

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

 X New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Twentieth Century African American Civil Rights-related Resources in Iowa

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

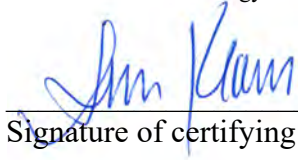
- I. An Emerging Cause in Iowa, 1833-1900
- II. Rekindling Civil Rights in Iowa, 1900-1941
- III. Birth of the Civil Rights Movement in Iowa, 1941-1954
- IV. The Modern Civil Rights Movement in Iowa, 1954-1964
- V. The Second Revolution in Iowa, 1964-1976

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.



Signature of certifying official

State Historic Preservation Officer

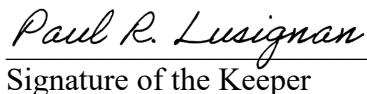
Title

December 23, 2020

Date

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.



Signature of the Keeper

2/4/2021

Date of Action

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Provide narrative explanations for each of these sections on continuation sheets. In the header of each section, cite the letter, page number, and name of the multiple property listing. Refer to *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* for additional guidance.

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 250 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS

*It is true that the good people who are law abiding must get together both races and work to one common end and that end to be, let law and order prevail, for the 12,000,000 of the colored race will not leave this the land of their forefathers, for we belong here and as a race we must and will stay here.*¹—John Lay Thompson, editor of the *Iowa Bystander*, 1903.

Introduction

Within a country founded upon the idea that “all men are created equal,” the reality that race often helps define who is entitled to equality has resulted in an on-going struggle within the United States. This freedom struggle included both the fight for governmental recognition of equal citizenship and the fight against embedded discrimination.² The Reconstruction Era (1865-1877) extended civil liberties to African Americans through Constitutional amendments that banned slavery, provided full citizenship to all people born or naturalized in the US, and guaranteed voting rights for all male citizens. These civil liberties, however, were soon infringed upon by many states’ legislation that disenfranchised Black voters and kept the races separate—laws upheld by Supreme Court cases like *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896).³ White-centric American society continued to discriminate against African Americans by denying Blacks equal access to education, housing, employment opportunities, and public accommodations. The post-World War II Civil Rights Movement ushered in a new era for equal rights with the passage of three landmark bills. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination in education, employment, public accommodation, and voter registration. Suffrage was further protected by the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968 banned discrimination in the sale and rental of housing. These three acts cemented into the US Code of Laws that all citizens were entitled to equal treatment, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The federal civil rights bills enacted in the 1960s were the culmination of decades of struggle to attain the full benefits of citizenship by and for African Americans in what historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall terms the “long civil rights movement.”⁴ The bills did not automatically end de facto discrimination, however, as the struggle continued into the 1970s and today.

Conventional discussion of segregation and racial discrimination, especially as relates to the modern civil rights movement, has until recently tended to focus on the South. The southern states most overtly dehumanized people

¹ J. L. Thompson, “Mob Lynchers,” *The Bystander* (31 July 1903): 1.

² Civil rights are traditionally defined as those basic human rights of equal treatment regardless of certain human characteristics (race, sex, religion, etc.); these rights are enforced by established federal, state, and local laws and upheld in court. Civil liberties are personal freedoms enshrined in the US Constitution and its amendments (including the Bill of Rights) and upheld by court cases. For more information, see Cornell University, Legal Information Institute https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/civil_rights.

³ The capitalization of the word Black throughout this document follows 2020 style guidance from the AP, which capitalizes Black when referring to racial, ethnic, and cultural contexts.

⁴ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (March 2005): 1233-1263.

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of color by the perpetuation of slavery, and after Emancipation, by the intentional physical separation of the races and the codified denial of basic civil rights and liberties. Southern cities such as Birmingham, Alabama, became the loci of organized action against discrimination, and violent reactions to demonstrators illuminated more fully the state of race relations in the country in the 1960s. Unequal treatment of the races, however, was not contained to the South. Although discrimination was overt in southern states, its existence was often less conspicuous to white Americans in northern states and, therefore, easier for them to ignore or miss. Laws did not always mandate the spatial partitioning found in the South, but “the unwritten rules of social custom,” writes historian Robert Weyeneth, carried the same intent: “African Americans were to be excluded from specific places by prohibiting their entry and use.”⁵ In varying degrees in northern states, this prohibition extended to education, employment, public accommodations, housing, and voting. For example, public pools may have been accessible to African Americans, but only within certain hours of the day; Blacks could attend movies or theatrical performances, but only if they sat in designated areas; public restrooms within department stores did not have to label themselves “whites only,” as African Americans intuitively knew this. Thus, as historian Thomas Sugrue notes, excluding the North from the civil rights narrative ignores the history of racial conflict in a large segment of the United States.⁶ The character of discrimination in the North may have differed from the South, but it was no less dehumanizing. When federal civil rights laws were passed in the 1960s, they did not specifically target southern states; they applied to the entire country.

Since the 1830s, African Americans migrated into Iowa hopeful that life there meant better opportunities for civil rights, employment, and the freedom to decide their own destinies. In some ways, life in Iowa provided opportunities, especially for Blacks migrating from the South.⁷ African Americans comprised less than 1 percent of the entire state population until 1970 but several made significant contributions to the state. Alexander Clark, Sr., settled in Muscatine, Iowa, and became a successful businessman, civil rights activist, and US diplomat. George Washington Carver received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from what is now Iowa State University before relocating to the Tuskegee Institute. Politician and newspaperman George Edwin Taylor became the first African American to run for president of the United States while he resided in Iowa. Lawyer Gertrude Rush helped establish the National Bar Association (NBA) for Black attorneys in 1925. Lawyer James (J. B.) Morris served as longtime editor of the *Iowa Bystander*, the most influential Black newspaper in the state. These are just a few of the many who not only excelled in their professions but joined their names to an even longer list of often unnamed Iowans who advocated for equal rights and equal treatment for African Americans.

The history of African Americans in Iowa is intrinsically tied to the civil rights history of the territory and state. Although slavery was prohibited, pre-Civil War white settlers were divided on how to treat their Black neighbors.

⁵ Robert R. Weyeneth, “The Architecture of Racial Segregation: The Challenges of Preserving the Problematical Past,” *The Public Historian*, ed. Randolph Bergstrom 27, no. 4 (Fall 2005): 13.

⁶ Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008), xiv.

⁷ See Section G for discussion on geographic data associated with this context.

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Some whites refused to equate freedom with full equality, resulting in antebellum laws that prohibited African Americans from settling, voting, holding legislative office, or intermarrying with whites in the state. On the other hand, some whites welcomed African Americans, assisted fugitive slaves along the Underground Railroad, and along with their Black neighbors helped persuade the Iowa General Assembly—both before and after the Civil War—to eliminate some discriminatory laws and open public schools to all students. The General Assembly passed its first Civil Rights Act in 1884, which, as written, entitled all persons within Iowa to full and equal access to public accommodations.⁸ The early tensions regarding race relations, however, continued to reside close to the surface of Iowa society. Discrimination throughout the state most commonly involved refusal of service or admittance to public places, unequal employment opportunities, and unequal access to housing; this was especially noticeable into the twentieth century. The General Assembly broadened the definition of public accommodation in 1897, but the Civil Rights Act remained largely unenforced between 1884 and World War I.⁹



Figure 1: Des Moines NAACP march in support of the US Civil Rights Act of 1964. Source: *Des Moines Register*, 28 July 1963.

Housing and employment discrimination practices and the civil rights law remained unchanged until the modern civil rights movement of the 1950 and 1960s. While the United States Congress prepared and passed its federal legislation, the Iowa General Assembly enacted new civil rights-related bills that aimed to positively affect Black residents. The Fair Employment Practices Act of 1963 (60 G.A. ch. 330) ostensibly banned discriminatory practices in employment and labor organizations, and the Civil Rights Act of 1965 (61 G.A. ch. 121) reestablished the ban on discrimination in employment and public accommodation, outlawed retaliation, and established the Iowa Civil Rights Commission to investigate complaints regarding violations of the Act. The 1965 act was an especially important document, as the first African Americans to hold statewide office cast votes in support of passage. In subsequent years, the General Assembly amended the Act to ban discrimination in housing, credit, and education. The Civil Rights Act of 1965, with amendments, continues to be in effect in Iowa. Encouraged by the state government's stance against discrimination, the Black community pressed for stronger representation within schools and governing bodies and for inclusion in the on-going discussions of how to end discrimination.

The following discussion provides an overview of the history of the long civil rights movement in Iowa, focusing on the twentieth century. The historic contexts within this document are arranged chronologically, following the

⁸ "Denial of Civil Rights" 20 G.A. Ch. 105 §§1-2 (March 1884).

⁹ "Infringement of Civil Rights," Iowa Code 1897 §5008; Leola Nelson Bergmann, *Studies in Iowa History: The Negro in Iowa* (1948; repr., Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1969), 55.

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timelines established in the National Park Service's *Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites*.¹⁰ The first context, "An Emerging Cause in Iowa, 1833-1900," establishes the foundation of African American rights in the state from the beginning of non-Native American settlement in 1833 to the end of the nineteenth century. "Rekindling Civil Rights in Iowa, 1900-1941" discusses how African Americans in Iowa firmly battled discrimination by increasingly relying on litigation. World War II and its immediate post-war years saw a transition from lawsuits toward larger-scale marches and boycotts to highlight discrimination; this is discussed in "Birth of the Civil Rights Movement in Iowa, 1941-1954." The 1954 US Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, sparked the modern civil rights movement, an era of vocal but non-violent actions to effect real change in status quo, especially regarding laws. The movement was persistent, bold, and organized, and "The Modern Civil Rights Movement in Iowa, 1954-1964" discusses how the movement played out in the state. Lawsuits, marches, and protests continued into the Vietnam Era; however, a separate movement was more earnest. During this era, organized demonstrations sought to assert the power of African Americans to determine their own goals and how to achieve them. The fifth context, "The Second Revolution in Iowa, 1964-1976," discusses this era. Each context includes brief discussions of the history of civil rights in America as illustrated in Iowa, specifically related to the themes of education, employment, public accommodations, housing, and voting. The intent of this document is not to provide the exhaustive history of Black Iowans already produced in seminal works such as the 2001 book *Outside In: African-American History in Iowa, 1838-2000*. Rather, the following contexts provide a summary of the struggle for African American civil rights in Iowa to help understand the significance of extant resources associated with the struggle in the state.

I. An Emerging Cause in Iowa, 1833-1900¹¹

The twentieth century struggle for African American civil rights in Iowa is built upon individuals, events, and legislation from 1833 to the end of the nineteenth century. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 restricted slavery north of the 36° 30' parallel, excepting what became the state of Missouri. Part of the land that formed eastern Iowa was first opened to Euro-American settlement in 1833, with families from other states relocating into a fifty-mile wide strip of land along the Mississippi River (*Figure 2*).¹² In July 1838, the US Congress created Iowa Territory, incorporating the land area of the future state of Iowa as well as parts of Minnesota and the Dakotas.

¹⁰ Susan Cianci Salvatore, ed., *Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, 2002, rev. 2008). This document ends in 1976. The National Park Service published three accompanying volumes: *Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations* (2004, rev. 2009), *Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation in Public Education in the United States* (2000, suppl. 2004), and *Civil Rights in America: Racial Voting Rights* (2007, rev. 2009). Two additional volumes are forthcoming: *Civil Rights in America: Racial Discrimination in Housing* and *Civil Rights in America: A History of Racial Employment Discrimination*.

¹¹ This context correlates to "An Emerging Cause, 1776-1865" and "Reconstruction and Repression, 1865-1900" described in Salvatore, ed., *Civil Rights in America: A Framework*. These two eras are combined here due to the focus of this MPS on the twentieth century.

¹² This land area of six million acres, known as the Black Hawk Purchase, stretched along the Mississippi River from the Missouri state line north to the mouth of the Upper Iowa River. A.T. Andreas, *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa* (Chicago: Andreas Atlas Co., 1875), 402.

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Although some white settlers brought slaves to Iowa, abolitionists who espoused racial equality also chose to settle in the state. Most early settlers, however, did not challenge the existence of racial slavery in the nation and were opposed to racial equality, socially, legally, and politically. Indeed, most whites in antebellum Iowa did not want African Americans living there at all. The first Territorial Assembly met in Burlington (Des Moines County) in November 1838 to create the territorial laws, some of which included racial biases common throughout the US at the time. African American men were denied voting rights (1 L.A. Ch. 20 §12). Any black or mulatto person in the territory after April 1, 1839 had to prove their free status by the possession of a certificate of freedom or be restricted from living in the territory; those with the certificates had to pay a \$500 bond or “be hired out...for the best price in cash,” a blatant form of slavery (1 L.A. Ch. 9 §1-2). The Territorial Assembly also passed their own fugitive slave law, which sanctioned the arrest and return of enslaved people who made their way into Iowa Territory (1 L.A. Ch. 9 §6). In 1840, the territorial legislature outlawed interracial marriages (2 L.A. Ch. 25 §13).¹³

*The Case of Ralph*¹⁴

While racism was the norm, over the course of the antebellum era increasing numbers of whites in the state gradually became more sympathetic to the plight of slaves. An 1839 ruling of the Territorial Supreme Court highlights the ideological differences of early white settlers. The ruling contrasted with the territorial laws limiting the rights of African Americans and clarified who was considered a “fugitive” slave. In 1834, a Missouri slave

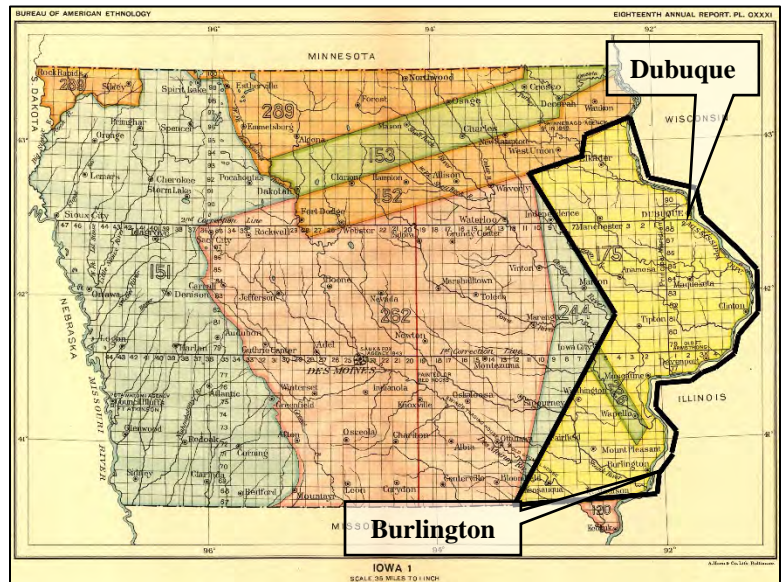


Figure 2: Map of Iowa, showing the Indian cession lands; the Black Hawk Purchase is outlined in black. Base map source: Library of Congress, Indian Land Cession maps. Map dated 1899.

¹³ *The Statute Laws of the Territory of Iowa, Enacted at the First Session of the Legislative Assembly of Said Territory, Held at Burlington, A.D. 1838-'39* (Du Buque[sic], Iowa: Russell & Reeves Printers, 1839), 69-70, 199-200; *Laws of the Territory of Iowa, Enacted at the Session of the Legislature Commencing on the First Monday of November A.D. 1839* (Burlington, Iowa: J.H. M'Kenny Printers, 1840), 42; Dorothy Schwieder, Thomas Morain, and Lynn Nielsen, *Iowa Past to Present: The People and the Prairie* 2nd ed. (Ames, Iowa State University Press, 1991), 97, 123-124; Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 8-9; Cyrenus Cole, *A History of the People of Iowa* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press, 1921), 147.

¹⁴ J.A. Swisher, “The Case of Ralph,” *The Palimpsest* 7, no. 2 (February 1926): 33-43; Lord Acton and Patricia Nassif Acton, “Chapter Four: A Legal History of African-Americans,” in *Outside In: African-American History in Iowa, 1838-2000*, edited by Bill Silag, Susan Koch-Bridgford, and Hal Chase (Des Moines: State Historical Society of Iowa, 2001), 63-64; Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 10-11; Cole, *A History of the People of Iowa*, 148.

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named Ralph contracted to purchase his freedom from his owner for \$550.¹⁵ Ralph requested and was granted permission to locate to Dubuque (Dubuque County) to attempt to raise the money by mining for lead.¹⁶ Between 1835 and 1839, Ralph mined for the ore without success. Two men apprehended Ralph purportedly on behalf of the Missouri man claiming ownership of him.¹⁷ A local abolitionist, Alexander Butterworth, interceded on behalf of Ralph, procuring a writ of habeas corpus for the district court to hear the case. The district judge transferred the case to the newly appointed Territorial Supreme Court, and the *Case of Ralph* became the first of that judicial body.

Defense attorney David Rorer argued before the court that upon his relocation to Iowa in 1835, Ralph was free, as slavery was strictly forbidden in the territory by the Missouri Compromise. Further, the defense contended that Ralph was not a fugitive, as he had entered the territory with the permission of his former master; thus, the territorial law permitting the return of fugitive slaves was not applicable. Prosecuting attorney John V. Berry argued that Ralph was a fugitive slave because he had failed to fulfill his end of the contract and further that the Missouri Compromise did not expressly state that slave property was forfeited when the “property” moved to a non-slavery region.

The Supreme Court unanimously sided with the defense. Justice Charles Mason stated, “Property, in the slave, cannot exist without the existence of slavery: the prohibition of the latter annihilates the former, and this being destroyed, he becomes free.”¹⁸ The court asserted that if the slaveowner maintained ownership over the slave living in free territory, then slavery was essentially permitted everywhere. Ralph became a free citizen upon his entering Iowa Territory and was not considered a fugitive because he came with the permission of his former master. Ralph stayed in Dubuque.¹⁹

The *Case of Ralph* presents an interesting contrast to *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decided by the US Supreme Court almost two decades later. Both Ralph and Scott were Missourians, and at one point in their lives, both lived in free territory—Ralph in Iowa, and Scott in Iowa, Illinois, and Minnesota. Using similar arguments as in the Ralph case, Scott argued for his freedom. However, in 1857, the US Supreme Court ruled against him, declaring that Congress had no constitutional authority to limit slavery north of Missouri. The court further ruled that neither a slave nor a person descended from slaves was a citizen of the United States; therefore, the person had no standing before a court of law. The Scott decision overturned the precedent in Iowa set by the *Case of Ralph*. Whereas the

¹⁵ In the court ruling, Ralph is listed without a surname. Instead the case was formally titled “Jorden J. Montgomery vs Ralph a man of color.”

¹⁶ In 2019 dollars, \$550 in 1835 equals about \$14,000. At the time of Ralph’s relocation, Dubuque was located within the strip of land that comprised the Black Hawk Purchase.

¹⁷ Sources differ on the motives and origins of these two men.

¹⁸ As quoted in Swisher, “The Case of Ralph,” 39.

¹⁹ Swisher writes that Ralph eventually discovered a lode but lost the mine in a card game.

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Iowa court upheld the right of the individual (Ralph), the federal court looked at the political and economic implications of a decision supporting the rights of a slave.

Statehood and African Americans

When Iowa prepared to enter the Union as a state, the equitable treatment of African Americans became a point of contention. The first constitutional convention met in the fall of 1844 in Iowa City (Johnson County), then-capital of the territory. Seventy-two delegates represented just over one hundred thousand people.²⁰ A delegate from Henry County in southeastern Iowa introduced a petition signed by over sixty county residents, urging the convention to secure equal citizenship for African Americans in the territory. The convention tabled the petition on a committee opinion that accepted the principle that “all men were created equal” but also believed that giving equal status to African Americans would lead to the state being inundated with members of the race, something with which the delegates were uncomfortable.²¹ A second petition requesting equality for Blacks was introduced a few days later; the delegates also tabled this, as well as a resolution forbidding any future discussion of the matter. One delegate from Dubuque proposed a resolution that African Americans be barred from settling within the state, and although the convention approved the resolution, it was eventually dropped from the draft constitution. While the 1844 draft constitution did not bar African Americans from Iowa, it did not extend equal rights to them; Blacks were not allowed to vote, hold legislative office, or serve in the state militia. The voters of Iowa rejected this draft primarily due to proposed state boundaries rather than the status of African Americans. Two years later voters accepted the constitution developed by the second constitutional convention that addressed boundary concerns but left the status of Black Iowans unchanged from the 1844 draft. After ratification by Congress, Iowa became the twenty-ninth state in the Union on December 28, 1846.²²

Blatant anti-African American sentiment in Iowa politics culminated in the early 1850s. Both US senators from Iowa, Augustus C. Dodge and George W. Jones, voted in favor of the 1850 US Fugitive Slave Law, and in 1854, both supported the rights of the territories of Kansas and Nebraska to decide for themselves whether or not slavery would be permitted within their boundaries.²³ In 1851, the Iowa General Assembly approved a bill prohibiting any additional African Americans from settling in Iowa. A group of African Americans in Muscatine, led by a Black businessman and early champion of equal rights, Alexander Clark, Sr., formally petitioned the General

²⁰ The population of Iowa when it became a state in 1846 was 102,388. Cole, *A History of the People of Iowa*, 210.

²¹ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 13; Schwieder, Morain, and Nielsen, *Iowa Past to Present*, 97.

²² Acton and Acton, “Chapter Four,” *Outside In*, 65-66; Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 13-14; A third convention met in 1857 to resolve issues remaining from the 1846 constitution; the 1857 constitution remains the basis for the current Iowa Constitution.

²³ Louis Pelzer, “Augustus Caesar Dodge: A Study in American Politics,” PhD diss. (Iowa City, State University of Iowa [University of Iowa], 1909), 145-146, 193; John Carl Parish, *George Wallace Jones* (Iowa City: The State Historical Society of Iowa, 1913), 64-65; Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 15-16.

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Assembly in 1855 to repeal this exclusionary law but to no avail. It would be another eight years before this happened.²⁴

Not all Iowans acquiesced to the prevailing political views in the state. Some residents in pre-Civil War Iowa actively ignored the state and federal laws related to fugitive slaves. These residents assisted African Americans to escape to Canada along the Underground Railroad. Members from religious denominations such as Quakers and Congregationalists, free Blacks, and other sympathizers in the state guided fugitive slaves along the network in Iowa (Figure 3). Many slaves came into Iowa from neighboring Missouri, attempting to reach the free state of Illinois. The total number of slaves and Iowans who assisted them is impossible to discern due to the secretive nature of the work; the network was especially active in the 1850s.²⁵

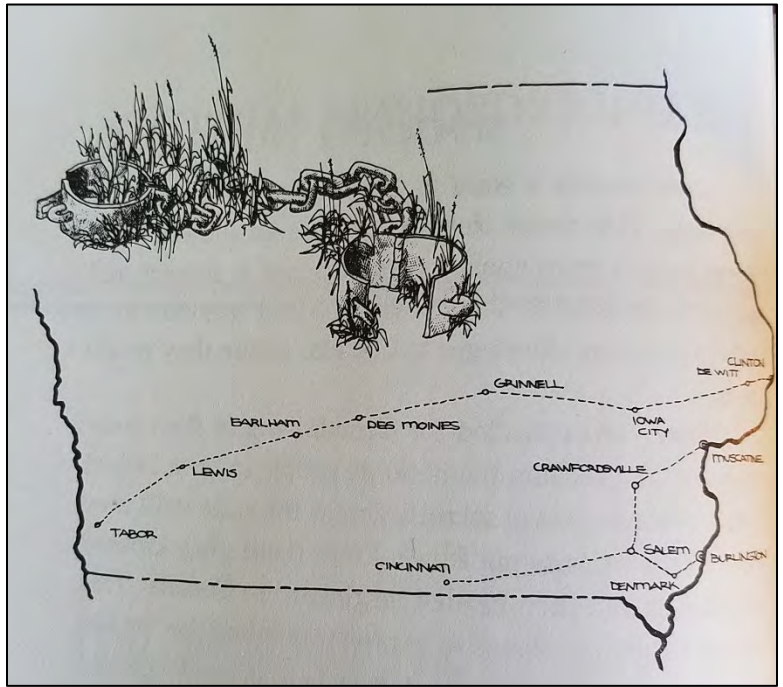


Figure 3: Simplified map of the Underground Railroad system in Iowa.
Source: Schwieder, et al., *Iowa Past to Present*, 96.

In 1854, Iowa voters elected a vocal abolitionist, James W. Grimes, as governor, signaling a marked shift in the dominant political opinion in the state. Under Governor Grimes, the General Assembly convened a constitutional convention in early 1857 to rewrite the state constitution. As in previous years, however, racial equality became a center of debate. The Black population in the state approached nearly one thousand, and no doubt, some members of this minority group urged changes to existing statutes where they could. In Muscatine, for example, the African American community organized the first statewide Black convention to discuss prejudice, education, and taxation.²⁶

In the new state constitution, African Americans received greater considerations than they had under previous laws of the territory and state, especially in terms of equal access to education and due process. Territorial laws

²⁴ Leslie A. Schwalm, *Emancipation's Diaspora: Race and Reconstruction in the Upper Midwest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 36; Acton and Acton, "Chapter Four," *Outside In*, 65-66; Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 15-16. The Actons and Bergmann note that the language within the bill itself mandated that the act be published within the Mount Pleasant (Henry County) *True Democrat*—a staunch anti-slavery paper; the editor refused to publish it, raising questions over whether or not the law actually stood. The Iowa Code of 1851 did not include this law; rather, it appeared in a supplemental volume.

²⁵ Schwieder, Morain, and Nielsen, *Iowa Past to Present*, 95-96; Iowa Freedom Trail Project, an on-going research project for Underground Railroad activities in Iowa <https://iowaculture.gov/history/research/collections/places-people/underground-railroad-iowa>

²⁶ Schwalm notes that in contrast to Muscatine, African Americans in Keokuk tended to keep their thoughts and feelings to themselves. *Emancipation's Diaspora*, 36, 41.

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ignored the education of Black children altogether, and in 1847, the new state legislature provided free and open access to school specifically for white children. In 1857, the General Assembly created a Board of Education, granting it the authority to enact education-related laws for “all the youths of the state” regardless of race; no laws mandated segregated schools based on race, either, despite vocal opposition in some Democrat-run papers.²⁷ The 1857 convention delegates also extended some citizenship rights to the Black residents of Iowa. The new constitution gave equal weight to the court testimony of African Americans, extended due process to Blacks, and allowed an accused Black person to have a trial, even if the accused were considered a fugitive slave—all situations denied under previous laws.²⁸ Ironically, the same year the US Supreme Court ruled that Blacks had no legal claim to American citizenship, Iowa guaranteed some citizenship rights to African Americans, overtly challenging the *Dred Scott* decision.

The Civil War Era in Iowa

The battles fought in Iowa during the Civil War did not involve armed conflict. Rather, the Civil War era heralded major milestones for African Americans in the state. For one, the Black population grew substantially. The Midwest, including the state of Iowa, became a major destination of Black settlement in the decades during and after the Civil War. Despite the tenuous feelings of racial equality in the North, thousands of southern Blacks fled northward toward the promise of liberty in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa, especially as the Civil War raged. As historian Leslie Schwalm writes, “their flight northward points to the contrast they anticipated between southern slavery and ‘the happy land of freedom.’”²⁹ Between 1860 and 1870, the overall population of Iowa doubled while the Black population grew by 500 percent. In 1860, 1,069 African Americans lived in the state; in 1865, 3,608, and in 1870 there were 5,762.³⁰

The influx of Black migrants into Iowa during the war put the state’s 1851 exclusionary law into question. In 1863, Archie Webb, a migrant and former slave from Arkansas, successfully argued that the law was unconstitutional. Webb arrived in Iowa in the fall of 1862 and relocated to rural Polk County soon after, working as a farm laborer. Webb joined other Black men in this capacity due to the shortage of able-bodied white laborers during the war. Several area farmers disliked this trend and in early January organized a meeting in an effort to enforce the prohibition of Black settlement in Iowa. A group of farmers served Webb a notice to vacate the state in three days in accordance with the 1851 exclusionary law. Webb refused to comply, and the day sheriffs arrested him, Webb filed a writ of habeas corpus in the Polk County district court, stating that the arrest and law were both unconstitutional, especially in light of President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation issued on the

²⁷ Acton and Acton, “Chapter Four,” *Outside In*, 69; Schwalm, *Emancipation’s Diaspora*, 41. Bergmann indicates at least seventeen (of the 175) school-age children in the 1850 census were in school; however, she can only speculate that these children may have been taught by Quakers or other abolitionists or were admitted to the district schools despite the law.

²⁸ Acton and Acton, “Chapter Four,” *Outside In*, 69; Bergmann *The Negro in Iowa*, 19-21.

²⁹ Schwalm, *Emancipation’s Diaspora*, 42.

³⁰ US Decennial Census, 1860, 1870; Schwalm, *Emancipation’s Diaspora*, 108.

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first day of January 1863. Judge John Gray heard the case and issued a lengthy ruling in favor of Webb in February, stating that the 1851 law not only violated the US Constitution but also the Iowa Constitution that viewed all men as free. Archie Webb went free, but sheriffs around the state continued attempting to enforce the law until the General Assembly passed a bill in April 1864 to repeal the exclusionary act. Black migrants were lawfully allowed to reside and settle in the state.³¹

During the war, nearly half of the state's Black population attempted to enlist in the 1st Iowa Volunteers of African Descent, 60th Regiment. Around seven hundred men enlisted at Keokuk; one third hailed from the Keokuk area while others came from Davenport, Des Moines, Newton, Iowa City, and Keosauqua. The 1,153 Black soldiers of the 60th Regiment formed part of the 76,000 Iowans who fought in the war; over half of the Black soldiers died in action or of disease. Those who returned to Iowa found sympathetic politicians within the Republican party who favored extending suffrage to these male soldiers and in turn other Black men in the state and offering equal pay to Black and white soldiers.³² These soldiers would lead the effort to gain voting rights in the following years.

The Reconstruction Era

In the wake of the Civil War, the Reconstruction Era saw new freedoms for African Americans within the United States. Formerly enslaved African Americans were free to move to new states and territories in pursuit of expanded economic opportunities and civil rights. The Midwest and Iowa continued to see an influx of African Americans in the two decades following the Civil War. By 1880, there were 9,516 Black Iowans. Still, the Black population comprised only between 0.5 and 0.6 percent of the entire state population. In 1870, the greatest number of African American migrants into Iowa were born in Missouri, followed by Kentucky and Virginia; by 1880, the majority of Blacks in the state were born in Iowa, with migrants continuing to arrive predominately from former slave states like Missouri, Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee.³³

Blacks preferred to settle where employment opportunities were, in theory, available. Prior to the war, the majority of African Americans in the territory resided in Dubuque due to the lead mining industry. The Mississippi River towns of Burlington, Clinton (Clinton County), Davenport (Scott County), Keokuk, and Fort Madison (both in Lee County) drew Blacks for employment related to river traffic.³⁴ As the railroad industry increased its dominance, towns such as Burlington and Davenport continued to attract workers both for labor-intensive jobs and for service-industry positions such as porters, waiters, and cooks. In western Iowa, African Americans settled in the Missouri River towns of Council Bluffs (Pottawattamie County) and Sioux City (Woodbury County) first for river-related work but later for the railroad, manufacturing, and meatpacking industries. Black migrants settled

³¹ Acton and Acton, "Chapter Four," *Outside In*, 69-70; Schwalm, *Emancipation's Diaspora*, 102-104.

³² Acton and Acton, "Chapter Four," *Outside In*, 70-71; William S. Morris, "Chapter Five: Black Iowans in Defense of the Nation, 1863-1990," *Outside In*, 92-96.

³³ As compiled from Census data by Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 32-33.

³⁴ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 11,13-14. Schwalm also discusses these settlement patterns during and after the Civil War.

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also in the coal-mining communities in southeastern Iowa, counties such as Mahaska, Monroe, Wapello, Lucas, and Appanoose. These were by no means the only employment endeavors by African Americans within these Iowa towns. Blacks also operated businesses for African American clientele, including cigar shops, hotels, and saloons. For instance, in Sioux City by the end of the century, Blacks owned several businesses, worked on the police force, and carried letters for the post office.³⁵

The Reconstruction Era also saw legislative changes for African Americans. At the federal level, Congress and the states ratified three amendments to the US Constitution that extended citizenship rights to African Americans and passed an act guaranteeing equal access to public places. In 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment officially eliminated slavery. Three years later, the Fourteenth Amendment extended citizenship rights to anyone born or naturalized within the United States and guaranteed equal protection and due process under the law to all citizens. In 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment guaranteed voting rights for Black male citizens. Iowa law preceded each of these ratifications. Slavery was disallowed since before statehood, and by 1857 Blacks were considered citizens of Iowa with equal access to due process. In 1875, the US Congress passed a civil rights act entitled “An Act to Protect All Citizens in Their Civil and Legal Rights” (18 Stat. 335-337), which guaranteed equal access to public accommodations, public conveyances, theaters, and places of amusement regardless of race or color. It is important to note, however, that these laws did not change embedded prejudice.



Figure 4: Alexander Clark, Sr., Muscatine businessman and early civil rights advocate. Source: *Outside In*, 72.

In 1868, the Iowa General Assembly finally guaranteed suffrage to African American males within the state. The first attempt to extend voting rights and representation to Black Iowan men came in 1857 during the third constitutional convention. Delegates that year debated whether the word “white” should be removed from the voting rights article. Rather than decide themselves, the delegates put the question to the voters of the state (all of whom were white men) who rejected the removal of the word. However, in the wake of the Civil War, African American veterans began lobbying for enfranchisement immediately upon their return to Iowa. In the fall of 1865, returning soldiers held a convention in Davenport, electing Alexander Clark, Sr., as president, to address this issue (*Figure 4*). Community leaders and officers spoke at this convention, and committees formed to draft resolutions to both the people of Iowa and the state legislature.³⁶ Finally in 1868, the General Assembly eliminated the word “white” from the constitutional articles related to voting, representation in the legislature, and the state militia. Upon achieving this milestone, African American communities from Keokuk to Des Moines held

³⁵ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 39-41; Bruce L. Mouser, *For Labor, Race and Liberty: George Edwin Taylor, His Historic Run for the White House, and the Making of Independent Black Politics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 57.

³⁶ Schwalm, *Emancipation's Diaspora*, 180-181.

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celebrations.³⁷ By 1880, Blacks were allowed to serve in the General Assembly; although, it would be almost eighty years before the first Black legislators were elected.

The Reconstruction Era in Iowa also saw the right of equal education upheld by the state Supreme Court. No state laws mandated segregated schools for Black and white students, but some districts chose to separate the students by race. Muscatine (Muscatine County) in east central Iowa provided separate buildings for white and Black students. As became common in the later Jim Crow era, the services, provisions, and physical character of the Black school was inferior to those of the white schools in town. Blacks were provided education; however, the educational experience was unequal to the white student experience. In 1868, Alexander Clark, Sr., successfully sued the Muscatine school board in district court on the grounds that his daughter, Susan, had been refused admittance to the white public school solely because of her race. The Iowa Supreme Court upheld the lower court's ruling that the practice of segregating schools based on race, religion, or economic status was unconstitutional. A few years later, two Black students in Keokuk were denied admission into the public schools; in an 1874 decision, the Iowa Supreme Court again ruled that Black students could not be refused admittance to any Iowa public school nor were they to be segregated to Black-only schools.³⁸

Alexander Clark, Sr. (1826-1891) is considered the most prominent African American in Iowa in the nineteenth century. Active in the Republican Party, he was known as "the colored orator of the West" and was a vocal advocate of civil rights for African Americans, including the 1868 amendment that extended the vote to Black men in Iowa. He received his law degree from the University of Iowa in 1884 at the age of 58. President Benjamin Harrison appointed Clark as consul general to Liberia in 1890, the highest presidential appointment of a Black man to date. Clark died in Liberia shortly after arriving.³⁹

Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1884

The passage of the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1884 (20 G.A., ch. 105) is one of the most significant civil rights-related events in nineteenth century Iowa. The Act came in response to an 1883 US Supreme Court decision that ruled the Civil Rights Act of 1875 was unconstitutional, that Congress did not have the authority to outlaw discrimination by private individuals.⁴⁰ Blacks across Iowa became deeply concerned that this ruling was a step backwards for equality. Letters and public meetings from African Americans from Keokuk to Cedar Rapids to Des Moines called for the state legislature to enact their own law to secure the rights provided in the US Civil

³⁷ Schwalm, *Emancipation's Diaspora*, 186-187.

³⁸ Stephen J. Frese, "Clark, Alexander G.," in David Hudson, Marvin Bergman, and Loren Horton, eds., *The Biographical Dictionary of Iowa* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2009) web version; Bergmann *The Negro in Iowa*, 50; Acton and Acton, "Chapter Four," *Outside In*, 72-73.

³⁹ Frese, "Clark, Alexander G.," *The Biographical Dictionary*; Bergmann *The Negro in Iowa*, 50; Acton and Acton, "Chapter Four," *Outside In*, 72-73.

⁴⁰ *Civil Rights Cases* 109 US 3 (1883). This was a group of five cases.

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Rights Act of 1875. The newly elected governor, Buren R. Sherman, in his inaugural address declared his support of such a bill that would guarantee the civil rights of everyone in the state. Within a couple of months, the General Assembly passed the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1884 with not one of the 113 legislators voting against it.⁴¹ The Act ostensibly entitled all persons within the state to “the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities and privileges of inns, public conveyances, barber shops, theaters and other places of amusement; subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law, and applicable alike to every person,” and in section two declared the violation of the act was a misdemeanor. Iowa was one of the first states to enact a law in response to the 1883 US Supreme Court ruling.

The Iowa Supreme Court heard two cases involving racial equality prior to both the passage of the federal and state civil rights acts. The 1873 case *Coger v. The North West Union Packet Co.* involved Emma Coger, a Black schoolteacher, who had been forcibly ejected from a white-only table and dining cabin on a Mississippi River packet heading to Quincy, Illinois from Keokuk, Iowa. Coger sued for damages in the Lee County District Court. The case ended in the Iowa Supreme Court where the high court upheld the lower court’s ruling that both the Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution and the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1866 entitled African Americans “to the same rights and privileges while traveling on a common carrier upon which a white person was also traveling, and that the rule making a distinction between the facilities for white and colored people on public carriers was unreasonable and unenforceable.”⁴² Conversely, in its *Bowlin v. Lyon* decision, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled that private businesses were not covered under the constitution or the Civil Rights Act of 1866. The African American plaintiff had been refused entry to a privately-owned skating rink in Cedar Rapids in 1883 due to his race.⁴³ This ruling echoed the precedent set by the US Supreme Court in 1883.

Although celebrated, the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1884 was rarely enforced. Cases of discrimination were tried in district court, and only one made its way to the state supreme court before the end of the century. The 1887 case involved a Black man who had been refused a shave by a white barber. The court sided with the white private business owner because the reason of refusal was not specified.⁴⁴ The General Assembly amended the Civil Rights Act in 1897 to specify additional places covered under the law: restaurants, chop houses, eating houses, lunch counters and all other places where refreshments are served, and bath houses; the amendment also added the word “all” in front of other places of amusement.⁴⁵ The law remained relatively unchanged for the next several decades.

⁴¹ Acton and Acton, “Chapter Four,” *Outside In*, 74.

⁴² As quoted in Bergmann *The Negro in Iowa*, 53-54.

⁴³ Although the ruling came in 1885, the incident occurred before the General Assembly passed the civil rights act in 1884; the high court could not take the new state law into consideration. Acton and Acton, “Chapter Four,” *Outside In*, 74; Bergmann *The Negro in Iowa*, 54.

⁴⁴ Acton and Acton, “Chapter Four,” *Outside In*, 73; Bergmann *The Negro in Iowa*, 55.

⁴⁵ Iowa Code 1897 §5008. The two sections of the 1884 version were joined into one “Infringement of civil rights.”

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The progress toward racial equality in the years following the Civil War began to wane at the end of the nineteenth century. Southern states most notably passed legislation following Reconstruction that ushered in the “Jim Crow” era of legally mandated physical separation of the races, provided that the accommodations were equal for whites and Blacks. The US Supreme Court continued to issue rulings after 1885 that appeared to disregard the intent of the Reconstruction Era legislation. The most notable and far-reaching decision came in the 1896 ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which upheld the legality of the “separate but equal” doctrine found in Jim Crow legislation. In 1892, Homer Plessy brought suit in a Louisiana district court, charging that his expulsion from the “whites only” car violated his civil liberties under the Thirteenth and Fourteenth amendments. The suit reached the US Supreme Court in 1896, whose majority opinion rejected the unconstitutionality of the arrangement and ruled that separate but equal facilities do not violate established law. The lone dissenter in the *Plessy* decision, Justice John Harlan, foreshadowed the effects of the ruling, writing:

If laws of like character should be enacted in the several States of the Union, the effect would be in the highest degree mischievous. Slavery, as an institution tolerated by law would, it is true, have disappeared from our country, but there would remain a power in the States, by sinister legislation, to interfere with the full enjoyment of the blessings of freedom to regulate civil rights, common to all citizens, upon the basis of race, and to place in a condition of legal inferiority a large body of American citizens now constituting a part of the political community called the People of the United States, for whom and by whom, through representatives, our government is administered.⁴⁶

The effects of the *Plessy* ruling extended outside of the South and its overt segregation. The decision gave license to the practice of spatial partitioning even in northern cities who had witnessed an influx of Black migrants in the last decades of the century. The US Supreme Court decision effectively affirmed the notion that African Americans were inferior citizens.

By 1900, Iowa’s population reached 2.23 million people, over 12,000 (0.6 percent) of whom were African Americans. Despite setbacks, the nineteenth century witnessed great changes in the march toward racial equality in Iowa. Access to public education and voting were affirmed by the state legislature and the Iowa Supreme Court, and the General Assembly provided equal access to public accommodation through the 1884 civil rights act, a piece of legislation first championed by a small but mighty percentage of the total population. The early twentieth century struggle for continued acknowledgement of equality before the law built upon these established precedents.

⁴⁶ Justice John Marshall Harlan (1833-1911), Dissenting opinion in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (No. 210), 163 US 537, 18 May 1896. Transcribed by Cornell Legal Information Institute.

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II. Rekindling Civil Rights in Iowa, 1900-1941

The population of Iowa increased 13.7 percent from 2.23 million in 1900 to 2.5 million in 1940. During the same time period, the African American population grew by 31.5 percent, from 12,693 to 16,694, peaking in 1920 at just over 19,000. Following settlement trends of the previous century, Black residents continued to concentrate in areas where employment opportunities were ostensibly more available to them. Urbanized towns with manufacturing jobs and coal-mining towns held the highest numbers of African Americans, who recruited family and friends to relocate from the South. Other African Americans migrated to Iowa because of the perceived openness of the political environment and, compared to other states, the state's acceptance of legal equality for Blacks.

The twentieth century struggle for equality in the United States and Iowa focused on two primary ideologies. The first aligned with the position expressed by educator and orator Booker T. Washington in his 1895 Atlanta Compromise speech: accept the social conventions separating the races and work hard to earn the respect of white neighbors through education and entrepreneurship thus reducing prejudice and racism. The second echoed the views of W.E.B. DuBois, who believed in the necessity of more rigorous advocacy of equality; litigation was seen as the most effective means to confront injustice.⁴⁷ These two ideologies played out simultaneously in Iowa. Black community leaders sought cooperative relationships with white leaders, and Black newspapers such as the *Iowa Bystander* implored their readers to be patient, respectful, and educated citizens. At the same time, Black politicians became more involved in the political process, and the first major civil rights-related institutions established themselves in order to meet needs within the African American community and to better organize advocacy efforts such as lawsuits.

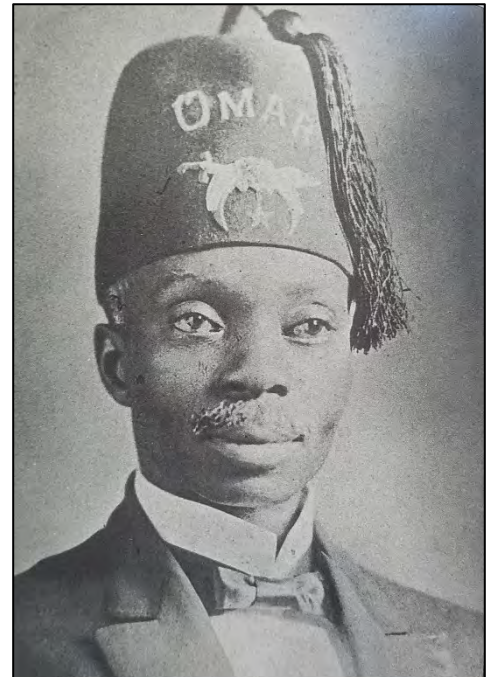


Figure 5: Reverend I.W. Bess, undated photo.
Source: *Iowa's Black Legacy*, 100.

One example of the intertwining of the two ideologies occurred in Waterloo (Black Hawk County). Reverend I.W. Bess (*Figure 5*) led the Waterloo AME Church between 1913 and 1916. During his tenure, Bess advocated for the advancement of the local African American community both within his immediate neighborhood and within the larger Waterloo community. He opened the church sanctuary to residents of the Northeast Triangle Neighborhood as a reading room and a gathering space. In 1914, he successfully argued in front of the city council against proposed racial restrictions to the public bathing beach at the Cedar River. Reverend Bess also worked

⁴⁷ DuBois married his first wife, Nina Gomer, in Cedar Rapids on May 12, 1896. Iowa, Select Marriage Index, 1758-1996, Ancestry.com.

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closely with the city police to help establish peace within the neighborhood. He both cooperated with the larger community and advocated before government for his fellow African Americans when needed.⁴⁸

Political Affiliations

Prior to the Great Depression, African Americans overwhelmingly supported the Republican Party. During Reconstruction, the Republican Party initiated and approved legislation granting civil liberties and rights to Blacks while Democrats, most notably those in the South, opposed such views. As the progress of the Reconstruction Era gave way to greater injustice and violence against Blacks, leaders within the African American community-at-large slowly began to question allegiances. Black leaders in this era increasingly distrusted both Republicans and Democrats to



Figure 6: An undated (pre-1912) view of downtown Buxton. The two YMCA buildings are in the upper left. Source: *Outside In*, 15.

defend the interests of African Americans. However, historian Bruce Mouser observes that Blacks who could vote “continued to accept the Republican Party as the race’s best hope,” perceiving the national Democratic Party as either impotent to control its affiliated state parties or complicit in the overt demonization of African Americans within the South. A smaller number of Black voters were willing to consider a national party separate from Republicans and Democrats.⁴⁹

Black Iowans generally followed national trends and supported the Republican Party. The Black press, including the most widely-read paper the *Iowa Bystander*, advocated for Republican candidates in local, state, and national contests, believing that the African American voice would be most effective by patiently maneuvering for equality within this party than by attempting to change Democratic Party ideologies or by forming a third party to advance a Black agenda. Voters accepted this argument, but as Iowa was a predominantly Republican state with a small percentage of African Americans, the Black vote was inconsequential to the larger political makeup of the state. Black votes added to the majority tally, and dissenting votes did not tend to make an impact on the final results.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Rebecca McCarley, “Intensive Level Historical and Architectural Survey of the Northeast Triangle Neighborhood in Waterloo, Black Hawk County, Iowa,” Survey report. 25 July 2019; Mary Beth Eldridge, “Waterloo Historical Information,” Unpublished, 1993; “Golden Anniversary Observance and Program, Payne Memorial AME Church.” Souvenir Booklet, 1962.

⁴⁹ Mouser, *For Labor, Race and Liberty*, 108.

⁵⁰ Mouser, *For Labor, Race and Liberty*, 106. Jeremy J. Brigham and Robert Wright, Sr., note that in the 1930s, the local NAACP chapter in Council Bluffs addressed the issue of racial coding on voter registration in that town. See “Chapter Thirteen: Civil Rights Organizations in Iowa,” *Outside In*, 321.

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The coal-mining section of southern Iowa often departed from the Republican majority. Towns such as Albia (Monroe County) and Ottumwa (Wapello County) were Democratic Party strongholds with Black populations who supported the majority party in their area. However, one of the most important towns of the early twentieth century was in the coal-mining region of southern Iowa with a strong Republican presence. The Consolidation Coal Company established the unincorporated mining town of Buxton (Monroe County) in 1900 (*Figure 6*). The coal company had operated the Muchakinock mine in southern Mahaska County since the 1870s and actively recruited African Americans from southern states to come work in Iowa. By the end of the nineteenth century, the company had nearly exhausted the coal reserves in Mahaska County and sought a new field in nearby Monroe County. Workers and their families relocated to Buxton, and by 1905 not much remained in Muchakinock.⁵¹ From 1900 to the end of World War I, Buxton was a prosperous community where African Americans comprised the majority of the population. During its heyday, Buxton had three schools, at least four churches, a YMCA, and a three-story department store, as well as literary and musical clubs. The community also had a large concentration of African American businessmen and professionals, including doctors, lawyers, pharmacists, undertakers, postmaster, Justice of the Peace, constable, and even school board members. Several African American leaders in Iowa had ties to Buxton, among them George Woodson.⁵²

Born in Virginia, George H. Woodson (1865-1933) arrived in Iowa in 1896 after graduating from Howard University Law School. Prior to Iowa, Woodson served in the 25th Infantry as a “Buffalo Soldier.” Between 1896 and 1900, he resided in Muchakinock where he was elected vice president of the Mahaska County Bar Association and nominated as county attorney by the Republican Party. Woodson lived in Buxton from 1900 until 1918, forming a law partnership with S. Joe Brown. While a resident of Buxton, he became the first African American nominated as a Republican candidate to the state house of representatives. He was also one of the twenty-nine delegates of the Niagara Movement, discussed below, which led to the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). After relocating to Des Moines, Woodson became a founding member of the Des Moines branch of the NAACP, and a few years later helped establish the National Negro Bar Association in 1925, serving as its first president. Woodson is a significant individual to the history of Iowa and to the pre-World War II era of civil rights history.⁵³

Another significant individual to the early civil rights history of Iowa is George Edwin Taylor (1857-1925) (*Figure 7*). While residing in Iowa between 1891 and 1910, Taylor became a prominent national African

⁵¹ For more information about Muchakinock, see Pam Stek, “Muchakinock: African Americans and the Making of an Iowa Coal Town,” *The Annals of Iowa* 68, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 37-63.

⁵² Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 42-43; J.A. Swisher, “The Rise and Fall of Buxton,” *The Palimpsest* 26, no. 6 (June 1945): 179-192; Jack Lufkin, “Buxton Historic Townsite,” National Register nomination form (June 1983), NRHP listed 9 August 1983. See also Dorothy Schwieder, Joseph Hrabá, and Elmer Schwieder, *Buxton: A Black Utopia in the Heartland* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2003).

⁵³ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 43; Ronald N. Langston, “Chapter Fourteen: The African-American Legacy in Iowa Politics,” in *Outside In*, 345-346; Hal S. Chase, “Woodson, George Henry,” *The Biographical Dictionary of Iowa* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2009) web version.

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American politician, whose prominence culminated with a run for president of the United States in 1904. He arrived in Oskaloosa (Mahaska County) in January 1891 from Wisconsin where he had published the *Wisconsin Labor Advocate*. In his editorship, Taylor advocated for the protection of civil rights and for biracial cooperation, a sentiment reminiscent of Booker T. Washington. Within one year of his arrival in Iowa, Taylor published “A National Appeal” as president of the National Colored Men’s Protective Association of America, a precursor to the NAACP. In his Appeal, he exhorted fellow Black citizens to demand the Republican Party, which he supported at the time, advocate for African Americans and their right to vote or lose the support of the race. He soon switched allegiance to the Democratic Party due to the lack of Republican commitment to equal protections for African Americans and is credited as the first Black political leader, at least in Iowa, to make the party shift.⁵⁴

In 1893 Taylor established a newspaper in Oskaloosa, the *Negro Solicitor*, in which he continued his advocacy for equal rights and for support of the Democratic Party, which he believed could be persuaded to support the efforts of equality for African Americans. The *Iowa*

Bystander, edited by John Lay Thompson, often countered Taylor’s opinions in support of patience within the Republican Party. Between 1898 and 1904, Taylor was a leader of the National Negro Democratic League which became a distinct bureau within the national Democratic Party. When the party held its national convention in St. Louis, Missouri, in July 1904, Taylor held the honorary position of sergeant at arms, indicating the status and recognition he had achieved within the national party.⁵⁵

Concurrent with the National Democratic Party convention, over three hundred African Americans also met in St. Louis to establish a new political party and to select a separate ticket of candidates for president and vice president to run against incumbent Republican Theodore Roosevelt and Democratic challenger Alton Parker. The newly established National Negro Liberty Party asked George Taylor to run as its presidential candidate. Their first choice, Booker T. Washington, endorsed Roosevelt. Taylor accepted the nomination, and on the first of



Figure 7: George Edwin Taylor as presidential candidate, 1904.
Source: *Outside In*, 343.

⁵⁴ Mouser, *For Labor, Race and Liberty*, 57-58, 95.

⁵⁵ Mouser, *For Labor, Race and Liberty*, 95, 105, 107

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August, the *Chicago Tribune* published his editorial laying out his stance on the unconstitutionality of the disenfranchisement of southern Blacks. The *Ottumwa Weekly Democrat* reprinted the letter on August 6, but little mention of the National Negro Liberty Party or Taylor appeared in other Iowa papers, not even in the Black press.⁵⁶

The majority of the National Negro Liberty Party platform involved core issues important to African American Republicans and Democrats, including support for voting rights of all citizens and condemnation of the established parties for their unconcern for the welfare of Blacks. Contrary to most of his Iowa compatriots, Taylor believed that the Black race was doomed as long as it refused to take political action separate from the established parties; the Black press and majority of Black politicians opposed this plan both in Iowa and throughout the nation.⁵⁷ Black newspapers, including the *Iowa Bystander*, endorsed established parties, ignoring or dismissing Taylor. He received around two thousand write-in votes nationally. Taylor returned to Iowa after the election, eventually resettling in Ottumwa and moved to Florida in 1910.⁵⁸ Although widely dismissed, Taylor's quixotic run for president was the first time an African American did so, and his platform included relevant issues that Blacks across the country understood.

The Niagara Movement & the Formation of the NAACP in Iowa

Societal attitudes toward African Americans became more openly hostile around the turn of the twentieth century. An economic downturn in the 1890s had depressed economies throughout the country, and the influx of Blacks into northern cities came to be seen by many white workers as competition for available jobs. This perceived threat exacerbated underlying racial tensions in the North, which often led to increased violence against African Americans.⁵⁹

Educator, activist, and social critic W.E.B. DuBois initially supported the tenets of Booker T. Washington. Around the turn-of-the-century, DuBois came to reject the idea that patient accommodation would lead to racial equality, as discrimination, lynching, and race riots continued across the country. He believed in meeting injustice directly, demanding equality through force not waiting for society to change its mind. In 1905, DuBois invited fifty-four African American leaders to meet in Niagara Falls to discuss the formation of a national advocacy

⁵⁶ Mouser, *For Labor, Race and Liberty*, 105, 107, 113-114

⁵⁷ Mouser, *For Labor, Race and Liberty*, 116-117. As the November election approached, his name did not end up on official ballots of most states, including Iowa, due to complicated regulations and cost.

⁵⁸ Mouser, *For Labor, Race and Liberty*, 127-129. See also *Outside In*, 287, 343-344; 346-347; Cary D. Wintz, "George Edwin Taylor (1857-1925)," essay for BlackPast.org; "Iowan to Dahomey," *Des Moines Register* (15 December 1912): 22.

⁵⁹ Mouser, *For Labor, Race and Liberty*, 106. Mouser notes that at least two attempted lynchings in the 1890s targeted blacks. Paul Walton Black produced a report in 1914 on the attempted lynchings in Iowa between 1834 and 1912. Of the sixty-eight known incidents, seven involved African American men between 1900 and 1908. Black does not discuss race as a cause of the attempted lynchings. Paul Walton Black, "Attempted Lynchings in Iowa," *The Annals of Iowa* 11, no. 4 (January 1914): 260-285.

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organization. Presidential candidate George Edwin Taylor was not one of the invitees; however, George Woodson of Buxton was one of the twenty-nine attendees, and the only representative from Iowa.

The Niagara Movement, as it came to be known, did not affiliate with a specific political party; although, twenty-six of the original twenty-nine men were Republicans. Most were from northern states, and the professional makeup included lawyers, teachers, ministers, newspaper editors, and government clerks, as well as other professionals and an artist. The Niagara Movement supported higher education for Blacks, believing in the power of the “Talented Tenth,” as DuBois termed it, to lead the fight for equal rights and against segregation and racial violence. Significantly, the movement participants held the conviction, as Mouser notes, that litigation was “the only promising path for guaranteeing or regaining civil rights for the race.”⁶⁰ This conviction came to define the early twentieth century civil rights movement. Although the Niagara Movement only lasted until 1909, historian William Harris described it as the “first major impetus of the twentieth century to demand equal rights for African Americans.”⁶¹ The Niagara Movement also formed the foundation for the most influential civil rights organization of the century, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

The NAACP formally incorporated in 1911 under the leadership of several former Niagara Movement leaders, including DuBois and progressives like Joe E. Springarn and Mary White Ovington. Similar to the Niagara Movement, the NAACP spoke out against violence, discrimination, and segregation, especially through litigation. Whereas the Niagara Movement was male-dominated and Black, the establishment of the NAACP came from white social activists—both men and women—who reached out to African American leaders to determine a way to fight injustice together. National leadership, especially in the first decades, was predominantly white, but African Americans led the interracial local branches that formed throughout the country. In their essay in *Outside In*, Jeremy Brigham and Robert Wright note the primary goals of the organization, “To end racial segregation; to secure every citizen’s right to vote; to gain justice in the courts; to end discrimination in the armed forces; to ensure equal job and educational opportunities; to abolish Jim Crow in interstate travel; and to oppose imperialism.”⁶² The NAACP became a significant interracial organization in Iowa beginning in 1915.

Between 1915 and 1939, twenty-three Iowa communities showed interest in forming local NAACP branches. Des Moines became the first branch in Iowa, and the twenty-fifth in the US, in 1915, and within the first year, membership reached two hundred people. Branch members most often met in churches within the African American communities, but social halls, community centers, upper floors of commercial buildings, and even homes also provided space for meetings. Initial efforts of the Des Moines branch included successfully advocating against new anti-miscegenation laws proposed in the Iowa General Assembly and suing to stop the showing of

⁶⁰ Mouser, *For Labor, Race and Liberty*, 132.

⁶¹ William H. Harris, “The Grand Boulé at the Dawn of a New Century,” in Tamara L. Brown, Gregory S. Parks, and Clarendia M. Phillips, eds., *African American Fraternities and Sororities: The Legacy and the Vision* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 2005), 101.

⁶² Brigham and Wright, “Chapter Thirteen,” *Outside In*, 304.

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the controversial 1916 movie *The Birth of a Nation*, which characterized African Americans as violent and untrustworthy and led to a rise in white fear and reaction throughout the country. Davenport became the second branch to form, also in 1915. Other branches formed after World War I in Burlington, Cedar Rapids, Centerville, Council Bluffs, Fort Dodge, Fort Madison, Keokuk, Marshalltown, Mason City, Ottumwa, Perry, Sioux City, and Waterloo.⁶³ The small town of Manly (Worth County) also formed a branch. College towns such as Ames, Grinnell, and Iowa City also had an NAACP presence.

This pre-World War II period saw several of the branches form, disband, and restart due primarily to population fluctuations. As previously noted, the Black population of Iowa peaked in 1920. During the Depression as employment opportunities dwindled in the coal mines, Blacks moved from smaller towns to larger cities in Iowa and elsewhere, often significantly reducing the number of African Americans in the smaller towns.⁶⁴ The first four decades of the twentieth century became a time of establishment and adjustment for the NAACP branches; however, in 1940 the existing branches in the state agreed to organize a state conference comprised of representatives of each of the local chapters. The first meeting of the state conference occurred at Corinthian Baptist Church, Des Moines, in January 1940; Georgine C. Morris, wife of James B. Morris, became the first state president.

James B. Morris (1890-1977) was born in Georgia, and after being threatened by the Ku Klux Klan in the early part of the century, he went to live with an aunt in Baltimore. He graduated in 1912 from Hampton University in Virginia and received his law degree from Howard University in 1915. George Woodson invited Morris to join his law firm in 1916, which he did the same year he passed the Iowa Bar exam. After service in World War I, Morris returned to law practice in Des Moines, and in 1922, he purchased the *Iowa Bystander* from John Lay Thompson. Over the next fifty years, Morris became one of the most influential voices of the Black community through his editorials and his activism. He believed communication was essential to equality, but he was not shy about advocating for his race. He helped form the National Bar Association, and both he and his wife were active in the NAACP both at the local and state levels and in the Republican Party.⁶⁵

Prior to the formation of the NAACP, two additional discrimination lawsuits pertaining to the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1884 ended at the state supreme court. A Black juror in Des Moines in 1905 had been refused a prearranged meal in a boarding house where his fellow jurors were served; the court ruled that the proprietors of the boarding house failed to uphold the law. The next case involved a less straightforward situation where the court agreed that discrimination occurred but did not agree that the discrimination violated the state law. In 1910, Sue M. Brown, wife of attorney S. Joe Brown, paid the admission into a public food show in Des Moines sponsored by a local retail association. When she approached a booth giving out coffee samples, she was denied service because she

⁶³ Brigham and Wright, "Chapter Thirteen," *Outside In*; NAACP records on file with SHSHI.

⁶⁴ Brigham and Wright, "Chapter Thirteen," *Outside In*, 304, 314.

⁶⁵ Alfredo Parrish, "Chapter Eleven: The Legacy of Black Attorneys in Iowa," *Outside In*, 278; Hal S. Chase, "Morris, James Brad, Sr.," *The Biographical Dictionary*.

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was Black. The court decision was split. The majority ruled that although the show itself was a public event, the vendors within were still private entities therefore the law did not apply. Writing for the majority, Judge Horace Deemer determined that while Mrs. Brown was undoubtedly humiliated, the law did not “confer equality of social intercourse.”⁶⁶ The dissenting opinion by Chief Justice W.D. Evans and Judge Silas Weaver argued that the humiliation experienced by Mrs. Brown was well within the spirit of the law whose “manifest purpose was and is to protect this burdened race against the further burden of public discrimination and humiliation.”⁶⁷ S. Joe Brown argued both cases before the court, becoming the first African American to do so.

S. Joe and Sue Brown were two significant individuals related to the early twentieth century history of civil rights in Iowa. Joe Brown (1875-1950) was born in Keosauqua, Iowa, and moved to Ottumwa where he was the first African American graduate of the high school. He attended the University of Iowa, being the first Black student to earn a liberal arts degree, and the first Black Iowan to be admitted to the Phi Beta Kappa fraternity. After a short stint teaching, Mr. Brown returned to the Iowa City to pursue a career in law, completing a Bachelor of Law and a Master of Arts within a few years. He joined George Woodson in a law partnership. Their law practice included civil, probate, and criminal matters. Active in politics, Joe unsuccessfully ran for a number of local offices, but was appointed city solicitor in the 1930s. Joe was also one of the founders of the National Bar Association. Sue Wilson Brown (1877-1941) came to Iowa from Virginia and graduated from Oskaloosa High School. She and Joe married in 1902, eventually settling in Des Moines where they both involved themselves in civic organizations, including the NAACP. Sue was an active writer, suffragist, club woman, and political activist. One of the organizations in which she was heavily involved was the Iowa Federation of Colored Women, where she served as president from 1915 to 1917. The couple were considered two of the most respected leaders within Iowa’s African American community.⁶⁸

Besides the three Iowa Supreme Court cases, only two district court cases prior to World War I resulted in criminal convictions under the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1884. A 1905 Clayton County District Court conviction resulted in a \$10 fine, and a 1917 conviction in Monroe County resulted in a \$5 fine. In 1923, the Des Moines branch of the NAACP, led by James B. Morris, advocated for an amendment to the civil rights act that would allow the law to be better enforced. Up to this point, violations of the state law required a grand jury to indict the defendant, the process of prosecuting a misdemeanor. Morris and the NAACP worked with a newly elected representative to the General Assembly to reduce the penalty to a fine not to exceed one hundred dollars or imprisonment in county jail not to exceed thirty days. The amendment passed with only one member of the house and no senators voting against it. By 1928, three additional criminal convictions resulted from the amended law. No cases appear to have been won between 1928 and 1939; although, discrimination was challenged in the courts. In January 1937, Gladys White of Burlington sued the Avon Theater under the civil rights act for being forcibly removed after refusing to

⁶⁶ As quoted in Bergmann *The Negro in Iowa*, 55; Acton and Acton, “Chapter Four,” *Outside In*, 74-75.

⁶⁷ As quoted in Bergmann *The Negro in Iowa*, 56; Acton and Acton, “Chapter Four,” *Outside In*, 73.

⁶⁸ Dolores Nicholson, “Sue M. Wilson Brown,” in Jessie Carney Smith, ed., *Notable Black American Women*, Vol. II (Detroit: Gale Research, Inc., 1996), 67-69; Parrish, *Outside In*, 277-278; Jack Lufkin, “Brown, Samuel Joe.” *The Biographical Dictionary*.

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relocate to the “colored section.” She lost the suit, as the defense claimed she was not forcibly removed and was offered a refund for her ticket.⁶⁹ The lack of convictions in the 1930s indicated even the new enforcement mechanism was not as effective as hoped.⁷⁰

*National Negro Bar Association*⁷¹

In 1924, Iowa had five practicing Black lawyers, S. Joe Brown, Charles P. Howard, James B. Morris, Gertrude Rush, and George Woodson, all of Des Moines and all active members of the NAACP. The American Bar Association (ABA) initially denied admission to all five attorneys based on their race, so in 1925, the quintet formed the National Negro Bar Association, later renamed the National Bar Association (NBA). Under the articles of incorporation, written in 1926, the purposes of the NBA were to “advance the science of jurisprudence, uphold the honor of the legal profession, promote social intercourse among members of the bar, and protect the civil and political rights of all citizens of the several states and of the United States.” Membership invitations were extended to practicing attorneys throughout the United States and the Virgin Islands, and the first national meeting was held in August 1925 in Des Moines with 120 delegates from all over the country. Gertrude Rush (*Figure 8*) was the first Black woman admitted to the Iowa Bar.



Figure 8: Gertrude Rush, January 1950. Source: National Bar Association Archives, Drake University Law Library, Des Moines, Iowa.

World War I & The Great Migration

From World War I to World War II, Black populations increased in Iowa, as did racial tensions and activism against discrimination. As America prepared to enter World War I, the US government utilized two training facilities for African American soldiers in Iowa; one was in Des Moines and the other just north of the city. The first, Fort Des Moines, was exclusively for commissioning Black officer candidates, the only camp in the US for this purpose; the second, Camp Dodge, established a segregated portion of the 13th Army Cantonment and trained

⁶⁹ “Theater Winner In Racial Suit,” *Des Moines Tribune* (15 January 1937): 6

⁷⁰ Acton and Acton, *Outside In*, 75-76; Iowa Code 1924 §§13251-13252 Infringement of Civil Rights.

⁷¹ Cleota P. Wilbekin, “The National Bar Association,” *Outside In*, 274-275.

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both officers and non-commissioned soldiers of African American descent. Efforts to establish training camps specifically for Black soldiers did not come easily. White southern opposition to armed African Americans meant that many Black recruits would be sent to northern states; however, Iowa was willing to host such camps. Some Black activists saw segregated army facilities as perpetuating the Jim Crow laws prevalent in the South. Most activists, however, including the NAACP, actively lobbied for the separate training facilities.⁷²



Figure 9: World War I military inductees outside the Ottumwa Public Library.
Source: *Outside In*, 110.

African American officers arrived at Fort Des Moines in May 1917, and by October when training ended, over twelve hundred candidates had been stationed there. Only sixteen candidates were Iowans, including S. Joe Brown, James B. Morris, and Charles Howard, the latter two of whom received commissions. The first draftees arrived at Camp Dodge in October 1917. Of the nearly six thousand soldiers trained at Camp Dodge, 127 were Iowans (*Figure 9*). The rest primarily came from southern states such as Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi with others from surrounding northern states. In May 1918, a Black officer training school opened at Camp Dodge where over five hundred non-commissioned Army officers trained. Ironically, although discrimination was not permitted by businesses contracted with the government to provide goods, Black soldiers were kept from serving alongside white soldiers due to a segregated military. Most Black US soldiers served in the 93rd Division attached to French companies. Local opposition to the Black training camps was minimal with a few outspoken white residents expressing anger at having to share trolley lines with Blacks traveling to and from Camp Dodge. For the most part, the local papers expressed interest in the events at the camps, and the majority of residents supported them.⁷³

African American soldiers sent to northern camps such as Fort Des Moines and Camp Dodge wrote letters home telling relatives and friends about the moderate weather and greater paying jobs than were to be found in the South. These assurances drew a significant number of migrants to Iowa in the fall and winter of 1917-1918. Several jobs became available to African Americans due to the number of white men deployed during the war. Bergmann notes that the “increase of the labor force in the production centers of the North was believed to be a factor of winning the war.”⁷⁴ Blacks helped win the war both through military service and through filling

⁷² Morris, “Chapter Five,” *Outside In*, 106-115; Bill Douglas, “Wartime Illusions and Disillusionment: Camp Dodge and Racial Stereotyping, 1917-1918,” *The Annals of Iowa* 57, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 111-134.

⁷³ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 56; Morris, “Chapter Five,” *Outside In*, 106-115; Douglas, “Wartime Illusions and Disillusionment.”

⁷⁴ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 60.

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production vacancies. After being discharged from service, many African Americans stayed in Iowa; thus, the peak Black population in the state in 1920 is directly related to the influx of workers and returning veterans.

The greater number of new settlers into larger Iowa cities necessitated the creation of community houses. These centers, located within predominantly African American neighborhoods, assisted new residents with job placement, housing, education, and oftentimes, childcare. Lillian Edmunds founded the Negro Community Center in Des Moines in 1919; Jane Boyd established the Model House in Cedar Rapids in 1921 (*Figure 10*); and Elonza Trospen and others formed the Booker T. Washington Center in Sioux City in 1933. These centers were especially necessary as places of camaraderie and fellowship between established members and new settlers of the African American community. Social and civic clubs often used the centers for meetings, as well. These places were often the only recreational venues open to Blacks.

The increase in the Black population within industrialized urban centers increased racial tensions throughout the country. Tensions culminated in 1919 when violence escalated so quickly that the summer months became known as “the Red Summer.” NAACP field secretary James Weldon Johnson coined this term to describe the terrorism and murder enacted by white supremacists against Blacks. African American veterans returned from the war expecting that their service to the country meant the race had proven itself equal to whites.⁷⁵ But whites were not necessarily ready to accept that. Although Iowa did not experience the level of violence and rioting seen in some areas of the country following World War I, tensions did escalate. Some towns went so far as to ban African Americans; some towns passed ordinances and/or openly posted signs that Blacks were to be out of the city limits before sundown.⁷⁶ In an effort to prevent mob violence, the Iowa General Assembly passed the Ku Klux Klan Act in April 1923 that made illegal the intimidation, trespass, and assault while masked or disguised.⁷⁷ The Klan first established in the state in 1922, with membership peaking in 1925 at over forty thousand people in more than one hundred local groups; nearly every county in Iowa had at least one chapter. Historian Richard Neymeyer argues that most Klan activity in Iowa was directed at Catholics and much less at African Americans. Nevertheless, the presence of the group in Iowa was disturbing to the Black population due to the tenets of the group.⁷⁸ Klan parades and meetings continued into the late 1920s in some cities across the state, including Des Moines and Cherokee.⁷⁹ The interwar years was a period of growing pains as Blacks increased their insistence for equality, upsetting established social norms in Iowa.

⁷⁵ Mark Robert Schneider, *“We Return Fighting”: The Civil Rights Movement in the Jazz Age* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002), 20.

⁷⁶ See James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York City: The New Press, 2005). Loewen has an on-going research website dedicated to documenting sundown towns across the nation. In his list of possible Iowa communities, oral history documented that Bedford, Manning, and New Market had such ordinances and signs.

⁷⁷ Ku Klux Klan Act (40 G.A., ch. 211), 9 April 1923; “Assaults,” Iowa Code 1924 §§12931-12932.

⁷⁸ Robert J. Neymeyer, “In the Full Light of Day: The Ku Klux Klan in 1920s Iowa,” *The Palimpsest* 76, no. 2 (1995): 59. See also Dorothy Schwieder, “A Farmer and the Ku Klux Klan in Northwest Iowa,” *The Annals of Iowa* 61, no. 3 (Summer 2002): 286-320.

⁷⁹ Brigham and Wright, “Chapter Thirteen,” *Outside In*, 320-321.

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In Iowa, discrimination had a different character than in the South. “White space” was created through social custom rather than also through state and local laws. Overt segregation was not practiced everywhere in the North, but some cities required spaces to be temporally segregated such as allotting only specific times of the day for African Americans to use public pools. Private businesses created partitioned space—theaters with dedicated rows for Blacks—or outright exclusive spaces, as in restaurants that blatantly refused service to African Americans. As Weyenth notes, “signage was unnecessary because white space was commonly recognized and acknowledged by both races.”⁸⁰ Blacks instinctively knew the places that were not open to them, often following S. Joe Brown’s lead, “I know that there are many places in Des Moines in which I would not be welcome. I simply don’t go to them.”⁸¹ But Brown still challenged such discrimination in court.



Figure 10: The 1921 Model House in Cedar Rapids. Source: Jane Boyd Center

Gabriel Cools wrote his master’s thesis in 1918 regarding the state of Black people in Iowa in the immediate post-war years. He documented three specific towns, Des Moines, Iowa City, and Cedar Rapids, focusing on employment, public accommodation, housing, and discrimination, among other factors.⁸² Bergmann observes that the most significant point of Cools’ survey was the far-reaching impact that World War I had on Iowa African Americans. For the first time in Iowa history, African Americans had “industrial opportunities approximately equal to that of whites.” Bergmann further notes that around World War I, Blacks in Iowa began to mobilize advocacy efforts, especially with the establishment of local NAACP branches.⁸³

The character of employment shifted in these interwar years. At the turn of the twentieth century, employment opportunities open to African Americans primarily focused on blue collar work and services, and prior to World War I, businesses catered to both Black and white clientele. In Des Moines around World War I, Black men were most likely to be employed in labor-intensive jobs such as coalmining or in the railroad shops and trackwork. However, in the mid-1910s, the town also had Black professionals in dentistry, medicine, law, and law enforcement. Due to the war, job vacancies in Des Moines formerly open only to whites became available to Blacks.⁸⁴ Between the wars, Blacks occasionally were able to move into jobs formerly closed to them, but Black

⁸⁰ Weyenth, “The Architecture of Racial Segregation,” 14.

⁸¹ As quoted in Acton and Acton, “Chapter Four,” *Outside In*, 76.

⁸² Gabriel V. Cools, “The Negro in Typical Communities of Iowa,” Master’s thesis (Iowa City, University of Iowa, 1918). Cools’ thesis is used here to understand basic facts without attempting to draw significant conclusions; some of his conclusions and information are considered problematic today.

⁸³ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 66-67.

⁸⁴ Cools, “The Negro in Typical Communities of Iowa,” 18, 20.

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businesses began to focus on the African American clientele of their communities. African Americans patronized white-owned businesses because they were the majority of businesses; when Black businessmen and women opened stores, Blacks often chose to support them instead.⁸⁵

In Des Moines, World War I allowed African Americans to move into semi-skilled and skilled jobs from the custodial and menial labor due to the number of white men serving in the army. At the same time, Cools observed, "Discrimination against the blacks is practiced everywhere, but it takes more active form in the theaters, restaurants, and hotels. In few restaurants in Des Moines are colored people served. In the theatres they are given inferior seats.... There are no first class or second class hotels that will accommodate colored people." White-owned barber shops in Des Moines also refused to serve Black customers.⁸⁶ Many of the practices in Des Moines blatantly contradicted the 1884 civil rights law.

The African American population in Cedar Rapids rose from three hundred in 1915 to almost one thousand in 1918 with the principal cause of migration due to white labor shortage brought on by the war. The closing of the Buxton coal mines also added to the number of immigrants. Blacks worked in the starch and Quaker Oats factories, the packing houses, and the street paving company. Theaters were largely segregated in Cedar Rapids. For instance, the Iowa Theater practiced open racial segregation.⁸⁷

Between 1920 and 1930, the Black population in Iowa dropped while the total state population rose. During this period as in years past, African Americans were overwhelmingly consigned to unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in manufacturing, domestic service, and transportation occupations. Slaughterhouses and meatpacking plants employed the largest number of African Americans. As the Depression hit Iowa, African Americans were further discriminated against in the now extra-competitive labor market. Prejudice increased, often in places where it typically was not found, and Blacks lost work to whites, losing some of the gains made in the 1920s. Three industries which did not lose African American labor were coalmining, slaughtering, and meatpacking.⁸⁸



Figure 11: *The Cedar Rapids Gazette* for March 8, 1953, discussing the opening of the Motel Sepia.

⁸⁵ Cools, "The Negro in Typical Communities of Iowa," 41.

⁸⁶ Cools, "The Negro in Typical Communities of Iowa," 59, 127.

⁸⁷ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 64-65.

⁸⁸ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 69, 71, 73.

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In the late 1930s, African Americans especially supported Black businesses in order to supply needs both as residents within towns and as travelers. Due to nationwide de facto and de jure segregation, in the 1930s, a Harlem, New York postal worker, Victor Green, developed a travel guide exclusively for Black travelers. Restaurants, overnight accommodations, beauty parlors, auto-related businesses, and other miscellaneous businesses that welcomed Black clients were advertised in his book. Green soon expanded his listings to include the entire United States. The first *Negro Motorist Green Book* to include Iowa was published in 1939, covering Burlington, Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Dubuque, Ottumwa, and Waterloo. Clinton, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Iowa City, Keokuk, Newton, and Sioux City had entries in later editions. The Green Books were published annually through the mid-1960s.⁸⁹ The businesses listed in these and similar guides

provided services often denied due to discrimination. Even on the eve of and after the 1954 *Brown* decision, African Americans in Iowa were still in need of businesses that would serve them. In Cedar Rapids, for instance, Cecil and Evelyn Reed opened the Motel Sepia in 1953 to provide accommodations for African Americans as well as whites (*Figure 11*).

Housing

Within the first decade of the twentieth century, Iowa cities began to shift from being open towns—anyone could live anywhere—to semi-restricted towns, where new residential sections overtly barred Blacks from acquiring property, mostly through deed restrictions.⁹⁰ In Des Moines, there was no distinct African American residential area until after the turn of the century. If a Black person could pay the rent or afford the purchase price of a house, they were able to live wherever they chose. Bergmann notes that this practice began to change in the 1910s when Blacks were increasingly barred from renting in certain areas, while real estate agents and landlords assumed they would be unable to rent or resell properties to whites after a Black tenant or owner moved out.⁹¹

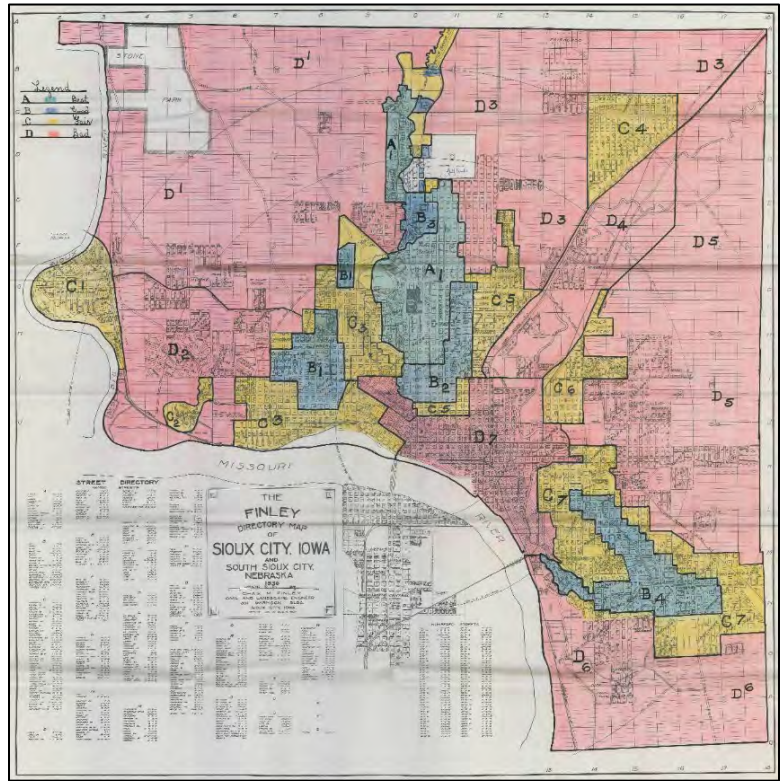


Figure 12: The Finley Directory Map of Sioux City, Iowa, circa 1936. Source: Nelson, et al., "Mapping Inequality."

⁸⁹ Green Book research compiled by Nathan Cirian, April 2019. On file with Iowa SHPO.

⁹⁰ Cools, "The Negro in Typical Communities of Iowa," 11.

⁹¹ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 48.

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Housing discrimination was not covered by state law, but it was occasionally challenged. In Waterloo, Dr. Lee and Lily Furgerson purchased a two-story house within a restricted neighborhood in 1929. Within a few months of their purchase, a committee of the Rose Hill Neighborhood Protective Association filed a motion for the couple to vacate their new house, stating they were in violation of a 1914 neighborhood covenant that barred African Americans from owning property within the neighborhood. Waterloo attorney Milton F. Fields, who was a member of the local NAACP chapter, filed a demurrer with the judge on behalf of the Furgersons, stating the covenant violated the Fourteenth Amendment. Further, the covenant was set to expire on January 1, 1930, and for it to be reinstated, all property owners, including the man who sold the house, had to resign the covenant, and not all owners were willing to do so. The Furgersons remained in their house until World War II.⁹² In 1930, 42 percent and, in 1940, nearly 44 percent of Black house dwellers in Iowa owned their home.⁹³

During the Depression, the federal government formalized the practice of housing discrimination through its 1933 Home Owners' Loan Corporation and the practice of redlining. Neighborhoods were ranked and color-coded along arbitrary, unwritten, and widely acknowledged racial boundaries to determine those worthiest of mortgage lending. Racial demographics were one factor used to rank neighborhoods; areas with a higher Black population were deemed to be unsound financial investments and assigned the color red and the letter D (*Figure 12*). As a result, Black prospective home buyers were more likely to be denied a mortgage. Private lenders adopted the practice, which was supported by the real estate industry.⁹⁴ Council Bluffs, Davenport, Des Moines, Dubuque, Sioux City, and Waterloo—all cities with higher populations of Black residents—had detailed redline maps created for their neighborhoods.

Education

Although schools were not segregated in Iowa, the school systems were dominated by whites, and Black teachers had difficulty acquiring jobs in Iowa schools. Educational opportunities were not always equal between the races, either. Evelyn Scott Davis discussed growing up in the southern Iowa town of Hiteman (Monroe County), and as she neared high school, her principal discouraged her chance of attending high school. Hiteman students attended high school in Albia. Students often stayed in Albia overnight, but because there were no Black families in Albia at the time, it would be impossible for Davis to attend. She received a General Educational Development (GED) diploma instead of a high school diploma.⁹⁵

African American college students increased rapidly after World War I. Nearly four hundred doctoral degrees were awarded nationally to Black students between 1876 and 1940 with most awarded after 1930. Thirty-two

⁹² Adapted from Amanda Loughlin, Iowa State Inventory Form for the Furgerson House, Waterloo (#07-03520), July 2019.

⁹³ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 76.

⁹⁴ Rachel C. Nugent, "Kansas City Police Department, East Patrol Station Historic Context," (2017): 9-10. Some scholarship suggests these maps were kept in Washington, D.C. and not circulated.

⁹⁵ Evelyn K. Scott Davis, *Life Narratives of African Americans in Iowa*, Charline J. Barnes, ed. (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2001), 25.

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such degrees were earned at an Iowa school. The first PhD awarded in Iowa was in 1933 from Iowa State College (now Iowa State University), Ames, to Nathaniel O. Calloway.⁹⁶

While some universities allowed Black students, there were varying degrees of inclusion. Some colleges developed quota systems in the late 1920s that accepted a limited number of African Americans a year. Other times, Black students may not have been treated harshly, but they were oftentimes ignored. Other universities practiced residential segregation, either placing students in segregated rooms or disallowing Blacks to reside on campus altogether. Administrative reasoning was paternalistic: they did not want the Black students to feel discriminated against because administrators knew not all white students wanted to reside next to Black students.⁹⁷



Figure 13: The Tate Arms in Iowa City, March 2018. Source: Richard J. Carlson, National Register nomination photograph 3.

The pursuit of higher education was available to African Americans within Iowa. For instance, when Joe Brown enrolled at the State University of Iowa (now the University of Iowa) in the late 1890s, he was one of two Black men. Seven Black women attended in 1917, and by 1929, the university counted twenty-five women.⁹⁸ Before 1910, Iowa colleges and universities graduated thirty-four Black students.⁹⁹ Although allowed to attend university, most colleges and universities throughout the state disallowed Black students from residing on campus; those that did, provided segregated housing. The need for Black student housing in this era led to African American organizations and individuals providing the space universities were unwilling to provide. As president of the Iowa Federation of Colored Women (IFCW), Sue Brown led the effort to secure housing for Black women attending the University of Iowa, and in 1919, the IFCW purchased a twelve-room, two-story house for the purpose.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, the Tate Arms provided housing for Black male students at the University of Iowa

⁹⁶ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 80-81

⁹⁷ Ibram X Kendi, *The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965–1972* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 22.

⁹⁸ Nicholson, “Sue M. Wilson Brown,” 68. Coe College in Cedar Rapids had several black graduates between 1900 and 1920.

⁹⁹ Brian Hallstoos and Jonathan Helmke, eds., *Ahead of the Curve: The First Century of African American Experiences at the University of Dubuque* (Dubuque, Iowa: University of Dubuque, 2015), 15.

¹⁰⁰ Nicholson, “Sue M. Wilson Brown,” 68. See also Richard J. Carlson, “Iowa Federation Home for Colored Girls,” National Register nomination (15 March 2018) and Richard M. Breaux, “Facing Hostility, Finding Housing: African American Students at the University of Iowa, 1920s-1950s,” *The Palimpsest* 83, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 14-15.

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beginning in 1914 (*Figure 13*),¹⁰¹ and in Ames, Archie and Nancy Martin rented rooms in their house to students attending Iowa State University beginning in 1920. These types of housing arrangements remained until the mid-twentieth century when campus housing became fully integrated.

In contrast to both the University of Iowa and Iowa State University, the University of Dubuque was one of the first Iowa higher education schools to provide housing for its first Black student in 1915. Solomon “Sol” Butler attended the university from 1915 to 1919, living in Severance Hall within the main block of campus. Butler had been recruited to attend the university because of his talents in track and field, basketball, and football. Other Iowa colleges that allowed Black students to live on campus included Cornell, Grinnell, Iowa Wesleyan, and William Penn.¹⁰²

The first four decades of the twentieth century witnessed the beginnings of organized advocacy for equal protections under the law. Leaders of the African American community focused on education and dialogue to create change, but they also pursued litigation to attempt to stop the practice of discrimination outlawed by the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1884. As World War II approached, the population of Iowa increased, as it did around World War I, and a more determined and organized movement formed to continue the push for equality.

III. Birth of the Civil Rights Movement in Iowa, 1941-1954

After a steady increase in the African American population, the number of Black Iowans at the beginning of World War II dipped back down to pre-World War I numbers. However, this changed during and after World War II. By 1950, numbers had rebounded. The Black population was still less than 1 percent of the total state population.¹⁰³ Similar to World War I, the Second World War brought scores of migrants to urban cities in Iowa who sought to participate in the employment opportunities provided by the war. With the increase in Black residents came continued discriminatory practices. By World War II, however, advocacy by Black Iowans was even more widespread and organized, which generated significant progress leading up to the modern civil rights era.

World War II and the Status of Civil Rights

Fort Des Moines once again participated in the war effort by hosting a training facility for the Women’s Army Corps (WAC). Political pressure by the NAACP opened WAC to both white and Black women; although, the training facilities at the fort separated Blacks from all other races until November 1942 when some of the officer

¹⁰¹ See Richard J. Carlson, “Tate Arms,” National Register nomination (15 March 2018). See also Breau, “Facing Hostility, Finding Housing,” 14-15. For additional context related to the University of Iowa, see Lena M. and Michael D. Hill, eds, *Invisible Hawkeyes: African Americans at the University of Iowa during the Long Civil Rights Era* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2016).

¹⁰² Hallstoos and Helmke, *Ahead of the Curve*, 17.

¹⁰³ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 65-66.

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facilities were integrated.¹⁰⁴ Shortly after the end of World War II, President Harry Truman issued Executive Order 9808 in response to violence against Black veterans seen in the South. This order established a committee to study the state of civil rights throughout the country and to prepare a report with recommendations about how to address, through legislation or other procedures, the protection of civil liberties and civil rights for all people regardless of race or religious beliefs. Two results of the December 1947 report *To Secure These Rights* were presidential executive orders formally desegregating the military and the federal workforce in the summer of 1948.

In 1951, lawyer and activist Pauli Murray produced a compendium of states laws she studied in the late 1940s to understand lawful discrimination. The US Civil Rights Act passed in 1875 left equal access to education, public accommodation, intrastate transportation, and employment up to state discretion, and the US Supreme Court ruled that the law did not extend to private businesses. As Murray notes, “Only when the state regulation of such matters is shown to violate the Fourteenth Amendment or to have invaded a field reserved to the Federal Government will state laws be invalidated.”¹⁰⁵ Successfully arguing a Fourteenth Amendment violation was nearly impossible, thus the need for state laws to address discrimination. Murray found that by 1950, Iowa was one of only eighteen states that had a civil rights law that prohibited discrimination in public accommodations and amusement and one of eighteen states to legislate against discrimination in education.¹⁰⁶ These findings align with the president’s committee report that found that the North was not free from discrimination.

Murray also looked at laws that allowed segregation. Although legal segregation was mostly confined to southern states, segregation was prevalent in the North, “particularly in housing, and in hotel and restaurant accommodations,” according to the authors of *To Secure These Rights*.¹⁰⁷ Murray purposefully distinguished between segregation and discrimination, stating that at the time of her study, “segregation by law is not declared to be discrimination per se” but that several cases before the US Supreme Court tried to argue lawful segregation was in fact discrimination. As long as “separate by equal” facilities were available, the constitution was considered to be fulfilled.¹⁰⁸ The greatest number of segregation laws by far were related to public schools. Segregation laws applied most commonly to southern states, but not exclusively. These laws focused on education, transportation, places of amusement, hospitals and penal institutions, welfare institutions, employment, and other miscellaneous items. Iowa did not have state laws mandating segregation; however, segregation did occur on local levels through

¹⁰⁴ Morris, “Chapter Five,” *Outside In*, 121-123.

¹⁰⁵ Pauli Murray, ed., *States’ Laws on Race and Color* (Cincinnati: Woman’s Division of Christian Service, 1951), 7.

¹⁰⁶ Murray, *States’ Laws on Race and Color*, 8, 10. The other states included California (public discrimination only), Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho (education only), Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming (education only).

¹⁰⁷ Charles E. Wilson, et al., *To Secure These Rights: The Report of the President’s Committee on Civil Rights* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1947), 79.

¹⁰⁸ Murray, *States’ Laws on Race and Color*, 7.

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posted signage, restricted time slots, or by simply ingrained understanding that African Americans were unwelcome.

(Re)Organized Advocacy Efforts

By 1942, Iowa was one of twelve states to have a statewide NAACP conference.¹⁰⁹ By the end of the 1940s, almost four thousand people belonged to twelve local chapters. Des Moines was the oldest branch with about half the state's membership; branches in Marshalltown, Waterloo, Ottumwa, Cedar Rapids, Centerville, Mason City, Davenport, Keokuk, Council Bluffs, and Sioux City had formed in the wake of World War I, but most had been reestablished in the late 1930s and 1940s, and Clinton's branch formed in 1944. Burlington reestablished its branch in 1950. The Youth Councils, a junior organization of the NAACP, had about three hundred members in its twelve branches.¹¹⁰

The strong NAACP membership tenaciously advocated for the state's civil rights law to be enforced. The Cedar Rapids branch reorganized in 1942 following an incident in 1941. Robert Johnson, a student at Coe College, was denied entrance to the newly constructed Ellis Park public swimming pool because he was Black. Johnson and other Coe College students, under the guidance of their advisor, Viola Gibson, protested the segregation of the pool, which allowed Blacks to use the facility only at certain times, the temporal segregation noted by Weyeneth.¹¹¹ In 1945, a ten-year-old child was refused admittance to the pool again due to her race. The local NAACP branch, through Waterloo attorney Milton Fields, filed a petition with the district court that the Cedar Rapids recreation commission allow all citizens, regardless of race, to use the public facility, stating that refusing this petition violated the Iowa constitution. Soon after, the pool was officially desegregated.¹¹² In 1945, Charles and Ann Toney were refused service at the Colonial Fountain, a soda fountain in Davenport. The couple filed suit against the owner, arguing that the refusal violated the civil rights law. Just a few months prior to the incident, the Toney's helped reorganize the local branch of the NAACP; with Charles as president, the branch had successfully integrated the city pool and YMCA, but some restaurants remained immovable. At the request of the local NAACP, S. Joe Brown agreed to represent the Toney's in their suit. The first trial ended in a hung jury; the retrial resulted in a conviction. The Toney case was one of three successful criminal suits against racial discrimination between 1939 and 1950 and the first in Davenport.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Roy Wilkins, Endnote 31 of "Chapter 39: Improvement and Protest Organizations," in Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1944), 1402 (cf 820). The other states were Virginia, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, South Carolina, Ohio, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, New York, and Texas.

¹¹⁰ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 67; see also records of the NAACP.

¹¹¹ Gibson was Johnson's aunt. Brigham and Wright, "Chapter Thirteen," 317; Weyeneth, "The Architecture of Racial Segregation," 18.

¹¹² Adapted from Amanda Loughlin, Iowa State Inventory Form for Christ Sanctified Holy Church, Cedar Rapids (#57-11387), July 2019; "Claim Negro Girl Denied Use of Pool," *Cedar Rapids Gazette* (18 July 1945): 2.

¹¹³ See George W. McDaniel, "Trying Iowa's Civil Rights Act in Davenport: The Case of Charles and Ann Toney," *The Annals of Iowa* 60, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 231-243.

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In Des Moines, NAACP-led activism was particularly apparent in the 1949 capitulation of the Katz Drugstore to stop its discriminatory practices in its soda fountain. Between 1939 and 1950, the store was at the center of ten criminal prosecutions and nine civil suits related to its refusal to serve Blacks at its soda fountain. This practice was common to chain stores throughout the country. Blacks could shop in the stores and acquire food, but they were not allowed to dine next to white customers.¹¹⁴ In 1948, Edna Griffin, Joe Bibbs, and Leonard Hudson were refused service at the Flynn Building's Katz fountain. The three picketed outside the drugstore for two months, and in November, Maurice Katz was indicted on criminal charges related to the incident. Katz was found guilty of violating Iowa's civil rights act and fined \$50. His appeal to the Iowa Supreme Court was unsuccessful in December 1949. Griffin also filed a civil lawsuit against Katz, which she won in October 1949. Leading up to the lawsuits, Griffin led sit-ins and protests against the store and brought additional civil suits when refused service. Maurice Katz settled with the litigants a few days before the court decision, and the Des Moines drugstore began serving Blacks immediately; although, it took a few more years before the whole of the Katz empire was fully desegregated.¹¹⁵ One of the significant aspects of the Katz ruling is that, contrary to Pauli Murray's findings, Iowa determined that segregation was discrimination. In the wake of the Katz suits, the Des Moines NAACP increased pressure with the state attorney general to enforce the civil rights act. In their letter to Robert Larson, the organization complained that the law had been blatantly violated throughout the state by entities specifically named in the law who posted signs or openly stated that Blacks would not be served. Three years later, Attorney General Leo Hoegh issued a letter to various industry associations, directing their compliance with the law.¹¹⁶ Results were mixed.

Other entities besides the NAACP also advocated for civil rights. In Iowa, the United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA) union filed suits on behalf of their employees. In June 1952 a group of UPWA members attended a training school in Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo County) and attempted to attend a dance at the Surf Ballroom. The group was denied admittance because a number of them were black; in July of the same year, another African American, Charles Bennett, was denied admittance to the ballroom to see Louis Armstrong. The UPWA filed suit in county court on behalf of its members; Bennett joined the lawsuit. The all-white jury acquitted the owners of the ballroom, seemingly aligning with established precedent that private businesses did not need to comply with the law. The UPWA again sued the Surf Ballroom in 1953 on behalf of LaFaun Amos. In December 1951, LaFaun and seven friends attempted to attend the Lionel Hampton concert at the Surf Ballroom. All African Americans, the group was denied entrance. Aided by the UPWA, LaFaun sued the owners of the ballroom in federal district court, charging they were refused admittance solely because of their race and therefore the Surf

¹¹⁴ Weyeneth, "The Architecture of Racial Segregation," 24. Weyeneth describes this segregation strategy as behavioral separation.

¹¹⁵ Alexa McDowell, "Flynn Building," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (6 March 2016): 8-45 to 8-46; Acton and Acton, *Outside In*, 76-77.

¹¹⁶ Acton and Acton, "Chapter Four," *Outside In*, 77.

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Ballroom was in violation of the state civil rights law. The jury determined a violation did occur, and the judge awarded Amos \$400.¹¹⁷

During this time period, focus groups formed within towns either to study or to advocate for equality. One example occurred in Burlington. In 1948, town residents formed a committee to, as historian Katrina Sanders writes, “ascertain discriminatory practices” within the city.¹¹⁸ James White instigated the survey as a psychology student at the University of Iowa, working with local community activist, Dorothy Schramm. Schramm, a white woman, was the wife of James Schramm, owner of a local dry goods store. The fifty-person inter-racial Burlington Self-Survey Committee worked with the Race Relations Department (RRD) at Fisk University to design a survey for Burlington. The RRD had already helped a number of other towns with similar work, including Davenport, Des Moines, and Cedar Rapids, but Burlington was the first city in Iowa to participate.¹¹⁹ The Burlington self-survey occurred over the following two years. Over eight hundred of Burlington’s roughly thirty thousand residents participated as workers, respondents, and/or sponsors. The 1951 survey report noted several points of “outstanding importance” for African Americans, among which was a lack of employment opportunities, especially in higher-wage earning jobs, and while a large percentage of heads-of-household were employed, per capita, unemployment in the Black community was three times higher than among their white counterparts. The study also found that contrary to other cities, Burlington’s Black population were predominantly native to Iowa or the Midwest, not immigrants from other areas of the country, and despite segregation and discrimination, African Americans had a high regard for their city. In response to the report’s findings, one committee member noted that the survey documented what the local Black residents already knew, “Some of the figures were startling. We gained some converts by publishing the unbiased report.”¹²⁰ The Burlington Self-Survey led to change within the community. Within two years of the survey report, 1953, the mayor formed a committee to continue to work on those areas of concern noted as most serious: desegregated public facilities, the reorganization of the local NAACP chapter, and improved opportunities for employment.¹²¹

Employment Equality

The push for equality in employment opportunities continued into this time period. During the war, jobs, especially related to the war effort, opened to African Americans. Evelyn Scott Davis moved to Des Moines to work in the ordnance plant in nearby Ankeny. Although allowed to work alongside whites, she soon discovered that all the white girls were removed to higher-paying jobs. A coworker suggested she speak to the union boss, a

¹¹⁷ See Anna Thompson Hajdik, “The Surf Ballroom: Rock & Roll, 1950s Nostalgia, and Cultural Memory in Clear Lake,” *The Annals of Iowa* 78, no. 2 (Spring 2019): 171-176.

¹¹⁸ Katrina M. Sanders, “The Burlington Self-Survey in Human Relations: Interracial Efforts for Constructive Community Change, 1949-1951,” *The Annals of Iowa* 60, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 252.

¹¹⁹ Sanders, “The Burlington Self-Survey in Human Relations,” 254.

¹²⁰ DeEdwin White, as quoted in Sanders, “The Burlington Self-Survey in Human Relations,” 266.

¹²¹ Adapted from Amanda Loughlin, Iowa State Inventory Form for the White House, Burlington (#29-03816), July 2019.

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Black man, about what happened. The union boss had her sit in a chair for three days in protest, during which time she continued to be paid; on the fourth day, she was given a new job as inspector, making equal salary to her white female counterparts. Although Davis did not elaborate, the union boss may have negotiated on her behalf.¹²²

Another union that advocated for equal employment opportunities was the United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA), which formed in 1943 as an alternative to the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen (AMCBW). The difference between the AMCBW and the UPWA was primarily in the inclusivity of all workers regardless of race and gender. As Ralph Scharnau writes in *Outside In*, the AMCBW “made only feeble attempts to organize African-Americans.” If Blacks did join the union, Scharnau observes, they “frequently had no voice in union affairs and continued to face job discrimination in terms of wages, promotions, and working conditions.”¹²³ The UPWA actively sought to engage Black workers, seeing racial equality as part of their mission to the workforce of the meatpacking industry.

The post-World War II years witnessed an increasing level of assertiveness on the part of the UPWA. Packing plants such as Waterloo’s Rath Company saw the influx of new and more workers, a growing number of whom were Black men and women. The union initiated a concerted effort to fight discrimination during this time period to help form a unified front towards management. Black women were traditionally only employed in janitorial jobs, while Black men were confined to the cut and kill sections of the plants; neither were considered eligible for promotions or other jobs within the packing plants. The UPWA took the following steps to change this. They encouraged African American workers to run for elected union offices; they wrote intentionally fair-employment language into contracts; they agitated to remove job classifications as male/female and white/black, and further, insisted that the pay scales be equal to the job not the race or gender of the worker. With organization, progress was quick. Black men and women found themselves in job positions formerly unavailable to them, and they also successfully held elected offices within the UPWA’s Local 46. Progress was not without its resistance and trials, however. Not all white workers welcomed the changes, and the companies, such as Rath, ignored elements of the union contracts that stipulated workforce equality. Grievances, legal challenges, or even government interference often forced compliance. Waterloo’s Rath Packing Company was one of the largest packinghouses in the country, especially in the post-war years. In the late 1940s, the company employed five thousand workers, one thousand of whom were African Americans. Two white leaders of the UPWA Local 46 collaborated with a group of Black leaders with the plant who helped keep the momentum of equality going at Rath and in the community. In 1953, the UPWA presented a “Resolution on Discriminatory Practices in the City of Waterloo, Iowa” to the city to highlight specific instances within the larger community where African Americans faced unequal treatment, and in 1954, the first African American woman entered the bacon slicing department.¹²⁴

¹²² Davis, *Life Narratives*, 27.

¹²³ Ralph Scharnau, “Chapter Nine: African-American Wage Earners in Iowa,” *Outside In*, 230.

¹²⁴ Adapted from Amanda Loughlin, Iowa State Inventory Form for the UPWA Union Hall, Waterloo (#07-13582), July 2019; see also Bruce Fehn, “Racial Equality in Waterloo, Iowa, 1948-1960,” *The Annals of Iowa* 54 (Summer 1995): 185-216. For information about meatpacking and labor activism in Cedar Rapids, see Dennis A. Deslippe, “‘We Had an Awful Time with Our Women’: Iowa’s

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The hiring of the first African American schoolteacher in the Des Moines Public School system in the twentieth century was decades in the making. Following World War I, an interracial group formed in Des Moines, known as the Commission on Interracial Cooperation (CIC) to discuss the pressing issues of the city's African American community and how to address these problems. The group produced a list of fourteen goals for which to strive, dubbing the list "The Desiderata of the Des Moines Negroes." Of the fourteen objectives, at least four pertained to education, including hiring at least one Black teacher. Although the district hired Black secretaries and substitute teachers, it was almost two decades before the district hired a full-time teacher. Harriette Curley, a Des Moines native, received her Bachelor of Science in Education with an advanced elementary certificate from Drake University in August 1946. That same month she was hired as a kindergarten teacher at Perkins Elementary School. At a school board meeting in September 1946, a group of twenty people protested her hiring, admonishing the board for an hour that "No Negro teachers be used in Perkins school," that this action by the board "would lower property values because prospective new residents 'would not want their children in a kindergarten taught by a Negro.'" Others in the crowd spoke in favor of Miss Curley. The board decided against taking any action to mollify the protesters. Superintendent N.D. McCombs stated that the board had also received a number of calls in support of Miss Curley. McCombs further explained, "She topped the list of applicants by a wide margin. The board has had a policy, in writing, for years that all boys and girls get the best teachers for the money that we pay." In response to a *Des Moines Register* reporter, Harriette explained that she had not had any problems at the school, that in fact mothers requested that their children be placed in her class and none had asked to have theirs removed. By 1954, the district employed six full-time African American teachers.¹²⁵

Higher Education

By 1948, all Iowa colleges (private and state-sponsored) were open to African American students; however, housing still remained somewhat segregated. Policies began to shift in the late 1940s when by the second semester of the 1946-1947 school year twenty-three Black students lived on college campuses across the state.¹²⁶ The University of Iowa in Iowa City first integrated their dorms in 1946 when a group of five Black women moved into Currier Hall. In 1949, Drake University in Des Moines integrated their residence halls. When Elaine Graham Estes (*Figure 14*) applied for admittance to Drake in 1949, she also intended to live on-campus. In a meeting with the dean of women, however, she learned that the school had yet to allow Black students to reside in the dormitories, a reality that surprised her. Two other female students, Johnnie Lockett and Hetercene Turner, also

United Packinghouse Workers of America, 1945-75," *Journal of Women's History* 5, no. 1 (1993): 10-33; Gregory Zieren, "'If You're Union, You Stick Together': Cedar Rapids Packinghouse Workers in the CIO," *The Palimpsest* 76 (1995), 30-49; Deborah Fink, "What Kind of Woman Would Work in Meatpacking, Anyway? World War II and the Road to Fair Employment," *Great Plains Research* 5, no. 2 (1995): 241-262.

¹²⁵ Adapted from Amanda Loughlin, Iowa State Inventory Form for Perkins Elementary School, Waterloo (#77-12102), July 2019; Hal S. Chase, "Chapter Six: 'You Live What You Learn,'" in *Outside In*, 146-148; "Doherty Given Principal Post," *Des Moines Register* (21 August 1946): 6; "Protest Hiring New Teacher," *Des Moines Register* (4 September 1946): 3; "D.M. teaching pioneers die," *Des Moines Register* (5 February 2002): 31-W.

¹²⁶ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 82. See also Lena M. and Michael D. Hill, eds, *Invisible Hawkeyes: African Americans at the University of Iowa during the Long Civil Rights Era* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2016).

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applied for housing for the 1949-1950 school year; as a result, the board of trustees voted to integrate their dormitories. Estes, Lockett, and Turner moved into Morehouse Dormitory that fall, becoming the first Black students at Drake to live on campus.¹²⁷

Housing

Equal housing opportunity remained a concern in this era. In the years immediately following World War II, housing supply could not keep up with demand. The authors of *To Secure These Rights* noticed that minorities faced an even greater shortage when it came to finding adequate housing after the war due to discriminatory business practices.¹²⁸ Redlining continued in earnest, confining African Americans to specific areas of town, and restrictive covenants for new housing developments—many of which were financed through federal loan programs—kept Blacks from acquiring new homes in specific areas of a town.

In Waterloo, for instance, the 1946 plat for Kenyon's Addition included a Declaration of Restrictions that stated, "No lot shall be sold to, rented to, leased by or occupied by any person other than of the Caucasian race...." The covenant, however, permitted non-white domestic servants to reside with the families for whom they worked.¹²⁹

Des Moines also had restrictive covenants. In January 1944, Archie Alexander and his wife purchased a home in the Chautauqua Park neighborhood of Des Moines. Alexander was a prominent African American engineer, community leader, and contractor, but despite his reputation, the neighborhood association objected to his purchase because of his race. The association passed a petition to remove Alexander on the grounds that the property deed prohibited sale to a Black owner before 1948, the year the covenant expired, and that the presence of Blacks in the neighborhood would lower property values; thirty-eight owners signed, and a court injunction was filed against the Alexanders. James B. Morris represented the Alexanders in the matter, but the district court dismissed the case in December 1944 because the plaintiffs made no trial requests. The Alexanders remained in their home until Archie's death in 1958, with a short stint in the Virgin Islands between 1954 and 1956 when President Dwight Eisenhower appointed Archie to serve as governor.¹³⁰



Figure 14: Elaine Graham Estes, circa 1953. Source: Drake University.

¹²⁷ "A Woman of Firsts," Drake University (23 February 2017) <https://news.drake.edu/2017/02/23/a-woman-of-firsts/>; Chase, "Chapter Six," *Outside In*, 148.

¹²⁸ Wilson, *To Secure These Rights*, 68-69.

¹²⁹ James I. Kenyon and May Belle Kenyon to The Public, "Declaration of Restrictions [for Kenyon's Addition]," 1 July 1946. "African Americans-Housing, folder, Grout Museum District Archives, Waterloo.

¹³⁰ "House Sale Questioned by Group," *Des Moines Tribune* (17 January 1944): 1; "House Sale Challenged in Court Action," *Des Moines Tribune* (26 January 1944): 11; "Drop Action on House of Alexanders," *Des Moines Tribune* (20 December 1944): 9; Langston, "Chapter Fourteen," *Outside In*, 347. This house was later home to Willie and Luther Glanton.

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In Burlington, equal housing opportunities was one of the areas the mayor's committee identified as needing to be addressed. Prior to 1953, real estate firms practiced restrictive housing within Burlington, refusing to show certain houses within certain neighborhoods to African Americans. By the late 1950s, these practices had dramatically decreased, and African Americans were moving into neighborhoods previously "off limits" to them.¹³¹

By the mid-1950s, the Black population continued to grow both with migrants coming to Iowa and with established families rooting themselves in communities. Community centers also continued to be integral parts of African American community experiences; some expanded into larger facilities to meet the growing populations and needs. In Sioux City, the Sanford Center was built in 1951 through the philanthropy of Stella and Art Sanford to replace the Booker T. Washington Center. Similarly, the Willkie House in Des Moines was constructed in 1951 to replace the Negro Community Center. Between 1950 and 1960, the number of African Americans in Iowa grew substantially, matched only by the post-Civil War years.¹³² Part of this was no doubt due to industrial jobs available to Black workers, but part was due to migrants leaving an increasingly volatile South.

The progress made in the immediate post-World War II years became a springboard for Iowa Blacks during the following decade. Working through established NAACP branches and through other advocacy groups, African Americans found more success in the courts in terms of enforcing the 1884 civil rights law than they had previously. The African American population also stabilized, indicating that this minority group was not going to leave the state, and they had the motivation and ability to advocate for equality.

IV. The Modern Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1964

Although shown to extend to the decades prior to and during World War II, the phrase "civil rights movement" connotes a specific period in post-World War II America. This modern civil rights movement is generally bookended by the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 and the passage of the US Civil Rights Act of 1964.¹³³ These ten years witnessed the culmination of decades of advocacy by Black Americans to achieve the basic acknowledgement of their legitimacy as citizens of the United States. Progress came in the form of court decisions and enforceable laws, but the means by which these were achieved varied from earlier efforts of groups like the NAACP. Peaceful, non-violent protests and marches came to define the era. The reaction by white leaders

¹³¹ Adapted from Amanda Loughlin, Iowa State Inventory Form for the DeEdwin and Gladys White House, Burlington (#29-03816), July 2019. See also Sanders, "The Burlington Self-Survey," 244-269.

¹³² William Petersen, "Twenty Years After," in Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 95.

¹³³ Some historians give slightly different years. For instance, historian William Harris argues for a tighter time frame of 1960 to 1965, from the Greensboro, North Carolina sit-ins to the Watts race riots in Los Angeles. Others extend to 1968 with the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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to direct action highlighted the inequality crisis, especially in the South. Northern African Americans such as those in Iowa followed the tactics of southern Blacks and so benefitted from the organized movement.

The objectives of the modern civil rights movement were the same as in previous decades. Historian Glenn T. Eskew notes in his book, *But For Birmingham*, that the crux lay in how to address these goals. Focusing on Birmingham, Alabama, but applicable to the movement in general, Eskew writes:

Although white people viewed the movement's demands as revolutionary, the movement proposed no revolution. The activists' requests for Negro policemen and bus drivers revealed the central desire for access to "whites only" jobs in Birmingham. By ending discrimination in the marketplace, movement members sought full integration into the existing system as consumers and commodified labor—hence the struggle to remove the race wage that paid black workers less by limiting them to inferior positions in the city's economy and to dismantle the segregated social structure that propped up the unequal system.¹³⁴

The work by southern Blacks to achieve equality during this time period permeated African American communities throughout the United States because the areas of discrimination—employment, education, housing, etc.—were consistent throughout the country.

Housing

Housing discrimination continued in the modern civil rights movement era in Iowa. Blacks continued to be confined to specific areas of a town, but more were willing to push the social barriers. Discrimination continued to be challenged by individuals and civil rights groups. In Cedar Rapids, Dr. Percy and Lileah Harris faced opposition when they sought to build a new house in a white neighborhood in the early 1960s. Colleague and fellow church member, Robert Armstrong, suggested that the Harrises make an offer on a piece of property that Armstrong had donated to St. Paul's Methodist Church. Dr. Harris made the offer, intending to construct a new home on the site. Reverend Jackson Burns, the minister at St. Paul's, was thrilled at the offer, seeing it as an opportunity for St. Paul's "to witness for our belief in the equality of man under God." Several property owners in the neighborhood, however, disagreed. In December 1961, a neighborhood committee formally petitioned the church against the sale, arguing that having African American neighbors would lower the property values of the surrounding parcels, arguments reminiscent of those used against the Alexanders in Des Moines. In their petition, the neighborhood stated, "We do not believe it is a christian [sic] act to help one family and do so much harm to dozens of others in the neighborhood." They even exhorted the committee to "put yourselves in our place" when considering the right way to vote. The debate was heated, but the church approved the sale 460 to 291. Some

¹³⁴ Glenn T. Eskew, *But for Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 7.

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members who opposed the sale left St. Paul's and formed their own congregation. Building permits for the six-bedroom house were issued by the city in 1962, and the Harrises moved into the two-story house in 1963.¹³⁵ In Clinton, a civil rights group formed in 1963 to study race issues within the town's neighborhoods. As the name suggests, Interfaith Interracial was a collaboration of several ecumenical congregations in Clinton. A subcommittee formed to study local problems and to facilitate improvements in race relations. Clergy from both Protestant and Catholic churches of both white and Black congregations eventually made up the subcommittee deemed by committee members as "the first broad-scale interfaith project in the more than 100 years of this community."¹³⁶ One goal of Interfaith Interracial was to understand the degree to which housing in Clinton was open to all people regardless of race. The group was especially interested in rental housing, so they set up an experiment enacted in cities across the country where a Black couple inquired about an available property; if they were outright rejected or told the property was already rented or no longer available, a white couple was to respond to the same advertisement. If the latter couple were given a different response, the owner of the rental property was confronted about their practice of discrimination. Interfaith Interracial helped to bring about more open housing in Clinton.¹³⁷

Similar efforts to test housing occurred in Des Moines in early 1964 by members of the Coordinating Council on Human Rights and Citizens for Fair Housing. Two couples, first a Black couple then a white couple, inquired in person about apartments for rent all over the city. The reception by the landlords differed in every case depending on the color of the applicants. The Black couple was either denied outright, lied to that the apartment had already been let, or quoted a high rental price; only one woman accepted their application but not without comment that the couple might be happier in a Black neighborhood. In each case, the white couple were immediately shown the residences and pressed to rent; some of the landlords commented that they had just turned away African Americans looking at the same place. The Black couple had gone through similar circumstances in attempting to purchase a home in Des Moines. Their first intention was to build, but no real estate agent would show them available lots in predominately white neighborhoods. The house they settled on purchasing was in a white neighborhood, but not without protest; even the real estate agent backed out of the deal, choosing to let the home sellers sell directly to the Black couple.¹³⁸

Urban renewal is perhaps one of the most impactful events related to African American neighborhoods in Iowa. In 1962, the Iowa State Advisory Committee to the US Commission on Civil Rights reformed to study the effects of urban renewal on minority group housing in the state. The Committee held public meetings in Des Moines,

¹³⁵ Adapted from Amanda Loughlin, Iowa State Inventory Form for the Harris House, Cedar Rapids (#57-11388), July 2019. See also: Barnes, *Life Narratives*, 16, 37-39; Indian Creek Hills Committee; Petition to the Congregation of St. Paul's Methodist Church. December 1961; "Iowa Pastor Wins Fight to Sell Negro a Lot," *Jet Magazine* (28 December 1961): 48; Brigham and Wright, "Chapter Thirteen," *Outside In*, 317-318.

¹³⁶ Joe Sheridan, "Faiths in New Turn in Clinton," *Quad-City Times* (15 January 1964): 5.

¹³⁷ Sheridan, "Faiths in New Turn in Clinton," 1,5; Katherine Long and Melvin Erickson, *Clinton: A Pictorial History* (Rock Island, IL: Quest, 1983), 37; Brigham and Wright, "Chapter Thirteen," *Outside In*, 332-333.

¹³⁸ Nick Kotz, "D.M. Housing Bias Tested by 2 Couples," *The Des Moines Register* (23 March 1964): 1, 5.

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Waterloo, and Sioux City, three municipalities with large African American populations that had also implemented a number of projects.¹³⁹ The Committee held its inaugural meeting in Des Moines in October 1962. Displaced minority families had a more difficult time acquiring adequate housing due to racial restrictions. The Committee found that of the 212 available houses available for displaced families, 1 percent (or two houses) were available to non-white residents, and further, that African Americans paid higher rent prices. To further complicate matters, a number of highway projects had been undertaken concurrently with relocation efforts, which caused confusion to those being displaced. Many relocated to substandard housing, often within the same neighborhood, due to a miscommunication with the agency overseeing relocation efforts.¹⁴⁰ Restrictive covenants added to the burden of finding adequate housing within large parts of cities.

The Center Street neighborhood, a thriving African American area near downtown Des Moines, was heavily impacted during this time period for the construction of I-235 (*Figure 15*).¹⁴¹ In Waterloo, a 1961 the Logan Avenue Urban Renewal Project displaced over two hundred families, thirty-eight individuals, and twenty businesses; over 75 percent of those affected were African American. At the December 1962 public meeting, reports echoed the situation in Des Moines: few adequate available properties would rent or sell to non-white people. The National Urban League accused the program of amplifying “existing discrimination in the city,” and Reverend I.V. Talbert of the Payne Memorial AME Church expressed to the committee the widespread dissatisfaction among the African American community with the urban renewal program.¹⁴² The Committee held its final meeting in Sioux City in May 1963.

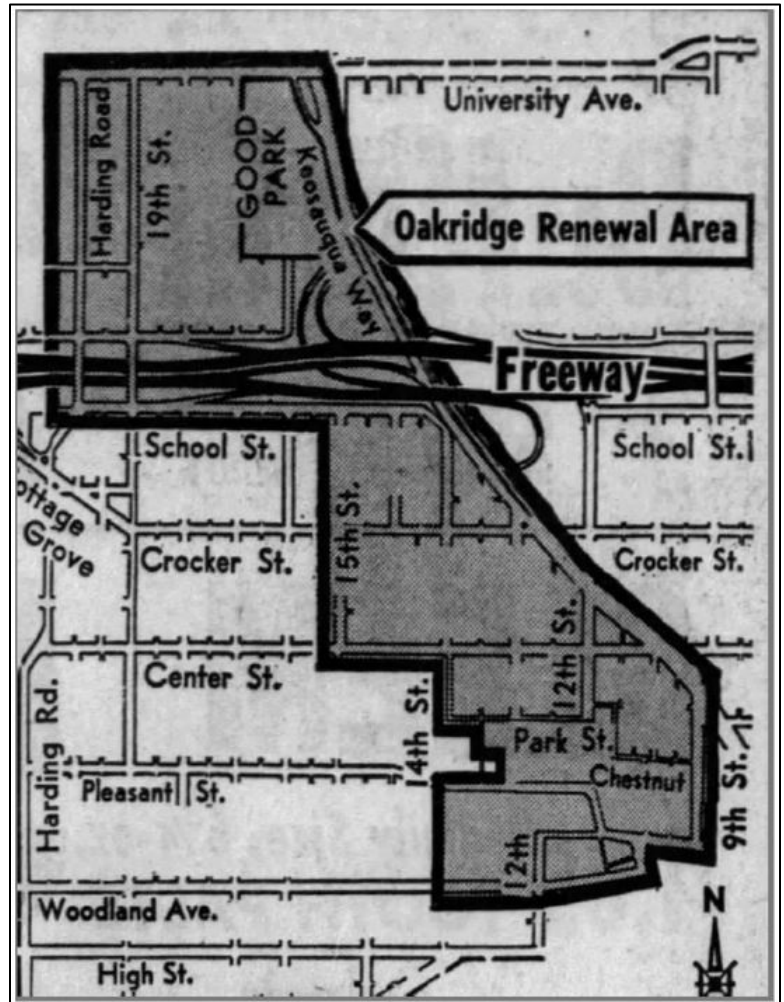


Figure 15: Map showing Oakridge Renewal Area which included the Center Street neighborhood. Source: Undesign DSM.

¹³⁹ Iowa State Advisory Committee, *Urban Renewal Programs and Their Effects on Racial Minority Group Housing in Three Iowa Cities*, Report to the United States Commission on Civil Rights (Washington, DC, 1964), 2.

¹⁴⁰ Iowa State Advisory Committee, *Urban Renewal Programs*, 3-4.

¹⁴¹ See Jack Lufkin, “Patten’s Neighborhood: The Center Street Community and the African-American Printer Who Preserved It,” *Iowa Heritage Illustrated* 77 (1996): 122-145.

¹⁴² Iowa State Advisory Committee, *Urban Renewal Programs*, 14.

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In the two urban renewal projects undertaken by the city, nearly 50 percent of the displaced persons were non-white. One hundred thirty-nine families relocated due to construction of I-29 through town, and two hundred thirty were displaced because of the Floyd River Flood Control Project between 1961 and 1962. Several minority families also had difficulty acquiring a suitable dwelling due to racism.¹⁴³

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka

In 1954 the US Supreme Court reversed its “separate but equal” precedent set in the 1896 *Plessy* case. Although most commonly associated with the Topeka school system and its practice of providing separate buildings for white and Black students, the case was actually a combined docket of similar cases in Kansas, Delaware, Washington DC, South Carolina, and Virginia. To reduce the appearance that school segregation was purely a southern issue, the justices chose to put Brown first in the list. The cases came together through the steady and organized work primarily of the NAACP and its branches. The unanimous opinion, written by Chief Justice Earl Warren, held that segregated educational facilities deprived minority children of equal educational opportunities, that separation is inherently unequal and therefore segregation violated the equal protections clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.¹⁴⁴ Iowa had outlawed segregated schools in the nineteenth century, but housing restrictions worked to create de jure segregation in towns with higher Black populations.

The ruling in *Brown* had far-reaching impacts. If separation was inherently unequal in educational facilities, then segregation in other facilities also must be in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment, as countless numbers of court cases throughout the country had sought to argue between 1896 and 1954. The landmark *Brown* decision was one of the most hopeful victories in the push for equality, and it became a springboard for greater advocacy. In Iowa, the *Brown* decision was a benchmark for progress and additional challenges to the practice of discrimination more broadly.

*Iowa’s Fair Employment Practices Act of 1963*¹⁴⁵

Since the end of World War II, activists and members of the Iowa General Assembly unsuccessfully fought for legislation to safeguard against employment discrimination in the state. The first bill came in 1947, but it and seven similar bills failed to make it out of committee between 1947 and 1955. Some progress came in 1955 when the legislature passed a resolution that espoused the idea that the right of an individual to work should not be based on race; the resolution also requested that Governor Leo Hoegh appoint a commission to study employment discrimination. Governor Hoegh created the Commission to Study Discrimination in Employment soon after the resolution passed. Between April and October 1956, the commission held meetings in seven cities across Iowa:

¹⁴³ Iowa State Advisory Committee, *Urban Renewal Programs*, 16, 20.

¹⁴⁴ *Oliver Brown, et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka, et al.*, 347 US 483 (1954).

¹⁴⁵ Acton and Acton, “Chapter Four,” *Outside In*, 78-79.

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Burlington, Waterloo, Davenport, Council Bluffs, Cedar Rapids, Ottumwa, and Sioux City.¹⁴⁶ These meetings overwhelmingly were attended by Black workers, and though employers were invited, few attended. Only Des Moines, Burlington, and Waterloo had made local attempts to improve employment practices. In its January 1957 report to the General Assembly, the commission concluded that Iowa Blacks were “generally excluded from or given only limited opportunities for employment” in work outside of the manufacturing/processing, service, or custodial industries, and that even these areas, Black employees often faced discrimination.¹⁴⁷ Most of the commission members supported legislation to ban discrimination in hiring and in union membership, but bills to this effect again died in committee.



Figure 16: Evelyn Freeman and her 1959-1960 class. Source: *Sioux City Journal* online.

School districts balked at hiring Black teachers and administrators in the first half of the century. The hiring of Harriette Curley in Des Moines in the late 1940s sparked a new era in Iowa where districts slowly began hiring qualified African American teachers, often at the urging of local advocacy groups. Following Miss Curley, the Des Moines school district employed six Black teachers by 1954. Waterloo hired its first African American teacher, Lily Furgerson, in 1951 where she taught at Grant Elementary in a primarily Black neighborhood. In Sioux City, the NAACP saw the employment of Black teachers as an area to advocate with the school district as there were no African Americans employed in the district up to that time. Evelyn Walker Freeman (*Figure 16*), a graduate of Morningside College in Sioux City, had been a substitute teacher in the district since 1953, but her application for fulltime employment had been denied. With the advocacy of the local NAACP chapter, Mrs. Freeman finally was awarded a contract with the district in April 1955, becoming the first Black teacher in Sioux City’s schools. She was placed in the newly built Lincoln Elementary.¹⁴⁸ By 1957, Cedar Rapids and Ottumwa still had no Black teachers in their school districts.¹⁴⁹

When Democratic Governor Herschel Loveless won election in 1958, he helped to keep momentum for an anti-discrimination in employment bill. One of his first initiatives was to appoint a Governor’s Commission on Human

¹⁴⁶ Benjamin Stone, “The Legislative Struggle for Civil Rights in Iowa: 1947-1965,” Master’s thesis (Ames, Iowa State University, 1990), 42. Stone describes more in detail what meeting attendees reported about the employment situation in their towns.

¹⁴⁷ Stone, “The Legislative Struggle...,” 47.

¹⁴⁸ Brigham and Wright, “Chapter Thirteen,” *Outside In*, 327-328; *The Sioux City Journal* (5 April 1955): 8; “First Full Time Negro Teacher is Given Post Here,” *The Sioux City Journal* (8 April 1955): 10.

¹⁴⁹ Stone, “The Legislative Struggle...,” 43.

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Relations to study and report on the state of racial discrimination across multiple areas, including employment; however, the General Assembly failed to act to formerly create the commission by 1961. Finally, in 1961, newly elected Governor Norman Erbe successfully formed the Governor's Commission in Civil Rights, and the commission announced its primary goal was the passage of a fair employment bill. The commission continued its work under Governor Harold Hughes, who in 1963, reorganized a new bipartisan commission of thirty-five Iowans.

In May 1963 the Iowa General Assembly passed the Fair Employment Practices Act (60 G.A. ch. 331). The bill amended the Iowa Civil Rights Law to add a new section devoted to employment. The new bill stated:

Every person in this state is entitled to the opportunity for employment on equal terms with every other person. It shall be unlawful for any person or employer to discriminate in the employment of individuals because of race, religion, color, national origin or ancestry. However, as to employment such individual must be qualified to perform the services or work required.

The bill also banned discrimination in membership of unions or other professional-related organizations. Violators of this law could be fined up to \$100 or serve up to thirty days in jail. While certainly progress, because this bill amended the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1884, it also required lawsuits to prove a violation occurred; enforcement would be just as rare as previous attempts to litigate under earlier sections of the act.

The US Civil Rights Act of 1964

During this era, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, became the figurehead of what became known as the civil rights movement. Likewise, Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth led the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, a grassroots civil rights organization, in its agitation for desegregated public places and equal employment opportunities for African Americans in Alabama.¹⁵⁰ King, Shuttlesworth, and countless others advocated for direct action—marches, protests, boycotts—to achieve equality rather than the traditional tactics of petitions and lawsuits espoused most notably by the NAACP. The use of non-violent, direct action became the *modus operandi* of the modern civil rights movement throughout the country, including Iowa, the result being the passage of the US Civil Rights Act in 1964.

King first visited Iowa in 1959, visiting the University of Iowa, Waterloo, and ending with a large NAACP gathering at the University Christian Church in Des Moines on November 12.¹⁵¹ The appearance of such a leader

¹⁵⁰ Eskew, *But for Birmingham*, 6-7.

¹⁵¹ "Capacity Crowd Expected to Hear Noted Integration Leader in NAACP Talk," *The Iowa Bystander* (12 November 1959): 1.

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in the state added legitimacy to the complaints of Black Iowans. He toured these three places where inequality was continuously challenged.

In 1963, communities across Iowa staged marches and rallies to support the work of Black southern leaders, to protest the violence against African Americans in places like Birmingham, and to protest discrimination in their own towns. George and Ocie Cooper, for instance, as heads of the Council Bluffs NAACP, organized a sympathy march in the early spring of 1963 to protest violence occurring in Birmingham.¹⁵² In August 1963 a large march and rally occurred in Davenport. Over two thousand participants met at St. Anthony's Catholic Church and marched approximately one-half mile down to LeClaire Park where a rally took place at the bandshell. The rally protested discrimination particularly in hiring practices.¹⁵³ One of the largest marches in 1963 occurred between Ames and Des Moines in September 1963. Approximately fifteen hundred people participated in some extent, marching from the Campanile at Iowa State University to the State Capitol in Des Moines to protest and to memorialize the victims of the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham.¹⁵⁴ Fort Madison hosted a freedom march and rally in November 1963 with eleven hundred total participants (*Figure 17*).¹⁵⁵



Figure 17: Fort Madison March for Freedom, November 1963. Source: African American Museum of Iowa, Cedar Rapids.

The following May, additional marches and rallies in Des Moines and Waterloo highlighted the demand for new legislation to address segregation and discrimination in Iowa. Participants in the 1960s marches and rallies understood that while not as violently opposed, African Americans in the South and the North shared the common experiences of being treated differently because of skin color. In Iowa, the local NAACP branches, often led by working-class Blacks, overwhelmingly organized the protests, which led to Governor Harold Hughes issuing an executive order in May 1964. This order proclaimed a code of fair practices and prohibited discrimination in state appointments and promotions. The executive order became the precursor for new state legislation in 1965.¹⁵⁶

Concurrent with Iowans' agitation for change, the US Congress took up the issue of new civil rights legislation. In the summer of 1963, President John F. Kennedy exhorted Congress to tackle the issue of equal treatment for

¹⁵² Council Bluffs Daily Nonpareil (12 March 1963).

¹⁵³ Acton and Acton, "Chapter Four," *Outside In*, 79.

¹⁵⁴ Howard Pederson, "Race Deaths Bring March of 1,500 Here," *Des Moines Register* (23 September 1963): 1,5; Rod Riggs, "Iowa's Biggest Civil Rights Rally," *Ames Tribune* (23 September 1963): 1.

¹⁵⁵ Acton and Acton, "Chapter Four," *Outside In*, 79.

¹⁵⁶ Acton and Acton, "Chapter Four," *Outside In*, 79.

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all citizens regardless of race. Despite his assassination that November, Congress continued to hone new legislation. In the spring of 1964, the US House of Representatives passed by a wide margin the most far-reaching civil rights bill in the history of the United States; the Senate followed suit, and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law on July 2.¹⁵⁷

The new legislation upheld the constitutional right of all citizens to vote, abolished the practice of segregation in all public places, and prohibited discrimination based on race especially in the hiring of workers. Importantly, the law overturned state laws allowing racial discrimination and segregation. The bill also provided a process by which the law could be enforced, which was especially important to African Americans living in states with Jim Crow laws; they could now litigate against the custom of segregation. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352) was the most significant federal civil rights legislation since the Reconstruction Era.

In July 1964, Blacks finally experienced tangible hope that decades of oppression could give way to better opportunities for equality. Historian William Harris notes that “for the first time, at least in law, the United States had become aggressively antiracist.”¹⁵⁸ The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a hopeful high mark of the freedom struggle, but it did not solve inequality overnight. In the years following the 1964 act, Blacks continued to be underrepresented in higher paying jobs and still faced housing discrimination. In Iowa, African Americans and their non-Black cohorts also continued to advocate for real change, encouraged by the success of the organized movement.

V. The Second Revolution in Iowa, 1964-1976

The passage of the US Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a watershed moment in US civil rights history. The Act was the culmination of decades of advocacy, but it also created momentum within individual states to enact similar legislation and to refocus the narrative of civil rights advocacy. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 empowered African Americans to speak out for what historian Rhonda Williams calls more “concrete demands.”¹⁵⁹ Instead of simply fighting for equal citizenship, the Black community embraced their hard-won freedoms, demanded enforcement of new laws, and developed specific action points that would more fully recognize Blacks as belonging to the broader US citizenry. During this era, use of the word “Negro” declined being replaced by “black” or “Afro-American.” In a true reversal from Booker T. Washington’s early call for acquiescence to white culture, some Black activists embraced a bolder tactic to proclaim the importance of African American culture, sometimes resulting in violence, especially after the death of Dr. King in 1968.

¹⁵⁷ Harris, “The Grand Boulé,” 120.

¹⁵⁸ Harris, “The Grand Boulé,” 119.

¹⁵⁹ Rhonda Williams, *Concrete Demands: The Search for Black Power in the 20th Century* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

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*Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965*¹⁶⁰

The protests, marches, and rallies across Iowa in the 1960s also advocated for the Iowa General Assembly to pass stronger legislation against discrimination. The 1884 law failed to provide adequate enforcement mechanisms. Arthur Bonfield, a University of Iowa law professor, prepared a draft of a new civil rights bill that he shared with the Governor's Commission on Human Rights. Bonfield's bill established an administrative statewide commission to handle cases of discrimination involving public places and employment. Housing discrimination was intentionally not included in the draft due to a lack of support by a majority of the legislature.



Figure 18: Willie Glanton (left) and James Jackson (right), the first African Americans elected to the Iowa state legislature. Source: *Outside In*, 348.

The 1964 election in November saw President Johnson elected, Governor Hughes reelected, and a large number of first-time Iowa state legislators and a larger representation of urban areas. In his 1990 master's thesis, Benjamin Stone notes that the 1963 General Assembly included only sixteen legislators from cities with NAACP branches; in 1965, forty-eight legislators represented cities with an NAACP chapter.¹⁶¹ The 1965 election also saw the first two African Americans win the race for the state legislature (*Figure 18*). Des Moines elected Willie S. Glanton who was married to Luther Glanton, the first Black municipal judge appointed in the state in 1959, and Waterloo sent James H. Jackson to the State Capitol. Cecil Reed represented Cedar Rapids in 1967, and A. June Franklin represented Des Moines from 1967 to 1970. Of the three, Reed was the only Republican.¹⁶² The election of these Black legislators came nearly a century after the state constitution allowed for African Americans to serve. In his 1965 inaugural address, Governor Hughes encouraged the General Assembly to create a seven-person, bipartisan state commission on human rights to oversee violations to the civil rights laws. This commission would differ from the Governor's Commission on Civil Rights in that it would have the statutory authority to investigate, hear, and rule in cases where discrimination took place in public places or employment; the commission would have authority to require remedial action of the person found in violation of the law. The process also allowed the commission to seek conciliatory settlement prior to a hearing, and if the findings of the hearing were dissatisfactory to one or another party, the case could then be heard in district court.

By the end of February 1965, fifty-four House Democrats sponsored a bill to put into place the Governor's plan for a new state commission and to reaffirm the prohibition of "discrimination based on race, creed, color, national

¹⁶⁰ Acton and Acton, "Chapter Four," *Outside In*, 79-81; see also Stone, "The Legislative Struggle...", 94-101.

¹⁶¹ Stone, "The Legislative Struggle...", 99.

¹⁶² Petersen, "Twenty Years After," 92.

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origin, or religion in the areas of employment and public accommodations,” as the Act reads. The bill also banned retaliatory actions by business owners and employers. Both the House and Senate unanimously voted to approve this landmark legislation.

Two years later—and one year before the US Fair Housing Act of 1968—the Iowa General Assembly for the first time addressed housing discrimination. The Discrimination in Housing Act (62 G.A. ch. 122) amended the Civil Rights Act of 1965 to specifically prohibit housing

discrimination. Accusations of discrimination were to be settled by the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. The Senate approved the bill with some detractors, but the House unanimously approved it after the speeches of June Franklin and Cecil Reed in favor of the bill; Reed, in his speech, related his own experiences in Cedar Rapids and argued that the time had come for African Americans to live wherever they could afford to live in a town regardless of race. Additional sessions of the General Assembly continued to amend and strengthen the law, which remains in effect today.



Figure 19: Dr. Harry Harper's office and residence in Fort Madison from 1934 to 1977. Source: *Life Narratives*, 32.

The first appeal to the Iowa Supreme Court regarding the new law did not occur until 1971. In *Iron Workers Local No. 67 v. Hart*, a construction company filed a complaint against a union, alleging unfair and discriminatory practices against Black workers. The Commission agreed with the construction company that discrimination did take place. Unsatisfied with the findings, the union requested a review by the Polk County District Court, and the appeal then came before the Iowa Supreme Court who found the union in violation of the law. The next complaint to reach the high court was not until 1986.

Iowa Civil Rights Commission

The first state civil rights commission formed within weeks of the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1965. Four Democrats and three Republicans served, including Fort Madison's Dr. Harry Harper who had previously served on governor-appointed commissions. Harper was a well-respected leader in Iowa and had experience dealing with discrimination both as a Black resident and as a business owner. During the Great Depression, Dr. Harper hired non-union workers to install new mechanical systems in his business-residence in downtown Fort Madison (Figure 19). Union workers protested his hiring practices outside of his building. Dr. Harper discussed his decision with the protestors, revealing he had no alternative because the union who protested would not allow

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Black membership. Soon after this discussion, the union changed its policy. Dr. Harper was also an active NAACP member and served as president of the local chapter.¹⁶³

The number of cases heard by the commission indicates that this process of addressing complaints was more effective than the criminal suits allowed under the previous Iowa Civil Rights Act. Its first session, July to November 1965 heard ten cases; between December 1968 and November 1969, 177 complaints were heard. In 1970, 107 complaints heard before the commission dealt with race discrimination. These numbers indicate the willingness of aggrieved people to make formal complaints, but it also indicates that the process was more approachable than previous methods. Litigation could still be sought, but the majority of complaints could be dealt with before the appearance in a court.

Individual cities throughout Iowa also formed quasi-judicial commissions to oversee possible civil rights violations before a complaint was filed with the state commission. The Clinton Human Rights Commission, for instance, formed within a year of the new civil rights act through the advocacy of three local groups: Council of Churches, Catholic Deanery, and Interfaith Interracial. One of their first cases came in 1966. Dolores Williams filed a complaint with the Clinton Human Rights Commission after being refused service at a local beauty shop, in violation of Iowa law. The Clinton Commission, upon investigation was informed by the owners of the shop that they would close before serving a Black woman; the Clinton Commission forwarded the complaint to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. The complaint was dropped when the beauty shop finally agreed to provide service to Mrs. Williams. In Davenport, the Catholic Interracial Council collaborated with the NAACP to address issues of discrimination. The Catholic church in Davenport had been a leader in civil rights issues since the 1950s.

Black Power Movement

The civil rights bills passed by the US Congress and the Iowa General Assembly did not immediately end prejudicial practices throughout the country. Events continued in southern states, especially Alabama, and Iowans continued to organize sympathy rallies and marches. In March 1965, the Des Moines chapter of the NAACP organized a march in support of the larger one to occur in Selma across the Edmund Pettus Bridge; in Des Moines, the marchers crossed the Locust Street Bridge.¹⁶⁴ The reaction to marchers in Selma became known as Bloody Sunday and showed the continued violent reactions to advocates of equality. In August 1965, a six-day riot and protest in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles led to similar incidents across the country.

As violence continued, a new, parallel movement began to form among Black civil rights activists frustrated with the slow pace of and opposition to the peaceful, non-violent demonstrations. In June 1966, Stokely Carmichael

¹⁶³ Lois Harper Eichacker (daughter of Harry Harper), in *Life Narratives*, 32.

¹⁶⁴ Tom Morain, "Des Moines NAACP Staged Local March to Support Selma Effort," *Des Moines Register, Special, Online* (1 March 2019) <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/life/2019/02/25/des-moines-naacp-staged-local-march-support-selma-effort/2980853002/>

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(later Kwame Ture) coined the term Black Power. Shirley Chisholm, the first Black US congresswoman, defined Black Power in 1972 as simply reflecting “black people’s desires to control their own destinies.”¹⁶⁵ Rhonda Williams writes about the term in her introduction to her book *Concrete Demands*:

[Black Power] represents a historically contextualized set of oppositional ideologies and politics. Undergirded by race consciousness and pride, nationhood, self-determination, and sovereignty, Black Power is a politics in which black people placed less faith in white goodwill and paid more attention to the structures of power. In doing so, they demanded the authority to control decisions, as well as resources, impacting black people’s lives and circumstances.¹⁶⁶

At times, the Black Power movement represented a more assertive approach to the freedom struggle, as represented by the Black Panther Party, but at its core, it was an awakening to the idea that Black citizens, rather than the white majority, could affect real change. This awakening permeated the era with more forceful demonstrations; although, Black Power politics generally waned by 1980.¹⁶⁷

Shortly after Carmichael’s Black Power speech, Iowa experienced its first significant racial disturbance in Des Moines. The “Good Park Rebellion” involved approximately two hundred Black youth on the nights of July 4 and 5, 1966. The protests grew out of several previous nights’ incidents where youths refused to leave the Good Park swimming pool at closing, resulting in police being called to remove them. Gathering in the park on Independence Day night, revelers set off fireworks, which were illegal at the time. Upon police arrival, cherry bombs were thrown at police vehicles and youth began to jump on the police cars. Several youths barricaded an intersection leading into the park and threw objects at squad cars as police attempted to remove the barricades. Acting police chief Captain Wendell Nichols called on three Black community leaders, James B. Morris, John Estes, Jr., and Perry Hooks, to help disperse the crowd. No one was seriously hurt in the disturbance, but property damages resulted; two teenagers were arrested that evening. On the evening of July 5, another disturbance occurred in the park involving around one hundred fifty young people. Police were called in around 9:30pm, and again, with the help of Morris, Hooks, and Estes, dispersed the crowd by 1:00am. Twelve teenagers were arrested that night.¹⁶⁸

While praising and thanking Morris, Estes, and Hooks, Captain Nichols stated his opinion that the incidents were not civil rights protests. Estes, Hooks, and Morris, who edited the *Iowa Bystander*, the state’s most read African

¹⁶⁵ Williams, *Concrete Demands*, 2.

¹⁶⁶ Williams, *Concrete Demands*, 4.

¹⁶⁷ Williams, *Concrete Demands*, 4.

¹⁶⁸ The information about Good Park is based on the following sources: Bruce Fehn, “North Side Revolutionaries in the Civil Rights Struggle: The African American Community in Des Moines and the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, 1948-1970,” *The Annals of Iowa* 69 (Winter 2010): 51-81; Dick Spry and Stephen Seplov, “200 Negroes throw Rocks in Good Park,” *Des Moines Register* (5 July 1966): 1; Guy Toulouse and Fred Pettid, “Morris Praised By Police,” *Des Moines Tribune* (5 July 1966): 1,9; Morris, “Chapter Twelve,” *Outside In*, 295.

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American paper, believed the incident was more nuanced. After the Watts Riots in Los Angeles in 1965, Morris wrote that the reason for such incidents were simple, that the African American citizen wants the same civil rights afforded his white neighbors and the “opportunity to advance to the top, money, good homes, good schools, and a chance to win if he makes the grade. And he is not getting it.” Perry Hooks, secretary of the Des Moines Human Relations Commission, echoed this sentiment after the Good Park events, saying, “I think it was an outgrowth of unrest in the community. A number of young males have been unable to find employment this summer. They have nothing to do with their time.”¹⁶⁹ Discrimination against African Americans still occurred in housing and employment, and the youth of the community grew increasingly frustrated.



Figure 20: Charles Knox with students at Forest Avenue Baptist Church during the free breakfast program administers by the Des Moines Black Panther Party. Source: Maurice Horner, *Des Moines Register* (23 April 1969): 3.

Historians Bruce Fehn and Robert Jefferson argue that the events in Good Park in July 1966 were “a prelude to the emergence of a new, more radical politics, later mobilized by members of the Des Moines chapter of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.” The Black Panther chapter was established in 1968 and lasted until 1970, led by Charles Knox. Beginning with Good Park, Des Moines African American youth publicly agitated for recreational space where Blacks were welcome to assemble and socialize.

Between 1966 and 1971, African American youth experienced additional confrontations with and demonstrations against the Des Moines police and city officials. In August 1966, a white police officer shot and killed a Black man, resulting in a march on the police headquarters by an integrated group of youth who called for the creation of a “grievance board” and new procedures for the use of deadly force. The Citizens Committee to End Police Brutality formed a short time later by a group of African Americans to oversee the advocacy for such demands. It was out of these struggles that a new group, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, emerged. The Black Panther chapter was established in June 1968 “to promote and develop black power in the community which means the economic, political, and cultural control of the Black community by black people.” Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP) was established in July 1968 by Mary Rhem, Charles Knox, and Michael Harris and lasted until January 1970.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Morris, “Chapter Twelve,” *Outside In*, 295.

¹⁷⁰ Bruce Fehn, “North Side Revolutionaries in the Civil Rights Struggle: The African American Community in Des Moines and the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, 1948-1970,” *The Annals of Iowa* 69 (Winter 2010): 51-81.

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As part of the national BPP agenda, the Des Moines branch successfully implemented a Free Breakfast Program for upwards of one hundred elementary and junior high school students of any race. The basement of Forest Avenue Baptist Church was first used for this program directly administered by the Des Moines BPP (*Figure 20*). It was the hope of the BPP hope to encourage other area churches and civic organizations to also provide such services, calling attention to the poverty of area school children. Soon after the Forest Avenue program started, three other places within Des Moines began offering free breakfasts. The breakfast program filled a need the school district was unable—and some argued unwilling—to meet. The breakfast programs of Trinity United Methodist and Cottage Grove Avenue Presbyterian were projects of the Inner-City Co-operative Parish. All three programs associated with the churches received reimbursement through the Department of Agriculture. The Gateway Opportunity Center, established in the former Forest Theater in November 1969, also offered a free breakfast program. The Gateway Center was a project of Mothers for Dignity and Justice, the local branch of the National Welfare Rights Organization, of which Charles Knox was an advocate and leader.¹⁷¹

*Black Campus Movement*¹⁷²

A distinct movement during this time period involved higher education. Historian Ibram Kendi distinguishes the Black campus movement from other activist-led movements related to the Black power movement. The Black campus movement spans the years 1965 to 1972 and is a specific movement separate, though similar to, other racial activism on and off college campuses. Kendi defines the Black campus movement as the “struggle among Black student nationalists at historically white and Black institutions to reconstitute higher education.” It “represented a profound ideological, tactical, and spatial shift from the early 1960s off-campus civil rights student confrontations.”¹⁷³

On college campuses across the United States, including those in Iowa, campus activists formed Black student unions and became involved with student government associations, using both to advance an agenda of inclusion. Much like previous efforts of groups such as the Commission on Interracial Cooperation in Des Moines in the 1910s, these campus activists agitated for a range of changes, including an increase to Black student populations,

¹⁷¹ Adapted from Amanda Loughlin, Iowa State Inventory Form for Forest Theater, Des Moines (#77-10218), July 2019. Reynaldo Anderson, “Practical Internationalists: The Story of the Des Moines, Iowa, Black Panther Party,” in Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds. *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America* (New York City: New York University Press, 2005), 282-298; Fehn, “North Side Revolutionaries,” 51-81; Morris, “Chapter Twelve,” *Outside In*, 295; “Opportunity Center Sets Open House,” *Des Moines Tribune* (17 June 1971): 26; “Schools Shirking Breakfast Duty,” *Des Moines Tribune* (12 October 1970): 16; Jane Boulware, “Food Donations Go to Wrong Group, ‘Small Flap’ Results,” *Des Moines Tribune* (22 April 1970): 12; “Names a Center, Wins a Watch,” *Des Moines Tribune* (19 November 1969): 45; Jerry Szumski, “Free Meal for Needy Youngsters,” *Des Moines Register* (23 April 1969): 3.

¹⁷² See Ibram X Kendi, *The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965–1972* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

¹⁷³ Kendi, *The Black Campus Movement*, 3.

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additional African American administrators and faculty, and the incorporation of Black history into established curricula.¹⁷⁴

Black Student Unions (BSUs) were most often established at historically white colleges and universities. Each BSU differed from campus to campus. Most often, BSUs started simply as study groups that evolved into organizations that attempted to “unite and raise the consciousness of the black student body....” A second function is articulated by the University of Northern Iowa student Dwight Christian in 1969, “Students banded together to make it easier to survive on this malevolent campus.” Third, BSUs formed to help solve the Black student identity crisis. This involved shifting from attempting to assimilate into white society and to understanding, accepting, and defining what blackness even was. A fourth objective was to promote the interests of Black students on campus. This objective is tied to the Black power movement’s principle of self-determination; no one on campus truly understood the interests of Black students nor how to address them like Black students. Tied to this objective was the fifth principle that BSUs should advocate for Black reforms on campus. At smaller colleges, BSUs formed to, as Kendi notes, “serve as an instrument of incorporation into campus life.” The BSU at Morningside College in Sioux City formed under this ideal. At other small colleges such as Clarke University in Dubuque and Coe College in Cedar Rapids, BSUs formed as a way to educate their white cohorts about Black culture in order to reduce prejudice and racism. The eighth function was more applicable to colleges near larger Black communities where the BSU served to “relate to, support, and serve off-campus black communities.” Black Student Unions faced criticism from both whites and Blacks when they began to be established. Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP, called the idea of a BSU self-segregation. This refrain was often repeated by white students and faculty, censuring, halting, or questioning their formation at institutions across the country, including Sioux City’s Morningside College.¹⁷⁵

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) in Cedar Falls was not the first Iowa university to establish a BSU, but the incidents involving its establishment were more conspicuous. In 1969, a room in the new student union was reserved for the Afro-American Society, who helped in its decoration. The Society used the room for social events, meetings, and as general gathering space; although, the room was not exclusively for the use of the Society. Despite the efforts, the Afro-American Society was frustrated at what it perceived as slow success. The Society delivered a set of demands to UNI Vice-President William Lang among which was that a cultural house for African American students be established. UNI President Bill Maucker met with the students, and in December 1969, he and student representatives presented the proposal for a cultural house to the Board of Regents. Maucker proposed the former president’s house as the center. The plan was presented the Board in March 1970, but the Board of Regents declined to approve a cultural center until the Attorney General had a chance to review the proposal.

¹⁷⁴ Kendi, *The Black Campus Movement*, 3.

¹⁷⁵ Kendi, *The Black Campus Movement*, 109-110, 131.

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Frustrated, a group of seven students from the Society decided to stage a sit-in at the President Maucker's House (*Figure 21*). Around ten in the evening of March 16, 1970, the group arrived at the home, stating they would like to discuss the cultural center. President Maucker obliged, and an hour later asked the students to leave. When they refused, President and Mrs. Maucker retired for the evening, and the students spent the rest of the night on the main floor of the house even ordering pizza. The next morning, an additional twenty-two students joined the original nine, followed by twelve students from Waterloo East High School. The university attorney sought an injunction from Black Hawk County District Court to bar the students from the Maucker house. Prior to the injunction being served, the students were warned

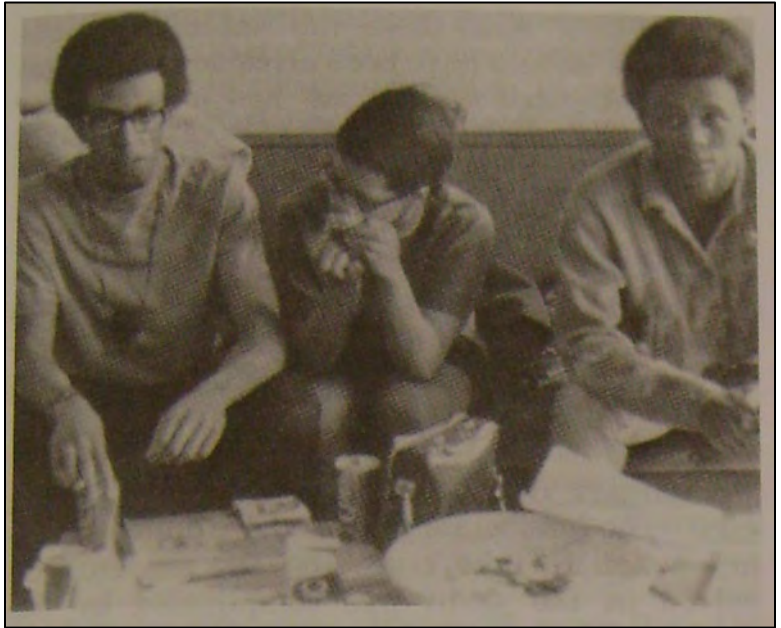


Figure 21: Three of the students involved in the sit-in at President Maucker's home. Source: Lang and Pendergraft, 271.

that they would be in contempt of court if they continued the sit-in after the injunction went into effect; after seventeen hours, the students ended their sit-in. Seven students were temporarily suspended following the incident. This led to on-going protests on campus, some of which were disruptive to the disciplinary hearings that also followed. President Maucker continued to advocate for a cultural center on campus. At his last meeting with the Board of Regents before the end of his tenure in June 1970, Maucker presented his plan to have the former president's house repurposed as the Ethnic Minorities Cultural and Educational Center. The Board approved the proposal five to three.¹⁷⁶

The Black campus movement altered elements of higher education. This was achieved through successful reforms that added greater Black presence, voices, and curricula on campuses, reforms not achieved through the 1954 *Brown* decision nor the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Kendi argues that the assassination of Dr. King in 1968 did not spark the Black campus movement; rather, it accelerated it.¹⁷⁷ The Black campus movement was not confined to larger, well-known universities. It extended into even the smallest and most rural campuses of the nation.

In the fall of 1969, Black students, educators, administrators, and government leaders remained divided about the Black campus movement core demands and how to implement them. Some wanted to escalate the movement;

¹⁷⁶ Adapted from Amanda Loughlin, Iowa State Inventory Form for Former President's House, Cedar Falls (#07-13581), July 2019. See also William C. Lang and Daryl Pendergraft, "Chapter XI: The Maucker Years, 1950-1970, Part 2," in *A Century of Leadership and Service: A Centennial History of the University of Northern Iowa*. Volume II: 1928-1976 (Cedar Falls: University of Northern Iowa, 1995), 249-316.

¹⁷⁷ Kendi, *The Black Campus Movement*, 4, 6.

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others wanted to continue protests for reforms not yet achieved; while yet others wanted to accept the gains and move on. Even the head of the NAACP, Roy Wilkins, questioned the movement, which began to wane. Black studies curricula were derided with some Black leaders writing unfavorably about instituting separate studies. The fear among leaders like Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall was that the students would be unemployable due to studies that would not prepare them for a career.¹⁷⁸

In March 1969, the US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare “warned all colleges and universities receiving federal assistance not to institute separate Black Studies programs, ‘separate housing,’ or ‘separate social activity’ spaces that excluded white students,” that doing so would be in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Although they issued a warning, the federal government does not appear to have followed through. Kendi notes that school administrators “had to satisfy the wishes of black campus activists and reactionary conservatives.” These administrators resented being forced into the untenable position because the vocal opposition curtailed reforms that were already in the works.¹⁷⁹ By 1972, campuses seemed calmer; although, Kendi argues that this was not because colleges had responded to all the demands of Black students. On the surface, the racial constitution had shifted, but the demands were not completely implemented. “*The Chronicle of Higher Education*’s report in the spring of 1972 on “Higher Education and the Black America” further assessed that “the black studies programs...now fill a standard, if insecure, niche in the curriculum.”¹⁸⁰

The work of Black campus activists to achieve progress extended into local school districts where high schoolers advocated for similar goals. One example occurred in Waterloo. During the week of September 8, 1968, numerous events at and involving students of East High School drew attention to grievances of the African American students. Students prepared a list of grievances—from hiring additional Black faculty to Black history curriculum to establishing a BSU—to share with school administrators. Faculty and administrators of the Waterloo Community School District were not averse to most of the requests on principle, especially regarding the inclusion of African American history. Municipal Judge William Parker acknowledged the underlying reason for the request to have more Black history taught in the school, stating, “The black youth want respect and recognition so that they can be proud to be students of East High School.” He urged all parties, regardless of race, to work together to guarantee respect and recognition of all students. The meetings held Thursday and Friday were meant to be the beginning of the discussion and implementation of how to meet the requests of the Black students and community. By February 1969, Waterloo Community School District had begun working to remedy the lack of Black history within the high school courses.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ Kendi, *The Black Campus Movement*, 99, 140.

¹⁷⁹ Kendi, *The Black Campus Movement*, 138.

¹⁸⁰ Kendi, *The Black Campus Movement*, 104.

¹⁸¹ Adapted from Amanda Loughlin, Iowa State Inventory Form for East High School, Waterloo (#05-07053), July 2019. “Tough Action in Disorders Pledged,” *Waterloo Courier* (12 September 1968): 1-2; “School Board Studies Negro Grievances,” *Waterloo Courier* (13 September 1968): 1,3; “East High May Reopen Tuesday, Walkouts to Go on Probation,” *Waterloo Courier* (15 September 1968): 15-16; “Seven Policeman Injured, 13 Arrests Friday Night,” *Waterloo Courier* (15 September 1968): 15-16;

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Assassination of Dr. King

The assassination of Dr. King on April 4, 1968 reverberated throughout Iowa. His last visit to the state included a stop in Grinnell to deliver a speech at the college on October 29, 1967. Reaction to his death came in many overt forms. Sit-ins were staged as several college campuses like Iowa State University, and some violence was partially attributed to his death such as rioting in Waterloo concurrent with the list of grievances provided to the East High School administration in September 1968.



Figure 22: Jane Elliott, teaching students. “Riceville class to be on ABC,” *The [Mason City] Globe-Gazette* (8 May 1970): 9.

One unique response occurred in Riceville (Howard County), a small town in northern Iowa. On Friday, April 5, 1968, a third-grade student at Riceville Elementary School (extant) asked his teacher, Jane Elliott, “Why’d they shoot that King?” To begin to explain discrimination and its effects, Mrs. Elliott created an experiment whereby she separated kids with blue eyes from kids with brown eyes (*Figure 22*). All day April 5, Elliott praised the brown-eyed children as being superior to their blue-eyed classmates, that they were smarter and deserved special privileges such as extra recess time. The blue-eyed children were told they were not as smart and therefore were held back from recess five minutes and given paper cups out of which to drink water. The following Monday, April 8, the roles were reversed, with the blue-eyed children being told they were superior. In both cases, the “superior” children treated the “inferior” children with contempt; students who usually did well in class suddenly had difficulty. After the experiment ended, the children hugged and some cried. Elliott emphasized that the class participated in this experiment in order to understand what it is like when a person is discriminated against. She asked the students to write essays about their experience. The weekly *Riceville Recorder* printed the responses under the heading “How Discrimination Feels,” and the story was soon picked up by the Associated Press. In early summer of 1969, Johnny Carson called to ask her onto the “Tonight Show.” In 1970, Elliott and her exercise were the subject of an ABC News special “The Eye of the Storm.” The national attention on Elliott and Riceville was not completely well-received within the community itself. The exercise also divided social scientists and educators in the succeeding decades, with some praising her efforts as remarkable while others describing the exercise as sadistic.¹⁸²

“Faculty Attitude Told to East Parents’ Gathering,” *Waterloo Courier* (13 September 1968): 3; Brigham and Wright, *Outside In*, 324; “Isolation Termed Basic Root Cause,” *Waterloo Courier* (12 February 1969): 1, 3.

¹⁸² Adapted from Amanda Loughlin, Iowa State Inventory Form for Riceville Community School, Riceville (#45-00262), July 2019 Stephen G. “Bloom, Lesson of a Lifetime,” *Smithsonian Magazine* (September 2005): n.p. [digitized online] <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/lesson-of-a-lifetime-72754306/> (accessed 13 September 2019).

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The twelve years following the passage of the US Civil Rights Act of 1964 witnessed a significant change in how racist attitudes were challenged. Discrimination and segregation were lawful in the past, but even the new, more enforceable laws could not remove years of ingrained prejudice and racism. The efforts of the post-1964 era sought to challenge prejudice where earlier efforts sought to remove legal barriers. In Iowa, a new state law prohibited discrimination in employment, housing, public places, and voting. Administrators in school districts and colleges added Black history courses to curricula, and Black student unions established on college campuses. By the end of the era, violent protests waned, but the fight for racial equality continued.

Conclusion

From 1833 to 1976, African Americans in Iowa witnessed slow, oftentimes frustrating, progress towards full inclusion and equality. In the nineteenth century, the Iowa General Assembly laid the foundation for legal equality by guaranteeing African American males the right to vote, allowing Black legislators to serve in the General Assembly, and providing for the education of all youth in the state. Vocal outcries from Black leaders in 1883 led to the passage of the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1884, which in theory prohibited discrimination in public places. The first four decades of the twentieth century saw a continued increase in the state's Black population and widespread efforts to organize to effectively fight discrimination. In this era, the state civil rights act also was amended to make violations criminal offenses with the hope of easier convictions. Lawsuits continued into the next era as local advocacy groups reorganized and the state NAACP conference formed. Iowans joined in the larger advocacy movement of the modern civil rights movement, staging more protests and rallies to highlight discrimination in Iowa and solidarity with southern Blacks, and the passage of the US Civil Rights Act of 1964 kept the momentum to allow a new state civil rights law to pass the General Assembly in 1965. The new law finally provided the enforcement mechanisms needed to more fully combat discrimination in public places and employment, and two years later, in housing. Protests and marches continued into the late 1960s and 1970s with new advocacy efforts to make space within a historically prejudiced society for those marginalized due to race. The steady and tenacious work of Iowa's Black community led to real changes in the ways African Americans were treated. Leaders of the long civil rights movement were the spokespeople for countless others who wanted equal opportunities. State and local civil rights commissions also continue their work to keep discrimination in check. Iowa may not have had the same level of violence and terror as the Jim Crow South, but the African American residents of the state still faced discrimination, sometimes blatant, sometimes covert. The difference in the character of discrimination may have led white citizens of the state to believe that racism was not a problem in Iowa. The work, started so long ago, continues to change with society and the needs of the Black community.

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F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

The historic contexts described in Section E involved specific places within the state of Iowa. Extant resources associated with Iowa's long civil rights movement may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, an honorary designation indicating that a place is important to the tangible history of the nation and should be preserved. Buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts often are listed as a way to celebrate history; however, the National Register also includes places important to the historic social conscience of America—places imbued with uncomfortable or even painful memories. Civil rights-related resources are places that intrinsically retain hard memories yet illuminate the resilience, perseverance, and success of the movement for equality. Listing them in the National Register recognizes their importance to the civil rights history of Iowa. The following section discusses why these places are significant, requirements they must meet in order to be listed under this cover document, the types of properties found in Iowa, and special considerations that may apply.



Figure 23: The Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake in 1948. This place was the center of a 1953 discrimination lawsuit. Source: Hajdik, “The Surf Ballroom,” 171.

General Significance

Extant resources eligible under this cover document derive primary significance for their association with the twentieth century struggle for African American civil rights in Iowa. Therefore, each eligible civil rights-related resource will be significant under Criteria A and/or B in the area of *Social History (Civil Rights)*, as each illuminates this aspect of Iowa history. Resources also will be eligible under Criteria A and/or B in the area of *Black Ethnic Heritage* as civil rights-related resources are a distinct category within the body of African American-related resources.¹⁸³ Few exceptions are expected. For instance, the Riceville Elementary School is significant for its connection to civil rights education following the assassination of Dr. King but not for its association with Black ethnic heritage in Riceville. Some properties also may be eligible under Criterion C as distinctive examples of their type or style, but this criterion is not expected to be associated with the events described in Section E. Criterion D is not expected to apply to resources listed under this cover document because these places are unlikely to yield information important to twentieth century civil rights history in Iowa that is unavailable from other sources.

¹⁸³ Civil rights are discussed within the broader context of African American resources in cover documents for Manhattan and Wichita, Kansas; Lincoln, Nebraska; Los Angeles, California; Prince George County, Maryland; and the State of Delaware.

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Levels of Significance. The struggle for equal rights was (and is) a nationwide theme most commonly effected at the local level. City governments and local businesses were the primary targets of advocacy and lawsuits; movement leaders focused on highlighting discrimination within their own communities; Black-owned properties were established to meet needs denied African Americans in specific locations. The majority of eligible resources will be locally significant for their roles in the long civil rights movement of the towns in which they are located. A few resources may be eligible on a statewide level for their associations with watershed events in Iowa civil rights history or for individuals who made a significant statewide impact. Watershed events include but are not limited to Iowa Supreme Court decisions that upheld state laws and led to change across the state, the passage of new state legislation, organized statewide marches, and the formation of significant civil rights organizations that represented statewide issues. Few resources are expected to be nationally significant. Properties may be considered nationally significant if they were involved with people or events that impacted the national civil rights movement. Although no longer extant, the 1918 St. Paul AME Church in Des Moines is associated with the formation of the National Negro Bar Association, later named the National Bar Association (NBA). The NBA was established in 1925 as a professional organization for Black attorneys barred from admittance into the American Bar Association. The NBA was open to Black members throughout the country, meeting a nationwide need for a professional organization.

Periods of significance for eligible civil rights-related resources will correspond with one or more contexts outlined in Section E. Because the focus of this cover document is on the twentieth century, resources that gained significance prior to 1900 also will need to have documented civil rights-related significance into the twentieth century to be listed under this cover document. Eligible resources include both properties solely significant for civil rights associations and properties where the significant civil rights association is part of the entire significance of a place. The Flynn Building/Edna M. Griffin Building in Des Moines has a period of significance from 1885 to 1966 to include both the years this building gained commercial significance and to include the year Edna Griffin successfully litigated against the Katz Drugstore for discriminatory practices (1948).¹⁸⁴ The types of resources eligible under this context also may be significant for reasons unrelated to civil rights, and the periods of significance should reflect this.

Research questions for Civil Rights-related Resources help to frame the argument of significance as well as which property type the resource falls under. Questions to consider include:

- How does the place fit within the context of equal rights for African Americans in Iowa?
- Was the place continually used for events related to equality, or was the place associated with a one-time event?
- How did the event advance equal rights for African Americans in its town or the state?
- Was the event only related to the lack of equality, or did the event spark change?

¹⁸⁴ McDowell, "Flynn Building." Listed in NRHP 3 May 2016. The Flynn Building was listed for its local significance; however, the events surround the Katz Drugstore protests led to the desegregation of all Katz Drugstores in Iowa. The building's social history association could be considered to be significant on a statewide level.

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- Is the event or person important locally, statewide, and/or nationally?
- How does the associated person exemplify the fight for equal rights?
- What significant accomplishments related to equal rights did the person represent?
- Is this the best resource associated with a significant person?
- What civil rights or liberties were violated and how was this challenged?

General Registration Requirements

Properties nominated as Twentieth Century African American Civil Rights-related Resources must meet the overall requirements for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Resources must demonstrate a direct connection to the twentieth century struggle for African American equality not just a connection with the Black community of a specific place. A resource can be eligible in the area of *Social History (Civil Rights)* and *Black Ethnic Heritage*, but it will not be nominated under this cover document only for *Black Ethnic Heritage*. St. John's Baptist Church in Mason City is listed in the National Register under Criterion A in the area of *Black Ethnic Heritage*. While members may have supported efforts of the NAACP, this association was not why the building is historically significant nor was it discussed in the nomination.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, this church would not meet the registration requirements of this cover document. On the other hand, a church like Bethel AME in Waterloo is significant under both *Black Ethnic Heritage* and *Social History (Civil Rights)*. The church was important to the African American community of Waterloo and for its association with its first pastor, Reverend I.W. Bess, who actively sought to promote equal rights for his community. A property may be listed under additional areas of significance, as explained within the property types, but it must demonstrate its *Social History (Civil Rights)* significance to be considered a civil rights-related resource. Properties only tangential to civil rights might be individually eligible under *Black Ethnic Heritage* and nominated apart from this cover document.

A nominated property must have documented *Social History (Civil Rights)* significance, but it must be extant and retain historic integrity from its period of significance. Of primary importance are location, setting, design, and materials, which when present support the integrity of feeling and association. Due to the theme of this cover document and its applicable criteria, workmanship (important for Criterion C) is not expected to be a factor.

Location: Eligible resources will be sited within their historic location, as the geographic location is directly tied to the character—and often the significance—of the resource. Resources related to significant people or organizations are located in specific areas often because those were areas open to Black residents; resources related to significant events are often located in areas where African Americans were disallowed. The location is part of the broader context of the civil rights-related resource. Relocated resources rarely are able to communicate the importance of historic location and the effect that location may have had on historic events or people.

¹⁸⁵ Molly Myers Naumann, "St. John Baptist Church," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (May 2001). Listed in NRHP 24 January 2002.

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Setting: Similarly, setting defines the environs of the nominated resource and helps to ground the property within its specific location. The intactness of the surrounding environment is not essential to the significance of a nominated property, but it does help to physically contextualize the historic character of a neighborhood or commercial district. Ironically, setting may have been intentionally altered by urban renewal projects in the post-war years. This alteration may actually add to the significance of an event associated with a specific property.

Design, Materials, and Workmanship: Although not significant under this cover document for their aesthetics, the design and materials of the resources are important in conveying significance. The types of properties covered under this context vary widely from architect-design public buildings to vernacular dwellings. Workmanship, that is the evidence of artisans' labor and skill, will depend on the primary use of the resource. The importance is the retention of the primary spaces and materials from the period of significance. The historic form should be clearly discernible. Multiple additions, enclosed porches, missing historic features, etc., decrease the ability of the property to convey how it appeared when it gained significance. Similarly, the interior of eligible resources will retain the design from the period of significance; for example, floor plans should not be substantially altered, and primary spaces should retain character-defining features from when the property gained significance. Would the people involved in the historic event recognize the place or has it been altered beyond recognition? Likewise, building materials that have been altered, removed, or installed to obscure historic features tend to give the resource a look it did not have historically.

One of the obstacles of integrity for some resources related to civil rights is the location of these resources within municipal areas that have seen adverse federal actions and disinvestment. All properties change over time; however, the changes should be deferential to the historic period of significance; a property should continue to convey the overall appearance from when it became associated with the civil rights movement. In commercial buildings, for example, storefronts commonly changed to fit design trends or tenant needs, but the commercial character of the building should be evident (e.g., display windows, distinguishable entrances). A property may exhibit alterations from after its initial construction; these may be documented to be within the period of significance of the property's civil rights association. Some common alterations include the enclosure of porches, and the installation of secondary siding. Alterations to significant resources should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if the changes irrevocably hinder the ability of the resource to communicate its historic significance.

Feeling and Association: Where the above aspects are present, the integrity of feeling is expected to be present. Feeling reflects the intactness of a resource to reflect its sense of place and to communicate its historicity. Relatedly, a property will retain its integrity of association if its character-defining physical attributes remain intact that help to convey its historic associations.

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Criteria Considerations

Some types of properties are generally considered ineligible for the National Register unless they meet certain conditions. These property types are cemeteries, birthplaces or graves of historical figures, religious institutions, and commemorative resources. Additionally, relocated or reconstructed properties or those properties less than fifty years old are also not eligible without proving exceptional significance. Civil rights-related properties defined by any of these conditions will need to meet the applicable additional requirements below.

Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties

A property owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes may be eligible if it derives its significance from historic events and not its religious affiliation. Religious properties in Iowa that meet this consideration were locations of historic events such as organizational meetings and important speeches that led to change. Other properties may not have been constructed as religious institutions but are now owned by or function as one; if these properties have documented civil rights-related significance, they meet this consideration. Additionally, the property would meet this consideration if it is demonstrated to be the best extant resource related to a person significant to the advancement of equal rights, such as a pastor or church member. This is likely to be a common criteria consideration.

Criteria Consideration B: Relocated Properties

As discussed above, properties that have been moved lose a primary aspect of integrity. Relocated civil rights-related buildings and structures are not likely to be eligible due to the historic location being integral to historic significance. However, if the property can be documented as the best and most importantly associated resource to a person demonstrated to be of outstanding or exceptional significance to civil rights in Iowa, it may be eligible for listing if it continues to retain its other aspects of integrity. The person must be demonstrated to have significance exceptional to others in similar situations. Properties relocated prior to or during their periods of significance do not need to meet this consideration. Criteria Consideration B is expected to be rarely applicable.

Criteria Consideration C: Birthplaces and Graves

Birthplaces and graves of important historical figures are considered ineligible because they are generally not associated with the person's productive life. Association with the person is not sufficient for listing unless there is no other extant resource associated with the person's productive life. In order to meet this criteria consideration, the person has to be documented to be of outstanding significance to the long civil rights movement in Iowa and no better resource remains that is associated with the person, in Iowa or elsewhere. The houses, businesses, and churches associated with significant people often have been demolished, so the Iowa birthplaces and/or graves

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may be the only extant Iowa places associated with people of outstanding importance. This is not expected to be a widely applicable consideration, however.¹⁸⁶

Criteria Consideration D: Cemeteries

Eligible cemeteries must either be associated with a documented civil rights-related event such as advocacy to allow Blacks burial within or if a cemetery or section thereof contains a sizeable concentration of graves of significant people to the civil rights movement within a specific town.¹⁸⁷ As of this writing, no Iowa cemeteries have been identified that have civil rights movement associations; however, this does not indicate the definite lack of such resources within the state. Therefore, this criteria consideration may not be widely applicable.

Criteria Consideration E: Reconstructed Resources

Resources that have been substantially or wholly reconstructed are not eligible under this cover document.

Criteria Consideration F: Commemorative Properties

Resources that are primarily commemorative in nature are ineligible for listing unless one has gained historic significance in its own right through age, tradition, or symbolic value. Few resources in Iowa are expected to meet this consideration. For this consideration to apply, a property must demonstrate its historic connection with the long civil rights movement in Iowa. Modern-day historical markers commemorating the location of a former civil rights-related building, event, or organization do not contain historic significance and are not eligible for listing.

Criteria Consideration G: Properties Under the Fifty-year Threshold

Properties constructed or associated with events within fifty years of the preparation of a nomination generally are ineligible for listing in the National Register because not enough time has passed to gain historical perspective. Properties less than fifty years old generally must demonstrate exceptional significance. However, because this cover document includes contexts up through 1976, a property clearly and solidly fitting within the documented context period up to 1976 need not prove exceptional significance in order to be eligible. The development of this context (and the placement of the property squarely within that context) provides the objective historical perspective necessary to meet the criteria consideration, particularly if the property's period of significance starts earlier and runs into the less than fifty year period. A property with a period of significance just dating to an event in circa 1975 will have to be strong, and check off the Criterion Consideration box, but will not need to establish exceptional significance. A property with post-1976 significance, however, will have to make such a high

¹⁸⁶ No birthplaces or graves have been identified as of this writing. For graves, see Elisabeth Walton Potter and Beth M. Boland, "Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places," National Register Bulletin 41 (1992).

¹⁸⁷ See Potter and Boland, "Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places."

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threshold exceptional case for significance given the lack of current scholarly context. The struggle for equal rights continued throughout the century, so this criteria consideration is expected to commonly apply.¹⁸⁸

General Discussion of Property Types

Twentieth Century African American Civil Rights-related Resources fall into three intentionally broad property types. The property typology is based on associative qualities rather than physical characteristics because each resource derives significance from its connection to the events, people, and organizations integral to the long civil rights movement. Places Associated with Civil Rights Events encompass resources directly related to events that defined the movement in Iowa; subtypes classify the kinds of events. Places Associated with Significant People represent those resources primarily significant for their associations with specific Iowans who directly furthered the advancement of civil rights. Finally, Organizational Resources includes those places associated with institutions integral to the movement with subtypes clarifying the kinds of organizations. In rare instances, a resource may fit the definition of more than one property type. While each of these can be discussed in the individual nomination for the resource, the nominated property only needs to meet the registration requirements of one, as well as the general registration requirements discussed above. Appendix B lists known resources throughout the state that represent each property type.

The National Register classification system for resources includes buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts. Most eligible civil rights-related properties are expected to be individual buildings (e.g., houses, churches, community centers). However, some properties will be sites (e.g., parks), structures (e.g., bridges), and objects (e.g., statues). Few cohesive historic districts are expected; however, there may be eligible examples of commercial blocks, neighborhood sections, or other concentrated resources.

¹⁸⁸ See Marcella Sherfy and W. Ray Luce, "Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years," National Register Bulletin 22 (1979, rev.1998).

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I. Property Type: Places Associated with Civil Rights Events

The “long civil rights movement” involved a variety of specific events that defined both the character of inequality in Iowa and the Iowan response to inequality. This property type covers resources central to each of the contexts and events described in Section E. Civil Rights Events are those instances where inequality and discrimination were challenged, acknowledged, and/or overcome. This property type excludes places where violations went uncontested. While important to the discussion of the freedom struggle, these places do not sufficiently represent how the denial of civil rights was confronted. The subtypes below are interconnected, but each represents a distinct aspect of the movement.



Figure 24: Waterloo East High School where a prolonged protest in 1968 led to changes in curriculum and staffing. Source: Author, July 2019.

Significance

Resources listed under this property type will be eligible under Criterion A in the area of *Social History (Civil Rights)* and may be significant under Criterion A in the additional areas of *Black Ethnic Heritage, Education, Law, Politics/Government*, and/or *Commerce*. A property may also be significant in these areas under Criterion B if its direct association involves a person of outstanding importance to the history and context of the movement. These criteria and areas of significance are further discussed under each subtype.

Registration Requirements

To be classified as a Place Associated with Civil Rights Events under Criterion A, the resource must be associated directly with the challenge, acknowledgement, and/or advancement of civil rights in Iowa in the twentieth century. Segregated places and places of discriminatory practices are not automatically eligible. The fact of segregated space may be part of the history of the resource, but unless the place is in some way associated with challenging the status quo, it is not a civil rights resource. The Iowa Theatre in Cedar Rapids, for example, showcased Black performances in the 1930s, but Black audience members were expected to sit in the tenth row from the front on the main floor or in the upper balcony. Because no known lawsuits or protests occurred to challenge this practice, this place is not eligible for its association with the African American civil rights movement. Conversely, the Avon Theater in Burlington (no longer extant) also practiced spatial partitioning, which in 1938 was unsuccessfully challenged in a lawsuit by Gladys White. If the building survived, its National Register eligibility

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could have been evaluated under this cover document. Both theaters are examples of segregated space; however, only the latter is an example of a civil rights site.

To be eligible under B, the significant person must be documented to be central to the civil rights event represented in the resource and have had a demonstrated influence locally or statewide on civil rights. Further, the person associated with the resource must be demonstrated to have exceptional significance above others in similar situations or must be directly integral to a real change in the status quo, locally, statewide, or nationally. The property also must be the best, extant representation of the person's productive life.¹⁸⁹ Resources listed as Places Associated with Civil Rights Events will be eligible under Criterion A or Criteria A and B but not Criterion B alone.

The integrity thresholds of this property type correspond to the general discussion of integrity above.

Subtype: Place of Activism

Places of Activism encompass those locations where marches, protests, pickets, strikes, and boycotts occurred in direct response to injustice. These active responses helped effect change of the status quo and eliminate discriminatory practices; they also highlighted specific instances of injustice. These forms of challenge are most commonly associated with the post-World War II decades, specifically the historic contexts "Birth of the Civil Rights Movement in Iowa, 1941-1954," "The Modern Civil Rights Movement in Iowa, 1954 to 1964," and "The Second Revolution in Iowa, 1964 to 1976."



Figure 25: In 1970, a group of students led a sit-in at the University of Northern Iowa's President's House to advocate for an African American cultural center on campus. Source: Author, July 2019.

Significance

Along with *Social History (Civil Rights)*, Places of Activism may be additionally significant under Criterion A in the area of *Education* when activism sought to highlight or alter education practices or curricula, for example student sit-ins for the incorporation of Black history into the existing curriculum. Properties significant under Criterion A in the area of *Law* are those associated with activism that highlighted discriminatory practices that violated existing laws or sought to change laws to reduce discriminatory practices. Properties significant under

¹⁸⁹ For additional guidance on Criterion B, see Beth Grosvenor Boland, "Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons," National Register Bulletin 32 (n.d.).

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Criterion A in the area of *Politics/Government* include those associated with activism that highlighted discrimination in or condoned by governmental bodies, such as marches against police brutality.

Places of Activism include the Flynn Building in Des Moines where boycotts in 1948 helped to desegregate the Katz Drugstore; the LeClaire Park Bandshell and St. Anthony's Church in Davenport, both of which are associated with a 1963 march and rally to highlight the need for equal rights; East High School in Waterloo where, in 1968, students led a protracted and successful protest for Black history courses and Black administrators; and the University of Northern Iowa's President's House in Cedar Falls where a 1970 sit-in led to the establishment of an ethnic minorities cultural center.

Registration Requirements

To be eligible as a Place of Activism, a nominated resource must document that the goal advocated for or the practice protested is directly tied to equal access to education, housing, voting, public accommodations, employment, or due process. Places where alleged discrimination was protested but not proven do not effectively demonstrate that rights were violated. The places must have this documented significance, but they must also retain sufficient historic integrity to communicate its historic associations.

Subtype: Place of Litigation

Places of Litigation cover those resources at the center of court cases that sought to uphold state and federal laws. Litigation was one of the most common forms of protest, as civil rights leaders considered lawsuits to be the most effective way to advocate for equal treatment. While not always successful, lawsuits enabled plaintiffs, their lawyers, and their supporters to highlight where perceived injustices occurred in violation of the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1884 (as amended), the Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, the US Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965 (as amended), and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. On occasion, when African Americans were the defendants in lawsuits meant

to enforce de facto segregation, their lawyers filed demurrers stating that the lawsuit was unwarranted because the civil rights or liberties were being violated by the plaintiff. When successful, litigation often led to real change. Unsuccessful litigation set the foundation for future lawsuits that challenged the same discrimination, eventually



Figure 26: The Katz Drugstore in the Flynn Building, Des Moines, became the site of boycotts and the subject of lawsuits due to discriminatory practices beginning in 1948. Source: *Outside In*, 77.

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leading to change years later. The benefits of bringing lawsuits, successful or otherwise, were to set legal precedent, to allow the courts to continue to determine the intent of established laws, and to illuminate where injustices were technically not covered by established law.

Significance

Places of Litigation are associated with each of the historic contexts discussed in Section E. Eligible resources are significant additionally under Criterion A in the area of *Law* for their direct connection to the interpretation and enforcement of the Iowa and US codes of laws. This subtype is significant for the court cases and legal precedent that was set.

Examples of Places of Litigation include the Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake, where in 1951 a group of African Americans were denied entry because of their race, resulting in a 1953 lawsuit won by LaFaun Amos; the Woodfield Disco in Iowa City, which was the subject of a successful 1979 lawsuit determined that the plaintiffs had been denied entry into the place of amusement due to being Black. The Flynn Building in Des Moines is also associated with an Iowa Supreme Court ruling that eventually led to a policy of desegregation within the Katz Drugstore corporation.

Registration Requirements

To be listed as a Place of Litigation, the nominated resource must demonstrate its direct connection to a lawsuit or other legal proceedings that claimed that an action violated an established law. Documentation must explain which civil rights were violated and the laws under which the lawsuit was brought. Whether the legal action was successful or not, documentation of the resource must demonstrate how the lawsuit affected succeeding similar litigation or effected a real change to de facto discrimination and segregation. If a lawsuit was dropped or settled out of court, the nomination for the associated resource must successfully argue that a law was indeed violated, that the legal action raised awareness of the issue at the heart of the case, and that social change occurred as a result.

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StateSection number F Page 70**Subtype: Place of Response**

Places of Response are those resources linked to less direct and sometimes subversive reactions to injustice and racism. These resources represent cooperative means of activism, such as solidarity marches that supported the work of other civil rights organizers and organizations, honorary dedications that declared a group's stance against discrimination, and educational exercises that explained cultural norms or significant events. Cooperation also came in the forms of continued dialogue that eventually led to change, such as conversations between unions and employers that changed employment practices and those between civil rights organizations and institutions that eventuated the cessation of segregation practices.

These places also include those resources established to fulfill a need within the Black community due to segregation. This subtype differs from Places of Activism and Places of Litigation because the significant event is the outcome of the advocacy rather than the advocacy itself. This subtype is associated with the historic contexts "Rekindling Civil Rights in Iowa, 1900 to 1941," "Birth of the Civil Rights Movement in Iowa, 1941-1954," "The Modern Civil Rights Movement in Iowa, 1954 to 1964," and "The Second Revolution in Iowa, 1964 to 1976."

Places of Solidarity. The marches and sit-ins covered under this subtype involve those undertaken in response to a larger, national event such as the March on Washington and the assassination of Dr. King. These were less protests than they were ways to acknowledge, support, or show solidarity with the larger civil rights movement. These solidarity events communicated concerns of the Black community to larger audiences, becoming important tools to the civil rights movement. These places may be a single building in which a sit-in occurred, terminal points of a march, or significant sites along a march route. Similarly, commemorative monuments could have been erected by a group or community in response to an event or to make a statement in support of equality.

Properties defined as Places of Response may be significant under Criterion A in the area of *Education* when the response to racism involved educating a group or groups about the incident, its cause, effect, and how to learn from what happened. The goal of the response was to illuminate and alter the status quo through learning. Riceville Elementary School is a Place of Response for its association with the blue eye/brown eye exercise created by Jane Elliott after the assassination of Dr. King in 1968.



Figure 27: The Harris House, built in 1963, is a symbol of neighborhood integration in Cedar Rapids. Source: Brad Finch, February 2020.

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Additional examples of Iowa Places of Response include the Liberty Pole in Garnavillo, erected and dedicated in 1918 as a symbol of that city's dedication to racial equality;¹⁹⁰ the Iowa State Campanile in Ames, which was the starting point of a march from Ames to Des Moines in support of the March on Washington in 1963; the former Locust Street Bridge in Des Moines that was associated with a 1965 march to support the civil rights march in Selma, Alabama;¹⁹¹ and the Iowa State University Memorial Union, which was the location of a 1968 sit-in in response to the assassination of Dr. King.

Places of Integration. This subtype also represents those places or circumstances that were formerly unavailable to African Americans, including employment opportunities, campus amenities, and residential neighborhoods. The resources related to employment equality also often are associated with activism or litigation, but they are distinct as direct results of continued agitation for equal rights. Continued agitation includes years of diplomacy and conversations on the part of African American leaders to broaden employment opportunities for Black workers or negotiations between unions and employers. Collegiate resources where Black students were first admitted after formerly being excluded from participation are also included under this subtype. Most Iowa colleges and universities were theoretically open to Black students; however, Black students were not allowed to reside on campus, or if they were, they were segregated from white students, until well into the mid-twentieth century. The Iowa college experience differed greatly between Black and white students, with societal color lines drawn that allowed African American students to attend classes but generally not participate in extracurricular activities frequented or established by white students. One area where Iowa Blacks experienced less discrimination, however, was in sports. Schools recruited Black athletes for basketball, football, track, and although other teams would occasionally protest having to play against an African American, many games were played without problem. Similar to college integration, this subtype includes those places related to community integration. This includes a broad range of resources that are each related to formerly segregated spaces, such as public pools or beaches where racial use was segregated according to time of day but where advocacy resulted in unrestricted use by all races, or areas of a town or city, or a house within an area, formerly unavailable to African American residents due to real estate practices and community bias. The integration of any space within a municipality is a direct response to continued work of civil rights advocates and represents how communities changed throughout the twentieth century. After passage of the civil rights acts of the 1960s, integration became more common as municipalities sought to conform to the new laws.

Places of Integration in Iowa include the Rath Packing Plant in Waterloo where as the result of advocacy, especially by the United Packinghouse Workers of America, jobs formerly unavailable were opened to Blacks in the post-World War II era; Perkins Elementary School in Des Moines hired its first African American school teacher in 1946; Lincoln Elementary School in Sioux City where in 1955, the first Black teacher in the district was hired. Severance Hall and McCormick Gym at the University of Dubuque where Solomon "Sol" Butler is

¹⁹⁰ Recent images from Google indicates this flagpole is still within the city park.

¹⁹¹ This bridge was replaced between 2018-2020.

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believed to be the first African American student to live in an Iowa dormitory and the first Black athlete at the university, both occurring in 1915; Currier Hall at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, was the first campus dorm to integrate in 1946; and the University of Iowa's Field House is associated with the first Black basketball player in the Big 10 conference, in 1944. The Hotel Lamson in Waterloo where in 1948 the first African American club was allowed to hold its banquet, as the hotel formerly did not accept Black guests; the Percy and Lileah Harris House in Cedar Rapids where in 1962, the Black couple purchased a piece of property in a white neighborhood on which to construct their family home, an act initially protested by neighbors; the Archie Alexander House in Des Moines where in 1944 Alexander successfully challenged a discriminatory clause within the deed, allowing him to move into the white neighborhood.

Alternative Spaces. Segregated places were not just places where whites specified how Blacks were to act. Oftentimes, Black-imposed segregation occurred in direct response to "white space." Richard Weyeneth labels these "alternative spaces" and argues that these places represent the "most intriguing response to the imposed architecture of white supremacy."¹⁹² Black initiative, innovation, and need created places—both public and private—that helped African Americans claim spatial ownership within communities not wholly open to their use. Examples of these alternative spaces of response are diverse. Residential buildings like the 1920 Iowa Federation Home for Colored Girls and the 1940 Tate Arms Rooming House in Iowa City and the Martin House in Ames provided housing for African American students denied access to on-campus housing. Businesses catering specifically to African Americans met a crucial need for Black travelers seeking accommodations, meals, and personal services, and beginning in the 1930s, these types of places were advertised in the *Negro Motorist Green Book* compiled by Victor Hugo Green. These African American commercial responses to de facto segregation may be additionally significant under Criterion A in the area of *Commerce*.

Registration Requirements

An eligible Place of Response must demonstrate its direct reaction to civil rights-related events were non-confrontational protests—often years in the making—against injustice or supportive reactions to larger events. Documenting the history of firsts, such as the first Black students to live on a campus, helps to show the spread of equality throughout the state of Iowa. However, the significance of these properties must demonstrate that the events with which the resource is associated heralded change rather than simply followed a trend. The resource must be associated with a documented first instance of integration as a direct response of agitation on the part of the African American community. Nominations should document the impetus for integration, how the place was formerly unopen to Blacks, and how it affected community life afterwards. If the nominated resource existed to fill a need denied African Americans, it must demonstrate what rights were denied and how it met the need.

¹⁹² Weyeneth, "The Architecture of Racial Segregation," 34.

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II. Property Type: Places Associated with Significant People

The twentieth century African American civil rights movement involved a number of people who made significant contributions to the advancement of equal rights or to the historic context of civil rights in Iowa. This property type specifically encompasses properties that do not fall under the other two property types but are associated with significant civil rights leaders connected with one or more of the historic contexts in Section E. This property type differs from the other two in that rather than being the location of a civil rights-related event or organization, these properties derive their primary significance from being the best extant resources related to the people behind the movement.



Figure 28: The DeEdwin and Gladys White House, Burlington. This house may be eligible for its association with the Whites, local civil rights activists, who resided here beginning in circa 1957. Source: Author, July 2019.

Significance

Resources nominated under this property type will most often be the houses, churches, and places of employment where leaders lived, worshipped, and worked during their productive years of civil rights advocacy. These types of resources were where individuals answered phone calls and letters, planned and strategized advocacy efforts, and held informal meetings, all of which revolved around issues of civil rights. These efforts were part of what shaped these people and led to their leadership roles, either formally (presidents of societies) or informally (respected people in the community). Often these leaders are significant for the sustained efforts of their advocacy rather than a single event. The George and Ocie Cooper House represents a place best associated with these two leaders of the civil rights movement in Council Bluffs from the early 1940s until the early 1960s. George was a postal clerk for the railroad until he retired in 1954, and the couple considered their advocacy part of their service to the community. Their work was a sustained effort within the local community, and their house served as an informal headquarters for their work.

In some instances, the resources best associated with the persons during their productive lives have been demolished. In larger cities like Des Moines, demolitions occurred due to street projects and later urban renewal and highway projects that targeted areas with predominantly African American residents. James B. (J.B.) Morris advocated for the Black community of Iowa through his long editorship of the *Iowa Bystander*, from 1922 to 1971. Between these years, the *Bystander* offices were housed in the Chemical Building at 201 W. 7th Street, Des Moines and later a smaller building at the northeast corner of Locust Street and W. 2nd Avenue. Neither building

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remains; the Chemical Building gave way to a modern office block in the 1970s, and the block on which the Locust Street building was situated was redeveloped into apartments in the late 1970s-80s. Morris also was a lawyer, beginning his practice in Des Moines in 1919 and helping establish the National Bar Association in 1925. In 1928, he and his new wife moved to the house at 955 17th Street within a historically Black area of Des Moines, residing there for the next several decades. This house no longer exists, demolished for the construction of the mid-century Edmunds School. Perhaps the only extant building associated with Morris is the house at 1064 14th Street, in which he lived from 1920 to 1927. Although not the resource best associated with his productive life, it is a tangible resource that could enable the sharing of the impact of this significant person.¹⁹³ A similar example is Gertrude Rush, the first African American woman lawyer in Iowa and a cofounder of the National Bar Association. During her most active years, Mrs. Rush resided at 1547 20th Street in Des Moines, between circa 1909 and circa 1938; this house no longer stands due to the construction of Keosauqua Way in the 1930s. From 1943 to 1962, she lived at 1160 13th Street, which still stands. Although an extant resource associated with her, this house is not the best extant resource with Mrs. Rush. Between 1939 and 1943, she had an office in the Hawkeye Insurance Building in downtown Des Moines. Because this is where she practiced law, this may be the best resource associated with her productive life.¹⁹⁴

Resources nominated under this property type will be significant under Criterion B in the area of *Social History (Civil Rights)*. Additional areas of significance also may include *Black Ethnic Heritage* for the advocacy of African American rights, *Education* for people who made significant contributions in the field of education for Blacks, *Law* for lawyers who advocated on behalf of plaintiffs and defendants, and *Politics/Government* for those people who made significant advancements for Blacks within governmental agencies or within the political process. The people associated with these resources also may be significant in other areas associated with their careers.

Registration Requirements

For a property to be listed as a Place Associated with a Significant Person(s), it must be documented to be directly associated with a person of exceptional importance to the long civil rights movement within an Iowa community or within the State of Iowa. While national leaders visited the state, the places they visited or stayed are not considered eligible for that association alone. The accomplishments of the individuals must be compared to and stand out from others who made similar contributions within their sphere of influence. Smaller towns may have only one or two individuals of exceptional significance; whereas, larger cities will have a higher proportion of influencers, each of whom may be unique within the movement. The property should be the best extant resource associated with the person's productive life. Research and documentation of all places associated with the person is necessary to understand how the nominated building best represents the person. The property also must retain

¹⁹³ This house was in poor condition when surveyed in July 2019 and may not retain sufficient integrity to be listed.

¹⁹⁴ The Hawkeye Building was listed in the National Register in 1986. This nomination could be amended to include an area and period of significance related to Mrs. Rush.

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sufficient historic integrity, described under the general requirements, from the time period associated with the person; interior and exterior alterations made to the property will have taken place during the period of time the place was associated with the person or be minor enough to allow the place to be discernible from its period of significance.

III. Property Type: Organizational Resources

Similar to the people significant to the long civil rights movement, organizations throughout Iowa supported the communities, the mission, and the events of the movement. Organizational Resources include those institutions with missions central to the movement. Churches hosted local NAACP meetings; settlement houses and later community centers provided critical services to communities; colleges provided campus cultural centers as gathering and educational spaces; and civil rights-related organizational headquarters directly housed the administrative or gathering space for advocacy meetings. This property type represents significant gathering spaces critical to the civil rights movement.



Figure 29: The Sanford Center in Sioux City, built in 1951, continues to be a center of the black community. Source: Author, July 2019.

Resources listed under this property type will be eligible under Criterion A in the areas of *Social History (Civil Rights)* and *Black Ethnic Heritage*. A property may also be significant in these areas under Criterion B if its direct association involves a person of outstanding importance to the history and context of the movement.

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StateSection number F Page 76**Subtype: Churches**

Churches are an integral component of many African American communities.¹⁹⁵ Historically they provided spiritual guidance, but perhaps most importantly, they provided a place for free fellowship with other African Americans. They were also places that offered leadership positions to people who otherwise were kept from leading the community in other ways. During the long civil rights movement, churches provided safe places to gather to discuss community advocacy, to host civil rights activists, and to hold formal meetings of civil rights organizations. Church pastors and congregants also impacted the advocacy for civil rights through their work in the community-at-large. Churches are associated with each of the historic contexts discussed in Section E. The resources nominated as this property type are significant for their direct associations with the civil rights movement within their communities.



Figure 30: Waterloo AME Church, 1914, was home to Rev. I.W. Bess and hosted NAACP meetings. Source: Author, July 2019.

Registration Requirements

For a church building to be listed as an Organizational Resource, documentation must indicate that the church building is directly associated with a significant civil rights-related meeting or event, such as a statewide NAACP conference or inaugural meetings of a citywide task force, or with sustained civil rights activities, such as being the main location of local NAACP meetings. Documentation must determine the impact of the civil rights association within community. While churches are significant to the larger African American community, that connection alone is not sufficient to be listed as a civil rights-related resource. The integrity thresholds outlined in general requirements apply here. Some of the most common alterations to churches includes the replacement or covering of doors and windows, often as protective measures, and the application of secondary siding, often as a way to inexpensively update the building. These alterations alone should be compared to the ability of the building to continue to communicate its historic function and the intactness of the interior, whose design and materials may date to the period of significance.

¹⁹⁵ See Hazel Smith, "The Negro Church in Iowa," Master's thesis, (Iowa City, University of Iowa, 1926).

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StateSection number F Page 77**Subtype: Community Centers**

Similar to churches, African American community centers in Iowa provided both a place for Black residents to freely gather and public services to the Black community. These centers grew almost organically within communities after influxes of Black migrants arrived looking for employment opportunities. Upper floors in commercial buildings gave way to larger buildings, which then gave way to purpose-built structures to accommodate growing populations and programming available. Among the services provided were childcare for working parents, job placement for unemployed workers, housing



Figure 31: The Willkie House in Des Moines was constructed in 1951. Source: Author, July 2019.

obtainment for new residents to the town, and educational endeavors both for children and parents. As centers of the Black community, these buildings also provided space for organizational gatherings such as NAACP meetings and social clubs. These places are significant for their connection to the Black community, for providing services not otherwise available to Black residents, and for association with civil rights organizational meetings. Examples of these places may be associated with one or more of the historic contexts within Section E.

An interesting aspect of their significance is that while they developed because of the African American community in a town, the missions of these places centered around interracial accessibility; they intentionally and overtly welcomed all races to participate in services and gatherings offered, in stark contrast to the exclusionary practices seen in some parts of predominantly white societies. Places within towns may not have been labeled "whites only," but the social custom indicated that was the case. The missions of Black community centers established in Iowa emphatically state that while they are places for African Americans, they are also for all people to come together. There was intentional inclusion. Extant examples of Community Centers in Iowa include the 1951 Sanford Center in Sioux City and the 1951 Willkie House in Des Moines. Both of these places are purpose-built and replaced earlier buildings in their respective cities.

Registration Requirements

For a community center to be considered eligible under this subtype it must have been established for the African American community of a specific town. Documentation must determine the types of services available throughout the decades and how they were filling needs not provided elsewhere. The community center does not still need to be active nor the building still used as one; buildings related to earlier iterations of the community center still may be considered eligible for their connections with earlier historic contexts, showing the physical

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evolution of the community center. Integrity thresholds described in the general requirements are applicable to this subtype.

Subtype: Campus Cultural Centers

Campus cultural centers are a specific subtype associated with “The Second Revolution in Iowa, 1964-1976.” These centers, also commonly known as Black Student Unions, are tied to the Black campus movement and began forming in the late 1960s at historically white colleges and universities for a variety of reasons. Some formed as a way to advocate for and raise awareness of the Black students on campuses where they felt overlooked and marginalized. Others formed to educate their fellow non-Black students about Black culture to reduce racism and prejudice. These centers often came about because of explicit demands by Black students. The Black Student Unions met in dedicated buildings or within rooms



Figure 32: The first Ethnic Minorities Cultural and Educational Center at the University of Northern Iowa. Source: Author, July 2019.

in student unions or other campus buildings. Although controversial at first, Black Student Unions have become ubiquitous on campuses throughout the country from small colleges to larger universities.

Iowa examples of Campus Cultural Centers include the Afro-American Cultural House at the University of Iowa, established in 1968; the Ethnic Minorities Cultural and Educational Center at the University of Northern Iowa, established in 1970, and Iowa State University’s Black Cultural Center also established in 1970.

Registration Requirements

To be listed as a Campus Cultural Center, the nominated resource must have been established as the place of the first dedicated cultural center or Black student union on campus. Most examples will be standalone buildings that formerly housed other functions. The establishment of the union will have resulted directly from campus agitation instead of simply following the trend to have a cultural center. Documentation of the significance of the resource must explain what needs of the Black students were met by or what goals the union sought to meet through its formation at the specific campus. The nominated building does not need to currently house the cultural center as some have moved into different buildings, nor does the building need to be on the campus itself. Integrity thresholds described in the general requirements are applicable to this subtype.

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StateSection number F Page 79**Subtype: Civil Rights-related Organizations**

This subtype most overtly represents the long civil rights movement in that it covers those resources associated with organizations that formed for the purpose of advocating for equal rights or whose core mission included forms of advocacy. This property type is associated with each of the historic contexts outlined in Section E.

Established in 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was the largest advocacy group in the state; the first branch in Iowa formed in 1915 and other cities followed suit, and a statewide entity oversaw each smaller branch. In the 1960s during the Black power movement, the Black Panthers briefly

formed a branch in Des Moines. Cities with larger Black populations also saw the formation of citywide organizations dedicated to specific advocacy initiatives such as the Commission on Interracial Cooperation in Des Moines (1919), the Interfaith Interracial in Clinton (1963), and the Catholic Interracial Council in Davenport (1960s), and the Congress of Racial Equality in Waterloo (1960s), among others.

In the post-World War II years, city governments allowed the formation of citizen commissions to investigate human rights and civil rights violations within their jurisdictions. Some began as temporary taskforces that became permanent entities, and the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965 initiated the formation of the statewide commission on human rights. Resources associated with these governmental entities would be additionally significant under Criterion A in the area of *Politics/Government*.

Other entities formed for purposes other than exclusive civil rights advocacy but shared similarities with civil rights organizations. The National Bar Association formed as a professional organization for Black attorneys, but its members often represented clients in cases involving discrimination or civil rights violations. The United Packinghouse Workers of America union formed to advocate for workers' rights; however, the union was dedicated to racial inclusion, advocating for their Black members to receive equal pay and equal access to employment opportunities. The union also extended their advocacy to supporting its members against discrimination outside of the workplace, filing suit on behalf of members who were denied access to public accommodations because of their race.



Figure 33: The United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA) Hall in Waterloo is associated with the union that advocated for racial equality. Source: Author, July 2019.

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Known Civil Rights-related Organizations resources include the UPWA Union Hall in Waterloo, built in 1954; the Black Panther Headquarters in Des Moines, which is no longer standing; and the 1918 St. Paul AME Church, also in Des Moines, which was where the National Bar Association formed in 1925.

Registration Requirements

Resources eligible as a Civil Rights-related Organization must be associated with an established city- or statewide entity whose purpose included advocacy. Many of the organizations did not have established headquarters in dedicated buildings, but they may have had an office within another building. A significant connection between the building and the organization must be demonstrated. Integrity thresholds described in the general requirements are applicable to this subtype.

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G. GEOGRAPHIC DATA

This multiple property cover document applies to all ninety-nine counties in the state of Iowa. Some counties currently have no known civil rights-related resources while others like, Polk and Black Hawk, contain the largest number of known resources. Population densities and settlement patterns directly affect the geographic distribution of extant resources and which historic contexts apply to the resources. Population and settlement patterns in Iowa generally followed established patterns throughout the country where, especially after the Reconstruction Era, African Americans overwhelmingly concentrated in urban centers rather than rural areas and small towns.

Population

The African American population of Iowa has historically represented a small percentage of the total state population. Federal decennial census records show that Blacks comprised less than 1 percent of the population until 1970. The number of Black Iowans steadily increased between 1840 (188) and 1920 (19,005) before dropping in the interwar decades, reaching 16,694 in 1940. From 1950 through the end of the twentieth century, the population increased (*Table 1*) reaching over 2 percent for the first time in 2000. The population numbers correspond with national migration patterns where large numbers of African Americans moved north during the Reconstruction Era following the Civil War, during the Great Migration around World War I, and in the prosperous years after World War II. In 1950, African Americans comprised over 1 percent of the population of seven Iowa counties: Polk (3.8), Lee (2.8), Black Hawk (2.7), Scott (1.2), Woodbury (1.2), Appanoose (1.1), and Wapello (1). Pottawattamie had 0.9 percent and Linn had 0.8 percent, proportionate to the overall Black population in the state. Conversely, in 1950, thirty-six counties had no recorded Black residents. Population numbers in Iowa in the 1960s show that nearly three quarters of the state's Black population lived in four cities: Des Moines (10,507), Waterloo (4,765), Sioux City (1,278), and Cedar Rapids (1,200).¹⁹⁶ Des Moines alone had 40 percent of the state's African American population in 1967; Des Moines and Waterloo together contained 60 percent.¹⁹⁷

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Total Population</i> | <i>African American Population</i> | <i>% of total (approx.)</i> |
|-------------|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1840 | 43,112 | 188 | 0.4 |
| 1850 | 192,214 | 333 | 0.2 |
| 1860 | 674,913 | 1,069 | 0.2 |
| 1870 | 1,194,020 | 5,762 | 0.5 |
| 1880 | 1,624,615 | 9,516 | 0.6 |
| 1890 | 1,912,297 | 10,685 | 0.6 |
| 1900 | 2,231,853 | 12,693 | 0.6 |
| 1910 | 2,224,771 | 14,973 | 0.7 |
| 1920 | 2,404,021 | 19,005 | 0.8 |
| 1930 | 2,470,939 | 17,380 | 0.7 |
| 1940 | 2,538,268 | 16,694 | 0.7 |
| 1950 | 2,621,073 | 19,692 | 0.8 |
| 1960 | 2,757,537 | 25,354 | 0.9 |
| 1970 | 2,824,376 | 32,596 | 1.2 |
| 1980 | 2,913,808 | 41,700 | 1.4 |
| 1990 | 2,776,755 | 48,090 | 1.7 |
| 2000 | 2,926,324 | 61,853 | 2.1 |

Table 1: African American population in Iowa per US Federal Decennial Records.

¹⁹⁶ Council Bluffs and Davenport also had high numbers but were tabulated with their respective metropolitan areas, Omaha, Nebraska and Moline and Rock Island, Illinois. Petersen, "Twenty Years After," 95.

¹⁹⁷ Petersen, "Twenty Years After," 92-95.

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Settlement Patterns

Between the Civil War and World War I, Bergmann notes that Blacks settled in river towns on the east and west borders of the state, within agricultural communities along the southern border, and “a parallelogram of counties running in a southeasterly direction from Polk County.”¹⁹⁸ By the 1880s, the Black populations of agricultural areas began to decrease as the children of the settlers moved into urban centers for better employment opportunities; this trend continued throughout the succeeding decades.¹⁹⁹ Mississippi River counties—Lee, Des Moines, Scott, Clinton—saw an increase of African Americans beginning in the 1880s due to the rising industries of towns such as Keokuk, Fort Madison (both in Lee County), Burlington (Des Moines County), and Davenport (Scott County). Dubuque County appears to be an exception. The town of Dubuque lost Black residents after the Civil War because the lead mines closed and river traffic decreased, two major industries in which Black workers were employed. The Missouri River towns of Council Bluffs (Pottawattamie County) and Sioux City (Woodbury County) drew workers during the Reconstruction Era. Railroad construction initially attracted Black laborers to Council Bluffs, and manufacturing at the turn of the century continued to attract Black residents. In Sioux City, African Americans primarily worked in riverboat, railroad, and construction industries; the decades surrounding the turn of the century saw an economic decline, and the Black population decreased until the meatpacking industry surged in town around World War I. Southern Iowa counties such as Mahaska, Monroe, Wapello, Lucas, and Appanoose attracted Black immigrants to work in the coalmining industry, and the unincorporated towns of Muchakinock (Mahaska County) and especially Buxton (Monroe County) were predominantly African American settlements.²⁰⁰

African Americans continued to concentrate in urban areas following World War I. Although Blacks resided in towns throughout the state, central and southern Iowa contained larger populations due to the tendency of African Americans to settle in larger cities. This is due primarily to the type and availability of employment as more white men left jobs to serve in the war. Des Moines (Polk County) and Cedar Rapids (Linn County) especially saw a significant increase in Black residents due to the war. After the war, industry waned, negatively affecting prices, profits, and wages. Blacks competed with whites for jobs, and most frequently were left unemployed. Several thousand African Americans left Iowa by 1940, looking for work elsewhere.²⁰¹ However, after World War II, Blacks returned to Iowa to work in the prosperous industries related especially to meatpacking and the railroad. By the 1960s, African American populations were firmly established in Iowa, and the most populated areas continued to grow as families also became established through succeeding generations.

¹⁹⁸ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 33-34.

¹⁹⁹ In Keosauqua (Van Buren County), for instance, the African American population steadily fell from more than one hundred people in 1873 to three small families in 1938. Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 37.

²⁰⁰ Bergmann, *The Negro in Iowa*, 37-41.

²⁰¹ Petersen, “Twenty Years After,” 95.

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The distribution of Black residents within individual Iowa municipalities varied. Towns which had smaller numbers of African Americans most often saw these residents settle throughout the town. Cools notes that in 1918, the Black population in Iowa City equaled twelve families, with fewer than fifty total persons, and no more than two Black families lived on the same street.²⁰² Municipalities with higher percentages of African Americans tended to have at least one section where Black residents concentrated. Employment opportunities were the primary reason for larger Black populations, and most often, African Americans concentrated within a close proximity to a town's major industries. In Waterloo, Blacks settled in a triangular area on the east side of town immediately adjacent to the Illinois Central Railroad tracks. There were two sections of Cedar Rapids that had higher concentrations of Black residents; the largest of the two was Oak Hill, located within walking distance of the packinghouses. Des Moines had a few disbursed pockets with the largest concentration of African Americans occurring west of downtown and centered on 9th and Center streets.²⁰³ The pattern of settlement within individual communities may affect where some extant civil rights-related resources will be found.

²⁰² Cools, "The Negro in Typical Communities of Iowa," 126. Students attending the University of Iowa were not counted.

²⁰³ Cools, "The Negro in Typical Communities of Iowa," 11-13, 95-96.

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H. METHODOLOGY

In 2016, the US Congress approved funding for an African American Civil Rights Grants Program through the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service. The grants support a variety of programs, including surveys, documentation, oral histories, and conservation related to the preservation, interpretation, and education of significant places throughout the United States that are associated with the twentieth century struggle for equal rights for African Americans. The Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), a part of the State Historical Society of Iowa, received an African American Civil Rights Grant in 2018 to support a statewide survey of sites and the preparation of a historic context. Paula Mohr, SHPO architectural historian and project director, formed a steering committee of ten individuals with expertise in African American civil rights history, especially as related to the state of Iowa. In March 2019, the Iowa SHPO contracted with Rosin Preservation to survey at least twenty-four sites and to prepare this historic context document.

The project began with a statewide intensive level survey of sites associated with significant people and events of the twentieth century African American struggle for civil rights. The goals of the survey were:

- 1) Identify at least twenty-four extant places not already listed in the National Register
- 2) Select sites based on a variety of themes
- 3) Visit places that are geographically distributed throughout Iowa
- 4) Determine the potential National Register eligibility of places based on historic significance and integrity
- 5) Produce individual Iowa Site Inventory Forms (ISIF) for each place

With the assistance of the steering committee, an initial list of ninety potential properties was compiled. These places were suggested through personal experience, word-of-mouth by family or fellow community members, and common knowledge within the study of African American history. Rosin Preservation identified additional resources through inquiry to the ninety Certified Local Governments, consultation with some members of the steering committee, and initial perusal of two invaluable publications, *Outside In: African-American History in Iowa* and *Iowa's Black Legacy*. Newspapers and city directories also helped locate places associated with significant people. Google Streetview and county assessor records provided initial findings on existence, condition, and integrity, and previous ISIFs helped determine whether some sites merited additional survey.

With the consultation of SHPO, Rosin Preservation selected thirty-two properties to survey, five of which were reconnaissance-level. Properties to survey involved one city park, one country club, one union hall, three university buildings, four public schools, five community centers, six churches, and eleven houses. These properties represent themes including but not limited to education, employment equality, fair housing practices, advocacy, and significant people. Counties selected for site work encompassed two along the Missouri River (Pottawattamie, Woodbury), four along the Mississippi River in (Clinton, Dubuque, Des Moines, Scott), two in

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northern Iowa (Cerro Gordo, Howard), and six in central-east central Iowa (Black Hawk, Linn, Mahaska, Marshall, Polk, Story). Although sites were suggested in Johnson County, Iowa City had received an African American Civil Rights Grant in 2016 to nominate and interpret two properties.

Prior to the field work, Rosin Preservation contacted city libraries, county historical societies, and local museums to determine if these repositories contained pertinent information about selected sites, significant people, or local civil rights. To gain access into the sites, Rosin Preservation also attempted to contact various representatives of the selected sites. School districts and university representatives provided access to most of their buildings; half of the community centers allowed access; and one church was open to visitors. Houses were also difficult to visit; however, one homeowner was amenable, and one realtor provided access to a house that was recently sold.

The field survey took place July 15 through 19, 2019. All thirty-two properties were visited. Field notes included documenting addresses, site features, overall building materials, forms, styles, and location/setting information. Digital photographs were taken at each site. Where access to the property was not granted, photographs were taken from public rights-of-way;²⁰⁴ interior photographs were also taken where access was granted. In a few instances, access to the exterior was granted and interior photographs were supplied by the owner or owner representatives. Additionally, SHPO staff was able to visit the interior of at least two properties and provide photographs; recent online real estate listings for three houses provided evidence of interior integrity at least at the time of sale.

Staff at archives, libraries, and repositories assisted in initial research efforts while surveyors were in town, often having vertical files, archived material, and books already pulled, or sending information they had found. Repositories visited included the Clinton Public Library, Davenport Public Library, Special Collections, Des Moines Public Library Central Branch, Grout Museum Archives (Waterloo), Marshalltown Public Library, Oskaloosa Public Library, Sioux City Public Museum Archives, Ushers Ferry Historic Village (Cedar Rapids). Repositories contacted but not visited who supplied specific information or avenues of research were the Council Bluffs Public Library Special Collections, University of Dubuque Charles C. Myers Library University Archives, University of Northern Iowa Rod Library Special Collections and University Archives, and the Waterloo Public Library. Additional repositories contacted included the African American Museum of Iowa (Cedar Rapids) and Riceville Public Library. Although not heavily relied upon in this document, oral histories such as those housed and the African American Museum of Iowa, will likely inform research of individual properties nominated under this historic context.

Prior to the start of the project, SHPO had gathered relevant research which was shared with Rosin Preservation. Much of the information shared came from the State Archives of the State Historical Society of Iowa and files within the SHPO. Records shared with Rosin Preservation included: National Association for the Advancement

²⁰⁴ Only one site owner denied permission for interior and exterior photographs.

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of Colored People records for individual cities as well as the state conference; newspaper clippings; Iowa Green Book analyses; photographs; journal articles from *The Annals of Iowa* and *The Palimpsest*; redline maps of various Iowa cities; National Register nominations for civil rights-related resources in Iowa; and copies of the *Iowa Bystander* not already digitized.

The initial research conducted for the survey fed into and was supplemented by additional research for the preparation of this historic context. Both *The Annals of Iowa* and *The Palimpsest* supplied invaluable articles about African American history in Iowa and specifically civil rights. Theses and dissertations from Iowa universities such as Iowa State University and the University of Iowa also provided contextual information. *Outside In* provided good foundational material for this document, and the National Historic Landmark study *Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites* provided the organizational framework as well as overarching themes related to defining civil rights sites. Previously listed multiple property submissions supplied helpful bibliographic information. Of particular assistance were the 2004 “The Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham, Alabama, 1933-1979” and the 2018 “Twentieth Century African American Civil Rights Movement in Ohio.”²⁰⁵

Future Initiatives

As of the of this writing, the historic contexts within this document extend only through 1976. However, the title of this cover document covers the twentieth century. As mentioned in Section E, civil rights violations did not automatically end in 1976. The character of post-1976 civil rights advocacy could be developed into an additional historic context(s). There also may be areas related to African American civil rights in Iowa that merit deeper analysis than is provided in this document. One area is the impact of the New Deal on African Americans in Iowa, specifically related to employment opportunities.

A few properties associated with the long civil rights movement are already listed in the National Register (Appendix B). With a couple of exceptions, the nominations do not discuss or mention the association, which may have occurred within fifty years of the listing. Nominations for these properties should be amended with additional documentation that sheds light on this important aspect of the history of the property. In December 2019, for instance, a proposed amendment to the Rath Administration Building in Waterloo was submitted to SHPO to discuss the importance of the civil rights history of the site.²⁰⁶ Additional properties that merit amendments include the Hawkeye Building and the Archie Alexander House both in Des Moines.

Similarly, nominations for properties significant for reasons distinct from civil rights may retain, within their histories, memories of discrimination and segregation. Efforts to document the history of a property should at

²⁰⁵ As of writing, the Ohio MPS has not been listed in the National Register.

²⁰⁶ Thomas R. Zahn & Associates to Laura Sadowsky, December 2019, on file with Iowa SHPO.

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least acknowledge this aspect of its history. As previously discussed, public accommodations did not always treat African Americans as equal to whites, and while this discrimination may not have been protested, documenting the discrimination will illuminate how pervasive the practice was in Iowa to help give context to the importance of the struggle. Conversely, noting if a place did not practice segregation or discrimination would also contextualize the civil rights movement in Iowa.

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Sioux City Sunday Journal

Unionist and Public Forum, Sioux City 7/14/1949, 9/1/1949, 1/26/1950 and other articles pertaining to civil rights struggle in Sioux City. [This is not digitized]

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- Figure 02. Map of Iowa, showing the Indian cession lands; the Black Hawk Purchase is outlined in black. Base map source: Royce, Charles C, and Cyrus Thomas. Iowa 1. *Indian land cessions in the United States*. 1899. Image. <https://www.loc.gov/item/13023487/>
- Figure 03. Simplified map of the Underground Railroad system in Iowa. Source: Schwieder, et al., *Iowa Past to Present*, 96.

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- Figure 09. World War I military inductees outside the Ottumwa Public Library. Source: Silag, et al, *Outside In*, 110.
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- Figure 17. Fort Madison March for Freedom, November 1963. Source: African American Museum of Iowa, Cedar Rapids.
- Figure 18. Willie Glanton (left) and James Jackson (right), the first African Americans elected to the Iowa state legislature. Source: Silag, et al, *Outside In*, 348.
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- Figure 21. Three of the students involved in the sit-in at President Maucker's home in 1970. Source: Lang and Pendergraft, Volume II, 271.
- Figure 22. Jane Elliott, teaching students. "Riceville class to be on ABC," *The [Mason City] Globe-Gazette* (8 May 1970): 9.

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APPENDIX A. Selected Timeline of African American Civil Rights in Iowa and the United States²⁰⁷

| YEAR | MILESTONE |
|------|---|
| 1838 | The US Congress creates Iowa Territory |
| 1839 | The Iowa Territorial Supreme Court decides the <i>Case of Ralph</i> , which allowed a slave residing in the territory to be free. The court establishes an anti-slavery precedent for the territory, then state. |
| 1846 | Iowa becomes the twenty-ninth state. The state constitution banned slavery and involuntary servitude. |
| 1850 | The US Congress passes the Fugitive Slave Act, requiring enslaved people to be returned to their owners even if residing within a free state. |
| 1851 | The state of Iowa eliminated its territorial law of 1839 that banned interracial marriages, becoming the third state in the Union to revoke anti-miscegenation laws. Its neighboring states followed: Illinois (1874), South Dakota (1957), Nebraska (1963), and Missouri (1967). |
| 1863 | 1 st Colored Regiment of Iowa (US 60 th Colored Troops) is organized. |
| 1865 | The Thirteenth Amendment, which officially eliminated slavery in the United States, is ratified. |
| 1868 | The Fourteenth Amendment, which extended citizenship rights to all persons born or naturalized in the United States, is ratified. The first article is known as the “equal protections” article and becomes a frequent subject in civil rights litigation. |
| 1868 | <i>Clark v. The Board of Directors</i> determines that segregation in schools is unconstitutional |
| 1868 | Iowa Constitution extended suffrage to African American males |
| 1870 | The Fifteenth Amendment, which grants voting rights to all male citizens, is ratified. |
| 1879 | The University of Iowa (established in 1855) grants its first law degree to an African American |
| 1884 | General Assembly passes the Iowa Civil Rights Act, 20 G.A., Ch. 105 |
| 1896 | US Supreme Court decides <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> , upholding segregation and establishing the doctrine of “separate but equal” |
| 1904 | George Edwin Taylor becomes first African American to run for president |
| 1909 | National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) forms |
| 1915 | The first Iowa chapter of the NAACP forms in Des Moines |
| 1915 | University of Dubuque becomes first Iowa University to integrate dorms when Sol Butler moves into Severance Hall |
| 1917 | Fort Des Moines 117 th Provisional Army Officer Training School established |
| 1924 | Anti-Mask Laws incorporated into the state code, effectively banning the Ku Klux Klan |
| 1925 | Negro (National) Bar Association established by five Iowa lawyers |
| 1948 | Edna Griffin, John Bibbs and Leonard Hudson filed suit against Katz Drugstore, won but drugstore refused to comply |
| 1949 | Iowa Supreme Court upheld original decision in Katz case in an appeal |
| 1954 | <i>Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka</i> declares “separate but equal” to be unconstitutional |
| 1955 | Rosa Parks bus boycott stretched into 1956 |
| 1957 | Desegregation of Little Rock High School |
| 1963 | March on Washington (August) |
| 1963 | Des Moines March following the bombing of 16th St. Baptist Church in Birmingham (September) |

²⁰⁷ The Human Rights Department of the City of Dubuque, Iowa, prepared a timeline of important civil rights milestones in the state, including those associated with African American civil rights. This document, “A Timeline of Iowa’s Civil Rights History,” is available on the city’s website <https://www.cityofdubuque.org/DocumentCenter/View/1178/History-of-Iowa-Civil-Rights>

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| | |
|------|---|
| 1964 | US Civil Rights Act passed by Congress |
| 1965 | Selma to Montgomery March (Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama) |
| 1965 | General Assembly passes the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965 |
| 1965 | US Voting Rights Act passes |
| 1966 | Good Park Disturbance, Des Moines |
| 1966 | Des Moines Black Panther Party established |
| 1968 | Martin Luther King, Jr. assassination |
| 1968 | Riceville schoolteacher Jane Elliott creates “Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes” experiment following Martin Luther King, Jr.’s assassination to explain discrimination to her third graders |
| 1968 | Waterloo sit-in and protests |

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APPENDIX B. Known resources associated with Twentieth Century African American Civil Rights in Iowa. This list is not exhaustive; it includes properties suggested or mentioned as potential sites to survey. Inclusion on this list does not mean the property has been determined eligible for the National Register.

Key:

Historic Contexts: (I)-An Emerging Cause in Iowa; (II)-Rekindling Civil Rights in Iowa; (III)-Birth of the Civil Rights Movement in Iowa; (IV)-The Modern Civil Rights Movement; (V)-The Second Revolution in Iowa.

Notes: D=Demolished; NE=Determined to be ineligible for NRHP; NRHP=already listed in the National Register of Historic Places; S=Surveyed in 2019 for this project

| <i>Resource</i> | <i>Address</i> | <i>P.O.S.</i> | <i>Property Type or Sub-type</i> | <i>Historic Context</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
|---|------------------------------|---------------|--|-------------------------|--------------|
| APPANOOSE COUNTY (Centerville) | | | | | |
| Second Baptist Church ²⁰⁸ | 422 S. 18 th St. | 1902-1949 | Church | I to III | NRHP |
| BLACK HAWK COUNTY (Cedar Falls) | | | | | |
| UNI President's House | UNI Campus, 2501 College St. | 1970 | Place of Activism | V | S |
| UNI Ethnic Minorities Cultural and Educational Center | UNI Campus, 2401 College St. | 1970 | Campus Cultural Center | V | S |
| BLACK HAWK COUNTY (Waterloo) | | | | | |
| East High School | 214 High St. | 1968 | Place of Activism | V | S |
| Furgerson House | 600 Cottage St. | ca.1944-1973 | Place Associated with Significant People | III to V | S |
| Grant Elementary School | 1224 Mobile St. | ca.1967-1970 | Place of Activism | V | D |
| Hotel Lamson | 201 W. 5 th St. | 1948 | Place of Response | III | NRHP |
| Jesse Cosby Center | 1112 Mobile St. | 1965-1970 | Community Center | V | S |
| Rath Packing Plant (Administration Building) ²⁰⁹ | 1515 E. Sycamore St. | 1925-1958 | Place of Response | III, IV | NRHP |
| UPWA Union Hall | 1651 E. Sycamore St. | 1954-1968 | Civil Rights-related Organization | IV, V | S |
| Waterloo AME Church | 101 Albany St. | 1914-1916 | Place Associated with a Significant Person | II | S |

²⁰⁸ This church is listed for its association with Black Ethnic Heritage of Centerville. Centerville had a local branch of the NAACP, but there is no mention of the congregation's support of the civil right movements in the nomination.

²⁰⁹ The Rath Administration Building is listed for its association with industry and commerce. The nomination does not mention the struggle for equal employment opportunities within the plant.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Twentieth Century African American Civil Rights-related Resources in Iowa
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Iowa
State

Section number APPENDICES Page 101

| <i>Resource</i> | <i>Address</i> | <i>P.O.S.</i> | <i>Property Type</i> | <i>Historic Context</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
|--|--|-----------------|--|-------------------------|--------------|
| CERRO GORDO COUNTY (Clear Lake) | | | | | |
| Surf Ballroom ²¹⁰ | 4620 N. Shore Dr. | 1948-1961 | Place of Litigation | III | NRHP |
| CERRO GORDO COUNTY (Mason City) | | | | | |
| Amos House | 510 S Van Buren | ca.1951-1953 | Place of Response | III | S |
| CLAYTON COUNTY (Garnaville) | | | | | |
| Liberty Pole | City Park | 1918 | Place of Response | II | |
| CLINTON COUNTY (Clinton) | | | | | |
| Bethel AME Church | 303 S. 3 rd St. | ca.1885-1970 | Church | I to V | S |
| Lula Wallace House | 564 1 st Ave., N | ca.1942-ca.1960 | Place Associated with Significant People | III, IV | S |
| Second Baptist Church | 438 4 th Ave., N | 1940s-1960s | Church | III, IV | S, NE |
| DES MOINES COUNTY (Burlington) | | | | | |
| First Evangelical and Reformed Church ²¹¹ | 603 Columbia | 1948 | Church | III | NRHP |
| White House | 409 S. 4 th St. | ca.1957-1970 | Place Associated with Significant People | IV, V | S |
| DUBUQUE COUNTY (Dubuque) | | | | | |
| Severance Hall | Univ. of Dubuque, NE corner Grace & Algona streets | 1915 | Place of Response | II | S |
| McCormick Gym | Univ. of Dubuque, 1050 McCormick St. | 1915-1919 | Place of Response | II | |
| HOWARD COUNTY (Riceville) | | | | | |
| Riceville Elementary School | 912 Woodland Ave. | 1968 | Place of Response | V | S |
| JOHNSON COUNTY (Iowa City) | | | | | |
| Bethel AME Church ²¹² | 411 S. Governor St. | 1868-1950 | Church | I to III | NRHP |

²¹⁰ The Surf Ballroom is listed for its association with entertainment, architecture, and Buddy Holly; the 1951 incident involving LaFaun and John Amos being refused entrance is mentioned in the nomination.

²¹¹ This church is a contributing resource to the Snake Alley Historic District. The church hosted the inaugural meeting of the Burlington Self Survey in 1948, but its association with civil rights is not mentioned in the nomination.

²¹² This church is listed for its association with Black Ethnic Heritage and Social History of Iowa City, including the church congregation's association with local civil rights issues. The end of the period of significance, 1950, represented the fifty-year cutoff from the time of listing (2000).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Twentieth Century African American Civil Rights-related Resources in Iowa
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Iowa
State

Section number APPENDICES Page 102

| <i>Resource</i> | <i>Address</i> | <i>P.O.S.</i> | <i>Property Type</i> | <i>Historic Context</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
|--|--|-----------------|--|-------------------------|--------------|
| (Iowa City continued) | | | | | |
| Univ. of Iowa, Currier Hall | UI Campus, N. Clinton St. | 1946 | Place of Response | III | |
| Univ. of Iowa, Field House | UI Campus, 225 S. Grand Ave. | 1944 | Place of Response | III | |
| Univ. of Iowa, Afro-American Cultural Center | 303 Melrose Ave. | 1968 | Campus Cultural Center | V | |
| Iowa Federation Home for Colored Girls | 942 Iowa Ave. | 1920-ca.1955 | Place of Response | II, III | NRHP |
| Tate Arms Rooming House | 914 S. Dubuque | 1940-ca.1955 | Place of Response | II, III | NRHP |
| Woodfield Disco | 223 E. Washington St. | 1979 | Place of Litigation | Post-V | |
| LINN COUNTY (Cedar Rapids) | | | | | |
| Bethel AME Church ²¹³ | 512 6 th St., SE | 1931-1963 | Church | II to IV | NRHP |
| Christ Sanctified Holy Church | Ushers Ferry | ca.1925-1973 | Place Associated with a Significant Person | II to V | S, NE |
| Ellis Pool | 2000 Ellis Blvd., NW | 1941-1945 | Place of Litigation | III | D |
| Harris House | 3626 Bever Ave., SE | 1962-1963 | Place of Response | IV | S |
| Jane Boyd Community House | 943 14 th Ave., SE | 1962-1970 | Community Center | IV, V | S |
| Lyon Roller Skating Rink | 5 th Ave. and 5 th St., SE | 1884-1885 | Place of Litigation | I | D |
| MAHASKA COUNTY (Oskaloosa) | | | | | |
| Taylor House | 409 N. D St. | ca.1898-ca.1900 | Place Associated with a Significant Person | I, II | S, NE |
| MARSHALL COUNTY (Marshalltown) | | | | | |
| Johnson House | 714 May St. | ca.1940-ca.1969 | Place Associated with a Significant Person | III to V | S |
| Second Baptist Church | 516 Bromley St. | ca.1939-ca.1945 | Church | II, III | S, NE |
| MONTGOMERY COUNTY (Red Oak) | | | | | |
| Everhart's Music Store ²¹⁴ | 421 E. Reed St. | 1904-1914 | Place Associated with a Significant Person | II | NRHP |

²¹³ This church is listed for its association with Black Ethnic Heritage and Social History of Cedar Rapids. The end of the period of significance, 1950, represented the fifty-year cutoff from the time of listing (2003)

²¹⁴ This is a contributing building to the Red Oak Downtown Historic District.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Twentieth Century African American Civil Rights-related Resources in Iowa
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Iowa
State

Section number APPENDICES Page 103

| <i>Resource</i> | <i>Address</i> | <i>P.O.S.</i> | <i>Property Type</i> | <i>Historic Context</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------------|--|-------------------------|--------------|
| MUSCATINE COUNTY (Muscatine) | | | | | |
| Alexander Clark House | 203 W. 3 rd St. | 1879-1891 | Place Associated with a Significant Person | I | NRHP |
| POLK COUNTY (Des Moines) | | | | | |
| Berlovich-Alexander-Glanton House ²¹⁵ | 2200 Chautauqua Pkwy | 1944-ca.1970 | Place of Response | III to V | NRHP |
| Black Panther Headquarters | 1207 11 th St. | 1968-1969 | Civil Rights-related Organization | V | D |
| Flynn Building ²¹⁶ | 319 7 th St. | 1948-1949 | Place of Activism; Place of Litigation | III | NRHP |
| Gateways Opportunity Center (Forest Theater) | 1343 13 th St. | 1969-1970 | Community Center | V | S |
| Good Park | 1155 17 th St. | 1966 | Place of Activism | V | S, NE |
| Gertrude Rush House | 1160 13 th St. | ca.1943-1962 | Place Associated with a Significant Person | III, IV | S |
| Glendale Cemetery (African American Section) | 4909 University Ave. | | Place Associated with a Significant People | | |
| Hawkeye Insurance Company Building ²¹⁷ | 209-211 4 th Street | ca.1939-ca.1958 | Place Associated with a Significant Person | III to V | NRHP |
| Locust Street Bridge | Locust St. at river | 1965 | Place of Response | IV, V | D |
| Morris House | 1064 14 th St. | 1920s | Place Associated with a Significant Person | II | S, NE |
| Perkins Elementary School | 4301 College Ave. | 1946 | Place of Response | III | S, NE |
| Roadside Settlement House | 620 E Scott Ave. | 1904-1970 | Community Center | II to V | |
| St. Paul's AME Church | 1209 Crocker St. | 1925 | Civil Rights-related Organization | II | D |
| Willkie House | 900 17 th St. | 1951-1970 | Community Center | III to V | S, NRHP |
| POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY (Council Bluffs) | | | | | |
| Cooper House | 1813 8 th Ave. | ca.1942-ca.1965 | Place Associated with a Significant Person | III, IV | S |

²¹⁵ This is a contributing building to the Chautauqua Park Historic District. The nomination does mention Alexander.

²¹⁶ Among other things, this building is listed for its association with the 1948 discrimination lawsuit brought against the Katz Drugstore by Edna Griffin.

²¹⁷ This building is listed for its commercial and architectural significance from 1869 to 1913; the nomination does not mention Gertrude Rush, who had an office in this building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Twentieth Century African American Civil Rights-related Resources in Iowa
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Iowa
State

Section number APPENDICES Page 104

| <i>Resource</i> | <i>Address</i> | <i>P.O.S.</i> | <i>Property Type</i> | <i>Historic Context</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
|---|------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| SCOTT COUNTY (Davenport) | | | | | |
| Colonial Fountain | 12 th & Harrison | 1945 | Place of Litigation | III | D |
| LeClaire Park Bandshell ²¹⁸ | 400 W. Beiderbecke Dr. | 1963 | Place of Activism | IV | NRHP |
| St. Anthony's Church ²¹⁹ | 417 N Main St. | 1963 | Place of Activism | IV | NRHP |
| STORY COUNTY (Ames) | | | | | |
| Martin House | 218 Lincoln Way | 1920-ca.1955 | Place of Response | II to IV | S |
| Iowa State Univ., Memorial Union | ISU Campus, 2229 Lincoln Way | 1968 | Place of Activism | V | |
| Iowa State Univ., Stanton Memorial Carillon (Campanile) | Central ISU Campus | 1963 | Place of Response | IV | |
| Iowa State Univ., Black Cultural Center | 517 Welch Ave | 1970 | Campus Cultural Center | V | |
| WOODBURY COUNTY (Sioux City) | | | | | |
| Lincoln Elementary School | 115 Midvale Ave, | 1955 | Place of Response | IV | S |
| Malone AME Church | 513 Main St. | 1887-1970 | Church | I to V | S |
| Sanford Center | 1700 Geneva St. | 1951-1970 | Community Center | III to V | S |

²¹⁸ The bandshell is listed for its architecture; the nomination does not mention the 1963 rally.

²¹⁹ The church is listed for its association with the settlement of Davenport; the nomination does not mention the 1963 rally.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: COVER DOCUMENTATION

Multiple Name: Twentieth Century African American Civil Rights-related Resources in Iowa MPS

State & County: ,

Date Received: 12/23/2020 Date of 45th Day: 2/8/2021

Reference number: MC100006114

Reason For Review:

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

☒ Accept ☐ Return ☐ Reject ☐ Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The Twentieth Century African American Civil Rights-related Resources in Iowa MPS is an extremely well written and researched cover document outlining the statewide historic context for the twentieth century civil rights movement. The document provides a well developed property type and registration requirements section. Among the better written MPS format contexts.

Recommendation/ Criteria Accept Cover Documentation

Reviewer Paul Lusignan Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2229 Date

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments: No see attached SLR: No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

December 23, 2020

Joy Beasley, Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places
ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

Dear Ms Beasley:

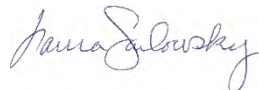
The following National Register Multiple Property Document from Iowa is enclosed for your review and listing if acceptable. This MPD also has an accompanying nomination, Harris, Dr. Percy and Lileah, House, which has also been submitted to NPS on this date through the Cultural Resource Online Mail Management System.

Twentieth Century African American Civil Rights-related Resources in Iowa

The historic contexts within this document are arranged chronologically, following the timelines established in the National Park Service's *Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites*. The first context, "An Emerging Cause in Iowa, 1833-1900," establishes the foundation of African American rights in the state from the beginning of non-Native American settlement in 1833 to the end of the nineteenth century. "Rekindling Civil Rights in Iowa, 1900-1941" discusses how African Americans in Iowa firmly battled discrimination by increasingly relying on litigation. World War II and its immediate post-war years saw a transition from lawsuits toward larger-scale marches and boycotts to highlight discrimination; this is discussed in "Birth of the Civil Rights Movement in Iowa, 1941-1954." The 1954 US Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, sparked the modern civil rights movement, an era of vocal but non-violent actions to effect real change in status quo, especially regarding laws. The movement was persistent, bold, and organized, and "The Modern Civil Rights Movement in Iowa, 1954-1964" discusses how the movement played out in the state. Lawsuits, marches, and protests continued into the Vietnam Era; however, a separate movement was more earnest. During this era, organized demonstrations sought to assert the power of African Americans to determine their own goals and how to achieve them. The fifth context, "The Second Revolution in Iowa, 1964-1976," discusses this era. Each context includes brief discussions of the history of civil rights in America as illustrated in Iowa, specifically related to the themes of education, employment, public accommodations, housing, and voting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Laura Sadowsky
State Historian
Historic Preservation Specialist
laura.sadowsky@iowa.gov | 515.281.3989 | iowaculture.gov

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