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## 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. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

☒ New Submission ☐ Amended Submission**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

African American Resources in Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

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

- I. Development of Wichita's African American Community: 1870-1971
- II. African American Elementary and Secondary Education in Wichita: 1870-1971
- III. Civil Rights in Wichita: 1947-1972

**C. Form Prepared by**name/title Deon Wolfenbargerorganization Three Gables Preservationdate December 2010street & number 320 Pine Glade Roadtelephone 303-258-3136city or town Nederlandstate COzip code 80466

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**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.

(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Patricia Zoller DSHPO  
Signature and title of certifying official4-29-11  
DateKansas State Historic Preservation Office  
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]  
Signature of the Keeper6/28/2011  
Date of Action

African American Resources in Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Kansas  
State

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Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

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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 18 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 Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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African American Resources in Wichita, Sedgwick Co., Kansas

**STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS**

The multiple property listing *African American Resources in Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas* is organized around the built resources and historic landscapes that are associated with African Americans in Wichita, Kansas. This multiple property submission provides a context for understanding the conditions that encouraged, hindered, or were associated with African Americans in Wichita, as well as a basis for evaluating those physical resources that resulted from these activities and associations. It covers extant resources dating from 1870 through 1972 that are located within the current incorporated city limits of Wichita, and is based in part on previous field surveys. Some of the historic contexts listed below may not be fully explored, either because too few resources remain, or the associated resources have yet to be surveyed. The historic contexts prepared for this Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) cover three major historic themes of African American history in Wichita. *Development of Wichita's African American Community: 1870 - 1971* covers numerous aspects of the black community, from population statistics, residential development patterns, and institutions that helped form a sense of community among Wichita's African Americans. Although there are fewer extant resources associated with the context *African American Elementary and Secondary Education in Wichita: 1870 - 1971*, its significance in the story of state and local desegregation in particular makes it worthy of inclusion. The story of *Civil Rights in Wichita: 1947-1972* is equally significant on the national stage, and covers the crucial period from post-World War II through the early 1970s. As several of these resources are associated with more recent events, many have not yet been surveyed. The period of significance for two of the contexts begins with the incorporation of the City of Wichita in 1870, and ends in 1971. For *The Development of Wichita's African American Community*, this date represents the construction of the elevated I-135 highway which split the historic African American neighborhood, while for *African American Elementary and Secondary Education in Wichita*, it was the year of the historic compromise reached by the federal department of Health, Education and Welfare and the Board of Education of Wichita. The period of significance for *Civil Rights in Wichita* extends from organization of the local Race Relations Clinic in 1947 through 1972, which a sociology study of Wichita noted as a turning point in racial relations in the city.

**Background**

From its beginning as a United States Territory, the history of Kansas has been intertwined with that of African Americans. Even though proportionately the numbers of black Kansans has been low, they have played a significant role in the state's history from the time of the earliest exploration period, through the conflicts over slavery, on the cattle drives to Wichita and other Kansas towns, as members of the now celebrated black military regiments, and as settlers of all-black towns on the Kansas plains after the great exodus from the South during reconstruction. Despite its creation as a free state, however, African Americans faced discrimination in many areas of Kansas. Regardless of this conflicting history, or perhaps even because of it, Kansas has been the site of some of the most significant events in the civil rights movement. The landmark Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* set in motion the desegregation of schools in this country, while a lesser recognized but certainly no less significant Wichita lunch counter sit-in was the first of its kind in the nation.



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Slavery was the key conflict surrounding the establishment of the territories of both Kansas and Nebraska. By allowing the residents of each territory to vote to decide whether they would allow slavery, the Kansas-Nebraska Act was intended to be a compromise between the southern and northern states. However, the result was that a few thousand voters on the edge of the United States would ultimately decide the balance of power between the North and South. Consequently violence broke out between free-staters and slavery proponents, resulting in the territory earning the moniker "Bleeding Kansas." Among the events that led to that name was the Pottawatomie Massacre in 1856, led by abolitionist John Brown. Brown had been deeply affected by the sack of Lawrence by pro-slavery forces on May 21, 1856, and decided to retaliate with the killing of pro-slavery settlers. This was a precursor to his unsuccessful raid on Harper's Ferry, and the reason why many historians agree that Brown and the conflicts in "Bleeding Kansas" played a major role in starting the Civil War. Just a few months after Kansas entered the Union as a free state, the Civil War began. Kansas was not only the first state to enroll African Americans in the military, but its First Kansas Colored Infantry was also the first such regiment to see action.

Prior to the Civil War, the number of African Americans in Kansas was extremely small, but that changed during and after the end of that conflict. In 1866, Congress authorized the establishment of African American regiments in the West, and some were assigned to Kansas to fight in the military campaigns during the Indian Wars. The U.S. Tenth Cavalry Regiment formed at Fort Leavenworth was the first to be called "Buffalo Soldiers," a name given to them by the Native Americans. Also, about one-quarter of the cattle drovers working the cattle trails between Texas and the trail heads in Kansas and Nebraska were African Americans during the open range period. Both the African American soldiers and the cattle drovers were common sights in some Kansas towns in the period following the Civil War.

The most substantial growth of Kansas' African American population in sheer numbers came after 1877, when Democrats returned to power in the South and set about reversing the gains made by Southern blacks during Reconstruction. Repressive laws reduced many to landlessness. A former slave from Tennessee, Benjamin "Pap" Singleton, promoted the idea that emigration as the answer to this problem. As early as 1876, he began recruiting African Americans as part of the "Great Exodus" to Kansas (Entz 1996, 124-139). Some of these "Exodusters" homesteaded or formed towns in the rural west, but others stayed in the eastern towns of Kansas. Other eastern Kansas towns, such as Atchison, Lawrence, Topeka and Leavenworth, experienced an influx of black settlers due to their accessibility by river and railroad. Eventually over 9,000 African Americans moved to Kansas as part of this movement. As a percentage of the overall Kansas population, however, the Exodus movement did not change the percentage of African Americans in the state between 1870 and 1880, when the numbers actually dropped from 4.7 percent to 4.3 percent (see Table 2).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, nearly ninety percent of African Americans still lived in the South; by 1970, only fifty percent remained there. African Americans began leaving the



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rural south for the North and Midwest during World War I to escape discrimination, and after World War II, also left for the West looking for better job opportunities. Kansas, with its predominately agricultural economy, for the most part did not see great increases in its African American population in the twentieth century except in its larger communities. In cities such as Wichita and Kansas City, Kansas, as in much of the rest of the country, African Americans were often relegated to overcrowded areas in sub-standard housing and segregated in poorly equipped schools. While this did not lead to riots in Kansas as was occurring in other parts of the country, Kansas was the setting for one of the most famous legal cases in American history and for one of the earliest sit-ins in the country – both key events of the civil rights movement.

Before Wichita was even incorporated African Americans were living or visiting the area that would eventually become Sedgwick County, although their percentage of the total population was only around two to three percent through much of the 1860s and 1870s (Miner March 1988). After 1879, their percentage of Wichita's population remained relatively stable at around five percent up through 1950. At that time, the growing air and defense industries stimulated by World War II led to increased growth in both the numbers and percentage of African Americans in the city, and soon the rate of African American population growth was one of the highest in the state. Wichita's African American population also grew in political strength at the same time. The city elected the first African American representative outside of Kansas City to the state legislature, and, as the home to NAACP activist Chester Lewis, Wichita became a leader in the national civil rights movement.

### **I. Development of Wichita's African American Community: 1870 – 1971**

#### **A. Population**

Although their history has often been ignored by mainstream or traditional historians, African Americans were a part of Wichita's earliest pioneer history. Around 1860, an African American known as Buckner, possibly a former slave of the Cherokee Indians, lived just east of the junction of the Arkansas and Little Arkansas rivers near other fur trappers. When James Mead, one of the founders of Wichita, began hunting buffalo in the area in 1863, he hired Buckner to accompany him on his hunting expeditions. Buffalo Soldiers – as the African American soldiers in Kansas were called by Native Americans – were also a common sight in the area during the 1860s (Miner 1982, 7). Also, as the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry was stationed at Fort Leavenworth, some of the soldiers would be sent to the Wichita area on missions.

When the buffalo hunts and fur trapping expeditions of the 1860s gave way to cattle drives of the early 1870s, African Americans still played a key role in Wichita's development and economy. About a third of the cattle drovers that followed the Chisholm Trail from Texas to Wichita were either African Americans or Hispanics (Miner 1982, 78). Many of the drovers settled in Wichita, leading a Kansas newspaper to remark in 1872 that Wichita had people of "every shade, class, and character" (Rutledge 1985, 21). Other African Americans emigrated with European Americans. In 1870, John Artis (Ahles) came to Wichita as a domestic servant in the Munger House. Richard Robinson and his family, which

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included wife Sarah and sons Samuel James and Walter George, came to Wichita that same year. The Robinson family would later grow to include Joshua, Walter, Louis and Henry. In 1871, William Handcock and the Jones family came to Wichita; one year later Sam Jones was the first black child born in Wichita. Other early African American pioneers were William Fleming and William Simmons (1872), Red and Thomas Johnson (1873), Phillip Payne and Thomas Glover (1874) (Rutledge 1985, 21; Sims 1923, 16). The surnames of other families or individuals that came to Wichita in the 1870s include Arnold, Gardenhire, Ritchie, Starnes, Robinson, Anderson, McAfee, Kelly, Gilbert, Gibbs, Clark, Barker, Rawles, Hodge and Williams (Rutledge 1985, 22). Not all of these early settlers lived within the city limits; the black population was estimated to be as high as ten percent of the county's population in the 1870s (Miner 1982, 100).

Although few in number, these African Americans were among the pioneers who helped build the future city of Wichita, both literally and figuratively. Many found jobs in construction, including Charley Sanders, a mason who was shot in 1874 while working on the Occidental Hotel. The local newspaper was appalled by Sanders' shooting by outsiders, lamenting that "drunken roughs" would shoot someone "who earns his bread by honest work is shot down in broad daylight, be he black or white" (Miner 1982, 101). While later newspapers were not always this broadminded in reporting about Wichita's African American residents, Sanders' shooting did generate enough community outrage that it led to the hiring of Wyatt Earp to enforce law in Wichita (Miner March 1988).

In spite of their early presence, African Americans remained a small percentage of Wichita's overall population. In the 1876 local census, there were forty-three black men, forty-two women, twenty-three boys and eighteen girls – about two percent of the city's population of 4,209. During these early decades, historian Craig Miner believes that African Americans were also relatively welcome in the growing community (Miner March 1988). Blacks were encouraged to organize politically, particularly by the Republicans who believed that African Americans would support their party. Reverend Harsen also began church services for blacks in August 1877. In 1878, an interracial marriage was reported by the *Beacon* (Miner 1982, 163). Also in 1878, Charles B. Jones was a Deputy U.S. Marshall – the first African American law enforcement officer in Wichita. This "live and let live" attitude would shortly change.

Near the end of the 1870s, there was a small surge in the African American population of Wichita as a result of the "Great Exodus" from the South. Initially, the prospects for African Americans wishing to settle in Wichita looked bright. In April 1879, the city started a subscription list to raise money to help these blacks looking for new homes, with Mayor Kahn initiating the fund with donation of twenty-five dollars (Rutledge 1985, 22). It is likely that more "Exodusters," as they were called, would have moved to Wichita had Marshall Murdock, editor of the *Wichita Eagle*, not shortly thereafter taken such a strong stance against the emigrants. Building on fears of a yellow fever outbreak, Murdock spread a rumor in July 1879 that Topeka had shipped fifty "contaminated" blacks to Wichita. The City Council called an emergency meeting and passed a quarantine ordinance. Fourteen new arrivals were found and shipped back to Topeka, leading other Kansas newspapers to ridicule the attitudes of Wichita.

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Quarantine against what? Really the whole affair is so ridiculous as to be laughable. The idea of a city of Kansas with six to eight thousand people getting up such a scare over the advent of fourteen negroes, who asked nothing of them, who were in good health, able bodied, ready and willing to work, is a curious one and illustrative of how small a thing it sometimes takes to upset the wisest people (from Miner 1982,164).

Thus while the "Exodus" movement produced an increase in the numbers of African Americans in certain Kansas counties, Wichita did not experience a significant increase in the percentage of blacks moving to town. Most of those coming to Kansas settled in segregated areas of larger cities in the eastern third of the state, while others farmed or established black communities (Bright 1956, 369).

As a result of a speculative real estate boom in Wichita that began in 1882, the city overall saw an influx of new residents. Wichita's overall population exploded, growing from a little less than 5,000 people to its decade high of 33,999 in 1888. African Americans were also attracted to the booming city during this decade, and their percentage of the population increased slightly. In 1888, African Americans comprised about 3.5 percent of Wichita's residents, but by 1890 they grew to just over five percent. This was a figure large enough to be considered a political force, given that the newspapers covered their political rallies (Miner March 1988). Even though their numbers increased steadily from 1890 through the next half century, the percentage of Wichita's African American population remained around five percent up through 1950 (see Table 1). This was in spite of continued migration of blacks from the rural south to urban north cities during the twentieth century. In her study of Wichita's African American population, Margaret Mullikin concludes that from 1900 to 1950, the "net migration of Negroes to Wichita has not approximated that occurring in other urban centers" (Mullikin 1958).

**Table 1: African American Population in Wichita: 1880 – 1950**  
(Miller 2000, 5)

Year	Total Population	African American Population	Percent African American
1880	4,911	172	3.5
1890	23,500	1,222	5.2
1900	24,671	1,389	5.6
1910	52,450	2,457	4.7
1920	72,217	3,545	4.9
1930	111,110	5,623	5.1
1940	114,966	5,686	4.9
1950	168,279	8,082	4.8



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Compared to the rest of the state, Wichita had a slightly higher proportion of African American residents. Whereas the rest of the state saw a decrease in percentage from 1880 to 1890 (although an overall increase in the number of black residents), Wichita's African American population grew both in numbers and percentage from 1890. Kansas, on the other hand, saw its black population remain between three and four percent from 1890 through the 1950 census, and only reaching over five percent by 1980.

**Table 2: African American Population in Kansas: 1860-1990 (Gibson 2002)**

Year	Total Population	African American population	Percent African American
1860	107,206	627	.6
1870	364,399	17,108	4.7
1880	996,096	43,107	4.3
1890	1,428,108	49,710	3.5
1900	1,470,495	52,003	3.5
1910	1,690,949	54,030	3.2
1920	1,769,257	57,925	3.3
1930	1,880,999	66,344	3.5
1940	1,801,028	65,138	3.6
1950	1,905,299	73,158	3.8
1960	2,178,611	91,445	4.2
1970	2,246,578	106,977	4.8
1980	2,363,679	126,127	5.3
1990	2,477,574	143,076	5.8

As the United States entered World War II, Wichita's existing air manufacturing industries and its secure, central location helped turn the city into a major defense production center. These industries continued to flourish during the Korean conflict in the 1950s, especially with the production of the B-52 bomber. This propelled Wichita's population growth until it became the largest city in Kansas, finally outgrowing Kansas City, Kansas. Wichita's African American population was part of this post-war growth. In 1950, there were 8,802 African Americans, or 4.8% of the city's overall population. In part due to increased job opportunities at defense industry plants, but also with increasing opportunities in other work areas, the percentage of African Americans in Wichita rose each decade after 1950.<sup>i</sup> Table 2 shows the increased growth of African Americans in Wichita, not just in numbers but also in percentage in each decade of the last half of the twentieth century. These figures do not include the African

<sup>i</sup> Data on race from the 2000 U.S. Census are not directly comparable with those from previous censuses due to the option to report more than one race.

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Americans living in Planeview during the 1940s and later, as it was not annexed into the city until around 1950. An additional estimated 1,000 blacks lived in Planeview in 1945 (Hayes n.d., 1). Statewide, there was an increase in just over 18,000 blacks; almost 12,000 of those were in Wichita. The overall growth in Wichita's population from 1960 to 1970 was attributed solely to annexations during the 1960s. Within the area covered by the 1960 boundaries, Wichita actually experienced a net loss of population over the decade (Wheeler 1971, 16). The growth in the African American population was thus one of the few areas of natural increase in the city's population in this period.

**Table 3: African American Population growth since 1950**  
(Miller 2000, 5)

Year	Total Population	African American Population	Percent African American	Two or more races	Percent Two or more races
1950	192,155	8,082	4.8		
1960	244,500	19,861	7.8		
1970	276,554	26,841	9.2		
1980	279,835	30,212	10.8		
1990	304,011	34,301	11.3		
2000	344,284	39,325	11.42	10,662	3.1

**B. Settlement patterns**

Up through the mid-1880s, Wichita was determined to not only survive but to grow from a frontier crossroads into a city, and thus its residents generally accepted new settlers with an open mind. Records from the period show that both blacks and whites lived in the Tremont, the Occidental, and even the elegant Carey House (Rutledge 1985, 22). It wasn't until Wichita grew into a city and segregation became firmly established in the United States through the Supreme Court's sanction of the "separate but equal" policy that its white residents began to consider residential separation of the races (Miner 1988, 98).

Wichita's original commercial center was located near the intersection of Main Street and Douglas Avenue, with various businessmen in dispute over whether the main commercial thoroughfare would be Main or Douglas. Eventually Douglas Avenue would prevail as the primary commercial street in Wichita. The Sedgwick County Courthouse square was located several blocks north of this intersection, in the block north of Centre (now Central Avenue) between Main and Market streets. The courthouse was at the far north edge of the Original Town plat. Wichita's African American population began settling in the area around the Courthouse during the 1870s, particularly the few blocks to the west and

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north. The St. Louis, Fort Scott and Wichita Railroad line and the Little Arkansas River formed the western boundary of the neighborhood, and the courthouse was on the eastern boundary.

The churches were among the first African American institutions to be established in the neighborhood. Organized in 1878, the First Colored Missionary (Baptist) Church was located on the west side of Wichita Street between Central and Elm, while the 1882 African Methodist Church, later St. Paul A.M.E. Church, was located one block west of the square on the west side of the 500 block of Church Street - now Water Street (Wichita City Directories, 1878 & 1883). The residences of African Americans were in the same blocks as the churches, primarily along Main and Water streets in the 500 and 600 blocks.

The 1880s were a period of intense real estate speculation in Wichita, which ended as spectacularly as it began. After the collapse of the real estate boom in the late 1880s, many businesses moved from Main Street to Douglas Avenue, which became the new center of Wichita's business. With commercial buildings being vacated on Main Street, African American entrepreneurs were able to move in and start businesses which catered to the nearby residential district (Miller 2000, 2). African Americans continued to live along the railroad tracks in the two to three blocks west of Main between 1st and 9th Streets. With supportive community businesses and institutions nearby, this coalesced into a cohesive neighborhood. Although African Americans were not restricted by law to a particular area of the city, during the 1890s and the first decades of the twentieth century their housing and businesses remained concentrated along Main and Water Streets - north of Central in the area surrounding and to the west of the Sedgwick County Courthouse (Miner 1988, 98). A few individuals or families were scattered throughout various sections of Wichita, possibly an indication of the early lack of segregation housing policies in the city. This would soon change. There are no records of codified housing restrictions around the turn of the twentieth century, but public opinion was changing as to the way things should be.

For the first decades of the twentieth century, the city's black population remained concentrated around the courthouse. In 1900, African Americans lived along Main and Water streets, remaining in the two blocks north of Central but also expanding a few blocks south between 3<sup>rd</sup> and Douglas in 1900 (see map in Appendix A). From 1900 through 1950, however, even though the percentage of African Americans in Wichita remained steady at around five percent, the number of residents grew from just over thirteen hundred in 1900 to over 8,000 by 1950. Clearly, the number of dwellings in the few blocks in N. Water and Main were insufficient for an increase of several thousand new residents. However, even as Wichita's black population increased by over a thousand each decade, they found themselves increasingly restricted to specific locations of the city as segregation became more entrenched in United States, particularly in 1913 with the implementation of segregated work places in the federal government, rest rooms, and lunch rooms. As early as 1910, with set boundaries of the river to the west and the Courthouse to the east, and the inability to move north or south because of social restrictions, a new strip of African American residences developed along the railroad tracks between Santa Fe and Wabash Avenues, as far north as 14<sup>th</sup> Street. This new neighborhood also edged eastward into a sparsely-settled area near 9<sup>th</sup> and Cleveland (see Appendix B). This neighborhood was first called the



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"North End;" later it expanded into the "East Side" (in contrast to the Wichita and Water Streets "West Side"), and currently it is known as the McAdams neighborhood. Although some of the earliest residents in the area were white, there was still vacant land available for housing near the drainage canal that resulted from the channelization of Chisholm Creek. Prior to this, the area was subject to flooding. The African Americans that first resided in the North End likely moved into existing houses on Cleveland. However, there were several vacant lots available on Mathewson and streets to the east, as well as on the streets north of 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Another incentive for African Americans to move away from the Courthouse area to the east was the employment opportunities offered by the grain industries and especially the meat packing plants – both of which were centered near the intersection of 21<sup>st</sup> Street and St. Francis Avenue. As the twentieth century progressed, job opportunities were becoming scarce for African Americans, and the meat packing plants were one of the few integrated workplaces in Wichita. The Wichita Union Stockyards, the Jacob Dold Packing House, and the Cudahy Packing House were all located in the area. These workplaces thus helped encourage the north and eastward expansion of the neighborhood up through World War II.

Especially after World War I, the growth in Wichita's African American community centered in the North End/McAdams area (see maps in Appendices C & D). Although many purchased or moved into homes formerly owned by white residents, there were also a significant number of dwellings that were built for African American owners. A historic resource survey revealed that many of the first residents of houses built during the 1920s in McAdams were African Americans (Ward 1995, 1). Much of the construction during this period surrounds the Dunbar Elementary School at 923 N. Cleveland. Originally built as the Ingalls School for the surrounding white residents, the school was converted to "negro" use only in 1927 and re-named after the black poet and author Paul Lawrence Dunbar.

Another significant community feature for the African American neighborhood was McKinley Park, located at 1329 E. 16<sup>th</sup> Street. The first parcel of twelve acres that formed McKinley Park was purchased by the city from the Dold Packing Company in 1901 after it suffered heavy losses from a fire at the plant – prior to the period when any African Americans had moved to the northeast. As African Americans began to move into the neighborhood, the park remained primarily undeveloped and under-staffed, as noted in the 1924 race relations study in Wichita (Wichita Council of Churches 1924, n.p.). It was not until federal funds became available during the New Deal era that the park finally received a shelter house, toilets, and a swimming pool with bath house. The park was renamed "McAdams" in 1966 to honor the recreation supervisor at the park, Emerson McAdams, on his death. It appears that other city services were also slow to come to the neighborhood; several streets were still unpaved through the 1930s, for example. However, African American businesses, community institutions and churches began moving to the neighborhood in the 1920s, and the McAdams neighborhood soon became the hub of Wichita's black community. In particular, there were a proportionately higher number of churches found in this small geographical area when compared to other parts of Wichita (Ward 1995, 2). The importance of religion and relationship of churches to the African American community was noted in the 1924 "Conference on Race Relations" report, where it stated that "The influence of the Negro church is unusually significant." (Wichita Council of Churches 1924, n.p.) Religious institutions were at the

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core of not only religious and spiritual life for African Americans, but social, cultural and civic as well. As one of the first institutions nationwide that could be owned and controlled by free blacks, the church provided a safe place for freedom of expression. With segregation restricting the ability of Wichita's African Americans to take advantage of city-wide community facilities and entertainment venues, churches, community groups, and fraternal organizations, such as the Prince Hall Masons, became increasingly important.

Although local customs were critical in the implementation of segregation in Wichita, many of these practices were developed elsewhere. Nationwide, changes in urban neighborhoods gave rise to methods of residential control as early as the 1920s. Prior to the adoption of zoning, there were unwritten "gentlemen's" agreements against selling or renting in certain parts of a city to persons other than those that typically occupied the neighborhood. This also pertained to other minorities, and, besides African Americans, in Wichita it often included Mexicans, Lebanese and Chinese. In addition to the unwritten agreements, there were also restrictive covenants appearing in the title of properties for specific subdivisions. An example of a restrictive covenant, some of which lasted for twenty-five to fifty years after the purchase, follows: "No persons of any race other than the Caucasian race shall use or occupy any building or lot, except that this covenant shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race domiciled with an owner or tenant." (Abstract of Title, Lot 22, Block 1, Paul's Addition).

Homeowners' associations in new developments also promoted segregation with restrictions, deed covenants, and even group pressure on white residents to practice racial exclusions (Hirsch 1993). In 1924, the National Association of Real Estate Boards established a "code of ethics" which prohibited realtors from introducing members of any race to a neighborhood that would threaten property values; this code remained until the late 1950s. This resulted in the practice of "steering" – not showing blacks any properties in white neighborhoods. Finally, the federal government continued to reinforce segregation beginning with the Home Owners Loan Corporation in 1933 and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in 1934. The former started an appraisal system for loans by rating neighborhoods using a racially-determined ranking as one of its key criteria. Nationwide, black, Mexican and Asian neighborhoods were assigned to the lowest or "red" ratings, originating the term "redlining." This appraisal system was subsequently adopted by the FHA.

In the 1920s through 1930, the North End /McAdams neighborhood expanded primarily to the north (see Appendices C & D). Many of the houses constructed during this period were Craftsman bungalows. By 1940 and especially from 1950 and beyond, most of the expansion in the district's boundaries occurred to the east of the canal, although infill housing was still being constructed on the vacant lots in the west side of the area. Due to the strict segregation practices in Wichita, it may have been easier for African Americans to build or buy a development tract home rather than to move into a traditionally white neighborhood. The houses constructed during or after World War II were typically Minimal Traditional in style. In 1940, 665 dwelling units out of 50,238 permanent houses in Wichita were owned by African Americans, having an average value of \$1381. Over half of these homes were owned free and clear. From 1940 through the end of the war, there was an increase in home ownership by African

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Americans, ranging from thirty to fifty percent. It was speculated that the reasons for this increase in ownership over such a short period included the lack of rental opportunities for African Americans, increased earnings due to jobs related to the defense industries, and increased population (Hayes n.d., 2). Still, it was difficult for African Americans to find financing to purchase a home. As the wartime economy led to improved employment conditions, some lending institutions provided loans based on the credit rating of the individual. However, since the appraisal value of the property was also a factor, many African Americans still found it difficult to find financing when the loan value ran about half of the actual value of the property in the black sections of the city.

As noted, home ownership among African Americans increased after the war because it was generally more difficult to find a rental property than it was to purchase a home. There was a post-war housing shortage in general, and this was felt most acutely by African Americans, who often found themselves locked out of most rental units due to restrictive covenants. A race relations clinic held in Wichita noted the continued prevalence of these covenants and released the following findings and recommendations in the report of October 3, 1947:

[The Summary Committee] Recognizes the use of restrictive covenants in titles as an undemocratic practice which restricts the normal expansion of minority groups, and threatens at the same time the values of property within and adjacent to the restricted areas, therefore recommends that any "continuing body designated" shall launch a program of education and action against restrictive covenants. ("Report of the Summary Committee" 1947, 1)

In the period immediately after World War II, approximately eighty percent of Wichita's African American population lived in the area bounded by Central Avenue on the south, 21<sup>st</sup> Street on the north, Grove Street on the east, and Broadway on the west. About fifteen percent lived in the oldest African American neighborhood, bounded by 3<sup>rd</sup> Street on the south, 9<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, Wichita Street on the west, and Main Street on the east (see map in Appendix F). A relatively small but new area opened up for African Americans in the northwest section of the city, where about two percent lived between 24<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Streets from Jeanette to Arkansas Streets. Along the Missouri Pacific Railroad, another two percent lived from Wheeler Avenue to McCormick north and south, and from Sheridan to Edwards east to west. As previously noted, there were three hundred housing units for African Americans in the Planeview Federal Housing Project, which at that time lay outside of the city's limits.

The areas that African Americans were restricted to in Wichita contained a disproportionately higher percentage of "sub-standard" housing – buildings that were in need of major repair or that had outside privies. For example, of the 1,200 outhouses still remaining in Wichita in the late 1940s, it was estimated that eighty percent of these were found in the McAdams area, where the majority of the African American population lived. Sub-standard housing was found throughout Wichita, however, because repairs had been generally delayed for nearly two decades – first because of the Depression, and next during the war period when building was restricted. Immediately after the war, there was such a



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demand for housing that the costs of material and labor rose significantly, effectively shutting out lower income property owners again from making repairs (Hayes n.d., 4).

Some of the studies on housing from this period did not recognize the issues regarding housing facing African Americans in Wichita. The planning firm of Harland Bartholomew and Associates prepared a housing report in 1945 as part of their comprehensive plan for the city. The report was fairly typical of the period, in that their assessment of housing focused on property values, number of owner-occupied vs. rental units, number of residents per unit, and age of dwelling. There was an inherent assumption, for example, that a high number of residents per unit was a negative factor. The report clearly did not consider that the ability of African Americans to find housing in any other section of the city was severely limited. Lower property values in the neighborhood were not only affected by unfair housing appraisals, but also by the fact that some areas of the McAdams neighborhood still lacked key city services in the 1940s, such as roads, water, and sewer. Perhaps more significantly, this report does note that the non-white residents were tightly relegated to specific areas of the city. "These are well concentrated within distinct districts and occupy only a small portion of the city. Furthermore in practically all of such districts at least ninety percent of the units are occupied by non-white households." According to the authors, since the housing in the area did not return enough taxes on the properties to equal the public expenditures in the districts, it was important not to "permit the facilities to scatter throughout the entire city so that their depreciating influences would affect an unnecessary amount of good property." Instead, zoning regulations were proposed to raise the minimum standards (Harland Bartholomew and Associates 1945, 44). The unfortunate implication was that the tight housing segregation of Wichita was a positive feature. The report failed to mention that during the public hearings held in 1944 about the new proposed city plan, numerous African Americans testified about the housing discrimination they faced in the city (Miner 1988, 203). The plan addressed none of the concerns raised by black Wichitans.

There were several factors which influenced overcrowding in the McAdams neighborhood. By the end of the 1940s, Wichita was experiencing a severe housing shortage. This affected all of its residents, but was especially difficult for newcomers, low-income residents, and minorities who were restricted to certain sections of the city. The increase of Wichita's African American population and the lack of new housing lead to increased crowding in existing units where families doubled up. Few multi-family dwelling units were constructed in the area around the Dunbar school. Dr. J. E. Farmer and his wife Gertrude built a four-plex across the street from their residence in 1935 at 1258 N. Cleveland, but very few multi-family dwellings were built after the war. Unlike other areas of Wichita, there were virtually no rental housing units constructed at the rear of properties during the war years (Ward 1995, 2). Housing was in such demand that in some unfortunate cases, the Phyllis Wheatley Children's Home, founded as an African American orphan's home, had to accept children because their parents were unable to find housing for their family (Hayes n.d., 6).

The severe housing shortage in Wichita led many in the city to protest the planned demolition of the "temporary" housing units at Planeview, which would not only impact the city's general population but

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a high number of African Americans as well. Even though the Harland Bartholomew and Associates plan of 1945 supported the demolition of the temporary housing tracts in Planeview built during the war-time years as part of their proposed plan to prevent "blight," these homes provided much needed housing for blacks in Wichita. Although Planeview was built to supply housing for Boeing workers, several black families moved there in spite of not working at the plant. Often the housing was better than they were able to find elsewhere in Wichita. Furthermore, many African American families appreciated the reasonable prices, and used their time of residency there to save money until such time as they could move back into the city limits and either buy or build a house (Miller 2000,10-11). African Americans that were able to purchase homes continued to push the boundaries of the existing neighborhood to the east – effectively forming a new neighborhood now known as the North Central neighborhood. It is bounded by 9<sup>th</sup> Street on the south, 17<sup>th</sup> on the north, Grove on the east, and Hydraulic Avenue on the west (see map in Appendix F).

Although the edges of the neighborhoods where African Americans lived in Wichita were growing, they were still confined to a restricted or segregated area of the city. By 1950 Wichita was ranked fourteenth among 211 cities as the most tightly segregated in the nation using federal census measurements. According to the 1950 Census, ninety-one percent of Wichita's black population lived in five census tracts – 1, 5, 6, 12 and 13. Sociologist Donald Cowgill's 1954 *A Pictorial Analysis of Wichita* details the residential pattern and historical development of this area:

The Main Negro district lay northeast of the downtown area between the railroad tracks and the canal and beyond the canal. In these three tracts [5, 6, and 12] were 6,272 of the 8,082 negroes in the city. The old Negro settlement just north of the central business district along Wichita and Water streets, now contains only 856 Negroes . . . (26)

Notable in the census data and Cowgill's summary is that the earliest African American neighborhood along Wichita and Water had lost a significant amount of its population prior to the construction of the new county courthouse in 1959. This latter event is often attributed by residents and some historians to the decline of the historic neighborhood, when in fact the majority of the black residents of Wichita had moved or settled east by this point. A possible contributing factor to this movement was the deteriorating condition of the housing stock by the 1950s; many African American families may have moved out of the oldest neighborhood to find better living quarters. The construction of a new courthouse in 1959 and later urban renewal projects did, however, result in the demolition of many of the historic residences and commercial buildings and forced the relocation of the remaining families and businesses out of the neighborhood that had been the first major cultural, social, business and religious center for Wichita's African Americans. Although the plan for a new civic center in this neighborhood had been recommended by Harland Bartholomew and Associates as part of their 1945 comprehensive plan, it was not necessarily planned as a project to clear Wichita of "blighted" housing. However, their report did note that certain sections of the city were in such dire need of redevelopment that "large scale operations" were needed. The area bounded by Murdock, Main, Central, and Riverview was near a park and desirable residential section, "yet it now contains very undesirable living facilities." The planning

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firm's recommendation in 1945 for building multi-family units, building a connection from Waco into Water Street, and to close and realign streets within the interior of the project, was eventually carried out decades later as part of urban renewal. They naively noted that "while this would displace the present tenants, it is believed that other facilities would be available, or other projects could be constructed that would be better suited to their income requirement . . ." (Harland Bartholomew and Associates n.d., 40-41)

In spite of the fact that there were never any zoning ordinances in Wichita supporting segregation or restrictions on occupancy, the trend of residential segregation in Wichita continued into the 1960s. As Cowgill noted in his follow-up 1962 report *The People of Wichita: 1960*:

The growth of the Negro population since then [1950] has forced an expansion of the district, but this has not lessened the degree of segregation. On the contrary, its segregation index increased from 91.5 to 95.3 (Complete Segregation = 100). (25)

Hemmed in on the west side by the increasing industrial development on Washington Street, the northeast African American neighborhood was further divided in 1971 with the construction of the elevated highway system I-135 along the Chisholm Creek Canal. Several houses were demolished or moved at this time to accommodate the new exit at Murdock; this was one key factor for the relocation of several black households to the east (Ward 1995, 1). Thus the trend after the 1950s was for the neighborhood to continue to push its boundaries to the north and east. Oral histories reveal some of the tactics used to promote segregation by whites, as well as those employed by blacks to try and break down the boundaries. White neighbors would band together to buy a property if there were rumors of an African American family about to move into their area. However, if an African American were to somehow move into an all-white block, that was generally enough to start "white flight." The first to move into a neighborhood would often have to overpay for a property. Others, such as prominent civil rights attorney Chester Lewis, had a white friend buy a house and then sign it over. Within days after purchasing the property in the early 1960s, Lewis found a cross burning in his yard (Johnson 1998-99, 231). When another African American family moved onto the east side of the canal, their house was blown up. Once a few families were able to persevere, though, others moved into the northeast, even coming from Planeview. However, although the segregation clearly presented obstacles, some African Americans noted their preference for living within a few blocks of others as they felt it reduced the potential for violence (Miller 2000, 12-13).

The speed in which some blocks transferred to African American families was particularly rapid in the late 1950s through the 1970s. This was partly due to the rapid growth of Wichita's African American population, from just over 8,000 in 1950 to nearly 27,000 in 1970. There were reports of real estate agents discouraging white families from moving into the area around Fairmount Elementary by telling "them that the school was 'going Negro.'" The school's racial makeup went from two percent black in 1957 to over forty-eight percent black by 1959 (Van Meter 1977, 319). Angela Miller's study of the *Changes in Location of the African American Community in Wichita: An Overview With Three Oral*



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*Histories* (2000) reveals this swift transformation of the northeast neighborhoods by studying census tracts. For example, the 1960 tract 78 had no African American residents, but by 1970, 88.4% were black. Miller also believes that it was significant that the "traditional" African American tracts were actually losing black population (Miller 2000, 6-7). However, as noted earlier, this was in part due to the county courthouse construction in 1959 and the later urban renewal projects, both of which caused forced relocations as opposed to moving by choice.

The postwar migration to the northeast resulted in the relocation of African American churches. In 1954, St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal moved to a new building at 17<sup>th</sup> and North Piatt. The Calvary Baptist Church also built a new church in the 1970s on North Hillside. In other instances, white congregations sold their properties to black churches, such as the University Methodist Church selling to the African American Tabernacle Baptist Church. A few churches, such as the Brotherhood Presbyterian Church at 2322 E 13th Street North, saw the racial composition of its church change from white to black along with the changing demographics of the surrounding neighborhood.

Although there were no formal zoning laws supporting racial separation in Wichita, the 1960s ushered in a significant level of activism among African Americans regarding fair housing – another indicator of the city's severe segregation issue. This activism helped push the local Urban Renewal Agency's focus in 1965 from a huge downtown project to a \$1.3 million upgrade of housing on the northeast side called "Project Amy" (Miner 1988, 203). The city formed a Fair Housing Committee to fight unfair housing restrictions. As a result, Wichita implemented a Fair Housing ordinance in 1965, but much like the 1961 Kansas Act Against Discrimination, it had little effect as there were no regulations to enforce. The federal government was also slow to enact legislation to combat residential segregation. Although the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Shelley v. Kraemer* that it was unlawful for courts to enforce covenant agreements, it did not actually declare that the agreements were illegal. Later in 1953, the decision in *Barrow v. Jackson* helped to strengthen enforcement against the use of covenant agreements. It was not until 1968, however, that the federal Fair Housing Act made the use of racial covenants illegal (Plotkin 2007, 681). This was followed by the state of Kansas in 1970 when it amended the earlier 1961 act by making it illegal to exclude any race from purchasing or residing in a house in the state. However, either through inertia or other circumstances, the removal of both unwritten housing practices and racially restrictive covenants has done little to decrease the level of segregation in Wichita. Although the 1980 census revealed much greater integration in schools, there were few fundamental changes in the housing patterns (Miner 1988, 206-207).

### **C. Community-building institutions**

African American institutions were the heart of the black neighborhoods in Wichita. Whether black-owned businesses, churches, fraternal or social organizations, these institutions offered life experiences to African Americans that were denied to them in other parts of the city. The physical presence of these key institutions within the historic black neighborhoods of Wichita played a significant role in encouraging a sense of pride and racial identity.

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The center of Wichita's African American community for much of its existence has been its churches. These were often the most dominant institutions, and served not only as the heart of religious life, but cultural, social and civic life as well. Nationally, churches were one of the first types of institutions organized and owned by blacks, and were places where they could be free to express themselves. As one of the few organizations where African Americans served in positions of authority, churches also provided key training for future leaders in the community and the opportunity to make business contacts; the pastors were certainly among the most respected men in the African American arena. They sponsored choirs, fellowship and charitable groups, educational classes, and literary societies. Church membership as well as the number of churches grew during the period of segregation in the early 1900s. Continuing their importance to the African American community into the civil rights era, churches played crucial roles in the movement, not only by providing locations for meetings but by sponsoring or participating in the numerous race relations studies, committees and conferences held in Wichita. Churches were often the first areas of cooperation between the races, with white and black members visiting each other's congregations.

In the Midwest, the dominant black church was the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Founded nationally in the 1790s, it was also one of the most influential denominations in Wichita. Churches sometimes reflected the class system within the African American community; as such, some of the smaller or poorer congregations struggled to raise funds to build their structures or meet the needs of their congregation. Nonetheless, even with limited personal resources, the ability to build even modest structures indicates the strong commitment that African Americans had to their church. The location of the African American churches was intrinsically tied to the black neighborhoods, and it followed the pattern of residential settlement. Many times congregations built their own structures as they moved into new neighborhoods, but in some instances they would purchase existing buildings from white congregations. Sometimes these new churches might serve to anchor a neighborhood and as a result, would end up encouraging members to move to another area by virtue of their new location.

In Wichita, the earliest African American residents worshipped with the white First M. E. and the First Presbyterian congregations in the early 1870s. They soon decided to meet together as a group, and began holding prayer meetings at the house of Mrs. Robinson at the corner of Waco Avenue and Pine Street. In 1878, this small band decided to organize themselves into two churches: the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Second Baptist Church (Sims 1923, 1923, 3). The number of churches grew more rapidly after the turn of the twentieth century. This was possibly a response to increasing segregation, which resulted in a need for organizations that would provide a safe haven and a springboard for leadership roles. Although churches were one of the few African American organizations that were recorded in city directories, even then some of the smaller congregations were overlooked. The city directory of 1878 lists only one African American minister - H. Pettiford "(colored)," M.E. minister. By 1883, the city directory lists the First Colored Missionary Baptist Church, organized in 1878 and located on the west side of Wichita Street between Central Avenue and Elm Street. It also lists the Colored Baptist Church on the west side of Wichita near Elm, and the African Methodist Episcopal Church, built in 1882 on the west side of Water (later Church Street)

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between Central Avenue and Elm Street (*Wichita City Directories*). The latter congregation, which would be called St. Paul A.M.E. Church, was prosperous enough to add a two-story tower to their building by 1892 (Sanborn Map Company 1892).

The 1922-1923 *Negro Year Book* provides a more accurate snapshot than the city directories of the African American churches that were prominent in Wichita during the 1920s, and is one of the few publications from the early twentieth century which documents black institutions. The St. Paul A.M.E. Church was among the largest at this time, starting from a group of thirteen in the 1870s that first met in a room in the 500 block of Water Street. In 1882, the members built a large frame church building on Water Street. After the Rev. James Wilson came in 1889, they constructed a brick building. In 1914, they started construction of a brick building west of Main Street. By 1922, they had over 400 members, and owned all their buildings free and clear, including two residences as well, one of which served as a parsonage. The groups sponsored by the church included the Allen Christian Endeavor, a choir, Sunday Schoolteachers' meetings, and class meetings (Sims 1923, 3).

The Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, organized around 1878 as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Baptist Church, first met in a blacksmith shop on Main Street. Later in the 1870s they used a house on Water Street, and subsequently moved to Wichita Street. They began construction of a brick church building in 1917. By 1923, they had between five and six hundred members. They sponsored Junior and Senior B.Y.P.U., a Mission Circle, Teachers' Training Class, a choir and sewing circle. St. Mary Missionary Baptist Church, located in 1922 at 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Wabash Avenue, was organized in 1910. It suffered in its early years without pastors and from indebtedness. The congregation worked to raise money, and began an annex in the 1920s. They sponsored a working Union for the young and old, Missionary Society, choir, Teacher's meetings, S.S. Club, and held Friday Church Socials (Sims 1923, 4-5).

The Fifteenth Street M.E. Church was organized in 1910, and by 1922, its congregation had grown to about eighty-five members. At that time, it not only owned the church building at Wabash Avenue and 15<sup>th</sup> Street, but the accompanying parsonage and two lots. The minister, Rev. Walton Brown, also owned a newspaper in connection with his church work *The People's Elevators*. The church sponsored a Senior League, choir, Ladies' Aid, the W.H.M. Society, Stewarts' Serving Club, Pastor's Aid, and the Excelsior Club (Sims 1923, 6-7).

St. Matthew C. M. E. Church was organized by Reverend Plummer Suttles in 1916, and was first located in a residence at 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Mosley Avenue. With the aid of friends from other churches, nine charter members purchased a house and two lots at 1156 N. Mosley. The house served both as a place of worship as well as the pastor's residence. In 1922 it had a membership of forty-three and was located at the corner of 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Mosley Avenue. The Epworth League, N. C. Cleaves Literary Society, and Woman Mission Society were among the clubs they sponsored. By 1926, the congregation needed larger facilities. They purchased the present property at 841 N. Cleveland. Under the leadership of Rev. D.W. Bass, they started construction on a new building (still extant) in 1945, completing the building in 1947. They purchased a parsonage at 1953 N. Spruce in the 1950s (Hammond ca. 2007). The Church



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of God on 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Mosley Avenue had about thirty members in 1922, while the Indiana Avenue Church of Christ at 627 Indiana Avenue had about thirty-five. It was organized in 1920. Other churches in 1922 included the Grant Memorial Chapel, A. M. E. Church at the corner of 16<sup>th</sup> and North Mosley Avenue, and the New Hope Baptist Church at the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Ohio Avenue (Sims 1923, 7).

These and other smaller churches played a critical role in not only the religious lives of black Wichitans, but also in the social, business, educational and charitable facets of African Americans. In order to coordinate the many facets of the church experience, the Wichita Colored Ministerial League was organized in the early twentieth century for the purpose of bringing together all ministers and heads of religious Christian organizations. In addition to discussing religious issues, they met to "study civic, social, economic, political, and religious conditions as to how they may affect the welfare of the race and community; act as a harmonious unity through the pulpit and press in promoting the interest of the colored race and Christian Church." (Sims 1923,9) They maintained an office at the Water Street YMCA.

Although the earliest churches were located near the courthouse, by 1950 there were several churches in the McAdams neighborhood serving African Americans. As previously noted, the number of churches in this relatively small district was extremely high compared to other parts of Wichita, again underscoring the importance of African American churches to the community (Ward 1995, 2). The churches from the mid-twentieth century included the Church of God in Christ, St. Mary's M.E. Church, St. Mathew Church, the New Hope Baptist Church, St. Augustine Episcopal Church, Wabash Avenue Church, Church of Christ, St. Peter Claver Roman Catholic Church, Indiana Christian Church, St. Mary's Baptist Church, the Sanctified Church of Christ, as well as two other "Church of God" and the Bible Auditorium building. (Sanborn Map Company, *Wichita City Directories*). Many of these churches were playing important roles in the growing Civil rights movement.

Other significant institutions in the African American community that helped forge a sense of racial unity and independence were the black-owned businesses. As early as 1874, a group of blacks operated an ox yoke factory in Wichita. That same year, Alexander Clark opened a blacksmith shop on Main Street, advertising that he would "do work for all parties irrespective of race, color, or previous condition of servitude" (Miner 1982, 100). Most African American businesses, however, catered to the retail needs or services of the community, and also employed African Americans who were denied jobs in similar positions in Wichita. Particularly by the 1920s when segregation was firmly entrenched in Wichita, black entrepreneurship was at its peak. The 1922-1923 *Negro Year Book* boasted of over one hundred black businesses. Because they had to compete with white companies, black newspapers strongly urged their readers patronize stores owned by their own race. Many who operated these commercial enterprises later emerged as community leaders, with their business background having provided them with leadership training.

The most successful businesses were usually those that accommodated personal services that were denied to blacks by white business owners, such as undertakers, barbers and beauticians. The Jackson Mortuary is an example of a personal service business that started by serving the black community.

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Abner Jackson Sr. started an ambulance service in 1926 at 628 N. Main. This grew into a mortuary service that eventually relocated to 1125 E. 13<sup>th</sup> Street and is in operation today (Jackson Mortuary n.d.). Like Jackson Mortuary, African American businesses either followed or helped shape the settlement patterns, moving their businesses if necessary to follow their customers, or anchoring a new neighborhood and drawing residents. The 1950 update to Wichita's Sanborn maps shows several small businesses located on E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street between N. Mosley and Mathewson Streets. A few other businesses were located on the northern and southern boundaries along E. 13<sup>th</sup> and E. Murdock, and a small animal hospital run by Dr. Perry was in the 1300 block of Cleveland (Sanborn Map Company).

African American newspapers served as a key component in the development of the community by writing about news, social events, promoting black businesses, as well as national and local coverage of interest to African Americans. The first African American newspaper in the greater plains region was the *Herald of Freedom*, first published in Wakarusa, Kansas on October 21, 1854, only twenty-seven years after the first black newspaper in the country, *Freedom's Journal*, was founded in New York in 1827 (Wishart 2004, 7). It wasn't until the Exoduster movement of the late 1870s, however, that there were sufficient numbers of African Americans in the state to warrant many newspapers, and black newspapers began to proliferate across the state. These newspapers were critical to the fledgling African American communities in Kansas prior to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s as the traditional white press did not cover much news about blacks. After the civil rights movement, many white newspapers finally began to cover news about the entire city, and additionally hired black reporters and editors. At this point, blacks moved to the white press as their primary news source, and the black press then shifted to reporting more community news (Wishart 2004, 7).

Although a majority of the black newspapers in Wichita were short-lived, they all focused on information and news that was generally left out of the white mainstream newspapers. With so many newspapers, there were sometimes feuds, with scathing remarks or accusations flung at rival newspapers or their editors (Rutledge 1985, 24). Newspapers from the 1960s often focused on civil rights, although even the earlier newspapers would cover politics or issues that concerned the community. When some Wichita residents first began talking about the possibility of segregating public schools in 1894 and later in 1906, the black newspapers expressed editorial opinions (Van Meter 1977, 86, 114). The newspapers also covered social events, such as visitors from out of town, church activities, clubs and social events, as well as celebrating the accomplishments of the local African American community. For those newspapers that were self-published, they also provided printing services for the black community. The *Negro Star*, for example, published the 1922-1923 *Negro Year Book* which not only listed businesses and residents, but provided a brief history on many black institutions in Wichita. A few of the African American newspapers published in Wichita, with their dates of publication, include: *Heart of the City* (1991-199 ); *Kansas Globe* (1887-1889); *Kansas Journal* (1940-1944); *Negro Star* (1908-1954); *People's Elevator* (1924-1930, 1937-1943, published concurrently in both Wichita and Independence); *Wichita Searchlight* (1899-1914); *Wichita Globe* (1887-1889); *Wichita Protest* (1918-1931); *Wichita Times* (1970-1978); and the *Wichita Tribune* (1896-1900) (Savage 1976, 363-364).

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Social and fraternal organizations and charitable groups were also key community-building institutions in Wichita's African American population. Some of the more significant organizations include the Arkansas Valley Lodge No. 21, A.F. & A.M., the Water Street YMCA (later called Hutcherson YMCA), and the Mary Talbert Bureau of the YWCA. In the 1920s, the Mary Talbert branch of the YWCA was founded to serve African American women in Wichita. After first meeting in a large room at 628 N. Main, in 1926 the central branch purchased a two-story building at 818 N. Water in 1926 and remodeled it as the Mary B. Talbert branch (Tihen Notes from 1926 *Wichita Beacon*, 11). The white branch of the Wichita YMCA held Bible Classes for young African American men as early as 1889, the growing black population felt a need for their own separate organization. In 1908, a group of African Americans met to formulate a plan for the organization of a YMCA branch for "Colored Men and Boys." With approval from the white association, they moved into their first home at the Coleman Building at 535 N. Main. They next operated out of 615 N. Main, providing larger facilities and the ability to organize a band, gym classes and athletic teams. In 1916, they purchased land at Central and Water, and named their branch after their location. W. L. Hutcherson was hired as Executive Secretary in 1922 (Sims 1923, 8-9). The organization officially joined the Wichita YMCA as a branch in 1927. The branch moved to its present location at 1221 Cleveland in 1941, and it was renamed the W. L. Hutcherson Branch in honor of its former executive secretary who died at the age of 36 in 1931 (Tihen).

One of the largest fraternal organizations for African Americans in Wichita was the Arkansas Valley Lodge No. 21, A.F. & A. M. The Wichita chapter was organized on June 27, 1885, and by 1923, it boasted over one hundred active members. In its early years, meetings were conducted at 517 N. Main, but its balls and parties were held at the Garfield and Armory Halls. In 1910, construction began on their own building at 615 N. Main (National Register of Historic Places, 1977). It was designed by African American Josiah Walker, with several of the lodge brothers serving as subcontractors. As one of the most prominent black-owned buildings in Wichita, other organizations were allowed to use the building, including the Knights of Pythias, the Odd Fellows, the Knights of Tabors, the S.M.T., UBF Lodge, Lutie Brown Chapter, Excelsior Club, Hurst and Colman Hall, and Massey Hall. In 1920, the second floor was rented out to an attorney, and T.L. Hackley rented the first floor office space. Although the members of the lodge at this time represented a cross-section of the African American community as far as employment was concerned, virtually all of Wichita's professional and middle class blacks were members. In addition to typical fraternal activities and entertainment, the lodge was involved in several charitable activities, and often helped out with other groups such as the YMCA (Rutledge 1985, 23, 28, 31).

The Prince Hall Masons were by no means the only black fraternal organization in Wichita. The 1922-1923 *Negro Year Book* lists several other groups. The Frederick Douglass No. 99 A.F. & A.M. was organized in 1918 and met 1229 N. Mosley. The Mt. Zion Chapter No. 17 R.A.M. was founded in 1900 by members of the Arkansas Valley Lodge. They simultaneously formed the Palestine Commander No. 12, Knights Templar. Other lodge groups in 1922 included the Emith Temple No. 30, Lutie A. Brown of E.E.S., Princess Chapter No. 12, O.E.S., Western Star Consistory No. 18, Peerless Princess Lodge No. 243, Home of the West Lodge No. 2908, Flower of Love Lodge No. 10147, Ruther Lodge No. 612,



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Knights of Pythias Taos Lodge No. 10, Arria Court of Calanthe, American Woodmen No. 3, Queen of West Temple No. 12, and Eureka Lodge No. 8 (Sims 1923,10-11).

Other men's groups in the 1920s include the Boue, Excelsior Club, and The Brotherhood of the Men of New Hope, while women had the B. T. Washington Club, Mission Society of the Women of New Hope, the City Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, and Alsbic. The YMCA sponsored many youth activities, and had separate groups like the Live Wire Club, the Booker T. Washington Hi-Y (high school boys), and the Triangle Club (7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade). The clubs had basketball teams, orchestra, glee club, and discussion groups (Sims 1923, 11-13). Fraternal organizations such as the Elks and Masons provided opportunities for black engagement in leadership, business contacts, and social activities. Women's clubs fostered cultural ideals, political activism, and often morality issues. Most importantly, these organizations provided support to its members in the era of segregation. Along with churches, these institutions worked together to provide environments that helped form a cohesive black community (Muraskin 1975, 27).

Although churches, fraternal organizations, and the Y's all had charitable arms, one of the most significant charitable community-wide organizations was founded in the early twentieth century. The first building to house the Phyllis Wheatley Children's Home, organized in 1919 with a motto "To Shelter and Protect Homeless Children," was located at 808 E. 13<sup>th</sup> Street (demolished). By 1920, the organization purchased a residence at 808 E. 13<sup>th</sup> Street for \$5,000. That building was expanded in 1922, but by 1934, the building was condemned. A new Phyllis Wheatley Children's Home was started in 1934 at the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and Mathewson. The \$10,000 building was constructed for sixty children, and was completed in 1935. In 1947, a new \$12,000 recreation building was dedicated in memory of A. A. Hyde (Tihen notes, *Wichita Eagle*, November 12, 1922). Located at 1422 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, the home offered many services to African American children, including religious, health, education, and recreational programs. Some of these services were offered on site, others utilized the local schools, Y's, and parks.

Shut out of white society's cultural and entertainment venues, African Americans in Wichita had to develop and promote their own sources of recreation. In the late 1880s, there was a special "colored people's" day set aside at several places of entertainment throughout the city, but in general blacks were not allowed at white places of entertainment. However, most of the all-black cultural organizations and events were rarely covered by white mainstream newspapers or the city directories. A few early exceptions include the notice in the local newspaper in August 1879 that the Hyers Sisters, a black troupe, presented an opera at Eagle Hall entitled "Urlina, the African Princess." (Miner, *The Early Years* 164) Also the Wichita "(Colored)" Central Band was listed in the 1883 City Directory. Organized in 1879, this group had ten members, and met three days a week in a building on the 200 block of Main Street. Sam Jones was the most notable member, singing baritone for the group (*Wichita City Directories*).

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By reading between the lines in the section discussing "Amusements" in the 1922-1923 *Negro Year Book*, it is clear that the public businesses open to whites for entertainment did not welcome Wichita's African Americans. Instead, entertainment was provided at either public parks, churches, the YMCA, or by the fraternal organizations. The Legion Band gave concerts on the YMCA grounds, in the Masonic Hall, and in the summer at McKinley Park on Sunday afternoons and Monrovia Park by special engagements. There was regular dancing every Monday night at the Masonic Hall, every night at Monrovia Park during summer, and on occasions at the Elks and Excelsior Clubs. As previously noted, the African American churches hosted social get-togethers, and all of the literary clubs were sponsored by churches. In 1922, these included the John Brown Literary Club, Frederick Douglas Literary Club, Cosmopolitan Literary Club, N.C. Cleave Literary Club and the Forum (Sims 1923, 12-13).

In the parks in the summer, there were numerous basket dinners and picnics. Although the 1922-1923 *Negro Year Book* notes that these occur "freely" in several parks through the city, officially only McKinley Park, located north of 15<sup>th</sup> Street between Ohio, was set aside for African Americans. Some of the parks listed in the *Negro Year Book* were not official city parks, but appear to have been vacant lots used by African Americans, such as the "Missouri Pacific" south of 13<sup>th</sup> Street between the Missouri Pacific Railway tracks and Main (Sims 1923, 13).

Monrovia Park, south of 13<sup>th</sup> Street between Mosley and Mead Avenues, was the home of the Monrovia Baseball Team. The sport of baseball provided one of the rare examples of the mingling of races during Wichita's segregation period of the early twentieth century. In the time between the two world wars, it was a rare venue where whites and black met without acrimony. The Negro National League (NNL) was established in 1920 at a Kansas City YMCA. However, as it primarily targeted cities with large black populations, geographically isolated Midwest towns like Wichita had to organize their own leagues; thus the Western League of Professional Baseball Teams was formed (Colored Western League). This nine-team league included Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Omaha, St. Joseph, Coffeyville, Topeka, Independence, Kansas City (Kansas) and Wichita. The first game was played in Wichita on June 4, 1922, where the Wichita Monrovia's beat the Tulsa Oilers. The team was chartered under the Monrovia Corporation, had a capital stock valued at ten thousand dollars in 1922, and their own ballpark at 12<sup>th</sup> and Mosley. Not only did this enable them to schedule league games and host other teams, the park became a key site for other social activities for Wichita's black community (Pendleton 2001, 147).

While the Monrovia's were one of the most talented and successful teams in the 1920s, there were other all-black teams in Wichita. One was the Cudahy Rex team, sponsored by the Cudahy meat packing company. It was ironic that while the sponsorship of a black team by a corporation indicates some tolerance, the same company also sponsored a separate white team; clearly Wichita was not yet ready for interracial teams. This irony is topped by the game held in 1925 between the Monrovia's and a Wichita Ku Klux Klan team. Prior to the game, the fears about what might possibly occur was verbalized in a Wichita newspaper:

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Strangle holds, razors, horsewhips, and other violent implements of argument will be barred at the baseball game at Island Park . . . when the baseball club of Wichita Klan Number 6, goes up against the Wichita Monroviens, Wichita's crack colored team.

The colored boys are asking all their supporters to be on hand to watch [the] contest . . . due to the wide difference of the two organizations . . . altho . . . all the fans will see is baseball. (Pendleton 2001,151)

By the end of the 1920s, the Monroviens began to fade and other black teams emerged. Also, Wichita hosted increasing numbers of interracial baseball games, with the Kansas City Monarchs of the National Negro League becoming local favorites. By the end of the 1920s, Wichita was a regular stop on the Monarchs' Midwestern tours. The Monarchs even introduced night games to Wichita in 1939 when they brought their own generators and temporary lights, preceding the night games in the white leagues. There were still local African American teams in the 1930s, including the Wolverines, Grays, Blue Devils, and Black Sox, as well as the Aztecs, an all-Mexican team (Pendleton 2001,151-154).

A victory for interracial games occurred statewide when an African American team participated in the Kansas state semi-pro championship tournament – the Colored Devils from Wichita. A few years later in August 1935, the first national semi-pro baseball championship played in Wichita's Lawrence Stadium. The championship game was less notable for Satchel Paige's superb pitching than for the fact he pitched for an interracial team, the Bismarcks of North Dakota. Baseball historian Jason Pendleton notes that baseball in Wichita and throughout the Midwest during the inter-war years clearly did not follow the established norms of segregation. Possible reasons vary from the fact there were so few African Americans that whites did not feel "threatened," to the fact that these smaller cities lacked Major League teams, and white citizens eager for local baseball thus more readily accepted black teams (142, 154-158). Jackie Robinson's breaking of the baseball color line with his acceptance onto a Major League baseball team in 1947 is listed as a key contribution in the fight to end segregation in the United States. A small part of this phenomenon had its roots in Wichita.

## **II. African American Elementary and Secondary Education in Wichita: 1870 - 1971**

Reflecting Kansans' ambivalent history toward race, the history of education in Wichita presents conflicting attitudes and treatment of African Americans. The earliest decades were ones of tolerance in the city's public schools and, at least according to policy, equal treatment of students of both races. Throughout much of the twentieth century, however, the segregation, which eventually worked its way into Wichita's schools, reflected the racist attitudes of the community. Although Topeka played a prominent role in the civil rights movement through the Supreme Court's landmark 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* that helped overturn segregation, in 1971 Wichita gained nationwide notoriety over its negotiations between its school district and the federal government concerning desegregation. More surprising, considering its past history of school segregation, the



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implementation of this decision would lead Wichita to be considered by some as one of the most successfully integrated districts in the nation during the 1970s.

Kansas enacted its first compulsory school attendance law in 1874, requiring all children between the ages of eight and fourteen, including African Americans, to attend at least twelve consecutive weeks of school every year. The compulsory attendance law was not followed in Wichita, or in many other Kansas towns for that matter, since it did not include any enforcement methods. Thus the percentage of children actually attending school in the early 1870s was relatively low for both whites and blacks. In 1878, there were only five school-age black children recorded for Wichita's Third Ward and two in the First Ward. Some children may have attended school intermittently, making an accurate count difficult. Just a year later, an 1879 survey showed 1,141 white and 30 black children in "eleven run-down Wichita schoolrooms." (Miner 1982, 47). With such small numbers of students, not only was the idea of a separate school for African Americans unwarranted, but in Kansas, it was against the law. However, in 1879 the state of Kansas granted permission for, but did not require, school districts to maintain separate elementary schools for black and white students in first class cities (populations over 15,000) (Bright 1956, 369). This did not extend to high schools, except in the case of Sumner High School, when Kansas City, Kansas was allowed to establish in 1905 the only "Negro" high school in the state. At the time this law was passed, Wichita was still a city of the second class. Surprisingly, with so few African American students, Wichita's Board of Education nonetheless in 1879 and again in 1880 considered either establishing a separate building or a wing in the old Fourth Ward building for African American children, although no action was taken. (Board of Education; June 2, 1879, September 6, 1880)

During the real estate boom and corresponding population growth of the 1880s, Wichita reached the status of a first class city. Likely because there were still not enough African American students to warrant maintaining separate schools in the early 1880s, Wichita's classrooms remained integrated. As Wichita's African American population grew during the mid- to late 1880s, the schools not only remained integrated but in 1889, an act was passed specifically stating that there would be no discrimination in education due to race in Wichita (Kansas Session Laws, 1889). Another possible factor against setting up a segregated school was the distribution of African American children. Figures published in the *Wichita Eagle* on June 24, 1887 reveal that there were African American school age children in all but one of the city's wards.

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**Table 4: Wichita School Age Population Distribution, 1887** (*Wichita Eagle*, June 24, 1887)

Ward	Whites age 5-21	Blacks age 5-21
First	2,584	290
Second	1,226	338
Third	1,000	97
Fourth	1,894	268
Fifth	757	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7,881</b>	<b>993</b>

In other Kansas towns during the late nineteenth century, separate schools were either being established, or their residents were exploring the possibility. In 1890, residents of Independence requested segregated schools, but a Kansas court ruled that the city, which had second-class status, did not have the authority to maintain separate facilities. Even though Wichita voters had rejected separate schools and the state legislature passed an act forbidding discrimination, as Sondra Van Meter noted in her history of the Wichita Public Schools, "Legal acceptance did not eliminate social rejection." (56) In 1889, the Board of Education instructed that only single desks be purchased from that point on, and that the practice of double desks be phased out. A Wichita newspaper reported that this decision was made in view of the "Park and Emerson schools where there is a mixed attendance of white and colored children." (*Wichita Beacon*, September 18, 1889)

African American students comprised four percent of the public school enrollment through the 1890s, closely mirroring their percentage of the overall population but representing an increase in the actual number of students. Perhaps because of their growing numbers, or possibly because of the increasingly racist attitudes of white citizens both in Wichita and across the United States, the 1890s changed from the earlier period of relative tolerance towards integration. Indications of this change in attitude are reflected by the meetings held during this decade by Wichita's African Americans to show, for the most part, their support for continued integration of the city's schools. On January 19, 1891, a meeting was held in St. Paul's African Methodist Episcopal Church. A group representing Wichita's African Americans drafted a resolution protesting discrimination in proposed state legislation which stated that they had no faith in separate schools, and furthermore protested against discrimination in the cities of the first class as well as cities of the second and third classes. At this meeting they also elected delegates to a state convention at Topeka, with Rev. B. W. Watson serving as chairman, and thirteen other citizens selected as delegates (*Wichita Eagle*, January 20, 1891).

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In December 1893, a group of African Americans met again to discuss the question of separate schools for the races. At this meeting, an earlier opponent of segregation, O. L. Boyd, changed his mind and attempted to lead a movement for separate schools. He felt that "colored teachers could do more for the education of colored children than white teachers." His opinions were widely denounced at this and at subsequent meetings where speakers sought to "crunch his theories in their infancy" and declared Boyd was an enemy to his race. Black leaders then prepared a resolution censoring Boyd and supporting the local public schools as they presently were set up. Continued support of the status quo concerning school integration was demonstrated by local African Americans in the newspaper *National Baptist World*. On October 3, 1894, the editors wrote of their satisfaction regarding the many black children attending Wichita's public schools and of the importance of education in raising intellectual standards. The century ended, though, with an important milestone for the African American community when Thaddeus Summit became the first black male to graduate from Wichita High School in 1898. When he walked over to receive his diploma, his fellow students cheered and applauded (*Wichita Eagle*, September 18, 1889). Also, in spite of growing calls for segregated schools, Wichita remained the only city of the first class in Kansas that prohibited segregation, thus running in opposition to state and national trends. Beginning in the 1880s, the U.S. Supreme Court through its decisions had been moving toward increasing segregation of the races. The *Plessy v. Ferguson* case in 1896 upheld the constitutionality of separate railway coaches. Three years later, the separate-but-equal doctrine was incorporated into education in the *Cummings v. County Board of Education* case. Wichita's public schools were operating counter to this growing nationwide movement of segregation.

Eventually, opinions supporting separate schools for the races began appearing in Wichita newspapers after the turn of the century. In 1902, the *Eagle* editor noted that Topeka had erected a separate school house, and although the editor was not happy that the "white taxpayer" had to pay for the school, neither did he support "forced mixing" of the races in integrated schools (*Wichita Eagle*, April 30, 1902). By 1905, the *Eagle* came out firmly in support of segregated schools. The debate over segregated schools in Wichita was always focused on the elementary level, however. As the following table of enrollment in 1904 shows that since there were so few black students at Wichita High School (amounting to less than one percent), segregation at the high school level was not a concern during the first decades of the twentieth century.

**Table 5: African American Enrollment in Wichita Public Schools – 1904** (Van Meter 1977, 155).

Carleton	12	Irving	52	Park	48
Emerson	56	Kellogg	5	Washington	9
Ingalls	53	Lincoln	12	Webster	25
High School				9	



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Although the Wichita Board of Education's own policies prohibited segregation, in 1905 the state of Kansas provided justification for the practice when the State Superintendent of Public Instruction released a lengthy argument defending segregation of the races. With this rationalization, a resolution was presented to the board on January 2, 1906 to organize and maintain "the separate educating of the white and colored" as "more in keeping with the ideals and wishes of a majority of patrons;" the resolution passed unanimously (Board of Education, January 2, 1906). The measure would be implemented, at the elementary level only, in the fall of 1906. Thus segregation in the public schools, which had not been practiced and in fact had been prohibited since the city's founding, was finally implemented in Wichita.

African American parents protested the planned actions before the board on February 5, 1906. They had three main arguments against the plan as presented by their spokesperson, Mr. Bettis. First, they argued that Wichita's African American children were scattered throughout the city. Next, the cost to maintain separate schools was more than the board could afford. Finally, their children would advance more if they had white students as their models. In spite of the fact that it was not clear if Wichita even had the legal authority to separate students by race, in July 1906, the board voted to set aside the west wing of Park School and a portion of the playground for black children, determining that they would work on enabling legislation later (Van Meter 1977, 114).

African Americans again appeared before the board to oppose the separate school, while the black newspaper, *The Wichita Searchlight*, advised parents in September 1906 to enroll their students in the same school as they always attended. Sallie Rowles followed this advice since her thirteen-year-old daughter Fannie had previously attended Emerson School, which was but a short distance from their house. When they arrived at Emerson in September 1906, the school refused to admit her. Rowles filed a Writ of Mandamus, but the Sedgwick County District Court ruled in favor of the Board of Education. She appealed to the Kansas Supreme Court and won in July 1907 (*Sallie Rowles v. the Board of Education of the City of Wichita, et al*, No. 15281). While the appeal was pending during the 1906-1907 school year, however, the separate section of Park School was set up and three African American teachers were hired; Sallie Rowles was the substitute teacher (*Wichita Eagle*, November 6, 1906).

In order to provide a legal justification for their plans for segregation, Wichita's Board of Education prepared a petition with signatures requesting that the Kansas Legislature strengthen the law providing for establishment of separate schools for the races. Their appeals to the legislature went nowhere until 1909, when the state senator from Sedgwick County introduced Senate Bill No. 250. With the passage of this bill, the 1889 law was repealed and it gave the Wichita Board of Education the right to segregate students. Enrollment figures from the first decade of the twentieth century indicate that the introduction of segregated schools in Wichita may be associated with a drop in the number of African American students. In 1900, almost seven percent of Wichita's male students were African Americans, and in 1902, six percent of both sexes were African Americans. In 1906, the percentage of African American students dropped to 5% or less, and by 1908, it dropped again to 4.5% of the male students and 4.1% of the females (Van Meter 1977, 115).

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From 1906 through 1911, African American students attended the separate section within Park Elementary. Starting in the 1912-1913 school year, four new elementary schools were opened for blacks: Frederick Douglass, Eighteenth Street, Grand and L'Ouverture. There were 517 students enrolled in these four schools the first year in grades 1-8, and fourteen graduated by the end of the school term. Douglass Elementary was located at 617 N. Water, in the oldest historically African American neighborhood in Wichita. L'Ouverture Elementary was first located at 13<sup>th</sup> and Mosley. All African American children in kindergarten through sixth grade living north of 11<sup>th</sup> Street and east of Santa Fe Avenue attended L'Ouverture, as did all black students from the entire city in the seventh and eighth grades. Students who lived a long distance from school were transported, but until 1944, Douglass students that wished to take manual training and domestic arts had to walk almost two miles to the classes held at L'Ouverture. As the African American population continued to expand into the North End neighborhood the formerly white Ingalls Elementary was designated as segregated school for black students in 1927. The school at 923 Cleveland was renamed Dunbar in honor of Paul Lawrence Dunbar, the African American poet and author. Continued population growth in the neighborhood into the 1930s led to a new addition to Dunbar in 1936, containing two classrooms for Kindergarten and first grade and an assembly room (Davis 1997, 229-231).

While the African American population in Wichita began to grow after World War II, the effort to bring about integrated schools grew as well. Nationwide, there were new reports and studies which discussed the harm of segregation. Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* was published in 1944. This work was later cited in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case and is credited with laying the groundwork for racial integration. Wichita citizens, both black and white, began to address the issues of racial inequality in the post-war years as well. In particular, there were several efforts on the part of community residents during the late 1940s to address the issue of educational segregation. On May 20, 1946, Z. Wetmore, a local white attorney, appeared before the Wichita Board of Education to request that no more black schools be built. On the agenda for this meeting was the discussion of constructing new buildings for Dunbar and L'Ouverture, which Wetmore viewed as a continuation of segregation. Two board members denied segregation as a factor in their selection of sites and buildings, and stated that these schools were merely serving the students in the surrounding neighborhood. A few months later at the August 5, 1946 board meeting, parents of Douglass Elementary School pupils presented a petition requesting that seventh and eighth grade students living in the area bounded by Main Street, Central Avenue, Tenth Street and North Waco Avenue be allowed to attend Horace Mann and Central Intermediate Schools, instead of L'Ouverture School, and for kindergarten age children to attend Park and Emerson Schools instead of Dunbar and L'Ouverture. Their petition also requested equitable facilities for first through sixth graders at Douglass School. Superintendent Dr. Wade C. Fowler recommended that the petition be approved, and the Board agreed (*Wichita Eagle* 21 May 1946). Although the minutes of the Board of Education indicate a growing dissatisfaction with the city's segregated schools, another report from the period painted a rosier picture of the situation. A committee report prepared for a Race Relations Clinic held in Wichita on October 2-3, 1947 noted that while segregation continued in elementary schools, for the intermediate



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schools "there is no segregation and that Negroes participate in sports, extra [curricular] activities, and in school honors." (Michener 1947, 2).

The local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) also became involved with education in the 1940s. In 1947, the president of the local chapter, James C. Douglas, petitioned the Board of Education opposing segregation of pupils and teachers. The next year, Rae Miller offered another petition signed by nearly 600 residents which presented several requests: to abolish all racial segregation in the Wichita School System; that no new school buildings be erected for "Negro pupils" in any part of the city; that any pupil be admitted to the school nearest their home; and that any qualified teacher be permitted to teach any place in the system (Board of Education, May 5, 1947). The Board nonetheless moved forward with their previously discussed plans for new buildings for Dunbar and L'Ouverture elementary schools. The new building for Dunbar was built on the Cleveland Avenue property in 1950; L'Ouverture was relocated to a new site at 1539 Ohio and was completed in 1951 (Davis 1997, 101, 231).

Although the United States Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954 made it unconstitutional to establish separate schools for black and white students, in the Kansas cities that had maintained separate schools, the boards of education simply changed their policies to open schools to all children based on their places of residence. In practice, with most cities having concentrations of blacks in segregated neighborhoods, African American students continued to attend the same school (Bright 1956, 369-370). As a result of changing mores and beliefs about segregation, both in the community and across the nation, the Wichita Board of Education had already begun to move away from the idea of separate schools and teachers for blacks and whites. During the 1952-53 school, the board approved a resolution eliminating the racial segregation policy and allowing students to attend their neighborhood schools (Davis 1997, 229). This at least was the official policy, but in reality segregation remained entrenched for at least another two decades. At times, the district changed the attendance boundaries for elementary schools to appease white parents, which effectively maintained segregation. Also, the settlement patterns of the rapidly growing African American population worked against the practice of integration. As blacks moved to the north and east during this decade, residential blocks that were previously white rapidly shifted in composition; this was reflected in the enrollment of the associated neighborhood schools. First, the population in the historic African American neighborhood near the courthouse had declined to the point that Douglass Elementary was closed at the end of the 1956 term. Also, schools that were intended to be integrated ended up as segregated as those historically planned for blacks. Little Elementary School opened in the fall of 1954 as Wichita's first elementary school planned for integration; however the first year's enrollment had a 75/25 ratio of black-to-white students. By its third year of operation, the percent of African American students was nearly one hundred percent (Davis 1997, 97, 229). Fairmount Elementary School, located west of Hillside, also reflected the rapid residential shift in racial composition. The first African American student enrolled there in 1954. In 1957, Fairmount had only three percent African American students, but by 1959, 48.5 percent were black. At this point, though, it was the only integrated elementary school in the northeast which retained a white majority (Van Meter 1977, 319).



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Hoping to highlight the school as a successful example of integration, leaders from Wichita University petitioned the Board of Education in 1960 to hold Fairmount to a 50-50 ratio; they received approval from the Superintendent for a two-year trial, but the balance was already shifting to a 60/40 ratio of black-to-white students. Again the group from Wichita University requested that Fairmount's student population not only remain integrated, but that the faculty be integrated as well. The Board agreed in October 1960 to support racial integration at Fairmount, on an experimental basis only, for a period of two years. As whites continued to move out of the area, however, the ratio changed again; by the 1964-65 school year, seventy-seven percent of the students were black, and by the 1966-67 school year, it reached ninety percent (Van Meter 1977, 319-320; Davis 1997, 237). African American students at Mathewson Junior High School at 1847 N. Chautauqua reached a majority in the 1957-58 school year, and in three years changed to nearly ninety-eight percent of the enrollment (Davis 1997, 259).

In 1962, Wichita's Board of Education appointed a committee which developed a policy statement supporting integration in Wichita's public schools and desegregation for both pupils and teachers. The district's new policy was slightly more successful for faculty and staff than it was for students. In the fall of 1960, only five elementary schools had black teachers. The high schools only had token integration, with one African American teacher each at East and South High Schools. By September 1963, thirty-two Wichita schools had 156 black faculty or nursing staff; that increased to nearly fifty schools with integrated staff by 1968 (Van Meter 1977, 321). During the 1960s, however, the elementary schools basically remained segregated while the junior and senior high schools were, at least "on paper," purportedly integrated. Due to the segregated residential patterns in Wichita, though, some of the junior high schools such as Mathewson had a predominately African American student population. As a start towards integration, the Wichita School Board allowed a limited number of Mathewson students that lived in a restricted housing area to transfer to another school as long as it did not cause overcrowding or require the hiring of more teachers. In August 1962, the Board also approved the transfer of majority students to a school where they would be in minority, but white students had to remain at the predominately black schools (Board of Education, 20 August 1962).

Wichita's disparity between white and black schools remained evident at the elementary level, particularly in the number of portable school rooms. As of 1966, Isley already had seventeen portables when the Board approved construction of ten more, even though the Superintendent recommended the transfer of around five hundred students to other schools that had space, as the transportation costs were significantly less than the construction costs of the portables. Chester Lewis, president of the local NAACP chapter, responded in February 1966 by forwarding a seventy-six page document outlining the racist policies of the Wichita school district to the Secretary of U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). Among his charges were assertions that the Board of Education had segregated the school system with intentional racial gerrymandering of the school attendance boundaries, assigned teachers on a racial discriminatory basis, and assigned inferior curriculum to the black schools. In April 1966, Lewis filed new charges supplementing the ones filed earlier (Lane 176, 109-110).

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While the school board discussed expanding black elementary schools, plans for integrating Wichita's junior high schools moved forward for the 1966-1967 school term. A study completed in 1965 measured the needs of Wichita schools, and all of the segregated black elementary schools as well as the predominantly African American junior high schools ranked the highest in need. Partly in response to this study, the board allowed 125 African American students to transfer to the new Coleman Junior High School, located in one of the wealthiest sections of Wichita. In order to assist African American families with transportation to Coleman, a fund-raiser led by African American church and civic groups called "Operation Transport" began in August 1966. (Van Meter 1977, 323).

Prior to 1967, there had been few incidents of racial violence in Wichita's schools. The continued tensions over the segregation policies as well as the inequities among the schools were nearing the breaking point, however. At East High, which had the highest percentage of African American students among Wichita high schools, there had long been unrest over the representation of blacks in student activities. When cheerleaders were selected in 1967, twelve white girls were chosen from twenty-five candidates, while none of the five African American girls were chosen. Black students protested, and a few days later, a riot broke out among 250 blacks and whites (about half were not students) at Sandy's Drive-In, resulting in the stabbing of a television cameraman. Violence flared up again later that school year after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in April 1968 (*Wichita Eagle*, May 4, 1967; May 10, 1968).

In the meantime, the investigation of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) was slowly moving forward. A team from HEW came to Wichita in summer of 1967, resulting in a report stating their opinion that Wichita had not made any effort to integrate. Returning in 1968, they requested that the Wichita school district comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but set no deadlines for that compliance. In the interim, the Board presented their plans for compliance with the Civil Rights Act. Although the Board's plan would largely integrate the secondary schools, the elementary schools would remain segregated; African Americans were free to enroll at other schools, however. Wichita's compliance plan was adopted on January 6, 1969 (*Wichita Beacon*, 7 January 1969; Van Meter 1977, 325-326).

Although the federal government determined many aspects of the plan to be adequate, it still ruled that the continued segregation of elementary schools was not in compliance with the Civil Rights Act. Recognizing the severity of the consequences, the district set about to rework the compliance plan. On January 5, 1970, the district recommended removing all portable classroom units, no new construction of facilities at the present black schools, integration of staff, the ultimate integration of pupils at all levels, and closing L'Ouverture and Dunbar schools as attendance centers for 1970-1971 school year (Lane 1976, 132-136). On January 19, 1970, HEW informed Wichita that the district was still out of compliance, eventually charging district officials with thirty-one violations of the Civil Rights Act. Enforcement proceedings were recommended. The hearings on the case against Unified School District #259, held at the Federal Office Building in Kansas City, Missouri on June 8-12, 1970, received national interest. To date, there had been no Supreme Court ruling on de facto segregation, and these hearings

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might establish a landmark legal precedent for the government and local boards of education. In the meantime, Wichita moved forward with plans for integration in the fall of 1970 by asking for volunteer transfers from white families to attend L'Ouverture and for African American students that wished to attend white schools (Lane 1976, 137-138, 147, 153-156, 169-172; Van Meter 1977, 355-360).

While the integration of the elementary schools proceeded relatively smoothly, racial tensions increased at the secondary levels, with violence occurring at West and South high schools and at several of the junior highs. A race riot at Heights High School resulted in the deployment of more than one hundred sheriff's officers, city police, and highway patrol officers. In the meantime, the district formed faculty sounding groups, human relations committees, and changed the selection methods of students for school organizations. They created multi-ethnic educational materials and appointed Frank Crawford, an African American, as director of intergroup relations in Wichita schools (Lane 1976, 173-177).

Almost a year after the federal hearings were held in Kansas City, the HEW examiner released his decision in March 1, 1971, ruling that the school administration, the Board of Education, and the City of Wichita were in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Furthermore, federal assistance would be terminated with the exception of some programs such as Head Start, the Child Nutrition Act, and Manpower. Some of his conclusions, which were based on civil rights precedents, were that:

- The existence of contiguous residential areas -- one from which Negroes were excluded and one not -- coupled with the conformance of school boundaries with the racial boundary separating the areas, gives rise to an inference that the board intended the result achieved when the schools serving the areas were racially segregated. . . .
- A finding that the school district has segregated the faculties of its elementary schools is alone sufficient to conclude that the district has created de jure segregation. . . .
- Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. When a school district maintains a system that includes a large number of minority pupils and offers those pupils a demonstrably unequal education, the board is discriminating against those students and must take corrective action. . . .
- . . . Moreover, the adverse effects of a racially segregated education are cumulative, so that desegregation in the primary grades is an educational as well as constitutional imperative. (from Lane 1976, 12-193)

Members of the Board of Education, staff, and several Wichita residents flew to Washington, D.C. to meet with representatives of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to negotiate a compromise. With the assistance of staff from U.S. Representative Garner E. Shriver and Senator Robert Dole, they forged an agreement to close three black schools and several white schools that had fewer than six hundred students. Furthermore, nearly 4,000 black students would be bused to white elementary schools and approximately 1,000 white students would be bused to formerly all black schools. Wichita was pleased that HEW agreed to the compromise, as only twenty days later on April 20, 1971, the Supreme Court decided in the *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* case



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that federal courts could order schools to bus children to achieve racial balance. At that point, Wichita would have been forced to accept all of HEW's demands (Lane 1976, 258, 266-268).

The Wichita school district, whose case was followed with interest across the nation, was only the second system in the country to be examined so closely by the Federal Office of Civil Rights. The plan met with little approval from either the black or white community. African Americans disliked the inequality of the desegregation plan, as the burden of cross-busing clearly fell on the black students. Some also protested the closing of Dunbar, Isley, and Little schools. White families, in the meantime, were dismayed over the dismantling of the neighborhood school concept, resulting in some white families moving away from Wichita. The compliance plan, as presented to Wichita residents on April 27, 1971, included the following proposals:

1. L'Ouverture and Mueller will be integrated on the approximate ratios of 84% white and 16% black.
2. Ingalls must have no less than 20% white pupils in attendance.
3. No portables will be used at any of these three schools, and the schools will be operated only at their permanent building capacity.
4. Fairmount school will be closed and its use discontinued for any purpose
5. Dunbar, Little and Isley will be discontinued as elementary attendance centers, but will be used for other substantial educational purposes.
6. No peripheral schools will be allowed to become majority black schools.
7. A home base concept for elementary pupils may be incorporated in the plan. (from Lane 1976, 197-198)

In spite of community misgivings, the Board approved the desegregation plan in May 1971. To the dismay of the district, HEW now wanted to revoke their approval because of the recent Supreme Court decision. The district hurriedly revised a few sections of the plan and implemented it before school started in the fall of 1971-1972. Wichita schools therefore opened in August 1971 and were fully integrated in grades K-12. Although there were still incidents of violence and parent groups continued to campaign against busing, the success of the first year was revealed when increasing numbers of white students volunteered to return to Ingalls, Mueller and L'Ouverture elementary schools for the 1972-1973 school year. Another positive step had been the election of Jo Brown in 1971, who was the first African American woman to serve on the Wichita School Board. On September 12, 1973, all of the federal offices involved with the Wichita case dismissed the non-compliance actions (Lane 1976, 258, 266-268; Van Meter 1977, 365-368).

In spite of the federal oversight, local tensions and community discontent, the resulting school desegregation plan put Wichita in the national spotlight in a positive manner. A study completed in 1973 found that Wichita was one of only ten school systems in the country that was completely desegregated (*Wichita Beacon*, November 26, 1973). As district historian Sondra Van Meter notes, "As late as 1976, Wichita was the largest city in the Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska region with a

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desegregation program that had been operating for several years. Topeka, Kansas City and Omaha school districts, accused of violating the 1964 Civil Rights Act, called upon Wichita for advice and recommendations." The new system was not without its detractors. Most notably, local NAACP president Chester Lewis remained unconvinced of its effectiveness, noting that the plan had not raised the achievement level of African American students, most of whom had yet to break free of the poverty cycle (Van Meter 1977, 368-369). In short, the school system had not helped to achieve the larger goals of community-wide equality and integration.

However, Lewis' disappointment nonetheless reveals the importance of education to the majority of African Americans in Wichita. A quality education was viewed as a vital component of the road to equality, and was key to raising the standard of living for most African Americans. The historic black schools were also important facilities where the sense of the sense of community was fostered in Wichita's African American neighborhoods, through sports, school programs, and organizations like drill teams and drum and bugle corps. Dunbar Elementary School, for example, served the neighborhood beyond education when it housed a day nursery during World War II. Its annual spring festival was adopted by many other schools in the district (Davis 1997, 231). Finally, students at the historic African American schools could see their teachers and principals serving successfully in important positions, providing additional justification to the argument that a quality education was the means to both individual and community betterment.

### III. Civil Rights in Wichita: 1947-1972

In the 1870s, Kansas was one of only three states in the country that had passed legislation on civil rights. When the Kansas Legislature enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1874, it prohibited "any distinction on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Violation of this was a misdemeanor and would result in a substantial fine (State of Kansas 1913, 82). Although this established a guarantee to legal freedom, historian James Leiker notes the state's contradictory position with a historical lack of commitment to political and social equality for blacks (Leiker 2002, 221). This contradiction continued through 1954 with the landmark Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. Although the state had legalized education segregation at the elementary level in cities of the first class, it may also have been the more tolerant attitude of white Kansans towards blacks, where they rejected racial inferiority and actually believed the "separate-but-equal" doctrine, that led the plaintiffs to believe they had a chance of success (Leiker 2002, 225-226). While the capital city's role in the national civil rights movement is well-known, the history of the civil rights movement in Wichita has been overlooked in the past, and continues to be virtually unknown outside of the city and state. Yet during this period, one of the nation's most influential leaders in the "Young Turks" movement within the NAACP operated from Wichita – attorney Chester I. Lewis, Jr. (1929-1990).<sup>ii</sup> Furthermore, the

<sup>ii</sup>The NAACP's "Young Turks" organized in 1962 because some members feared the NAACP would be left behind by the growing militancy of the civil rights movement. By the late 1960s, the Young Turks also were concerned about the association's position with regard to urban riots, the War on Poverty, and the Vietnam War

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nation's first sustained, and more significantly, first successful student sit-in was held in Wichita in 1958, two years before such actions were attempted in the South. Part of the reason for the achievements in civil rights won by African Americans may lie in Wichita's Midwestern location on the central plains of the United States, away from the violence associated with the movement in the South. This may also be the reason for the obscurity in which the leaders of the movement and their deeds remain. Although the struggle for equal rights is viewed by many as ongoing, for the purpose of this MPDF this context's period of significance starts in 1947, when the school board was petitioned by the local chapter of the NAACP to end segregation, resulting in the formation of the first racial relations committee. It extends through 1972 when the local school board settled its federal desegregation case. Wichita's African American leadership was also changing and becoming more fragmented during this period. The black community was splintering into several groups, many with similar goals but with different bases of power. Furthermore, the national civil rights movement was experiencing setbacks. President Richard Nixon had just won re-election, and as part of his efforts to win over voters in the South, his administration began dismantling the programs of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty which had been instrumental in helping to advance the economic situation of African Americans in the 1960s.

During its pioneering days, Wichitans had a relatively open attitude towards newcomers, including African Americans. This open attitude towards other races was relatively short-lived. By the real-estate boom of the 1880s, Wichita was transforming into a "real" city, and had left behind its more laissez-faire attitude towards minorities (Miner 1988, 47). As the city's largest minority group, African Americans would eventually face organized segregationist or discriminatory institutions and customs, both overt and subtle. Some practices changed slowly. Wichita public schools, for example, remained integrated until 1906, even as the housing choices for blacks were becoming more restricted. Even though there were never any discriminatory housing laws or ordinances formally in place in Wichita, real estate practices and restrictive covenants would gradually limited the areas of town in which blacks could lease or buy properties.

The first formalized act of discrimination towards African Americans occurred when the Board of Education voted to segregate schools in 1906. In defiance of this new policy, a local African American parent, Sallie Rowles, tried to enroll her daughter in the neighborhood school where she had always attended. When the school refused, Rowles challenged this decision by filing a lawsuit. Eventually winning the case in 1907, the district nonetheless found a way to circumvent the ruling, and subsequently worked to eventually overturn the law upon which the decision was based (Van Meter 1977, 114-115). From 1906 through 1911, African American students were taught in a separate section of Park Elementary school. In 1911, the city passed a bond to build L'Ouverture and Douglass elementary schools, to be used solely for the education of African Americans; these schools opened in 1912. This action was again challenged in 1912 by an African American parent, who petitioned the school board to allow his daughter to a nearby school; the board refused his request (Miner 1988, 98).

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(Bracey 2002, vii). Historically, the term "Young Turks" referred to progressive members of the Ottoman society who were modernist and opposed to the status quo.



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Nationwide, the first decades of the twentieth century saw African Americans losing ground and rights that many felt had been secured at the end of the Civil War with the ratification of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1865, the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment in 1868, and the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment of 1870. The United States had passed legislation similar to the Kansas Civil Rights Act of 1874 just a year later. However, that law was rarely enforced, and in 1883, the Supreme Court ruled that the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1875 was unconstitutional. Lynching was becoming more commonplace, and the race riot of 1908 in Springfield, Illinois served as a wake-up call for many Americans.<sup>iii</sup> Partly in response to this, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was formed in February 1909 by white liberals as well as blacks (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People n.d.). The Wichita branch was organized in 1919 by H. F. Sims, publisher of the *Negro Star* newspaper, a few years after the first branch in Kansas was formed in 1913 in Kansas City. Only a year after the Wichita chapter organized, however, it suffered from internal discord, partly because of claims of preference towards the professional class. In 1921, the branch rallied to convince the Wichita City Commission to prohibit the showing of the movie *Birth of a Nation*, a controversial film which led to protests across the nation by both blacks and whites for its racial bias, although Kansas would eventually become one of only seven states that would censor the film (Eick 2001, 34-36; Leiker 2002, 217).

A conference on race relations was held in Wichita on February 17 and 18, 1924 under the direction of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the American Social Hygiene Association. As a result of this conference, the Wichita Council of Churches concurrently formed a commission and conducted a survey on race relations in Wichita. The subsequent report stated that "Such a survey was made because of the earnest desire of fair-minded white people in Wichita to understand their Negro neighbors." (Wichita Council of Churches 1924) Other outside factors influencing the formation of this commission may have been the increased activism of Wichita's African American community, as well as in reaction to recent events such as the East St. Louis race riot of 1917 and the Tulsa race riot of May 31, 1921 where "credible estimates of riot deaths range from fifty to three hundred." (Scott Ellsworth n.d.) Tense racial relations that existed in nearby northeastern Oklahoma were beginning to spill into southeastern Kansas. Even though the African American population was only about 5,600, the Ku Klux Klan had about 6,000 members in Wichita during the 1920s (Eick 2001, 18).

The Council of Churches report primarily provided statistics on health, employment, "leisure time and character forming agencies," welfare work, crime and delinquency, housing, schools, and churches; there were few conclusions or recommendations presented. However, there was a brief discussion of the improved coverage of African Americans in the white daily newspapers and hopes for the future of cooperation between white and black women in Wichita. While the conference was initiated by white residents, it appears that, at least for women, whites and blacks attended the conference in nearly equal

<sup>iii</sup> The majority of recorded lynchings occurred in the Southern states. Between 1882 and 1968, there were 54 recorded lynchings in Kansas: 35 white and 19 black (University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law, statistics compiled by the Archives at Tuskegee Institute). Before 1882, no reliable statistics are available, although in 1933 for an article in the *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, Genevieve Yost wrote that there had been 206 lynchings in Kansas up through that time, of which 38 were black men (Yost 1933, 199).

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numbers, and that the permanent committees set up as a result of the conference had members from both races (Wichita Council of Churches 1924, n.p.). Although there are no documented reports of this conference influencing race relations or civil rights in Wichita, the report does provide a snapshot of conditions of African Americans, albeit primarily from a white perspective. Perhaps a more accurate picture of Wichita's African American community during the 1920s is presented in the 1922-1923 *Wichita Negro Year Book*, compiled by Neely and Sims and published by the *Negro Star* newspaper. Not only did it provide the names, addresses, and occupations of Wichita's African Americans, their churches, and businesses, but a listing of social and charitable groups, schools and teachers, background on professional men, as well as an amusement directory and some brief histories. The vibrancy of the community is more positively recorded here than in the Council of Churches report.

Some small civil rights gains were made by African Americans statewide during the 1930s, although the group as a whole suffered disproportionately to the overall population during the Great Depression. The Urban League, NAACP and the Congress of Industrial Organizations worked to pass a statute through the Kansas Legislature prohibiting racial, religious and ethnic discrimination in municipal and state public works employment. As the legislation did not include any penalties for non-compliance, it had virtually no effect. Wichita's NAACP chapter continued to suffer from internal disagreements during the thirties. By 1936 the branch was no longer in existence, although it was revived by 1941 (Eick 2001, 19, 34). Nationwide, employment opportunities for African Americans improved with the defense build-up during the 1940s when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802, requiring companies with government contracts to not discriminate based on race or religion. This order opened up jobs for African Americans and others in the booming defense industry in Wichita.

After having served their country during World War II, black G.I.'s returned home with a renewed sense of activism across the country and in Wichita. In 1947, the local NAACP petitioned the school board to end segregation of both students and teachers. Partly in response to this request, the school board appointed a study committee on race relations, appropriately called the Race Relations Clinic. The committee was chaired by local Quaker activist Anna Jane Michener, a graduate of Wichita's Friends University. Over sixty people gathered information for reports that focused on specific areas of inequities in Wichita: housing, employment, community resources, recreation, government, education and commercial establishments.<sup>iv</sup> The committee presented another round of reports in 1949. Among their findings was recognition of the fact that the expanding African American population in Wichita led to discriminatory practices in both the real estate and lending industries, which was further compounded by the fact that Kansas law allowed restrictive covenants. In the area of public recreation, the report noted that only McKinley Park admitted blacks and they were denied the use of neighborhood pools. Wichita had separate schools for African American students up through the eighth grade, and black teachers were employed only in these schools. Local hospitals had separate sections for blacks, or else did not allow them to share rooms with whites. Two universities, however, had official non-discrimination policies, and later both of these would play roles in the local civil rights movement.

<sup>iv</sup> The separate contexts on education and community development cover both the fight for equal educational opportunities in Wichita, as well as the segregation housing practices in the city.



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Friends University had fifty-six African Americans enrolled in 1949, compared to 404 white students – approximately ten percent of enrollment. Wichita University (later Wichita State University) had a much smaller percentage of African Americans enrolled – forty-five blacks as compared to 3,019 white (Michener 1947, 3). The President of the University, however, was active in many race relations committees and as indicated by his private papers, often worked behind the scenes on civil rights issues, both on campus and in the community (Corbin n.d.).

The Race Relations Committee issued reports on each of the major issues facing African Americans, such as the *Report of the Employment Committee for the Wichita Race Relations Clinic*. Its stated purpose was to bring forward facts to the clinic in an effort to “eradicate some of our shortcomings.” It noted that the industrial plants in Wichita still hired only a “negligible” number of African Americans, and then only in custodial jobs or rarely, common labor. The only exception was the meat-packing industry, where Union membership may have been instrumental in opening up a slightly wider range of jobs. The gains made during the early 1940s in the defense industry employment declined considerably more for African Americans than others in the immediate post-war years. A notable statistic concerning black employment in Wichita is the relative lack of a middle- or skilled-labor class; blacks tended to be divided into two groups – unskilled labor and professionals. When additional education was available, Wichita’s African Americans moved into professional fields such as the law, medicine, teaching, dentistry and veterinary medicine. Unskilled workers, while active in busy times, would find themselves competing for fewer jobs during periods of economic depression in a community where discriminatory hiring practices were fairly widespread. An ironic fact noted in the summary of the report is that Wichita was “an essentially southern community. . .” but that a “complicating feature is that we have fewer jobs actually allocated to the Negro group than has a southern city of this size.” (Wichita Race Relations Clinic ca. 1947, 1-2, 9-10) Thus in spite of some gains in this area, the lack of employment opportunities remained an issue of discrimination; this would be addressed by the civil rights movement in Wichita, along with the issues of housing, education, and public accommodations.

A visible focus of Wichita’s African American community during the 1940s was its work to eliminate discriminatory and segregationist policies in public education, both for students and adult employment. This movement began in earnest after World War II and continued through the forced desegregation decision by the federal government in 1971 (see education context). Another key area of focus for the civil rights movement in Wichita after World War II was the desegregation of commercial establishments, such as restaurants and hotels. When black entertainers and notables came to Wichita near the turn of the twentieth century, they were able to stay in the Water Street Hotel. When that hotel closed and the town became more segregated, there were no longer any public accommodations where blacks could stay (Nelson, in Miller 2000, 9). As noted in the 1947 Race Relations Clinic report, there were no hotel accommodations for African Americans in Wichita. Even notables such as George Washington Carver and singer Marian Anderson were denied hotel rooms, and stayed instead at the house of Dr. James Farmer. When Anderson was scheduled to perform at the Forum in Wichita in January 1945, she found out that blacks unofficially were not allowed to attend. Anderson refused to perform unless all were permitted (Rutledge 1985, 38). Restaurants and cafes, especially the smaller



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venues, either did not serve blacks at all or had segregated accommodations. Movie theaters admitted African Americans only if they had a balcony; in one chain, they were allowed only in the third balcony, but were charged the same admission price (Michener 1947,7).

Although the various studies, reports and committees of the first half of the twentieth century did little to alter the status quo, it did arm the citizens with information. The few examples of direct challenges from blacks, such as the 1906 lawsuit against the Wichita Board of Education, had been unsuccessful. That would change after World War II. In spite of continued employment obstacles, blacks were beginning to acquire a somewhat higher status, both economically and in employment. They were no longer content to accept the status quo, and began taking steps to resolve the situation. As historians Meier and Rudwick note, the use of direct-action tactics by African Americans has historically occurred when blacks either experienced a significant loss of status or a rising set of expectations (Meier 1976, 388). From this perspective, the historic legal action in 1906 arose when blacks in Wichita were suddenly relegated to segregated schools, where previously they had been able to attend their neighborhood schools. In the 1950s, though, the circumstances were different. African Americans in Wichita were experiencing the benefits of better paying jobs, home ownership and higher education. The direct actions that were initiated by Wichita's black citizens during the 1950s were undertaken to change the status quo and promote social change, not to maintain the existing situation.

One situation that blacks in Wichita challenged was the lack of freedom to be served in local restaurants. In the early 1950s, the only white-owned food establishments that served African Americans were public institutions – the cafeterias at Wichita University and the YWCA. Also as noted, the movie theaters had separate sections for blacks in the balconies, and blacks were relegated to only one of the many city parks. Starting in the early 1950s, blacks, sometimes joined by whites, employed a variety of direct-action tactics in order to initiate change. In many instances, the protestors were students or young adults. In 1952, members of the black YMCA and white youths from the Unitarian Church joined together and tried to order coffee at the Continental Grill. Safeway grocery stores were also picketed for their practice of hiring only whites by a group from the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) that included students from Friends University (Eick 2001, 3). CORE was an interracial organization founded in Chicago in 1942 that promoted non-violent tactics, such as civil disobedience, to fight segregation. Their methods were adapted from Ghandi's philosophy of non-violent resistance that were rooted in pacifism. The direct-action techniques that would be employed in Wichita during the 1950s and early 1960s were all based on this philosophy and were non-violent.

On May 17, 1954 the Supreme Court issued a unanimous decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* that segregated schools were inherently unequal. While this decision supported the demands for equal educational opportunities in Wichita, it would be almost two decades before that goal was reached. This same year, the Wichita chapter of the inter-racial Urban League was formed, in spite of a lack of funding from the Community Chest and support from white businesses – a typical approach for the Urban League. The group eventually recruited business and over the years its leadership grew to include both white and black residents. Nationally, the Urban League's focus was to help African

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Americans who emmigrated from the rural South adjust to city life; in Wichita, the local chapter of the Urban League worked to reverse the white flight from the Isley School area, and helped form the Northeast Wichita Improvement Association. This latter association protested the practices of real estate agents promoting the white exodus from the area, and printed signs that read "This Home Is Not for Sale" to place in neighborhood yards. Ironically, this neighborhood association lasted just a few years because of disagreements of whether or not to admit blacks (Eick 2001, 60).

In 1955, Vivian Parks was elected the first woman president of the Wichita branch of the NAACP. According to historian Gretchen Cassel Eick, author of *Dissent in Wichita: the Civil Rights Movement in the Midwest, 1954-1972*, not only did Parks revive the organization and make it more active, she initiated its multi-directional activism that characterized the group for the next twelve years. No longer just focused on education, the organization would fight for civil rights in nearly all facets of life where Wichita's African Americans faced discrimination. Parks assembled an active group for the NAACP board, including Samuel Cornelius, director of Wichita's black YMCA, and the Rev. H. H. Brokins, pastor of the influential St. Paul AME Church. Cornelius served as the advisor to the organization's Youth Council formed in 1956, and William Lugrand was the group's president. Along with Parks, both men played a significant role in making the Youth Council more active. The Youth Council first met at the St. Paul AME Church in Wichita and the Hutcherson Branch of the Wichita YMCA at 1221 Cleveland. Vivian Parks also organized a local conference, "Wichita's Problems in Practical Democracy," that brought together a wide variety of community organizations, including the NAACP, the Urban League, the Community Committee on Social Action (CCSA), and other groups with a broader scope such as unions, realtors, churches, the YWCA, and the National Conference of Christians and Jews (Eick 2001, 2, 34-36).

After the unsuccessful sit-ins and picketing of the early 1950s, there were several other direct-action attempts in Wichita to fight segregation as the decade progressed. Many of these were single occurrences and not sustained sit-ins over a period of time. For example, in 1956 and 1957, there were numerous instances of both individual and group sit-ins at "whites only" sections in movie theaters or lunch counters. In 1956, Curtis McClinton Jr. and Prentice Lewis tried to order ice cream at Randall's Drug Store after their high school graduation. When they were denied service, they refused to leave. The manager eventually turned out the lights and told the youth to wait outside for the police, who never came. Also in 1956, twenty students from North High School tried to be served at Hollebaugh's Drug Store. Again a month later, some youth tried to order ice cream at Randall's Drug Store. Although unsuccessful in changing the policies at these restaurants, these actions were being noticed in Wichita. After the sit-ins at Hollebaugh's and Randall's, Anna Jane Michener called Vivian Parks to discuss the situation. As a result of their meeting, Michener and Parks formed and co-chaired the Community Committee on Social Action (CCSA), an interracial group spun-off from the YWCA. Together they visited Roman Catholic Bishop Mark Carroll, who was sympathetic to the civil rights movement, as well as other Wichita clergy and the mayor (Eick 2001, 3-4, 37).

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Wichita's NAACP also worked to change attitudes within the city government. Vivian Parks, Jackie Lewis and Castella White approached the Wichita police in an effort to stop the harassment of black families who moved into white neighborhoods – harassments that were often disregarded by the police. When the police chief ignored their requests, they threatened to call a press conference to back up their accusations, leading to acquiescence on the part of the police chief. In 1957, the city commission established an advisory council on minority problems; members included Parks, Chester Lewis, Hugh Sims, Luther Harris (an African American real estate agent), and Anna Jane Michener. By this time, Chester Lewis had replaced Vivian Parks as president of the Wichita branch of the NAACP, and Parks moved into the secretary position. In December 1957, Chester Lewis requested that the Wichita school board reconsider its policy of assigning black teachers and principals only to the black schools. Two years later, two black teachers were teaching in Wichita's integrated senior high schools, increasing to four in another two years (Eick 2001, 37).

The Youth Council of the local NAACP chapter continued their activism through the late 1950s, and conducted one of the most significant, yet under-recognized direct actions in the nation's civil rights movement. In the summer of 1958, Wichita African American youth engaged in the nation's first successful, sustained student sit-in at Dockum's Drug Store lunch counter. Dockum's was part of the Rexall Company, a national drugstore chain with the largest market share in Kansas. The idea for the sustained sit-in had been developing for about two years. In 1956, the NAACP's western region director, attorney Franklin Williams, was a speaker at the conference organized by Vivian Parks. As was typically the case when African Americans came to visit in Wichita, Williams stayed with a local African American family instead of in a hotel – in this instance, the Parks family. During his stay, he spoke to Carol Parks and her cousin Ron Walters about the sit-ins organized by CORE in Chicago in 1942, St. Louis in 1949, and Baltimore in 1952 (Congress of Racial Equality n.d.). Over the next two years, Williams continued to come to Wichita and talk with African American youth. The ideas he planted finally germinated in the summer of 1958, when sixteen year old Joyce Glass tried to order a drink at Dockum's in downtown Wichita but was denied service. Her older sister, Lequetta, happened to be the secretary of the youth group of the Wichita branch of the NAACP. Lequetta brought the matter in front of the group, and, with the background on sit-ins provided by Parks and Walters, it was decided to move forward with non-violent direct action against Dockum's (Eick 2001, 2-3). Working now with Rosie Hughes as their advisor, the youth group of the NAACP would plan and carry out a sustained sit-in at the lunch counter.

Ronald W. (Ron) Walters was twenty years old in 1958. The son of Gilmar Walters, a career Army officer and later professional bassist, and Maxine Fray Walters who would become a civil rights investigator for Kansas, he was the oldest of seven children. His role in organizing the Dockum Drug Store sit-in was only the first in his list of lengthy achievements, although he eventually received an NAACP award in 2006 for his role. After graduating from high school in 1955, Ron first joined the army. He then returned home to earn money for college. Walters received his B.A. in History and Government from Fisk University in 1963, and his M.A. in African Studies and a Ph.D. in International Studies from American University. He was an assistant professor of political science at Syracuse University, was a visiting professor at Princeton and a fellow at the Institute of Politics at Harvard, and



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became the first chairman of Afro-American studies at Brandeis University. Dr. Walters taught at Howard University from 1971 to 1996, and was chairman of the political science department for fifteen years. Walters helped establish the Congressional Black Caucus in the 1970s, and served as a deputy campaign manager and debate adviser for the Rev. Jesse Jackson's 1984 presidential bid. He wrote thirteen books and numerous articles on racial politics. Walters envisioned the possibility of an African American president, and laid out the approach that a candidate would need to take in *Black Presidential Politics in America: A Strategic Approach* (Hevesi 14 September 2010).

Other youth who participated included Carol Parks, who was nineteen and vice president of the youth group. She had attended college for a year, and also gone to national NAACP conventions with her mother, Vivian. Lequeatta Glass was eighteen in 1952 and secretary of the NAACP Youth Council. Like the Parks, Walters, and Glass family, most of the other participants came from strong families that were active in Wichita's African American organizations and churches, with many of the adults also having a history of working for equal rights. Other youth participants included Peggy Hatcher, Daisy Blue, Joan Smith, Arlene Harris, Carol Jean Wells, Janice Nelson, Joyce Glass, Betty Sorter, Harold Beasley, Billy Alexander, Dwayne Nelson, Robert Newby, Prentice Lewis, Galen Vesey, and Gerald Walters (Eick 2001, 5, 25-28).

A sustained sit-in was not a quick, one-time attempt; it would require several students to work in shifts over days or weeks – whatever it took to achieve their desired goal of being served at the sit-down lunch counter. Typically, if even served at all, African Americans had to stand in line at the back of the store and take their food and drinks outside. The youth first approached Chester I. Lewis, Jr., an attorney and president of the Wichita NAACP, about the feasibility of their idea. Lewis brought the proposal to the NAACP executive committee which subsequently approved the plan. The students then began recruiting others to participate, drawing from their youth NAACP group, East High School and Wichita University. They went to McKinley Park to encourage other youth to join them, eventually recruiting about twenty to participate (see Appendix I). At Vivian Parks' request, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Wichita, Mark Carroll, agreed to allow the youth group to practice for the sit-ins in the basement of St. Peter Claver Church (Eick 2001, 4-5).

The youth experienced a serious setback on July 18, the day before the sit-ins were supposed to begin, when the national NAACP reversed its previous approval and wired their opposition after receiving the final plans in a telegram from Chester Lewis and Vivian Parks. Parks and Lewis called both the national director and the executive secretary of the NAACP branches to try and change their minds. Instead, the NAACP stated that it did not approve of direct-action tactics, instead preferring the legal route such as filing suits under existing discrimination laws. Chester Lewis advised the Wichita NAACP to express their support of the Youth Council's plans, in direct defiance of the national organization. Although the branch executive committee approved, many individual members did not want their children participating in the sit-ins (Eick 2001, 5).

The following day, July 19, 1958, the sit-in began. Well-dressed teens came in and sat quietly at the counter, staying when they were refused service. As a result, the restaurant manager put up a sign "This

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Fountain Temporarily Closed.” This, however, fit into the students’ plan. If the store would not serve them, and they stayed in their seats anyway, the restaurant would not be able to serve anyone else, consequently losing money. For the next three weeks, the students came twice a week: on Thursdays when the counter was open in the evenings and Saturdays. They came before lunch and remained in their seats until closing. The exact number of students varied, sometimes eight to twelve or more. Their parents would often wait outside across the street to see that their children were safe. On two separate occasions, police officers with clubs came, and one time they told the students to get off their stools. Lewis advised them to leave to avoid a confrontation. Another time a group of white youth came in to the shop and threatened the black youth. Fortunately, there was never violence (Eick 2001, 5-8).

On August 10, after the sit-in had been going on for three weeks and the confrontation with the white youth, Lewis held a meeting at New Hope Baptist Church to update Wichita’s African American community. With the church filled, the students asked for the support of the adults. They also decided to increase the number of days each week for the sit-in. When the students arrived the next Monday, however, the owner of Dockum’s entered the store and told his staff to “Serve them. I’m losing too much money.” Lewis confirmed these actions by telephone with Walter Keiger, the vice president of Dockum’s, who responded that “he had instructed all of his managers, clerks, etc., to serve all people without regard to race, creed or color.” The Rexall Corporation then extended this to all of its stores in Kansas (Eick 2001, 8-9). Thus the youth of Wichita not only broke down discriminatory barriers in their own city, but across the state as well.

Their actions had more significant and far-reaching effects than just in Wichita and Kansas, though. Although the mainstream media and newspapers in Wichita did not cover any news about the sit-ins, the black newspapers did. Furthermore, the Associated Press and United Press wire services ran national stories. John White, the State Youth Director of the Oklahoma NAACP, read about the Dockum sit-in. White called Lewis for details on how it was carried out, and eight days after the Dockum sit-in ended, the Oklahoma City sit-ins began, inspired by the youth in Wichita. At the end of August, Herb Wright of the national NAACP, who had previously denied permission for the Wichita Youth Council to conduct the sit-in, wrote Lewis “the Oklahoma City youth have followed your lead and are really doing a bang-up job.” (Eick 2001, 9) Ironically, the Oklahoma City sit-ins are often credited as the forerunner of the Greensboro sit-ins, which in turn are acclaimed in the American civil rights movement. The Greensboro sit-in occurred nearly two years later in February 1960, yet its lunch counter has been preserved in the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History (Smithsonian National Museum of American History n.d.). The Wichita sit-in, however, is routinely overlooked by historians in spite of its documented influence on the movement and the fact that the building is still extant.

In spite of the recognition by Herb Wright of the role that the Dockum sit-in played, the Wichita sit-ins were not reported at the national NAACP minutes that year. On the other hand, the Oklahoma City sit-ins were noted and praised twice, in both the September and December 1958 minutes. Gretchen Cassel Eick believes there may be several reasons for this oversight. First, the national staff advised the Wichita NAACP youth not to conduct the sit-ins. In direct defiance of this advice (although with the

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support of their parent chapter), the youth continued with their plans and succeeded. Next, Lewis mistakenly wrote the national branch that the sit-ins began on August 2 and ended on August 11, when they were actually conducted over a three-week period, from July 19 to August 11. Internal organizational politics may also have played a role. The national NAACP board of directors included someone from Oklahoma, who would naturally want to highlight the work in his own state (Eick 2001). Unfortunately, the oversight that occurred in 1958 by the NAACP has led to a general lack of knowledge about this significant event.

Even though the Dockum sit-in was eventually followed in a seemingly short time by other successful sit-ins in the South, it is no accident that the first successful youth sit-in occurred in the Midwest. In 1956, high-ranking officials of the NAACP concluded that the deep South was not yet considered a viable setting for nonviolent direct action despite the urgings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to consider these types of tactics. The organization preferred boycotts. CORE-style sit-ins were generally considered much harder to stage than boycotts. The latter avoided physical confrontations with hostile whites, but the same could not be said of a sit-in. The potential for violence existed even in the more moderate areas of the upper South, as well as in the oppressive environment of the deep South where such tactics had little chance of success (Meier 1976, 370). Thus, according to historians Meier and Rudwick, it was the border states in the late 1950s that provided the best environment for the tactics that would later prove successful in the deep South in the early 1960s. In their opinion, it was here that a gradual shift in white public opinion made conditions ripe for successful demonstrations. It is significant to note that the successful sit-ins of the late 1950s were being carried out by all-black groups, rather than the inter-racial CORE. Furthermore, it was usually the youth councils of the NAACP initiating the direct-action tactics, rather than the adult branches. Just like the Wichita youth, other young African Americans around the nation had grown tired of the preferred legal tactics of the adult branches of the NAACP (Meier 1976, 372-373).

In December 1958, as a result of the events in Wichita and Oklahoma City, the NAACP branch presidents finally agreed to allow youth members to participate in sit-ins as long as they were carefully planned and coordinated by the chairman of the Youth Work Committee of the adult branch (Eick 2001, 10). Thus the later sit-ins, such as the one conducted at Greensboro, not only received approval but benefited from the assistance of the national NAACP as well as the knowledge of what worked before. The Wichita youth that organized and conducted the Dockum sit-in, on the other hand, were the true pioneers of the sustained youth sit-in movement, relying on their own faculties and local adult leaders.

All of these sit-ins are significant as examples of non-violent direct actions that were used during the civil rights movement in the United States. Historically some non-violent direct actions were limited to specific locales based on the conditions in that city, there were periods where direct-action tactics spread from one city to another during a relatively brief span of time. Thus, the successful sit-in at Wichita inspired and encouraged youth leaders in nearby Oklahoma City, which in turn spread to trials in Louisville and elsewhere in the upper South. The increasing number of successes in the border states were directly responsible for the Greensboro sit-in in North Carolina (Meier 1976, 374, 382-383). What



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chiefly helped venerate the Greensboro sit-ins was the extensive reporting of these incidents by white mass media, something that was significantly lacking in the Dockum sit-in.

Although the national NAACP failed to recognize the events that occurred in Wichita in 1958, it could not overlook the many successes that the Wichita chapter achieved in the 1950s. Their efforts were recognized by the national branch in 1959. Among their notable achievements (during just the previous year), the Wichita NAACP was recognized for:

- Desegregating the municipal golf course
- Filing seventeen complaints against two aircraft companies and one against Kansas State Collge for employment discrimination
- Organizing a letter-writing protest against Bell Telephone
- Negotiating with a privately-owned bus company to hire a black driver
- Drafting a public accommodations ordinance for the city and a comprehensive civil rights bill for the state legislature
- Issuing regular press releases
- "Securing" three TV programs
- Intervening with the state insurance commissioner on behalf of African American policy-holders
- Fighting discriminatory hiring practices by the local board of education and police
- Advising the youth council in their protest against the Dockum Drug Stores (Eick 2001, 11)

In the above recognition, the Dockum sit-in was practically a sidenote, although in 1960 there was another recorded recognition of the event. Gloster Current, director of branches and field administration in the NAACP, was the keynote speaker at the Kansas State Conference of Branches. There he stated that the sit-in movement began with the NAACP Youth Council in Wichita, Kansas. Besides this and the mention in the 1959 branch recognition above, the NAACP has virtually ignored the Wichita sit-in until recently. Within the press release section of the official website for the national organization, an article about "NAACP Leaders Mark Sit-in and Race Riot Anniversaries," the sub-title notes that the "Commemoration of lesser known civil rights events get underway this weekend." The webpage records that the Dockum Sit-in in Wichita was the

*"first successssul student-led sit-in of the Civil Rights Movement. . . In the summer of 1958, two dozen young people from Wichita stood up by sitting down, and that changed our nation,"* said NAACP Interim President & CEO Dennis Courtland Hayes. "We must never forget these heroes of the struggle who laid a solid foundation in the fight for justice, equality and progress we enjoy today." . . . The Dockum and Oklahoma City sit-ins are often overshadowed by the later sit-ins in Greensbroro, N.C. and other places throughout the South but were just as groundbreaking. The NAACP encourages all to join in correcting the history books and offering appreciation to truly deserving civil rights pioneers and their nearly forgotten acts of service," said NAACP Field

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Operations Chief Rev. Nelson B. Rivers, III. [*italic emphasis from the website*] (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People n.p.)

Although the Dockum sit-in has been overlooked, not as easy to ignore was the president of the Wichita NAACP branch, Chester Isaac Lewis. Lewis is commonly recognized as not only a state, but a national leader of the modern civil rights movement, and was one of the "Young Turks" of the NAACP. Lewis was born in Hutchinson, Kansas in 1929 and lived there until he graduated from high school. His father was the editor of the African American newspaper *The Hutchinson Blade*, and his mother was a teacher. She founded the Delta chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority at the University of Kansas in 1916, and both parents, as college graduates, were firm believers in the value of an education. Lewis did not experience much discrimination, at least in his public education in Hutchinson partly because there were only 200 black families in that town. After serving in World War II, Lewis attended the University of Kansas where he was one of only forty African American students out of ten thousand. He received his undergraduate degree in 1951 and a law degree in 1953, where he was third in his class. That same year his wife Jacqueline received her undergraduate degree, and the couple moved to Wichita afterwards. When he was only 23, Lewis addressed the state NAACP. He set up his law practice when he moved to Wichita and also immediately began working on fighting segregation, many times as a volunteer or later in his capacity as NAACP chapter president (unknown, *Chester I. Lewis, Jr.*). In 1958, he received the NAACP Thalheimer Award for the most effective branch work without paid staff. He was later elected to the national NAACP board. As an attorney, his usual method for fighting discrimination was through legal tactics, although as previously noted, he also became involved in direct-action tactics in an advisory capacity.

Lewis applied his legal expertise to fight for ending segregation in the city's police and fire departments as well as the public schools. He filed the first civil rights lawsuit against the city of Wichita for refusing admittance to two black college students to the municipal swimming pool; that policy was revoked a year later (Eick 2001, 39). By 1955, Lewis served as deputy county attorney for Sedgwick County. Actively serving in the Wichita NAACP branch, his first official role was chairing the local chapter's Legal Redress Committee. In 1956, he became president of the chapter (unknown, *Chester I. Lewis, Jr.*). In addition to integrating schools and city departments, Lewis led the local NAACP to challenge employment practices in the private as well as public sector. During his first year as president, the Wichita NAACP filed complaints against Boeing Aircraft with the President's Committee on Government Contracts and the Kansas State Anti-Discrimination Commission. As a result, fifty-five African Americans were hired into the training program, ten were immediately assigned to production departments, and three women received office jobs (Eick 2001, 42).

In spite of his victories for Wichita's African American community at large, Lewis experienced personal acts of discrimination. He and his wife planned to build a house on North Madison Street in 1956, but they could not get bank FHA financing because they were building outside the black section. (Eick 2001, 40) As a result of this and other discriminatory housing practices in Wichita, Lewis lobbied for the passage of the Wichita Fair Housing Ordinance (unknown, *Chester I. Lewis, Jr.*). Lewis was an

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active leader in local, state and national NAACP branches as well. He was a member and primary spokesperson of the "Young Turks" caucus within the national NAACP – a group critical of the "Old Guard" within the organization. The Young Turks wanted to include direct-action tactics and non-violent protest within the movement, instead of focusing solely on legal action. They also wanted the NAACP to place more emphasis on the issues of poverty experienced by African Americans in the urban north. In disappointment over the NAACP's failure to initiate reforms, Lewis resigned his membership in 1968 and subsequently endorsed the Black Power Movement.<sup>v</sup> He continued to work for civil rights, and along with three other lawyers, he won a class action lawsuit in 1983 on behalf of African Americans who had been discriminated against for promotions while working as train porters ("Chester I. Lewis," n.p.). Lewis did not rely solely on legal actions to achieve his goals; in 1958, he presented twelve one-hour lectures to the city police in order to better educate the force about working with the African American community. Later that year, the city commission established a thirty-person Human Relations Commission, partly at Lewis' urging (Eick 2001, 42).

Largely because of efforts of Lewis, Vivian Parks, and other activists, the Wichita branch of the NAACP received recognition from the national branch for all of their work in the late 1950s, and generally received favorable local press as well. In 1959, the organization approached the newly formed Human Relations Commission and got the city to agree to integrate the fire department. During this critical period of activism from 1958 through 1963, the NAACP met at the Hutcherson YMCA on Cleveland Street or at churches to plan the events for the upcoming weeks. Members also marched each Saturday with pickets in front of several downtown stores, including Kress, Grant, and Woolworth (Eick 2001, 46).

The contributions of Wichita's African Americans to the civil rights movement were not confined to local successes, but extended to statewide efforts as well. The local chapter worked on strengthening Kansas' weak discrimination laws, and in 1953, achieved a minor success in convincing the state legislature to pass a bill enacting fair employment legislation (Doherty 1972, 8-10, 13-14). Wichita resident Curtis McClinton, Sr., who was the first African American outside of Kansas City to be elected to the Kansas Legislature in 1956, introduced a bill in 1959 that would amend the Kansas Anti-Discrimination Act, expanding it to include hotels, motels, and other public places. He had to introduce the bill without any sponsors, though, and it failed then and again in 1960 when he reintroduced it. Two years after the state passed the Kansas Act against Discrimination in May 1961, a version of his bill finally passed in 1963. The Kansas Act against Discrimination created a Kansas Commission on Civil Rights (KCCR) that finally had enforcement powers. Not surprisingly, the majority of cases that came before the KCCR in the next decade came from Wichita with Chester Lewis behind the cases. Lewis also filed a landmark complaint against the Kansas State Employment Service in 1961 for its practice of accepting racial designations in job orders and for sending those seeking jobs to employers that designated which race could fill an opening. Not only did the federal government side with the

<sup>v</sup> The Black Power movement was prominent in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As opposed to other movements promoting multiculturalism, it instead encouraged racial pride and promoted black interests.



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NAACP's complaint, it issued an injunction against the Kansas agency, which was later upheld by the federal courts. This case established a precedent for other states, particularly southern ones, where state employment agencies openly practiced segregation. Employment discrimination in Wichita was fought in arenas other than the courts (Chester Lewis Papers).

Additional legal structures were put into place nationally in 1961 when President John F. Kennedy issued Executive Order 10925. It required government contractors to "take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin." The order also established the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity. This committee would later become the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in 1964 when the Civil Rights Act was passed. That landmark legislation outlawed racial segregation in schools, at work, and public accommodations. It also prohibited the unequal application of voter registration requirements, but its enforcement powers were weak until it was later strengthened. During these years of national successes, Wichita was the location of several civil rights conferences sponsored by other organizations, featuring speakers such as the Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell and U. S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas.

Although many of the civil rights actions were formulated and undertaken by the Wichita branch of the NAACP, a female inter-racial group was quietly fighting racial discrimination at the same time. The Community Committee for Social Action (CCSA) was an organization of both black and white women that met regularly:

to make a community approach to community problems, especially those related to segregation and discrimination. To practice within our group the principles of inclusiveness, seeking in our membership persons of all faiths, races, and nationalities who will work with us toward ending discrimination. (Eick 2001, 55)

Under the direction of Anna Jane Michener, the organization worked tirelessly for civil rights. In the mid-1950s, the CCSA focused on ending restaurant segregation until a state law finally made it illegal. One of the CCSA's tactics was to send two women, black and white, to restaurants; if the black woman was not served, the white woman would make an appointment with the manager to try and persuade them to desegregate the establishment. The group also printed business cards to leave in restaurants politely requesting a "completely democratic policy of service to all people" as well as stickers to be put on bill payments stating that "As your customer, I welcome being served by any qualified person regardless of race, creed or color." The CCSA worked with the NAACP on the city's fair housing ordinance and on state civil rights issues. Michener organized a series on human relations at Wichita University, founded the Kansas Institute for International Relations, and served on the city's Human Relations Commission after she pushed for its formation (Eick 2001, 55-56). Like Chester Lewis, Vivian Parks, and many others in Wichita, she was a tireless champion for human rights in all arenas. Michener formed a committee on fair housing in 1962, which worked to enact the city's fair housing ordinance. African Americans were still faced with decades-old practices of housing discrimination in

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Wichita, both in purchasing and financing. In 1963, when Chester Lewis and his new wife Vashti wanted to purchase a house in the affluent white neighborhood north of Wichita University, they had to ask white friends to purchase and deed it over to them. They then faced intimidation, physical threats and violence after moving (Eick 2001, 76-77). A fair housing ordinance was finally passed in 1964. In the very first case presented to the Human Relations Commission, Margo Looney, a graduate of Wichita State University, charged that Maude Beech and Molly Mollohan would not rent her an apartment because of her race. Looney went to the apartment and was told it had been rented fifteen minutes before she arrived. Another person called the apartment forty-five minutes later and was informed the apartment was still available. As the ordinance carried no punishment for violation, the ordinance proved ineffectual (*Wichita Eagle*, 1965).

Civil rights activism continued to grow in Wichita during the 1960s, and many of its up-and-coming leaders were new to Wichita. Hugh Jackson came to Wichita to serve as the new executive director of the Urban League in 1964; he remained in that position until 1972. Under his direction, the local chapter took advantage of free research services available from the National Urban League that resulted in a study that not only provided background data on Wichita's African American community, but observations and recommendations in the areas of employment, education, health, housing, social behavior, recreation, social work, the church and race relations (Banner 1965, 1). A signification portion of the Urban League's work during Jackson's tenure focused on jobs and training. Matt Green and Fred Sparks, eventually the leaders of the Movement for Afro-American Unity, the Black Immediate Action Committee, and Wichita's antipoverty program, came to the city during the 1950s while in the military and remained after their discharge. Before taking on their leadership roles in Wichita's African American community, they served as Chester Lewis' bodyguards and assistants (Eick 2001, 83).

Nationally, the movement was increasingly being met with violence in the mid-1960s, especially as it moved into the deep South. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was arrested and jailed in Selma in early 1965; Malcolm X, the Muslim spokesperson, was assassinated a month later. A black veteran was murdered by a state trooper in Selma at the end of the month, and on March 7, 1965 – "Bloody Sunday" – white police officers violently beat black marchers there. Two days later, a white minister from Boston, the Rev. James Reeb, was fatally beaten in Selma (Bracey 1996, 14). Reeb was born in Wichita and had grown up in Russell, Kansas; nearly 600 people attended a memorial service for Reeb in Wichita (Eick 2001, 100).

In spite of, and partly in reaction to, this violence, there were significant legal gains in the civil rights movement in the mid-1960s. The passage of national Civil Rights laws in 1964 and 1965 provided a legal basis for which African Americans could fight discrimination, and Chester Lewis's acumen and insight led to new tactics to combat discrimination in Wichita. In 1967, Lewis filed a complaint with the federal government against Boeing for violating its federal contract to train disadvantaged workers, and requested that the government stop its funding to the company (Eick 2001, 120). He also organized a rent strike that winter, encouraging tenants in two Wichita apartments to put their rent money in escrow

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until the buildings were brought up to FHA standards. This tactic was possible because the buildings had been built with federal funds before being sold to private owners (*Wichita Eagle* 8 April 1967; "Chester Lewis Papers). Wichita African Americans were making gains in the political arena as well. Attorney A. Price Woodard, a Republican, was elected in April 1967 as Wichita's first black commissioner, and would later serve as the city's first black mayor in 1970.

In spite of some progress, frustration about the lack of opportunities for the majority of poor African Americans was growing. Things came to a head in 1967, when riots broke out in seventy-five cities across the nation, including Wichita. As Mayor Vollmer was out of town when the riots broke out in July, acting mayor Woodard placed the city under a curfew and met with leaders of the black community. The riots broke out again after the curfew was lifted, and police were sent to break up crowds of black youths. In general, though, Police Chief Pond attempted to work with the black community. From this cooperation grew the Northeast Patrol, a group of African American youths that worked in two-person teams to keep the peace in their neighborhoods (Eick 2001, 129-133). In August 1969, trouble erupted again when a black youth was shot, leading to street fights across the city. After nights of disturbances, the mayor's actions this time were geared towards crowd control. He called in the National Guard and the entire county was placed under curfew by the governor (*Wichita Eagle*, August 20-22-26, 1969).

The circumstances within the traditional centers of black power was changing as well. At the 1968 NAACP annual national convention, the Young Turks failed in their plans to restructure the association, with a key goal making it more democratic. The executive director, Roy Wilkins, was prepared for their attempted "takeover," and preempted much of their agenda and even had police frisk the Turk leaders. Disgusted with Wilkins' tactics, Chester Lewis resigned from the organization at all levels, including the presidency of the Wichita branch, and even gave up his lifetime memberships. Wilkins retaliated by expunging his name and even his family's from all NAACP records, including the bronze plaque on the tenth floor foyer – the primary reason historian Gretchen Cassel Eick believes he receives little credit for his significant national role in both the national civil rights movement and the NAACP (Eick 2001, 153-156).

While the Urban League continued to work on civil rights, by the end of the sixties, the Wichita chapter of the NAACP was declared "dead" by the national organization (Eick 2001, 188). At the beginning of the 1970s in Wichita, there were now several African American organizations active in the city. Instead of vying for power, these groups generally worked together, since many of them focused on specific aspects of African American life, whether that was helping the poor, developing program priorities for federally funded projects, or for self-defense. In addition to the Urban League, there was the Black United Front, Black Immediate Action Committee, Citizens for Better Housing, Black Concerned Parents, Citizens' Committee for Neighborhood Schools, Committee for Black Unity, Black Panthers and the Movement for Afro-American Unity (MAAU). Even more specialized interest groups included the Mothers Organized Movement (MOMs), the Wichita Minority Contractors Association, youth groups associated with churches, and an Afro-American Study Group at Wichita State University. Other



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organizations were city-wide, but had offices or staff that focused on African American neighborhoods, such as the Wichita Area Community Action Program, Inc. (WACAPI) which help tenants who had been evicted or working with landlords that were not maintaining their property, and the Neighborhood Advisory Council for the Model Cities Program.

In spite of a general cooperation between local agencies and organizations, there was a growing tension between the civil rights activists of the 1960s and African Americans who were newcomers both to activism and the city in general; between the middle class and the poor; and between the young and old in Wichita. Although the struggle to gain equal rights for African Americans would continue, the early 1970s were a period of change. As historian Gretchen Cassel Eick notes, Chester Lewis's local power appears to have diminished when he abandoned his national NAACP platform. Hugh Jackson left the Urban League in 1972 for a new position; there were new leaders moving into positions of power in the movement. Wichita had elected its first black city commissioner in 1968, and elected him mayor in 1970. Other African Americans had moved into the mainstream of "white" commerce and government. Furthermore, instead of fighting to gain basic rights, the movement shifted to enforcing the newly acquired legal basis for civil rights (Eick 2001, 219-220). In some areas, there appeared to be deterioration in race relations. In a study of the city's police department, sociologist Pamela Irving Jackson lists 1972 as a turning point in the city's race relations, at least regarding this issue. In 1972, the police were "unusually community-oriented, and the minority community unusually cooperative toward police." After this, however, there was increasing negative press about the police and their treatment of minorities, and black residents in particular were moved to publicly protest the situation (Jackson 1989, 97). Nationally, Richard Nixon had just been reelected, and began eliminating the War on Poverty programs which had accomplished much in the areas of employment for African Americans in the 1960s and early 1970s. It was a different era in civil rights, both in Wichita and across the country, as attention moved away from legislation which enabled basic rights and more towards enforcing those rights.

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**Appendices A-H** (population maps) are included at the end of the document under the heading "Additional Documentation."

**Appendix I: Participants & Sites associated with the Dockum Drug Store Sit-in**

***Youth participants***

Carol Parks  
Peggy Hatcher  
Daisy Blue  
Joan Smith  
Arlene Harris  
Carol Jean Wells  
Janice Nelson  
Joyce Glass  
Lequeatta Glass  
Betty Shorter  
Harold Beasley  
Billy Alexander  
Dwayn Nelson  
Robert Newby  
Prentice Lewis  
Galen Vesey  
Gerald Walters  
Ron Walters

***Adult advisors***

Chester Lewis  
Vivian Parks  
Rosie Hughes

***Associated Wichita properties***

Dockum Drugstore No. 2, 301 E. Douglas  
St. Peter Claver Roman Catholic Church, 1209 N. Indiana

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### **ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES**

The property types related to the historic contexts covered in *African American Resources in Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas* include buildings, structures, objects, sites or districts associated with African Americans in Wichita, Kansas from 1870 through 1972. The period of significance extends from the incorporation of the city in 1870 through 1972, when events in the city marked a change in the local civil rights movement. This project was based in part on previous historic and architectural surveys, as well as windshield surveys of areas not yet inventoried in order to determine the types of resources that one might expect to find in future surveys. As such, information about some property types not yet inventoried was limited. Future surveys in Wichita may add to or alter what is known about the property types that follow, or may reveal information about new property types.

The property types are primarily based on the historic function of the individual resource, although the first property type includes districts, which include numerous resources that may have varied functions. When evaluating African American resources in Wichita, it is preferable to first determine if there is a potential historic district. As Wichita's history includes a long period of segregation, the potential for districts within areas historically settled by African Americans is high. No matter the original function – residential, commercial, social or religious – all buildings and structures within the entire district worked together as a whole to produce the tight-knit African American neighborhoods. Thus a historic district may comprise a variety of property types, or each building may have served the same function, as in a small residential district. Although the buildings within the district may not possess individual significance, they may contribute to a larger concentration of resources that convey significant aspects of Wichita's African American history.

The historic district property type is followed by property types defining specific buildings classified by the historic use of the resource, even if that use has changed throughout the years. While representatives of each separate property type will vary in physical appearance from another property type, all of the resources share at least a few common attributes, particularly in the areas of significance and, in some instances, registration requirements. In the interest of preventing repetition, the common attributes are discussed first.

#### **Significance – General**

These property types are significant under Criterion A in the area of *ethnic heritage* for their association with historic African American activities and development in Wichita. These resources may have been built for or by African Americans, or they may have originally been built for another ethnic group. If African Americans leased or owned the property during the period of significance, the property has the potential to be eligible. The property types may represent some aspect of racial discrimination, such as segregation in housing or education, or an achievement of an individual African American, such as in the establishment of a successful business. They may be associated with community or social organizations, where the welfare of the African American community was provided for in the absence of opportunities found in other parts of Wichita. In some instances, there are very few extant or intact



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representatives of these property types left in Wichita. The relative scarcity of a particular property type should be taken into account when evaluating its significance in ethnic heritage, particularly if the scarcity itself is a result of racial barriers.

Wichita's African American resources may also be significant in other areas, such as *exploration/settlement, community planning and development, commerce, education, or social history*. Many of these latter associations will generally require evaluation on an individual basis, although some of these are discussed in the individual property types. They also may be eligible under Criterion C in the area of *architecture*. In the area of *architecture*, African American resources may be significant for a distinctive design, form, or construction characteristics that are associated with the building's original use. The resources may possess high artistic values or may be good examples of typical types or styles of popular architecture of the period. The resources, craftsmanship, materials, construction methods may sometimes reflect the ethnic background or socio-economic status of the owners, designers, or craftsmen who were African American.

African American resources may also be eligible under Criterion B if associated with significant individuals. In these instances, the resource must be associated with African Americans who provided leadership within the community or in the civil rights movement, or who excelled in some area such as education, sports, commerce, politics or entertainment. The accomplishments of these individuals should have occurred during the period of significance, as well as be associated with the property being considered, which may vary from residences, commercial buildings or churches, depending upon the area of significance. If there are no other extant properties associated with a significant individual, their childhood home may be eligible. Properties of citizens of other races may also be eligible if they were associated with African Americans, such as those who were involved in civil rights activities. The property should retain integrity from the period when the significant individual either lived or worked there.

A few properties may also be significant under Criterion D if they have the potential to yield important information that contributes to the understanding of African American history in Wichita. While Criterion D is often applied to archeological sites, it can also be applied to buildings or structures if they are the principal source of the important information which is being sought, such as the dating of certain property types, construction expertise which affected the evolution of a local building technique, local availability of materials, use or ethnic associations. The areas of association might be *exploration/settlement, education, architecture, commerce, ethnic heritage, or social history*.

**Registration Requirements – General**

To be eligible under Criterion A in the area of *ethnic heritage*, the resources must have been used or built for or by African Americans in Wichita during the period of significance. Exceptions to this association are those properties that are significant for the role they played in the civil rights movement. In rare instances, a property may not generally be associated with African Americans throughout its history, but was the site of a significant rights event, such as the Dockum sit-ins. Those resources with a

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strong association to African Americans in Wichita may be eligible under Criterion A if they retain sufficient integrity, particularly in the areas of location, setting, feeling and association. Original location is important, especially with resources that are tied to an area that functioned as an African American neighborhood or commercial area (see also Section F, page 4). Setting is less critical for those properties where it may have been altered in some respect due to encroachment of commercial or industrial uses or loss of buildings through demolition. Therefore, some degree of integrity loss in this area is acceptable, as long as the feeling and association with ethnic heritage and the period of significance can be ascertained. While integrity of feeling and association are more intangible and difficult to measure, they are generally present when other areas of integrity are high, such as location and setting. Design is an important aspect of integrity, to the extent that the form of the resource nearly always indicates the historic function, although some alterations are acceptable under Criterion A as long as the original use of the building is indicated. Integrity of workmanship may not be as critical, at least for those resources eligible under Criterion A. For those eligible under Criterion C, however, workmanship would likely reveal important aspects of construction for those built by African Americans.

To be eligible under Criterion B in the area of *ethnic heritage*, the resources must have a close association with individuals who made significant contributions in Wichita's African American heritage, as well as being associated with that person during the time of their contribution. For ethnic heritage, the person must have played an important leadership role within Wichita's African American community, or have made a significant local contribution to the betterment of the race, as in the area of civil rights. The properties may also be associated with another area of significance, depending upon the contribution or area of specialty of the individual. Examples include the homes or commercial properties of prominent business people, such as Drs. Farmer and Perry, or properties associated with key civil rights leaders, such as Vivian Parks, Ron Walters or Chester Lewis.

Although there are a variety of property types in Wichita that were used or built by African Americans during the period of significance that may be eligible under Criterion C, all eligible resources must retain integrity of key character-defining elements in order to convey integrity of design. Typical key elements include: mass, form, plan and structural elements. Mass and form may be affected by additions to a building or changes to the roof shape. The latter would significantly reduce integrity of original design, but other additions may not seriously lessen integrity if they are not on the primary elevation, are set back from the primary elevation on a side, or are located to the rear. Furthermore, some resources typically underwent alterations, particularly since Wichita's African Americans were restricted to a relatively small area of the town. As their choices for "moving up or moving out" were so limited, African Americans often made changes or built additions to their residences or business buildings. These alterations may have achieved "significance over time" when they are evaluated in this context, as they not only represent phases of a property's history, but the cultural limitations of Wichita's African Americans. Later additions outside the period of significance should not overwhelm the resource's massing from the period of significance. This is generally interpreted as the additions being smaller in mass and height, or being situated in such a manner as not to be noticeable from the

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public right-of-way. While wall cladding materials also reflect the historic design intent, these too have often changed over time, particularly on the main residence. Changes in wall material should be considered on a case-by-case basis, if the non-original material can be placed and evaluated in a historic context. Any other features that are considered character-defining or that indicate the building's historic function should be reasonably intact. For example if a residence is an example of a Craftsman bungalow, it should retain its character-defining porch, porch supports, overhanging eaves and roof brackets – any elements which help define that particular architectural style. The design elements that distinguish the building's historic use are especially critical, even if the function no longer exists. For example, if a building served as a residence during its period of significance, it should still be distinguishable as a residence.

In evaluating integrity for individual buildings, particularly when the economic ability of property owners may be restricted as far as upkeep and maintenance is concerned, it is important to understand the difference between integrity and existing physical conditions. While integrity is the authenticity of a resource's historic identity, existing conditions can be defined as the current physical state of its features. For example, the integrity of an abandoned building is based on its extant form, features, and materials – i.e., it retains its original floor plan, fenestration, and roof – but the existing conditions of the actual materials and features may be deteriorated due to neglect or deferred maintenance. A deteriorated building may therefore still retain integrity even if its present condition is poor.

While moved buildings are generally not considered eligible for the National Register unless they meet Criterion Consideration B, a 1995 survey of historic resources in the Dunbar neighborhood notes that relocation, particularly of residences, was a common occurrence in this neighborhood. This occurred when commercial buildings were built along Washington and 13<sup>th</sup> Street, when the new Dunbar school was built, and with the construction of the elevated I-135 highway in 1971 (Ward 1995, 1-2). It would have been less expensive to move these small residences than to build new, and these houses provided an affordable option for African Americans. These buildings, if moved to other sites within the Dunbar neighborhood during the period of significance, would be contributing to a potential historic district if they retain other areas of integrity, as they reflect not only the history of development in the neighborhood, but the financial means of their owners.

Under Criterion D, the assessment of integrity (and therefore, the registration requirements) will depend upon the data that is required for the information sought. Thus a property eligible under D does not need to visually represent the historic period, but must sufficiently contain the information in a manner that can yield the expected information. Examples of this in Wichita are unlikely, however.

**NAME OF PROPERTY TYPE:** *African American districts***Description**

An African American district includes a grouping of historic resources, which may contain buildings, structures and objects, as well as associated cultural landscape features including roads, driveways,



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parks, trees and fences. The oldest African American neighborhood in Wichita was located near downtown on the present sites of the Sedgwick County Courthouse, jail, and the Wichita City Hall (between Waco Avenue and Main Street). When the government structures were built in mid-twentieth century, the neighborhood suffered extensive demolition and now contains only a few small extant groupings of residences that date from around the turn of the twentieth century. The portion of the McAdams neighborhood around Cleveland Avenue and 9<sup>th</sup> Street contains houses that date from the 1920s through the mid-1940s, as well as a number of churches, commercial buildings, social institutions, and a park on its eastern edge. The North Central neighborhood located east of the elevated I-135 highway also features wartime and post-World War II housing built as infill among existing 1920s Craftsman bungalows. As the post-WWII building boom continued into the 1950s and 1960s, the new neighborhoods (Power, Northeast Millair, Matlock, and Northeast Heights) between Grove and Hillside Avenues and expanding north to 21<sup>st</sup> Street and east to Oliver continued the spread of the *Minimal Traditional* style plus modest, early Ranch houses. African American districts should therefore reflect the period of time in which they were settled and occupied by African Americans. They may be exclusively residential buildings, or they may also include other property types such as churches, schools, club buildings, and commercial buildings.

As the majority of Wichita's streets within the city core are arranged on a grid pattern with the blocks running lengthwise north and south, most buildings within the potential districts face either east or west. The edges of the potential districts are usually well-defined by changes in use – with commercial or industrial zones often forming at least one of the boundaries. There are also vacant lots within the defined African American neighborhoods, which in some cases are sites of former residences.

**Significance**

Under Criterion A in the area of *ethnic heritage*, African American districts represent the conditions and places where Wichita blacks lived and worked during the period of significance. These districts provide important information of the settlement patterns of Wichita's African American population, and where they were, and were not, able to move to as their population grew. The districts may thus also be significant in the area of *community development and planning*. Even after the Supreme Court ruled against restrictive housing covenants in 1948, it took decades before the ingrained social patterns which fostered segregated housing in Wichita would change.

Although these neighborhoods were defined and confined by the segregation practices which existed throughout the city, they were also noted for the vibrant sense of community that developed within. Potential larger districts may be the best examples to represent the wide variety of activities that were associated with African Americans in Wichita, and therefore may be significant in the areas of *social history* and *commerce*. The neighborhoods may contain churches, business, clubs or social institutions that reflect the complexity of Wichita's African American community. For example, while the McAdams (Dunbar) neighborhood is primarily residential, it has a greater number of churches located in the area than any other section of Wichita, reflecting the importance of the church to this neighborhood. In addition, McAdams contains a few small commercial buildings, the YMCA, the Phyllis Wheatley

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Children's Home, a park and a school, which up to the 1960s provided the core business and recreational area for nearby residents.

**Registration Requirements**

As noted in the general registration requirements, integrity of location, setting, feeling and association are especially necessary for African American districts. However, losses of individual buildings have sometimes occurred within, as well as on outlying edges of the original historic neighborhoods. Nonetheless, the district must still be able to convey the area of significance – *ethnic heritage* – as well as the historic period of significance. It is not necessary for contributing resources within the district to possess individual significance or retain enough integrity or significance to be individually eligible. Thus the evaluation of the integrity of a potential district should focus on the overall characteristics of the neighborhood, not the individual contributing buildings. This would include boundaries of the district, circulation patterns of streets and sidewalks, and setback and massing as reflected in the size of the lots and houses. Due to deterioration caused by deferred maintenance and upkeep, some historic buildings or structures may have been demolished over the years, leaving behind vacant lots. However, enough other buildings and structures must be extant so that the district continues to convey its function – whether residential, commercial or a combination of multiple uses. The presence of non-historic resources will not make a district ineligible as long as the district as a whole retains its historic sense of time and place. The amount of demolition and infill that a district can withstand before losing integrity will depend on the scale and size of infill. Finally, the resources located within a district will most likely have been built over a number of years. It is therefore critical to clearly define a period of significance so that contributing properties reflect the historic period.

For districts, it is critical to identify historic period(s) of initial ownership and occupancy by blacks and their subsequent development, not only to better understand the associations that make them significant, but to aid in evaluating integrity. Understanding that a neighborhood is a continuum through history and analyzing the changes is particularly important to determining its integrity. Change is inherent in residential and commercial districts, most often resulting from human activities. In spite of the dynamic quality of all historic districts, in order to retain historic associations with ethnic heritage, this change should be associated with the residency or ownership of the properties by African Americans.

Based on prior historic inventories and windshield surveys of historic African American neighborhoods, it is likely that none will be eligible for their overall architectural significance. Therefore, integrity of design, materials and workmanship of the individual houses within a district is not as critical when assessing the integrity of a district which has significance in other areas – in this instance, *ethnic heritage*. Particularly for the issue of non-original siding for residential buildings within a district, the considerations outlined by the National Park Service in National Register Bulletin *Historic Residential Suburbs* are important to take into account when assessing their contributing status. Individual residences should primarily be evaluated as to whether or not they contribute to the historic character of the overall neighborhood, and not if they are individually eligible. Specific to Wichita's African American neighborhoods, the practices of segregating neighborhoods by race and the discrimination

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against blacks in obtaining loans to purchase new homes resulted in restricted housing choices. If an African American family could not move out of their segregated neighborhood, they remained where they were and made alterations as suited their financial situation. While lower-income white families may have faced economic restrictions in housing choices, they were not confined to neighborhoods on the basis of their race, and could move anywhere in the city that they could afford. Furthermore, they did not face the discriminatory lending practices that confronted African Americans. Prospective white homebuyers would receive a greater loan for a comparable income than would blacks.

**NAME OF PROPERTY TYPE:** *African American residences***Description**

Residences associated with African Americans in Wichita resemble other houses built in the city during the period of significance. As the name indicates, resources in this property type served as the residence for either African American owners or renters. In addition to serving as domiciles, these buildings may also have functioned as places of work for those who washed clothes or operated small restaurants or other businesses. They may have been built for African Americans, or purchased from white residents. A few represent rental properties owned by successful African American men and women, and may have been either single- or multi-family residences. Some of the residences do not necessarily possess stylistic elements or even quality workmanship or materials. They were instead simply built and decorated, with function dictating the form.

Generally one-story and frame construction, this property type nonetheless represents a fairly wide variety of forms and styles, most of which reflect the popular or vernacular trends of the period in which they were constructed. Those constructed in the late nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century were generally examples of so-called *National Folk* forms.<sup>vi</sup> There are representatives of both one- and two-story *pyramidal family* houses in the N. Water Street area; 839 N. Water is a nineteenth century one-story example with nearly full width shed roof porch, while 929 N. Water is a later two-story example with a simple Colonial Revival porch (this form was also referred to as a *Foursquare*). The buildings at 1912 N. Ash and 920 N. Water are examples of simple *hall-and-parlor* residences with additions, while 1208 N. Indiana is a one-story *gable-front* home. These often employed local materials and simple workmanship, with occasional details or architectural influences from the Late Victorian styles. The few remaining residences in the N. Water Street area, which is the oldest African American neighborhood in Wichita, are from this period. They are one-story frame houses or cottages with hipped or gable roofs and simple porches. The majority of houses in this neighborhood were demolished through various large-scale projects, such as the expansion of the courthouse and county government offices, and urban renewal housing and road re-alignments.

African American residences built in the early to mid-twentieth century were typical of those constructed from popular plan or pattern books, and were examples of American movements, such as

<sup>vi</sup>A term popularized by Virginia & Lee McAlester in *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984) 89.



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the *Craftsman* or *Prairie* styles, or revival styles, including variants of the *Tudor Revival* and *Colonial Revival*. Postal worker Homer Perry built his *Tudor Revival* house at 1314 N. Cleveland in 1925, and Dr. P. M. Perry and his wife Annabel lived in a *Colonial Revival* house at 1025 Ohio. Housing for laborers were generally less substantial in terms of the quality of materials and workmanship, and lacked stylistic details and ornamentation that were found on the homes of Wichita's African American middle class. The houses in the Dunbar section of the McAdams neighborhood, which represents the second historic development area for African Americans, are from this period.

As is typical of other neighborhoods in Wichita from the post-World War II era, *Minimal Traditional* and simple *Ranch* houses were the most common residential style constructed within African American neighborhoods. These were also built as infill within the McAdams neighborhood, and as entire blocks in the northeast area bounded on the east by Hillside Avenue, such as the nearly identical *Minimal Traditional* houses in the 1000 block of N. Pennsylvania or the 1900 block of N. Piatt. As defined by Virginia and Lee McAlester, *Minimal Traditional* houses are one-story with low-pitched roofs and wide facades. The roof eaves are close, rather than overhanging, and the house has very little detailing. *Ranch* houses also are one-story, have low-pitched roofs and even further emphasize the façade width. Both houses mark a departure from the revival styles popular in the first half of the twentieth century (McAlester 477-479).

Although the majority of African American residences in Wichita are located in specific neighborhoods, there are a few clusters or even individual residences that were owned or leased by blacks in other parts of the city. Very few large apartment buildings are found in McAdams. However, there are a fair number of small, multi-family residences. These are one-story, often brick, and usually contain two or four units. They are often located on a corner lot or situated at right angles to the street on vacant house lots, as is the four-plex at 1258 N. Cleveland. These are comparable to other modest rental units found throughout Wichita that were built during the World War II era expansion of the aviation industry. A few Craftsman bungalow duplexes are also extant from the 1920s.

**Significance**

In addition to the significance in *ethnic heritage* under Criterion A noted in the general requirements, these residences may be eligible under Criterion C in the area of *architecture*. They may be good examples of a type or method of construction that reflect the conditions of the period, or may be typical representatives of popular residential architecture. These were sometimes built by or for white residents, and were later sold to African Americans. They are typical of other modest residences built across the country during this period, generally *National Folk* housing. In many instances, the buildings lack architectural embellishment. Residences reflected nationwide trends, and such, most houses appear similar to those found throughout Wichita. However, the involvement of African American craftsmen in the construction of a building, whether general contractors, carpenters, or masons, in the construction of these buildings contributes to their significance no matter the stylistic influence. Contractor Frank H. Garrett and stone mason George W. Ewing contributed to the folk art character of the Tudor Revival

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influenced residence for Dr. Farmer at 1301 Cleveland Avenue. Ewing worked on several other properties in Wichita, for both black and white clients.

After the beginning of the twentieth century, Wichita residents – both black and white - replicated and adapted building plans from a variety of sources, such as books, catalogues, and trade literature, all readily available because of rural free mail delivery. *Twentieth-Century Revival* and *American Movement Houses* were part of a nationwide trend that occurred after the Victorian era, when the country as a whole was turning away from the old-fashioned exuberant styles from the previous decades. Tastes in residential architecture were turning either in favor of revival styles, which harkened back to an even earlier era, or to the simpler lines of the *Prairie* and *Craftsman* styles. While most are modest examples of these styles, some African American residences in Wichita are physical manifestations of the success of their owners. Symbolic of their owners' social standing within the African American community, these houses represent the economic success and stability of the individual residents. These houses may have replaced earlier vernacular houses as the owner increased their wealth, or may reflect the owner's desire to appear modern and sophisticated. Whether or not the building was professionally designed, if it is a typical or good representation of a particular style or type, African American residences could be significant under Criterion C.

*Minimal Traditional* and *Ranch* houses are less likely to be individually eligible under Criterion C due to their relative abundance and lack of individual distinction. They were particularly common during and after World War II when housing construction expanded in Wichita. Commonly found in tract developments, the simplest of these were inexpensive and quick to build, and thus helped Wichita overcome its housing shortage as its population grew during the defense industry boom of the late 1940s through 1950s.

While some African Americans may have built new homes as their personal wealth, it was more common within the African American community to update the appearance of their existing residences. Furthermore, many of Wichita's African Americans did not have the ability to move to a larger or more modern home, as their choices for neighborhoods were severely restricted in Wichita. For much of the period of significance, it was also difficult to obtain financing to purchase a new home. Another factor influencing their choice to modify their homes was the encouragement by some federal programs to "update" an older residence. After World War II, Title I of the National Housing Act promoted the use of private money to "recondition and preserve and renew the Nation's buildings." Pamphlets showed such modernizations as residing a Victorian era house, removing jig-sawn features and enclosing a porch. These alterations, if present during the historic period of significance and associated with African American residents, should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis as they may have achieved their own significance over time.

There were some multi-family dwelling units constructed by either blacks or whites within the historic African American neighborhoods. It is noteworthy that there was also virtually no single rental housing units built at the rear of properties in the McAdams neighborhood, as was so typical in other parts of

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Wichita (Ward 1995, 2). This reflects the lack of disposable income amount African Americans, particularly in the years leading up to World War II. Therefore, the few multi-family units that were constructed take on additional significance, particularly if they were built or owned by African Americans.

As noted in the general registration requirements, some single-family residences may be eligible under Criterion B for their association with historically significant African Americans. The residence of an individual that was significant in Wichita's civil rights movement is an example, as are the houses that were purchased by families that broke the racial barrier by purchasing homes in white neighborhoods. Examples include the Gilman and Maxine Walters house at 1650 N. Madison, where son Ron Walters was living in 1957 when he led the student sit-ins at the Dockum Drug Store. Vivian and Herbert Parks lived at 545 N. Mathewson in 1957, when Vivian was the advisor to the student NAACP chapter; Vivian was later president of the local NAACP chapter, and the Parks' home hosted several significant civil rights activists during the 1950s. Some of these houses may be located on what was the "other side" of the invisible boundaries separating neighborhoods, although a very few were located in traditional white neighborhoods which never experienced "white flight" once African Americans moved in. Duane Nelson's family was one of the first to move north of 13<sup>th</sup> Street on the east side of the canal to 1422 N. Ash. As the first African American family in the area, they were met with violence when their house was dynamited (Nelson, in Miller 2000, 12). This area would eventually become primarily African American. Chester and Vashti Lewis moved to the white College Hill neighborhood in 1961, an area of Wichita that today is primarily occupied by white families. In order to break the color barrier that existed in Wichita at that time, a white friend actually purchased the house and then transferred ownership to the Lewis family (Johnson 1998-99, 231).

**Registration Requirements**

In addition to the previously noted general registration requirements for associations with ethnic heritage, a residence may also be eligible under Criterion C in the area of *architecture*. In these instances, the building must retain integrity in the areas of design, materials and often workmanship. For those originally modest buildings, facade alterations or loss of key character-defining features would have a negative impact on integrity. The historic floor plan should be evident, although small additions to the rear do not seriously lessen integrity. Historic fenestration, facade symmetry (or asymmetry) and exterior finishes should also be intact. The historic plan and mass of the front porch should also be intact. However, with eclectic vernacular houses, it may be difficult to determine if the porch detailing is original. Therefore porch columns and balustrades may not be historic, but should display patterns that are complementary in size and detailing to the residence. The building should still be identifiable to the time it was constructed, however, and should not contain details that falsely correspond with an earlier period.

In spite of the above discussion on integrity, it is rare for an African American house to have survived to the present time without alteration. Replacement of window or roof materials is common. It is also common to find houses with additions made over the years, particularly to the rear. In the case of the



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Minimal Traditional houses, owners often closed the attached garage permanently to create more interior living space. In some instances, alterations and additions may have drastically altered the historic appearance of the house, rendering it incapable of conveying its original architectural significance. However, it may still be eligible under Criterion C if the changes are typical or characteristic of a later period of architectural significance. An example would be the addition of a Craftsman style porch onto a simple vernacular residence, possibly in an attempt to update the appearance of the house.

The homes of middle- to upper-class African Americans must be good examples of their period and type of construction in order to be eligible under Criterion C. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are of particular importance, especially those features that are identifiable to a specific style. Roof shapes, window and door openings, exterior wall materials and porches are areas that should retain their integrity from the time of construction. Integrity of association and feeling should also be retained in well-preserved examples of a particular type or style.

**NAME OF PROPERTY TYPE:** *Educational buildings***Description**

Extant public school buildings – elementary or secondary - associated with *ethnic heritage* are very rare in Wichita, and only a handful of the historically black elementary schools remain. Frederick Douglass School, Grand Avenue School, 18<sup>th</sup> Street School and Fairmount Elementary School have all been demolished, as was the original L'Ouverture School building. However, the L'Ouverture School constructed in 1950 is still extant, as Little (1954), Isley (1948) and Dunbar (1939 and 1950). Although their numbers are few, these schools played a key role in the struggle against segregation in Wichita – a fight that placed Wichita in the national spotlight. Also included are public schools that were not intentionally built as black schools, but due to the segregated residential patterns or the policies of the Wichita Board of Education, served primarily African American students. Public schools in Wichita that were built for or used by African Americans resembled the city's other public schools. Those built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were generally brick, flat roofed, and were two to three stories in height – often on raised basements. Those built after World War II or additions that were constructed during this period were usually one-story.

**Significance**

Educational buildings are significant in the area of *ethnic heritage* as noted in the general requirements for their association with the education of African Americans in Wichita, and may likely also be significant in the area of *education*. Many represent an ironic duality – they are physical reminders of decades of repression and inequality, yet also demonstrate the determination of African Americans in Wichita to obtain an education as a means of betterment. A quality education was a goal for many African Americans as it was viewed as a key means to a better job, a better life, and increased opportunities. However, many of these schools are also reminders of the past when public education in

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Wichita was not equal; either because school choice was restricted, or the methods in which it was administered at black vs. whites schools was not equal.

When the construction of education buildings was tied to the historic locations of Wichita's African American neighborhoods, examples of this property type may also be significant in the context of *community planning and development*. Public schools in Wichita were segregated at the elementary level by 1912, and at the intermediate level by racial geography and the policies of the school district.

In addition to the significance in *ethnic heritage* or *education* under Criterion A, education buildings may be eligible under Criterion C in the areas of *architecture* if they feature distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or because they possess high artistic values.

**Registration Requirements**

To be individually eligible, these resources must retain integrity noted in the general registration requirements section. Under Criterion A, they must have been constructed during the period of significance, and must have either played a part in the settlement of the neighborhood, or represent the African American community's struggle for equal access to education opportunities. It may also be associated with a number of distinguished individual African American individual in the community by having played a role in fostering their education and leadership; however, this would not make these buildings eligible under Criterion B.

The buildings should retain enough integrity that their original use is clearly evident. As virtually every public school building in Wichita has been rehabilitated, additions and alterations will not be sufficient to render a building ineligible. In fact, if the dates of the alterations occurred during the period of significance, they likely reflect the City's and school board's attitudes towards the African American community. For example, Dunbar Elementary was originally constructed as Isley Elementary in 1901. It then was designated as one of the segregated elementary schools for blacks in 1927 and the name changed to Dunbar. To accommodate the growing African American population the neighborhood, and addition was built in 1939. However, the original portion of the building needed expensive repairs, and rather than taking care of the maintenance issues, the original building was demolished and a new one constructed in 1950. From 1950 through 1971, when the district was desegregated in 1971, these two buildings served the black students of the neighborhood.

In nearly all examples, integrity of association, feeling, setting and location are critical to conveying the significance of this property type. It is important to determine the period of significance to help assess integrity of design and/or materials. While design integrity, particularly the elements of form and massing, are important for indicating historic function, changes over time may have achieved their own significance.

**NAME OF PROPERTY TYPE:** *Community buildings and resources*

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**Description**

Community buildings represent a broad property type, but in general are those that provided a space for social, cultural, recreational, political or religious functions within Wichita's African American community. They may be buildings or sites, such as parks, that provided either public or private meeting places for a variety of reasons. If buildings, they were generally larger and more substantial than residences, such as churches or social halls. One or two stories high, they were usually brick or masonry, and would provide important meeting space for African Americans that lived in segregated Wichita. Virtually all of these buildings were located in the historic black neighborhoods, so as to better serve the needs of their members. These resources may have modest materials and design due to the limited financial resources of most organizations. Examples include the Phyllis Wheatley Children's Home, the Arkansas Valley Lodge No. 21, Prince Hall Masons (listed 8/24/1977), the YMCA, and churches such as St. Peter Claver Catholic Church and Calvary Baptist Church (listed 10/28/1998).

Churches, which were often the first places in Wichita to provide a private meeting place for African Americans, are included in this property type. These can vary greatly in appearance, depending upon the financial means of the congregation. Some are large brick examples, and represent a particular architectural style. Others are simple, small concrete block buildings with a gable roof. Still others may have been originally constructed for a white congregation, and the building's style and architectural features are thus not necessarily the key area of association. All of the churches that service this function were located, however, in a historically black neighborhood and thus share associations of setting and location.

Meeting halls for fraternal or social organizations are also included in this property type. Although built for a specific organization, these were often used by a variety of other local African American groups, including social clubs and charitable and mutual aid organizations. The Prince Hall Masonic building was located near the Sedgwick County Courthouse, and its style and form are characteristic of other commercial buildings of its period. Only one park in Wichita was historically designated for the African American community within Wichita's large park system. McKinley Park is located in the McAdams neighborhood, and for many years it received little funding for construction of park resources. Many of its structures were built when federal funds became available during Roosevelt's New Deal era.

**Significance**

Community buildings and resources are significant under Criterion A in the area of *ethnic heritage* as physical reminders of the determination of Wichita's African Americans to build a supportive community environment in the face of racial discrimination. They were the buildings and sites where African Americans could safely associate with friends, celebrate milestones, develop business contacts, and plan for civic engagement or the mutual aid of their community. Their relationship to Wichita's African American society as a whole, by providing meeting places free from intimidation and oppression, was critical to the development of community character. Barred from much of the rest of Wichita's society, examples of this property type allowed African Americans to work within their own



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society and thus have some measure of control over their lives. These buildings and sites were important training grounds for future leaders in the black community and the city at large.

No other community institution was more important to the African American community than the church. The earliest churches in Wichita gave African Americans their first leadership and organizational experience. They were the location of important social and political gatherings. They may also have served as a center for cultural entertainment, especially for the congregations with active choral groups. The church was the center of nearly all aspects of the African American community, serving not only religious, but the social, cultural and political needs of its members. Most churches also worked on the welfare needs of its members. Many churches played significant roles in political involvement and civic engagements, with key civil rights meetings held there. They were training grounds for the future leaders in Wichita's African American community, and for later in the twentieth century, for the city at large. Some churches played a significant role in the education of African Americans, holding both secular and Sabbath school classes. They may have offered reading and writing classes for adults and children. These classes were often held in rooms other than the main sanctuary. The complex for St. Peter Claver Catholic Church contains separate buildings for classes and church offices, and was significant for the role it played in planning and preparation for the Dockum sit-ins.

In the area of *community planning and development*, community buildings and resources represent the segregated development patterns of Wichita. All are located within the historically black neighborhoods. Some were built by African American congregations or organizations, and others are buildings that were purchased for their purpose. For example, several churches in the Hillside area were originally built for white congregations, but were later sold to black churches as the neighborhood demographics shifted. Especially for the congregations that moved with their members, they are tangible representations of the population shifts and changing residential patterns of Wichita's African American neighborhoods.

Social halls, clubs, and community welfare buildings are also included in this property type. Those associated with an important African American club or organization are eligible if they played a key role in the social, welfare, cultural or political history of Wichita's African American community. Some may have been organized for purely social reasons, while others worked to improve the lives of local residents through political or charitable work. The YMCA buildings at 517 N. Water Street and 1221 N. Cleveland Avenue were the sites of recreational and social gatherings, as well as a leading organization that worked with African American youth in Wichita. Social clubs were often organized by churches, but sometimes met in the homes of members. Some were formed strictly as African American organizations, while others, like the Prince Hall Masons, were "colored chapters" of national fraternal orders. These organizations promoted morality and charitable service among its members, while also providing a form of insurance should a tragedy befall one of its members. Buildings associated with these groups would also be eligible in the area of *social history*.

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In addition to the significance in *ethnic heritage* under Criterion A noted in the general requirements and *social history* as outlined above, community buildings and resources may be eligible under Criterion C in the areas of *architecture* or *landscape architecture* if they feature distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or because they possess high artistic values.

**Registration Requirements**

To be individually eligible, these resources must have been used by or built for African Americans community in Wichita during the period of significance. Integrity of location is particularly critical, as all of the resources were situated so as to be easily accessible to the historic black neighborhoods. They should also retain integrity of setting, feeling and association. The design should clearly indicate the building's function. Additions should be expected as the needs of the group changed over the years, but they should not overwhelm the building's original design. For the larger community buildings, their primary interior spaces that provided meeting space should be retained.

For church buildings to be eligible, they need to first satisfy National Register Criteria Consideration A which states that religious properties must derive their primary significance from architectural distinction or historic importance. A religious property must also meet either Criterion A or C, or both. To meet Criterion A, religious properties should be associated with an African American organization in Wichita. This organization must have played a role in the social, cultural or political history of the community. A church may also reflect the direction of Wichita's African American settlement patterns in Wichita. While an African American congregation must have occupied the church during the period of significance, it is not necessary for the congregation to have built the church. If this is the case, the church represents the changing demographics of formerly white neighborhoods, such as the formerly white University Methodist Church selling to the African American Tabernacle Baptist Church, or the membership of the Brotherhood Presbyterian Church changing from white to black. For those built by black congregations, the churches may have modest designs, materials and workmanship due to the limited financial resources of most congregations. Alterations such as new siding and additions should be evaluated on an individual basis to determine if these alterations have achieved their own significance over time if it occurred during the period of significance, and if the essential form of the original portion is not overwhelmed. Churches that were designed and/or built by African American architects and craftsman may also be significant under Criterion C in the area of *architecture*. A high degree in integrity of design and workmanship is more critical in these instances.

**NAME OF PROPERTY TYPE:** *Commercial buildings*

**Description**

African American commercial buildings housed a variety of enterprises, and may include grocery stores, theaters, funeral homes, and office and professional buildings. They were the center of commerce within the African American neighborhoods. Generally they resembled other commercial buildings in

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Wichita, although many may have had simpler designs and materials, representing the means of their owners.

The earliest African American commercial district was located just west of the 1888 county courthouse on North Main Street. The majority of buildings here were originally constructed for white owners. As the center of commerce in Wichita shifted from Main Street to Douglas Avenue in the 1880s, many white-owned businesses moved from North Main, leaving the buildings available for African American entrepreneurs. Most of these buildings were two-part brick commercial blocks (Longstreth 2000, 24). Any ornamentation was generally provided by the materials, such as brick patterning. The majority of examples along N. Main were demolished due to the expansion of county government and through urban renewal projects.

During the early part of the twentieth century, when Wichita's African Americans were moving to the "North End" (now called the McAdams neighborhood), a new commercial center developed at the intersection of 9<sup>th</sup> and Cleveland. Many of these buildings were constructed specifically by or for African American business owners, and as such, were simple masonry buildings with little to no ornamentation. They are one-story, brick or brick-veneered buildings with flat roofs. The buildings often fill the entire lot, and are set close to the sidewalk. Windows on the front façade are larger than those found in residences in order to promote the businesses or products located within. An exception to the window pattern was the Dunbar Theater, which naturally required restricted light into the building. Here the marquee forms the predominant architectural pattern of the building.

A few commercial enterprises were located in residences or buildings that had a more domestic quality, such as small carry-out restaurants and beauty salons. Instead of being located at the commercial centers on North Main or at 9<sup>th</sup> & Cleveland, these smaller businesses were often located in the midst of a residential block, such as McClinton Market at 1205 E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **Significance**

Commercial buildings owned or operated by African Americans provided entrepreneurial opportunities that were denied to blacks in other parts of Wichita. These black-owned businesses also provided important services to the African American community, where they could be served or entertained in an environment free of racial discrimination. African Americans were either excluded or restricted to "colored" areas in Wichita's restaurants, retail stores, service industries, mortuaries, theaters and dentists' and doctors' offices. Businesses that were owned by African Americans provided equal access to their services that were denied to blacks otherwise, and filled an important need in the community. Commercial buildings may also be significant if they housed important black-owned businesses or professionals. As African Americans were excluded from employment in many sectors of Wichita's economy, many were forced to open their own business as a means of employment, both for themselves and for other African Americans. Many who operated these businesses later emerged as community leaders, such as Curtis McClinton, Sr. A real estate broker in addition to running a neighborhood grocery, McClinton was the first African American outside of Kansas City, Kansas to serve as a Kansas



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State Representative. His business was also used as headquarters for his legislative campaigns. Chester Lewis' office at 2202 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Street was built in 1958, and from here he conducted much of his groundbreaking legal work in civil rights. Black-owned businesses were great sources of pride for the community as well. The Negro Directory of 1923 boasts of over one hundred businesses that served Wichita's African Americans, illustrating how these entrepreneurs were able to overcome the lack of opportunities and discrimination that were so prevalent.

As much of the early civil rights movement in Wichita focused on equal access to public businesses and accommodations, there may be some traditionally white-owned buildings that have significance for an event during the civil rights movement. To be eligible, these properties should be the site of an event that was generally sustained, such as long-term picketing, or that were pivotal in either local, state or national civil rights movements, such as the Dockum sit-ins.

**Registration Requirements**

In addition to the general requirement for listing under Criterion A in the area of *ethnic heritage*, commercial buildings should have housed commercial or professional operations which were significant to Wichita's African American neighborhoods. They may have contained a store, office, restaurant, theater, or the offices of a professional, medical or trade service. The commercial buildings may have been originally built for white owners and later sold to blacks; these will represent the changing demographics of Wichita's neighborhoods. Others may have been built by or for black-owned businesses. Integrity of location is critical, as all of these were located in historic African American districts. Setting, feeling and association are also important areas of integrity. In the area of design, street-facing elevations should retain the majority of their major design features, particularly those that indicate original function, like a storefront or marquee sign. However, storefront replacements were quite common during the twentieth century and should be expected, when owners wanted to update the appearance of their buildings to continue to attract customers. Materials may be altered or replaced in these instances, but a storefront appearance should remain, including a centered or recessed front entry door as well as large display windows. The alterations should be representative of the era in which they were constructed, and should date from the period of significance. Less than a dozen extant examples of historic African American commercial buildings remain in Wichita, and evaluation of integrity should take into consideration this rarity. Most of these are located near the intersection of 9<sup>th</sup> and Cleveland Streets, such as the drugstore at 1001 N. Cleveland and the Dunbar Theater at 1007 N. Cleveland (listed 7/2/2008); a handful of other commercial buildings are scattered throughout the McAdams neighborhood. Exceptions to these registration requirements are those commercial buildings that were the site of significant civil rights events, such as the Dockum Drugstore building. These properties will be located outside of the traditional African American neighborhoods. Integrity should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and take into account the period in which the event occurred, as well as the level of significance of the historic association. In the case of the Dockum Drugstore, for example, the sit-ins that occurred in July 1958 were nationally significant.

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If a commercial building is eligible under Criterion C as a good example of a method or type of construction, it should retain its character-defining features that distinguish it. Examples of character-defining features include the form, mass, floor plan, organization of space, fenestration patterns, style and materials.

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

The geographical area covered by this MPDF encompasses all of incorporated city of Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas. A majority of the known and potential historic resources associated with African Americans are located primarily in three locations, however: North Water Street, McAdams neighborhood, and the northeast neighborhood north of 13<sup>th</sup> Street, between I-135 and Wichita State University. However, there are rare historical instances of an African American family residing in other sections of Wichita. Furthermore, some of the civil rights pioneers in the 1960s moved outside of the traditional African American neighborhoods, breaking the color barrier that existed in Wichita housing at this time.



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**SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS**

The Multiple Property Documentation Form for *African American Resources in Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas* was developed to provide a broad context for evaluating the extant cultural landscape and built resources associated with African American activities in Wichita, Sedgwick County. The geographic area covers the 2010 incorporated city limits.

The project began with archival research about African Americans in Wichita and Kansas. This information, used to develop the historic contexts and property types, was based on a study of both primary and secondary sources. These sources include census records, Sanborn maps, city building permits, previous surveys and nominations, city and county histories, historic newspapers, city government records, private publications and resources, and historic photographs. These sources were found at local libraries, local museums or historical societies, and local governments. After preliminary background research, existing individual surveys were reviewed and a windshield survey was conducted in the historic African American neighborhoods. Past historic surveys in Wichita have evaluated approximately 650 properties which have been identified as having the potential for associations with African Americans. Two books were particularly helpful in the development of two contexts: Sondra Van Meter's *Our Common School Heritage: A History of the Wichita Public Schools*, and Gretchen Cassel Eick's *Dissent in Wichita: the Civil Rights Movement in the Midwest, 1954-1972*. Robert Leon Lane's Ed.D. dissertation on "A Historical Study of the Development of School Desegregation in the Wichita Public Schools, 1966 to 1975" also provided extensive documentation of desegregation in Wichita's education context. Due to the deaths of many of the participants of these various events, the original sources documented in these well-researched monographs would be impossible to replicate today.

Based on the background information gathered through both archival and field research, the historic contexts represent the major themes of African American development in Wichita that were also likely to have extant resources. Thus there were several thematic areas that are worthy of additional research, but for the purposes of this project, would not likely be associated with many extant properties. Examples are properties associated with African American commerce, entertainment/recreation, health/medicine, performing arts and social history. In these areas of National Register significance, there may be just a single example or a handful of extant resources in Wichita. As all of these properties are located within the traditional African American neighborhoods and all lend to the sense of community, they are covered in the larger context *The Development of the Wichita's African American Community: 1870 - 1970*. Future research, however, may prove the need for additional contexts.

This thematic-based approach for preparing historic contexts in the MPDF is predicated on the forces which shaped the African American community in Wichita. Property types are based on categories of resources sharing similar original functions, utilizing the existing surveys and the reconnaissance windshield survey conducted during this project to not only develop the property types but the registration requirements as well. As more examples of these property types are surveyed in the future, it

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is possible that additional information may be revealed, which in turn may warrant amendments to this document.

The MPDF was partially funded by Federal funds from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior and for the Kansas State Historical Society. Deon Wolfenbarger, historic preservation consultant for Three Gables Preservation, prepared the document. Project coordinators for City of Wichita were Kathy Morgan, Senior Planner, Historic Preservation, and Barbara Hammond, Associate Planner, Historic Preservation. Hammond also conducted census and city directory research and prepared the population maps. Certified Local Government Coordinator for Kansas was Katrina Ringler, and project coordinator for the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office was Sarah Martin, National Register Coordinator. Various staff of the Kansas SHPO reviewed Section F, and Virgil Dean and Donna Rae Pearson, KSHS historians, reviewed Section E. All meet federal standards 36 CFR-61 for historic preservation consultants, with the areas of landscape architecture, history, and historic preservation represented. Lavonta Williams, City Council person for District 1, represented Wichita City Government in the direction of this project. Dr. Galen A. Vesey, project director for *Research on Black Wichita* as well as one of the youth participants in the Dockum sit-ins, also provided invaluable direction and assistance with the MPDF and the accompanying individual property nominations. Mary Nelson, Program Consultant II, Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, was instrumental in providing access to WSU's African American collection. During this project, Wichita State University Libraries hosted "Separate Is Not Equal," an exhibit of photographs, documents and artifacts showing the importance of education in the Wichita's black community.

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***Mapping credits:***

Barbara Hammond, Associate Planner, Historic Preservation, City of Wichita.

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National Park Service

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Multiple Property Documentation Form  
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African American Resources in Wichita, Sedgwick Co., Kansas

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The following Wichita properties currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places meet the registration requirements under this MDPF:

**Arkansas Valley Lodge No. 21, Prince Hall Masons (1910)**

615 N. Main

Listed 8/24/1977

**Calvary Baptist Church (ca. 1917-1920)**

601 N. Water Street

Listed 10/28/1998

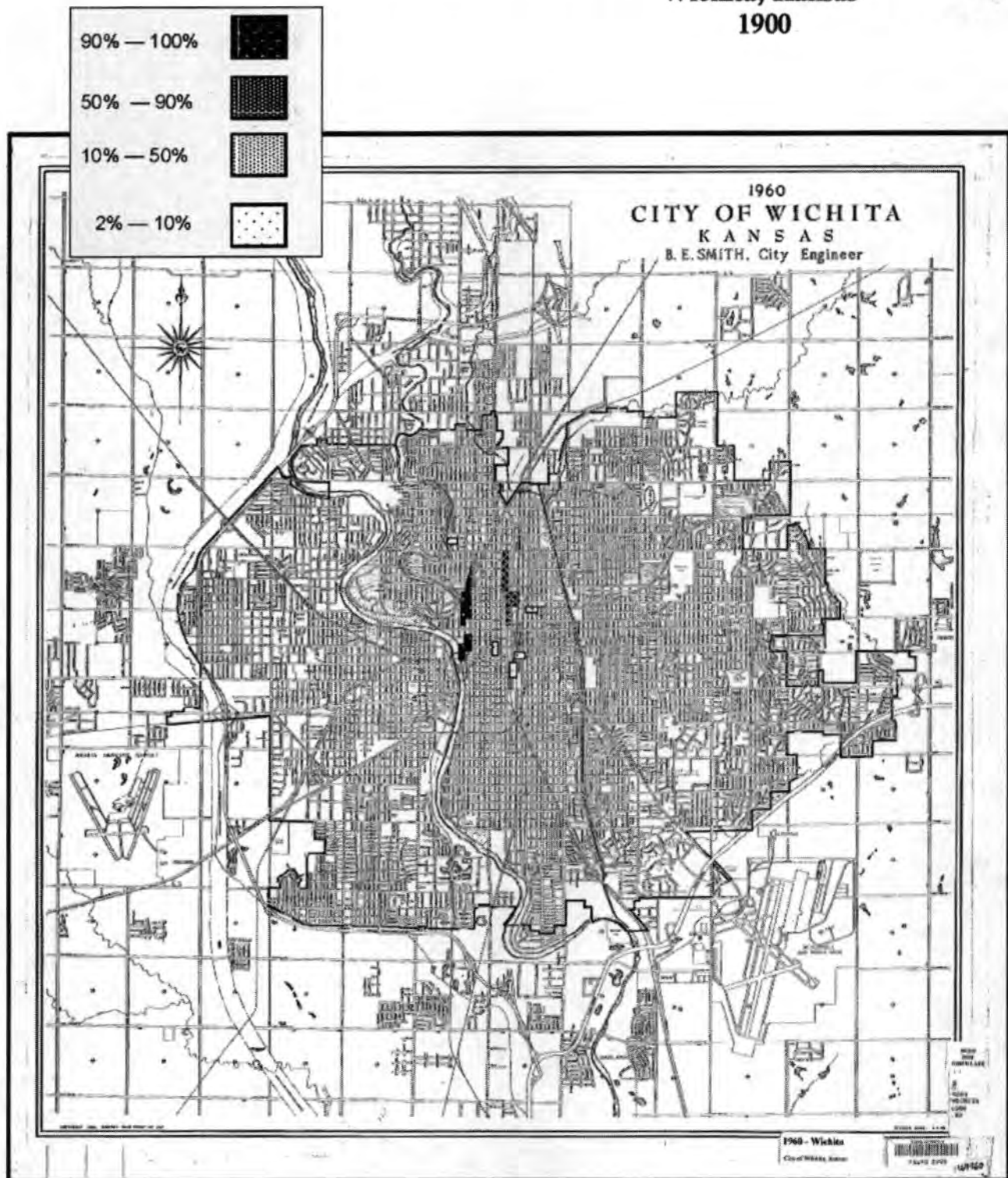
**Dunbar Theater (1941)**

1007 N. Cleveland

Listed 7/2/2008

Appendix A

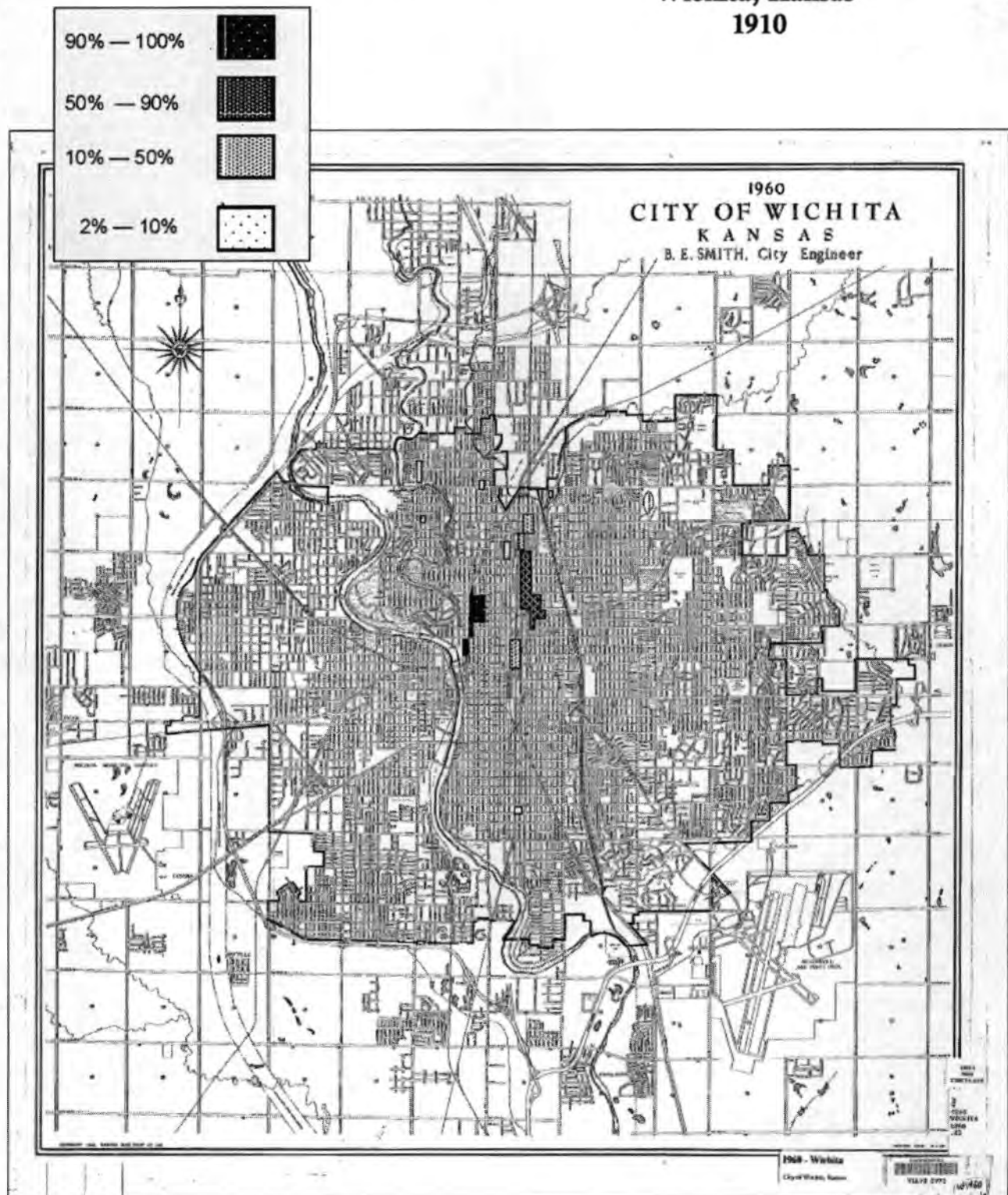
**Proportion of African American Residents in Total Population  
Wichita, Kansas  
1900**





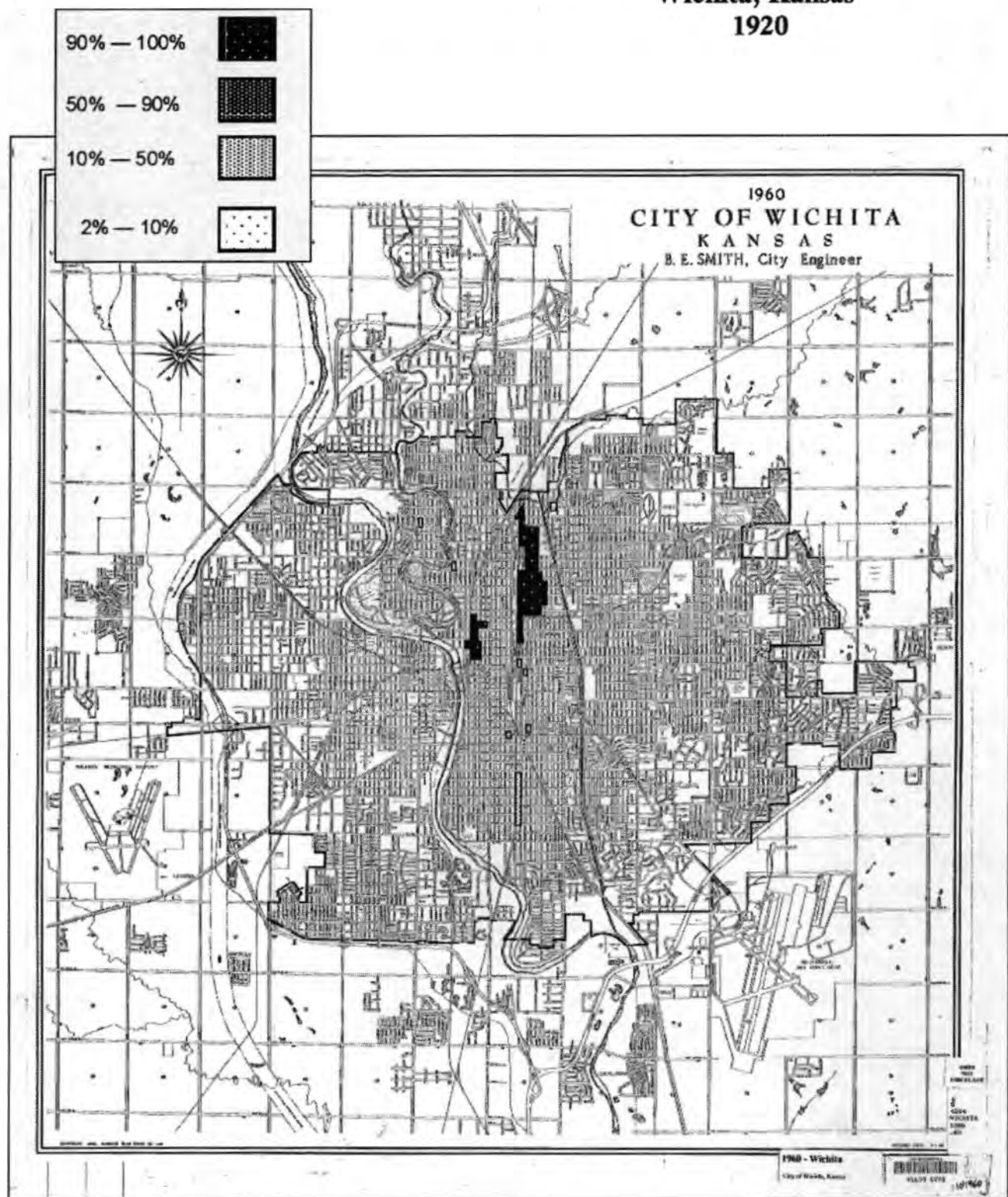
Appendix B

**Proportion of African American Residents in Total Population  
Wichita, Kansas  
1910**



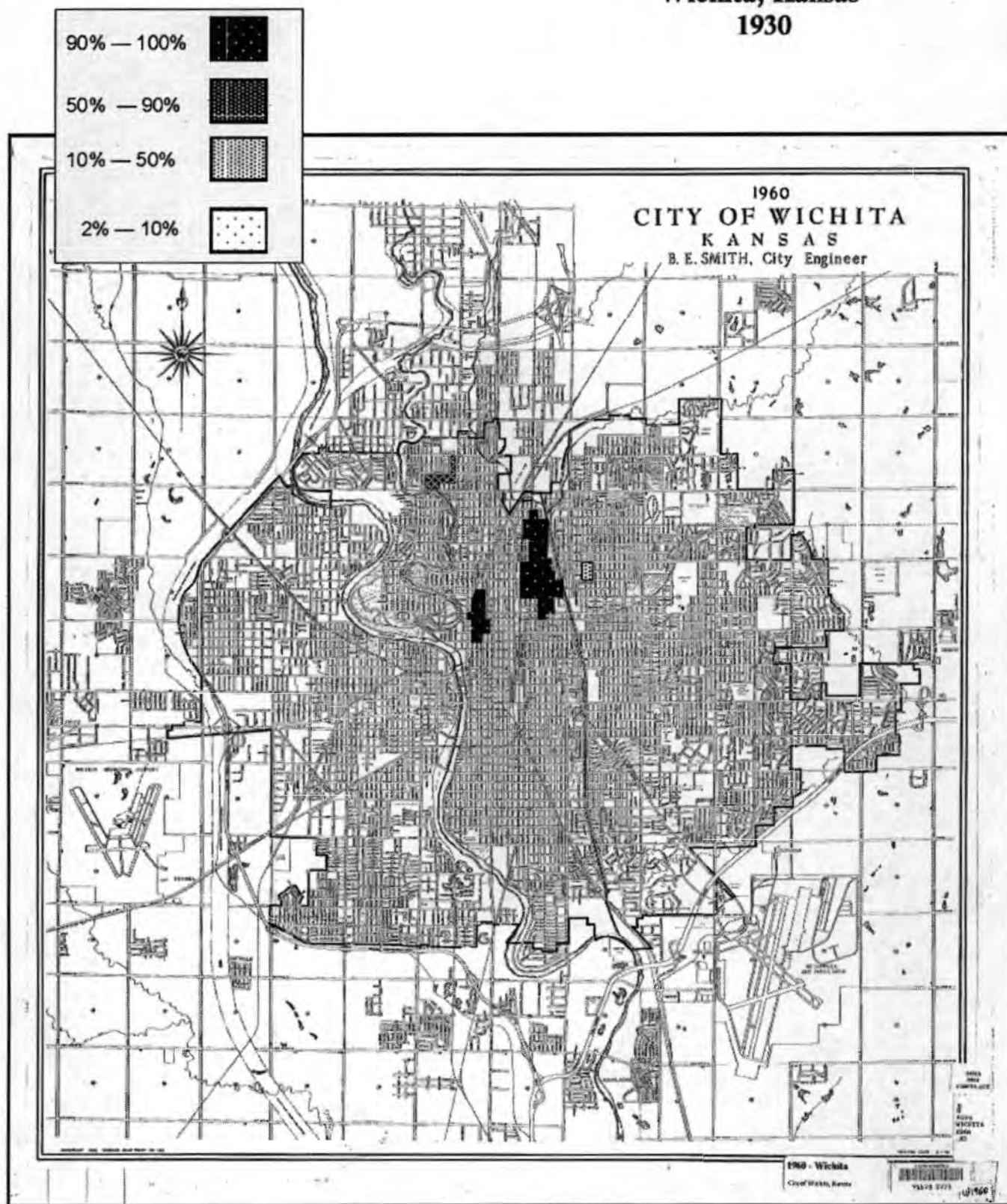
Appendix C

**Proportion of African American Residents in Total Population  
Wichita, Kansas  
1920**



Appendix D

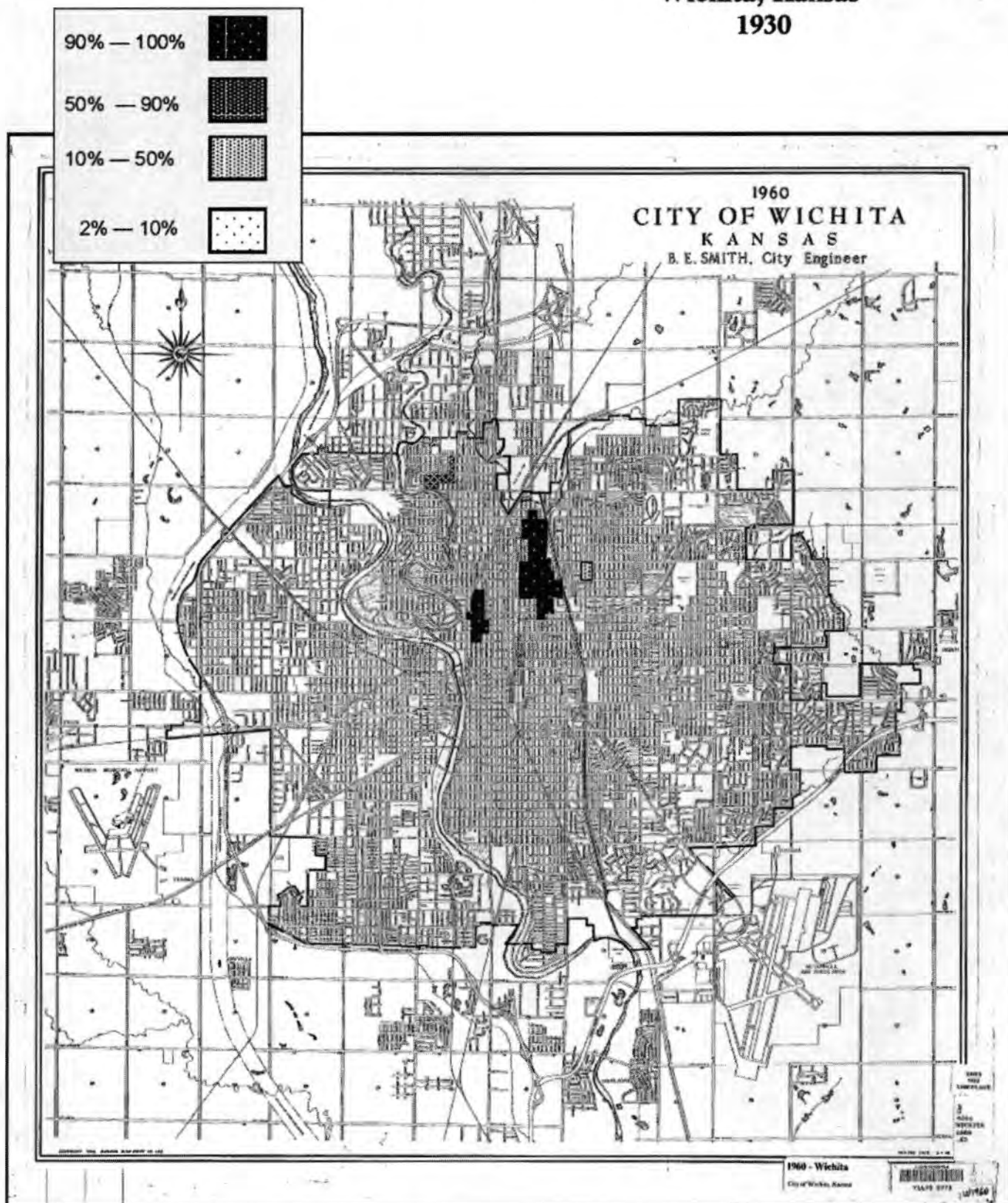
**Proportion of African American Residents in Total Population  
Wichita, Kansas  
1930**





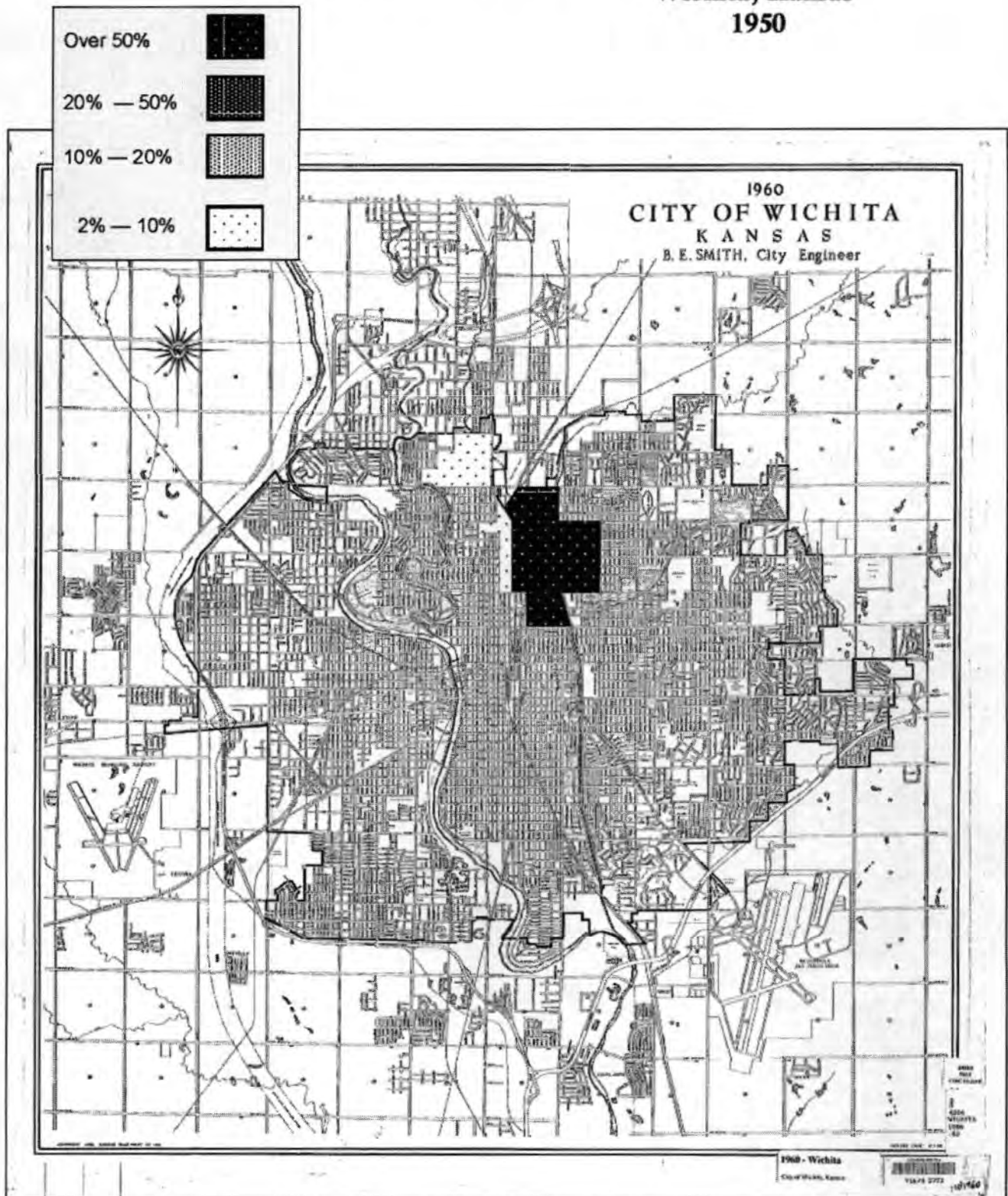
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**Proportion of African American Residents in Total Population  
Wichita, Kansas  
1930**



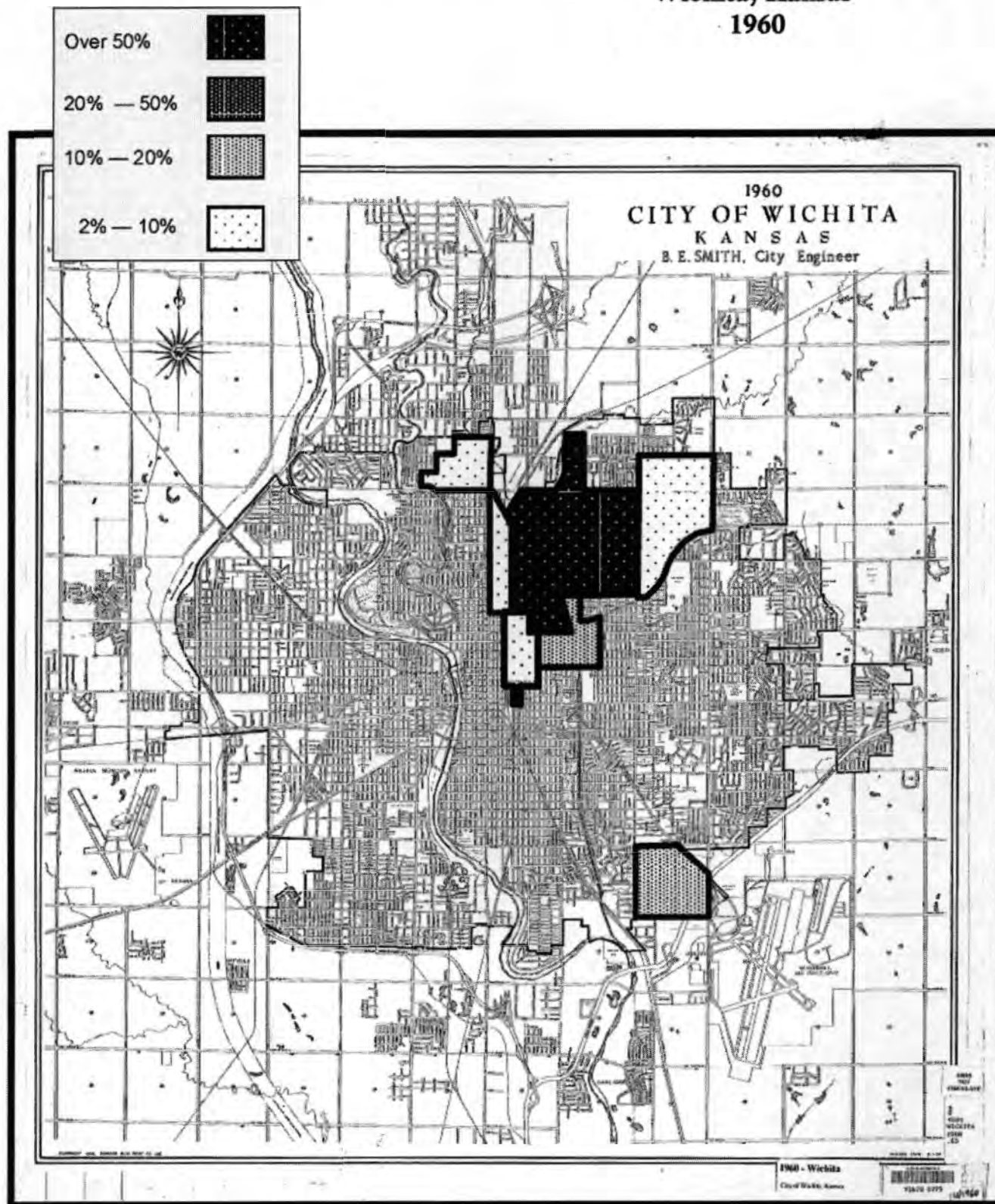
Appendix F

**Proportion of African American Residents in Total Population  
Wichita, Kansas  
1950**



Appendix G

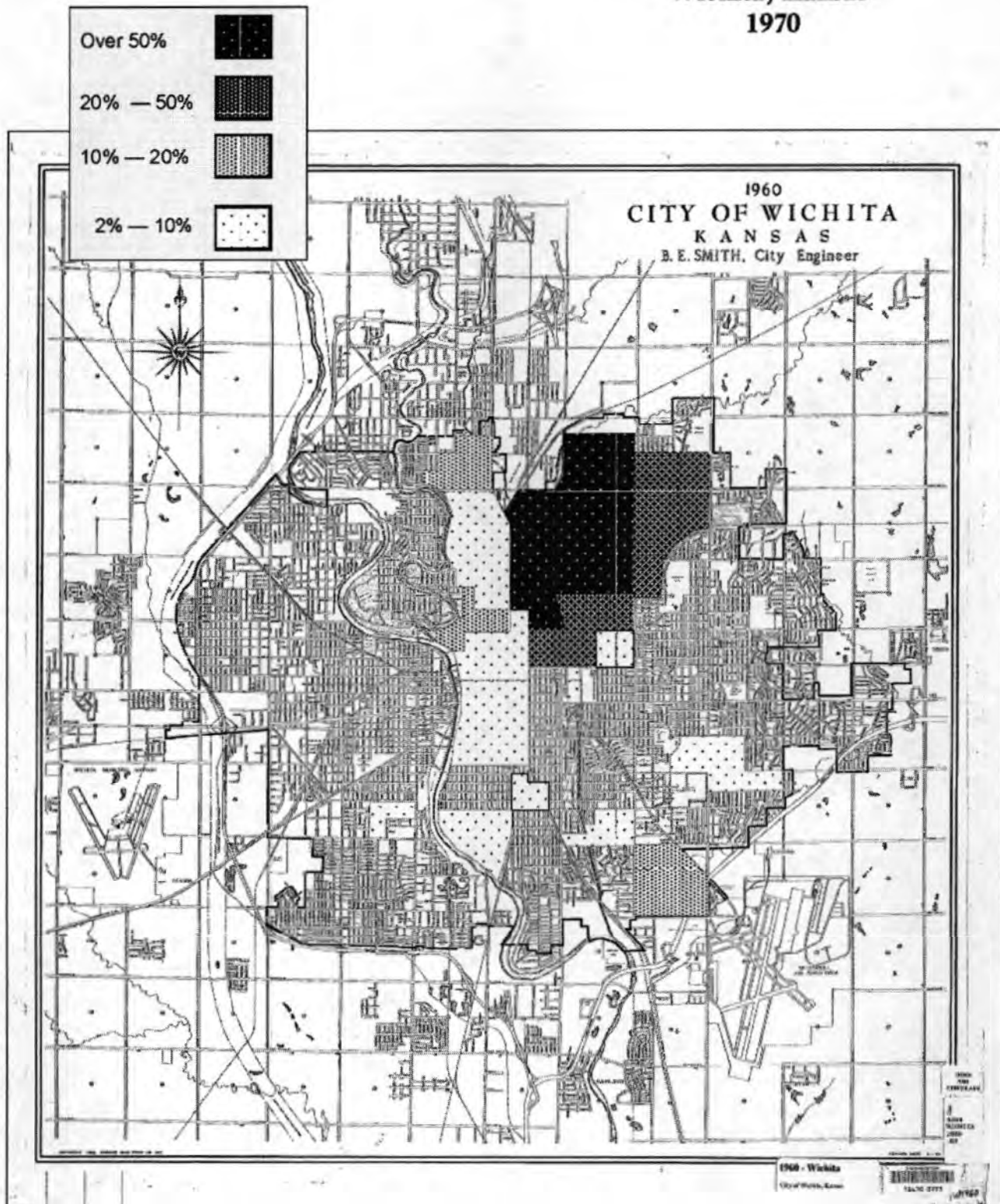
**Proportion of African American Residents in Total Population  
Wichita, Kansas  
1960**





Appendix H

**Proportion of African American Residents in Total Population  
Wichita, Kansas  
1970**



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: COVER DOCUMENTATION

MULTIPLE African American Resources in Wichita, Kansas MPS  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: KANSAS, Sedgwick

DATE RECEIVED: 05/13/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 06/28/11  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 64501113

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N  
NEW MPS: Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 6/28/2011 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Provides a good context for Development & Growth  
of African American Community of Wichita. Registration  
Requirements and Property types are well done*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept

REVIEWER J. Hubert DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

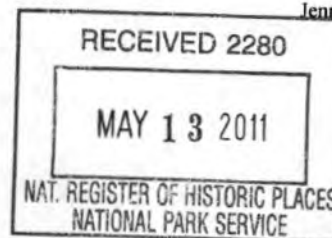
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N Y see attached SLR Y/N Y

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

Kansas Historical Society

Sam Brownback, Governor  
Jennie Chinn, Executive Director



May 3, 2011

Carol Shull  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, N. W.  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor (MS 2280)  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Please find enclosed the following National Register documents:

- African American Resources in Wichita, Sedgwick Co., KS MPDF (new submission)
  - J. E. Farmer House – Wichita, Sedgwick Co., KS (new submission)
  - McClinton Market – Wichita, Sedgwick Co., KS (new submission)
- Broom Corn Warehouse – Wichita, Sedgwick Co., Kansas (new submission)

Also included is a request for feedback on a draft nomination for the St. Louis & San Francisco Railroad Retention Pond in Beaumont, Kansas.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. I may be reached at 785-272-8681 ext. 216 or [smartin@kshs.org](mailto:smartin@kshs.org).

Sincerely yours,



Sarah J. Martin  
National Register Coordinator

Enclosures