalled how a teacher ripped up a paper she had worked hard to write as a junior high student at

Nipher because it was so good the teacher thought she must have cheated. Others recalled having to go to the kitchen door of the popular Spencer's Grill to get served.

The U.S. Department of Justice issued a report recommending ways the racially divided community could unite. The city strengthened the Human Rights Commission. Meacham Park, the city and the school district partnered to start a Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration. And the city renovated Meacham Park Memorial Park.

Ten years after the shooting, Patton told the Post-Dispatch: "I have seen progress. A seed has been planted, it's been watered. It is strong. Now, I'm looking for the bloomin'."

### Hands up, Don't shoot

Hands up, don't shoot never happened. The Justice Department and St. Louis County grand jury investigations proved that.

Officer Darren Wilson allowed a confrontation with Michael Brown to escalate when he should have de-escalated. Brown contributed to the escalation. He grabbed Wilson's gun through the window of the squad car and fired it. After running away Brown turned back and charged Wilson who shot him dead.

It shouldn't have happened that way. But it did and in the instant online explosion of social media that followed Hands Up, Don't shoot became a national rallying cry.

But that isn't what made Ferguson into

this century's Selma. It was the attention on police accountability, reform of prosecutors' offices and court and bail reform.

The federal investigation found the Ferguson police department's rampant unconstitutional practices fell heavily on blacks. All of the department's police-dog bites occurred during arrests of African Americans. Ninety-six percent of those arrested for not appearing in court were black. Eighty-eight percent of all cases involving use of force were against black suspects. And blacks were far more likely to be searched than whites even though whites were more likely to be found with contraband.

Beyond that, the protests led to the realization that an invisible part of the American judicial system — municipal courts — was often abused by small towns that operated them like cash registers raising money for town operations. Citizens who never had committed a crime were locked up for having failed to appear in court to pay a fine. The result was lost jobs, lost apartments and wrecked families.

Brendan Roediger, a Saint Louis University law professor active in court reform, recalls deposing former Ferguson Police Chief Thomas Jackson and asking how many of the 10,000 people locked up in the Ferguson jail over a recent five year period were there after having been sentenced for a crime. "He said, 'Oh yeah, it happened one time.'" In other words, the other 9,999 people in jail were not there for





crimes, says Roediger.

Here are some of the reforms that grew out of Ferguson:

- Ferguson fueled the Black Lives Matter movement and contributed to election of reform prosecutors here and across the country in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Kansas City and Chicago. Ferguson protesters led the campaign to elect Kim Gardner as St. Louis' first black prosecutor, and Wesley Bell stunned the political world beating Bob McCulloch, the powerful prosecutor who had cleared Wilson in Brown's death.
- Justice Department intervention in the operation of the Ferguson police department led to a consent decree requiring constitutional policing.
- Missouri passed a new law limiting the use of deadly force to instances where police had probable cause a suspect posed a significant threat of death or serious physical injury to the officer or others.
- ArchCity Defenders, a public interest law office that rose out of obscurity, won a \$4.7 million settlement from Jennings over operation of its municipal court as a modern-day debtor prison; similar lawsuits against Ferguson, Florissant, St. Ann, Edmundson, Normandy and Maplewood linger in court.
- The Missouri Legislature enacted a reform limiting the amount of municipal fines that could be used for a town's expenses, gradually forcing some small

municipal courts out of business.

- The Missouri Supreme Court ordered changes in municipal court procedures. Later, in 2019, it issued new bail rules limiting how long a defendant can be detained without a hearing and requiring courts to balance community safety with the defendant's ability to pay. New procedures for more prompt hearings and ankle monitoring have led to a 20 percent reduction in jail population in the past year.
- St. Louis. Post-Dispatch columnist Tony Messenger's revelations about reincarcerating former prisoners for failing to pay their board bills — the cost of food and lodging during an earlier jail stay — shocked the legal system and general public, leading to reforms.
- Greater scrutiny of police conduct after Ferguson led to the 2017 prosecution of a former St. Louis Police Officer Jason Stockley for killing Anthony Lamar Smith at the end of a police chase. Stockley had been recorded as saying during the chase he was "going to kill" Smith "don't you know it." A judge acquitted Smith prompting days of Ferguson-style protests in downtown St. Louis.
- During the Stockley protests, St. Louis police used the unconstitutional tactic of "kettling," which is trapping protesters in a closed space, tear gassing them and arresting them. White officers also beat up an undercover black officer during those protests, leading to prosecutions.

- Gardner angered the white police union with her list of 59 police officers who could not bring criminal charges because they had credibility problems from past cases or because they had made racist social media posts.
- When Gardner sought a new trial for Lamar Johnson, who has spent 25 years in prison for a murder that Gardner's Conviction Integrity Unit says he did not commit, she ran into a solid wall of opposition from the white legal community. Misconduct by the prosecutor and police payments to a false witness contributed to the unjust conviction, she found. But a judge and Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt claimed Gardner lacks the power to ask for a new trial for a prisoner her office wrongfully convicted. People would lose faith in prosecutors, Schmitt said. The Missouri Supreme Court will decide who is right.

Thomas Harvey, who led ArchCity Defenders during Ferguson, had been trying to expose petty municipal corruption for years before Brown's death. But he couldn't get people to pay attention to the big impact minor fines, small town municipal courts and abusive police traffic stops could have on people's lives.

It took the death of Michael Brown to finally attract the nation's attention to this racist injustice that had been hidden in plain sight, along with all of the other vestiges of slavery and segregation.

## Press flubs first draft of history of race

by William H. Freivogel

The press' rough draft of the history of race in St. Louis, Missouri and Illinois got most things wrong.

In the early 1950s, a group of young civil rights activists – Irv and Maggie Dagen, Charles and Marion Oldham and Norman Seay – led a CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) sponsored sit-in of lunch counters in segregated downtown St. Louis.

Richard Dudman, a young reporter for the Post-Dispatch, ran across the protest and hurried back to the office with the big story.

The editors told the future Washington Bureau chief to forget it. They knew about the protests but weren't writing about them because it might trigger violence. Avoiding a riot was a preoccupation at the paper where big glass windows near the presses were bricked over just in case. There never was a riot, a fact often cited as a reason St. Louis never seriously grappled with race before Ferguson.

Joseph Pulitzer II was the publisher who built the Post-Dispatch into a great American newspaper and a leading progressive voice for change. He and the paper generally supported civil rights, as opposed to its competitor the Globe-Democrat that consorted with FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's dirty tricks against the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Pulitzer urged reluctant editors to consider hiring blacks in the 1950s. But Pulitzer didn't want to go too far.

In 1950 Pulitzer thought a letter to the editor from black postal clerk Henry Winfield Wheeler was "an almost perfect statement of the Negro cause." At Pulitzer's suggestion, reporter Donald Grant was assigned to write a story about Wheeler. Wheeler wrote a letter to Grant saying blacks want "the same treatment under our Constitution as every other American citizen" including the right to marry anyone of their choosing.

"The persons, be they Black or White, who object to this right are Fascist in their thinking. I want my daughter to have a right to go to a Public School, not as a Colored girl, but as an American girl enjoying the same opportunity as her White playmate. I want my boy and my girl to be given the same opportunity according to their ability and efficiency as any other individual. I want the right to eat and sleep in any hotel that I can pay the price. I want the right to live anywhere that I choose in any neighborhood so long as I am a law-abiding citizen. I want the right to go into any Theater or Public Place just like all other Folks. I want the right to enjoy peace and prosperity under the stars and stripes, which rights have been bought by all of us by blood and tears and toil. I want Human Dignity."

This basic statement of human rights

was too much. Grant wrote to Pulitzer "that in my opinion an interview with Mr. Wheeler would not be suitable for publication." Pulitzer agreed, adding, "I fear I made a mistake" suggesting the interview. "I agree the publication of his views would do the Negro cause more harm than good."

In 1954 the Post-Dispatch supported the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark *Brown v. Board* decision desegregating public schools. Again Pulitzer was cautious.

"I advise going slow in pressing the subject of non-integration in hotels and restaurants, lest we do the cause of non-integration more harm than good."

Irving Dilliard, the editorial editor, didn't follow the advice in his editorial the next day: "More Powerful than All the Bombs." It said the justices of the Supreme Court "will be associated as long as this Republic stands with a great and just act of judicial statesmanship" that affirmed "the pledge in the United States of the worth and dignity of the humblest individual means what it says ... . Nine men in Washington have given us a victory that no number of divisions, arms or bombs could ever have won."

One of the big Post-Dispatch projects of the 1950s was "Progress or Decay," a multi-part series advocating the clearance of slums to be replaced by public housing. The slums, such as the Mill Creek area around the railroad tracks east of Grand Blvd., were cleared, but residents were scattered to the winds and public housing projects soon were their own slums. Laclede Town, which replaced the Mill Creek slum, had to be torn down and Pruitt Igoe was dynamited.

### Jefferson Bank

St. Louis never had the riot that Post-Dispatch editors feared. The closest thing was the 1963 Jefferson Bank protest, which began two days after Martin Luther King's March on Washington.

President John F. Kennedy, who had just introduced the Civil Rights Act that year cautioned civil rights leaders two months before the Washington march that it was "ill-timed." He added, "We want success in Congress, not just a big show at the Capitol." King responded to Kennedy, "Frankly, I have never engaged in any direct-action movement which did not seem ill-timed."

Demonstrators at the Jefferson Bank were told the same thing — that they were setting back their cause.

The pro-civil rights Post-Dispatch editorial page wrote, "The impatience of the civil rights movement here is understandable and justifiable, but does it not now owe the business efforts to end discrimination a

chance to prove successful? Demonstrations that stop business can be as self-defeating as they are unfair."

William L. Clay, then an alderman, was sentenced to 270 days in jail for blocking the bank entrance. He went on to be elected to Congress where he served 32 years. He recalled: "The media was shameful in its biased coverage of the Jefferson Bank protests. The Post-Dispatch, Globe-Democrat, KMOX-TV, radio and the rest of the media became front organizations for the Establishment."

They called demonstrators a "disruptive attempt by a small group of radicals seeking to harm the solid advancement in the city's race relations."

He pointed out the newspapers had no black reporters, ad reps or pressmen.

"The most the Post could point to was a black receptionist," he said. "There were no blacks as newsmen or women in radio or television. ... These facts that the media refused to publicize were as clear as a goat's behind going uphill on a clear day."

"The Post, over and over, referred to the guilty and irresponsible (CORE) leadership and misguided defendants," Clay added. And the Globe-Democrat tried to link CORE to communists. A Globe editorial called the protests "an extortion tactic in the guise of racial equality."

Martin Duggan was a news editor at the Globe-Democrat at the time of the Jefferson Bank demonstrations. Recalled Duggan: "I considered Jefferson Bank not a villain. Why did they go after Jefferson Bank? It was never a big player. Maybe it was easier to intimidate. ... The whole thing was unfortunate. It put an unfavorable light on the city and banks ... Bill Clay was always antagonistic to the Globe. The Globe never approved of his tactics."

### Hoover and the Globe-Democrat

J. Edgar Hoover, the treacherous head of the FBI (amazingly the FBI headquarters still is named after him) orchestrated a campaign of dirty tricks against Rev. King to get him to kill himself. FBI Agent William Sullivan was placed in charge of the COINTELPRO — Counter Intelligence Program — targeting anti-war and civil rights leaders, including King.

Hoover and Sullivan had a different reaction than most Americans to the "I have a Dream Speech" during the 1963 March on Washington. Sullivan wrote: "In the light of King's powerful demagogic speech. ... We must mark him now if we have not done so before, as the most dangerous Negro of the future in this nation from the standpoint of communism, the Negro, and national security."

One of Sullivan's tactics was to send a hateful anonymous letter to King telling him





SIUC School of Journalism The Cairo Project

All white fire department in Cairo, Illinois.

to kill himself because of his "countless acts of adulterous and immoral conduct lower than that of a beast."

The old St. Louis Globe-Democrat was an accomplice in the effort to discredit King, according to congressional reports. The Post-Dispatch used the Freedom of Information Act to obtain documents showing the Globe-Democrat's complicity with the FBI's COINTELPRO. The documents became part of the investigation of the House Assassinations Committee in 1980.

One 1968 FBI document read:

"The feeding of well chosen information to the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, a local newspaper, whose editor and associate editor are extremely friendly to the Bureau and the St. Louis Office, has also been utilized in the past and it is contemplated that this technique might be used to good advantage in connection with this program."

And another:

"The St. Louis Globe-Democrat has been especially cooperative with the Bureau in the past. Its publisher [name deleted] is on the Special Correspondents List."

On March 28, 1968, violence broke out at the Memphis sanitation march, the last protest Rev. King led. The FBI used it to send the message that King could not control a large march, such as the Poor People's March planned for upcoming summer.

The FBI circulated a memo to "cooperative news media sources." The House Assassinations Committee concluded the FBI ghost editorial resulted in a Globe-Democrat editorial two days later, right down to the misspelling of capital.

"Memphis may only be the prelude to

civil strife in our Nation's Capitol [sic]. — FBI memorandum, March 28, 1968

Memphis could be only the prelude to a massive bloodbath in the Nation's Capitol [sic] ... — Globe-Democrat editorial, March 30, 1968

The House Assassinations Committee concluded that James Earl Ray didn't read the editorial. He was in Birmingham that day buying the rifle he used to kill King.

The committee believed, however, that Ray's brother, John, had read the editorial because he referred to it later after the assassination. On June 13, 1972, John Ray wrote to author George McMillan the following description of Dr. King:

"... A piece in the editorial sections of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat said that King led marches until he got, them stir [sic] up, then used a excuse to leave, while the dumb Blacks got their head beat in by police."

The final conclusion of the House Assassinations Committee was that a St. Louis conspiracy most likely led to Ray's assassination of King. It found evidence that a segregationist Monsanto patent lawyer, John H. Sutherland, and a former stock broker, John H. Kauffmann, had offered \$50,000 to a career criminal to kill King. Sutherland, whose home office was decorated with Confederate memorabilia, was a John Birch Society member who founded the segregationist Citizens Council in Missouri and worked in the American Independent Party campaign for segregationist Alabama Gov. George Wallace. AIP leaders frequented John Ray's Grapevine Tavern in South St. Louis. The committee could not close the link however and the Rays denied receiving any offer. Nor could the

committee find evidence of a payment to Ray.

## COINTELPRO in Cairo

Hoover and his COINTELPRO were active too in Cairo, Illinois, the sad town at the convergence of Ohio and Mississippi River with a history of lynching blacks in carnival atmospheres and printing postcards to commemorate the occasions. The lynching of Will James in 1909 was classic.

As the 1950s rolled around, Nathel Burtley and his friends wanted to swim in the Cairo pool. But a sign on it said, "Private: Whites only." Burtley and his friends jumped in anyway and got arrested. The story featured prominently in an obituary last month when Burtley, who had gone on to be the first black superintendent in Flint, Michigan, died of COVID-19.

By 1964 the white city government in Cairo was taking no chances. It closed the municipal swimming pool rather than open it to blacks.

Three years later, on July 16, 1967, Pfc. Robert L. Hunt Jr. was found hanged in the Cairo jail, setting off weeks of protests and violence.

Hunt was riding in an automobile with five others on the night of July 15 when Cairo police stopped the vehicle, allegedly for having a defective tail light. Hunt responded to the policeman's verbal barrage with a barrage of his own, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights found. He was charged with disorderly conduct and taken to jail. Police reported they locked Hunt into a cell at 12:30 a.m., and found him "approximately 30 to 40 minutes later ... hanged by his t-shirt."

Continued on next page



A portrait of William James.

The police story, based on a cellmate, was that Hunt was AWOL from the military and hung himself. The police report went missing and as did the cellmate and his name. Dr. Fred Crockett, physician and Illinois State President of the NAACP, contacted the FBI and called for an investigation. Among the suspicious elements of the death were:

Witnesses who viewed Hunt's body saw bruises indicating he had been beaten; the police claim that Hunt was picked up because he was AWOL is contradicted by military documents praising his service; relatives say that Hunt was in good spirits and in no way suicidal before his visit to Cairo; the wire mesh at the top of his cell could not have supported Hunt's weight.

But violence already had begun in Cairo in response to the hanging and top FBI officials decided not to investigate.

In an "urgent" July 19 memo to the Hoover, obtained by the SIU School of Journalism, the Springfield FBI wrote: "In view of the current turmoil where the National Guard, the state and local police are trying to contain a potentially violent situation, where vandalism and destruction of property have already occurred, it is recommended that no action be taken on Dr. Crockett's complaint at this time."

There was no action then nor in the 53 years since.

Washington was more interested in stemming the violence in Cairo and harrasing civil rights leaders. FBI documents show COINTELPRO sought to undermine the Rev. Charles Koen, who headed the Black Liberators, a Black Panther-style group in Cairo. FBI documents from 1969 show Hoover approved an operation proposed by the St. Louis office to send falsified "anonymous letters...(to) his wife regarding extramarital relations." The hope was to "cause Koen to spend more of



Photos courtesy of SIUC School of Journalism The Cairo Project

The lynching of Will James. Commercial Avenue is jammed with spectators below the electrically lit Hustler's Arch, November 11, 1909. This image was taken moments after the rope broke and James' body fell to the street. After hanging James, the mob turned its attention to the county jail where it seized Henry Salzner, a white man suspected of murdering his wife, and lynched him from a telephone pole.

his time at home" in St. Louis. The letters were sent and the rumors also were printed in an "underground newspaper" called the Blackboard, which was printed in Springfield, Illinois and distributed in St. Louis.

The local paper, the Cairo Evening Citizen didn't probe Hunt's death. In a 1971 first-hand account from Cairo, J. Anthony Lukas of the New York Times described the paper's bias against civil rights. Here's a passage:

I'd agree to meet Leonard Boscarine, a young reporter for The Cairo Evening Citizen. I'd heard that the police had taken Boscarine's camera away ... and wanted to check that out.

"Yeah," he told me. "... I started to take a picture and this cop shouted: 'Hey, you can't take our picture,' shaking his club at me. Then Charlie Jestus, the assistant police chief, came over and said: 'Give me that damn camera.' Jestus knew me and I showed him my credentials just to make sure. But he took the camera and put it in his car. We got it back later, but the film had been ripped out.

"I was really mad, and I got even madder when I found out the paper wasn't even going to report anything about it. The merchants told our advertising man we'd better be careful what we said about the Saturday events or they wouldn't buy any more ads. ... When I told Jim Flannery, the city editor [whose brother is a police sergeant] how disgusted that made me, he just looked up and said: 'A man's got to eat.'

"Hell, at journalism school (at SIU) they taught me a reporter ought to get both sides of a story. But down here people didn't like that. In September, the Mayor and Police Commissioner came in and asked that I be fired.... The next day, Boscarine was fired. So I went down to see David Cain, the young Texan who is

editor publisher of The Citizen. Cain said he had fired Boscarine because he had become too "emotionally involved" in the racial story. "He was inclined to use his mouth too much and his ears too little," he said. "Our readers just came to doubt the veracity of his reports."

... Cain...conceded that The Citizen did not intend to publish anything about the camera incident. "In a big city you might feel you had to write about it because you couldn't let the police get away with something like that," he said, "but things are done differently in a small Illinois town."

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights found the events in Cairo so disturbing that it held hearings in 1972 and Frankie M. Freeman, the St. Louis lawyer and member of the commission, issued the report the next year: "Cairo, Ill.: A Symbol of Racial Polarization. It said: "Black residents have been faced with serious harassment and physical brutality by law enforcement officials (who) have aligned themselves with groups whose purpose is to oppose the enforcement of equal opportunity for all citizens regardless of race."

## The civil rights stories never published

James C. Millstone was the Post-Dispatch's Supreme Court reporter in the 1960s. Millstone covered the civil rights protests in the South. After months on the road, he returned to the home office on his way back to the Washington Bureau.

That's when he got his first look at how the paper had handled his dispatches from the front lines of the civil rights marches. The paper had not run the stories as stand alone eyewitness accounts to history, but instead folded a few paragraphs here and there into wire service reports. Haynes Johnson, with whom Millstone had reported the stories while traveling in the South, got a Pulitzer Prize.



Millstone's stories didn't make it to the readers.

The Post-Dispatch's account of Rev. King's 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech suffered a similar fate. Reading the long story, one would never know that Dr. King's words were making history. His famous words were buried far down in a story about the forgettable speeches of politicians and other civil rights leaders.

I became a reporter at the Post-Dispatch in the fall of 1971. Much of my reporting involved race. Municipalities had passed anti-blockbusting laws that banned for-sale signs and imposed occupancy regulations limiting how many members of a family could live together.

One St. Louisan who greeted me was Franklin V. Chesnutt, a member of the Ku Klux Klan who didn't appreciate my stories. He telephoned me repeatedly and threatened to burn a cross on my front lawn. He even sent me his card, which listed his KKK membership.

One day in 1972 Charlie Prendergast, a beloved executive city editor, sent me out on an assignment about police brutality. As a last caution, he opened the bottom left drawer of his desk and pointed at a stack of stories.

He told me it was a big project on racism that never had made it into publication. Make sure you don't make the same mistakes, he cautioned.

It wasn't the only time a big racism project at the Post-Dispatch failed to make it into print. A months-long project in 1999 also never saw the light of day.

I was involved in one civil rights series that same year — an old-fashioned, editorial crusade to persuade St. Louisans to tax themselves to pay for continuation of the city-county school desegregation plan. With the help of civic leaders, such as Chancellor Emeritus William Danforth, the tax passed.

About a decade later, the online St. Louis Beacon decided to try a major project on race. Beacon representatives travelled around town to line up media partners. Many said it was a good idea but all had reasons they could not participate. One media executive said it was "too soon" to write about race in St. Louis. The Beacon ended up publishing the project with the Missouri Historical Society as a partner. It was called: Race Frankly.

### **Ferguson: The citizen activist becomes the citizen journalist**

Ferguson was a journalistic revolution that marked the triumph of the citizen/activist journalist over the traditional mainstream media. Gone forever was the day when an editor at the Post-Dispatch or KMOX could decide a black kid shot to death by a police officer on a Ferguson street wasn't big news.

The first tweet reporting Michael Brown's death was two minutes after he crashed to the pavement on Canfield Drive.

There were five million tweets in the week after Brown's death and 35 million in the months that followed. Protesters with cell phones seized the national agenda, told the story from their points of view, knit together a new national civil rights movement and scratched the

scabs off the nation's racial scars.

Social media's prevailing view of Ferguson — that Brown had been executed, with his hands up and shot in the back — came to dominate many media accounts.

It turned out the narrative was a myth, but one with great power and truth. No, Brown didn't have his hands up or say "Don't Shoot," the Justice Department concluded. But, yes, Officer Darren Wilson's escalation of his confrontation with Brown had led to the shooting. Yes, the Ferguson police were involved in grossly unconstitutional policing that victimized blacks. Yes, white police officers shoot and kill African Americans without sufficient justification all the time.

And yes, this land of Dred Scott has never directly confronted its racial demons.

### **12:03 p.m. "Just saw someone die OMFG."**

The first tweet about the death of Michael Brown was a minute or two after he collapsed on Canfield Dr., just past noon Aug. 9, 2014. Local rapper Emanuel Freeman (@TheePharaoh) tweeted from inside his home a photo of Brown's body face down in the street, an officer standing over him.

12:03 p.m. "Just saw someone die OMFG."

12:03 p.m. "I'm about to hyperventilate."

12:04 p.m. "the police just shot someone dead in front of my crib yo."

Forty minutes later, at 12:48 p.m., a previously unknown young woman, La'Toya Cash, joined the conversation. She posted this tweet as @AyoMissDarkSkin: "Ferguson police just executed an unarmed 17-year-old boy that was walking to the store. Shot him 10 times smh."

The account of the "boy" "executed" walking on the street and shot 10 times established Mike Brown's victimhood. smh — Twitter speak for "shaking my head," — drove home the point, as did a photo showing dozens of police cars in the street.

The tweet was retweeted 3,500 times in the next few hours as word of the shooting passed through the community like an electrical charge. @AyoMissDarkSkin's report received much more attention than the Post-Dispatch's report hours later.

Never before in America had a story exploded so fast from the people who normally feel disenfranchised.

Even though the Twitter story had big mistakes, it told the essential truth about white police officers killing black suspects. And it connected people into groups that led to reforms, says Nicole Hudson, now a vice chancellor at Washington University who led the Forward Through Ferguson reform effort.

"As much as people pooh-pooh social media as a horrible loud place," she said, "there are moments and times when real community is created and change can happen ... There is this myth that Twitter is horrible because there is a bunch of untrue stuff on it but like any medium you have a responsibility to use your brain."

Hudson said she was disappointed with traditional media's coverage. "The thing I

found frustrating in the traditional media is I wanted to see a story about the nuances to the protest movement. I wanted to see a story that recognized what was happening on the ground between the young kids and the elders and that some of the elders were having some aha moments about how the kids were saying you're not my elder and i don't need to listen to you."

### **An awakening**

Traditional media played an important part, though, in memorializing the Ferguson protest through the photos of the Post-Dispatch photo staff. And Tony Messenger, the deputy editorial editor turned columnist, has crusaded ever since for municipal court, bail, board-bill and police accountability reforms.

For Messenger and some other journalists, Ferguson was an awakening. Richard Weiss, whose COVID and Clayton stories appear in this issue, was another journalist for whom Ferguson was a turning point.

St. Louis Public Radio devoted the entire staff to Ferguson reporting, curating a live blog to keep up with the rapid news developments and launching the "We Live Here" podcast on race and class. "We Live Here" brought alive historical events such as the landmark restrictive covenant case of Shelley v. Kraemer by interviewing descendants of J.D. and Ethel Shelley's family about housing discrimination.

Messenger remembers that at the start of the Ferguson protests he was shocked by what he saw on the streets, turned on his tape recorder and said, "This is not St. Louis."

After Ferguson and after Charlottesville, Messenger realized he was wrong. After watching Nazis march through the streets of Charlottesville with torches he tweeted, "This cannot be the new normal in America."

Jason Purnell, the Brown School professor at Washington University, who had pulled together the ground-breaking For Sake of All report, tweeted back. "America isn't better than this. America is this. America CAN be better than this if we can finally face that fact."

Messenger realized he was wrong. He wrote:

"When the president of the United States, Donald Trump, can't even bring himself to condemn such God-awful displays of racism and outright treason on American soil, this is not something that can be written off to 'extremists' or a broken political system. This is America. It's an America that allowed Republicans to gut voting rights protections so that black voters would have a more difficult time voting on election day. It's an America in which a black lawyer in Jefferson City is not allowed to testify against a bill that makes it easier to discriminate in Missouri against people of color because a white Republican doesn't want to be bothered by talk of the long-past 'Jim Crow' era. It is an America in which white elected officials in both parties, and their donors and alumni, brought the University of Missouri to heel after black students and faculty stood up for their rights, and demanded change."

"Charlottesville is America. For far too many Americans, we are not better than this, and we never have been. The arc of American history has much more bending to do before justice even enters the frame."

# Vulnerable neighborhood faces shorter life expectancy and COVID-19 dangers

by Richard H. Weiss

*This story was produced in partnership with the Pulitzer Center. Additional support provided by the St. Louis Press Club.*

Kim Daniel has stared death in the eye more times than she can count. But the coronavirus has her more than scared. "It's intimidating," said the 53-year-old. "I don't walk out the door without a mask, gloves, baby wipes and rubbing alcohol."

Her door opens into a two-bedroom apartment in an affordable housing development called Preservation Square. It's located just a mile west of downtown St. Louis, in a ZIP code that has been identified as ranking last in the region in social determinants of health.

A lot of factors go into that ranking, but the main one is that, on average, people living in 63106 will die sooner than most anyone else in metropolitan St. Louis. The life expectancy of a person born in 63106 in 2010 was 67 years, according to data from the census and the St. Louis Department of Health. That compares to 85 years in 63105, which covers Clayton, the St. Louis County seat six miles to the west.

Residents in 63106 die younger because they suffer from higher rates of chronic illnesses like cancer, heart disease and diabetes. They have less access to health care, nutritious food and fresh air. Higher crime rates in their neighborhood are a factor too, not just because of the physical harm crime brings, but because of the stress it imposes on immune systems. Crime makes residents fearful to venture outdoors and to public spaces where they can enjoy sunshine and recreation.

Now add to this toxic stew the looming threat of a pandemic that impacts everyone but falls most heavily on African Americans.

Accustomed to fighting the fight

Kim Daniel comes to the pandemic, and the joblessness and fear it can engender, as a seasoned veteran.

She was born with a congenital heart defect. "They (the doctors) said I wouldn't live to my first birthday," Kim recalled. "I made it. They said I wouldn't live to age 6. I made it."

At age 17, in 1985, Daniel dropped out of Beaumont High School after learning she was pregnant. The pregnancy nearly took her life; she went into cardiac arrest in her ninth month. But doctors resuscitated her and performed an emergency C-section. And that's how Terrence came into this world.

At age 24, it once again seemed Daniel's time had come. She suffered a cardiac arrest while undergoing a cardiac catheterization. But the medics were able to bring her around.

"The doctor told me then, 'If you don't lose weight, you'll be dead by age 35.' Right now I weigh 219 pounds" — 80 pounds more than at age 24 — "and I am still here."



Photo courtesy of Wiley Price/ St. Louis American

The Preservation Square neighborhood is located in the middle of the 63106 ZIP code and includes a public elementary school, an early childhood center and a convenience store, and is accessible to Metro bus routes. Nearly half the residents in 63106 do not own vehicles, and half have incomes below the poverty line.

Her weight aside, Daniel knows how to take care of herself and others. Her resourcefulness and determination may be what sees her through the pandemic. Despite her health issues, she went on to earn a GED — and didn't stop there. Daniel is a lifelong learner. If she needed to know something, she picked up a book or went online. That's how she learned to save her money, understand how government benefit programs work and invest her money wisely. That's how she was able to put food on the table for Terrence, and later his little brother, Michael. And that's how she was able to afford a car when many of her neighbors must rely on public transportation.

Given these characteristics, it's perhaps not surprising that for many years, she was a caregiver for her entire extended family. She not only raised her two children but also helped watch over her sister's child and her aunt's four children.

When her two sons were children, Daniel relied for a couple of years on food stamps to feed them and herself. She started up with food stamps again in 2004 and continues to receive Supplemental Security Income, which provides a stipend for basic needs for low-income citizens with disabilities. But she has always sought work and has held a variety of jobs, including hotel housekeeper, home health care aide and school bus driver (her favorite). She currently is starting her second year as an employee with the St. Louis AmeriCorps VISTA program. Under its aegis, she is working with

Urban Strategies, an organization that helps bring resources to underserved neighborhoods in St. Louis and nationwide.

Marlene Hodges, a longtime community organizer for Urban Strategies, said Daniel is a master at outreach, excelling at organizing social events for residents in Preservation Square. "You give her a task, and she gets it done," Hodges said. Daniel was starting to build an advisory council that would give residents a stronger voice in the future of their neighborhood.

Then the coronavirus outbreak brought her effort to a temporary halt. Now she is working from home, editing and rewriting a manual on trauma-informed tutoring.

Kim is definitely trauma-informed. She has seen and experienced more than her share in the neighborhoods where she has lived and within her family, too. Her elder son, Terrence, a Navy veteran, was arrested not long after his discharge in 2011 for participating as the driver of the getaway car in a bank robbery in Auburn, Alabama. That led to a 22-year sentence that he is serving at the Fountain Correctional Center in Alabama. Daniel is a strong believer in having her son face the consequences. But now he is facing more than just doing time, as prison inmates are considered at great risk of contracting the coronavirus.

No infections have been reported to date at Fountain, which is about 50 miles northeast of Mobile. But few tests had been performed. And Alabama officials were



# A Tale of Two Zip Codes



Graphic courtesy of Richard Weiss

A closer look at these two zip codes uncovers what we call the “social determinants of health.” Though we often think about access to health insurance and medical care as driving health outcomes alone, it turns out that factors like education, employment, income, wealth, and neighborhood status have significant impact on how well and how long we live. By way of example, 63106 has 6 times the unemployment rate, almost 8 times the poverty rate, and a quarter of the median income of 63105. It also has more than 10 times the African American population.

bracing for an outbreak, with a prediction of as many as 185 deaths among a statewide prison population of 22,000, according to a report obtained by AL.com.

“No one should be faced with a life-threatening disease, especially when they don’t have the opportunity to do anything about it,” Daniel said. “I am just hoping that the Alabama Department of Corrections will test all their employees and inmates so they can separate the sick from the well to serve out their time without the fear of being infected.”

Kim’s younger son, Michael, 32, is faring better, but is nonetheless at risk too. Also a Navy veteran, who saw action in Iraq and Afghanistan, Michael is an essential worker. Each day he rises at 1 a.m. to head to an Amazon warehouse in Hazelwood. There he loads more than a dozen pallets of packages to take to rural post offices in eastern Illinois, about a 400-mile round-trip journey. This is all done with masks and distancing and with Michael assiduously wiping down his truck. But he is an independent contractor, which means he not only provides his own vehicle but receives no medical benefits. He has no health care coverage.

Michael recently lost his home to foreclosure. He is living with his father in Florissant. What little money he can put aside will go to tuition at a parochial school for his 12-year-old daughter, Mi’kehael, who is staying with her mom.

Daniel wants to help out her family and anyone she can during this crisis. She has



Photo courtesy of Wiley Price/ St. Louis American

Kim Daniel makes home made masks both for herself and others.

been a caregiver all her life to family, friends and even strangers. She has always provided the answers either by giving sage advice or hands-on help. But who will provide the answers for her, should her heart begin to fail, should she contract the virus?

“If I fall ill,” Daniel said, “there is no one readily available. No one to count on, no one to be at my beck and call, no one to manage my bills.

“My only alternative is to remain healthy.”  
Richard H. Weiss is the executive editor

of Before Ferguson Beyond Ferguson

Before Ferguson Beyond Ferguson, a nonprofit racial equity project, is telling the story of families in 63106 one by one over the course of the pandemic. Kim Daniel’s story is one of as many as 10 that will be shared with mainstream media in St. Louis for what will likely be months to come. This story originally was shared through St. Louis Public Radio and can be viewed at [stlpr.org](http://stlpr.org). You can find an archive of other stories at [beforefergusonbeyondferguson.com](http://beforefergusonbeyondferguson.com).

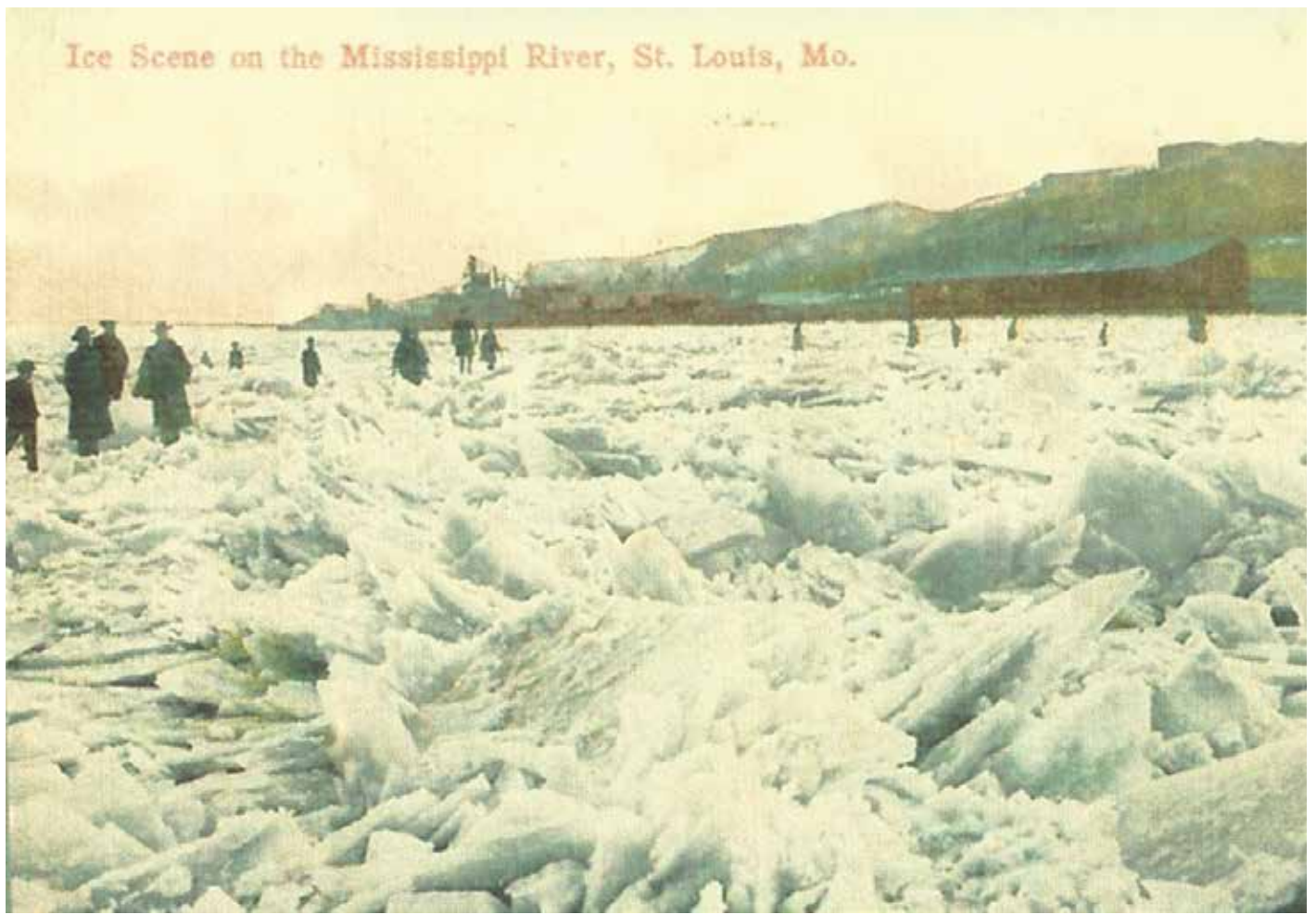


Photo courtesy of Illinois Historical Society

Ice on the Mississippi River in St. Louis.

## A family's fight for freedom

by Amelia Blakely

"Once a slave, always a slave. Born free, always free."

These words symbolize the life of Lydia Titus, a pre-Civil War African American who was born as a slave and died a free woman after fighting for her family's freedom for more than 20 years.

Even after she won her freedom, her slave owner's family tried to re-enslave her and her children and grandchildren.

Her story shows free African Americans in the supposedly free state of Illinois lived the peril of imprisonment and re-enslavement.

The Titus story played out in the decades before the nation was gripped by a similar fight by Dred and Harriet Scott. Titus was one of a thousand enslaved African Americans who lived in southern Illinois between 1720 through 1865. Her struggle is documented in state court documents including freedom suits and the registration of free blacks from the early 19th century.

Titus, along with other slaves Bob, Hester, Matilda, Titus's daughter Vina and their owner Elisha Mitchell and his family

arrived in St. Clair County, Illinois in the winter of 1807. In a physical description, Lydia is said to be very dark complected and about five feet and nine inches.

At this time, the United States was expanding west. American settlers from the south and east were moving through southern Illinois to get to Missouri and beyond. Mitchell was headed to Missouri but couldn't cross the Mississippi River because of ice on the river and sickness. He stayed in St. Clair County for two years.

During those years, according to the Indiana Territory Law, Titus and the other slaves should have been indentured by Mitchell.

It was common practice at the time for owners to "free" their slaves and have them agree to serve their master for a set number of years as indentured servants. But Mitchell didn't.

Darrel Dexter, southern Illinois historian who researched Lydia Titus's case for freedom said, "Jinsey Mitchell, Elisha's wife, claimed her husband tried to convince Titus to become an indentured servant but she refused." Dexter said this claim is hard to

believe because slaves usually didn't refuse a demand from their master.

Mitchell was able to cross the Mississippi River after living in Illinois for two years in 1809. After they arrived, Elisha died and Jinsey moved back to Illinois.

Mitchell's failure to comply with the territory's slavery ban and indenture law allowed Titus and the other slaves to sue for their freedom after Jinsey Mitchell moved her family and slaves back to Illinois in 1810.

Lydia Titus and Bob filed their first freedom suits in St. Clair County and they claimed Jinsey assaulted, imprisoned them with force and detained them in servitude for days. Both African Americans won their freedom suit and were given each a quarter in damages.

After Titus was free she married Nathan 'Nace' Titus. They settled a farm of 160 acres a few miles north of Belleville in 1816 and had six more children. Nathan Titus died in 1821.

After Nathan's death, Lydia struggled to keep her freedom. In 1825 she filed and won a freedom suit against one of her neighbors who





Photo courtesy of Darrel Dexter

A part of the Titus Homestead that is now Pleasant Ridge Park in Fairview Heights, Illinois in 2009.

was a notorious kidnapper. In the same year, she had to file another freedom suit against her former master's son and Alexander Pope Field.

Elijah Mitchell, the son of Elisha, hired attorney Field to reclaim his slaves, including Lydia because he never accepted the court's decision to grant Lydia her freedom, Dexter said. Field was the best criminal lawyer in the state at the time. Ironically, after the Titus case, Field would go on to be hired by Dred Scott in the case of Dred Scott vs. Sandford.

Lydia, six of her children, and two grandchildren were kidnapped in their home when Field entered with a gun and threatened to tie up Lydia in 1832. They were taken to St. Louis and were intended to be put on a boat to Kentucky and sold into slavery.

Plans changed, and instead, Lydia and her family were taken to Herculaneum. The story of the kidnapping spread throughout the area and Mitchell and another slave catcher assisting Mitchell were arrested.

Lydia filed freedom suits in St. Louis. While Lydia and her family waited for the ruling, they were jailed for their own safety and her children were "hired out" by the St. Louis County Sheriff.

Meanwhile, Lydia's kidnappers were out on bail in Jefferson County, Missouri and imprisoned

Lydia's oldest daughter Vina as a slave.

Vina was taken to the St. Louis jail with her family and waited as Mitchell tried to prove Lydia and her children were his property. He lost his case. The court decided the law was on Lydia's side as her original freedom suit from 1810 made it clear that her children were born to a free woman.

The family was awarded \$250 in damages and was allowed to return home to Illinois.

Although the Titus family kept their freedom in the end, Dexter said years of being chased, kidnapped, and jailed took a toll on Lydia and her financial resources.

Just as the Titus family thought they could go back home, one of the lawyers appointed to represent the Titus family sued Lydia for \$125. The suit claimed the money was the lawyer's fee for "work, labor, care, diligence, service and advice," as a lawyer. Lydia was arrested before she could return to Illinois, but the judge ordered her release because she was unable to pay to the fee.

She returned to the Titus homestead but was followed by the lawyer, who filed the same suit against her in Illinois.

Fearing she would lose claim to her land, she sold her land for \$300 in 1834 as a free woman — almost 26 years to the day after she first arrived in Illinois as a slave.



Photo courtesy of Illinois Historical Society

Alexander Pope Field





## New lights shine on riots against blacks in East St. Louis and across America

by Harper Barnes

The 1917 East St. Louis race riot might more accurately be called a "racial massacre," thus avoiding confusion with the urban black uprisings of the 1960s. The riot in East St. Louis involved the slaughter of dozens — perhaps hundreds — of African Americans by marauding whites, who raged through the blue-collar satellite city burning, looting and murdering blacks, while the police stood and watched.

I became interested in the subject when I read that East St. Louisan Miles Davis thought that perhaps his lifelong animosity toward most white people was influenced by horrific tales of the breathtaking cruelty of the rioters in his hometown back in 1917, nine years before he was born. I did research and wrote a book called "Never Been a

Time: The 1917 Race Riot that Sparked the Civil Rights Movement" about the riot and dozens of similar massacres of blacks by whites throughout the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th. "Never Been a Time" came out in 2008, and the tale of racial slaughter drew markedly different reactions from readers depending on race. White readers generally had never heard of the riot, even those whose families had lived in the area for generations; some expressed surprise that such things had happened, some thought the stories, which mainly came from Congressional testimony by victimized blacks must be exaggerated.

Black people simply nodded their heads. They knew that all the stories were all too

true. As East /St. Louis poet laureate Eugene Redmond told me, there had "never been a time" that the massacre was not alive in the oral tradition of African Americans. (Upon reading that, my editor told me, "There's your title." I had wanted to call it "Bloody Island," but it became "Never Been a Time.")

Early in my research, I discovered that there had been for half a century a single book devoted to the riot, by sociologist Elliott Rudwick: "Race Riot at East St. Louis." Suddenly, within the space of a few months in 2008, there were three more books on the riot, mine and two scholarly ones. "American Pogrom," written by Charles Lumpkins, an African American professor of history at Penn State, focuses on the history of the



black struggle in East St. Louis. "Power, Community and Racial Killing in East St. Louis" is by Malcolm McLaughlin, a lecturer in American Studies at the University of East Anglia in Great Britain. His text adds valuable sociological analysis of the riot and of mob violence in general.

So there had been only one book about the riot for half a century and suddenly there were four. As time went by, I noticed more and more books coming out devoted to the lives and deaths of blacks between the Civil War and the Civil Rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s. I wasn't aware of a hundredth of the acts of death and destruction and subjugation of African Americans well into the 20th century. Reconstruction, it turned out, was over almost before it began. Was white America finally waking up to its horrible history of racial hatred? There was even a law being handed around Washington declaring lynching a federal crime, a measure that had been rejected dozens of times before. And there was even talk of reparations. Something was going on. I can only hope it keeps going on.

Among the books on the black struggle in America were some notable ones that also became bestsellers. They included Isabel Wilkerson's, "The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration" (2010); Douglas A. Blackmon's "Slavery by /another Name" (2008), and Colson Whitehead's novel "The Underground Railroad" (2016) Also worth mentioning are the film "12 Years a Slave" (2013) based on an 1853 slave memoir by Solomon Northrup, and "The 1619 Project," the ongoing New York Times series, created by Nikole Hannah-Jones, that follows the trail of slavery as it shapes America. It is both fascinating and controversial.

As for East St. Louis in 1917, here's at least part of the story.

In the second decade of the twentieth century, half a million African Americans moved from the impoverished rural South to the booming industrial cities of the North, wooed by the promise of jobs and freedom. The migration intensified in the second half of the decade in an industrial boom fueled by the First World War. Blacks arrived in northern cities by the trainloads, and whites responded to the African American incursion with a horrific series of racial confrontations, riots and massacres that broke out in cities across the nation, beginning in the summer of 1917 in East St. Louis.

The East St. Louis race riot not only was the first but officially the deadliest of a series of devastating racial battles that swept through American cities in the World War I era. The death toll in East St. Louis was at least 48, a figure not exceeded in the 20th century until the 1992 Rodney King riot in Los Angeles, with 55 deaths. Officially, 39 African American men, women and children were killed in East St. Louis. But, as with other riots in the period, including those in Tulsa and Chicago, it is likely the official East St. Louis figures on the deaths of black men, women and children, many of them undocumented, are too low. Historians, journalists and civil rights leaders who have studied the East St. Louis riot believe more than 100 African Americans, and perhaps as many as 200, were killed in the slum-ridden industrial city on the east bank of the Mississippi, with many of their bodies, including those of small children and infants, burned beyond human recognition in gasoline-ignited shacks or dumped in the deep, fast-flowing waters of America's largest river and its sewage-ridden tributaries. What happened in East St. Louis in the summer of 1917, wrote Gunnar Myrdal in "American Dilemma," his landmark study of race in this country, was not so much a riot as a "terrorization or massacre," a "mass lynching."

East St. Louis, Illinois, an industrial and meatpacking town of about 75,000 people, about 12,000 of them black, lay across the Mississippi river from what was then America's fourth largest city, St. Louis, Missouri. In the years leading up to 1917, blacks by the thousands had moved north to both cities, looking for work. Many blacks could not find jobs and ended up homeless or crowded into shanties in the river bottoms at the southwest end of East St. Louis, and sensationalist stories in some local newspapers led many whites to believe blacks were on a rampage of crime. But the city was ridden with vice and corruption long before large numbers of blacks came to it in search of work, and a Wild West atmosphere had long prevailed in East St. Louis, further fueled by a wartime boomtown mentality in a city with thousands of jobs dependent on military contracts.

Although there is little evidence of the "reign of crime" blacks were accused of, there were a few particularly lurid crimes with racial overtones, at least as they were presented in the local press, and whites generally blamed blacks for the increasing dangers of walking the streets. Perhaps more importantly, blacks were competing with whites for jobs, encouraged by the

powerful white industrialists who controlled the city from behind the scenes, polluting its air and streams while paying very low taxes. Employers used non-union strikebreakers, some of them black, to force white unions into disarray and collapse, and continued to lure blacks north with promises of jobs long past the time when the job market was saturated. Blacks were blamed for the city's troubles, and were attacked by white mobs in the street throughout the spring and early summer of 1917, leading up to a full-scale riot on July 2. By the end of the long, sweltering mid-summer day, hundreds of blacks had been brutally attacked, thousands fled the city and more than 300 homes and places of business had been destroyed by fire. At military and Congressional hearings in the aftermath of the riot, dozens of eyewitnesses, black and white, described their experiences in sometimes very painful detail, and many of these descriptions are quoted here for the first time.

In an atmosphere of racial and economic fear, whites and blacks had been pitted against one another by the purposeful acts of wealthy and powerful whites: not just industrialists but politicians, from the Democratic mayor of East St. Louis to the president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, who used a "Southern Strategy" in his bitterly fought re-election campaign in the fall of 1916 that increased the division between black and white in the region that included East St. Louis. In the riot's immediate aftermath, the tragedy was investigated by, among others, NAACP founder W. E. B. Du Bois and pioneering black feminist and anti-lynch-mob activist Ida Wells-Barnett, both of whom interviewed survivors and wrote of the terror visited upon the 12,000 black citizens of East St. Louis. Their accounts became rallying points for growth of the NAACP, the Urban League and other black organizations, including Marcus Garvey's "back-to-Africa" United Negro Improvement Association.

The terrible events of July 2, 1917 were the precursor to a horrific riot later that summer in Houston and to the Red Summer of 1919, when two dozen American cities and towns, including Chicago and Washington, D. C., exploded in riot. Two years later, a riot tore through Tulsa, and once again the official death toll — 36 people, two-thirds of them black — was widely considered to represent only a fraction of the tragic reality of the racial massacre.

The riots of the World War I period, one of the most violent times in the history of the world, were fueled by white resentment over blacks moving into previously segregated neighborhoods and jobs; sensationalist reports of black crime; lax, corrupt and biased law enforcement; exploitation of or capitulation to racism by business, labor and political leaders; overcrowded, crime-festering slums; neglect of the central cities by absentee owners, and deep poverty among both races. Ultimately, of course, like all racial confrontations in America from its earliest history to the present, the riots were part of the deadly legacy of slavery.

**“ The East St. Louis race riot not only was the first but officially the deadliest of a series of devastating racial battles that swept through American cities in the World War I era.”**

# Unmasking the Veiled Prophet – for jobs not black debutantes

by Percy Green II

First, it must be understood clearly that ACTION's protests of the white Veiled Prophet festivities were strictly part of a STRATEGY to enhance our protest for fair employment at certain big businesses ... NOT to be part of it! In fact, ACTION viewed the white-only VP as a Klu Klux Klan organization by another name. According to ACTION, the VP organization should be abolished altogether if the City of St. Louis was to begin freeing itself from institutional white racism and become a prosperous city for all.

ACTION in the Spring of 1965 launched its protest campaign DEMANDING "More and Better Paying Jobs for Black Males, the family chief-bread winner" against large businesses such as, Southwestern Bell Telephone Company (now AT&T), Laclede Gas Company (now Spire), Union Electric Company (now AmerenUE), McDonnell Aircraft Corporation, (now Boeing), McDonald Construction (the general contractor who built the Gateway Arch) and other large local construction companies. ACTION's demands collectively at these five businesses were to generate 4,080 for Black males in good paying jobs. Our demands were NOT met within the time span allotted. Consequently, ACTION began public protest demonstrations against each company individually.

After ACTION discovered in 1967 that all the chief executive officers of companies that it had charged with practicing employment racism also were active members of the WHITE-ONLY Veiled Prophet festivities, it became necessary to EXPOSE their social racist practices. In other words, it is commonly known that things equal to the same thing are equal to each other. Then how likely a CEO being a member of the Klu Klux Klan by a different name would also be fair to a black male? According to ACTION, this racist social connection was the GLUE that reinforced these CEO's racist practices of not hiring black males into decent paying jobs.

ACTION had been protesting the VP for seven years, 1967-1972. Many VP debutantes became interested in ACTION charges and protest demonstrations against the VP organization. They were really concerned about the argument of sexism. Some of the wealthy young males were somewhat concerned about the racism charge. But, the biggest provocative shock to both male and female young VP participants was ACTION's expressing the CEOs were AUCTIONING OFF the debutantes to other wealthy young potential VP males of an elitist class. Many of the young and some older VP participants expressed, in confidence, they were NOT happy being forced to be part of this questionable festivity. Some of them expressed a willingness to support the protest they also saw was outdated.

Moreover, because ACTION had established credibility in maintaining confidentiality, some



VP participants saw fit to make available authentic VP invitations to ACTION for use. There were six.

## Unveiled

ACTION being an integrated organization called upon its white members for this task. After much discussion among ACTION leadership and active membership, it was decided that unveiling VP was possible and would be the goal in 1972. An all-white surreptitious protest team was selected and briefed. They understood they would likely be arrested.

On December 22, 1972 the ACTION annual picket line was in place across the street from the entrance to the Kiel Auditorium (now Peabody) as usual for the past seven years. Among the chanting, ACTION was still saying it will "unveil the white Veiled Prophet." Laughter from VP attendees usually followed after hearing these expressions as they enter the auditorium. This time, unknown to them, however, ACTION's effort to unveil the VP was about to happen.

Gena Scott and Jane Sauer, two white members of ACTION, actually executed the unveiling.

After entering the auditorium, Scott and Sauer, dressed in their white formal evening gowns, went upstairs to the balcony area. Scott and Sauer collaborated for awhile. Sauer then went to the opposite end of the auditorium from where they entered. Sauer began dropping many ACTION leaflets denouncing the VP event from the balcony to gain the attention of the observing audience

from above and below. During that period, Scott spotted a back-stage cable and began climbing down to the first floor. It broke part way down, causing Scott to fall to the floor knocking the wind out of her. She regained her composure and worked her way behind the stage curtains to where the VP was sitting. Scott then snatched the VP's veiled head gear from his head and threw it out in front of the stage. It lay there on the floor. The audience was shocked and expressed a loud "wheooooo." Scott continued to stand behind the VP and reported that he, too, was shaken up. The soldier-like guards, standing on each side of the VP were also stunned. After about a minute or so with the VP sitting unveiled for all to see, a soldier like character finally broke rank, walked out to pick up the veiled head gear and restored it to the VP's head.

Scott and Sauer were arrested and charged with general and individual peace disturbance.

The VP himself was publicly identified to all the daily newspapers by ACTION as Tom K. Smith, Jr., a vice president of Monsanto Corporation. Both the Post-Dispatch and Globe-Democrat daily newspapers refused to reveal his identity. The St. Louis Journalism Review was the only news journal that identified Smith.

By the time of the court date, the charges against both ACTION protesters were dropped.

ACTION argues the charges were dropped because the protesters were going to demand to face their accusers. That meant that Tom K. Smith, the VP, would have to appear in court. Neither the VP organization nor the City of St. Louis was willing to face the humiliation.



# The slave state of Illinois

by Amelia Blakely

Illinois is remembered in history as a northern state that didn't practice American slavery and was home to the Great Emancipator. But a historical paper trail of court documents, news accounts and former laws spanning over two hundred years tell a different story.

"Slavery was definitely here, in the entire state. Mostly in southern Illinois, but in northern Illinois as well," Southern Illinois historian and author Darrel Dexter said.

Dexter outlined Illinois' seemingly forgotten past in his book *Bondage in Egypt: Slavery in Southern Illinois*. In the book, he establishes what is not taught in most history classrooms — Illinois' history of slavery.

"The slave experience in Illinois was different from that in the American South, but slavery still existed even in the 'Land of Lincoln,' the home of the Great Emancipator," Dexter wrote in his book.

from Great Britain, southern Illinois had at least 600 slaves, according to Illinois Department Natural Resources' historical research.

The United States claimed Illinois, which was part of the Northwest Territory in 1786. A year later, The Northwest Ordinance prohibited slavery and involuntary servitude in the Northwest Territory but continued to allow settlers to keep slaves if they had

settled before the ordinance was passed.

Despite laws banning slavery after 1787, some settlers — including St. Clair County's namesake Arthur St. Clair — continued to bring slaves illegally Dexter said.

Settlers weren't ignorant of the ban on slavery, but the laws were simply not enforced. There was also a loophole: indentured servitude.

Continued on next page

**“ The slave experience in Illinois was different from that in the American South, but slavery still existed even in the 'Land of Lincoln,' the home of the Great Emancipator.”**

**— Darrel Dexter**

Until 1845 slaves were purchased and sold in Illinois. The state didn't end legal involuntary servitude until 1848.

## From the beginning

The French were the first European colonizers in the area. They brought along kidnapped Africans to work in the salt mines in the southeastern part of the state in the early 18th century.

In 1763, a little over a decade before the original thirteen colonies declared separation



# “ Chicago Tribune newspaper accounts from 1859 describe scenes from southern Illinois towns where a head of a slave is cut off and put into a meal sack, paraded through city streets ... ”

To get around the Northwest Ordinance, Dexter said white settlers would “free” their slaves and have them put their mark on a written agreement that said the person agreed to serve the white individual for a set amount of years. If a child was born to a mother who was an indentured servant, then the child became one as well.

“It became generational,” Dexter said. “Slavery and indentured servitude were the same thing,”

## A crossroads

Southern Illinois’ physical location of bordering the American South, the slave state of Missouri, and the various waterways that run around and through the state provided routes for slaves to escape enslavement and also to be sold into it.

Illinois state officials understood it was necessary for the state to have friendly relations with its neighbors to the south, Dexter said.

A year after Illinois became a part of the Union, the state passed its own runaway slave law and black code that allowed kidnappers from other states to search for slaves for profit. Illinois’ 1819 runaway slave law also obligated Illinois residents to stop all African Americans and have them prove they were not runaways, Dexter said. The law classified a runaway slave as a black or mixed person found in Illinois without having proper freedom papers.

“Every white man legally became a slave catcher,” he said.

Whites presumed that African Americans or mixed race people they encountered were slaves if they didn’t have freedom papers.

Within the first three days of the person’s arrest, the sheriff was to put a public notice in the nearest newspaper. The majority of notices included a physical description of the person arrested, highlighting scars, missing limbs, and the degree of the individual’s skin color. These notices circulated in newspapers throughout the Midwest and the South for weeks, while the suspects were kept locked up.

If during those first six weeks no one claimed the arrested person then he or she was sold to the highest bidder from the county courthouse steps. Those who weren’t claimed during that single year were given conditional freedom papers and released.

Dexter said every courthouse in the southern portion of the state had slave auctions adhering to the 1819 law.

Some African Americans escaped custody as runaway slaves and lived to tell the story.

Andrew Jackson, a slave from Kentucky, passed through southern Illinois in 1840

and published a book seven years later recounting his experience of being caught in Gallatin County.

According to Dexter, a doctor offered to feed and provide him shelter, only to betray him and give him up to the kidnappers who were chasing him.

“I can scarcely give the reader a fair impression of the sufferings we endured in that cold, damp, filthy cell. No one was there to care for us. Our food was principally potatoes or coarse bread and water, and not enough of that even to keep us from half-starving,” Jackson wrote. “Our complaints were answered by abuse, and sometimes by the lash.”

Jackson recounts skin coming off of his feet and other swollen limbs and having no indication of what was to come next.

“But all I could do was to sit down, and meet my fate — for I learned to my sorrow that ‘on the side of the oppressor there was power, and there was none to help,’” he wrote.

Hundreds of runaway slaves and free persons of color were locked up, Dexter said. The laws also made it a crime to help or harbor a slave escaping into freedom, prevented free black or racially mixed people from immigrating to the state, banned white people from hiring black workers, and outlawed assembly or “seditious speech.”

Tavern keepers were banned from selling hard liquor to slaves or harboring them without written special permission from their owner, Dexter said.

Abolitionist newspaper editor Zebina Eastman described Illinois’ runaway slave laws as “a law which made it a crime to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, and to shelter the stranger, or protect the fugitive from oppression.”

If any of these laws were broken the suspect was whipped, in most cases, dozens of times. Particularly, if a free African American was caught harboring runaway slaves he would receive 39 to 50 lashes on the back and ordered to leave the region within 30 days.

If they continued to refuse they were whipped until they agreed.

For slaves looking for freedom, escaping a southern state into Illinois was little cause for joy because “in reality, they had only passed from one slave state into another,” Dexter said.

“They knew to be very cautious and secretive in Egypt and to move through the region quickly,” he said.

## Illinois’ erased history

History textbooks frame slavery as if there were two groups in the United States:

racist slaveholders and sympathizers and anti-racist abolitionists, Dexter said.

But it’s more complicated than that.

The pre-statehood roots of slavery in Illinois poisoned ordinary social interactions between whites and free blacks. The majority of white settlers in Illinois considered free African Americans as a threat to Illinois’ slavery practice and led to the southern portion of the state to have the racial sentiment of a slave state.

Chicago Tribune newspaper accounts from 1859 describe scenes from southern Illinois towns where a head of a slave is cut off and put into a meal sack, paraded through city streets “under the very winks of honorable Democratic officials.”

But despite the danger and violence of racism, there were free communities of African Americans throughout southern Illinois.

As early as 1828, free African Americans from North Carolina were welcomed by Quakers in southern Illinois. Dexter said many of the families immigrated to the state after Nat Turner’s slave rebellion to escape retaliating violence from their white neighbors. Free African Americans soon found that racial violence followed them to Illinois.

But despite the danger, for almost 40 years free African Americans in Illinois made a home for themselves while the government protected their enslavement.

In 1866, the Illinois State Convention of Colored Men passed a resolution recommending African Americans send petitions to repeal legislation that prevented black children from attending public school; at the time fewer than 100 black children attended public schools, the resolution said.

The resolution also called for the right to vote and access to owning land.

“Resolved, that we do not ask our white friends to elevate us, but only desire them to give us the same opportunities of elevating ourselves, by admitting us to the right of franchise, and an equal chance for educating ourselves, by opening the doors of their free schools and colleges,” the resolution said.

Soon after the resolution passed during the years after the Civil War, civilian violence against blacks worsened in the state, Dexter said.

African American populations in Illinois dwindled by the turn of the 20th century.

Despite southern Illinois having an extensive history of race-based violence, many white locals are not educated on the subject, Dexter said.

“People don’t understand that we’re products of the past,” Dexter said. “Our lives are so out of our control, so far as the lives, we live, were predetermined by past events.”



# Underground Railroad in Illinois

by Amelia Blakely

The secret escape route known as The Underground Railroad was a national and decentralized effort led by Americans to break federal law and help runaway slaves escape into freedom prior to and during the Civil War.

Southern Illinois Historian Darrel Dexter in his book *Bondage in Egypt: Slavery in Southern Illinois* writes the region had a small role in the Underground Railroad even though Chicago was often a destination where an enslaved African American could gain their freedom.

Free African American communities and river cities such as Cairo were stations in the network even though the surrounding region was hostile to free blacks and runaway slaves.

Dexter said it generally is agreed among historians that runaway slaves were discouraged from escaping through southern Illinois. The route through the region was laden with slavery sympathizers and kidnappers hunting runaway slaves for profit. The most notorious posse was the John B. Jones Gang from Jonesboro.

For more than a decade Jones profited by kidnapping slaves and returning them to their owners.

Once the Illinois Central Railroad was established in 1856, it became a direct link from Cairo, at the bottom tip of Illinois, to Chicago in the north. John Jones and members of his gang patrolled the trains and river fronts and confronted African American passengers, forcing them to show their freedom papers.

If they did not have papers or were suspected of forging their documents, the Jones Gang captured them. This started an incarceration process that would end many runaway slaves' escape from the South as they would be forced to return to their masters or sold back into slavery.

Underground Railroad stations in southern Illinois are known to be in Eden in Randolph County, Cairo in Alexander County, and Alton in Madison County, Dexter said. Stations were also located in Washington, Bond, Marion and Clinton Counties. Entry points to the Underground Railroad routes in the state from Missouri were in Chester and Alton. Cairo was the entry point for southern states including Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi.

Dexter said it's uncertain when or where the Underground Railroad was officially established.

In Illinois, there are accounts of people helping runaway slaves before even statehood.

John Leeper, a settler from Marshall County, Tennessee, moved to Bond County in 1816. His son, Harvey Black Leeper told Underground Railroad Historian Wilbur Henry Siebert his father was "a hater of slavery," and his house, "was always a hiding place for the fugitive from slavery."

Leeper was active in establishing the system of the Underground Railroad sites in Bond, Morgan, Putnam and Bureau County throughout the 1830s.

Dexter said the system of the Underground Railroad was made out of routes of safe houses and "conductors," who were agents helping the runaway slaves get to their next destination.

When the runaways would find the Underground Railroad stations, they would hide for days or weeks, Dexter said. In Siebert's research, there are accounts of runaway slaves hiding in hay bales, wagons and secret rooms in houses.

Once the African Americans were ready to make a run for it again, conductors provided food and directions for the runaways to make it to the station.

Then at night, they would make their escape guided by the North Star.

Between 1840 and the early years of the Civil War was the most active period for the Underground Railroad in southern Illinois, Dexter said.

Once the Illinois Central line opened, Underground Railroad operations could put runaways on train cars that would take them to the north quicker than walking or riding a horse. The Illinois Central was one of the most active routes for carrying runaways because they could get on at Cairo after crossing the river, be taken directly to Centralia and then to Chicago, Dexter said.

So many slaves were escaping into Canada via the Illinois Central that in 1855 there was proposed state legislation that would have banned African Americans from traveling on trains in the state unless they could prove their freedom, Dexter said. The bill didn't pass but it was a reaction from Illinois residents who disagreed with their abolitionist neighbors' mission.

Cairo's strategic and unlikely designation as a station on the Underground Railroad, given the proslavery sentiment of many of its white residents, gave the river city notoriety.

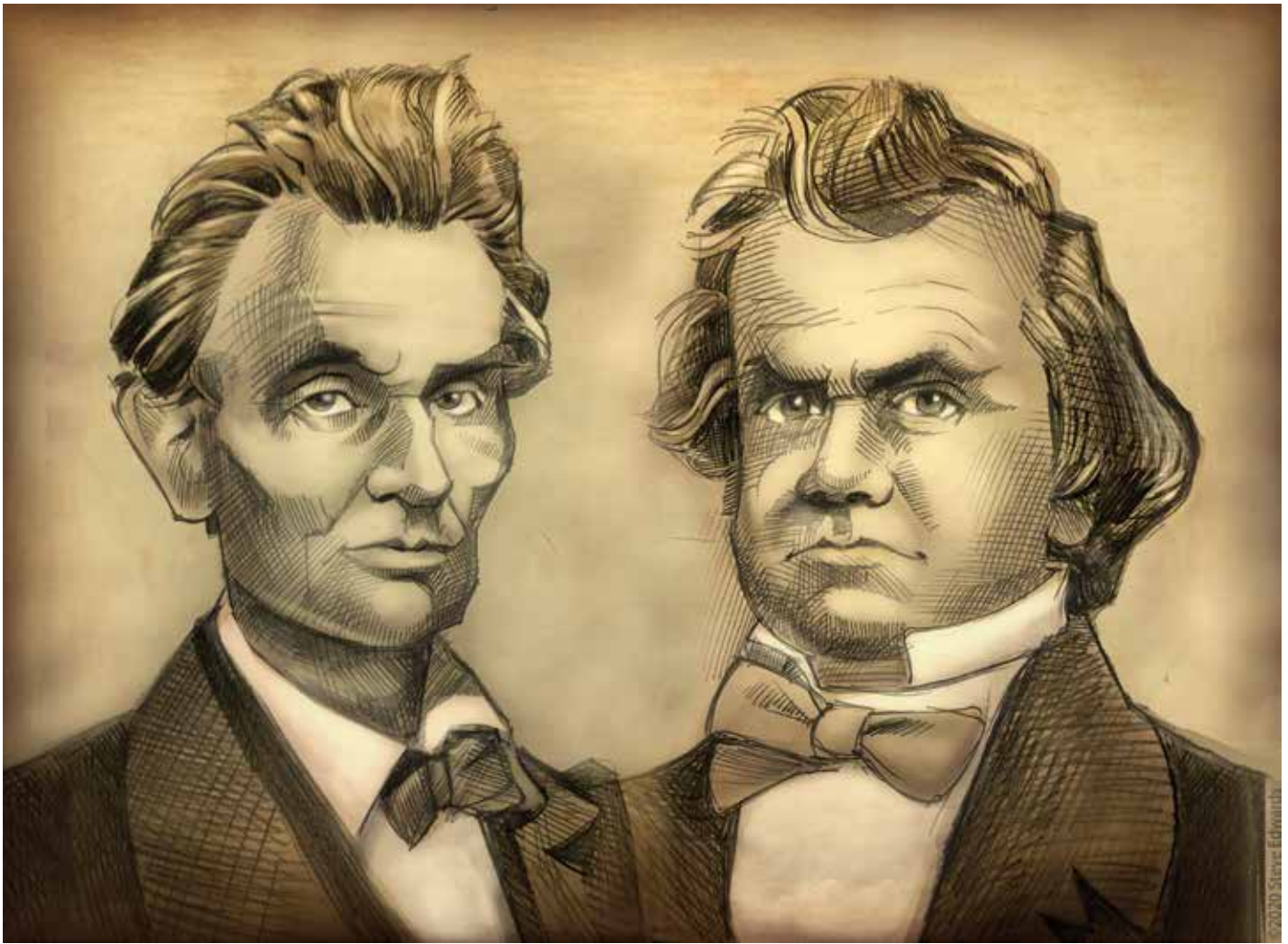
Slaves on their way to the slave markets in St. Louis or New Orleans passed through the area, providing Underground Railroad agent George J. L. Burroughs ample opportunities to try and convince slaves to runaway. Dexter said despite there being substantial circumstantial evidence that Cairo was a station on the Underground Railroad, including being the symbol of hope for the runaway slave Jim in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, the depot provides the least amount of documentation to verify its existence.

This is because for the Underground Railroad to be most successful it had to be incredibly secretive, Dexter said.

For example, there was typically not a single standard route that runaways would follow. Instead, conductors took a varied amount of ways to get to the next place, whichever was the safest at a particular time.

The secret and shifting nature of the Underground Railroad attributed to the network a legendary quality. Dexter said in many cases dealing with the network, it's hard to separate fact from fiction because the information was passed down primarily in an oral tradition.

It's certain, however, that Illinois and particularly southern Illinois was the final escape corridor for abolitionists and free blacks to 'spirit' away enslaved African Americans to freedom.



# Lincoln-Douglas debates marred by overt racism of both

by Kayla Chamness and William H. Freivogel

When Abraham Lincoln and Sen. Stephen A. Douglas arrived in dry and dusty Ottawa, Illinois, on Aug. 21, 1858, for the first of their seven great debates, their campaigns for the Senate were consumed by the great national struggle over slavery.

A large press corps covered the debates, which were big news across the nation and established Lincoln's national reputation. The new technology of the telegraph sent verbatim transcripts of the long debates to newspapers everywhere.

When the debates began, Douglas, "the little Giant," was a leading national figure who had engineered the great compromises of the 1850s designed to keep the nation from a war over slavery. Lincoln was a lesser known politician who emerged from the debates as a rising figure in the Republican Party. Two years later he was president and the Civil War had begun.

Douglas championed "popular sovereignty," the idea that territories wanting to become states should be able to decide whether to enter the Union slave or free. He led passage of the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which adopted popular

sovereignty. That brought with it the possibility that slavery would be extended to states north of the southern border of Missouri — negating the Missouri Compromise of 1820 that had barred slavery north of Missouri's southern border — 36-30 north.

The Compromise of 1850 included the Fugitive Slave law that required federal officers to turn over black people to any white person claiming ownership, without allowing the black people to testify they were free. Hatred of the Fugitive Slave law in the North was fueled by Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Douglas also supported the 1857 Dred Scott ruling that two Missouri enslaved people, Dred and Harriet Scott, did not become free when taken into free states such as Illinois. Chief Justice Roger Taney wrote that the Scotts could not sue for their freedom because black people "are not included and were not intended to be included under the word citizens in the Constitution."

The decision also held that the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional because Congress couldn't bar slavery in the territories. Any law taking away a slaveowner's property

right was an unconstitutional violation of the Fifth Amendment's due process clause, Taney wrote.

Six topics came up again and again during the debates:

- Whether the Declaration of Independence's promise that all men are created equal included Negroes. Douglas said no, Lincoln yes.
- Whether Negroes should have equal legal rights to whites. Douglas said no; Lincoln said no but Douglas didn't believe him.
- Whether the Founding Fathers meant the nation to remain half slave and half free forever. Douglas said yes, Lincoln said they expected it to eventually disappear.
- Whether the Dred Scott decision had to be obeyed in stating that Negroes were not people under the Constitution. Douglas said yes; Lincoln said no.
- Whether the territories should be able to decide whether to have slavery. Douglas said yes, Lincoln said no.
- Whether Lincoln's House Divided prediction inevitably meant war or not. Douglas said it did; Lincoln said slavery could gradually disappear.



## A 'Negro colony' with 100,000 freed Missouri slaves

As the Ottawa debate began around 2 p.m., Douglas whipped up his audience's fears of being overrun by hundreds of thousands of free blacks from Missouri and being turned into a "Negro colony." Here are Douglas' words, complete with the crowd reaction.

We are told by Lincoln that he is utterly opposed to the Dred Scott decision, and will not submit to it, for the reason that he says it deprives the negro of the rights and privileges of citizenship. (Laughter and applause.) ... I ask you, are you in favor of conferring upon the negro the rights and privileges of citizenship? ("No, no.") Do you desire to strike out of our State Constitution that clause which keeps slaves and free negroes out of the State, and allow the free negroes to flow in, ("never,") and cover your prairies with black settlements? Do you desire to turn this beautiful State into a free negro colony, ("no, no,") in order that when Missouri abolishes slavery she can send one hundred thousand emancipated slaves into Illinois, to become citizens and voters, on an equality with yourselves? ("Never," "no.")

## Back to Africa — 'We cannot ... make them equals'

Lincoln in his homespun way acknowledged Douglas' national stature. "I know the Judge is a great man, while I am only a small man," he said to laughter.

Lincoln, as a congressman, had fought against the popular sovereignty compromises Douglas had passed through Congress. And he opposed the Dred Scott decision as contrary to the Declaration of Independence's promise that All Men are Created equal.

On the June day the Republican Party nominated him as its candidate against Douglas, Lincoln gave his famous House Divided speech in Springfield.

A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall — but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other.

During the debates later that summer and fall, Douglas attacked the speech again and again, saying Lincoln was setting the country on the course toward civil war. Lincoln denied it but was on the defensive when explaining what he would do if enslaved people were freed.

In language hard to read today, Lincoln denied that blacks were equals and spoke of sending them back to Africa, a scheme he later pursued in the White House. Lincoln said this at Ottawa:

My first impulse would be to free all the slaves, and send them to Liberia — to their own native land. But a moment's reflection would convince me, that whatever of high hope, (as I think there is) there may be in

this, in the long run, its sudden execution is impossible. If they were all landed there in a day, they would all perish in the next ten days; and there are not surplus shipping and surplus money enough in the world to carry them there in many times ten days. What then? Free them all, and keep them among us as underlings? Is it quite certain that this betters their condition?... Free them, and make them politically and socially our equals? My own feelings will not admit of this; and if mine would, we well know that those of the great mass of white people will not. Whether this feeling accords with justice and sound judgment, is not the sole question, if, indeed, it is any part of it. A universal feeling, whether well or ill-founded, cannot be safely disregarded. We cannot, then, make them equals.

But Lincoln saw the Dred Scott decision and Douglas' popular sovereignty as part of a "conspiracy" to perpetuate slavery throughout the country. He warned that just as the Dred Scott decision had ruled the Missouri Compromise unconstitutional and said slavery could not be banned in the territories, a second Dred Scott decision could say slavery could not be banned in the already established states.

There was much discussion during the debates of an editorial in the Washington Union newspaper that had concluded the emancipation of slaves in the North had been an outrage on the property rights of slave owners and that the Dred Scott decision supported the property rights of slaveholders everywhere.

Lincoln said the late Sen. Henry Clay, the great compromiser from Kentucky who had sought to avoid a civil war, had favored eventual emancipation as the inevitable result of Revolutionary War principles. Lincoln said:

Henry Clay once said of a class of men who would repress all tendencies to liberty and ultimate emancipation, that they must, if they would do this, go back to the era of our Independence, and muzzle the cannon which thunders its annual joyous return; they must blow out the moral lights around us; they must penetrate the human soul, and eradicate there the love of liberty; and then, and not till then, could they perpetuate slavery in this country! [Loud cheers.] To my thinking, Judge Douglas is, by his example and vast influence, doing that very thing in this community, [cheers,] when he says that the negro has nothing in the Declaration of Independence.

## Freeport Doctrine

The second debate in Freeport at the end of August was a turning point after Lincoln backed Douglas into a corner. How could popular sovereignty exist if the Dred Scott decision said territories could not bar slavery, Lincoln asked. Douglas said even if new state constitutions could not ban slavery,



new states could refuse to pass police laws enforcing slavery? Douglas' answer became known as the Freeport Doctrine.

But even though Douglas' Freeport Doctrine pleased enough Illinois and northern Democrats to win the Senate race, it angered southern Democrats and split the Democratic Party in the 1860 election because the southerners thought it weakened slavery. Northern Democrats backed Douglas and southern Democrats John C. Breckinridge.

The Lincoln-Douglas Senate race preceded the popular election of senators. Lincoln won the popular vote by 7%, but lost the legislative vote by the same margin — 54-36. Douglas went back to Washington.

Two years later Lincoln won an electoral college landslide with just 40 percent of the popular vote. Missouri was the only state Douglas won outright. Before Lincoln's inauguration the South had seceded. Lincoln's prediction about a House Divided and Douglas' of a civil war were both coming to pass.

Below is a you-were-there recreation of the atmosphere surrounding the debates recreated by Southern Illinois University Carbondale student Kayla Chamness, based on research at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield.

# Douglas: 'I'm in favor of confining citizenship to white men'

Aug. 21, 1858, Ottawa, Illinois

The stage for the first debate has been erected on the edge of the canal. It is constructed in a manner that allows for impermanence because of the nature of these debates. To stir people up for the election and then to be torn away at the end of it all. I suppose there is a charm to it, to live in the moment of history. Ottawa itself, in the far north of the state, boasts only a population of 3,000. From the early hours of the morning, people have been gathering to attend these festivities, this meeting of the minds. Or maybe the separating of the minds. Perhaps there will be 10,000 people, maybe more.

It was an honor to see both Judge Douglas and Mr. Lincoln. It stirs one's soul. They could not be as different as men as cats and dogs. Where Judge Douglas is a stout man, nearer to round than any other shape, Mr. Lincoln has grown in length. He is a very tall man.

They could not be further apart in ideology as well.

Mr. Lincoln is escorted by his supporters from the railway. Many sing his praises and while some may remain skeptical of this new Republican party one cannot argue the fact that this county and region favor Mr. Lincoln over Judge Douglas.

That is not to say that Judge Douglas arrived to a cold shoulder. He and his people arrive in a massive collation of folks on horseback. A cannon rings out to announce his arrival and his crowd only grows as he travels from Peru. People hang out of their window to catch a view of the rising star judge.

Their arrival stirs up the dirt in the air, which hangs heavy in the late summer heat. People gather to watch this speech, which isn't to take place until late afternoon and will continue until early evening — and as I said they were arriving with the first rays of sunlight.

Wm. H.H. Cushman is the man who delivers the opening remarks with some favorability to the sitting senator, Douglas:

For the honor you have impressed upon your constituents the people of the State of Illinois by your firm, consistent, and patriotic insisting in the councils of this nation for Democratic principles (applause) asserting the ability, and the right of the people to be the sole judges of the acts of the legislative bodies themselves what institutions they will found and under what laws they can best sustain the great principles of self-government.

Douglas is the leading national advocate of "popular sovereignty" — the idea that people in the territories should decide whether to enter the union slave or free. Mr. Lincoln has already given a famous speech on what he thinks about that. "A House divided against itself cannot stand."

Judge Douglas begins the first hour of

**"For one, I am opposed to negro citizenship in any and every form."**

**— Sen. Stephen A. Douglas**

speech as impassioned as the bulldog many describe him as resembling. His face is red as he hurls through his oratory shouting and hollering at his opponent, cutting with harsh wit. It is nearly impossible to hear the words far from the stage through the din of the crowd and perhaps a few spooked horses and the speculation of fistfights at the fringe of the crowd.

There's a whispered rumor that part of the stage had collapsed on the head of the Douglas delegation, but from my position I can not tell if this is true. What I can tell is that the Democrats and even the Mr. Lincoln sympathizers in the crowd are losing heart.

Mr. Lincoln himself seems to lose some of his famed composure, holding his shoulders close together as Judge Douglas rips into the goals of the "black Republican" party. Douglas shouts about abolition and great violations of states' rights and paints the picture of hundreds of thousands of freed Missouri slaves turning the prairie land of Illinois into a "Negro colony." The crowd jeers and cheers at the appropriate moments, and perhaps the debate has already been won without the return speech and rebuttal. Says Douglas:

If you desire negro citizenship, if you desire to allow them to come into the State and settle with the white man, if you desire them to vote on an equality with yourselves, and to make them eligible to office, to serve on juries, and to adjudge your rights, then support Mr. Lincoln and the Black Republican party, who are in favor of the citizenship of the negro. ("Never, never.") For one, I am opposed to negro citizenship in any and every form. (Cheers.) I believe this Government was made on the white basis. ("Good.") I believe it was made by white men for the benefit of white men and their posterity forever, and I am in favor of confining citizenship to white men, men of European birth and descent, instead of conferring it upon negroes, Indians, and other inferior races. ("Good for you."

"Douglas forever.")

When Mr. Lincoln stands to speak, despite the disheartened spirit that seems to have taken over his supporters, they cheer with such vigor and length that for many minutes Mr. Lincoln cannot speak if he hopes to be heard. He speaks completely differently from Judge Douglas. Not only about issues, but his tone is even and measured. His passion is no less than Douglas, but he is restrained and expresses himself in his movements, measured but emboldened. His cadence carries each response with grace.

Mr. Lincoln says the Kansas-Nebraska Act and popular sovereignty is the end of the Missouri Compromise.

This is the repeal of the Missouri

Compromise. The foregoing history may not be precisely accurate in every particular; but I am sure it is sufficiently so for all the uses I shall attempt to make of it, and in it we have before us, the chief materials enabling us to correctly judge whether the repeal of the Missouri Compromise is right or wrong. I think, and shall try to show, that it is wrong; wrong in its direct effect, letting slavery into Kansas and Nebraska and wrong in its prospective principle, allowing it to spread to every other part of the wide world, where men can be found inclined to take it.

This declared indifference, but, as I must think, covert real zeal for the spread of slavery, I cannot but hate. I hate it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself. I hate it because it deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world—enables the enemies of free institutions, with plausibility, to taunt us as hypocrites—causes the real friends of freedom to doubt our sincerity, and especially because it forces so many really good men amongst ourselves into an open war with the very fundamental principles of civil liberty—criticizing the Declaration of Independence, and insisting that there is no right principle of action but self-interest.

Still, Mr. Lincoln says of freed slaves, "We can't ... make equals of them."

In the end, the cheers again prevent anyone from speaking. There's a tumultuous yell that if the horses were not spooked from before, they would be now. Judge Douglas seems to lose himself into his vigor, and his rebuttal of half an hour is pure anger.

Once both have concluded, I catch a glimpse of Mr. Lincoln being carried off on the shoulders of his supporters, long enough that his feet drag behind him as he is celebrated. From the reaction, one might guess Mr. Lincoln has won the debate and even in the morning, it seems that many newspapers from the Chicago Times to the Chicago Daily Journal are in agreement, that at least on this stage Judge Douglas has no hope of winning.



# Freeport Doctrine helps Douglas win Illinois and lose nation

Aug. 27, 1858, Freeport, Illinois

The late August morning brought along a chilly rain. I have dressed the warmest I can, and I find it quite surprising to see such a crowd. Lining the street are Lincoln supporters, some of the crowd still recovering from Douglas' arrival the night before.

As in Ottawa, Douglas arrived with the sound of a booming cannon still attached to his train. Douglas walked in at the head of the procession. This morning nearly five thousand greeted Lincoln at his arrival as he pulls into the square.

Mr. Lincoln speaks first, the order swapped from the first debate giving Lincoln a chance for rebuttal. Again he exudes that even and calm demeanor presenting an air of knowledge and sensibility. He appears to hold the attention of a crowd of nearly 15,000 people. I am impressed by his presence and it appears Mr. Lincoln's hub of supporters is less rowdy.

The town square is so crowded Mr. Lincoln's chosen reporter and scribe must be lifted to the stage to sit with the rest of the press pool.

I listen carefully. In the last debate, Mr. Lincoln was left with Judge Douglas asking several questions of him. It was perhaps a devastating blow to Mr. Lincoln not having time to respond. Now Lincoln is listing Douglas' questions and responding with answers that emphasize his moderation:

"Question 1," he says, "I desire to know whether Lincoln to-day stands, as he did in 1854, in favor of the unconditional repeal of the Fugitive Slave law?"

Mr. Lincoln's answer, "I do not now, nor ever did, stand in favor of the unconditional repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law."

His second question is: "I desire him to answer whether he stands pledged to-day, as he did in 1854, against the admission of any more slave States into the Union, even if the people want them?"

"I do not now, or ever did, stand pledged against the admission of any more slave States into the Union," he answers.

"I want to know whether he stands pledged against the admission of a new State

into the Union with such a Constitution as the people of that State may see fit to make?"

"I do not stand pledged against the admission of a new State into the Union, with such a Constitution as the people of that State may see fit to make."

Again there is a loud chorus of people chanting, "good, good,." With so many people there it is a nearly unpleasant sound to one's ears.

Mr. Lincoln continues with the fourth question, "I want to know whether he stands to-day pledged to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia?"

He answers it as he has does the others, "I do not stand to-day pledged to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia."

"I desire him to answer whether he stands pledged to the prohibition of the slave-trade between the different States?"

"I do not stand pledged to the prohibition of the slave-trade between the different States," he says.

"Question six, I desire to know whether he stands pledged to prohibit slavery in all the Territories of the United States, North as well as South of the Missouri Compromise line?" Mr. Lincoln answers, "I am impliedly, if not expressly, pledged to a belief in the right and duty of Congress to prohibit slavery in all the United States Territories."

"Question seven, I desire him to answer whether he is opposed to the acquisition of any new territory unless slavery is first prohibited therein?"

"I am not generally opposed to honest acquisition of territory; and, in any given case, I would or would not oppose such acquisition, accordingly as I might think such acquisition would or would not aggravate [sic] the slavery question among ourselves."

I listen as he explains that he answered those questions as the wording required of them, that Mr. Lincoln in his admittedly short time in politics has not pledged to any cause and promised very little in the way of legislation.

Mr. Lincoln then turns Judge Douglas' questioning tactic upon him. He asks Douglas "could the people of a territory in any lawful way, against the wishes of any

citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from their limits prior to formation of a state constitution,"

This puts Judge Douglas in a bind. If he says no he will anger supporters in Illinois and northern Democrats who want to limit the spread of slavery. If he says yes, he will anger southern Democrats.

Douglas tries to find a middle ground saying the legislature may not be able to do it directly — the Dred Scott decision said that — but can refuse to enact laws that enforce slavery. "The people have the lawful means to introduce it, or exclude it as they please, for the reason that slavery cannot exist a day or an hour anywhere, unless it is supported by local police regulations. Those regulations can only be established by the local legislature, and if the people are opposed to slavery they will elect representatives to that body who will by unfriendly legislation effectively prevent the introduction of it into their midst."

Judge Douglas reiterates his denouncement of the Washington Union, a D.C. newspaper, which argued that "free states had not the right to prohibit slavery within their own limits." The newspaper's position could permit slavery in already existing free states.

Time expires and Judge Douglas steps back and allows Mr. Lincoln to have his thirty-minute rebuttal.

As he steps back he can't realize that history will call his response to Lincoln the Freeport Doctrine. Nor can he realize it will divide Democratic Party and seal the result of the presidential election two years hence, putting Mr. Lincoln in the White House and the nation at war.

As Mr. Lincoln stands to conclude he reiterates the House Divided doctrine that Douglas has attacked, but with a moderate twist. "I repeat that I do not believe this Government can endure permanently half slave and half free, yet I do not admit, nor does it at all follow, that the admission of a single slave State will permanently fix the character and establish this as a universal slave nation."

**"I do not now, or ever did, stand pledged against the admission of any more slave States into the Union."**

**— Abraham Lincoln**

# In Egypt – the shame of letting Frederick Douglass ride next to a white woman

Sept. 15, 1858, Jonesboro, Illinois

While I doubt it was the late fall heat keeping people away completely, the crowd in this town deep in Southern Illinois' "Egypt" region with its great rivers is smaller than either of the two previous debates. Reliably there are somewhere near 1,400 people present on this hot afternoon. I suspect the largest reason for this mood change is that we were undeniably in the Democratic stronghold now. Most of those in attendance are from slave-holding states.

Mr. Lincoln arrives with an escort of the corporal's men, meanwhile, Judge Douglas is celebrated with a parade. It is the Democratic stronghold of Illinois, but even then, the air is strained.

The stage is set in the Jonesboro fairgrounds. I look around the tiny grove.

As it was in the Ottawa speech, Judge Douglas was the first speaker. He begins with a brief history lesson of the political parties previously, the Whig and Democrat.

Judge Douglas, red-faced as ever, charges Mr. Lincoln with changing views with each area of the state that he visits. He says, "it is apparent that our opponents find it necessary, for partisan effect, to change their colors in different counties in order to catch the popular breeze."

He proceeds to bring back Mr. Lincoln's statement that a "house divided against itself cannot stand." Judge Douglas says it is contrary to the Founding Father's protection of slavery:

He tells you that this Republic cannot endure permanently divided into slave and free States, as our fathers made it. He says that they must all become free or all become slave, that they must all be one thing or all be the other, or this Government cannot last. Why can it not last, if we will execute the Government in the same spirit and upon the same principles upon which it is founded?

... I say that this is the inevitable and irresistible result of Mr. Lincoln's argument, inviting a warfare between the North and the South, to be carried on with ruthless vengeance, until the one section or the other shall be driven to the wall, and become the victim of the rapacity of the other.

Judge Douglas says that there would be no gain from fighting each other and that the founder's intention was for each state to govern its own path.

He says that supporters of the "black flag of Abolitionism" have abandoned the national unity of the great compromisers - Sens. Henry Clay and Daniel Webster - and the Founding Fathers' belief the country could endure half slave and half free.

Douglas openly appeals to the crowd's dislike of race mixing by commenting on a

famous national black abolitionist riding in a carriage with white women.

"Why, they brought Fred Douglass to Freeport," he said, "when I was addressing a meeting there, in a carriage driven by the white owner, the negro sitting inside with the white lady and her daughter."

"Shame" murmured the crowd.

... I hold that this Government was made on the white basis, by white men, for the benefit of white men and their posterity forever, and should be administered by white men and none others. I do not believe that the Almighty made the negro capable of self-government ... in my opinion, the signers of the Declaration had no reference to the negro whatever, when they declared all men to be created equal. They desired to express by that phrase white men, men of European birth and European descent, and had no reference either to the negro, the savage Indians, the Fejee, the Malay, or any other inferior and degraded race, when they spoke of the equality of men.

Many cheers still greet Mr. Lincoln as he stands to walk to the podium and speak. Mr. Lincoln begins defending himself saying he has never had an opinion which would bring about an infringement of states' rights.

Mr. Lincoln says that the Founding Fathers had not protected slavery but set it on the course of extinction, until Douglas came along with popular sovereignty spreading slavery in the territories.

I say, in the way our fathers originally left the slavery question, the institution was in the course of ultimate extinction, and the public mind rested in the belief that it was in the course of ultimate extinction. I say when this Government was first established, it was the policy of its founders to prohibit the spread of slavery into the new Territories of the United States, where it had not existed. But Judge Douglas and his friends have broken up that policy, and placed it upon a new basis by which it is to become national and perpetual. All I have asked or desired any where is that it should be placed back again upon the basis that the fathers of our Government originally placed it upon. I have no doubt that it would become extinct, for all time to come, if we but readopted the policy of the fathers by restricting it to the limits it has already covered-restricting it from the new Territories.

As for saying one thing in northern Illinois and another in "Egypt," he says this:

Did the Judge talk of trotting me down to Egypt to scare me to death? Why, I know this people better than he does. I was raised just a little east of

here. I am a part of this people. But the Judge was raised further north, and perhaps he has some horrid idea of what this people might be induced to do.

Judge Douglas begins his thirty-minute rebuttal with the complaint that Mr. Lincoln was making at the end of his speech, about being carried off the stage at Ottawa. As Judge Douglas makes his quips, it appears to be the first slip of the calm and unflappable composure of Mr. Lincoln. From my position I can see him worrying at his nails with a stormy expression.

Judge Douglas again returns to the argument that while Mr. Lincoln may not have lied about his stances there appears to be a discrepancy in his views and who campaigns for him.

Judge Douglas addresses Mr. Lincoln's charge that Judge Douglas' answer on admitting Kansas into the Union has been unclear. Judge Douglas' response to that is to call out Mr. Lincoln on not answering it at all.

Judge Douglas ends by restating the Freeport Doctrine he announced at the previous debate about how localities can refuse to enforce slavery even in a new state that permits it.

My doctrine is that, even taking Mr. Lincoln's view that the decision recognizes the right of a man to carry his slaves into the Territories of the United States, if he pleases, yet after he gets there he needs affirmative law to make that right of any value. The same doctrine not only applies to slave property, but all other kinds of property. Chief Justice Taney places it upon the ground that slave property is on an equal footing with other property. Suppose one of your merchants should move to Kansas and open a liquor store; he has a right to take groceries and liquors there, but the mode of selling them, and the circumstances under which they shall be sold, and all the remedies must be prescribed by local legislation, and if that is unfriendly it will drive him out just as effectually as if there was a Constitutional provision against the sale of liquor. So the absence of local legislation to encourage and support slave property in a Territory excludes it practically just as effectually as if there was a positive Constitutional provision against it. Hence, I assert that under the Dred Scott decision you cannot maintain slavery a day in a Territory where there is an unwilling people and unfriendly legislation ... if the people of a Territory want slavery they will have it, and if they do not want it you cannot force it on them. And this is the practical question, the great principle, upon which our institutions rest. ("That's the doctrine.")





Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Lincoln at a debate with Stephen Douglas.

## Lincoln: 'Physical differences ... forever forbid the two races from living together'

Sept. 18, 1858, Charleston, Illinois

As fall becomes well and truly upon us so does the frequency of the Lincoln and Douglas public feud. This debate is set to take place on the Coles County Fairgrounds, and it is filled with upwards of ten thousand people, perhaps nearer to fifteen thousand. Eleven railroad cars of people arrived from Indiana.

Again there is much pageantry involved with the arrival of the speakers. It's said both had begun their trip to Charleston from Mattoon which is about a twelve-mile journey. Once more Judge Douglas' arrival is noted by the sound of a cannon firing.

Mr. Lincoln comes in with a wagon drawn by an ox. Within Mr. Lincoln's procession was a wagonful of maidens — and among that there were thirty-two done up to represent the states by wearing sashes, and perhaps it is worth noting that this is perhaps the greatest showing of women being active in these debates thus far, ride in on a wagon bearing the inscription:

Westward the star of empire takes its way;  
The Girls link-on to Lincoln  
Their mothers were for Clay

At the end of the procession, a woman was wearing a sash, similar to others, marking her as Kansas in statehood, also wearing the banner with the phrase "I WILL be free." Quite the controversial statement and I wondered if this would be the topic of

the debates today or if Mr. Lincoln would be answering Judge Douglas' charges about his claims of wanting equality for the races. Or perhaps, Judge Douglas will be so infuriated about the banners displaying a smaller Mr. Lincoln fighting against at giant Judge Douglas or the one calling Douglas the "little giant" and calling Mr. Lincoln "Abe the Giant Killer" that he cannot form a coherent argument.

Following precedent, it will be Mr. Lincoln's turn speaking first — this afternoon. There is a momentous amount of applause as he rises to speak. While we are still nearer to the heart of the Democrats, I wondered if some of the excitement was perhaps spurred by the idea of a "Lincoln Homecoming." His father and stepmother once called this town home. He begins his speech by calling for silence.

He then starts by answering the charges presented by Judge Douglas and perhaps others in the opposing party and maybe within his own that he favors racial equality.

While I was at the hotel to-day, an elderly gentleman called upon me to know whether I was really in favor of producing a perfect equality between the negroes and white people. (Within the audience, there was a roar of laughter at the idea.) While I had not

proposed to myself on this occasion to say much on that subject, yet as the question was asked me, I thought I would occupy perhaps five minutes in saying something in regard to it. I will say then that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races, (applause)-that I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.

I do not understand that because I do not want a negro woman for a slave I must necessarily want her for a wife. (Cheers and laughter.) My understanding is that I can just let her alone. I am now in

Continued on next page

my fiftieth year, and I certainly never have had a black woman for either a slave or a wife.

I will also add to the remarks I have made (for I am not going to enter at large upon this subject,) that I have never had the least apprehension that I or my friends would marry negroes if there was no law to keep them from it, (laughter) but as Judge Douglas and his friends seem to be in great apprehension that they might, if there were no law to keep them from it, (roars of laughter) I give him the most solemn pledge that I will to the very last stand by the law of this State, which forbids the marrying of white people with negroes. (Continued laughter and applause.)

Once his time is up, Lincoln sits down to a round of applause and Judge Douglas takes the podium. There is a great difference in their bearings and stature that one cannot help but compare when they stand next to each other. Judge Douglas begins his speech with the usual fire that he has presented throughout this journey.

Judge Douglas responds to Mr. Lincoln's long remarks about a speech given by Sen. Lyman Trumbull. Trumbull, from Alton, was the other Illinois senator and himself a national figure.

Discussion of Sen. Trumbull has occupied much discussion throughout the debates. Douglas has accused Lincoln of transforming the Whig party of Sens. Henry Clay and Daniel Webster into an abolitionist party. And he accuses Trumbull of abolitionizing the Democratic Party.

Douglas portrays this as an abandonment of the great slavery compromises of Clay and Webster and an abandonment of the Founding Fathers' view that the nation could continue half slave and half free. Douglas portrays it as abandoning the Clay-Webster national principles he stands for and adopting abolitionist sectionalism. Douglas put it this way:

... no sooner was the sod grown green over the grave of the immortal Clay, no sooner was the rose planted on the tomb of the god-like Webster, than many of the leaders of the Whig party, such as Seward, of New York, and his followers, led off and attempted to abolitionize the Whig party, and transfer all your old Whigs, bound hand and foot, into the Abolition camp. Seizing hold of the temporary excitement produced in this country by the introduction of the Nebraska bill, the disappointed politicians in the Democratic party united with the disappointed politicians in the Whig party, and endeavored to

**“ Every where up north he has declared that he was not in favor of the social and political equality of the negro, but he would not say whether or not he was opposed to negroes voting and negro citizenship.”**

**— Sen. Stephen A. Douglas**

form a new party composed of all the Abolitionists, of abolitionized Democrats and abolitionized Whigs, banded together in an Abolition platform.

And who led that crusade against National principles in this State? I answer, Abraham Lincoln on behalf of the Whigs, and Lyman Trumbull on behalf of the Democrats formed a scheme by which they would abolitionize the two great parties in this State ... ”

Once more Judge Douglas discusses how Lincoln changes his politics based on what part of the state that it is in.

I admired many of the white sentiments contained in Lincoln's speech at Jonesboro, and could not help but contrast them with the speeches of the same distinguished orator made in the northern part of the State. Down here he denies that the Black Republican party is opposed to the admission of any more slave States, under any circumstances, and says that they are willing to allow the people of each State, when it wants to come into the Union, to do just as it pleases on the question of slavery. In the North, you find Lovejoy, their candidate for Congress in the Bloomington District, Farnsworth, their candidate in the Chicago District, and Washburne, their candidate in the Galena District, all declaring that never will they consent, under any circumstances, to admit another slave State ... ”

Judge Douglas uses the last of his time to again pursue the argument of black equality and demand Lincoln say whether a black man can be a citizen.

Every where up north he has declared that he was not in favor of the social and political equality of the negro, but he would not say whether or not he was opposed to negroes voting and negro citizenship. I want to know whether he is for or against negro citizenship? He declared his utter opposition to the Dred Scott decision, and

advanced as a reason that the court had decided that it was not possible for a negro to be a citizen under the Constitution of the United States. If he is opposed to the Dred Scott decision for that reason, he must be in favor of conferring the right and privilege of citizenship upon the negro! I have been trying to get an answer from him on that point, but have never yet obtained one ... . Douglas leaves no doubt about his position:

I say that this Government was established on the white basis. It was made by white men, for the benefit of white men and their posterity forever, and never should be administered by any except white men. I declare that a negro ought not to be a citizen, whether his parents were imported into this country as slaves or not, or whether or not he was born here. It does not depend upon the place a negro's parents were born, or whether they were slaves or not, but upon the fact that he is a negro, belonging to a race incapable of self-government, and for that reason ought not to be on an equality with white men. (Immense applause.)

Once Mr. Lincoln resumes the podium he replies that Judge Douglas had never asked him on the question of black citizenship.

I tell him very frankly that I am not in favor of negro citizenship. (Renewed applause.) ... Now my opinion is that the different States have the power to make a negro a citizen under the Constitution of the United States if they choose. The Dred Scott decision decides that they do not have that power. If the State of Illinois had that power I should be opposed to the exercise of it. (Cries of “good,” “good,” and applause.) That is all I have to say about it.

Once Lincoln has closed his speech, like Judge Douglas he is greeted with a great round of applause and even a smattering of chants for additional speeches, which is a likely thing with the celebration tonight at the bonfire. If one were to judge the winner by the applause, there would be no clear victor.

**“ Now my opinion is that the different States have the power to make a negro a citizen under the Constitution of the United States if they choose.”**

**— Abraham Lincoln**





## Lincoln: The negro has a 'humble' share of Declaration of Independence

Oct. 7, 1858, Galesburg, Illinois

After the pleasant summer afternoons of late September comes the harsh bite of early fall. The campus of Knox College is filled with people in their Sunday best braving the grounds after a storm yesterday. The stage is close to the Old Main and despite the raging wind, a window remains open. A banner spreads across the stage declaring favor for Mr. Lincoln, "Knox college for Lincoln" it says.

20,000 people are milling about the speaking area. There have been rumors of people arriving at dawn. Mr. Lincoln stayed overnight in Knoxville and will be coming along the nine-mile road after a stop at Mayor Henry Sanderson's home.

As is typical of Judge Douglas, he arrives by train and with a cannon blast. He is arriving from Bancroft. The audience is rowdier today than the other crowds have been. Once it gets closer to the determined time of the speech, the reason for the open window becomes apparent as both candidates crawl through it onto the speaking platform. Mr. Lincoln, as always keeps up an affable presence quipping that "at last, I've gone through college!"

Judge Douglas is the first to speak. He

begins discussing his leadership on the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which allows new states to decide whether to be slave or free and puts an end to the Missouri Compromise that barred slavery in territories north of Missouri's southern border.

Douglas denies that this ensures new states will be slave states, pointing out his opposition to the pro-slavery Lecompton constitution that would have brought Kansas into the Union as a slave state. He says he opposed that constitution because it had been voted down in an election.

Douglas says:

The Kansas and Nebraska bill declared ... it was the true intent and meaning of the act not to legislate slavery into any State or Territory, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States. For the last four years I have devoted all my energies, in private and public, to commend that principle to the American people.

Douglas calls out, with quotes from

Mr. Lincoln's speech, the charges of the differences in Mr. Lincoln's rhetoric throughout the debates, citing the speeches in Charleston and the one in Chicago. In the north Mr. Lincoln says the Declaration of Independence included blacks, saying, "I should like to know, if taking this old Declaration of Independence, which declares that all men are equal upon principle, and making exceptions to it, where will it stop? If one man says it does not mean a negro, why may not another man say it does not mean another man?"

Yet Douglas points out that in Charleston Mr. Lincoln declared:

"I will say then, that I am not nor never have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races; that I am not nor never have been in favor of making voters of the free negroes, or jurors, or qualifying them to hold office, or having them to marry with white people ...

Douglas sums it up this way:

Fellow-citizens, here you find men

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hurraing for Lincoln and saying that he did right, when in one part of the State he stood up for negro equality, and in another part for political effect, discarded the doctrine and declared that there always must be a superior and inferior race. Abolitionists up north are expected and required to vote for Lincoln because he goes for the equality of the races, holding that by the Declaration of Independence the white man and the negro were created equal, and endowed by the Divine law with that equality, and down south he tells the old Whigs, the Kentuckians, Virginians, and Tennesseans, that there is a physical difference in the races, making one superior and the other inferior, and that he is in favor of maintaining the superiority of the white race over the negro. Now, how can you reconcile those two positions of Mr. Lincoln? He is to be voted for in the south as a pro-slavery man, and he is to be voted for in the north as an abolitionist.

Douglas says that no political creed is sound unless it can be expressed throughout the country.

Is there a Republican residing in Galesburg who can travel into Kentucky and carry his principles with him across Ohio? What Republican from Massachusetts can visit the Old Dominion without leaving his principles behind him when he crosses Mason and Dixon's line? Permit me to say to you in perfect good humor, but in all sincerity, that no political creed is sound which cannot be proclaimed fearlessly in every State of this Union where the Federal Constitution is not the supreme law of the land.

Then Mr. Lincoln begins his speech. He is greeted by cheers. Mr. Lincoln immediately takes on Douglas' claim that the Declaration of Independence does not include Negroes:

The Judge has alluded to the Declaration of Independence, and insisted that negroes are not included in that Declaration; and that it is a slander upon the framers of that instrument, to suppose that negroes were meant therein ... . I believe the entire records of the world, from the date of the Declaration of Independence up to within three years

ago, may be searched in vain for one single affirmation, from one single man, that the negro was not included in the Declaration of Independence; ... And I will remind Judge Douglas and this audience, that while Mr. Jefferson was the owner of slaves, as undoubtedly he was, in speaking upon this very subject, he used the strong language that he trembled for his country when he remembered that God was just ... .

Lincoln says Douglas' claims that he is saying different things in different parts of the state is intentional misunderstanding. Lincoln says his belief that Negroes are included in the Declaration does not mean they are equal. He says:

... in so far as it should be insisted that there was an equality between the white and black races that should produce a perfect social and political equality, it was an impossibility.

Mr. Lincoln then returns to the Dred Scott decision and the power of the Supreme Court. Lincoln denies there is a political obligation to obey a wrongly decided Supreme Court decision and says Jefferson and Jackson agreed. And he says Dred Scott was wrongly decided because the Constitution nowhere says that slave owning is a protected property right. He says:

The essence of the Dred Scott case is compressed into the sentence which I will now read: "Now, as we have already said in an earlier part of this opinion, upon a different point, the right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution." I repeat it, "The right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution!" I believe that the right of property in a slave is not distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution, and Judge Douglas thinks it is. I believe that the Supreme Court and the advocates of that decision may search in vain for the place in the Constitution where the right of a slave (owner) is distinctly and expressly affirmed.

Judge Douglas, and whoever like him teaches that the negro has no share, humble though it may be, in the Declaration of Independence, is going back to the era of our liberty and independence, and, so far as in him lies,

muzzling the cannon that thunders its annual joyous return; that he is blowing out the moral lights around us, when he contends that whoever wants slaves has a right to hold them; that he is penetrating, so far as lies in his power, the human soul, and eradicating the light of reason and the love of liberty, when he is in every possible way preparing the public mind, by his vast influence, for making the institution of slavery perpetual and national.

When Judge Douglas rises in rebuttal six cheers are called for from the crowd. Douglas again probes the tension between Mr. Lincoln's claim that the Declaration of Independence includes Negroes and that Negroes are not equal to whites. He says:

Mr. Lincoln asserts to-day as he did at Chicago, that the negro was included in that clause of the Declaration of Independence which says that all men were created equal and endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. (Ain't that so?) If the negro was made his equal and mine, if that equality was established by Divine law, and was the negro's inalienable right, how came he to say at Charleston to the Kentuckians residing in that section of our State, that the negro was physically inferior to the white man, belonged to an inferior race, and he was for keeping him always in that inferior condition. (Good.) I wish you to bear these things in mind. At Charleston he said that the negro belonged to an inferior race, and that he was for keeping him in that inferior condition. There he gave the people to understand that there was no moral question involved, because the inferiority being established, it was only a question of degree and not a question of right; here, to-day, instead of making it a question of degree, he makes it a moral question, says that it is a great crime to hold the negro in that inferior condition. (He's right.) Is he right now or was he right in Charleston?

The three hours of bracing the wind end with a round of applause and the arrival of a southbound train with people who were likely coming to observe the speech.

**“ I believe that the right of property in a slave is not distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution, and Judge Douglas thinks it is. I believe that the Supreme Court and the advocates of that decision may search in vain for the place in the Constitution where the right of a slave (owner) is distinctly and expressly affirmed.”**

**— Abraham Lincoln**



# Lincoln: Granting negro equality as fantastical as proving 'horse-chestnut to be a chestnut horse'

Oct. 13, 1858, Quincy, Illinois

The Lincoln Douglas debate moves to downtown Quincy. It could be assumed that this city is a fan of Lincoln. Quincy is a city of Whigs, Mr. Lincoln's former political party. Today is a clear sky and without any of the cold and bracing wind of Galesburg. The Quincy Whig published a programme for the speech.

Judge Douglas arrived the prior night in a parade or torches and tapestry. He was escorted to the Quincy house by a group of 3,000 Democrats. Mr. Lincoln arrived at half-past nine and he was met by a large crowd of Republicans and the Steig's brass band.

There are 12,000 people in attendance, and many of them are part of the former Whig party. The debate begins early afternoon. Mr. Lincoln begins his speech by explaining he never attended a Republican Party meeting that passed abolitionist positions that Douglas has blamed on him.

As in previous debates, Lincoln counters Douglas' claim that he says one thing in Egypt in southern Illinois and another when he comes north. He points out he had said four years earlier exactly what he said at recent debate at Charleston - that his "own feelings would not admit a social and political equality between the white and black races, and that even if my own feelings would admit of it, I still knew that the public sentiment of the country would not, and that such a thing was an utter impossibility..."

Lincoln adds:

Now, gentlemen, I don't want to read at any great length, but this is the true complexion of all I have ever said in regard to the institution of slavery or the black race, and this is the whole of it; any thing that argues me into his idea of perfect social and political equality with the negro, is but a specious and fantastical arrangement of words by which a man can prove a horse-chestnut to be a chestnut horse. I will say here, while upon this subject, that I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution in the States where it exists. I believe I have no right to do so. I have no inclination to do so. I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and black races. There is a physical difference between the two, which, in my judgment, will probably forever forbid their living together on the footing of perfect equality, and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position. ("Cheers," "That's the doctrine.") I have never said any thing to the contrary, but I hold that notwithstanding all this, there is no



Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

This photo taken in 1862 shows the public square, left, in which the Lincoln Douglas debate took place in Quincy, Illinois.

reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence-the right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man. I agree with Judge Douglas that he is not my equal in many respects, certainly not in color-perhaps not in intellectual and moral endowments; but in the right to eat the bread without the leave of any body else which his own hand earns, he is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every other man. (Loud cheers.)

Lincoln pushes the question of the Dred Scott decision again and whether or not Judge Douglas would stand by such a choice.

From the beginning of the debates, Lincoln has said that applying the Dred Scott decision to the whole nation would mean free states could not ban slavery because the court said the Constitution protects the slaveholder's property right in slave ownership. Lincoln says Douglas has dodged the question:

At Galesburg, I tried to show that by the Dred Scott decision, pushed to its legitimate consequences, slavery would be established in all the States as well as in the Territories. I did this because, upon a former occasion, I had asked Judge Douglas whether, if the Supreme Court should make a decision declaring that the States had not the power to exclude slavery from their limits, he would adopt

and follow that decision as a rule of political action; and because he had not directly answered that question, but had merely contented himself with sneering at it, I again introduced it, and tried to show that the conclusion that I stated followed inevitably and logically from the proposition already decided by the court ... I give him this third chance to say yes or no. He is not obliged to do either-probably he will not do either - (laughter) but I give him the third chance.

Mr. Lincoln concludes his speech by arguing the difference with Judge Douglas is a matter of right or wrong.

I suggest that the difference of opinion, reduced to its lowest terms, is no other than the difference between the men who think slavery a wrong and those who do not think it wrong. The Republican party think it wrong-we think it is a moral, a social and a political wrong. We think it as a wrong not confining itself merely to the persons or the States where it exists, but that it is a wrong in its tendency, to say the least, that extends itself to the existence of the whole nation. Because we think it wrong, we propose a course of policy that shall deal with it as a wrong. We deal with it as with any other wrong, in so far as we can prevent its growing any larger, and so deal with it that in the run of time there may be some promise of an end to it. We have a due regard to the actual presence of it amongst us and the difficulties of

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getting rid of it in any satisfactory way, and all the Constitutional obligations thrown about it. I suppose that in reference both to its actual existence in the nation, and to our Constitutional obligations, we have no right at all to disturb it in the States where it exists, and we profess that we have no more inclination to disturb it than we have the right to do it.

Judge Douglas then takes his stand to a roar of applause. Again he calls for silence for his presentation. He begins with what he calls the facts of the Republican party:

That platform declared that the Republican party was pledged never to admit another slave State into the Union, and also that it pledged to prohibit slavery in all the Territories of the United States, not only all that we then had, but all that we should thereafter acquire, and to repeal unconditionally the Fugitive Slave law, abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, and prohibit the slave-trade between the different States. These and other articles against slavery were contained in this platform and unanimously adopted by the Republican Congressional Convention in that District. He continues to follow up on Mr. Lincoln's rhetoric hitting hard upon the question that he asked in Freeport and again in Ottawa about adding more slave states into the union.

In answer to my question whether he indorsed the Black Republican principle of "no more slave States," he answered that he was not pledged against the admission of any more slave States, but that he would be very sorry if he should ever be placed in a position where he would have to vote on the question; that he would rejoice to know that no more slave States would be admitted into the Union ...

Judge Douglas doubles down that Mr. Lincoln will not answer about admitting slave states "as the people of the people of the territory wish."

He would not answer my question directly, because up North, the abolition creed declares that there shall be no more slave States, while down south, in Adams county, in Coles, and in Sangamon, he and his friends are afraid to advance that doctrine. Therefore, he gives an evasive and equivocal answer, to be construed one way in the south and another way in the north, which, when analyzed, it is apparent is not an answer at all with reference to any territory now in existence ...

Then Judge Douglas explains why he won't say whether he thinks slavery is right or wrong.

"He (Lincoln) tells you that I will not argue the question whether slavery is right or wrong. I tell you why I will not do it. I hold that under the Constitution of the United States, each State of this Union has a right to do as it pleases on the subject of slavery. In Illinois we have exercised that sovereign right by

**" Let each State stand firmly by that great Constitutional right, let each State mind its own business and let its neighbors alone, and there will be no trouble on this question."**

**— Sen. Stephen A. Douglas**

prohibiting slavery within our own limits. I approve of that line of policy. ... It is none of our business whether slavery exists in Missouri or not. Missouri is a sovereign State of this Union, and has the same right to decide the slavery question for herself that Illinois has to decide it for herself ... He is going to discuss the rightfulness of slavery when Congress cannot act upon it either way.

He begins to discuss the Dred Scott decision bringing attention to how Mr. Lincoln would reverse the decision. Judge Douglas makes the statement that the territories should protect the slave owner's "property."

I ask him whether the decision of the Supreme Court is not binding upon him as well as on me? If so, and he holds that he would be perjured if he did not vote for a slave code under it, I ask him whether, if elected to Congress, he will so vote? I have a right to his answer, and I will tell you why. He put that question to me down in Egypt, and did it with an air of triumph. This was about the form of it: "In the event of a slaveholding citizen of one of the Territories should need and demand a slave code to protect his slaves, will you vote for it?"

He (Lincoln) wishes to discuss the merits of the Dred Scott decision when, under the Constitution, a Senator has no right to interfere with the decision of judicial tribunals. I have never yet learned how or where an appeal could be taken from the Supreme Court of the United States! The Dred Scott decision was pronounced by the highest tribunal on earth. From that decision there is no appeal this side of Heaven. Yet, Mr. Lincoln says he is going to reverse that decision. By what tribunal will he reverse it? Will he appeal to a mob? Does he intend to appeal to violence, to Lynch law? Will he stir up strife and rebellion in the land and overthrow the court by violence? ... But, I will not be drawn off into an argument upon the merits of the Dred Scott decision. It is enough for me to know that the Constitution of the United States created the Supreme Court for the purpose of deciding all disputed questions touching the true construction of that instrument, and when such decisions are pronounced, they are the law of the land, binding on every good citizen.

Shortly before closing, Douglas foresees

slavery existing forever.

Let each State stand firmly by that great Constitutional right, let each State mind its own business and let its neighbors alone, and there will be no trouble on this question. If we will stand by that principle, then Mr. Lincoln will find that this Republic can exist forever divided into free and slave States, as our fathers made it and the people of each State have decided. Stand by that great principle, and we can go on as we have done, increasing in wealth, in population, in power, and in all the elements of greatness, until we shall be the admiration and terror of the world. Lincoln in his answer immediately jumps on Douglas' remark.

I wish to return to Judge Douglas my profound thanks for his public annunciation here to-day, to be put on record, that his system of policy in regard to the institution of slavery contemplates that it shall last forever. (Great cheers, and cries of "Hit him again.") We are getting a little nearer the true issue of this controversy, and I am profoundly grateful for this one sentence. Judge Douglas asks you, "Why cannot the institution of slavery, or rather, why cannot the nation, part slave and part free, continue as our fathers made it forever?" In the first place, I insist that our fathers did not make this nation half slave and half free, or part slave and part free. I insist that they found the institution of slavery existing here. They did not make it so, but they left it so because they knew of no way to get rid of it at that time. When Judge Douglas undertakes to say that, as a matter of choice, the fathers of the Government made this nation part slave and part free, he assumes what is historically a falsehood. More than that: when the fathers of the Government cut off the source of slavery by the abolition of the slave-trade, and adopted a system of restricting it from the new Territories where it had not existed, I maintain that they placed it where they understood, and all sensible men understood, it was in the course of ultimate extinction.

As Mr. Lincoln closes out the rest of his time, the crowds melt away hurraing for their chosen candidates until their voice cracked and went hoarse.



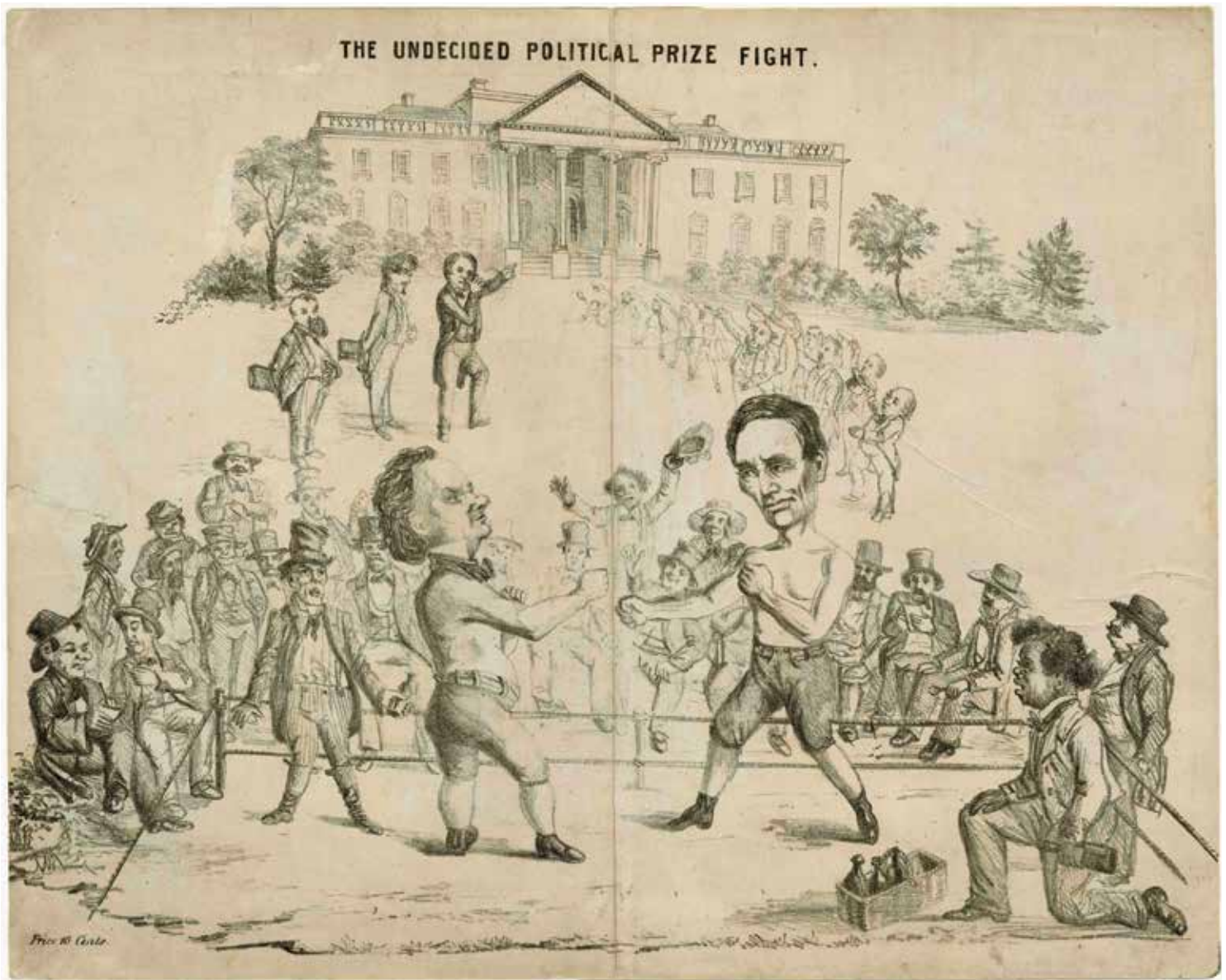


Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

A cartoon depicts Lincoln and Stephen Douglas engage in a boxing match before the White House and onlookers.

## Lincoln: Slavery represents 'eternal struggle between ... right and wrong'

Oct. 15, 1858, Alton, Illinois

The final debate has a small crowd of perhaps 5,000 people, a small number considering that many trains lowered their fare by nearly half from Chicago and Springfield to come to this debate. As it was, many of the crowd arrived from St. Louis on a steamboat. The day was cloudy but otherwise the weather was fair for the riverfront debate.

Both candidates also arrive by the riverfront.

Judge Douglas is the first to speak, his voice finally showing the strain of the campaign as it rasps and cracks. He is once more greeted by applause; the difference in volume from the large ground in Galesburg

is apparent. The speech begins with a brief summary of the debates that they have had until that point. With a focus on Mr. Lincoln's debate points.

The principal points in that speech of Mr. Lincoln's were: First, that this Government could not endure permanently divided into free and slave States, as our fathers made it; that they must all become free or all become slave; all become one thing or all become the other, otherwise this Union could not continue to exist. I give you his opinions almost in the identical language he used. His second proposition was a crusade against the Supreme Court of the United States because of the Dred Scott decision; urging

as an especial reason for his opposition to that decision that it deprived the negroes of the rights and benefits of that clause in the Constitution of the United States which guaranties to the citizens of each State all the rights, privileges, and immunities of the citizens of the several States ... "

He then points out that he discussed what he saw to be the flaws in Mr. Lincoln's arguments

I took up Mr. Lincoln's three propositions in my several speeches, analyzed them, and pointed out what I believed to be the radical errors contained in them. First, in regard to

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his doctrine that this Government was in violation of the law of God, which says that a house divided against itself cannot stand, I repudiated it as a slander upon the immortal framers of our Constitution. I then said, I have often repeated, and now again assert, that in my opinion our Government can endure forever, (good) divided into free and slave States as our fathers made it, each State having the right to prohibit, abolish or sustain slavery, just as it pleases ...

If the original 13 states had applied the House Divided proposition, Judge Douglas says again, they would have voted for slavery throughout the country because there was only one completely free state. He puts it this way:

You see that if this abolition doctrine of Mr. Lincoln had prevailed when the Government was made, it would have established slavery as a permanent institution, in all the States, whether they wanted it or not, and the question for us to determine in Illinois now as one of the free States is, whether or not we are willing, having become the majority section, to enforce a doctrine on the minority, which we would have resisted with our heart's blood had it been attempted on us when we were in a minority. ("We never will," "good, good," and cheers.)

He also discusses that in regard to the amount of free states that have grown means that by numbers they have the opportunity to remove the ability for states to determine if they want to be a slave state. That the Northern states have the electoral college superiority.

He also makes clear that he represents Illinois within the Union, "you did not elect me, I represent Illinois and I am accountable to Illinois, as my constituency, and to God, but not to the president or to any other power on earth."

Judge Douglas then moves on to rally against the Buchanan Democrats. It is President Buchanan who has abandoned the principle of popular sovereignty, not he. "They now tell me that I am not a Democrat, because I assert that the people of a Territory, as well as those of a State, have the right to decide for themselves whether slavery can or cannot exist in such Territory." But that's what Buchanan said to get elected president in 1856, he points out, reading Buchanan's words.

Douglas then speaks on how he believes the Founding Fathers wrote the Declaration of Independence to mean that only the white men are meant to be equal to each other.

But the Abolition party really think that under the Declaration of Independence the negro is equal to the white man, and that negro equality is an inalienable right conferred by the Almighty, and hence that all human laws in violation of it are null and void. With such men it is no use for me to argue. I hold that the signers of the Declaration of Independence had no reference to negroes at all when they declared all men to be created equal. They did not mean negro, nor the savage Indians,

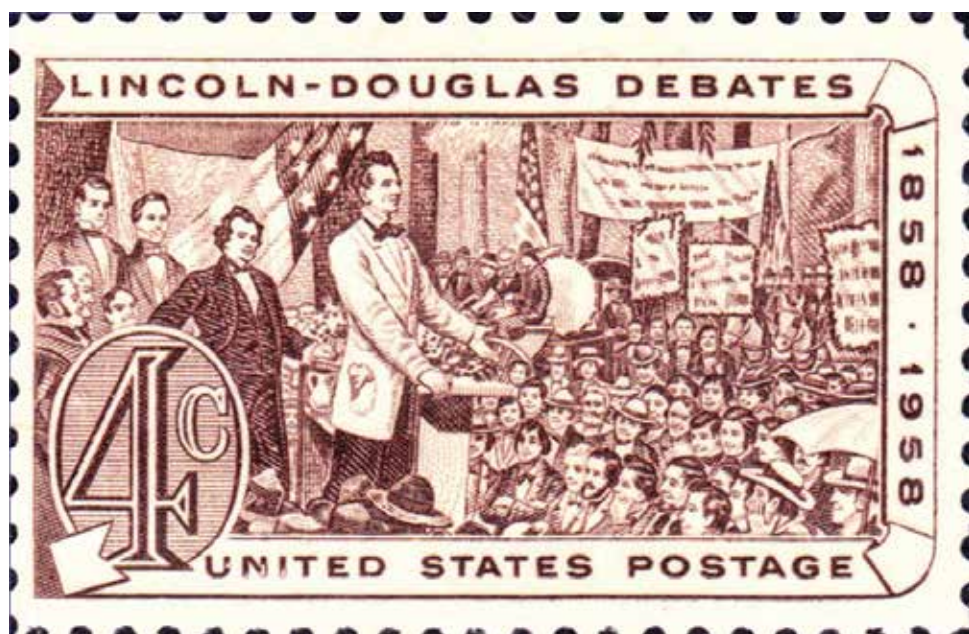


Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

nor the Feejee Islanders, nor any other barbarous race. They were speaking of white men. ("It's so," "it's so," and cheers.) They alluded to men of European birth and European descent-to white men, and to none others, when they declared that doctrine. ("That's the truth.") I hold that this Government was established on the white basis. It was established by white men for the benefit of white men and their posterity forever, and should be administered by white men, and none others.

But it does not follow, by any means, that merely because the negro is not a citizen, and merely because he is not our equal, that, therefore, he should be a slave. On the contrary, it does follow that we ought to extend to the negro race, and to all other dependent races all the rights, all the privileges, and all the immunities which they can exercise consistently with the safety of society. Humanity requires that we should give them all these privileges; Christianity commands that we should extend those privileges to them. The question then arises what are those privileges, and what is the nature and extent of them. My answer is that that is a question which each State must answer for itself. We in Illinois have decided it for ourselves. We tried slavery, kept it up for twelve years, and finding that it was not profitable, we abolished it for that reason, and became a free State. We adopted in its stead the policy that a negro in this State shall not be a slave and shall not be a citizen. We have a right to adopt that policy. For my part I think it is a wise and sound policy for us.

Mr. Lincoln then takes the stage greeted by great applause. He does commend Judge Douglas on his attack on Buchanan, a fellow Democrat. Then he is able to turn an accusation of inconsistency to Judge Douglas himself pointing out that Douglas once favored the Missouri Compromise but then passed the

Kansas-Nebraska Act to negate it.

Lincoln denies that his opposition to the Dred Scott decision is based on the decision's refusal to allow Negroes to be citizens. He says he himself does not support their citizenship.

Out of this, Judge Douglas builds up his beautiful fabrication-of my purpose to introduce a perfect, social, and political equality between the white and black races. His assertion that I made an "especial objection" (that is his exact language) to the decision on this account, is untrue in point of fact.

He then returns to his disagreement with Douglas on whether the Declaration of Independence' "all men are created equal" includes Negroes. Lincoln had said in the Galesburg debate that no one claimed prior to three years earlier that Negroes were not included among men. Now a letter to the Chicago Times cites a speech by the late Sen. Henry Clay - the great compromiser and friend of Lincoln's - as proof to the contrary.

This is the entire quotation brought forward to prove that somebody previous to three years ago had said the negro was not included in the term "all men" in the Declaration. How does it do so?... Mr. Clay says it is true as an abstract principle that all men are created equal, but that we cannot practically apply it in all cases. He illustrates this by bringing forward the cases of females, minors, and insane persons, with whom it cannot be enforced..."

But Mr. Lincoln points out Clay attacked slavery in the same speech. Lincoln quotes Clay:

I desire no concealment of my opinions in regard to the institution of slavery. I look upon it as a great evil, and deeply lament that we have derived it from the parental Government, and from our ancestors. But here they are, and the question is, how can they be best dealt with? If a state of nature existed, and



we were about to lay the foundations of society, no man would be more strongly opposed than I should be, to incorporating the institution of slavery among its elements.

Lincoln says that settling new territories is laying the foundations of society so slavery should be banned but that he never proposed freeing slaves in the older states, such as Missouri where many in the audience live:

The principle upon which I have insisted in this canvass, is in relation to laying the foundations of new societies. I have never sought to apply these principles to the old States for the purpose of abolishing slavery in those States. It is nothing but a miserable perversion of what I have said, to assume that I have declared Missouri, or any other slave State, shall emancipate her slaves. I have proposed no such thing.

Lincoln clarifies his "house divided" speech, which Douglas has attacked throughout the debate as a prelude to war. Lincoln says Douglas "has warred upon" the House Divided speech "as Satan wars upon the Bible." The crowd laughs.

Lincoln points out that Douglas had predicted the Kansas-Nebraska Act would put an end to the "agitation" over slavery by allowing each new state to decide the slavery question. But Lincoln says the opposite has occurred. "When was there ever a greater agitation in Congress than last winter? When was it as great in the country as to-day?" he asks.

Mr. Lincoln then continues to argue that the question of slavery has been a constant throughout all of the great issues of the United States.

Is that the truth? How many times have we had danger from this question? Go back to the day of the Missouri Compromise. Go back to the Nullification question, at the bottom of which lay this same slavery question. Go back to the time of the Annexation of Texas. Go back to the troubles that led to the Compromise of 1850. You will find that every time, with the single exception of the Nullification question, they sprung from an endeavor to spread this institution. There never was a party in the history of this country, and there probably never will be, of sufficient strength to disturb the general peace of the country ...

Mr. Lincoln says that by ending slavery in the new states, slavery will eventually disappear.

"We might, by arresting the further spread of it, and placing it where the fathers originally placed it, put it where the public mind should rest in the belief that it was in the course of ultimate extinction. [Great applause.]

He returns to the topic of where he stands on equality and affirms that it is his party that finds the institution as wrong.

The sentiment that contemplates the institution of slavery in this country as a wrong is the sentiment of the Republican

party. It is the sentiment around which all their actions-all their arguments circle-from which all their propositions radiate. They look upon it as being a moral, social and political wrong; and while they contemplate it as such, they nevertheless have due regard for its actual existence among us ...

He finishes out his time by discussing the Dred Scott decision and how it relates to the Fugitive Slave Law.

I do not believe it is a Constitutional right to hold slaves in a Territory of the United States. I believe the decision was improperly made and I go for reversing it. Judge Douglas is furious against those who go for reversing a decision. But he is for legislating it out of all force while the law itself stands. I repeat that there has never been so monstrous a doctrine uttered from the mouth of a respectable man ...

Mr. Lincoln points out that the Constitution never uses the word slavery but instead uses "covert" language, such as "three-fifths of all other persons." He says this is because the Founders wanted the Constitution to last for all time and expected slavery to disappear. He put it this way:

that covert language was used with a purpose, and that purpose was that in our Constitution, which it was hoped and is still hoped will endure forever-when it should be read by intelligent and patriotic men, after the institution of slavery had passed from among us-there should be nothing on the face of the great charter of liberty suggesting that such a thing as negro slavery had ever existed among us. [Enthusiastic applause.] This is part of the evidence that the fathers of the Government expected and intended the institution of slavery to come to an end. They expected and intended that it should be in the course of ultimate extinction. And when I say that I desire to see the further spread of it arrested, I only say I desire to see that done which the fathers have first done.

Mr. Lincoln says Judge Douglas is trying to misrepresent him.

On the point of my wanting to make war between the free and the slave States, there has been no issue between us. So, too, when he assumes that I am in favor of introducing a perfect social and political equality between the white and black races. These are false issues, upon which Judge Douglas has tried to force the controversy. There is no foundation in truth for the charge that I maintain either of these propositions. The real issue in this controversy-the one pressing upon every mind-is the sentiment on the part of one class that looks upon the institution of slavery as a wrong, and of another class that does not look upon it as a wrong.

The issues, Mr. Lincoln says, is between right and wrong:

It is the eternal struggle between these two principles-right and wrong-throughout the world. They are the two

principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time; and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity and the other the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says, "You work and toil and earn bread, and I'll eat it." No matter in what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own nation and live by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men as an apology for enslaving another race, it is the same tyrannical principle.

Lincoln then finishes and is met with applause that is quite loud for a crowd of this size.

Judge Douglas begins his last rebuttal. He begins by returning Lincoln's statement about his feud with the current administration.

His first criticism upon me is the expression of his hope that the war of the Administration will be prosecuted against me and the Democratic party of this State with vigor. He wants that war prosecuted with vigor; I have no doubt of it. His hopes of success, and the hopes of his party depend solely upon it.

He says this war is the first one Lincoln wanted to prosecute vigorously, noting Lincoln opposed the war with Mexico.

When the Mexican war [was] being waged, and the American army was surrounded by the enemy in Mexico, he thought that war was unconstitutional, unnecessary, and unjust. ("That's so," "you've got him," "he voted against it.") He thought it was not commenced on the right spot. (Laughter.)

The crowd does find that tremendously funny. Even one crowd member calls Mr. Lincoln a traitor because of his support of the Mexican side.

Judge Douglas concludes on the argument about what is a states' right issue and what should be controlled by the federal government. He believes that the issues of slavery should be determined by the populace of the state.

My friends, if, as I have said before, we will only live up to this great fundamental principle, there will be peace between the North and the South. Mr. Lincoln admits that under the Constitution on all domestic questions, except slavery, we ought not to interfere with the people of each State. What right have we to interfere with slavery any more than we have to interfere with any other question? He says that this slavery question is now the bone of contention. Why? Simply because agitators have combined in all the free States to make war upon it ...

And to great applause the circuit of the Lincoln-Douglas debate closes and what they have said will determine who will continue on to the senate in the coming months. It may be destined to determine who becomes president two years hence.

# 200 lynched in Missouri and Illinois

by Amelia Blakely

In 1836 Frank McIntosh, a person of color, was a steamboat porter and cook docked in St. Louis. He got off the boat Flora a free man.

But when he failed to assist officers in an arrest and he was himself arrested and became the first person lynched in Missouri.

McIntosh knew Missouri was a slave state and being arrested meant he would be sold into slavery. So, he took the ultimate risk to keep his freedom and lunged at the officers watching him in his cell with a knife, injuring one and killing the other.

The story of McIntosh's death was told by the late Illinois Sen. Paul Simon in his book *Freedom's Champion* — Elijah Lovejoy.

Outside the jail where McIntosh was being held, wrote Simon, a crowd began to form. After wounding the officers, McIntosh tried to escape but was caught by the crowd that was now aroused by shouts of the surviving officer to stop him. The steamboat porter was jailed for a second time. Soon the mob chained him to a locust tree with wood piled up to his knees, and burned him alive.

McIntosh's brutal death has the core elements of a lynching — mob execution without trial. It was a spectacle fueled by blind rage, racism, and mob mentality. Trying to stop a lynching risked being lynched. Rarely, if ever, were mobs held accountable for torturing and murdering their victims. In fact, many lynchings were carried out in a carnival atmosphere with women and children joining the crowd. Cairo, Illinois, sold postcards commemorating its 20th century lynchings.

In fact, only in recent days did Congress pass a law making lynching a hate crime under federal law — and that was 64 years after the brutal lynching of Emmett Till shocked the nation.

Lynching in the United States during the 19th and 20th centuries was considered a form of a "self-appointed" justice in local communities, according to the online research collection of Monroe Work. Work was a pioneer in Sociology who collected research on lynchings in America. Born in 1866, Work lived through Reconstruction and the Jim Crow Era. He died in 1945.

Between 1836 and 1943 almost two hundred people were lynched in Missouri and Illinois, Work found. Over 90% of the people lynched were people of color. The few white individuals were lynched for being abolitionists or showing sympathy towards a person of color. Overall, 4,800 people were lynched across the United States between 1836 through 1945, Work discovered.

In Missouri, lynchings spanned across the state. Illinois' lynchings were primarily in the southern portion, with the exception of race riots in Chicago and East St. Louis in the early 1900s.

After the Civil War, lynchings in Illinois and Missouri became more frequent as

white communities used the terrorist tactic against African Americans. Most lynchings happened over the summer and winter.

Lynchings sometimes created a frenzy that would lead to more people being lynched for being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

To become a lynching victim all it took was the slightest infraction; for example, speaking disrespectfully or annoying a white person. Till was accused of whistling at a

white woman.

Men were the majority of those lynched in Illinois and Missouri, many accused of murder or rape.

There were no trials. The accusations were tried in the court of public opinion. The verdict was always guilty and followed by an execution.

By 1890 lynchings in the United States were rising, but only one newspaper - The





Chicago Tribune - was keeping track.

Ida B. Wells was the first to report lynchings. Later she published one of the first pamphlets opposing lynchings. Often she'd travel to the site of the killing, at great risk to herself.

Wells traveled to Illinois in 1909 to report the infamous lynching of William "Froggie" James in Cairo, Illinois.

James was accused of murdering a young girl from Anna, Illinois. Quickly word of the murder and James's arrest moved throughout the town and into neighboring towns, including the girl's hometown.

A mob gathered at the jail holding James and began calling for his death. The local

authorities knew the mob was dangerous and snuck James out of Cairo for his own protection.

Within three days of the murder and arrest, the crowd found James and took him back to Cairo.

Back in town James was bound with rope and marched down the streets to an illuminated steel arch where he was lynched before a crowd of 5,000 people.

Moments before he was hanged, he confessed to the crime. Then the rope to hang him broke as it was pulled up and he was killed by being shot repeatedly. His body was dragged through the streets, set on fire, and mutilated. James's severed head was

put on a pike and his foot was taken back to Anna on the train as a souvenir.

No one was ever charged for James's murder.

The story of James's death is not forgotten by the local area. Instead, it turned into a local legend and reinforces the belief of some that African Americans still aren't welcome in some parts of southern Illinois.

Lynching in the United States was a behavioral symptom of a culture that assumed blacks were inferior and not entitled to respect. Communities across the United States have a connection to the history of lynchings but few have faced up to the historical stain on their communities.



sh at St. Louis, in April, 1836,



# Lynchings in Missouri and

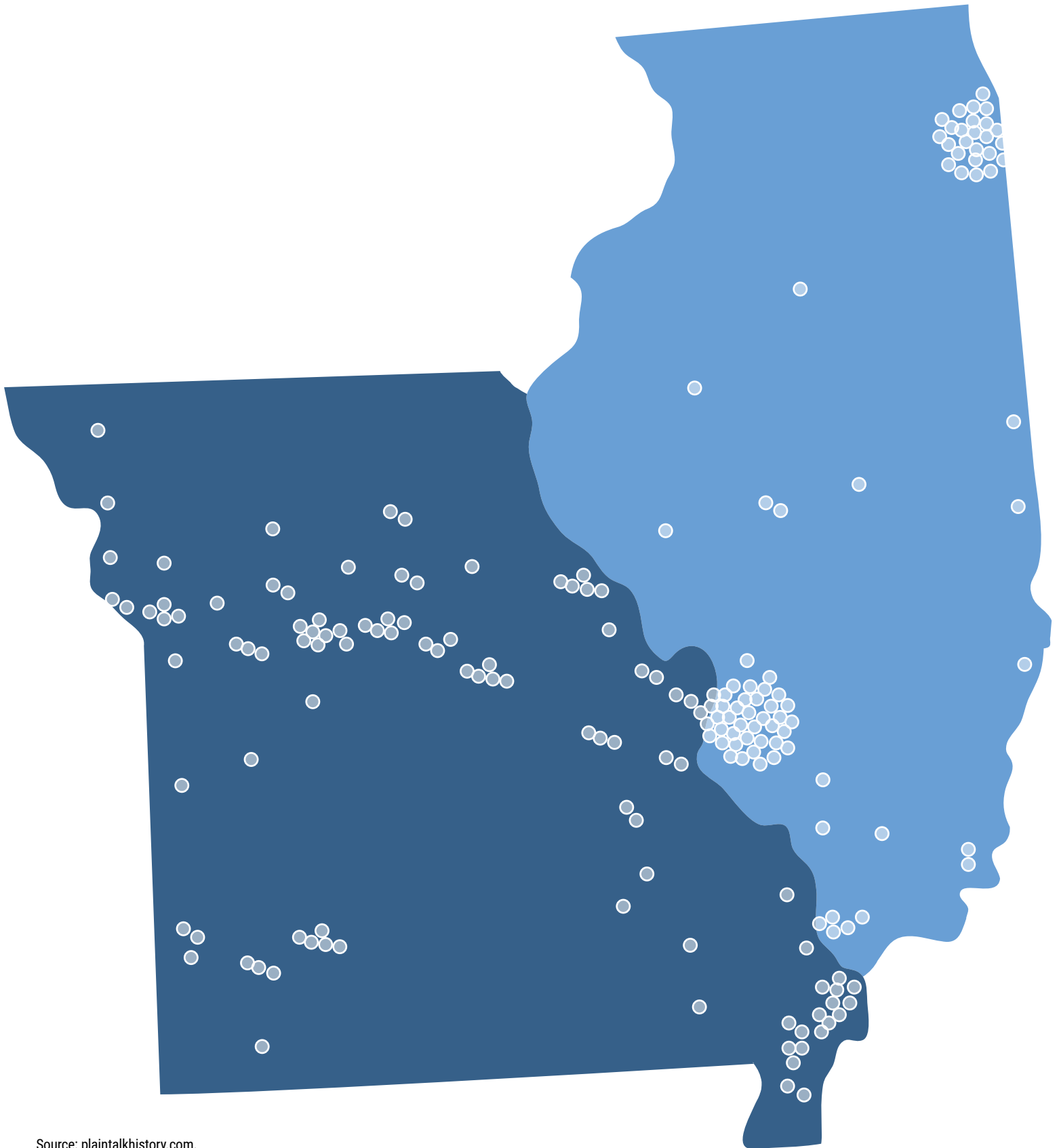
Below, you can find a list of 126 incidents, with names provided when possible, of lynching in Missouri and Illinois. A corresponding map follows to the right.

1. Francis L. McIntosh, April 1836, St. Louis, Missouri
2. Elijah Lovejoy, white, November 1837, Alton, Illinois
3. Unnamed enslaved man, April 1840, Washington County, Missouri
4. Unnamed, 1842, Jefferson County, Missouri
5. Unnamed enslaved man, March 1844, Jefferson County, Missouri
6. Eli, an enslaved man, April 1847, Franklin County, Missouri
7. 'Annice II', May 1850, Clay County, Missouri
8. Sam, an enslaved man, July 1853, Pettis County, Missouri
9. Colley, an enslaved man, July 1853, Jasper County, Missouri
10. Bart, an enslaved man, July 1853, Jasper County, Missouri
11. Hiram, an enslaved man, August 1853, Boone County, Missouri
12. Peter, an enslaved man, March 1855, Clay County, Missouri
13. George, an enslaved man, October 1855, Carroll County, Missouri
14. Giles, an enslaved man, January 1859, Lincoln County, Missouri
15. Jim, an enslaved man, July 1859, Marshall, Missouri
16. John, an enslaved man, July 1859, Marshall, Missouri
17. Holman, an enslaved man, July 1859, Marshall, Missouri
18. Unnamed enslaved, July 1859, Arrow Rock, Missouri
19. Martin, an enslaved man, August 1859, Greene County, Missouri
20. Teney, an enslaved woman, October 1860, Callaway County, Missouri
21. Unnamed enslaved man, November 1862, Andrew County, Missouri
22. Unnamed male, 1865 or 1866, Franklin County, Missouri
23. Anthony Colman, September 1869, St. Louis County, Missouri
24. John Tolliver, June 1870, Lafayette County, Missouri
25. John Sears, July 1870, Henry County, Missouri
26. West Hawkins, October 1870, Marshall County, Missouri
27. Ben Walton, November 1870, Washington County, Missouri
28. Unnamed man, November 1870, Saline County, Missouri
29. Bud Isbell, June 1871, Greene County, Missouri
30. John Swinney, January 1873, Arrow Rock, Missouri
31. Joe Breza, March 1873, Livingston County, Missouri
32. George Fields, June 1873, St. Charles County, Missouri
33. Alexander White, Feb. 1874, Mt. Carbon, Illinois
34. Jim Callaway, April 1875, Carroll County, Missouri
35. Raphael Williams, July 1876, Platte City, Missouri
36. Edmond Moore, September 1876, Chariton County, Missouri
37. Andrew Richard, September 1877, Winchest, Illinois
38. Port Cason, August 1879, Howard County, Missouri
39. Henry Bird, September 1880, Clinton County, Missouri
40. Charles Reese, June 1881, Platte County, Missouri
41. Levi Harrington, April 1882, Kansas City, Missouri
42. Henry Caldwell, July 1882, Iron County, Missouri
43. Unnamed man, Summer 1882, Elizabethtown, Illinois
44. Nelson Howard, July 1883, Mounds City, Illinois
45. William McDowell, July 1883, Pike County, Missouri
46. Ham Patterson, May 1884, Callaway County, Missouri
47. Unnamed man, October 1884, Callaway County, Missouri
48. John Vandeford, July 1887, Fulton, Missouri
49. Alonzo Holly, February 1888, Pickneyville, Illinois
50. Benjamin Smith, August 1889, La Plata, Missouri
51. George Burke, September 1889, Boone County, Missouri
52. Will Waters, April 1890, Lafayette County, Missouri
53. Thomas Smith, September 1890, Poplar Bluff, Missouri
54. Olli Truxton, January 1891, Glasgow, Missouri
55. Sam Bush, June 1893, Decatur, Missouri
56. Allen Butler, July 1893, Lawrenceville, Illinois
57. Will Jackson, September 1893, Bates County, Missouri
58. Ulysses Hayden, June 1894, Monett, Missouri
59. Joseph Johnson, July 1894, Millers Creek, Missouri
60. Unnamed man, February 1895, Fulton, Missouri
61. Emmett Divers, August 1895, Callaway County, Missouri
62. William Butcher, September 1895, Hickman, Missouri
63. William Henderson "Will Mance", October 1895, Cape Girardeau, Missouri
64. Unnamed man, May 1896, Fulton, Missouri
65. Erastus Brown, July 1897, Union, Missouri
66. Henry Williams, June 1898, Macon, Missouri
67. Curtis Young, June 1898, Clarksville, Missouri
68. S.W. Stewart, November 1898, Lacon, Illinois
69. Frank Embree, July 1899, Howard County, Missouri
70. Thomas Hayden, October 1899, Fayette, Missouri
71. Mindo Cohnagwe, April 1900, Marshall, Missouri
72. Henry Darley, May 1900, Liberty, Missouri
73. Williams, October 1900, Tiptonville, Missouri
74. Ike Fitzgerald, March 1901, Tiptonville, Missouri
75. Arthur McNeal, March 1901, Camden, Missouri
76. Peter Hampton, August 1901, Pierce City, Missouri
77. Will Godley, August 1901, Pierce City, Missouri
78. French Godley, August 1901, Pierce City, Missouri
79. Louis Wright, February 1902, New Madrid, Missouri
80. Oliver Wrigh, May 1902, Higbee, Missouri
81. Abe Withrup, May 1902, Paris, Missouri
82. Harry Gates, August 1902, Lexington, Missouri
83. Unnamed man, April 1903, Thebes, Illinois
84. Thomas Gilyard, April 1903, Joplin, Missouri
85. David Wyatt, June 1903, Belleville, Illinois
86. J.D. Mayfield, July 1903, Danville, Illinois
87. Joseph Bumpass, August 1904, Hickman, Missouri
88. James Gray, May 1905, Chicago, Illinois
89. Tom Whitterspoon, May 1905, Belmont, Missouri
90. William Allen, April 1906, Springfield, Missouri
91. Fred Corker, April 1906, Springfield, Missouri
92. Horace Duncan, April 1906, Springfield, Missouri
93. Unnamed, July 1907, Lake County, Missouri
94. Unnamed, July 1907, Lake County, Missouri
95. Will Clifford, August 1907, Lake County, Missouri
96. Scott Burton, August 1908, Springfield, Illinois
97. William Donnegan, August 1908, Springfield, Illinois
98. David Walker, October 1908, Hickman, Missouri
99. David Walker's baby, October 1908, Hickman, Missouri
100. Marshall Stineback, November 1908, Tiptonville, Missouri
101. William Jones, November 1909, Cario, Illinois
102. Unnamed, May 1910, New Madrid, Missouri
103. Sam Fields, July 1910, Charleston, Missouri
104. Robert Coleman, July 1910, Charleston, Missouri
105. William Sharp, September 1910, Tiptonville, Missouri
106. Robert Bruce, September 1910, Tiptonville, Missouri
107. Unnamed No. 1, September 1913, Tamms, Illinois
108. Unnamed No. 2, September 1913, Tamms, Illinois
109. Dallas Shields, March 1914, Fayette, Missouri
110. Love Rudd, September 1915, Clarksville, Missouri
111. Unnamed man, Italian, September 1915, Johnston City, Illinois
112. Lafayette Channel, April 1916, St. Charles County, Illinois
113. 40 black and 8 to 9 white killed, Summer 1917, East St. Louis, Illinois
114. 23 black killed, 1919, Chicago, Illinois
115. Fred Canafex, July 1920, Centerville, Missouri
116. Ray Hammonds, April 1921, Bowling Green, Missouri
117. J.T. Douglas, white, November 1922, Lamb, Illinois
118. James Scott, April 1923, Columbia, Missouri
119. William Bell, October 1924, Chicago, Illinois
120. Roosevelt Grisby, December 1924, Charleston, Missouri
121. Walter Mitchell, August 1925, Excelsior Springs, Missouri
122. William Sherrod, May 1927, Braggadocio, Missouri
123. Lloyd Warner, November 1933, St. Joe, Missouri
124. Cleo Wright, January 1942, Sikeston, Missouri
125. James Edward Person, October 1942, Paris, Missouri
126. Hallery Willis, November 1943, Ellis Camp, Illinois

\*Unless race was otherwise listed, assume individuals are black.



# d Illinois from 1836 to 1943



Source: [plaintalkhistory.com](http://plaintalkhistory.com).



Photo courtesy of Missouri Historical Society

Aerial view in 1955 of Clayton.

# The Clayton conundrum

by Richard H. Weiss

Clayton has a troubled past when it comes to diversity and inclusion.

Can this otherwise progressive community summon the will and find the way toward racial harmony?

Most St. Louis area residents know Clayton, the St. Louis County seat, to be a prosperous, progressive hub. You won't find many MAGA caps in Clayton. In 2016, Hillary Clinton crushed Trump in Clayton by 15 percentage points.

Former Alderman and longtime-resident Alex Berger likes to call the town where he grew

up "the Emerald City" because of Clayton's great schools, beautiful neighborhoods, and bustling business community.

But many African Americans who live, work or visit Clayton feel differently. At one point in July 2018, a multi-racial group organized a Black-Lives-Matter style rally in the wake of a dine-and-dash incident at a nearby IHOP. Police had stopped and questioned 10 Washington University students, quickly decided they were innocent and sent them on their way. But many considered the stop a case of racial profiling.

Protesters said it was just one example among many in which African Americans had been harassed or treated by police or the citizenry as interlopers.

Civic leaders are appalled by that portrayal of Clayton. They feel the IHOP incident was blown out of proportion in an insensitive news and social media environment. They note the students fit the description of the IHOP suspects and were treated politely. Overall, they say their police department is one of the best and most highly-trained in the region, and that training includes instruction on identifying

and mitigating racial bias.

And yet with all that said, city officials decided to create a Community Equity Commission to address race relations and other matters aimed at making Clayton a more welcoming and inclusive community.

They start by dealing with an incontrovertible fact. Clayton is home to very few African Americans. Officially the latest census estimate puts African Americans at 7% of Clayton's population at just over 17,000. But that percentage is a bit misleading in that it includes residents of the St. Louis





Photo courtesy of Missouri Historical Society

Civic leaders of Clayton on the site of the Pierre Lodge building, the municipality's first office high rise.

County Jail, and short-term residents like those residing in Washington University's dorms. So the long-term black population is likely close to 3%.

It had not always been that way. For nearly a hundred years, and until the early 1960s, Clayton had been home to a thriving African American community.

Then civic leaders and government officials, in the name of progress and development, made it all but disappear.

### 'Suffocated and snuffed out'

Clayton's founding goes back to the 1870s when it established itself as a tiny burg just outside the St. Louis city limits. Not long after, townsfolk were quite pleased to have been granted a post-office and its first postmaster was an African American.

Most of Clayton's African American families lived in an area roughly bounded by what is now Forest Park Parkway on the south, the Ritz Carlton



Photo courtesy of Missouri Historical Society

Clayton youth watching construction workers.

Hotel development on the east, Carondelet Avenue on the north, and Brentwood Boulevard on the west. Forest Park Parkway was once a railroad right-of-way and the enclave of

African Americans, along with the all-black Crispus Attucks School and the all-black First Baptist Church of Clayton, were north of those tracks

A turning point came in 1948

when Famous-Barr opened a suburban store at Forsyth and Jackson Avenue. Encouraged by the store's success, more retailers opened in Clayton,

Continued on next page



The McKay Family then and now.

along with major businesses such as the Brown Shoe Co. In 1959, Clayton approved a master plan that carved out several hundred acres from the black residential area to add to its business district. This was part of a nationwide trend that also took place in other parts of the St. Louis area. It was then called urban renewal. (Critics called it urban removal, or more archly, “Negro removal.”)

Planners thought it made sense to purchase the least expensive land available, contiguous to sites already used for commercial purposes. Those areas, particularly in Clayton, happened to be where black residents were living.

It also happened to be the path of least resistance. Not one African American resident served on Clayton’s Board of Aldermen, nor did any hold a seat on the planning commission during the time civic leaders, planners and developers targeted their modest homes for redevelopment.

One of those growing up in the targeted area was the Rev.

Doris Graham, now 81. “We lived on a street called Bonhomme (pronounced Bonum), but we called it Bonhomie,” she recalled wistfully for Emma Riley, who produced a documentary about Clayton called *Displaced & Erased*. “We all knew each other and watched out for each other. It was such a happy time for me.”

Also growing up in the neighborhood was Gerard McKay, one of Julius and Ida McKay’s seven children. Ida’s family had been living in Clayton at least since 1900 when her grandmother, Mary Breckenridge Ellis, lived there. Gerard can remember having cousins, aunts and uncles living in homes close by.

The McKays lived for many years on a quarter of an acre just off Hanley Road. The home was set back from the street with a terraced lawn dotted with apple and plum trees. Over the years, Julius, who made his living as a truck driver, added on to his one-bedroom frame home bit by bit. With the help of his brothers and friends, he installed plumbing

for an indoor bathroom, dug out a basement, and added a dining room and a second story with two bedrooms for his growing family. He added a smokehouse, barbecue pit and picnic area, as well.

By then — the mid-to-late 1950s — Gerard and the children in his neighborhood could almost literally see the handwriting on the wall: the signs posted on cyclone fencing naming the contractors doing the razing, excavating and new construction.

“People were moving out, their homes were being demolished,” McKay recalled. “For a while there would be a vacant lot, then a commercial building would be built in its place. My parents didn’t give us details, but we just sort of thought, ‘Okay, we’re going to have to be moving. Where are we going to go?’”

For the McKays it would be California, though Gerard remembered his parents looking at other Clayton homes nearby. He surmised they either couldn’t afford them or were

not allowed to buy them, given the segregation and redlining practices at the time.

“The choice was something forced upon us,” he said. “It isn’t like we could say, ‘Let’s go to the city council and vote, and let’s be a part of the political process that designates our area as commercial. Oh, and then we’ll take advantage of it, and be able to get higher prices.’ There wasn’t any choice.”

Donna Rogers-Beard, an educator and historian who has written and lectured on the African American experience in Clayton, agreed. “The community was slowly suffocated and snuffed out,” she told Emma Riley.

Rogers-Beard, who taught in the Clayton District for many years, noted that the children who departed with their parents and grandparents missed out on the best public-school education the region had to offer, just as it was becoming available to them.

With the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, African American children were



Photo courtesy of Gerard McKay

**“ The choice was something forced upon us. It isn’t like we could say, ‘Let’s go to the city council and vote, and let’s be a part of the political process that designates our area as commercial. Oh, and then we’ll take advantage of it, and be able to get higher prices.’ There wasn’t any choice.”**

**— Gerard McKay**



getting a chance to attend schools with whites. Unlike his older siblings, Gerard was able to attend Maryland School and could walk there, as it was just a few blocks away.

In terms of facilities, this was a major step up from Attucks School, essentially a two-room schoolhouse where the younger African American students were taught on the first floor, and the older students on the second story.

Longtime Clayton residents, like Alex Berger, who attended grade school in the mid to late 1950s remember attending school with black children, but not finding very many of them when it came time for high school graduation in the 1960s. (The McKays left Clayton in 1962, before Gerard's junior year at Clayton High.)

Also leaving: First Baptist Church of Clayton, which had sat for more than 70 years at the corner of Bonhomme and Brentwood Boulevard, just across the street from Shaw Park. The Rev. Willis Louis Rhodes served as pastor for more than half a century. Under his leadership, the church grew from 60 parishioners in 1907 to more than 600 by 1955, according to a story in the Post-Dispatch at the time. Seven years later, developers would buy the church property and build a high rise.

"With great pride we announce that we are now ready for occupancy in the magnificent Barclay House in Clayton," the owners declared in a Post-Dispatch advertisement. "Magnificent because we have combined some of the architectural features of Florida, California, the Lake Shore Gold Coast of Chicago and New York's Fifth Avenue into one exciting new building."

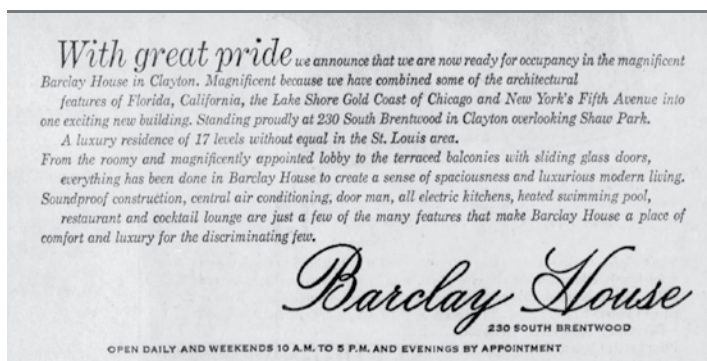
The advertisement extolled the 17-story Barclay House as a place of "comfort and luxury for the discriminating few."

The church relocated to 2801 North Union Boulevard, which at the time was a solid working-class neighborhood, but soon fell on hard times. A visit to the church one recent Sunday found about 30 of the faithful in a sanctuary in some disrepair. Terri Pruitt, stepped outside to greet a visitor and spoke of how the church now has a congregation of just 50 members. "Yes, we have seen better days," Pruitt said. "There are a lot repairs we



Photo by Richard H. Weiss

Terri Pruitt at First Baptist Church of Clayton.



Announcement of the Barclay House's opening as seen in The St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

need to do. We keep it going by the grace of God."

Pruitt, 58, is among the youngest of the congregants. She noted that another church down the street had recently shuttered. As for Clayton

Baptist: "It's touch and go. A church without young people is a dying church," she said.

Still she added, "We remain hopeful and optimistic," as the church is now searching for a new pastor, who will

be expected to inspire more worshippers to join. "We are not going to let this church die."

### Wither the Emerald City?

With its home values increasing and tax base expanding, Clayton could afford to invest even more in its schools and other amenities, such as a swimming pool and fitness center. It became home to excellent restaurants and Fortune 500 companies, while retaining a small town feel with safe and lovely neighborhoods.

But the prosperity has taken its toll on diversity and created tension. Few African American families can afford to buy into Clayton. Some African

Continued on next page

**“ They have all the things they need, the schools, the stadium, the soccer thing that they’re doing, the hockey team, Forest Park, the Arch. But when you start looking at the quality of life for everyone else, it’s pretty abysmal.”**

**— Valerie Bell**

Americans who do live in the municipality and others who visit have complained that they feel like they are being watched. At times residents have called the police, leading to accusations of racial profiling.

Clayton called in a team of consultants to examine the problem. They spent several months conducting interviews and concluded: “Based on both sworn officer and civilian narratives of these calls, any person of color regardless of time of day, clothing or conduct risks being stopped by the police and questioned as to their place of residency, purpose for being in a particular neighborhood, and/or required to show a state or federally issued form of identification. Of those interviewed, 68% held the impression that there was a bias in the Clayton community towards person of color and/or ethnic minorities.”

The consultants recommended Clayton “conduct a thorough audit” of how the dispatching center that handles suspicious person calls evaluates them and whether they merit the dispatch of an officer.

The consultants did not address whether anything can be done to increase the number of African Americans living in Clayton, nor did it address the school district.

Clayton residents have long taken pride in the diversity that it has encouraged and supported in its classrooms. The Clayton School District has taken part in the areawide desegregation program since 1982, which allowed the district to increase enrollment of African American and mixed-race students to as much as 25%.

Notably, in 2004, more than 700 Clayton students walked out of their classrooms to protest the possibility that the school district might withdraw from the region’s desegregation program. They prevailed.

Clayton to this day is among the dwindling number of St. Louis County districts that continue to participate and there’s probably no district that has done more to research and address the achievement gap between white and African American students. The district currently has an enrollment of 2,620 students, of which 15% are African American and 7% mixed-race students.

But the desegregation program is now winding down. When the current group of African American students graduate, there will be many fewer students of color to replace them. Desegregation advocates are looking at new models for transfer programs that would allow students to cross district lines based on income, but none has been proposed and it will take a coordinated effort among many school districts to bring such a plan to fruition.

Clayton’s newly formed Community Equity Commission now can consider all the aforementioned issues.

“Our community is committed to making Clayton a welcoming and safe place for all,” Mayor Michelle Harris said after the city’s board of alderman passed the enabling legislation. “We have an opportunity to make meaningful progress for our region as a whole, which continues to struggle with equity.”

Many African Americans are adopting Missouri’s “show-me” stance toward the good intentions of Mayor Harris and other civic leaders.

Among them are Valerie

Bell and Kelvin Westbrook, who live in the Clayton Gardens neighborhood where they raised their three children, who are now grown and living elsewhere.

Just like so many of their neighbors, Bell and Westbrook are accomplished and well-to-do. All five family members are Harvard graduates. Since moving from New York to the St. Louis area 25 years ago, Westbrook co-founded a cable and telecommunications firm, launched a Clayton-based consultancy in the same field, served as chairman of the board of BJC HealthCare, and also as a member of several corporate boards, including ADM, Commerce Bank and Stifel Financial Corp.

Bell, an attorney and civic volunteer, served pro bono as a settlement coordinator for the St. Louis school desegregation case, then went on to lead the St. Louis Public School Foundation and became the first African American to head the board of trustees at John Burroughs School.

And yet, Bell and Westbrook say they still feel like outsiders in their community. They know other African Americans, living or working or just visiting in Clayton, who do as well.

If there’s a moment for Westbrook that puts his feelings in sharp relief it’s when he dons athletic gear and heads to the Clayton Community Center to shoot hoops. In those moments, Westbrook transitions from looking like the successful

businessman he is to a black man in a hoodie, 6 feet tall, 180 pounds and 64 years old. Westbrook says he doesn’t feel comfortable walking the five blocks from his home to the community center, fearing a resident might call the police. So he drives.

“It just doesn’t make sense,” Westbrook says. “But that’s what I do.”

For many months, both before and after the IHOP incident, Westbrook had tried to engage Clayton’s civic leadership in addressing the police department’s relationship with African Americans. He credits former police chief Kevin Murphy with listening but until the IHOP protest in 2018, Westbrook said he had made no progress in trying to get in front of police officers to make his case for heightened sensitivity. (Murphy declined to be interviewed for this story.)

Bell and Westbrook are pleased to see Clayton now moving forward. They believe the community has the resources and the know-how to make meaningful reforms and to set an example for the region, maybe even the nation. But it will take an uncommon degree of diligence.

Other regions have been able to “galvanize and get out of the bad circumstances that they’re in and start making progress,” Bell said. “Not so in St. Louis. And I think that’s largely because the powers-that-be who really have control don’t really have the requisite interest.

“Their families are good. Their lives are good. They have all the things they need, the schools, the stadium, the soccer thing that they’re doing, the hockey team, Forest Park, the Arch,” Bell said. “But when you start looking at the quality of life for everyone else, it’s pretty abysmal.”

**“ Our community is committed to making Clayton a welcoming and safe place for all.”**

**— Mayor Michelle Harris**



# Did St. Louis find way to end civil war over 'Lost Cause' monuments?

by Robert Joiner

One spring day in April 2015, Bridget Flood was driving through Forest Park to a book club meeting when she took a wrong turn and found herself in a thicket of trees, staring at a 32-foot-high statue that paid homage to the Confederacy.

"I was curious and appalled when I saw it," says Flood, executive director of the Incarnate Word Foundation. Although many would disagree with her, Flood felt the structure didn't belong in the park, saying it sent a disturbing message to the African Americans majority in St. Louis. She added that the statue was an affront to many whites whose ancestors, like her own, had fought to preserve the Union.

Her concerns marked the start of a rocky St. Louis debate, which initially generated more heat than light but ultimately provided what might turn out to be one good example of how a community can resolve conflicts over a Civil War monument. St. Louis stood at a crossroads on this matter until 2017 when it reached a deal with Mark L. Trout. As executive director of the Missouri Civil War Museum, Trout has never seen a Civil War relic, Blue or Gray, he didn't like. He took ownership of this one and relocated it when other parties refused to touch it.

His action sounded unthinkable on the day when Flood gazed at the monument's inscription two years earlier and wondered what she could do about the fact that the statue made no reference to the central role that slavery had played in the Civil War.

"There was no interpretive material. It really was a classic example of 'Lost Cause' propaganda on what the Civil War was about. This was in our premier park. I called the mayor's office to complain."

Flood had no idea how then-Mayor Francis Slay would react to her concerns. In fact, he embraced them almost immediately, setting into motion an even-handed public discussion about issues she had raised

and others as well. In a blog, he asked whether the park was the right place for the monument or whether it should be relocated to a "more appropriate setting." Moreover, he asked: Should the statue at least have an interpretive plaque describing "the reality and brutality of slavery, over which the war was waged, including in the city, and the bitter badges of slavery, Jim Crow and de facto discrimination and segregation, that are its continuing legacy?"

Strong stuff from a mayor who had been perceived by some as being slow at times to confront racial issues in his city. But in this case, he made a genuine effort to make a difference, asking his human resources director, Eddie Roth, to help shape the debate by researching answers to questions, such as: "What were the motivations of the sponsors of the statue?" and "Why does it glorify the Confederate cause?"

He also asked Flood to head up a panel to seek proposals from people or organizations willing to offer an appropriate location for the statue. The mayor seemed ready to embrace a St. Louis History Museum suggestion that the monument remain in the park with permanent interpretive material. But he acknowledged that others voices, including that of U.S. Rep. Lacy Clay, had offered an alternative "respectable position" that the monument be removed as a way to make "a clean break" from what it symbolized.

Ultimately, the city chose the option of dismantling and removing the shaft. That turned out to be easier said than done, both because of a public outcry over relocating the monument as well as the cost associated with moving it. In addition, no area university or other institution offered to take it. Nobody stepped up except Trout. He said he wasn't surprised that the city had difficulty finding a taker, asking "What institution in its right mind would want

to accept the 'political and social' issues and problems that have been unfairly and unjustly attached to Confederate monuments such as this one?"

The Civil War Museum covered the cost of dismantling the statue, then storing it for eventual display in the future in a new facility. In short, the answer to the city's statue problem turned out to be hidden in plain sight — a mere 26-minute drive from Forest Park to Civil War Museum property in south St. Louis County.

The initial discussion growing out of Flood's concerns came two months before the debate over such monuments burst to the surface in the most revolting way in Charleston, S.C. There, on June 17, a 21-year-old white supremacist named Dylann Roof murdered nine worshippers inside Charleston's Emanuel A.M.E. Church. Disturbing as it was, the massacre would only be the first shocker. The second would be a photograph, discovered on the internet, showing the killer posing with a Confederate flag in one hand and a gun in the other. He would become the first person sentenced to death for a hate crime; he is now appealing the conviction.

The shootings and the flag accelerated the push by many cities to relocate their Confederate statues from public spaces. The Southern Poverty Law Center has documented 1,200 such monuments nationwide. The number includes more than a dozen in Missouri. Two of these — one in Forest Park and one in Kansas City — have since been removed either because they had become the target of vandals or protesters.

There is complicated history behind the St. Louis monument. Many of the joggers, bikers, skaters and others who once passed the structure probably never associated it with a military conflict, never noticed how the structure captured a poignant moment of anxiety on the faces of a father, his mother, wife and son as the father is about to head off to the Civil War, the deadliest military conflict in U.S. history.

Though the statue was venerated by Confederate groups and others during the time it was being considered by city officials, the monument's sponsor, the Ladies' Confederate Monument Association (part of the Daughters of the Confederacy), soon discovered they'd have to do a lot more than whistle Dixie in order to gain city approval of the design. Much of Missouri seemed sympathetic to the Confederate cause, and even the St. Louis Post-Dispatch supported the statue. But St. Louis was a Union stronghold, and many of its residents associated the monument with slavery and white supremacy.

Opponents were especially offended by the presence of a Confederate battle flag in

**"There was no interpretive material. It really was a classic example of 'Lost Cause' propaganda on what the Civil War was about. This was in our premier park. I called the mayor's office to complain."**

— Bridget Flood

Continued on next page

the statue's design. Leaders of the women's group either denied the flag was there or argued that it was so tiny that a viewer could not tell what type of flag was being depicted. The Globe-Democrat quoted the statue's creator, George Julian Zolnay, as admitting the battle flag was included "to represent the confederacy." This comment didn't sit well with Frederic W. Ruckstull, a New York sculptor whose own competing design had been rejected. He had argued that the presence of the flag might tempt Union veterans to dynamite the design.

The Confederate women's group brushed aside this criticism and blamed Ruckstull for stalling city approval of the monument. There is irony in the women's position over the flag issue. The group apparently already had plans to make sure real flags associated with the Confederacy would be included in a copper box that would be embedded in concrete underneath the statue.

Until this interview, Trout had never made a public disclosure about the contents in the box. He said the box was originally sealed, but that corrosion and water infiltration had damaged its contents. He also corrected early news accounts which had said the box was located behind the cornerstone rather than beneath the monument.

"Yes, there were three small wooden flag staffs recovered in the time capsule but their cloth flags were destroyed and lost due to the water," Trout said. "After careful and professional restoration services, most of the contents were preserved but some items did result in deterioration and loss."

Trout said inclusion of the flags in the box didn't strike him as unusual. He added that there were several other items in the box that he found interesting. These included a "Votes for Women" pin, and a large silver medallion from the 19th century relating to the establishment of the Gen. Robert E. Lee monument that was removed in 2017 in New Orleans.

He added that "we did not observe any items really focusing on race or slavery. The items were more of historical memorabilia relating to the United Daughters of the Confederacy."

Monuments, flags and other items associated with the Confederacy have been the focus of heated debate because of Lost Cause ideology. Not everyone who defends Confederate monuments agrees with this ideology, but it has taken hold as a convenient argument in defense of the Confederacy. Its proponents claim that the Confederacy was based on upholding states' rights rather than preserving slavery. They dismiss Reconstruction as a dubious experiment imposed on white Southerners, and they praise Confederate soldiers for heroism and blame the South's defeat on sheer Union manpower rather than smart military strategy. Echoes of that ideology could be heard in a speech during the unveiling of the statue's cornerstone in 1914 when H. N. Spencer, president of the Confederate Monument Association, praised "our beloved veterans" adding that "only for overwhelming numbers were they at last overcome."



Photo courtesy of Wikimedia

One view of the Memorial to the Confederate Dead, Forest Park

Give these women credit for stamina and marketing. They raised \$23,000 to build the St. Louis monument, a sum equal to \$591,000 when adjusted for inflation. Give them another pat on the back for helping to frame the Civil War debate through textbooks, printed material and monuments spread throughout the country. All this was augmented in later years by a beloved novel and film, *Gone With the Wind*, an overly simplified and stereotypical soap opera that offers an unnuanced account of causes of Civil War and life during that period. Perhaps

this fictional account is part of the reason the "Lost Cause" has been so convincing and popular that it has marked one of the few instances in which the losing side controlled the Civil War narrative and got the chance to write the history.

Add efforts like those by the Rev. C.C. Woods, chaplain of the St. Louis Confederate Veterans. He praised the women's group and said he'd like to see a monument erected in their honor, higher than the Eiffel Tower. It isn't reported whether he made this comment in jest. The city's zoning committee would



surely have blocked that. After all, that Paris landmark is more than 300 feet taller than the Gateway Arch. Perhaps his wishful thinking was satisfied belatedly by the construction of the nation's largest Confederate Memorial, the 1,200-foot-long Stone Mountain carving in Georgia in 1972, depicting generals Stonewall Jackson and Lee and Confederate President Jefferson Davis astride their horses.

The way St. Louis appears to have resolved the debate over the monument seems to suggest one potential way forward, a way to move beyond controversy and let the statues and people on both sides find peace. Because of the agreement between the city and the Civil War Museum, Trout doesn't believe there is any remaining controversy regarding the memorial. "I firmly believe that most people in our community were satisfied in the actions that the museum took to remove the memorial from a municipal park owned by the City of St. Louis whose leadership decided it no longer wanted this particular item displayed on their property," he says.

He also acknowledged that "many of these memorials unfortunately were originally installed on property that could not guarantee their permanent display or on property that did not even relate to the Civil War and (it) now seems inappropriate to have them in their present locations."

That fact, he says, explains why many of these monuments "can be preserved by relocating them to more appropriate locations such as Civil War battlefields, cemeteries, or Civil War museums and historical sites so they can be preserved and appropriately interpreted for people to learn from and appreciate."

Some scholars agree with him saying placing a Civil War in a setting beyond a general public space can spark thoughtful discussion and deeper meaning about why the statue exists.

"I think it's important to preserve these objects in spaces like museums," says David Cunningham, head of the Sociology Department at Washington University. Moving the object to a museum setting, he says, "changes what the object means" to some visitors. In such settings, he says, the objects aren't seen so much as "a cause for celebration but as objects to be studied or understood." By contrast, he says seeing these same monuments in public spaces leads the viewer to forget that the object "is not an objective portrayal of the Civil War. They are not historically accurate. They really ignore the root causes of the Confederacy, which was preserving slavery."

He has studied the way officials in three locations — St. Louis, the University of Mississippi at Oxford, and the University of Texas at Austin — dealt with their Civil War monuments controversies. In the case of the University of Texas at Austin, President Gregory Fenves ordered that a statue of Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy, be moved from its prominent outdoor location to an indoor center devoted to the study of American history. In a statement at the time

of the move, Fenves argued that the statue was "best explained and understood through an educational exhibit."

Cunningham also cites the experience of the University of Mississippi at Oxford, where a statue of a saluting Civil War soldier, on campus since 1906, is expected to be moved to a Civil War cemetery, also on campus. The action was precipitated in part by a student body resolution that said Confederate ideology directly violated the university's creed supporting "fairness, civility and respect for the dignity of each person."

Whether the issue involved St. Louis or some other place, Cunningham says that relocating these statues away from public spaces can mean that the statues "tend to fall out of public debate." He adds that it is unwise for cities to maintain the status quo by keeping the statues in existing spaces and adding interpretive plaques. This approach has been tried in many cities and created more problems than it solves, he says, because opposing sides in the controversy tend not to reach consensus on what should and shouldn't be included on the plaque.

**"I think it's important to preserve these objects in spaces like museums."**

**— David Cunningham**

Some of Cunningham's thoughts about Civil War monuments will be included in an upcoming book by Washington University faculty members Iver Bernstein and Heidi Kolk. It is titled, "The Material World of Modern Segregation: St. Louis in the Long Era of Ferguson."

It's unclear whether other Missouri monuments in public places will face major criticism. There has been little or no debate, for example, about Confederate statues situated on public places on courthouse grounds in Missouri in Cape Girardeau, Columbia, Neosho, Palmyra, and Huntsville.

In other sites in Missouri, the monuments already are in appropriate spaces. These include the state's largest Civil War monument, the Confederate Memorial State Historic Site in Higginsville, a 135-acre site that once was the Confederate Soldiers Home. It's listed in the National Register of Historic Places, so there is unlikely to be a big public debate about the site. Even so, operators of the site shouldn't dismiss the

Civil War overtones of the place. One official told the *Columbian Missourian* that "You have to remember this site had nothing to do with the Civil War. It was essentially an old folks home." That doesn't mean this or any other Civil War monument will get an automatic pass. This same official told the newspaper that the Higginsville site "commemorates the more than 40,000 Missouri soldiers who fought for the Southern cause." Which means the site had an indirect connection to slavery and the Civil War.

Some proponents of the Confederacy undoubtedly will continue to argue their motives for preserving Civil War iconography are based solely on heritage not hate. But that message has been turned inside out in recent years by violent acts, such as the Charleston shootings and the Civil War-related confrontation in Charlottesville, Va., which claimed the life of one counter protester. Incidents like these only reinforce suspicions that extremists are gaining the upper hand in turning statues, flags and other Confederate items into symbols of white supremacy. That's the concern scholars and civil rights leaders have warned against for decades.

"The plain truth of the matter," scholar W.E.B. Du Bois wrote in *Crisis Magazine* in 1931, is that an appropriate inscription of any of the monuments might read: "sacred to the memory of those who fought to Perpetuate Human Slavery."

On the other hand, his observation overlooks the millions of Americans who genuinely think about the Civil War in a different context. Their feelings make real the agony on the faces on statues like the one that once sat in Forest Park. Who can say that the family depicted in bronze in that concrete slab didn't foretell stories of ordinary people worrying about the loss of loved ones, unidentified in death, left to rot on battlefields or dropped into unmarked graves or trenches. To some of these families, the monuments dotting the landscape probably are less an abstraction but a concrete (pardon the pun) source of comfort and closure for their losses. Of course, it might have made a world of difference if etchings on these monuments or plaques had at least acknowledged Du Bois' point that slavery was at the heart of the war.

Trout seems hopeful that both sides can learn and appreciate why these artifacts exist and save them, whether they acknowledge slavery or not. When he thinks about monuments, which is often, Trout says he tends to recall a favorite preservation quote, which says "through interpretation comes understanding, through understanding comes appreciation, through appreciation comes preservation."

Cunningham of Washington University is equally hopeful, but he says it's too early to make any broad predictions about whether moving and preserving these monuments will become part of a trend, the new norm.

"It's important to see what happens in the next decade," he says. "It will be interesting to see if this movement spreads."

# Looking back: Legacy of slavery limited opportunities at Post-Dispatch and beyond

by Linda Lockhart

I am the great-great-great-granddaughter of a woman who was enslaved. Her name was Mariah and she lived in the mid- to late-1800s in northern Alabama, somewhere along the Limestone and Madison county lines near the town of Harvest. I don't know much more about her, other than that she had nine children, one of whom was my paternal great-great grandfather.

Some of my cousins say Mariah was a full-blooded American Indian, perhaps Cherokee. Others disagree. We have no records. That's one of the disturbing legacies of slavery in the United States — that those of us descended from those who were enslaved have slim chances of really finding our roots, as historian Henry Louis Gates does on PBS.

I know my family has the surname of Lockhart, because Mariah and her children lived on the Lockhart place, or plantation. A Capt. James Lockhart, who was of Scottish origin, owned this place. I have come to learn that many Scottish immigrants settled in northern Alabama in the mid- to late-1700s. So that part of my family's oral history holds up.

Mariah was born, we believe, in 1835. We don't know when she died. Nor does my family know if Capt. James Lockhart or others on the place were father of any of her children, one of whom was my great-great grandfather, Horace Lester Lockhart. We don't know if Mariah had any love relationships or if her children were the result of force.

Yet, either by coincidence or intention, many of the males in my family bear the name James Lockhart. James Earl Lockhart, one of our much beloved elders, was the youngest son of Horace Lockhart, who was Mariah's eldest child. It is possible that this James (1902-1998) was named for the slave-owning Scot, the man who could have been his grandfather.

This nugget of knowledge is for only one of my enslaved forebears. I know even less on my mother's side. There I can follow my line back three generations to Pennsylvania, where my maternal grandfather, Harry Theodore Boulding, was born. I remember being told that one of his grandparents was enslaved in Virginia. I know little else.

Not knowing the whole story of Mariah and my other ancestors makes me envious when I watch Henry Louis Gates' "Finding Your Roots" on PBS.

Gates goes back many generations, using Census data, church records and ship manifests to connect people today to their relatives hundreds of years ago. For some of his guests who are of Chinese descent, Gates can go back thousands of years. That's because written records exist today

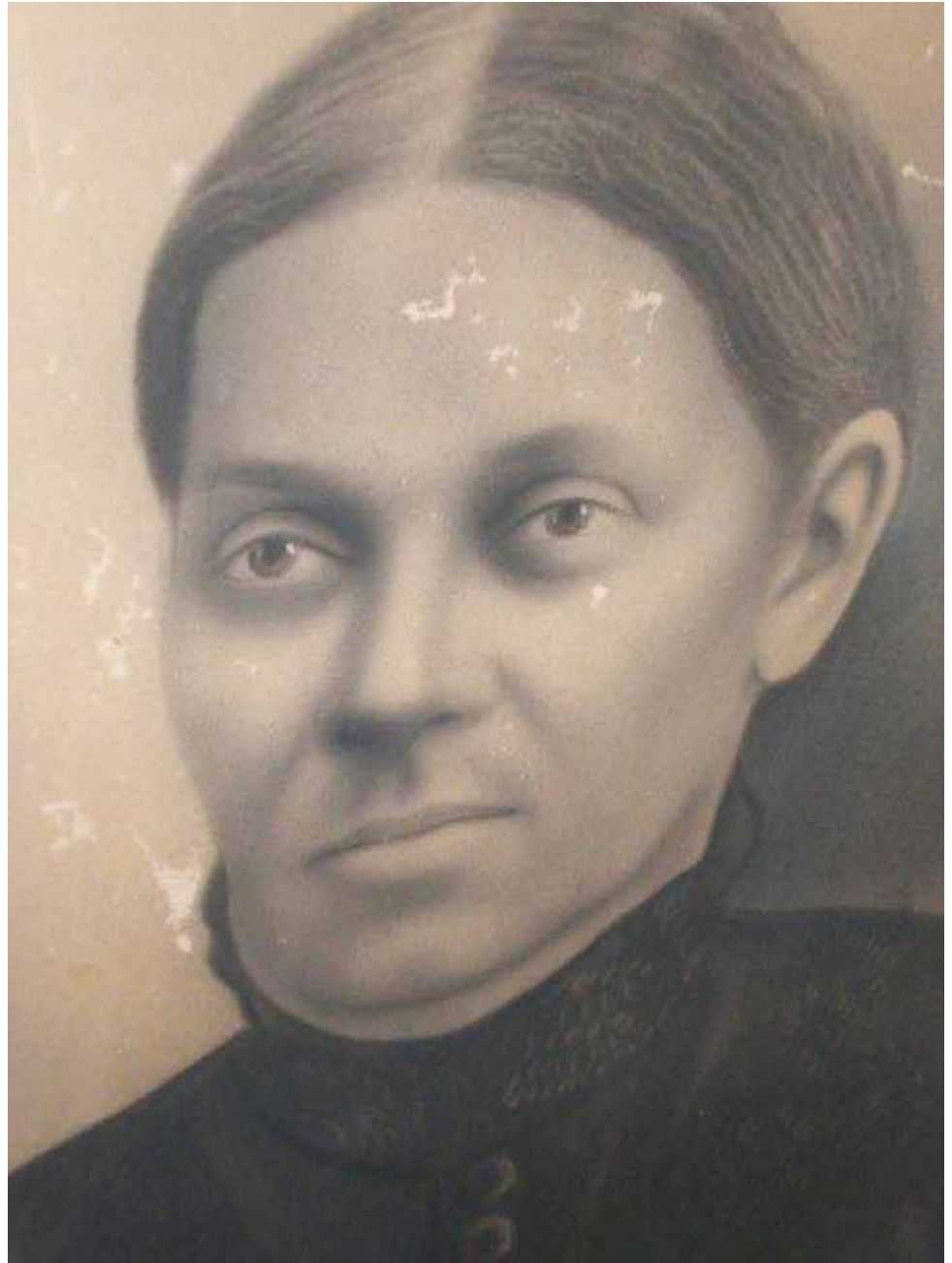


Photo courtesy of Linda Lockhart

Photo of the great-great-great-grandmother of Linda Lockhart, Mariah, an enslaved woman who was owned by Capt. James Lockhart. Mariah worked on Lockhart's plantation in northern Alabama.

that document family lines through the ages.

## Anti-literacy laws to keep slaves down

For people of African descent in the diaspora, it is much harder. African Americans have few historical documents because, in large part, enslaved people were forbidden to learn to read and write.

Anti-literacy laws were in force in slave states, including Missouri, before and during

the American Civil War, affecting slaves, freedmen, and in some cases all people of color.

Owners feared if slaves gained even the most rudimentary form of education it could lead them to rise up and revolt. Any possible contributions to society were never considered.

One slave who was able to defy the notion that Africans were mentally inferior was Phillis Wheatley. Later hailed as the first



African American woman to publish a book of poetry, Wheatley was captured from her village in Senegambia in West Africa around 1761. It's estimated that she was about 7 or 8 years old when she was loaded with others onto a slave ship and endured the ocean voyage to Massachusetts.

Slavers sold her to John Wheatley, who presented the child to his wife, Susanna Wheatley, to be her personal attendant. The Wheatleys named the girl for the ship on which she arrived.

This child quickly adapted to her new life, learning to read and write English masterfully within just a few years. She went from reading — and understanding — the Bible on to study Latin and many other subjects.

White people were amazed and declared her a genius, a prodigy. Yet how many other enslaved children could have also mastered such subjects, if given the chance?

## Journalism chose me

So what does any of that have to do with me? I am a retired journalist who worked for more than 40 years, mostly for newspapers, as a reporter and editor.

Did I wind up in this business because of a yearning to tell stories?

Was it because I aspired to be like Ida B. Wells Barnett, the crusading journalist who in the 1890s documented the lynching of black men and boys?

More likely it was because I had a caring mother who knew I liked to read and write. My mother, Laura Boulding Lockhart, spotted an opportunity that would launch me on what became a most unexpected, but incredible adventure. She had read in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch of a scholarship the newspaper offered Negro students, paying for them to attend the University of Missouri's School of Journalism and offering them a job upon graduation.

I applied for the scholarship, and won. It was more as if journalism chose me, rather than the other way around. In a small way, I was like Phillis Wheatley, winning an opportunity that others just as capable as I never had.

I was born in 1952. By my high school years, I knew I didn't want to follow in the few career paths most available to African American women. When considering what kind of profession I might want when I "grew up," I knew I was too squeamish to go into nursing. Nor did I see myself as a teacher, which was certainly a highly respected profession.

I'd like to say I always wanted to be an advocate for justice. But mostly, I started out on this path because it was laid out before me.

It wasn't until a few years in the business that I started learning what it means to be a black journalist, rather than just a journalist who happens to be black. It means that I have a duty — a sacred trust — to tell stories in my own voice. With my own eyes, with my own life experiences as my foundation.

While the Post-Dispatch appeared as a welcoming place to young black professionals



Photo courtesy of Linda Lockhart

Photo of Mariah's eldest child in 1907, Horace Lester Lockhart (fourth from right with bow tie, his wife, Fannie (in white dress), their children and grandchildren. Between Horace and Fannie are their eldest and youngest sons, Horace Lester Jr., Linda's great-grandfather, and James Earl, Linda's great-grand uncle. On the far left is Daisy, wife of Horace Jr., holding Linda's grandfather, Cornelius Roosevelt Lockhart.

in the 1970s, it also became clear managers would let us rise only so far. The paper was happy to have a collection of reporters and photographers. But it didn't take long before those who wanted to reach higher positions left St. Louis, myself among them.

## No black colleagues at the P-D rose to the top

None of my black colleagues from the '70s ever reached senior ranks at the Post-Dispatch. Almost all who left found greater success elsewhere.

More than 40 years ago, the American Society of News Editors challenged the news industry to achieve racial parity by the year 2000. Since 1978, an annual survey has shown "that while there has been progress, the racial diversity of newsrooms does not come close to the fast-growing diversity in the U.S. population as a whole," the organization reported.

In September 2018, ASNE found that people of color represented 23 percent of the workforce in U.S. newsrooms that responded to the survey. While the percentage may appear encouraging, the society said the number of newsrooms responding to the survey hit a historic low, with a response rate of about 17 percent, or 293 newsrooms of the 1,700 queried for the survey submitted information.

This rate of 23 percent should not be generalized to interpret the landscape of the U.S. journalism industry as a whole, the society noted, because the responses were not drawn from a random sample. The survey has historically relied on a convenience sample from organizations that

volunteer to participate.

But what happens in newsrooms where there is little or no diversity? Where is the diversity of thought and news judgment when considering what stories to tell and how to best tell them?

## Story pitches died

On the one hand, we are encouraged.

"We value your voice," they say initially. "But that's not how we would say it," they respond, when we complete a particular assignment.

Story pitches are met with passive resistance.

"That's a great idea. But we really don't have anyone who can do it right now."

Many of my colleagues and I have heard responses such as these many times.

Pondering today the legacy of slavery in the United States on the news industry is to consider equally the same legacy on the education of African American children who are undereducated and mis-educated by teachers who continue to pre-judge their abilities.

And on the injustice system that perpetuates the school-to-prison pipeline that disproportionately leads African American youth and young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds to become incarcerated.

That legacy is that all of us continue losing out by limiting opportunities for significant portions of our population. It is a loss not only for African Americans. It is a loss for all of humanity.

## Publisher's Note

*GJR invited students at Kirkwood and University City high schools to write essays inspired by the New York Times' 1619 project. The effort was part of an educational outreach effort sponsored by the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting. The participants at Kirkwood are reporters and editors of the Kirkwood Call. Mitch Eden is the Call's advisor. The students at University City are in Christina Sneed's AP English class, to see more of their work go to <https://bit.ly/3fwzBGf>.*

## Can Missouri show political correctness, equality?

by Malcia Greene

Missouri: The Show-Me State. One of these days it's bound to start living up to its nickname, right?

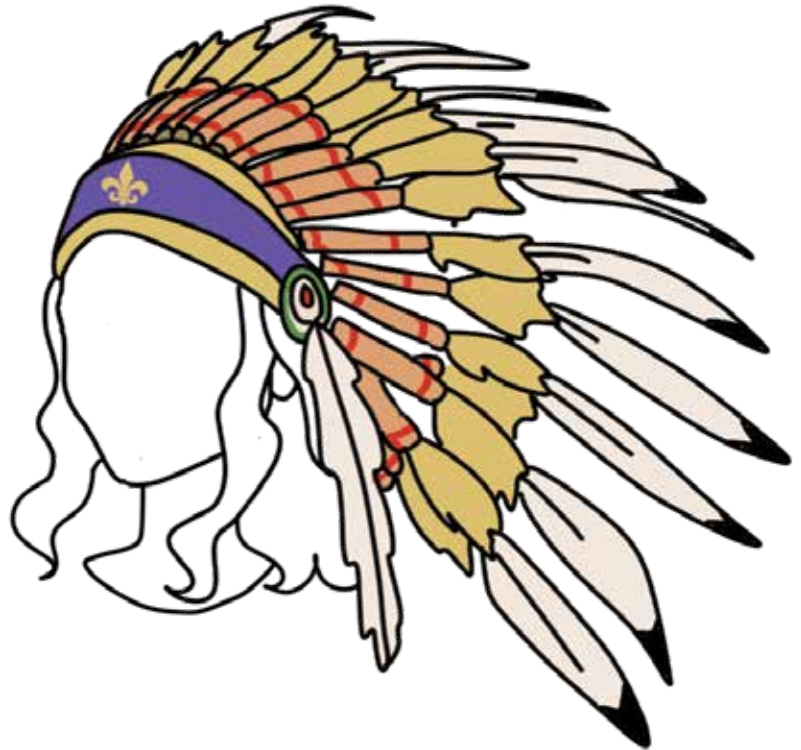
All I want is for someone to show me. Show me that we're done taking what's not ours from minorities. Show me that we're not robbing marginalized cultures of their customs and practices, rarely acknowledging any historical context or the years and years of oppression they endured. Show me that good ole suburban St. Louis can rise above such blunt injustice.

Go on, I'm waiting.

Show me that I can go to LouFest without seeing white girls roaming around with sleeves of henna tattoos — a tradition meant for Muslim or Hindu women on special occasions — because I'm sorry, but Forest Park doesn't quite make the cut. Or without looking at the bedazzled foreheads of my peers because a bindi is nothing more than a little bling, right? Religious emblem or trendy gem, you see the problem with Caucasians using them. And of course, I have to ask, is there a reason cornrows have made a comeback? Oh white girl, I'd love to hear about your Gen-Z troubles, but I just don't know if they'd compare to North African struggles.

And is there a way I can celebrate Super Bowl LIV without dehumanizing Native Americans for the Kansas City Chiefs? Go ahead, Coach Reid. Bang your pre-game ritual drum, commence the tomahawk chops and pull a name out of a hat for that lucky cheerleader who gets to ride your pinto horse mascot, Warpaint, onto the field of Arrowhead Stadium. You say these customs are done to honor Native Americans, but would the National Congress of American Indians agree?

Does the exploitation and destruction of African American homes on the northside of St. Louis from the Pruitt-Igou project count as showing me when it put



thousands out of their homes? Really, I want to know. I want to know if, Minoru Yamasaki, "award-winning" architect, honestly believed his buildings wouldn't become more than a ramshackle warehouse solely inhabited by impoverished, black citizens despite his lack of concern for their well-being and dream for finally achieving safer living conditions; forced to brave an even greater fail of the development than before in the '50's.

Let's talk blues. No, not the 2019 Stanley Cup champs, I mean music. Sure, you can tell me that culture and richness exists in all music, but did a white band just come to mind when I said that? Hmm, Europeans love to "tweak" (Whoops, I misspelled take) what's not theirs.

What about 2012? You remember, the year supermodel, Karlie Kloss, took the Victoria's Secret runway by storm. If you're unfamiliar, this may ring a bell: feathered headdress, turquoise jewelry and fringed suede lingerie. You heard it here folks, St. Louis' finest. Was she really sorry for appropriating an entire culture of Native Americans, or was she just ashamed for getting called out? Who knows, but at least we can ponder, as her sincere, heartfelt apology tweet will assist our thinking. Alas, this wasn't the last time Victoria Secret poked fun at a group of individuals.

Missouri, it's time to show me that we know how to be politically correct.





Art by Merry Schlarman

## Redlining's long lasting mark

by Rachel Finan

Kamina Love and her mother Betty practice urban farming to provide fresh food for themselves and their neighbors. They help provide the kids in the neighborhood with clothes for the winter. Love has also stood up against developers who try to buy out her neighbors. Love said they have seen the effects of an area that fell victim to redlining.

"We only have one legitimate grocery store, they don't give us enough healthy food to eat," Love said. "Now we have a neighborhood market that is black-owned and operated. We have jobs here, but we are very limited once again because of the opportunity and the platform that is placed here. We would have to go outside of East St. Louis to find jobs."

In his report, "The Making of Ferguson," Richard Rothstein, historian and author of "The Color of Law," said that events reflecting this racial tension, such as the shooting of Michael Brown, are largely a result of years of housing policies such as zoning and redlining, the refusal of mortgages and insurance based on race, and its effects on those areas. Dr. Jason Purnell, associate professor at Washington University, said these problems in residential segregation have been an issue in St. Louis for quite a while, and have been shown through old state and federal acts that still have a role in the opportunity given to certain areas.

"[St. Louis] had a longer period for racism to [develop], and it was aided and abetted by the government, and local agencies like banks and insurance companies that

helped to perpetuate it," Purnell said. "[The percentage of poverty] creates a vicious cycle of disinvestment and disability for people to access [opportunities.]"

According to a 2014 study by For the Sake of All, a report on the health of African Americans in St. Louis, there was a 18-year difference in life expectancy depending on which side of the city you lived in St. Louis. Purnell said this isn't due to the individual's efforts, but the situation of life they've been put in.

"Particularly in the last 40 years of our political development, there is a sense that people are on their own," Purnell said. "We have to remediate and reverse over a hundred years of housing policy that has failed to give opportunity equally to people all over the United States including in St. Louis."

Love feels that the community is not having a say in its development, and it is not for the benefit of the current residents but for the developers who want the land. According to Love the decrease in the value of the homes as a result of redlining policies has allowed developers to pay significantly low prices to buy out people's homes.

"We need to be at the table," Love said. "If they don't want to bring us a seat we need to bring a seat. I don't have that much income to move out of East St. Louis, but you only offer me \$800 to move out of my house and relocate. People's grandmothers are being kicked out. Once again we are being robbed."

According to Joe Edwards, owner of Blueberry Hill and The Peacock Diner in the

Loop, the area has been able to escape the effects of the housing policies that divided the neighborhood through white flight, where real estate agents scare white families out of the neighborhood through talk of African Americans moving in. Edwards said they escaped being divided through investment in diversity.

"It was at that time that a bunch of people in our area dug in their heels and said 'this is crazy, let's embrace diversity and let's make that a strength in our area,'" Edwards said. "A lot of open-minded and tolerant people stayed and moved in, and worked together to revitalize the area."

The development of the area has included the building of new shops along The Loop. A development that Edwards said has provided jobs for the surrounding communities, and created a dense network of resources for transportation and opportunities.

When Edwards first came to the neighborhood his goal was to open a place where he could play his records with Blueberry Hill. However, it was through the opening that Edwards became aware of the need for development in the area.

"Within a week of opening Blueberry Hill I realized that if I didn't work on the area Blueberry Hill wouldn't make it," Edwards said. "So I got people together and over a long period of time it has started to work. The more people that are around each other, the more comfortable they will feel and the better they will feel about themselves."



# There's never been a proper apology for slavery

by Kiden-Aloyse Smith

Although I'm a black girl living in America, I'm privileged. I live in the suburbs and both my parents have multiple degrees. My dad has a doctorate and is the interim president at Harris Stowe State University, while my mom is a minister.

This isn't to say we don't economically struggle on occasion, or that my dad doesn't work extremely hard to keep us afloat in expensive Kirkwood. If I painted that picture, it'd be a lie.

I've never had to worry if we'd have electricity, my phone paid for or new school clothes or supplies. I'm not allowed to have a job — because according to my parents, school is my job. That's a privilege. Looking through a white, suburban lens, that's normal.

However, due to the wide wealth disparity, that isn't common among the black community. Most of my friends applied for jobs the minute the clock struck midnight on their 16th birthdays. Working late nights, even though they have an AP test the next morning. It wasn't just because they wanted to buy makeup or clothes; they had bills to pay.

Due to the false notion of the "American Dream," it has been promoted that the reason for poverty and wealth disparity is laziness. If poor white people can work their way up, why can't poor black people? Black people must be lazy.

In reality, if you're born black, the odds are stacked against you, but if you're black and poor, the opportunities are scarce. It all starts at the root — 1619.

Yes, I know that's a long time ago. But the

repercussions of slavery have devastated the black community because there's never been a proper apology that comes in the form of a check. The economy is the key to controlling and suppressing a group of people; it's just another form of slavery. Kids like me, have won the lottery.

According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, a report done by EdBuild shows that nationwide there's a \$23 billion racial funding gap with K-12 schools. EdBuild is a national group dedicated to promoting fairer funding of public schools for low-income students.

In Missouri, "predominantly nonwhite school districts in Missouri have 2% less funding on average than predominantly white school districts." Although 2% doesn't sound like a large amount, that's about \$134 less per student, the report says. The biggest contribution to the gap is disparities in property taxes. Nation-wide, nonwhite districts took around \$54 billion (\$4,500 per student) in 2016 in local tax dollars while white districts took in more than \$77 billion (\$7,000 per student).

None of this is by coincidence. It is systematic oppression.

In a TEDtalk Amy Hunter, manager of Diversity and Inclusion for St. Louis Children's Hospital, speaks about how our zip code directly correlates with the resources within our schools and how, for example, the people of Normandy pay a 13% tax rate, while the people of Ladue pay 8%. An important factor in how we got to this point is things like the GI Bill. Hunter said it best when she said it

moved working-class whites to middle-class whites in the same generation, whereas black people were denied access to the GI Bill, despite earning it the same way. They were left stuck in the same economic bracket.

It's a simple equation — systematically — caused low property value equals a lack of economic prosperity. Who's going to open up a business with low property value? There's no revenue being generated within these inner-city neighborhoods. A low property value means a lack of funding for schooling. As for "working hard," all kids need new, up-to-date texts. It's a system. And it's hard to break a system.

However, this isn't just an issue that was systematically created; we privileged "well-off" black folks helped contribute to it as well—we've also adapted the mentality that we worked hard for ours. Not all skin folks are kinfolks. Not always intentionally, we've separated ourselves from inner-city black folks, forgetting where most of our parents or grandparents started because remember, the GI bill didn't include us. We weren't all born into wealth. Moving to the suburbs for a better life is one thing, but assimilating is another.

Bridging the gap between the haves and have-nots is difficult; it's not impossible. It all starts with a change in mentality and that starts with education. Although many black people can work hard enough to live in nice suburbs and live comfortably we need to understand how systematically it's difficult for poor black people to raise their economic status.



# Mixed In: Life as a 'mixed' student at KHS

by Charlotte Heinrich

Ellie Francois plays field hockey for the school, wishes the DJ played better music at the Friendship Dance and, like most freshmen, said she is constantly trying to find a ride on weekend nights.

Francois has been in the Kirkwood School District since the beginning of sixth grade after moving from St. Louis's Tower Grove South neighborhood and a St. Louis public school.

"When I was growing up I never really thought of it," she said. "The city is more diverse, [being mixed] was more normal there. When I moved to Kirkwood, people were like, 'Wait, why is your mom white? Are you adopted?' and then I started thinking about it."

Francois said her city school was much more diverse with about half of the students being non-white. Yet, while at KHS, she is sometimes the only kid of color in her classes and social circles. As of 2016, KSD reported black students making up 13% of the district population.

"Sometimes with touchy political subjects [in class] you can feel the tension and people will look at you [as the person of color]," she said. "Kids will say racist or offensive things and won't even realize. I'll call them out sometimes and they'll get really defensive about it. I guess I'm more aware of it too because they don't have to think about it as much."

Francois said she can best relate to her friend Tyler Macon, freshman, who also has a white mom and black dad. Like Francois, Macon said that from being the only person of color in his world history class, he gets all the looks during the lessons on slavery. She said they like to joke about how it feels to get their hair "pet."

"A lot of people will just come up and touch my hair [and say], 'It's so weird and puffy' and they do that to him too. They act like I'm another creature because my hair isn't stick straight. I wouldn't come up to anyone else and start petting them."

Yet Ellie said she also feels different from black girls at KHS, and that she has since she moved to Kirkwood. She attributed this to the fact that most of her friend group is white.



"Some black girls have said you're not black. You're actually white. You don't act black. People will say stuff and not even realize it's offensive. Kirkwood is more sheltered in their bubble of Kirkwood."

But for Macon, who has been in the

school district since kindergarten, being the only person of color in his class is habitual. He even laughs about it.

"You just go to class, and there's a bunch of white kids. I'm the only black one. But I mean, I'm used to it."

**"People will say stuff and not even realize it's offensive. Kirkwood is more sheltered in their bubble of Kirkwood."**

**— Ellie Francois**



Art by Merry Schlarman

# Kirkwood redistricting raises questions about race

by Maddie Meyers

When William F. Hall was 6 years old, he confidently walked into Robinson Elementary as the first African American student in 1954. Rather than feeling intimidated, he said he felt prepared for the challenge because he was the son of two educators. He had attended the segregated Turner School in Meacham Park until the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, which prohibited public school segregation.

"I am fortunate that I was always raised to believe all human beings are made in the image of God," Dr. Hall, adjunct professor and consultant for the Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association, said. "There was never any hatred or any feeling that I was better than someone or, certainly, that I was less than anyone."

These childhood experiences shaped Hall's views on how the Kirkwood School District (KSD) should redraw its attendance boundaries today as it combats overcrowding.

"The key is, what is going to be in the best interest of the best education of the children?" Hall said. "It is pretty much a no-brainer that in today's contemporary society, the key to the best education is diversity."

While Hall said racial diversity is important, he believes other variables need to be taken into consideration, including gender, socioeconomic income and ethnicity. Hall said, however, there should not be more emphasis on one factor over another.

The KSD will start the redistricting process in May 2020, in hopes the plan will go into effect in the school year of 2022-2023. This is the first time KSD has redrawn attendance boundaries since 1975, according to School Desegregation in Kirkwood, Missouri: A Staff Report of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

The year before Hall walked into Robinson, Kirkwood was in court accused of operating a segregated school system like the one found unconstitutional in *Brown*. For years Kirkwood had shipped its black high school students off to Sumner to keep Kirkwood white. Even after *Brown*, many of Kirkwood's schools, such as Tillman and North Junior High School, remained almost entirely white. The

1975 adjustment of attendance districts was an effort to create greater diversity. What's uncertain is whether the new redistricting plan will jeopardize that diversity.

Dr. Michele Condon, KSD superintendent, said it is illegal for Kirkwood to redistrict based solely on race. She said it needs to be taken into consideration the concerns of parents and students in KSD and reflect their values in the schools.

"We just want to make sure that all of our kids have an opportunity for an excellent education," Condon said. "We want to make sure that we hire a diverse staff so that all of our kids in our district have the opportunity to learn what it is like outside of Kirkwood because the real world is more diverse than Kirkwood is at this point."

Condon said KSD is going to look at how the Webster Groves School District (WGSD) is redistricting because it is ahead in the process. The WGSD Boundary Advisory Committee presented its recommendation to its school board, Feb. 24. The recommendation, which is listed on the WGSD website, includes balancing utilization among all schools and minimizing travel distances for students; however, it creates a discrepancy in socioeconomic status. The schools range from being 4% socioeconomically diverse to 30%.

The KSD redistricting process cannot start until after the community votes April 7 on Proposition S, a no tax rate increase bond issue to address student enrollment growth, including building a new elementary school on Kirkwood's Lindemann property, according to Dr. Matthew Bailey, KSD assistant superintendent and co-chair of the committee to redistrict. He said redistricting will happen regardless of whether Proposition S passes.

Bailey said there is a Google Form to sign up to be part of the committee, which will include people with different community perspectives. He said there are currently about 100 people signed up, but they want to get as many people involved in the boundary decisions as possible, so there are no surprises with the new layout.

According to Darnel Frost, Kirkwood School Board president, race is not going to be the

leading factor in KSD redistricting. However, he said people in Meacham Park believe it is essential that a lot of the decisions revolve around race.

"To me [race] always has to be a factor [in the redistricting process]," Frost said. "Now, how important a factor, is where the discussion needs to be had."

Stephanie Keller, parent of two kids at North Glendale Elementary, is one community member who signed up to be part of the redistricting committee. She said diversity should play a factor in the process, and it is worth it to split up some neighborhoods to keep the schools balanced.

"It's important to have a little piece of everybody in each elementary school," Keller said. "Not just having one school specifically having all of the lower-economic scale families in it."

Even though some students will attend different schools, Bailey, Condon and Frost agree all Kirkwood schools supply a great education.

"All of the elementary schools are great," Frost said. "The schools in Kirkwood are very good schools. We have great principals, great leadership. So no matter what school you end up going to, you are going to have a great experience."

Kirkwood School District Official Enrollment Report for 2019:

570 total Black students (9.16%)

Kirkwood High School: 11.04% Black — 197 students

Nipher Middle School: 13.60% Black — 99 students

North Kirkwood Middle School: 5.32% Black — 34 students

Keyser Elementary School: 4.68% Black — 26 students

North Glendale Elementary School: 9.75% Black — 59 students

Robinson Elementary School: 14.54% Black — 74 students

Tillman Elementary School: 5.71% Black — 29 students

Westchester Elementary School: 5.02% Black — 27 students



# Northside Knights

by Emma Lingo

"Our scholars are proof that children who find themselves in the most challenging zip codes of St. Louis can succeed far beyond expectations."

– North Side Community School website.

Before 1948, realtors reserved the northside of St. Louis for people of color. Laws blocked off a section of the city to contain the growing population of foreigners and black Americans in one place—away from white people. The segregation and isolation of blacks resulted from racially restrictive covenants at first and then redlining. Both practices are now outlawed. Anyone driving down Delmar Blvd. can see the split caused by the former redlined road.

North Side Community School sits north of Delmar, in the area once redlined for people of color and now housing a predominantly black population. After a decade of growth, the school reigns as the number one charter and open-enrollment school in the St. Louis region, the second-best charter school in Missouri, and is within the top 10% of charter schools across America

The school opened in August of 2009 and served 51 kindergarten and first grade students. John Grote acted as head of the board, Stella Erondy stepped up as principal and Ross Woolsey worked as the executive director. The trio dreamed up the idea of North Side Community School when they ran a task force dedicated to improving inner-city education together. Grote pointed out that the task force wasn't making quick progress, and eventually suggested the creation of a charter school where northside children could receive a top-notch education.

Their rankings are high, and those numbers are based on state-wide tests such as the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) where they score anywhere from the 50th percentile to upwards of the 80th. Many northside schools pull in single-digit percentiles. Compared to other city schools, North Side Community School shines. But how?

"We went back to basics," Grote said. "We operated on the assumption that our students came in behind and that assumption was correct. They were years behind. They came in with disadvantages; they weren't given the same education white middle-class students in the county got."

According to Grote, Erondy was the driving force behind ensuring their kids were up to par for MAP testing. She didn't allow low standards.

"Stella worked in city schools for decades," Grote said. "She knows the northside, the parents, the students, the population. She set high expectations and kept a simple no-frills operation."

Grote and Erondy managed the school together since its opening. A character



Art by Celia Bergman

education program introduced the North Side Knights to the idea of JUSTICE, an acronym for positive traits in a person (i.e. being Just, Unapologetic, Self-disciplined, Tenacious, Inquisitive, Caring and Enthusiastic). Students fill out a JUSTICE card once a month and report their progress to teachers. The administrative duo also knew home life played a large role in a student's success, so they began to educate parents alongside their students through parent meetings, assemblies, JUSTICE slips, and more.

"There is no boundary between home and school," Erondy said. "They should flow in and out of each other. If we do that we will succeed, and succeed is what we've done so far."

Last year Grote retired, and this year Erondy will follow him. Woolsey has relaxed his role with the school, and the next generation of administrators is taking the reins. Chester Asher, new executive director, already has plans.

"When comparing scores, the school is doing 10 times better than some of the others—literally," Asher said. "And North Side isn't doing great. It's relatively the

best. Only about half of our scholars [score proficiently], which relatively is something to commend, but in the terms of our own standards, it's not where we want to be."

North Side Community School currently holds about 500 scholars, but within the next two years, it hopes to educate approximately 750. A middle school was just added to the Knights' family. It's stationed at the intersection of Washington Ave. and Grand Blvd. down the road from the St. Louis Symphony and The Fabulous Fox Theatre. The board has also discussed expanding more; talks of a high school building and another elementary school have begun.

"We made a heaven of learning for kids," Erondy said. "It's a safe and beautiful place. But when you step outside of our fences and go into the streets, you hear the gunshots. You see the decay. You see the neighborhood that's a result of poor care and poor education. But the kids can always come here, and when they do they beam with happiness. It's a hopeful and peaceful place. It is so heartbreaking that it's not being replicated everywhere else."

# Re-examination of the American Dream

by Sahra Jamal

The American Dream. What does that mean? Many would say it means everyone, regardless of where they are from or their race, can achieve success through sacrifice, hard work, and risk-taking. That isn't exactly the case.

A New York Times investigative journalist and founder of the 1619 Project, Nikole Hannah-Jones re-examines and challenges our democracy's founding ideals. Jones' 1619 Project reframes America's history by recounting events of slavery and the contribution of Black Americans in founding America. Throughout her essay, she discusses and evaluates our founding ideals and recognizes the important role of Black Americans in the establishment of our nation. Nikole Hannah-Jones effectively challenges the "founding ideals" of America and in the process unfolds the many roles black Americans had in its establishment. Without the perseverance of black Americans throughout history and now, the American Dream would not hold any meaning.

Hannah-Jones claimed that this country was "founded on both an ideal and a lie." Indeed America was built on ideals that can be considered lies. For instance, the Declaration of Independence which states, "... that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness ... ." The same men who sat and drafted these exact words couldn't fulfill their promise — the hypocrisy. What happened to "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness"? Clearly, these rights were not extended to African Americans or they wouldn't continuously fight against the violence and oppression towards them.

Besides, the Constitution which was put into effect on March 4, 1789, also failed African Americans. The word slavery never is used in the Constitution but on the first page of the text is the three-fifth compromise that protected slavery and made it clear that "We the people" did not include black people. On January 1, 1863, Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation because he understood to win the war against Britain, he had to allow free slaves. It declared, "that all persons held as slaves' within the rebellious states "are, and henceforth shall be free." Furthermore, even though the document went into effect, it was very limited and only extended to states which seceded. Freedom was still not accomplished.

According to Hannah-Jones, America simply wouldn't have existed without the contributions of black Americans. As a young child, she questioned why her dad always had the flag in front of their home as blacks were never recognized as Americans. In her perspective, why honor a symbol

that didn't stand for what it preached? She now understands — he knew his people's contributions to the foundation of America would leave a permanent mark. Many of us were taught that July 4, 1776, was the date the U.S. was founded, but in actuality, it was August 1619 — before the Puritans at Plymouth Rock. Between 20 to 30 enslaved Africans were stolen from the Portuguese and shipped to America, the beginning of slavery and the birth of a new nation.

An American sociologist and professor, Matthew Desmond expanded the contributions blacks made, arguing that American capitalism is built on brutality and the heritage of slavery. This country's wealth progressed because of cotton production. African Americans not only had an important role in the economy's growth but also culture, American music. Wesley Morris, another 1619 author, shares his knowledge on how music in America came about. Morris claimed that music started in 1975 through 1983, especially Yacht Rock. He mentions a story about a white man who heard a tune a slave was humming, stole the tune and made a career. White Americans did what they are best at doing — taking credit for what is not theirs. The economic growth and the birth of American music are just a glimpse of what African Americans contributed. Even though treated as if they are nothing, blacks have built and carried this whole country on their backs.

Many would automatically disagree on who the true achievers of the founding ideals are or the roles African Americans have played in the foundation of America. But, if one carefully reads the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, the faults are unavoidable. The words inscribed such as "that all men are created equal" and "that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights" mean nothing unless they become reality. Then, there's the role blacks played in the growth of this nation. The cotton industry flourished on slave labor. Continuously giving to the country and receiving nothing unless it involves harsh punishments — that is the black experience.

Nikole Hannah-Jones does a remarkable execution of re-examining the founding ideals of America and giving credit to its founders. There's evidence such as the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence which reveal that America cannot live up to its beliefs, disclosing hypocrisy. America wouldn't have thrived if it wasn't for the struggles and oppression blacks have encountered. Nikole Hannah-Jones discovered the truth about this nation. Their words hold no truth.



# The American Dream is based on a whitewashed version of history

by Zoe Yudovich

"Hard work pays off ... Pull yourself up by your bootstraps," these statements embody the American Dream ... the dream parents sell their children to motivate them, the dream through which we view immigrants entering our glorious country, and the dream used to exalt ourselves above other nations. Dictionary.com, defines the American Dream as the "ideal by which equality of opportunity is available to any American," which shows that America is a meritocracy.

Nikole Hannah-Jones, a staff writer for the New York Times and creator of the 1619 Project, challenges our whitewashed knowledge of American history and calls into question the dream. We are the land of the free, home of the brave, and if you work hard in America, your dreams will come true. But is this everyone's reality? Hannah-Jones explains that America was built on the backs of slaves. Therefore the American Dream is a lie. Her claim delegitimizes the American dream because it is not accessible to all people.

Capitalism was founded upon the institution of slavery, which created systems that currently prohibit African Americans from enjoying the benefits of the dream. "In order to understand American capitalism, you have to start at the plantation," wrote Mathew Desmond, a sociologist professor at Princeton University. Desmond criticizes the roots of capitalism and gives recognition to the true founders...slaves. According to Desmond, in 1831, America was delivering almost half the world's raw cotton crop, and due to the large scale cultivation of cotton, the factory was created, which triggered the Industrial Revolution.

During the peak of slavery, the combined value of all the slaves was worth more than all the railroads and factories. Desmond said Plantations – more accurately forced labor camps – created a new economy - one that closely resembles modern-day corporations. For example, slaves were hunched over and worked in long rows. Today our factories are also in rows, known as assembly lines. Plantations had multiple supervisors and used beatings to force slaves to harvest more crops. Today, salesforces have multiple supervisors and incentivize employees to go above their targets and lose their jobs ... Nowadays, people take out mortgages for their houses. Mortgages were created for plantation owners to get more capital and would mortgage their slaves to banks because it was easier than mortgaging their own property.

Slavery created all these systems that are needed for capitalism to thrive. Capitalism was started by exploiting African Americans by using them for intensive labor and continues to exploit people today. The

richest one/tenth of 1% owns as much as the bottom 90% and McDonald's CEO makes an hour what the average worker makes a year, according to Douglas A. McIntyre, former editor and publisher of Financial World Magazine.

This system of income inequality makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. Capitalism is the heart of the American dream and it's the barbaric and exploitative foundation that threatens the existence of a fallacy many individuals hold dear to their hearts. According to Americanprogress.org, the average median wealth for black families was about \$20,000 in 2016 compared with white families' median wealth of \$171,000. Slavery might have been abolished over 150 years ago, but these systems have maintained inequality from slave times. The institution of slavery is an example of American hypocrisy because capitalism was built upon slavery and African Americans weren't given the opportunity to reap the benefits, contradicting the principles of the American dream.

The American Dream is an ideal that the country embodies. Humanity buys into it because it gives us a sense of hope. But it leaves us disappointed. In reality, the dream is not accessible to all people, especially African Americans who helped create it. American freedom is the foundation of the American dream because it's based on the idea of individuality and paving a road to accomplish your dream. The military has always been a symbol of American freedom because we are protecting what other countries envy and want to dismantle. Hannah-Jones comments that her father believed his country would treat him well if he served in the military, but was passed over for opportunities and was discharged. She says "Like all the black men and women in my family, he believed in hard work, but like all the black men and women in my family, no matter how hard he worked, he never got ahead." This was the sad reality for all African Americans who would enlist in the military in that time period. From the Revolutionary War to Vietnam, African Americans would return after their service and wouldn't be given their medals or the same benefits other veterans received. According to History.com, the GI bill excluded over 1.2 million African Americans who served in World War II. This shows how the American dream didn't apply to all people because even though African Americans fought for America overseas, they weren't given the same freedoms they fought for. African Americans have always been a prime example of hypocrisy in America in terms of freedom. While the Founding Fathers were writing our constitution, slaves

were building their houses. While Thomas Jefferson established America as the land of the free, enslaved African Americans were constructing the White House. African Americans were the first to stand up for their freedoms and were responsible for making America the true "land of the free."

People criticize the 1619 Project because they believe the American Dream is still alive and well. However, there are systems that grant individuals privilege prohibiting everyone from accessing the dream. Individuals have the privilege – whether it exists as race, socioeconomic factors, education, gender, and sexuality. According to a 2017 study by Harvard Business School, African Americans with better credentials on their resume are less likely to get a job compared to their white counterparts purely because of their "black-sounding" name. This privilege is only afforded to white students, even though African Americans work just as hard, because of racial bias. African Americans own approximately one-tenth of the wealth of white Americans, are less likely to graduate high school and more likely to be incarcerated. These are the consequences of systemic racism which shows there isn't an equal playing field for all individuals. For instance, public school funding is determined by property tax dollars. Wealthy districts have more money for their schools. This creates a learning gap between "poor" schools and "rich" schools which harms minority students the most. There haven't been any attempts to try to dismantle these examples of systemic racism, but the hope of even having a dream can't exist without everyone being equal. The American dream doesn't apply to all because minorities aren't given equal opportunity required for the American Dream to be successful.

Society views slavery as if it was just one of America's sins, which undermines the contributions of slaves. This doesn't threaten the work of the Founding Fathers but gives recognition to the ones who were ignored. Today, many kids are told, "anything is possible," and, "if you work hard, your dreams will come true." For marginalized citizens, dreams are much harder to accomplish because not everyone starts at the same starting line. Hannah-Jones's argument undermines the American dream because it is not accessible to all people. Society encourages individuals to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps," but some people don't even have boots.



Photo courtesy of Christina Sneed

UCity juniors from left to right, Ian Feld, Zoe Yudovich, Reuben Thomas, Merrick Hoel, Kelis Petty and John Ruland.

## Hannah-Jones tried to be passionate, not objective — and she was right

by John Ruland

I live in America. Here, we're reminded every day of the names of our Framers, through the places we live, the streets we drive, and the parks we play in. We're especially inundated with reminders of our first president — there are 88 different cities alone that are named Washington. But Nikole Hannah-Jones, staff writer for the New York Times, wants to put the spotlight on a

different group for once, asserting that black people are the most deserving of "American ideals," not people like the Framers or Abraham Lincoln. She describes the history and the legacy of African Americans in a way that is unheard of in the mainstream. Her argument is controversial in the extreme, but she had the sense to address it the right way. If somebody else were writing about an

issue this sensitive, they might try to make it more palatable, which would sacrifice the heart of the essay. But Hannah-Jones is not that person. She tells the story her way, with the voice of a passionate expert — an opinionated expert — filling the text. Her rhetoric and her argument are not meant for traditionalists, people who value the popular version of American history almost to a



fault. Instead, they are meant to be a shining beacon of hope for people who are ready for a history that hasn't been whitewashed. It's an alternative, not a magic wand that makes a hardcore Civil War buff repeal their allegiances. Anyone who believes that Hannah-Jones' essay should have been meeker needs to look closer to find her real purpose.

To discover why Hannah-Jones' essay was not aimed at everyone, it's necessary to look at her intended audience. When she describes black people and white people in history, she uses two completely different tones. She tells the anecdotes of black people's contributions to history in a patriotic, respectful way. "No one cherishes freedom more than those who have not had it," she writes, "and to this day, black Americans, more than any other group, embrace the democratic ideals of a common good." She devotes a long paragraph to Reconstruction, which serves as a vehicle to show how effective government was when black people ran it. She describes blacks as the "architects" of America, building the Capitol, the plantations, and wealthy people's houses. Conversely, she uses a sardonic tone towards white people in history. She chose not to use any non-racist white people for her anecdotes. She challenges the label "The Greatest Generation" by retelling many examples of oppression that make the '40s and the '50s look ... not so great. Sarcastically, she writes, "Black Americans, simply by existing, served as a problematic reminder of this nation's failings." White America dealt with this "inconvenience" by supporting a cruel racial caste system.

An unfortunate idea that some people have (one that I used to have) is that journalistic writing needs to be ideologically accessible to all people, all the time. For example, in my yearbook class, we aren't allowed to put opinions in our stories at all. Junior reporters on the beat are just supposed to report, not argue. But everyone's beliefs are different, especially with an issue so sensitive as race. To achieve her purpose, Hannah-Jones had to abandon the idea that she was going to be accepted by all her readers, and so she chose to be loud and clear about what she believed in.

One way authors can show bravado and strength is in their portrayal of good versus evil. In Hannah-Jones' essay, it's clear who the protagonists and the antagonists are. There is one anecdote that she uses, in which Abraham Lincoln calls all the black Congressmen to the White House to suggest to them that all black Americans flee the country when they're freed. "You and we are different races," she quotes from Lincoln. "Your race suffers very greatly, many of them, by living among us, while ours suffer

from your presence. In a word, we suffer on each side." She presents Abraham Lincoln as the antagonist — the racist president expelling the black congressmen out of their homeland. Hannah-Jones is aware that people who idolize figures like Lincoln aren't likely to be receptive to this narrative. The people who will understand her are the ones who want a more accurate, inclusive version of history. Hannah-Jones wants to make sure they have something strong to believe in, so she loses a little objectivity to make her points resonate more clearly. And — again — that's okay.

This purpose is illuminated further by the structure of Hannah-Jones' essay, which is in chronological order. By peppering her claim with evidence that transcended 400 years, she was able to show that her argument held up over time. In addition, chronological order is the structure of textbooks, and she was, in a way, creating a new kind of textbook. Her writing is a new version of history, so it makes sense that she would write it like a history book. Hannah-Jones begins with the first black man to die in the Revolutionary War, goes through the Founding Fathers, the Civil War, Reconstruction, Jim Crow laws, and the present day. Each time, she spotlights the real heroes of America, and discredits the figureheads whom we have idolized for so many years. The chronological-order choice keeps the credibility of a textbook and blends it with Hannah-Jones' own style to create the unapologetic remix she desired. Moreover, the chronology supports the idea that this essay isn't really meant to persuade anyone in particular, especially people who think of the Founding Fathers as heroes and the '40s as being the good old days. The structure is a history lesson, not a speech. Her essay is educational, not preachy. Her words tell a story about her race.

While what and who an author writes about is certainly important, where she writes it can tell a lot about her purpose as well. The New York Times caters to a very specific niche of America. NYT readers are mostly in their late thirties and early forties, according to Hitwise, a marketing firm. The median household income of its readers is \$191,000 for the paper, and \$96,000 for the website — so most of them aren't strapped for cash. They're very progressive, with 72 percent of readers identifying as liberal. And they're 24 percent more likely than the average American to be interested in "other cultures." This means readers are willing to consider other perspectives other than their own. They're receptive to a narrative that's different than the status quo. Even if they're not black (which they probably aren't — sadly, the statistics show that black households are almost \$100K less affluent than white

ones), the audience Hannah-Jones reached is a progressive, open-minded one. It's receptive to change, and new narratives. Fox News or Breitbart would be a very different nut to crack, and even PBS and MSNBC have lower percentages of liberal viewers. The vast majority of NYT readers probably don't idolize the Framers. They probably drive Priuses. I've been reading the New York Times every Sunday for as long as I can remember, and I was shocked by the revelations I learned from Hannah-Jones' essay. But I believed her. So she didn't really even need to write to her critics. She gave her audience something unapologetic, because she knew they could accept it.

But what about the people who don't believe her? Those people are still important to the impact of Hannah-Jones' essay. Some people might say that by arguing that she's conscious of her audience, I'm disavowing the broader impact of her essay on all of America. But by using such inflammatory language, she got people to notice her, for better or for worse. People who would never agree with her still read her words, took the bait and spread the article around. Newt Gingrich, a former House Speaker known for his conservative viewpoints, appeared on Fox and Friends and denounced the 1619 Project as "historically, factually false nonsense." He called the New York Times "a propaganda paper worthy of Pravda.") Gingrich proved that he wasn't persuaded by the arguments in Hannah-Jones' essay, which echoes my point that not everyone was intended to be influenced by her argument. But his interview showed how effective it was for Hannah-Jones not to hold back. By mentioning the 1619 Project on a conservative network, the number of people who will be exposed to the project, and her essay, will increase significantly. If her strong language lands on Fox or Breitbart, Hannah-Jones is the one who wins.

Black Americans Fought to Make Them True is a powerful essay. It upends a narrative widely held by millions of people, and elevates a historically underrated and oppressed racial group in the process. People needed to read something like this. But what they didn't need to read was an overly neutral grab for clicks and views. By staying true to her voice and her target audience, using the sharp tone that made her famous as a journalist and speaker, Nikole Hannah-Jones has risen above the demands of public journalism. She is not a catch-all, copy-churning machine. She is an advocate of her race, her country, and her story. What this essay does is distill that passion and technique into a history lesson, one that this country has needed for quite some time.

# Summer chores remind me of the hard work of African Americans building America

by Reuben Thomas

When summer rolls around, the time comes for home restoration: cleaning gutters, pulling weeds, cutting grass. These events are always a family affair, when everyone in the house is rushed out by my hurrying dad in attempts to get in as many hours of daylight as possible to get every project done. As my siblings and I begin our chores, we become restless—wanting to return to the cool air-conditioned home to escape the beatings on our backs from the blaring sun. Our plans to escape however, usually backfire resulting in lectures from my father. My brothers and I, as we are told off, continue to work and mouth the words of what my father would say, as we had heard this infamous lecture every summer.

My dad, a man of mixed-race, would repeat to us that when he worked outside in the blazing heat he thought about our ancestors, the inhumane conditions they were put in, the beatings they took, and how they would be forced to work outside in more extreme conditions and get nothing in return. Everytime this story is repeated to me, it makes me think about the struggles that black people went through to gain rights in this country, and I always feel for how hard it must have been to be a black person in America. In these moments I never really think about how the struggles and the labor done by black people contributed to the United States. I always focused on how bad things were and not how much black people built up our country.

That was until I was introduced to the 1619 project. The 1619 project was developed by Nikole Hannah-Jones and designed to highlight the 400th anniversary of the first slave ship coming to America. It's goal is to re-educate us about slavery and putting the contributions made by black people at the very foundation that holds up American society. She rewrites history to give more credit to the overlooked contributions of black people.

The 1619 project begins with an essay by Hannah-Jones entitled "Our democracy's founding ideals were false when they were written." Black Americans have fought to make them true." In this essay, Hannah-Jones goes into detail about the contributions that black people have made and how they have built this country from the ground up. She introduces a new perspective as to how black people contributed to this country, while refuting previous thoughts and beliefs about black people's contributions. Hannah-Jones claims re-education is necessary. The mindset of racism that stems from our past needs to be removed from modern-day American textbooks, including the shadowing of black accomplishments and history and the fake perfection and glorification of popular white historical figures.

Racism is an equation. It is a combination of hate based on race together with the authority to wield power over that race. While there are modern day acts of racism, a lasting form of racism is one that exists in the classroom — the suppression of black people and anything that may be associated with black people from American history. In an attempt to not let black people have any credit for the crafting of America's foundation, anything that could be attributed to black people is essentially blocked out of major historical events. An example can be found in Hannah-Jones' essay in which she explains that America's founding event, gaining independence, was based around black people. "Conveniently left out of our founding mythology is the fact that one of the primary reasons some of the colonists decided to declare their independence from Britain was because they wanted to protect the institution of slavery." Due to the fact that black people could have been a reason for such a big moment in American history is the reason that these ideas have never been shared in history textbooks and taught in United States schools. This tactic of oppressing blacks in American history is a way to make not only black people think but all Americans think that black people really haven't contributed much to this country.

Even when first learning about history, it can be taught to children that only one group of people is responsible for the success of America, which can lead to racism being taught. Hannah-Jones puts herself back into the mind of her younger self and describes how she was taught about her identity and how it related to American history. "I had been taught, in school, through cultural osmosis, that the flag wasn't really ours, that our history as a people began with enslavement and that we had contributed little to this great nation." Instilling into students that black people had very little to contribute to this country is the form that racism takes in history lessons. Through the racism equation, the hate of the black race demonstrated by historians is being held over black people by the people writing history. Action needs to be taken against teaching youths that black people had very little to contribute to American history. It is this false teaching that has shadowed black people's contributions to America.

While certain groups of people in history are not acknowledged at all for their contributions to America, others are given too much attention and are looked at as American heroes. Several of these popular white American heroes are put atop pedestals and are symbols of America and what it supposedly stands for. However the "heroes," that we put up on pedestals are not perfect and should not be treated as such. The narratives that America has put on white

politicians is an attempt to try and make them look as squeaky-clean as possible and make them be the heroes of America while covering up bad actions, such as ownership of slaves.

History however, should be as close to the truth as possible, and to get rid of the racism that clogs the textbooks of today. History needs to be honest when it comes down to historical figures and their actions. To start off with honesty, Hannah-Jones points out the hypocrisy that beloved politician Thomas Jefferson was exuding, simply by stating a fact. "As Jefferson composed his inspiring words, however, a teenage boy who would enjoy none of those rights and liberties waited nearby to serve at his master's beck and call," she wrote. Those inspiring words written by Thomas Jefferson were written but not applied to America that "all men are created equal," and that all men deserve the right to "Life, liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Whenever we learn about Thomas Jefferson we learn about the Declaration of Independence, but we never talk about how he never wanted to give the freedoms he wrote about to the people who were helping him build the country and being forced to labor on his plantation — or forced labor camp as Hannah-Jones accurately calls it.

But Jefferson is not the only one who has skeletons in his closet. Abraham Lincoln does as well. Hannah-Jones digs deep into Lincoln and addresses the fact that when trying to find a resolution for the Civil War, Lincoln wanted to move all black people out of America because he believed that white people and black people could not live peacefully in the same place. This fact would be surprising to most, especially since Lincoln is known best for abolishing slavery. Lincoln is seen as a beacon of hope. For some he even inspired the "Negro Anthem." The first time it was ever sung was on the anniversary of his death. But Lincoln never really has been held accountable for his statements that he has made in the past. The people we put atop pedestals in this country are the people who while they may have done some right, have also done some wrong. Because they were white men, America does not want to ruin their reputations. However it is time that we start to take everything into account.

Some people may disagree with the statement that there is still a mindset of racism in the way that America teaches history, and others say we are nowhere near where we used to be. While it may be true that America has come a pretty decent way when it comes to race relations, that does not have anything to do with the American history system and how it mistreats and objectifies black people and glorifies white men. The people who have written history, go all the way back from when history first began. History comes from the journals, the letters, the books of the past and the people writing those journals and letters



at the beginning of American history were the men who owned slaves. The men who believed that whites were better than blacks are the ones who documented American history and the ones who have put into the textbooks that black people did nothing to contribute to this country. Not until now have Americans begun to question their history and what they have been learning and it has not been until now

that America is beginning to re-evaluate the racism in its history.

This summer, and the next one I expect to hear my father repeat his lecture to my siblings and me. However when I hear the same words that my father has spoken to me time and time again, I will take away a different message. Next time, I will think about the work that has been done by black

people that has put me where I am today. I will think about re-educating others around me who may be confused about certain things in history, and re-educating myself and being able to continuously ask questions about what I am being taught. I want to re-educate not only myself but others around me to tell the true story of American history, which is the true story of my history.

## Ignoring true history of America's founding can hurt later generations

by Kelis Petty

American History — prideful to some, biased and deceitful to others. American history has been taught in the same manner for decades, but new generations say the teachings have been distorted. American investigative journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones reevaluated the true founding of America through the 1619 Project. As an American tradition, July 4, 1776 is considered the day that the United States was founded. However, Hannah-Jones argues that in August of the year 1619, America became established when the first slave ship arrived on American soil, providing forced labor for American success stories. Hannah-Jones rightly exposed the flawed influences throughout America that should change ignorant perceptions concerning the contributions of African slaves to America's founding.

Relevant historical evidence uncovers the beginning of America's foundation based on the work of slaves. African slaves contributed to the start of a thriving economy in America with physical and economical assistance. Physical contributions started with forced labor in agricultural work. As Hannah-Jones stated, "They taught colonists to grow rice. They grew and picked cotton that at the height of slavery was the nation's most valuable commodity, accounting for half of all American exports and sixty-six percent of the world's supply." Such groundbreaking profits provided an economical comfort for citizens not only in America but around the world — all thanks to the contributions to African slaves. Before African slaves were brought into the colonies, colonists were struggling to produce agricultural success. Hannah-Jones further states, "They lugged wooden tracks of railroads that crisscrossed the South and that helped take the cotton to the Northern textile mills, fueling the Industrial Revolution."

Not only did slaves have to pick the cotton day in and day out, they laid the tracks that allowed the distribution of their work across the country. Such assistance is often overlooked with the assumption that slave owners were the only ones responsible

for economic success. Many are under the ignorant perception that colonists were giving a helping hand to the African slaves — doing them a favor — however the contributions and assistance from slaves were more effective than the colonists' attempted teachings.

African slaves were the roots of the capitalist economy. Capitalism is an economic system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners seeking profit, rather than by state. That started on the plantations, Matthew Desmond, another author of the 1619 project, wrote. "Around the world there are many capitalist societies, ranging from liberating exploitative, protective to abusive, democratic to unregulated." In America's capitalist economy, small businesses are purposely forced out of business to better the profits of bigger businesses, the ones that work with the government. Capitalism on the plantations introduced ideas of punishing those who don't do their job well and holding those who do well to a higher standard. When making such comparisons Desmond states, "Unskilled workers are typically incentivized through punishment, not promotions; inequality reigns and poverty spreads." He adds, "Plantation owners used a combination of incentives and punishments to squeeze as much possible out of enslaved workers."

Or consider the concept of mortgaging — "a popular mainstream instrument." Mortgaging was a factor in the capitalists' work that kept slave owners wealthy not only from cotton sales, but slave sales. Slaves were considered property and, "Enslaved people were used as collateral for mortgages centuries before the home mortgage became a defining characteristic of middle America." When thinking of today's harsh capitalist economy peoples' first thoughts should be the plantations. Although African slaves were not included in the earned profits in slavery, works of the enslaved helped slave owners to find methods to keep money flowing and nourishing generations of whites under slavery.

Just as educational history in America has been taught in a biased manner to intentionally downplay the dehumanizing and heinous behaviors of slave masters towards African slaves, people also neglect the helpful contributions from African slaves. The Revolutionary War leaders downplayed bad behavior against African slaves by claiming they were enslaved under Britain's rule. To which Samuel Johnson commented, "Americans hear the yelps of for liberty among the drivers of Negroes." Hannah-Jones states, "Britain had grown deeply conflicted over its role in the barbaric institution, and, 'London began growing calls to abolish the slave trade.' Colonists complained they were slaves under British rule, however colonists were humanized. White Americans have tried to downplay the dehumanizing and heinous acts against African slaves by feeding biased and hypocritical teachings to ignorant souls with no regards of decency for an entire race's sufferings.

Opposing opinions regarding Hannah-Jones' testimony argue that the true evolution of America based off the work of African slaves should not be considered and previous historical accounts were true. Although it is convenient to hold onto information that citizens have been taught their whole lives, Hannah-Jones and journalists have performed deeper research to portray truthful history. Hannah-Jones uses historical evidence to back up her claims. She told the story of Isaac Woodard who was blinded by a police club within hours of his discharge after World War II, "Officers struck him in the head, beating him so badly that he fell unconscious. Blows to Woodard's head were so severe that when he woke up in a jail cell the next morning he could not see. The beating occurred just 4.5 hours after his military discharge. If people allow ignorant souls to remain uneducated on the true founding of their country, not only is it harmful, it is damaging to later generations who will lack helpful knowledge and build hateful spirits.

# The divisive effect of the 1619 project's evidence

by Ian Feld

When the names of the most famous African American authors, scientists, activists, and leaders are Googled, the first lines of their biographies are noticeably missing a certain qualifier: "American sociologist, historian, civil rights activist, Pan-Africanist, author, writer and editor," reads the first few lines of W.E.B. Du Bois' page; "American educator, author, orator, and adviser," reads Booker T. Washington's. There is an absence of race within their nationality, which seemingly has become so customary in American culture. "African Americans" is standard, almost a sleight to the legitimacy of blacks in America, so the omission on Google becomes more pronounced—a welcome sign. It's a perfect parallel to the work of American journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones, whose crowning achievement is the New York Times' 1619 project—a deep dive into the contributions of blacks to America and—more importantly—the role of slavery on modern American society. Within the various articles, essays and poems contained by her project, Jones delivers groundbreaking assertions in an attempt to reclassify African American history as American history.

In the first essay of the 1619 Project, Hannah-Jones attacks the foundational principles of American democracy and argues that America's true founders were the black Americans who have persisted throughout their subjugation since the early 17th century. Her argument centers around the fact that blacks, even after horrid degradation, stuck their feet firmly in the soil of American culture and did as much as any whites to build the modern superpower. However, though Hannah-Jones' argument has merit, her evidence—largely anecdotal—leaves too much room for the reader to be influenced by their own biases—falling short of affecting a broader audience and succeeding only in deepening the partisan divisions between ignorant and progressive Americans.

The main issue within Hannah-Jones' evidence lies in its jaw-dropping impact, specifically when she dismantles the reputations of well-loved presidents. This is not to say that anything she says is inherently incorrect, but her most provocative evidence in the body is presented as almost entirely anecdotal with no source material. For example, in her shocking revelation about Abraham Lincoln and his plan to move blacks to another country following the emancipation of southern slaves, Hannah-Jones uses a third person view to tell the story of the meeting between Lincoln and five free black men—in a fashion that is most similar to storytelling. While emotionally tactile, Hannah-Jones does not pursue any further appeals with empirical evidence to strengthen her credibility in the

telling of the narrative; this is her downfall. Almost immediately, the opposition to Hannah-Jones' argument—namely those who maintain their patriotism and faith in American ideals—are turned off to her essay. Any intrigue felt from her opening anecdote about her father is squashed, and their biases take over. How dare Hannah-Jones desecrate the sanctity of a president held in as high regard as Lincoln? How dare she maim the man responsible for freeing her ancestors? Even in ignorance, that response is warranted. Though Hannah-Jones uses a quote from Lincoln, it is immediately dismissed as outlandish because of her failure to include the source material.

Many proponents of Hannah-Jones' argument may assert that the provided anecdotes and facts do not require the inclusion of source material because her target audience is already inclined to buy her version of history, as is. Therefore, the people reading can take her words at face value. Still others may say that—if her purpose is to intrigue this audience—the perceived strength of the story will be enough to have them research on their own. Although valid points, they are inherently flawed: in the interest of journalistic integrity, authors are supposed to cite source material when the evidence presented comes from an outside document, or exists beyond common knowledge. Anytime an author fails to do this, it leaves what should be concrete evidence up for interpretation, thereby weakening the evidence and the effectiveness of the argument. And besides, Hannah-Jones would be foolish to pander to a receptive audience. To write for those who already believe in her argument is not to argue at all. To write for one side is to lack a fundamental understanding of the opposition and to weaken one's credibility—a practice commonly known as preaching to the choir.

It is utterly absurd to argue that Hannah-Jones crafted her essay without the intent to reach a broader audience than the roughly 13 percent of the American population who are black—assuming that all even agree with her—and the minority of more liberal whites. If this is her audience, then what case is Hannah-Jones trying to make—and to whom? What purpose is there in trying to convince a demographic that already acknowledges the extent of the degradation?—that needs no convincing. Providing them with even more evidence is a pointless endeavor. It's beating a dead horse; a waste of time.

In a 2020 interview with Atlanta Magazine, Hannah-Jones admitted, "I want everyone to read [the 1619 Project]," clearing up any misconceptions about a thin, targeted audience; furthermore, the language within her opening essay also points to a

broader gallery. She frequently adheres to a straightforward and impassioned tone that never dips into scolding or shaming—so as not to blatantly offend—while still managing to plainly point the finger at the villains, many of whom are the ancestors of her detractors. Nevertheless, the lack of sourcing demonstrates that she may not completely understand this group of people, as in her attempt to appeal to the readers' emotions, she loses the sympathy of the opposition as it transforms into disbelief and a deficit of faith in the argument. Something as simple as the lack of a source is enough for those ignorant audience members to refute the rest of the essay and, consequently, the project as a whole—not bothering to research for themselves. Critics are convinced that Hannah-Jones' viewpoint is founded not on evidence but speculation and ideology. It's a shame considering that in succeeding essays, quantitative data is given to support the emotional connection Hannah-Jones has to her topic. Regardless, the exhausting length and overwhelming passion of the introductory composition turns too many people away and leaves Hannah-Jones open to attack as it devolves into a mess of pathos and not-completely-sound partisan logic.

The 1619 Project is incredibly worthwhile. The depth and mastery at connecting the workings of the modern day with the systems of slavery is powerful and revolutionary, but there isn't enough concrete evidence in its introduction to keep her opposition from lashing out. Understandably, Conservative America has an issue with the project, with former U.S. Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Newt Gingrich summing up the animosity toward Hannah-Jones' attempt to rectify history. In a tweet from August 2019, Gingrich states, "The NY Times 1619 Project should make its slogan 'All the Propaganda we want to brainwash you with.' [I]t is a repudiation of the original NY Times motto." Though clearly partisan, the reaction is foreseeable and—quite possibly—reasonable. Gingrich represents the demographic that will be most offended by the 1619 project's assertions—white men. He likely read the opening of the project and found the evidence Hannah-Jones presents to be "propaganda" in the sense that it's threatening to his identity. Especially in the case of the Lincoln anecdote, Hannah-Jones' work can easily be interpreted as an attempt to change the perception of men traditionally perceived as progressive humanitarians—or to "brainwash" the population and slander the white man's name... And this is why Hannah-Jones' failure to cite her source comes back to bite. Even a short introduction like "A journal entry from... shows..." would have been sufficient to delegitimize criticism like Gingrich presents,



without marring the flow of the essay. It would have taken the interpretation out of the matter, metamorphosing the effect of the evidence from surprising and halfway convincing to damning; irrefutable without ignorance. Alas, the opposition can feign obliviousness in the essay's current state.

Hannah-Jones succeeds fully in drawing emotional responses from the audience throughout the entire paper, but she lacks a strong personal credibility at times, especially in dealing with controversial figures and

facts, and this leads to the discrediting of her argument by some sections of her audience. Ultimately, the paper serves less to intrigue and more to deepen the personal biases of the audience. Hannah-Jones' proponents find her argument insightful and take her evidence as fact because they are more apt to agree with her; the opponents find her argument invalid because of the evidence she presents: mostly circumstantial and largely anecdotal; threatening to their identities. Though chock full of revolutionary attitudes and ideas

toward slavery's impact on society, Hannah-Jones' essay turns away the people who need the most convincing and ensures that the rest of her project — which houses her more indisputable assertions — goes unseen. Her lack of credibility through sourcing and personal accounts detailing expertise only makes the audience question her authority. Even if there is warrant for her claim, it trickles to a halt in front of the larger goal, since it only heightens the divides among Americans.

# Black people have right to claim America as their own

by Merrick Hoel

Throughout the American education system, teachers have taught us the subject of slavery and how it relates to the founding of this country through a one-sided and narrow lens — leaving room for students to question the accuracy of what is being taught in the classroom. Such assumptions are examined through the 1619 Project where Nikole Hannah-Jones denounces the textbook version of the portrayal of slavery within America and provides an alternative explanation on the nation's founding. In the introductory part of the essay, Hannah-Jones uses anecdotal evidence about her father as the foundation of her argument to emotionally persuade her audience. She incorporates an overwhelming amount of evidence to solidify her argument. This essay effectively argues that I should continue to question the ways in which history is taught. Hannah-Jones proves to me that black people have the right to claim this nation as their own.

As Hannah-Jones introduces her argument, she questions her father's decision of proudly hanging the American flag; this creates a personal connection for her readers. When she writes, "When I was young, that flag outside our house never made sense to me ... I didn't understand his patriotism," Hannah-Jones continues the use of familial accounts as the entryway into her depiction of America's founding. Although there are other instances when she uses personal references such as telling the story of her grandma cleaning white people's houses, her father's story proves to be most effective. Not only does it serve as a point of cohesion but it allows me to have a better understanding of her father's experiences. If it were not for these anecdotes, her work would lack the paths that she incorporated within her essay.

Because Hannah-Jones cannot understand her father's love for a nation that looks down upon the black race, she seeks out answers through second-hand

evidence. By creating a historical timeline of the black experience, she broadens her argument beyond her personal world to appeal to readers on a fact-based level. For example, she adds details about the slave trade, recounts the Dred Scott decision and describes the violence against blacks after Reconstruction. Highlighting this evidence and layering it throughout her work gives factual backing to her argument and shows her father's patriotism stems from the perseverance of black people overcoming these events. This further persuades her readers about the inequalities ingrained within present society and reveals how much harder the black race has worked in a nation that never wanted them to succeed.

Some may argue that there is potential for certain audiences to find fault in Hannah-Jones's line of reasoning as they believe she overuses anecdotal evidence and personal opinion. Those opposing her argument may add that she relies too heavily on her feelings and makes false assumptions without backing them up. When Hannah-Jones writes that, "without the idealistic, strenuous and patriotic efforts of black Americans, our democracy today would most likely look very different," she creates a plausible statement which lacks proof. These generalizations may prevent some from buying into her claims. She could be faulted for overemphasizing the anecdote about her father when she makes statements such as "no person has a greater claim to that flag than us." Due to other people's understanding of American history, some may feel offended that she focuses only on her race as it relates to America's development. Without facts, these examples reveal a flaw within Hannah-Jones' work, which invites the question of her work's credibility.

Conversely, it can be argued that the structure of Hannah-Jones' essay does not fail to support her claim. Her intentions were not to create a historical document

supported only by statistics, but to help communicate the legacies of black history as it relates to her father's patriotism. Except at the beginning and the ending of her essay, Hannah-Jones focuses entirely on the historical events as she creates conclusions made about the rights black people deserve. The middle of her essay is built on a chronology of facts from the past to present which she supports with multiple types of second-hand evidence including historical documents and figures. For example, she uses the Declaration of Independence to support her claim: "the framers carefully constructed a document that preserved and protected slavery without ever using the word." Here, she uses irrefutable evidence to reinforce her point that the freedoms for black people were never explicitly addressed. Hannah-Jones cites historical documents as well as the points of view of historical figures, such as William Goodwell, Samuel Johnson, and Samuel Bryan. Using these resources, she forces the reader to consider such historical accounts and how they support her argument that there is a lack of acknowledgement of the accomplishments of black people. Instead of concluding that Hannah-Jones makes broad generalizations, her opponents should put their prejudices to the side and realize the harsh realities of history and the burden they place onto blacks in America.

Through her essay, Hannah-Jones presents a more accurate representation of the black experience beyond the textbook versions. Americans have been taught a narrow perspective of history from the dominant culture's point of view. Therefore, Hannah-Jones uncovers the missing truths of the ripple effects of slavery and how it is impactful on today's society. Readers such as myself benefit from a different perspective regarding the lack of recognition for the black community in America.

# White racism continues in the American South because of past human slavery

by Franklin McCallie

There is a strong connection between present white racism in the American South and past enslavement of black human beings in America. I believe I can show evidence of that connection through my experience as a Southern white man, born in 1940, and that of my father, born in 1909.

By the time I was two or three years old, I had adopted the culture of racism I heard, saw, and experienced in Chattanooga, Tennessee. I knew who “colored” people were, versus revered white people. (“Colored” was the accepted word of that period.) My family’s colored maid entered and left our home through the back door, never the front. White friends who entered the back door were mostly childhood playmates. “Clara” (not her name) was also assigned her own bathroom in the work area of our home. She was not to use ours. It is difficult to comprehend now that Clara helped raise me, bathe me, dress me, and cooked my meals, but could not use my bathroom.

I cannot expound on the experience of our colored friends who came to visit my parents, because we had none. In fact, I knew of no white people in my parents’ social sphere who had a black friend. I understood through osmosis that white people would have — should have — no black friends.

The only other colored people I knew in my childhood worked on the campus of the private boys’ school of which my father was headmaster. “Coloreds” held janitorial, kitchen, or laundry positions. It was appropriate for me to interact with them, as with Clara, because the school campus was my home. My parents were courteous to all members of the staff, letting me know I could expect friendly treatment—from white and colored alike. However, I looked with at least mild apprehension at colored persons in the wider community because of negative things said to and around me by my parents,

extended family, classmates, parents of classmates, and members of my church.

I did not live in a social group which made wide use of the “N-word.” I do not remember hearing my mother or father use that word. But I heard enough “N-jokes” through community contacts during childhood into teenage years that I was comfortable repeating several “N-jokes” myself. As a child, however, when I once called out the “N-word” to my brother, my father chided me: “That will embarrass Clara.” At the time, I did not understand why I should be worried about embarrassing our colored maid. I respected her for the considerable power she had over me as our house-keeper and “nanny,” but hurting Clara’s feelings over this word did not concern me. At that time Clara was in her 30s; I was seven.

It is significant that Southern history during my young years was filled with the Civil War and the battle between our beloved Confederates and the hated Yankees. History books and magazines I saw were also filled with pictures of colored people as “slaves,” owned by white people, working the cotton fields, living in crude shacks, and often being brutally whipped. These pictures were not hidden away. There were few, if any, photographs of colored people doing things considered important or for which they might be held in esteem by white people. (Ironically, which white child of the 1940s and 50s would understand the importance of black people picking the cotton that helped build our country’s economics and energized international commerce?)

It is embarrassing, yet revealing, to admit that the words “colored” and “slave” were often attached in my thinking during my childhood years. Consciously or unconsciously, I did not see “colored” people as worthy of my consideration. I understood they were the descendants of slaves. The

exception was “Uncle Remus.” He was an ancient colored man whose stories delighted me; but then, maybe he had been a slave too.

I also witnessed colored men in prison uniforms with chains on their ankles, picking up trash along the road or cutting back undergrowth, while always being guarded by white prison officers with shotguns in their hands. I never forgot those mental pictures.

With that as background, it is not now surprising to remember that In 1954, I was shocked when my father announced to me at the age of 14 that “the Supreme Court of the United States has made the terrible mistake of ruling that colored children ought to attend school with white children.” I cannot say that I actually thought the words, “the grandchildren of slaves” should be barred from going to school with me. But I feel certain my bias was influenced by the stain of slavery. I repeated back to my father, as if it were my own idea, “Yeah, that’s terrible; that’s wrong!”

I kept repeating that mantra aloud at my school, my church, and social circles until my junior year of college, 20 years of age. I was not vicious. I did not adhere to the KKK philosophy of violence, nor did my parents. But we were adamant about segregation. Segregation was the law of the land, and it was right, as my parents and church taught me. Through the Biblical story of Noah’s cursing his son Ham, we were convinced that God had ordained that colored people would be the servants of white people through all time.

Following an honest and startling conversation with two students from a black college in 1961, I made a complete conversion from segregation to integration, changing the trajectory of my life. I chose to participate in the civil rights movement, and In 1968, I said to my father that I wanted to teach at the private school where I was raised and where he was still headmaster; however, he and the Board of Trustees must integrate the school. My father said he could not do that because, “Those people can’t do our work.” As we discussed the condition of black Americans, I heard in his tone and reasoning a belief that black people had not yet reached a level of full humanity. Listening at that point with a more sensitive ear, I was stunned. I heard a throwback to that long ago “3/5 of a human being” in the American Constitution. I left that meeting disheartened and greatly concerned about the effects of a long life of racism on my father.

A year and a half later, while teaching at the all black public school at which I had been accepted, I heard that my father had experienced a change of heart. I went immediately to see him. As tears streamed down both of our faces, we hugged, and at

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60 years of age, he said to me: “I have been wrong about black people all my life; next year the Board of Trustees and I will integrate our school.” My father had completely reworked his view of how and why he had ever considered colored people as less than whole human beings. He admitted that day his children’s views had greatly influenced his change.

Today, the continuing “chain” of slavery is most easily witnessed where Southern whites still fly the Confederate flag. Those Confederate aficionados say that it indicates their “pride of heritage in their ancestors.” I’m not doubting that. But it’s also easy to believe those flags imply, as well, that the heritage of black people resides in their former condition of slavery. Most white people will not say that aloud. Some might not even recognize that unconscious thought.

The heavy load of “slavery” is difficult for

black people to carry. It is equally heavy for many whites to jettison from their thinking. I am convinced that when referring to the ancestors of our black citizens, it is a significant detriment to black-white relations to speak of “slaves,” rather than “human beings who were enslaved.” I believe the only thing that will break those historical chains is face-to-face conversation between black and white. We must share our stories in order to build understanding and trust, thereby leading to mutual friendship and camaraderie. Only with that level of respect between black and white citizens will all Americans recognize that the enslavement of human beings stood as a total aberration against the concept of full humanity.

## Civil Rights Act didn’t help when students wanted a burger and fries

by Franklin McCallie

The Howard School of Chattanooga Tennessee was established in 1865 to educate newly freed black children. In 1960, 30 Howard students “sat in” at a segregated lunch counter for the freedom to eat at any restaurant open to the public. Fifteen students were arrested and jailed. James Mapp, President of the Chattanooga Chapter of the NAACP, came with bail. A plaque now stands at Market Street and M. L. King Boulevard to commemorate these students’ courage. Few know, however, of the bravery of 50 other Howard students who faced their own rejection by white restaurant owners ten years later, even though Congress had by then banned racial discrimination in public accommodations through the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In 1970, Principal Clifford Hendrix requested that I, as Assistant Principal, chaperone the “spirit/cheering” bus for the football game against arch-rival Pearl High School in Nashville Tennessee. On a Friday afternoon in October, we boarded our bus for Nashville. Fifteen minutes after crossing Monteagle Mountain, the bus blew a tire. The driver pulled off Interstate 24 beside a grassy area. Teacher/chaperone Joyce Gee took our students into the field to play games. The driver’s duty was to stay with the bus, so I hitchhiked with parents of Howard football players, luckily driving by, and asked to be dropped at a service station in Manchester, Tennessee. After four hours, the station owner located the right size tire

in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

By then, the game was half over. Our students had been well-behaved and patient. I hated to say there would be no football for them. Their response: “We’re not worried about the game; we’re hungry!” With Manchester so close, this was a simple problem to solve. I requested the driver to stop at the first mom and pop burger joint he saw. Our students heard the jukebox inside and approached hungry and excited. Without warning, the outside lights went off; the door lock clicked. From inside, a loud voice hollered, “We’re closed!” Seeing the owner, I looked at my watch, indicating 8:15 p.m., and called back, “What time do you close?” He looked at his watch, “8:15!”

Disappointed, but without grumbling, the students returned to the bus. The driver found a second restaurant. This owner “closed” at 8:30 p.m. This time the students’ reaction revealed frustration and anger. “What’s going on, Mr. McCallie?” My response was honest and brief: “You know, and I know, but you’re going to get your burgers!”

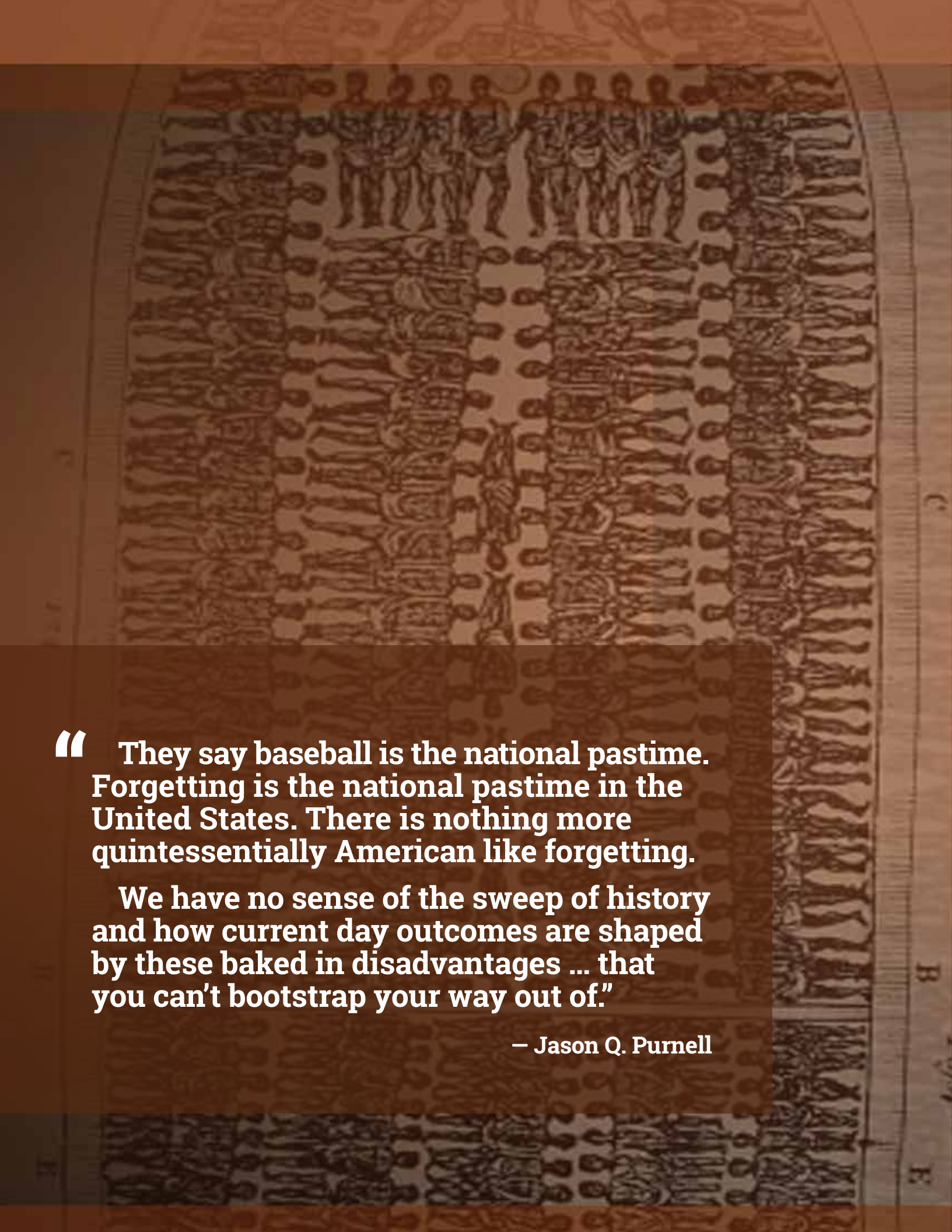
I was afraid. I was “in charge” of this trip. These were “my” white people breaking the law against “my” black students whom I had promised a meal. I could call the Manchester sheriff and complain, and possibly be charged with attempting to cause a riot with 50 black teenagers. But arrest was not my fear. I feared I could not accomplish for these exemplary

black teenagers what I had promised and what they deserved. We could return to Chattanooga and send the students home; they wouldn’t starve. But that wasn’t fair, and it wasn’t the law. I told the driver to continue driving and pull over immediately when seeing another restaurant. I walked the last 100 yards, entered and asked for the owner.

“Are you open?” “Sure, can’t you tell?” “Yeah. What time you close?” “Midnight on Fridays.” “Can you handle a bus of 50 hungry teenagers?” I asked, showing my best white face. “Sure; bring ‘em on!” “I will,” I said, with a smile in my voice.

Back at the bus, I asked the driver to park close. I told the students: “Decide what you want; enter quickly; take the first open table; order immediately.” The driver came just short of driving inside the restaurant! I jumped out to hold the door. The students rushed in to fill each table. “I want a cheeseburger, Coke and fries.” The owner, waiters, and white customers looked aghast. But we were in, and we were staying.

Howard students got their burgers that night — on their third try. But they had not entered as respected customers, and they knew it. Their courage in the face of such discrimination and overt hostility deserves its own plaque. Sadly, those students, now in their 60s, must still ask America: “When will all citizens be welcomed with respect and dignity ‘in every hamlet and every



**“ They say baseball is the national pastime. Forgetting is the national pastime in the United States. There is nothing more quintessentially American like forgetting.**

**We have no sense of the sweep of history and how current day outcomes are shaped by these baked in disadvantages ... that you can't bootstrap your way out of.”**

**— Jason Q. Purnell**