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A HISTORY OF THE NEGRO IN MINNESOTA

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# A HISTORY OF THE NEGRO IN MINNESOTA

by Earl Spangler

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In a state where minorities have played such an important role in the development of culture and society, it seems only just that the Negro's history should be part of the total. This study is an attempt to survey the struggle of a small minority of people as they strove to become first-class citizens.

The American Negro is our oldest minority, with the exception of the American Indian. He has been intertwined with the history of the United States from Jamestown to the present. All too often, he has been portrayed as a Southern "problem," but this is no longer true, if it ever were. His struggle to achieve equality in America has become part of the struggle by minorities, particularly those of color, to do the same thing in world society.

The Negro, unlike most other groups in Minnesota, has not been conscious of his own history and role in the state. He has made few major efforts to preserve the variety of sources so vital to the preservation of the history of a people. One of his greatest achievements along this line has been the maintenance of a Negro press since 1885 which constitutes a major source on his activities and institutional life.

The Negro was present in Minnesota in the early fur-trading days and has played a role, direct or indirect, in the history of the Territory and State ever since. The Negro population of Minnesota grew from 39 in 1850 to 14,022 in 1950, a sizable growth but still a very small minority of the total population. He has been held in slavery, freed by court action, given legal,

educational and suffrage equality, held public office, including the state legislature, and contributed to business, industry, and professions in his communities. His institutions, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and Urban League, have been exceedingly active and effective in furthering the progress of the Negro in Minnesota. In essence, he has been a "catalyst" of American democracy in Minnesota, as elsewhere.

The history of the Negro in Minnesota indicates that a minority which always has been a very small part of the total population can have an impact on the history of the state. In addition to the role noted above, an anti-lynching law and the enactment of a Fair Employment Practices Act give further credence to the place of the Negro in a Northern state where race prejudice has always existed but now appears to be on the wane. Such success in establishing this atmosphere speaks well for both white and Negro residents of the state.

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Any errors in fact are those of accident and not of intent; so too are mistakes in judgment or interpretation. For these, the author assumes complete responsibility.

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# A HISTORY OF THE NEGRO IN MINNESOTA

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION--SOURCES AND METHODS

The story of the Negro in America has been told in many books; the story of the Negro in Minnesota has been told in none. In a state where minorities have played such an important role in the development of culture and society, it seems only just that the Negro's history should be a part of the total. This study is an attempt to survey the struggle of a small minority as they strove to become first-class citizens.

It is not only important that white people understand the Negro and his history in Minnesota; it is essential that the Negro know something about his history, leaders, and accomplishments, a knowledge that is all too lacking in Minnesota. The purpose of this story is to enable whites and Negroes to more fully realize their mutual problems, not as racial groups but as American citizens.

There are numerous works on the American Negro. Most of them are sociological in nature and deal with "acculturation," discrimination patterns, and the "role of minorities

in American society." It is true that the American Negro is a sociological problem, but he is also a historical problem. Here is a race that has been a part of American history since Jamestown. The American Negro is the nation's oldest minority, with the exception of the American Indian. He has played an increasingly important role, directly or indirectly, in American history through his petitions for freedom in colonial days, his presence at the Boston Massacre, as a reason for the moral criticism of abolitionists, and as a pawn in the hands of unscrupulous Reconstructionists. Today as a citizen, he is seeking his rights in schools, at the polls, or in lunch counters.

All too often, the Negro has been studied and surveyed as a Southern "problem;" this was largely true for the first 50 years after the Civil War. However, the period of World War I saw the Negro turn in increasing numbers to Northern states as economic opportunities seemed to offer relief from the social and economic status that had become the lot of the Southern Negro. As such, the Negro became a Northern "problem," and it is this phase of Negro history that has been studied with increasing intensity, particularly since the mid-twenties.

Among the more important general works on the American Negro by an American Negro author is The Negro in the United States, by E. Franklin Frazier. Here the Negro is treated in his interaction with the larger American society

and in broad sociological perspective. It is Frazier's contention that the Negro has been pictured too often as "floating about" in American society, an approach which tended to perpetuate outmoded and provincial notions. The main emphasis, Frazier believes, should be placed upon the "Negro community" and its institutions. Frazier has described the Negro under the slave regime, depicted the racial conflict and new forms of accommodation that came out of the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the New South, and gave special attention to the more recent period in terms of Negro intellectual life, health, family disorganization, crime, and urbanization. Specific areas touched upon are Harlem, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, and the Border States.<sup>1</sup>

Frazier stated that "In a sense the Negro has always been the ward of the nation, so to speak, or the ward of some philanthropic interests." As such, he has never been permitted to develop into "full stature" through competition with whites. However, according to Frazier, the increasing urbanization of the Negro has decreased this wardship, as has the increasing political power of the Negro.<sup>2</sup>

Another part of the Frazier thesis is that the struggle of the Negro to achieve equality in America "can no

<sup>1</sup>E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro in the United States, (New York: Macmillan, 1949), pp. xi-xii.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 676-677.

longer be separated from the struggle of colored colonial peoples" to do the same thing in world society. Thus some American Negroes have identified themselves with this struggle. In this sense, what America does to its Negro minority is projected throughout the world as an example, good or bad, of American democracy.<sup>1</sup>

Another general work on the American Negro is the American edition of Gunnar Myrdal's American Dilemma, namely The Negro in America, by Arnold Rose. In this edition, Rose placed a great deal of stress upon the migrant Negroes in the North and the gains made by them during and since World War II. The sudden influx of Southern Negroes of "low educational and cultural attainments" during and after World War I is given credit for the increased racial prejudice and social discrimination that existed in the North in the 1920's and 1930's. While Negro betterment organizations and state laws did much to protect Negroes against discrimination, Rose felt that the "constant fear of social discrimination and the necessity of fighting for civil rights are sources of cynicism toward and hatred for whites."<sup>2</sup>

Rose recognized that Negroes made tremendous strides during the last two years of World War II but argued that "The two areas in which Northern Negroes suffer most are

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 701.

<sup>2</sup>Arnold Rose, The Negro in America, (Boston, 1948), p. 313.

housing and employment." In spite of gains, the Northern Negro was still restricted to certain areas in every large Northern city, the housing shortage bore most heavily on the "upper-and middle-class Negroes, whose standards demand decent housing," while "postwar prosperity enabled the Negro . . . to avoid unemployment."<sup>1</sup>

Another important general history of the Negro in America is that of John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom. Franklin has stated that ". . . the history of the Negro in America is essentially the story of the strivings of the nameless millions who have sought adjustment in a new and sometimes hostile world." The author believed that American history has been "vitally affected" by the Negro's presence, but acculturation has taken place so markedly as to make the Negro "as truly an American as any member of other ethnic groups that make up the American population."<sup>2</sup>

Franklin stated that the Negro's survival in America has depended on his capacity to adjust and accommodate to the dominant culture. However, the obstacles to these have often been so great as to prevent him from making "significant achievements in the usual sense of the word."<sup>3</sup>

Several smaller and less well documented works

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 313.

<sup>2</sup>John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p. viii.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

either attempt to portray the Negro in the context of modern democracy or show the cultural and intellectual attainments of American Negroes. Ina Corinne Brown, in Race Relations in a Democracy, attempted to show that the American race problem cannot be fully understood until white and Negro people know "why they feel as they do" about one another. Chapters V-IX approach the story of the Negro in the United States from a historical standpoint and also discuss the status of race relations during the post-World War II years. The claim is made that the race problem must be seen in a global context.<sup>1</sup>

The Story of the Negro, by Arna Bontemps, is a very general survey of the Negro from Africa to the New World. The main emphasis is upon Negroes who have become famous and have contributed to American culture. Among those mentioned are: Booker T. Washington, Charles S. Johnson, W. E. B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, and General Benjamin Davis. Some attention is given to Negro betterment associations, specifically the National Urban League.

The viewpoint that the Negro has been a "catalyst of American democracy" is advanced by Margaret Just Butcher in The Negro in American Culture. Butcher has stated that the progress of the Negro from slave to freedman and legal citizen, to increased equality of rights and opportunities, and

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<sup>1</sup>Ina Corrine Brown, Race Relations in a Democracy, (New York, 1949), pp. vii, 187.

as an "accepted neighbor and compatriot" is a "dramatic testament to democracy's positive and dynamic character."<sup>1</sup> Even though her conclusions might be premature or overly-optimistic, the "catalyst" role of the Negro has been demonstrated in many Northern states, including Minnesota. Unfortunately, Butcher placed an undue emphasis upon the cultural and artistic attainments of the Negro as against the political and economic problems that would normally be implied in the "catalyst" thesis.

An older but still useful general work is that of Jerome Dowd, The Negro in American Life. Written over 30 years ago by a sociologist, this work made the telling point that "The ardor of American patriotism has had a tendency to impress our people with the idea of inferiority of other races than that to which we claim kinship. . . ."<sup>2</sup> Dowd traced the Negro from Africa to the New World, gave some attention to the Northern Negro since the Civil War, and placed emphasis upon the Negro in Chicago, specifically in respect to Negro education and race riots. The work is general in nature and stresses trends, characteristics, and assumptions. The sources are largely secondary and sociological.

More specialized studies give attention to the mi-

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Just Butcher, The Negro in American Culture, (New York, 1956), pp. 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> Jerome Dowd, The Negro in American Life, (New York, 1926), p. v.

grant Negro and his status, problems, and attainments in the North. A great many of them deal with the major centers of Negro concentration: New York City, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, Chicago, and Detroit. Virtually all of these studies concur in the opinion that Negro migration from the South began during World War I and continues to the present. Some are almost completely statistical, others are extremely local, while still others attempt to generalize from these statistics and studies.

In the late 1930's, Dorothy Thomas Swaine called attention to the stream of Negro migration from the South which began in 1917. In her Research Memorandum on Migration Differentials Swaine cited the drouth, industrial depression, agricultural conditions, and restrictive laws on immigration as factors which contributed to Negro migration. She acknowledged that her facts and conclusions could be questioned because of the absence of few norms against which evaluation could be made.<sup>1</sup>

In 1940, Frank Lorimer, Ellen Winston, and Louise Kiser published their Foundations of American Population Policy, a study made for the National Economic and Planning Association. They maintained that within the decade of the 1930's, population distribution studies had become more important than immigration studies. According to the authors,

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<sup>1</sup>Dorothy Thomas Swaine, Research Memorandum on Migration Differentials, (New York, 1938), p. 3 passim.



the Negro represented an increasing part of the population in many states and should be regarded as an important minority in terms of planning by both local and national governments. The study attempted to analyze population trends, labor supply, consumption trends, and family structure. However, many of its conclusions and ideas are no longer valid since they are based upon the "approaching cessation of population growth in the United States."<sup>1</sup>

Louise V. Kennedy analyzed the period 1915-1930 in The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward. An attempt was made to discern characteristics, causes, sources, and problems of the migrant situation. The study is not entirely accurate because many of the statistics and conclusions failed to distinguish actual migrants from all Northern Negroes or non-migrants. It is useful, however, as an early study on the causes of migration and does not differ materially from the later works of Swaine and Lorimer, et al. There is a good bibliography. Kennedy believed that "the first real step" toward improving the lot of the Negro lay in "giving him economic opportunity comparable to the white man's and a chance to earn a decent wage."<sup>2</sup>

A later study on the same subject, but not statisti-

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<sup>1</sup>Frank Lorimer, Ellen Winston, and Louise Kiser, Foundations of American Population Policy, (New York, 1940), Preface.

<sup>2</sup>Louise V. Kennedy, The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward, (New York, 1930), p. 238.

cal in nature, was made by Arna Bontemps and Jack Conroy. In They Seek a City, the authors attempted to show the various aspects of internal migration but paid especial attention to New York, Chicago, and Detroit. Minnesota is not mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

One of the earliest and best studies of a specific city was published in 1922 by the University of Chicago Press. Supervised by the Chicago Commission on Race Relations, The Negro in Chicago was a report based on the situations that preceded, contributed to, and followed the Chicago race riots of 1919. It was found that an estimated 65,000 Negroes entered Chicago between 1916-1918. This migration created a lack of housing, increased the rent for Negroes 5-50 per cent, and accentuated the problem of "remaking" rural Negroes into urban dwellers.<sup>2</sup> Ten years later, E. Franklin Frazier made a study on The Negro Family in Chicago which was primarily a series of case histories on the "crises of migrants."<sup>3</sup>

Prior to the Chicago study, Abraham Epstein looked at The Negro Migrant in Pittsburgh. He covered the period 1914-1917 and thus recognized the fact that migration had begun but stopped short of making any hard and fast conclu-

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<sup>1</sup>Arna Bontemps and Jack Conroy, They Seek a City, (New York, 1945), p. 4 passim.

<sup>2</sup>Chicago Commission on Race Relations, The Negro in Chicago, (Chicago, 1922).

<sup>3</sup>E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro Family in Chicago, (Chicago, 1932).

sions. Since the study was published in 1918, it is obvious that Epstein could not see the long range implications of such a survey. However, it represents one of the earliest attempts to analyze the Northern and migrant Negro.<sup>1</sup>

An even more specialized study, Negroes in Columbus, Ohio, was made by Mary L. Mark. Only one Negro district in the city was studied, the year 1924 was the base, and primary emphasis was placed on occupational differentials. Thus, it was a limited study and dealt very little with the migrant Negro.<sup>2</sup> A similar study, The Negro in Detroit, was made in 1926 by the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research.<sup>3</sup>

Some state histories of Negroes have been written, but they are few in number. Many are dated and do not encompass the period 1935-1960 when so many changes took place, particularly in civil rights and economic progress. Others do not properly evaluate the period 1928-1960 and thus fail to show the effects of the World War I migration.

It is true that adequate Negro history will not be written until more detailed state studies are made. However, because of the great urban concentration of Negroes, it is more than likely that the real history of the Negro will come

<sup>1</sup>Abraham Epstein, The Negro Migrant in Pittsburgh, (Pittsburgh, 1918).

<sup>2</sup>Mary L. Mark, Negroes in Columbus, Ohio, (Columbus, 1928).

<sup>3</sup>Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research, The Negro in Detroit, (Detroit, 1926).

from more concentrated studies of urban centers. Various state and city agencies, such as Human Rights Commissions and Interracial organizations, are constantly bringing out local studies on their respective levels. Once these have been collected and analyzed, general Negro history will become more adequate.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, studies were made of Negroes in Maryland and the District of Columbia. Jeffrey R. Brackett, in "Progress of the Colored People of Maryland Since the War," pointed out that Maryland, as a loyal border state, escaped radical Reconstruction and was not touched by the Emancipation Proclamation. Therefore, it did not have to contend with all the problems ensuing from those policies that affected the states of the former Confederacy.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, Maryland had its slavery and Black Codes. Slavery was abolished in 1864 only by the soldier vote, but discrimination continued.<sup>2</sup> The white population was provoked at the ways in which Negroes gained rights and engaged in "boyish enthusiasm" as they exercised their new freedom. Brackett concluded that a growing number of whites were willing to help the Negro, thus pointing the way to a

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<sup>1</sup>Jeffrey R. Brackett, "Progress of the Colored People of Maryland Since the War," Johns Hopkins University Studies, VIII (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1890), pp. 352-353.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 354.

better future for both races.<sup>1</sup>

Edward Ingle, in "The Negro in the District of Columbia," called attention to the great concentration of Negroes in the District, particularly in Washington. He characterized them as having a "lack of unity" and stated that an "absence to a great degree of proper race pride" was one of the weaknesses of the Negro population. Furthermore, the Negro in the District of Columbia had become a pawn in political campaigns, a development not uncommon in other states.<sup>2</sup> Almost 40 years later, another study was made of the Negro in Washington, D. C., but it was basically a study in race amalgamation, specifically the "mulatto problem." As such, it was not too useful as a study of the Negro.<sup>3</sup>

The Negro in Pennsylvania, 1639-1861, by Edward Raymond Turner, traced the history of the Negro from his "divergence from servitude" to freedom. Turner pointed out that the Negro rose from one status to another even after freedom, and that he suffered from civil inequality until 1790 and political inferiority until 1870. There was a strong race prejudice among whites against the freed Negro, suffrage was not granted until after the Civil War, while the Quakers in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 439-441.

<sup>2</sup>Edward Ingle, "The Negro in the District of Columbia," Johns Hopkins University Studies, XI (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1893), p. 200.

<sup>3</sup>A. H. Shannon, The Negro in Washington (New York: Walter Neale, 1930), p. 7.

the state were the real friends of the Negro.<sup>1</sup>

A rather complete study of the Negro in Ohio was made by Frank U. Quillen in 1913. It was divided into Part I, which surveyed the situation from 1802 to about 1900, and Part II, which covered "Present Conditions" in selected cities such as Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, and Cleveland. Quillen reached several conclusions: the prejudice of whites against Negroes increased according to the growth of the Negro population; the average Negro was worse off in the North than in the South because he was shut off from so many industrial opportunities; and social equality in the North was a myth.<sup>2</sup> Other areas covered were discrimination in public schools, militia, and juries, along with various case studies of social discrimination.<sup>3</sup> Since this study was made prior to World War I, it obviously falls short in noting the great migration to Ohio and the adjustments that resulted from it.

Shortly after World War I, Delilah L. Beasley published The Negro Trail Blazers of California. This was not so much a continuous story as a collection of materials, facts, and biographical data interspersed with some annotation. Great reliance was placed upon letters and memoirs.

<sup>1</sup>Edward Raymond Turner, The Negro in Pennsylvania, 1639-1861, (Washington, D. C.: American Historical Association, 1912), p. vii.

<sup>2</sup>Frank U. Quillen, The Color Line in Ohio, (Ann Arbor: George Wahr, 1913), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 21-34; 60-87; 105-121.

A short history of slavery in California was included along with sketches of early Negro residents. The participation of California Negro soldiers in World War I was covered quite thoroughly.<sup>1</sup>

The history of the Negro in Tennessee has been partially covered in two books, The Negro in Tennessee, 1790-1865, by Caleb Perry Patterson, and The Negro in Tennessee, 1865-1880, by Alrutheus A. Taylor. In the first of these, Patterson tried to discover the exact status of the Negro in a border state, and his progress from servitude under common law to slavery under slave codes. There is a portion devoted to the free Negro. The author claimed that the Negro made progress under slavery because of the industrial training he received, and the practice of obedience to the law.<sup>2</sup> Other chapters, or areas, deal with the economics of slavery, anti-slavery sentiment, and the religious and social aspects of slavery.

Taylor discussed the story of the downfall of slavery, the disruption of the labor system, sectionalism in Tennessee, and the attempt to define the status of the Negro after the Civil War. Other areas covered are the Negro contribution to the political, economic, and social life of

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<sup>1</sup>Delilah L. Beasley, The Negro Trail Blazers of California (Los Angeles: Delilah L. Beasley, 1919), pp. 17-97; 98-139; 140-317.

<sup>2</sup>Caleb Perry Patterson, The Negro in Tennessee, 1790-1865 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1922), p. 7.

the state.<sup>1</sup>

Taylor also studied the Negro in South Carolina during Reconstruction. He outlined the new role of the freedman, discussed their struggle for more than nominal freedom, and showed how "reenslavement" gradually came about. It is Taylor's thesis that the mistakes of Reconstruction were largely those made by the whites, and that while the Negro often supported the corruption of Reconstruction, his role in it has been distorted.<sup>2</sup>

The past quarter century has witnessed the compilation of three more state histories of the Negro, one for what might be called a border state, one for a "deep South" state, and one for a Northern state. Unfortunately, only one attempted to study the Negro as he was at the time of writing. Therefore, we are denied a contemporary outlook for at least two states widely varient in their treatment of the "Negro problem."

Thomas E. Posey, in The Negro Citizen of West Virginia, carried his study into the 1930's. Basically, he started in the post-Civil War period and took up the attempt to make the Negro a citizen, discussed sectionalism in Virginia and West Virginia, and surveyed the role of the Negro

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<sup>1</sup>Alruthus A. Taylor, The Negro in Tennessee, 1865-1880 (Washington, D. C.: Associated Publishers, 1941), Preface.

<sup>2</sup>Alruthus A. Taylor, The Negro in South Carolina During the Reconstruction (Washington, D. C.: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1924), pp. 1; 308-311.



and slavery during the state constitutional convention.<sup>1</sup> The Reconstruction period is covered, but the industrialization of West Virginia and the resultant Negro migration into the state is covered very adequately. There is a section on the Negro in West Virginia politics which shows clearly that considerable progress has been made in that area.<sup>2</sup>

The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890, has been studied by Vernon Lane Wharton. The point is made that the Civil War brought a violent and comparatively sudden destruction to the old social order. This, in turn, produced a violent reaction to the freed Negro and Reconstruction.<sup>3</sup> Wharton pointed out that Negroes were often accused of drawing the color line themselves because of their political affiliations with the Republican party and insistence upon their rights as freedmen. The whites of Mississippi feared any Negro militia, or any organized military force that included Negroes as members.<sup>4</sup>

Wharton concluded that laws against the Ku Klux Klan were ineffective, "Jim Crow" laws were illustrative of

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas E. Posey, The Negro Citizen of West Virginia (Institute, West Virginia: Press of West Virginia State College, 1934), pp. 5-18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 19-31; 32-53.

<sup>3</sup>Vernon Lane Wharton, "The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890," James Sprunt Studies, XXVI (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 183, 194.

a social revolution and the determination of the South to maintain separation, and that the absence of a Negro press during this period was a serious handicap to Negroes throughout the State.<sup>1</sup>

A recent study of the Negro in Indiana before 1900 has been made by Emma Lou Thornbrough. This is a very thorough work, and it is regrettable that it ends at the turn of the century. Thornbrough has discussed the existence of slavery, or long term indentures, in Indiana, the "alien" status of Negroes there from 1817-1861, and the denials of suffrage and other rights to free Negroes. Some attention is given to the operation of the Underground Railway and the role of the Quakers in the struggle over Negroes, both free and slave.<sup>2</sup>

Thornbrough found that the Negro population of Indiana increased five fold between 1860-1900. Much of this increase came from migration, chiefly from states of the upper South, most of which went to towns and cities. In this 40-year period, great progress was made as Negroes acquired the suffrage, held political offices, and achieved equality before the law in other areas. However, "discrimination continued with but little abatement," and a double standard of justice prevailed. Lynchings became increasingly frequent

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 220, 230, 273.

<sup>2</sup>Emma Lou Thornbrough, The Negro in Indiana Before 1900 (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1957), pp. vii-viii.

toward the end of the century. In Indiana, as elsewhere, Negroes became pawns in politics.<sup>1</sup>

The history of the Negro in Minnesota deserves to be included in the growing literature on the American Negro. Materials for this study have been gathered from a multitude of sources. Fortunately, the Minnesota Historical Society has been extremely conscious of all phases of state history and has preserved a surprisingly complete collection of Negro newspapers that have been published from time to time in the state. The bibliography has been annotated to give a full picture of one of the most valuable sources on the Minnesota Negro. Although the Negro press in Minnesota did not exist in any major proportion until 1885, many of the early issues give feature articles, "flash-backs," obituaries, and "fillers" on early Negro history. The various Centennial issues of present day Negro newspapers have preserved many of the items that shed light on an earlier period. Although some of these items are incomplete, or partially erroneous, they furnished a starting point from which further research could be accomplished.

A variety of state, county, and local histories helped to fill in the gaps or uncover unknown or forgotten facts about Negro residents, migrants, and occupations. Histories of police and fire departments shed further light on Negroes who served in these public capacities. The diaries

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. ix-x.

of early residents and visitors to the Territory showed further evidence of Negro residency and revealed such things as occupations, educational facilities, and organizations of and for Negroes. White newspapers helped greatly to fill in the Civil War period when a relatively large number of Negroes were brought to Minnesota as "contrabands."

Census reports and statistical abstracts were consulted for population figures and for comparative data on surrounding states.

In the more recent period, reports of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Urban Leagues, settlement houses, legislative journals and statute books proved invaluable in a study of social, civil rights, and political problems that arose out of discrimination, prejudice, and restrictive devices, particularly in the areas of housing and employment. The various reports of the Governor's Interracial Commission were very helpful. Furthermore, non-Negro newspapers gave increasing coverage to the Negro and his problems in those areas.

Some attempt was made to find personal documents, family histories, and records but these were either non-existent or proved unreliable. The Negro, unlike most of the other groups in Minnesota, was evidently not too history conscious, or had never made any attempt to keep the more intimate records that could have been so valuable to a study of this type. The interview technique was utilized on a few

occasions and proved equally unrewarding, and for the same reasons. Faulty memories, lack of adequate written data, distortion of accomplishments--all these were found to exist upon analysis of the data obtained in interviews. Those few that proved reliable have been included in the study.

In conclusion, it should be stressed that this study is historical rather than sociological in approach. Comparative data has been used when it seemed advisable, necessary, or valid. It would seem that, although the Negro's problems are the same in general for each Northern state, there are extenuating circumstances based on history and time that make each state different.

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## CHAPTER II

### EARLY MIGRATION OF NEGROES TO MINNESOTA

The exact date when the first Negroes appeared in present Minnesota is unknown but various sources indicate that some engaged in fur trading activities there during the early nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> In fact, there is evidence that Negroes played a more varied role in the trade than some other groups, since they acted in such capacities as independent entrepreneurs, cooks, personal servants, hunters, guides, and interpreters. A few became salaried traders and voyageurs, but the most usual and typical role was that of a servant or slave. Presumably, the Negro could negotiate with the Indian without some of the friction often manifested in relations between the Indian and whites. This was due, no doubt, to the racial affinity felt between Indian and Negro. Many old traders "always got a Negro if possible to negotiate for them with the Indians, because of their

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<sup>1</sup>Kenneth W. Porter, "Relations between Negroes and Indians within the Present Limits of the United States," Journal of Negro History, XVII (July, 1932), pp. 287-367; Edward D. Neill, History of Minnesota, (Minneapolis, 1882), p. 391.

'pacifying effect.'<sup>1</sup>

Many of these early Negro migrants came from St. Louis or other fur trading centers to the South where some of the expeditions and companies headquartered and prepared for eventual entry into fur territory. Some free Negroes in Missouri were hired by the fur companies, and Negro body servants were not uncommon. Others who were slaves were taken along by traders as a natural consequence of their position and function.

Not all the early Negroes in Minnesota came from regions directly to the South. Some came from the East, Ohio, Maryland, and the New England states, and others from Canada. George Bonga, the first person with Negro blood of whom there is any major record in Minnesota, was descended from Negro migration to Canada. George was the grandson of Jean Bonga, reportedly the first Negro to settle in the Northwest, and the servant of a British army officer. Jean was a servant at Michilimackinac from 1782 until he was freed by his master in 1794. He then married one of his master's former slaves with whom he had lived for some time.

One of the children of this union, Pierre, worked with Alexander Henry of the Northwest Fur Company which operated in the area of the Red River of the North. He married into the Chippewa tribe, and became the father of

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<sup>1</sup>Kenneth W. Porter, "Negroes and the Fur Trade," Minnesota History, XV (December, 1934), pp. 421-433.

George. The latter was born about 1802 near the present site of Duluth, Minnesota. He lived for awhile at Fort William on Lake Superior, and attended school in Montreal. Like his father and grandfather, George Bonga became a trader and also married into the Chippewa tribe.<sup>1</sup>

Bonga was fluent in French, English, and Chippewa, and acted on one occasion as interpreter for Governor Lewis Cass of Michigan Territory. He became a licensed trader at Lac Platte and probably served as interpreter at the Chippewa treaty signed at Fort Snelling in 1837.<sup>2</sup> He left many descendants in the region around Cass Lake, Minnesota. Bonga was a man of great size and strength, a charming person and gracious host. Judge Charles E. Flandrau, an early Minnesota legal figure, visited Bonga at Leech Lake in 1856 and described him as a "thorough gentleman in both feeling and deportment. . . very popular with the whites," and a "man of wealth and consequence."<sup>3</sup> The Bonga tradition of service did not end with George. In 1854, his son Stephen served as a guide and interpreter for Eastman Johnson, an

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<sup>1</sup>June Drenning, "Black Pioneer of the Northwest," Negro Digest, VIII (March, 1950), pp. 65-67; William W. Warren, "History of the Ojibways," Minnesota Historical Society Collections, V (St. Paul, 1885), p. 488.

<sup>2</sup>Porter, "Negroes and the Fur Trade," p. 424.

<sup>3</sup>Charles E. Flandrau, "Reminiscences of Minnesota during the Territorial Period," Minnesota Historical Collections, IX (St. Paul, 1901), p. 199. Bonga is also mentioned in Neill, History of Minnesota, pp. 322, 416, and Grace Lee Nute, Rainy River Country, (St. Paul, 1950), p. 16.



artist, who travelled and painted in the Lake Superior area.<sup>1</sup>

Very few Negroes entered Minnesota in the period from the early 1800's to the decade preceding the Civil War. Although there were no laws or restrictions against their entering such as were enacted in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, there were few economic opportunities for them, and the Underground Railway did not operate in Minnesota to the extent that it did elsewhere in the Northwest.<sup>2</sup> Those who entered Minnesota, aside from the ones engaged in the fur trade, came with the army officers who were stationed at Fort Snelling and vicinity. Most were slaves and accompanied the officers when they changed stations, but some were freed. For instance, Major Lawrence Taliaferro, the noted Indian agent at St. Peter's, leased some of his inherited slaves to the personnel at the fort but eventually freed all of them.<sup>3</sup>

At least two slaves at Fort Snelling were sold in Minnesota during the 1820's and 1830's. One of these, James Thompson, made some small contribution to Minnesota history. Thompson had left Virginia as a youngster with his owner, George Monroe, a nephew of President Monroe. When they reached Kentucky, Thompson was sold in payment for debts. In 1827, his new owner took him to Fort Snelling by way of

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<sup>1</sup>Warren, "History of the Ojibways," p. 488.

<sup>2</sup>Frazier, The Negro in the United States, pp. 60-66.

<sup>3</sup>"Autobiography," Minnesota Historical Collections, VI (St. Paul, 1894), p. 235.

St. Louis. He was purchased at the fort by an army officer and later sold for \$1,200 to a Methodist missionary named Alfred Brunson. In the meantime, Thompson married an Indian woman of unknown tribal relationship.<sup>1</sup>

Freed by the missionary, Thompson served as an interpreter for Brunson in his work among the Sioux. He eventually became a Methodist and contributed physical and financial aid in the construction of a Methodist church building on Market Street in St. Paul. He died in 1884 after having lived in Minnesota almost sixty years. To him went the distinction of being the only Negro member of the Old Settlers organization.<sup>2</sup>

By far the most famous of all the Negroes in Minnesota before the Civil War was Dred Scott, whose impact on the history of the United States is well known. His role in Minnesota history, however, was rather slight. Scott was brought to Fort Snelling in 1836 by Dr. John Emerson, an army surgeon. While there he married Harriet Robinson, who was

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<sup>1</sup>"Slavery in Minnesota," Minnesota History Bulletin, V (February, 1923), pp. 40-43, a brief article signed "L.A." Another sale is mentioned in Taliaferro's "Autobiography," Minnesota Historical Collections, VI (St. Paul, 1894), p. 235. For other items on slavery in Minnesota during this period, see Return I. Holcombe, History of Minneapolis and Hennepin County, (Chicago, 1914), p. 46; also Minnesota in Three Centuries, (Minneapolis, 1908), p. 66, by the same author.

<sup>2</sup>Henry A. Castle, Minnesota, Its Story and Biography, I (Chicago, 1915), p. 86; Ella C. Brunson, "Alfred Brunson, Pioneer of Wisconsin Methodism," Wisconsin Magazine of History, II (December, 1918), pp. 1-20; William Bradley Hennessey, Past and Present of St. Paul, Minnesota, (Chicago, 1906), p. 21.

owned by Major Taliaferro. According to Taliaferro, Scott "was united with my servant girl which I gave him." Since no minister was available, a justice of the peace performed the ceremony.<sup>1</sup> Scott figured in another incident at Fort Snelling when the quartermaster refused him a heating stove until after everyone else had received one. When his owner, Dr. Emerson, heard about this, he was very angry at the official; bitter feelings were prevalent throughout the fort over this incident, largely because a white man dared to defend a Negro, even though he was a slave.<sup>2</sup>

Other Negroes continued to settle in the area around Fort Snelling and in what later became St. Paul and Minneapolis. Some made the short move from the post while others--evidently free Negroes--hired out on the boats from St. Louis and points south and then decided to stay once they reached Minnesota.<sup>3</sup>

According to contemporary accounts, some Negroes settled at St. Peter's (Mendota) as early as 1837. The diary of a Canadian visitor to that settlement states that "an occasional Negro" could be seen. Another entry by the diarist mentions that he opened a school, "on a heterogenous

<sup>1</sup>Taliaferro, "Autobiography," p. 235.

<sup>2</sup>Castle, Minnesota, p. 128.

<sup>3</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, September 29, 1939; Roy Leslie Preston, "Intercultural Education in Minnesota," unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Minnesota, (Minneapolis, 1950), pp. 10-11.

system," which included students of "Negro extraction."

This statement indicated that Negro youths took their places in the classroom alongside English, French, Swiss, Chippewa, and Sioux students at an early period without any known demands for segregation. Furthermore, this school probably ranks as the first supported by public funds in the St. Paul and Minneapolis area.<sup>1</sup> Further proof of this peaceful association is seen in the admonition by a resident of St. Paul that any teacher coming to the town "should be entirely free of prejudice on account of color, for among her scholars she might find . . . some claiming kindred with African stock."<sup>2</sup>

These examples of Negro entry and settlement in the future state of Minnesota do not imply that Negroes arrived in great numbers. There were few opportunities for them in the early days. Furthermore, the atmosphere in both North and South regarding slavery and abolitionism had not yet reached an emotional peak. Minnesota was still an unorganized frontier and had there not been an army post and some fur-trading stations, Negroes probably would not have entered until much later. Actually, one year after Minnesota attained territorial status, the census of 1850 listed only thirty-nine free Negroes in the area. Four of the nine organized

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<sup>1</sup>George Henry Dunn, "Peter Garrioch at St. Peters, 1837," Minnesota History, XX (June, 1939), pp. 119-128.

<sup>2</sup>Henry A. Castle, St. Paul and Vicinity, I (Chicago, 1912), p. 121.

counties had no Negro residents at all, while Ramsey County had thirty. No slaves were listed.<sup>1</sup>

Conditions changed as the territory moved into the decade preceding the Civil War and the whole country girded itself for a struggle over slavery. Meanwhile, the number of Negroes in Minnesota slowly increased. That story belongs to the tense and hopeful period after 1850. Negroes already had made their mark upon Minnesota history--in the fur trade, along the Indian frontier, and in the educational process. They had been part of civilization, few in number but accepted by their neighbors.

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<sup>1</sup>Beverly Tucker, Statistical View of the United States: Compendium of the Seventh Census, (Washington, 1854), p. 332.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE TERRITORIAL PERIOD AND THE BEGINNINGS OF STATEHOOD, 1850-1865

As the new Territory of Minnesota entered the decade preceding the Civil War and prepared for statehood, numerous economic and political developments affected the progress of the Negro in the region. Steamboats continued to ply the rivers, bringing an occasional free Negro to Minnesota and also carrying wealthy Southern planters who visited during the summer. These planters brought slaves with them, some of whom escaped while others were freed by force or through legal action in Minnesota. The presence of these slaves in Minnesota occasioned bitter feelings between abolitionist and pro-slave elements in the Territory. Although less important than elsewhere, the Underground Railway operated in the Territory, and it, too, played a role in the history of this period.

Politically, as Minnesota moved toward statehood, the national issue of admission into the Union of slave versus free states took on added importance; within the area itself the question of Negro suffrage became a major problem during the debate on the future constitution. On the local

level, the question of education for Negroes was hotly argued in some towns and settlements before it was resolved, in part, by legislative action. Furthermore, in an era that saw the rise of strong Republican and Democratic factions, the status of the Negro as an individual, along with his civil and legal rights, inevitably became an issue.

Certainly, many of these problems were national rather than local, as evidenced by the Compromise of 1850, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill of 1854, and the Dred Scott decision of 1857. In this sense, the Negro became a part of the stream of history that flowed through the nation, having its eddies and swirls in Minnesota as well.

Because more Negroes, free and slave, came into the Territory, and thus contributed to more feeling over a potentially bitter subject, the people of Minnesota eventually reached agreement on the Negro question. It might be said that most of them agreed with the idea expressed in an editorial in the Chicago Tribune, namely "the prospect of the early abolition of slavery is far less promising than it was a few years ago."<sup>1</sup> This idea grew until it became evident that Minnesota would be counted among the anti-slave states and her inhabitants would do all they could to insure some degree of justice to the Negro.

This belief expressed itself militarily when Minnesota became the first state to offer a regiment of troops

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<sup>1</sup>August 22, 1859.

to the national government when war came.<sup>1</sup> The Negro population of the state also responded to the call of arms and sent 104 soldiers to the Union colors.<sup>2</sup> By contrast, Wisconsin furnished 165, Iowa 440, Michigan 1,387, Indiana 1,537, Illinois 1,811, Kansas 2,080, and Ohio 5,092.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the Negroes who settled in the area before the Civil War carried on their occupations and daily pursuits much as did the white residents. Many became substantial property owners, among them the Durant, Hilyard, and Bowles families, who had taken up land in St. Paul where the Emporium and Golden Rule stores were eventually built.

- One Mary Doris owned the land later occupied by the post office. Others became self employed, many as barbers, or obtained similar responsible jobs. The increasing influx of immigrants from northern Europe, however, brought competition to many Negroes who had small shops or were otherwise employed. These activities indicate a reasonable degree of assimilation into the economy of the area, as well as responsible and energetic conduct. Minnesota had opened the doors of opportunity to those who sought and were willing to work toward a better life. The fact that there were only

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<sup>1</sup>"The Minnesota Story," an article prepared by the Minnesota Historical Society for release to the press and later published in pamphlet form, (St. Paul, 1954), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>George W. Williams, A History of the Negro Race in America, II (New York, 1883), p. 300.

<sup>3</sup>Monroe N. Work (ed.), Negro Year Book, 1918-1919 Tuskegee: Negro Year Book Publishing Company, 1919), p. 212.



about a hundred Negroes in St. Paul by 1858 is sufficient reason for noting their record of accomplishment.<sup>1</sup>

These developments meant that the white inhabitants of Minnesota paid more attention to the Negro and usually opinions and judgments were favorable. As early as 1852, Negroes were described as "attentive to their business, and . . . no idlers as they are represented to be, in the slave states. . . . They are a useful class, and here on the confines of Barbarism do as much to put a civilized aspect upon the face of society as any other class."<sup>2</sup>

All was not serene, however. There was an occasional outburst of anti-Negro sentiment along with some agitation against Negroes who had accompanied their masters from the South. During the 1854 session of the territorial legislature, a "Black Law" was introduced requiring all persons of Negro blood to give bond of \$300 to \$500 as a guarantee of good behavior. This law was patterned after one passed in Ohio in 1803 which required a \$500 bond from any Negro that came into the state.<sup>3</sup> Although the bill was defeated 10-6 in the House, it typified some of the local anti-Negro senti-

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Pioneer Press, December 11, 1887; Northwestern Bulletin (St. Paul), May 5, 1923.

<sup>2</sup>Minnesota Pioneer (St. Paul), September 30, 1852, quoted from "Minnesota Annals," a collection of newspaper extracts filed in the Manuscripts Division of the Minnesota Historical Society. They are cited henceforth as "Annals."

<sup>3</sup>Booker T. Washington, The Story of the Negro (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909), I, p. 199.

ment at the time.<sup>1</sup> In 1859, for example, the Mankato Weekly Record stated that there was not a Negro in the town and probably not in the whole of Blue Earth County. The weekly concluded: "It is often remarked by visitors that we are peculiarly blessed in this respect."<sup>2</sup>

Such sentiment continued even after the Civil War had begun, and when Minnesota soldiers were in action against the Confederacy. The Belle Plaine Enquirer spoke of an "ebony skinned vagrant" who had been "holding forth in this town to the manifest satisfaction and honor of a few lighter skinned fools. . . ." The proper place for this "black disgrace is in the jail," the paper added. One week later, the statement was made that "Hell is paved with the skulls of such fiends in human shape."<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the 1850's, according to available accounts, the slavery issue and the status of the Negro in Minnesota became matters of increasing interest. In 1856, a correspondent from St. Paul wrote to the New York Tribune that "the immigration into the territory. . . is almost a unit on the demand, 'No more slavery aggression.'" By 1857, the Tribune, editorializing on the situation in Minnesota,

<sup>1</sup> Robert Watson, Notes on the Early Settlement of Cottage Grove and Vicinity, (Northfield, 1924), p. 18; see also Minnesota House Journal, 1854, p. 255.

<sup>2</sup> November 15, 1859.

<sup>3</sup> Belle Plaine Enquirer, July 20, 27, 1861.

decried the money and patronage enjoyed by Democrats and pro-slavery elements in the Territory and added that it "remain[ed] to be seen that they can so wield all these advantages as to overcome the fixed repugnance of the yeomanry of Minnesota to the insolent domination of the traffickers in women and children."<sup>1</sup>

On the local scene, a Congregational minister in 1858 deplored the fact that Minnesota was being insulted by owners who brought their slaves to the Territory, kept them there "before our faces," and took them home again while "there has not been enough of the noble blood of Liberty in Minnesota, to protest against this outrage." Elsewhere in the Territory, Jane Grey Swisshelm, the militant crusader-editor of the St. Cloud Democrat, wrote to the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in St. Cloud and roundly denounced him for bringing a slave woman to Minnesota from Tennessee; presumably, the minister had promised to free the slave when they arrived in Minnesota but eventually took her back to Tennessee where she continued in slavery.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, Minnesota was touched slightly by the fugitive slave problem. Governor Alexander Ramsey felt compelled to offer a \$250 reward for the apprehension of those

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<sup>1</sup>New York Tribune, December 3, 1856, September 12, 1857, quoted from "Annals."

<sup>2</sup>New York Tribune, October 30, 1858, quoted from "Annals;" lecture dated November 22, 1858, Henry M. Nichols Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

who kidnapped an "alleged fugitive slave" and carried him off "without any legal forms or any warrant."<sup>1</sup> In the light of agitation and court opinions expressed in other states concerning the status of fugitive slaves, it can be seen that Minnesota was in a quandary as to just how to handle this problem. However, no record exists that shows any legal decision made to solve such cases.

These instances show that there was definite opposition to slavery and to the holding of slaves in Minnesota. Part of this hostility stemmed from the typical feeling of many northern residents, and some of it was occasioned by the practice of Southerners bringing slaves into an area where slavery had never been popular. Although some of these occurrences took place after the Dred Scott decision, which seemed to give slaveholders freedom to take their property where they pleased, those who opposed the practice were not silenced.

But there was another side to the picture. People in various Minnesota towns and cities that catered to the sojourning Southerners were either divided on the issue or, at best, felt that no great harm was being done. Some of these elements felt that the Southerners should be welcomed. The Stillwater Democrat, for example, invited the slaveholders to "come along" and estimated that there were almost one hundred families in the South who were eager to visit

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<sup>1</sup>New York Tribune, August 3, 1860, quoted from "Annals."

friends in Stillwater during the summer. These prospective tourists, the paper averred, could not feel comfortable about such a visit "on account of the intermeddling propensities of Abolition fanatics." But there was really no danger, the article added with assurance, since Minnesotans were law-abiding people and, "although there may be now and then an odious creature who would not scruple to invade the family circle," the Southerners were urged to come north, bring their slaves, and enjoy themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, Minnesota provided these Southerners with one noteworthy example of how slaves could be freed while temporarily residing in the state. This incident, involving Mrs. Eliza Winston, became one of the most celebrated cases of its kind in Minnesota, if not in the Northwest. Eliza Winston was a slave who had been brought to Minnesota in August, 1860, by her master, Colonel R. Christmas, a wealthy Mississippi planter. She was then about thirty years old, the widow of a free Negro who had died in Liberia. Her husband had owned property in Tennessee which she could not obtain except as a free person. In Minnesota, Eliza lived with her master's family at their summer cottage on Lake Harriett.

Though the accounts differ slightly, it appears that Eliza sought to learn from the wife of a Negro barber if there were some white men in the area who would help her

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<sup>1</sup>May 19, 1860.

gain freedom. After due consultation, a plan for freeing Mrs. Winston was set in motion by three local abolitionists, W. I. Babbitt, William S. King, editor of the Minneapolis Atlas, and F. R. E. Cornell, a lawyer.

Babbitt quickly obtained a writ of habeas corpus, and a hearing was hastily convened, presided over by Judge Charles E. Vanderburgh of the district court. Meanwhile, Eliza had been apprehended by a deputy and brought to the courtroom. She was represented by Cornell, who rested his case on the contention that slavery was illegal in Minnesota according to Article I, section 2 of the state Constitution. The Mississippi lawyer representing Colonel Christmas cited the Dred Scott decision for the opposite viewpoint. Deciding for the plaintiff, Judge Vanderburgh told Eliza she was free to go where she pleased.<sup>1</sup>

Because some people refused to accept such a decision and the implications of these actions, violence occurred. When a mob came to repossess Eliza after she had taken refuge in William King's house, he, according to some reports, stood in the doorway and threatened to "brain" the first one who entered. Other accounts indicate that King ran off the mob by threatening it with a shotgun. Still other sources state that Babbitt was accosted by a mob, which hurled epithets at him. Obviously, there was some commotion but no indication

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<sup>1</sup>Return I. Holcombe, Compendium of History: A Biography of Carver and Hennepin Counties, Minnesota (Chicago, 1915), p. 130.

that any bodily harm was done.<sup>1</sup>

Eliza was spirited out of Minnesota by white sympathizers and eventually arrived in Ontario, Canada. According to one report she followed a logical route by way of La Crosse, Wisconsin, Chicago, Illinois, and Detroit, Michigan. Another report insists that she was taken by way of St. Cloud, Minnesota, where she was aided by Mrs. Jane Grey Swisshelm, a militant abolitionist editor. However, if Mrs. Swisshelm helped Eliza get out of Minnesota, she failed to mention it in her book Half a Century. Instead, she merely stated that Eliza received help from the Underground Railway. Unfortunately for the friends of Eliza, she voluntarily returned to the Christmas family before the war broke out and presumably re-entered a state of bondage.<sup>2</sup>

Other visiting slaveholders in the area, their hosts, and the hotel and resort operators were disturbed over the Winston decision and subsequent events. If legal redress could be obtained in such a manner and slaves freed with so little difficulty, visiting Southerners would be discouraged from remaining or returning. This, of course, would be bad

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel S. B. Johnston, "Minnesota Journalism from 1858-1865," Minnesota Historical Collections, XII (St. Paul, 1908), p. 199; Northwestern Bulletin, May 16, 1925; Holcombe, Compendium of History, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup>Holcombe, Compendium of History, p. 131; Northwestern Bulletin, May 16, 1925. For another account of the Winston case, see Hiram F. Stevens, History of the Bench and Bar of Minnesota, I (Minneapolis and St. Paul, 1904), pp. 32-36.

for business. Some hotel operators proclaimed their fears but were advised by antislavery people to put "gold on one scale and liberty on the other." Republicans in the state, unmoved by the plea that some businessmen would lose money, declared that the party's platform would not be altered even if thousands of slaveholders came North to spend their money. Although such issues were sublimated for the more important concerns of war, incidents of this kind did not contribute to political harmony in an area that was just beginning its transition from a territory to a state.<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of this agitation, plans were espoused for anti-slavery conventions and organizations in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties. A call for an anti-slavery convention, to be held in St. Anthony (Minneapolis), had been made as early as June, 1854. It was held on July 4, presumably an auspicious date, and the "radical views" of various civic and religious leaders were expressed. In 1855, Reverend C. C. Ames, one of the leaders in the convention of 1854, founded the St. Anthony Republican, a strong abolitionist paper.<sup>2</sup>

In 1859, some Hennepin County residents decided to

<sup>1</sup>Merle Potter, 101 Best Stories of Minnesota, (Minneapolis, 1931), pp. 124-127; William W. Folwell, A History of Minnesota, II (St. Paul, 1924), p. 69.

<sup>2</sup>Minneapolis, the Story of a City, a W. P. A. Project published by the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minneapolis Board of Education (St. Paul-Minneapolis, 1940), p. 52.



form an anti-slavery society of the type common in many Northern states. Accordingly, at a meeting in December, 1859, the Hennepin County Anti-Slavery Society elected officers and drafted a constitution. The preamble stated that "all mankind are created Free and Equal and . . . no human power can make one man the property of 'Equal' brothers." It further declared that "Slavery is the sum of all [sic] villianies" and called upon all interested persons to join the society.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout 1860, this society was very active. In January it adopted a constitution and appointed a committee to urge the legislature to pass a personal liberty bill that would make it a penal offense for any person "to claim and attempt to exercise ownership over any human being" within the limits of Minnesota. The society appointed another committee to urge the legislature to pass a constitutional amendment which would enfranchise Negroes within the state; it circulated a petition among the voters urging Negro enfranchisement; it deplored the "threats and mobs attending the release of Eliza Winston from the clutches of the slaveholders," and it ended the year calling for a mass anti-slavery meeting to be held in St. Paul "as early as practicable."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes, December 26, 1859, Mortimer Robinson Papers, in the Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes, January 10, 17, October 7, 12, December 16, 1860, Robinson Papers.

Thus it is clear that more than just a few people considered the slavery issue and the welfare of Minnesota's Negro population to be important. Again, as a result of the Civil War and its aftermath, all of the objectives of this society, and its sister organizations elsewhere, were realized. One objective, Negro suffrage, was soon to become a major issue in Minnesota.

Mention has been made of the presence of Negroes in schools in Minnesota, and of the fact that they were not segregated. But the increasing influx of Negroes during the 1850's, along with the growth of pro-slavery (or perhaps anti-Negro) sentiment in the areas of greatest Negro concentration, soon led to demands for a separate school. In fact, evidence indicates that, in 1857, a separate Negro school did exist in St. Paul for about six months. The teacher was Moses Dixon who later played a part in another separate school. Presumably, the first school closed because of the lack of pupils.<sup>1</sup>

Evidently, there was increased sentiment in some quarters for a separate school. In 1857, the St. Paul Board of Education resolved that when thirty pupils "of African descent" should apply for instruction, the secretary of the board would be "authorized to employ a teacher for the same, with a salary of thirty-five dollars a month." In this way, St. Paul launched what turned out to be an unsuccessful ven-

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, February 28, 1858.

ture and one that was doomed by legislative action some years later.<sup>1</sup>

The school was established, and Moses Dixon, listed as "colored," was employed as teacher at a monthly salary of twenty-five dollars. Throughout the next few years attendance was sporadic and Negroes apparently re-entered the other public schools much as before. Although the school continued on a precarious basis, within a few months after the war, the question of a separate school was again brought to the board, which noted in a resolution that "mingling was obnoxious . . . to a large portion of our citizens." The board members believed that they had a duty to extend educational facilities to Negroes, and they called for a teacher and a building for Negro children. They further resolved "that no children of African descent be thereafter admitted into any other public schools."<sup>2</sup>

In October, 1865, the superintendent of schools informed the board that such a school would again be in session. Official notice was given that a "School for Colored Children" would open in Morrison's Building at Ninth and Jackson streets in St. Paul. Classes would be taught by a Miss Morrow, who would receive a monthly salary of thirty-

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Democrat Weekly, November 5, 1857, July 22, 1858, quoted from "Annals."

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul Daily Minnesotian, February 17, March 9, 1859; St. Paul Daily Pioneer, August 9, 1865, quoted from "Annals."

five dollars. According to the board's report, forty pupils enrolled in the colored school during the academic year 1865-66. But the problems of maintaining and operating this school caused the superintendent to note in September, 1867, that "the colored school will not be opened until further notice." In November, 1867, a local paper called attention to the dilapidated condition of the building. But although the windows were broken and attendance dipped, the school continued to operate under Miss Morrow at least into 1868.<sup>1</sup>

This venture into segregation ended in 1869 when the legislature passed an act which, in effect, abolished separate schools "in corporate towns" by the device of withholding funds from any public school that barred entry to pupils on grounds of "color, social position or nationality." From then on, Negro children in Minnesota were free to attend schools on an equal basis with others. This act, while legally removing the color barrier, did not eliminate other deterrents to integration, such as expense and the lack of interest on the part of those affected. Thus, although Negro pupils were urged to apply for the public schools, only thirteen actually did so by the spring of 1869. All were

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<sup>1</sup> St. Paul Daily Pioneer, October 10, 15, 1865; St. Paul Daily Press, May 8, 1866, November 30, 1867, January 30, 1868; St. Paul Daily Pioneer, September 6, 1867, all quoted from "Annals."

admitted.<sup>1</sup> Nor did such a law remove the prejudice still existent in the minds of many, and this was probably a strong deterrent in keeping many Negroes away from the schools they were legally entitled to enter.

The Negroes around Lake Como did not fare so well. Because their problem, in part, concerned religious education, no legislative act could remedy it. An episode there illustrates how popular opinion varied in a northern state in the very year that President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

Copperheads in the neighborhood immediately ousted the superintendent of a Sunday school at Lake Como who allowed two Negro children to enter in 1853. There were protests against the superintendent from the surrounding areas, including St. Paul; the trustees of Rosetown, for example, stated in a public letter that "There is no objection to Mr. Potts teaching the colored children, but there is objection to an indiscriminate mingling of the blacks and whites on a footing of perfect equality and it cannot be done. If he teaches them he must teach them separately." Such sentiments won out in this instance and were reinforced when Negroes were not admitted to the Lake Como district school. Thus education for the Negro was brought about in an atmos-

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<sup>1</sup>Minnesota, General Laws, 1869, p. 7; St. Paul Daily Press, March 14, 1869; St. Paul Daily Pioneer, April 13, 1869, quoted from "Annals;" "The Minnesota Story," (St. Paul, 1956), p. 1.

phere of mingled liberalism and restriction. Certainly, the white population of Minnesota was divided on many of the problems attendant on the growing number of Negroes within its midst. The Negro was often the subject of discrimination. While many people were sympathetic toward him, others saw him as a threat, not only in the schools but in the labor market as well. But it might also be said that "As much as anything the Negro also had on his side the solid character of the white population."<sup>1</sup>

The most important event in Minnesota history, of course, during this pre-war period was the admission of the Territory into the Union as a state. Among the issues debated during the process was the effect of slavery and its expansion on the status of other territories seeking statehood. By 1854, the spread of slavery into areas north of 36°30' had become a matter of grave concern, and the whole country was soon to be wrought up over the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the Lincoln-Douglas debates, and the consequences of migration into the western and northern regions of the old Louisiana Purchase.

Within Minnesota, soon to add its weight to the balance of power, there were already divisions of opinion about slavery and the rights of the Negro. Indeed, the "wave of

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Daily Press, September 5, 1863, February 27, 1864; St. Paul Pioneer, September 6, 1863, quoted from "Annals;" Minneapolis Spokesman, February 28, 1958.

emotionalism which swept over the North throughout 1854 and the years which followed could not fail to reach Minnesota." Anti-slavery sentiment resulted, as has been seen, in the formation of at least one anti-slavery society. In fact, there were meetings in St. Anthony and St. Paul as early as 1855 in which protests were made against, among other things, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. At one of these mass meetings a territorial convention of anti-slavery people was called. When it met in July, 1855, it issued a platform which demanded the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law, denounced the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and deplored the extension of slavery.<sup>1</sup>

Minnesota's entry into statehood was related to the questions of free versus slave states and of Negro suffrage. Briefly, the territorial delegate, Henry M. Rice, introduced a bill into the national House of Representatives to authorize the people in Minnesota to write a state constitution that would be submitted to Congress. The bill was passed by the House without amendment on December 24, 1856, the day it was introduced. In February, 1857, it was reported out of the Senate Committee on Territories without amendment. But during the Senate debate, an amendment offered by a Southern senator was passed. It provided that only citizens of the

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<sup>1</sup>William Anderson, A History of the Constitution of Minnesota, (Minneapolis, 1921), p. 37; Folwell, Minnesota, I (revised edition, St. Paul, 1956), p. 375.

United States could vote under the proposed act.<sup>1</sup> This provision undoubtedly related to the contention that Negroes were not citizens, a point made the same year in the Dred Scott case. In addition, there might well have been the fear on the part of some "Know Nothings" that aliens would be given the suffrage. Then followed an unsuccessful motion to reconsider the bill as amended, in the hope that the provision on suffrage could be changed. The debate that followed was filled with references to the danger of slaves flocking north, the destruction of the equilibrium of the Senate when Free Soil senators entered that body, and the encroachment of aliens.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, within the Territory, steps had been taken toward obtaining statehood. The governor's message to the legislature in 1857 called for such status and urged that body to call a constitutional convention even before Congress had acted upon Rice's bill. Because of deadlocks and amendments, the bill failed, and it remained for the succeeding governor to call an extra session of the legislature to deal with the situation and to carry out the provisions

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<sup>1</sup>Congressional Globe, 34 Congress, 3 session, 1856-57, pp. 517-519; Minnesota House Journal, 1857, pp. 70, 89, 163, 328; Folwell, Minnesota, I, p. 390.

<sup>2</sup>Congressional Globe, 34 Congress, 3 session, 1856-57, pp. 734, 808-814, 849-865, 872-877; Folwell, Minnesota, I, p. 391.



of the act as passed by Congress in 1857.<sup>1</sup>

The story of the election of delegates, party and factional divisions, the eventual split of the delegates into Democratic and Republican "conventions," and the eventual drafting of two constitutions for the proposed state has been ably told by Folwell in his History of Minnesota and by Anderson in his History of the Constitution of Minnesota. It need not be retold in detail here. Briefly, the Democrats asserted that the elections constituted a struggle between "white supremacy" and "Negro equality" and declared that the Republicans, in their desire to gain control of state and national offices, would allow Negroes to vote and serve in various offices in the state. This, they asserted, would allow the Republicans to influence the forthcoming congressional campaign, as well as the presidential campaign of 1860.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the Minnesota Negro had already become a part of the struggle for statehood.

From this point on, the calling of the convention and the separate deliberations merged into the general history of Minnesota, replete with party recriminations, parliamentary maneuvers, separate drafts, and attempts at com-

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<sup>1</sup>Minnesota, Council Journal, 1857, pp. 57, 65, 84; Minnesota, House Journal, 1857, pp. 43-47, 228, 230; Minnesota, Council Journal, 1857, extra session, pp. 5-11; Minnesota, House Journal, 1857, pp. 6-13, 80; Folwell, Minnesota, I, pp. 388, 395.

<sup>2</sup>Minnesota Constitutional Convention (Democratic), Debates and Proceedings, (St. Paul, 1857), p. 54; Folwell, Minnesota, I, p. 396.

promise. Of specific interest was the final resolution of the suffrage issue. At one point, there was a proposal to strike out the word "white" where it occurred before "citizens," but both groups in the convention seemed to think such a plan unwise and the proposal was defeated by a two-thirds vote.<sup>1</sup>

The question of suffrage was finally turned over to a conference committee made up of members of both "conventions." The crux of the matter seemed to be whether the Negro's right to vote should be determined by the voters, as the Republicans desired, resolved by other methods, or maintained as it was. Out of the conference came the McClure Resolution, which basically empowered the legislature to pass a law extending the suffrage, but stated that the law would then have to be submitted to the electorate and approved by a "majority of votes cast on that subject." The resolution was adopted by the committee. Although suffrage for Negroes was not granted until after the Civil War, at least a procedure for realizing it had been worked out.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Debates and Proceedings (Democratic), pp. 267, 426, 607-613; Folwell, Minnesota, I, p. 412.

<sup>2</sup>Anderson, Constitution of Minnesota, pp. 99-101; for another summary of these happenings, see Anderson, "Minnesota Frames a Constitution," in Minnesota History, XXXVI (March, 1958), pp. 1-12. It should be noted that section 5 of the Organic Act of 1849 prescribed that free white males above the age of 21, who were United States citizens, and those who had declared citizenship intentions under oath, could vote. According to the Minnesota Constitution of 1857, Article 7, section 1, citizens of the United States, persons of mixed white and Indian blood "who have adopted

The ultimate decision on Negro suffrage was thus left to the people. The proposal to give Negroes the vote was submitted three times. The first in 1865 lost by a vote of 14,651 to 12,135; the second in 1867 lost by the narrow margin of 28,794 to 27,479; the third in 1868 carried by a vote of 39,493 to 30,121. This affirmative vote preceded by two years the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.<sup>1</sup>

Other states in the North had problems similar to those noted in Minnesota. In 1857, the Iowa state constitutional convention submitted the question of Negro suffrage to popular vote. Although the measure was defeated, over one-fifth of the voters supported it. In the same year, a similar proposal was submitted for a third time in Wisconsin and was defeated 40,106 to 27,550. In January, 1865, 102 Wisconsin Negroes petitioned the state legislature for the suffrage, declaring that since they were liable for taxes and military service, they wanted some voice in political affairs. Their petition fell on deaf ears. Similar proposals met defeat in Connecticut and Colorado in 1865. Nebraska, Ohio, and Michigan turned down Negro suffrage proposals in 1866, 1867, and 1868 respectively. How-

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the customs and habits of civilization," and pure-blood Indians who have done likewise and were approved by any district court in the state could vote.

<sup>1</sup>Anderson, Constitution of Minnesota, p. 178; Folwell, Minnesota, III, pp. 3, 7; IV, p. 333.

ever, Iowa voted favorably on Negro suffrage in 1868, as did Minnesota. The ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments within the next two years settled the question, legally, in other states.<sup>1</sup>

After the constitutional convention had met and the necessary legal and political steps had been taken within the Territory, Congress took up the question of admitting Minnesota to the Union. There were long debates in the Senate over whether the Minnesota bill should be considered; inevitably and inextricably statehood for a free territory became involved with the question of slavery and the proposed admission of Kansas as a slave state under the Lecompton Constitution. The need to preserve the Senate balance was mentioned since the admission of California in 1850 had been "out of turn," according to the Southern senators. It was charged that should Minnesota be admitted before Kansas, there would be two more senators to help in the exclusion of Kansas from the Union. There were threats that the Union might not last very long if this sort of thing continued. Finally, the Senate passed a bill admitting Kansas under its slave constitution (which was ultimately rejected by the people of the Territory); after more debates and postpone-

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert Aptheker, A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States (New York: Citadel Press, 1951), p. 532; Work (ed.), Negro Year Book, 1918-1919, pp. 198-201; Alfred Holt Stone, Studies in the American Race Problem (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1908), p. 31; Henry Lee Moon, Balance of Power: The Negro Vote (New York: Doubleday, 1948), p. 56.

ments, the Senate approved the Minnesota bill and sent it to the House. That body took up the measure after it passed the Kansas bill, and after almost two weeks of debate and maneuvering, the House finally approved the bill. Minnesota had passed another milestone.<sup>1</sup>

The struggle for statehood finally ended, and Minnesota entered the Union three years before the outbreak of a war that was to decide many of the questions involved in the fight for her admission. The issues of slavery and the rights of Negroes had stirred Minnesotans for almost a decade and in other forms would continue to shape its history in the years ahead. Throughout the territorial years, debates, recriminations, and political and legal intrigues on those subjects had steadily mounted. However, Minnesota's Negro population was not large, and it is doubtful that it took much heed of, or part in, what happened. The census of 1860 showed only 259 Negroes in the state, with four counties -- Ramsey (70), Dakota (39), Le Sueur (20), and Winona (19) -- accounting for more than half.<sup>2</sup>

The Negro population of Minnesota was far below that of other Northern states, thus pointing up the fact that the

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<sup>1</sup>Folwell, Minnesota, II, pp. 1-18; see also Hermann E. von Holst, Constitutional and Political History of the United States, VI (Chicago, 1889), pp. 214-252.

<sup>2</sup>Preliminary Report on the Eighth Census: House Executive Document No. 116, 37 Congress, 2 session, 1860, p. 266.

state was not in the main stream of Negro migration or the source of much colored settlement. By comparison, the Negro population of Ohio was 36,373, Indiana 11,428, Illinois 7,628, Michigan 6,799, Wisconsin 1,171, and Iowa 1,069.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Negro population of Minnesota was small, the issues were large and so were the numbers of Negroes throughout the country who could be affected by what happened. The Negro in Minnesota was influenced by favorable court decisions, local segregation in schools, lack of suffrage, and a high degree of economic freedom within the confines of an area which hotly debated and acted upon all these questions.

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<sup>1</sup>Work (ed.), Negro Year Book, 1925-1926, p. 226.

## CHAPTER IV

### NEW ADJUSTMENTS AND FURTHER GROWTH, 1860-1885

In each of the two decades after 1860, the Negro population of Minnesota more than doubled. From a total of 259 Negroes in the state in 1860, the number rose to 759 in 1870 and to 1,564 in 1880. Ramsey County continued as the area of greatest concentration, with 198 Negro residents in 1870 and 491 in 1880, followed closely by Hennepin County with 190 and 476. In 1870 the next largest concentrations were in Winona County which had 58 Negro residents, and Dakota County with 46. By 1880, the Negro population of Winona County had increased to 68, while that of Dakota County had decreased to 38, and Polk County had 59 Negro residents. In other words, in 1870, four counties contained 484 out of the 759 Negroes in the state, or almost 64 per cent; in 1880, five counties contained 1,132 out of a Negro population of 1,564, or 72 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

All but one of these counties are located along the Mississippi River, thus showing the influence of that stream

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<sup>1</sup>United States Census, 1870, Compendium, (Washington, 1872), pp. 12, 60; United States Census, 1880, Compendium, Part 1, (Washington, 1883), p. 356.

as a highway for Negro migration. The fact that these counties were more urban probably accounted for part of this growth. Polk County, the exception, is located in the Red River valley and received most of its Negro residents from colonization and migration schemes of the Reconstruction period and the river trade of the northern portion of the state.<sup>1</sup> It is possible that some free Negroes came to Minnesota because of the restrictive laws passed in many Southern states in the pre-Civil War period. Both Arkansas and Mississippi, for instance, passed laws that gave free Negroes the alternative of migrating or becoming slaves. However, no substantial evidence has been found to authenticate such migration to Minnesota. More likely, Negroes who left under these circumstances moved to Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.<sup>2</sup>

Although Negroes did occasionally settle in other Minnesota counties and towns, their history in the state continued largely to be made in Ramsey and Hennepin Counties, and particularly in what now constitutes the Twin Cities. Such concentration increased the contact between whites and Negroes and among Negroes themselves, and made for solidarity where little or none had existed. It also created a

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<sup>1</sup>Abram L. Harris, Jr., The Negro Population in Minneapolis, (Minneapolis, 1926), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Cincinnati Gazette and Enterprise (Mississippi News, n.d., quoted from Century Gazette, January 9, 1960 and referring to the time period of December, 1859.



community of interest that continued to grow along with the development of economic, social, and political Negro institutions. Furthermore, as they enjoyed their newly gained educational and political rights, Negroes took a more active interest in their own welfare, one that was often shared by those who guided the social and political destinies of the state and community. By 1885, Negroes had become better integrated into the civic and political life of Minnesota.

The movements of troops and individuals during the Civil War played a role in bringing Negroes to Minnesota. Officers and enlisted men of Minnesota regiments often returned home with orderlies, body servants, or other Negroes. Some Negroes were brought north to work at civilian or military jobs. Still others were attracted by various proposed colonization schemes, most of which were never successfully carried out. In addition to work opportunities, other factors induced Negroes to come to Minnesota, not the least of which was the "free" atmosphere in the state.<sup>1</sup>

It is estimated that by the middle of 1863, thousands of Negroes had left the South and settled in various free states, including Minnesota. Some states passed stringent laws against migration that might compete with white labor, but this did not halt the northward movement of Negroes. In fact, "in no accessible Northern state was there an unqualified welcome for Negroes, bond or free." There

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<sup>1</sup>Harris, Negro Population in Minneapolis, p. 71.

were the usual objections from "honest Irish and Germans" about the decline in wages and the "undesirable elements." Illinois, in 1862, reenacted her constitutional provision against the immigration of free Negroes. This law was often invoked, and Negroes were sold for fines incurred for illegally residing in the state.<sup>1</sup>

Although Minnesota did not actually enact legislation of this type, a petition was submitted to the legislature urging the enactment of legislation to prohibit the immigration of Negroes into the state.<sup>2</sup> However, many people felt that the climate in Minnesota, rather than specific laws, would act as an effective barrier to extensive Negro migration.<sup>3</sup>

This movement from Southern states, while furnishing northern and western states with a transplanted Negro population, created some contrasts in attitudes. As previously stated, northern labor considered these people an economic threat. To Southerners, however, the loss of their laboring force brought fears that they would have to import foreigners to replace the Negro; other Southerners felt it

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur C. Cole, The Irrepressible Conflict (New York: Macmillan, 1934), pp. 338-339.

<sup>2</sup>Alban P. Man, Jr., "Labor Competition and the New York Draft Riots of 1863," Journal of Negro History, XXXVI (October, 1951), pp. 375-405; St. Paul Daily Press, February 8, 1863, quoted from "Annals."

<sup>3</sup>St. Paul and Minneapolis Pioneer Press, December 11, 1887.

would solve the Negro question for the South; still others saw an opportunity to replace the Negroes with "a more intelligent and thrifty race."<sup>1</sup>

It is doubtful if such an anti-Negro attitude was prevalent to any great degree in Minnesota during this period. As will be shown, there was resentment against them because of economic competition, but it never became serious. During the war period, Minnesota Negroes, old and new, gave no occasion for real resentments. The only incident that might have brought about difficulty seems to have had no repercussions. This occurred during the Sioux uprising in 1862 and involved Gusa Godfrey, a renegade Negro, who fought with the Sioux. Although he aided in the capture of white inhabitants, and boasted of killing seventeen white citizens, no anti-Negro sentiment was expressed.<sup>2</sup>

Among the newcomers in the Civil War period was John W. Cheatham, a former slave in Union County, Missouri, who arrived in Minneapolis with his parents shortly after being freed in 1863. He became a member of the Minneapolis fire department, was appointed a fire captain in 1899, and served in that post for many years. John Alfred Boone left Wilming-

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<sup>1</sup>R. H. Woody, "The Labor and Immigration Problem of South Carolina during Reconstruction," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XVIII (September, 1931), pp. 196-201.

<sup>2</sup>Theodore C. Blegen and Philip D. Jordan, With Various Voices, (St. Paul, 1949), pp. 61-72.

ton City, North Carolina, before the Civil War as a free-born Negro, served with a Missouri regiment during the conflict, went to Le Sueur County after the war, lived in Northfield for some years, and died in Minneapolis in 1914. John Green, a former slave who was brought north by a Major Saunders, settled in Le Sueur in 1865. During his younger days he worked on steamboats plying the Minnesota River and was well thought of by those who knew him.<sup>1</sup>

Mark Cane, once sold as a slave for a thousand dollars, became an orderly in the Union army and later moved to New Ulm, Minnesota. He was a barber and his wife was a hairdresser. He spoke perfect German, and it is reported that every morning for sixty-four years, he knelt before a picture of Abraham Lincoln. Fergus Falls had its Negro representative in one Prince Honeycutt, a former camp boy for Captain James Compton. Honeycutt returned home with Compton, became a barber, and helped other Negroes who came to Fergus Falls. He was married twice, once to a white woman, and some of his children taught school in Otter Tail County. Other Negroes apparently moved into Minneapolis, for a newspaper in 1866 spoke of "quite an addition to our colored population recently, by arrival from the sunny south." This

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<sup>1</sup>Alix J. Muller, History of the Police and Fire Departments of the Twin Cities, (Minneapolis and St. Paul, 1899), p. 228; Warren Upham and Rose B. Dunlap, "Minnesota Biographies, 1655-1912," Minnesota Historical Collections, XIV (St. Paul, 1912), p. 119; Western Appeal (St. Paul), January 16, 1915; Mankato Free Press, July 22, 1918.

account went on to say that these Negroes "seemed better adapted to chores about the gardens, yards, [and] houses, than hard labor in the fields."<sup>1</sup>

An even earlier arrival in the area was John Coquire who settled in St. Paul in 1860. He was born in Washington, D. C., became a slave in Virginia, purchased his freedom, enlisted in the army and was stationed at Fort Snelling for some time. He died in 1941.<sup>2</sup> Another ex-slave, Louis Liverpool, escaped from slavery in Missouri before the Civil War, came to St. Paul on a river steamer, worked for James J. Hill, did some boxing, and joined the St. Paul police force in 1882. Later he did some drayage and express work.<sup>3</sup>

One of the most interesting and best documented instances of how a Negro went north is supplied by the letters of a white soldier from Cleveland, Minnesota, who served for some time as an officer in a Civil War colored regiment. He was Thomas Montgomery, who originally served with the Seventh Minnesota Volunteers during the Sioux uprising and then went south, received his commission, and became a Lieutenant in Company B of the Third Missouri Volunteers of African Descent.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New Ulm Review, April 21, 1915; New Ulm Journal, June 14, 1929; Fergus Falls Daily Journal, September 16, 1933; Minneapolis Chronicle, August 4, 1866.

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul Dispatch, July 25, 1941.

<sup>3</sup>St. Paul Dispatch, September 23, 1925.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas Montgomery Papers, Minnesota Historical Society; see letters written by Montgomery during 1863-1864.

By 1864, Montgomery was on his way to Port Hudson, Louisiana, and vicinity, where he stayed for the remainder of the war. He acquired a Negro laundress who had been a slave in Missouri and had run away some time in 1863. Her husband, who had also escaped, was a soldier in Montgomery's company. By the summer of 1864, Montgomery proposed to send his laundress, Elizabeth, to his mother in Cleveland. "She is a girl I think much of," he wrote, "and I can recommend her as being honest and industrious. She is an excellent cook, laundress, and seamstress. . . . She is young, only 23, goodlooking and nearly white. . . . She is not saucy or haughty but is willing to be taught."<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Montgomery consented to the proposal in July, 1864. Thomas said he would send Elizabeth soon and added his hope that she would be treated well, "for she has been good to me in sickness and health. . . . I hope you will teach her to read." In August, 1864, Elizabeth boarded a steamer and ultimately reached Cleveland. Thomas acknowledged her arrival and repeated his hope that she would stay with his mother "as one of the family, as long as you live, and both parties are satisfied."<sup>2</sup>

Elizabeth remained with Mrs. Montgomery at least until October, 1866, when Montgomery, then a Captain, pre-

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<sup>1</sup>Montgomery to his mother, June 14, 1864, Montgomery Papers.

<sup>2</sup>Montgomery to his mother, August 5, 22, 31, October 12, 1864, Montgomery Papers.

pared to leave the army. But all had not gone well with Elizabeth and Mrs. Montgomery. Between October, 1864, and September, 1866, she threatened to leave several times. Montgomery, while remaining reasonably patient, became irritated at Elizabeth's seeming ingratitude. There were times when he felt that she should go if she desired, but he also wondered how she would get along. By the end of 1864, however, things had quieted down in the Montgomery home and Elizabeth decided to stay for the winter. In the summer of 1865, another short restive period set in, but Elizabeth again remained. In his last letter on the subject, in the fall of 1866, Thomas rather bluntly wrote his parents: "If Elizabeth gives any trouble, you should settle with her and send her away."<sup>1</sup> How the problem was resolved is unknown.

Meanwhile, a substantial number of Negroes from various Southern states arrived in St. Paul, and also in St. Anthony and at Fort Snelling. These people, generally called contrabands, in many cases had been caught up by the advance of Union troops as they penetrated the Confederacy before the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect. Hence, in the eyes of the military, they were "contrabands of war." Others had run away from plantations and placed themselves under the protection or control of Union troops.

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<sup>1</sup>Montgomery to his brother, October 26, 1864; to his mother, October 27, November 27, 1864, June 11, 1865, September 23, 1866, Montgomery Papers.

Still others considered themselves freed by the proclamation, although some interpreters might argue otherwise. They represented the human residue of a still unfinished war, and were the precursors of later eras which found them supposedly free but without much actual liberty.

Whatever the category, these Negroes had to be cared for, and the government was not sure just how to do it. One solution was to hire Negroes for work in the army and in other federal agencies. In 1863, a St. Paul paper discussed General Henry H. Sibley's part in bringing Negroes to Minnesota for employment by the army in order to free army personnel for other duties. Another practice was to employ them in civilian posts; for example, as early as 1862, the St. Paul and Galena Packet Company, along with the La Crosse Company, sent an agent to St. Louis "to engage Negroes as deck hands on their steamboats" after their white deck hands struck for higher wages.<sup>1</sup> All these motives for migration meant an influx of new faces and, in time, a process of adjustment for both old and new Negro settlers.

One of the largest single Negro groups to enter Minnesota arrived in two contingents from St. Louis in May, 1863--a total, during a week and a half, of approximately three hundred men, women, and children. A St. Paul paper

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Daily Press, May 16, 1863; Mankato Semi-Weekly Record, June 14, 1862, both quoted from "Annals." Both articles refer to the Negroes as "contrabands" See also the Daily Press for May 6, 1863, which mentions Sibley's part in a similar activity.



reported on May 6, 1863, that a steamboat, the "Northerner" out of St. Louis, "brought up a cargo of 125 Negroes and 150 mules on Government Account." The boat was to take some eight or nine hundred Indians back to St. Louis, and in discussing the "exchange" one account sarcastically offered the opinion that the mules should be kept in St. Paul, and the Negroes and Indians sent to Massachusetts. Another local source indicated some variance in figures, as well as concern for the Negroes' future in Minnesota. Here too they are referred to as "contrabands" sent up from St. Louis, through the efforts of General Sibley, to serve as teamsters. This account gave a total of 76 rather than the 125 listed in the first source. It was stated that the Negroes travelled on a barge that was brought up by the "Northerner," adding, "This was rather more than was bargained for." The writer expressed doubts about the value of women and children as teamsters. It was said that the police "were very much alarmed at the appearance of such a thunder cloud" and tried to prevent the landing on grounds that the Negroes were paupers. Furthermore, the Irish workers on the levees were supposedly disturbed about this rival labor force. Although the reported totals vary, several facts are clear: these Negroes were contracted for by the government; General Sibley did have something to do with the contract as originally reported, and some antagonism was expressed toward the

new arrivals.<sup>1</sup>

On May 15, 1863, the "Davenport" arrived in St. Paul from St. Louis bringing 218 additional "contrabands," 100 of them women and children. They were in charge of Chaplain J. D. White and were guarded by Company C, Thirty-seventh Iowa troops. According to a newspaper account of May 15, "Most of them had been slaves in Missouri, though a few were free." Again, the Irish laborers "swarmed" the boat and tried to frighten them off. This treatment was deplored by the local press, which stated that the recently arrived contrabands "furnish[ed] another proof of their superiority over their Kilkenny persecutors by the favorable contrast of their quiet, civil and inoffensive manner." Most of the newcomers also went to Fort Snelling, although some were quartered elsewhere, including the Winslow House.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the emigrants were hired as army teamsters, others obtained private employment in the area, still others went on to St. Anthony and Stillwater. At least thirty-two became recruits in an Iowa colored regiment and left for Keokuk shortly after their arrival in St. Paul.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Pioneer, May 7, 1863; another report in the Pioneer of that date refers to the Negroes as "contrabands." See also the St. Paul Daily Press, May 6, 1863.

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul Daily Press, May 15, 16, 1863, quoted from "Annals."

<sup>3</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, May 27, 1949; St. Paul Daily Press, September 30, 1863; article entitled "Our Colored Citizens," in St. Paul and Minneapolis Pioneer Press, December 11, 1887. The latter account confirms the arrival of

As with the May 6 arrivals, there is evidence of the origin of the newcomers, their reasons for moving North, the reception they received upon arriving in large groups, and their eventual entry into various jobs. This influx increased the Negro population in the area, exclusive of Fort Snelling, antagonized the native labor force, and compounded the problems of adjustment and integration at a rather difficult time.

One of the new arrivals, however, rose above these difficulties to become a real leader in the Negro community. He was Robert Hickman, generally considered the founder of the Pilgrim Baptist Church in St. Paul. Born a slave in Boone County, Missouri, on January 1, 1831, he died in St. Paul on February 16, 1900. During his period of slavery, he was a rail splitter, among other things, but his master taught him to read and gave him permission to preach to other slaves, a not uncommon practice under the slavery system.<sup>1</sup>

Accounts of how Hickman came to Minnesota are mixed but not necessarily contradictory. One report states that many Negroes in Boone County planned to escape, received protection by Union forces, and were promised aid by the

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Negroes in 1863 from Missouri and other slave states, and mentions that among them was Robert Hickman.

<sup>1</sup>Upham and Dunlap, "Minnesota Biographies," p. 325; Minnesota Baptist State Convention, Annual Report, 1900, (Minneapolis, 1900), p. 13; Minneapolis Spokesman, May 27, 1949; Twin City Observer (Minneapolis), October 1, 1953.

Underground Railway. This account asserts that around three hundred were smuggled aboard the "War Eagle" and taken north. Not knowing for sure where they were going, these Negroes referred to themselves as "pilgrims." Hickman probably was a member of the group brought to St. Paul.<sup>1</sup>

He was almost certainly among those caught up in the general movement to Minnesota in 1863, but the aid promised by the Underground Railway and the protection by Union troops are matters of surmise or of secondhand evidence. There is no doubt that Hickman was a slave until sometime in 1862, when military and legal developments in Missouri caused some confusion in the minds of Negroes as well as of federal officials. Just what Hickman's status was when he got on the boat and came north is a matter of conjecture; he could have been a runaway slave still in bondage, as the Minneapolis Spokesman implied. His obituary in the Annual Report of the Minnesota Baptist State Convention merely says that "Brother Hickman came to St. Paul, Minnesota in 1863, with a boatload of colored people." The entry in "Minnesota Biographies" stated that he went to St. Paul as soon as he was freed by the Emancipation Proclamation. Edward D. Neill, historian and contemporary of Hickman, wrote that Hickman "was a slave until Abraham Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation. As soon as that had gone into effect. Mr.

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, May 27, 1949.

Hickman came north."<sup>1</sup>

Again, while there is no doubt that Hickman arrived by boat, it is not known on which steamer. The Spokesman account stated that he arrived on the "War Eagle." A boat by that name, usually referred to as a packet, operated during this period. It was in St. Paul on May 5, 1863, and left that day for Prairie du Chien, but listings in the daily papers do not mention any Negroes or other passengers aboard. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that Hickman traveled on this boat. If, however, he arrived on May 6, 1863, he could have been on the "Northerner." Nevertheless, the Spokesman's statement that he was one of the three hundred indicates he might have been on the "Davenport," which arrived on May 15, 1863, with its 218 "contrabands."<sup>2</sup>

Regardless of the exact ship or date on which Hickman arrived, the essential fact was that he and others soon established a Baptist church. Since Hickman was licensed only to preach, he assisted a white minister at the Pilgrim Church until his ordination in 1877. When the church was first organized in 1863, its congregation included whites as well as Negroes, and until a building could be obtained, services were held in the homes of various members. The whites gradually withdrew, a building was finally found on Cedar Street,

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<sup>1</sup>Edward D. Neill, History of Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul, (Minneapolis, 1881), p. 540.

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul Pioneer, May 6, 1863; St. Paul Daily Press, May 6, 1863, and other entries previously cited.

and an all-Negro church was actually incorporated in 1870.<sup>1</sup> Thus, a separate Negro institution came into being. Need, leadership, and opportunity combined to solve a problem that was to present itself again in various forms.

Another aspect of Negro migration into Minnesota concerns proposed colonization schemes, which apparently never materialized. They were thought of primarily, perhaps, as a means of resettling Negroes who could not or would not remain in the South during and after the war, and also as investments and economic ventures for speculators.

Montgomery, the officer stationed in Louisiana, told of a proposed Negro colony that was to have been located in the St. Peter land district. In a letter to his father, he referred in 1865 to a plan that had been spoken of by the land agent from that district, and asked for further information on the proposed settlement, including fees, titles, taxes, claims for those who might die in service, and the amounts and kinds of timber on the land. He wrote that if the arrangements in question were satisfactory, he would send names and money for land selections. Thomas had already spoken to his troops about the scheme, and he reported that "they seemed to be gratified that any person had taken such an interest in their future welfare." Unfortunately, the Montgomery letters ceased in the fall of 1866 with no

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<sup>1</sup>Neill, Ramsey County, p. 389; St. Paul and Minneapolis Pioneer Press, December 11, 1887; Minneapolis Spokesman, May 27, 1949.

further mention of the colonization idea. Dr. H. W. Ward proposed another colony in the Lake Osakis area about 1870, but after encountering a number of difficulties, he abandoned the scheme.<sup>1</sup>

Minnesota was virtually untouched by the Negro migration and colonization that occurred in 1879-1880. At that time, thousands left the South because of unsettled economic and social conditions. The vast majority of these went to Kansas, while a comparative few migrated to other Western states.<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence in contemporary accounts to indicate that any concerted effort was made to bring these unfortunate Negroes to Minnesota. The distance and expense involved may have been deciding factors in discouraging colonization efforts in Minnesota.

The period from the 1860's to the early 1880's was an eventful one for Negroes in Minnesota. With numbers more than doubling each decade, the issues of separate versus integrated schools and of Negro suffrage were finally resolved. Religious institutions for Negroes multiplied during these years. In addition to the Pilgrim Church in St. Paul, the St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church was officially organized in Minneapolis in 1863. Actually its members had conducted prayer meetings since 1860, the first

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<sup>1</sup>Montgomery to his father, March 22, 1865, Montgomery Papers; Minnesota History, II (August, 1917), p. 215, an unsigned news item.

<sup>2</sup>Frazier, The Negro in the United States, pp. 154-155.

having been held in the home of Paul Brown on Fourth Avenue Southeast. In 1869, the group finally secured a building formerly occupied by a white congregation at the corner of Sixth Avenue Southeast and Second Street. Less successful was the attempt to found a Negro Episcopal church in St. Paul. Established in 1867 and incorporated as St. Mark's Parish in 1868, the church dissolved in 1870, following the death of the rector a year earlier.<sup>1</sup> A Baptist church was organized in St. Paul in November, 1866. The work of salvation went ahead as the pastor, William Morris, baptized eight persons in the Mississippi River, "near their place of worship."<sup>2</sup> Evidently, the fall climate in Minnesota did not deter the religious fervor associated with outdoor baptism.

Across the river in St. Anthony, in June, 1870, the Negro residents started to erect the foundation for a new Methodist Episcopal church. According to some observers, it was "rather an unsightly place for a church" since it was located "near the springs on Second Street." It was also noted that the Republican friends of the Negroes would "donate liberally" toward the undertaking, an apparent jibe by a Democratic paper against the political affiliation of most

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Recorder, May 27, 1949; Minneapolis Spokesman, April 25, May 23, 1958; St. Paul and Minneapolis Pioneer Press, December 11, 1887.

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul Daily Press, November 24, 1866.



Negroes at the time. The church was opened for services in November, 1870, under the leadership of Reverend Hedgeman who was praised for his "perseverance and industry" in getting the church founded and built.<sup>1</sup> These first few religious organizations were the forerunners of many others, some of which are still in existence.

Most of the jobs which Negroes could obtain involved menial work in restaurants, hotels, and industry, although a few operated or worked in small shops and businesses. Some Negroes found municipal jobs and a very few were employed in minor positions in other government services.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps their plight and attitude is best expressed by a twentieth-century Negro leader:

"Without money or friends, the objects of the open antagonism of workers already established, and dependent almost entirely on the humanity and justice of white employers, these illiterate black people turned their hands to whatever job they could find to do and availed themselves of every opportunity for their business advancement and enlightenment."<sup>3</sup>

Yet, despite these limitations and some resistance from trade unions, Negroes were relatively well received by most whites in Minnesota. A great many white people tried to help them through the founding of churches, colonization

<sup>1</sup>St. Anthony Falls Democrat, June 24, November 24, 1870.

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul and Minneapolis Pioneer Press, December 11, 1887.

<sup>3</sup>Mildred Strader, in Minneapolis Spokesman, September 29, 1939.

schemes, and individual attempts to bring Negroes from the South. The records are scant, of course, since the daily activities of men of good will are often unsung, but one piece of evidence may speak for many such efforts. George W. Prescott, a member of the Minnesota Branch of the United States Christian Association in St. Paul, wrote in 1865 to his friend Edward Eggleston about the newly freed Negroes and the responsibilities of the "Freedman's Association": I don't know how you feel upon this subject, but my conviction is that the people of this country have a duty to perform to the colored race, to carry out God's plans. These people must be educated--their present necessities must be supplied. I am willing and glad, as a Christian, to be identified with the movement."<sup>1</sup>

Although the writer's views were undoubtedly shared by many other Minnesotans, this problem was national as well as local. It is certainly true that some provisions in many northern state constitutions and statutes, as well as court decisions, constituted the equivalent of "black codes." It has been shown that Negro suffrage was opposed in northern states, particularly Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin. In other areas of rights, specifically in the holding of property by Negroes, legislation either prohibited it outright, as was the case in Illinois; in Indiana contracts between Negroes and mulattoes were held to be void.

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<sup>1</sup>April 15, 1865, Eggleston Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

Minnesota Negroes, while undergoing a certain degree of discrimination, did not have to contend with such outright denials of rights.<sup>1</sup>

However, all was not discouragement and frustration; there were heartening achievements. Minnesota Negroes gained the suffrage in 1868. The occasion was celebrated on January 1, 1869, along with the observance of the sixth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. At a meeting of Negroes in November, 1868, plans were drawn up for a state convention to be held in St. Paul the following January "to perfect a State Organization of the Sons of Freedom," a statewide society for Negroes. The event was given favorable mention by the press, which characterized the local Negro population as "among the most industrious, useful and well-behaved of our citizens."<sup>2</sup>

The convention met as scheduled and was addressed by many notables, including Governor William R. Marshall and Ignatius Donnelly. After paying tribute to his Negro hosts, the Governor received them into the electorate:

"In the name of forty thousand of the free electors of this commonwealth, I welcome you to liberty and equality

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<sup>1</sup>Henry C. Hubbart, "'Pro-Southern' Influences in the Free West, 1840-1865," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XX (June, 1933), pp. 48-49.

<sup>2</sup>See the introductory statement in Proceedings of the Convention of Colored Citizens of the State of Minnesota (St. Paul, 1869, hereafter cited as Proceedings; St. Paul Daily Press, November 13, 1868.

before the law. In the name of the State of Minnesota, which has relieved itself of the reproach of unjust discrimination against a class of its people, I welcome you to your political enfranchisement."

Since Governor Marshall had been one of the leaders in the successful fight to achieve Negro suffrage, it was fitting that he should make this statement.

The convention continued its deliberations and received further favorable comment from the press, which characterized it as "a great success," called attention to the "great earnestness and unbounded enthusiasm" expressed, and complimented the participants on their "harmony," parliamentary skill, and "universal courtesy and sobriety." In a political aside, it was also noted that some of the "Democratic demagogues" who had denounced the Negro and his right to vote should "take lessons" from the Negro on how to conduct their own meetings.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, the constitution of the Sons of Freedom was drawn up and adopted. The organization would consist of the "colored men of the whole State," and no fees were to be charged for membership. Its objectives were to help Negroes in as many ways as possible, particularly in their jobs and trades, to keep population records of Negroes both in and out of school, and to look after their personal property and real estate if necessary.<sup>2</sup> While undoubtedly

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<sup>1</sup>Proceedings, pp. 8, 9; Minneapolis Daily Tribune, January 1, 15, 1869.

<sup>2</sup>Proceedings, p. 29.

worthwhile, these objectives were overly ambitious, and the organization was never able to function very effectively.

Throughout the rest of the 1860's and 1870's, several encouraging events showed that the Negro in Minnesota was adjusting and moving toward social and political maturity and equality. In September, 1866, the Negroes added another organization to their race and community--the Pioneer Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. Among those Negroes in St. Paul who helped in this venture were J. K. Hilyard, Moses Dixon, Joseph Farr, Israel Crosley, and Jacob Pritchard, all of whom were respected business and professional men.<sup>1</sup>

Some excitement was created in Minnesota when Negro jurors were used in several counties and towns, the first time being March, 1869. The occasion was the trial of a Negro in the Court of Common Pleas, Ramsey County. Five Negroes served on the jury: R. J. Stockton, M. I. Jernigan, Henry Moffitt, Thomas Jackson, and Robert Hickman. Evidently the Negro jurors were not moved by considerations of race, for the defendant was found guilty.<sup>2</sup> Further use was made of Negro jurors in Duluth and Anoka County. Thomas Jackson was the first Negro to function in that capacity in

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<sup>1</sup>Harris, Negro Population, p. 6; St. Paul and Minneapolis Pioneer Press, December 11, 1887.

<sup>2</sup>Minneapolis Daily Tribune, March 25, 1869; R. I. Holcombe, History of the Minnesota State Agricultural Society, (St. Paul, 1910), p. 99.

Duluth, while a Mr. Chapman served in Anoka County.<sup>1</sup>

Within the next few years, Negroes founded a successful literary society in St. Paul, called the Robert Bank's Literary Society, with T. H. Lyles, a rising businessman, as president. This club, which may also have held meetings in Minneapolis, was a forerunner of other such organizations devoted to cultural pursuits. Contemporary accounts declared this society to have been quite successful as a "lyceum."<sup>2</sup>

With all these new organizations, societies, churches, and businesses, Minnesota Negroes felt a need for their own media of communication. The early history of the Negro press in Minnesota is obscure and poorly documented, but it is clear that Negroes did publish at least two papers in the 1870's and 1880's before their major newspapers first appeared in 1885. One was described by a St. Paul paper in 1876:

An intelligent and enterprising colored citizen of St. Paul has commenced the publication of a paper called the Western Appeal, [not to be confused with a paper of the same name that started publication in 1885] the initial number of which is before us. It is small in size, but neatly printed, and in its literary execution is highly creditable to its conductors. It takes strong ground in favor of the Republican party though criticizing it severely for not more adequately protecting the colored people of the South.<sup>3</sup>

Just who edited this paper, how long it was published, and

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Tribune, December 23, 1871; St. Paul Daily Pioneer, January 22, 1874.

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul Daily Dispatch, February 25, 1875, quoted from "Annals."

<sup>3</sup>St. Paul Daily Dispatch, September 23, 1876.

what happened to it is unknown.

Four years later another Negro newspaper was published in St. Paul, but no more is known of it than of the earlier venture. It was mentioned by a Minneapolis paper of 1880 which said: "The colored people of Minnesota have an organ in the shape of the St. Paul Review, a neat little paper published in the Saintly City."<sup>1</sup>

Increasing population brought added problems of law enforcement to the Negro population in Minneapolis and St. Paul. For practical as well as political reasons, the governing officials of each city decided to add a Negro to their police forces. St. Paul appointed a Negro policeman in 1881 and Minneapolis the next year.<sup>2</sup> However, full-scale Negro participation in law enforcement did not come until later, and in each election year the Negro newspapers called for more adequate representation on the police forces of both cities. Nevertheless, in another area of city-wide interest and concern, the Negro made considerable progress. In 1885, Company 9 of the St. Paul Fire Department was organized as an all-Negro company. The pride taken by Negroes in this accomplishment was evident in many current papers.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Tribune, February 11, 1880.

<sup>2</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, September 29, 1939; May 27, 1949.

<sup>3</sup>The Crisis, XXVII (November, 1923), p. 37, an unsigned news article.

Lest these developments be misconstrued as indicative of uninterrupted ascent toward equality, it must be remembered that there was some discrimination in almost every aspect of life in Minnesota. True, it was not accompanied by "lynch law", nor did it ever approach this extreme except for one isolated incident in 1920, but it was discrimination nonetheless. No real civil rights legislation had yet been passed, so Negroes often lost on civil rights battles. One such instance occurred in 1873 when a Negro brought suit against the St. Paul Railway Company which had denied him the right to ride first class. The plaintiff asked for damages of \$1,800 but lost the case in a jury trial.<sup>1</sup>

Thus by 1885 Negroes in Minnesota had made considerable social and economic progress despite some occasional reverses. New faces, adjustments, and a degree of maturity made for progress. The Negro had come to stay, and he had been in the state long enough to take great pride in his history. In fact, some families could boast of having lived in the state for generations. By 1880, 24.4 per cent of Minnesota Negroes were native born, a figure exceeded by a few points in 1890 but not approached again for some decades.<sup>2</sup>

A survey of this period might well conclude with

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Press, May 15, 16, 17, 1873.

<sup>2</sup>Harris, Negro Population, p. 9.



these challenging words, spoken in Minnesota by the great Negro leader Frederick Douglas:<sup>1</sup>

It is sheer cowardice for the great Caucassian [sic] race on this continent to fetter the negro by legal restrictions, for fear he will rise to political and social equality. If he is essentially inferior, he must remain inferior even with equal advantages. If nature created him equal, in God's name let him have a chance to prove his equality. It is time this great nation should cease to oppress the weak because of his weakness.

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Tribune, April 24, 1868, quoted from "Annals."

## CHAPTER V

### INTEGRATION--LEADERSHIP--PARTICIPATION, 1885-1920

The Negroes of Minnesota who lived during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth progressed tremendously in their social and economic status. They did not achieve full liberty and equality, but they witnessed great improvement over the conditions of their predecessors. Negroes expanded their publications and increased their participation in politics. A few entered colleges, both on the undergraduate and graduate levels. Negro professional men became respected leaders in the community. Two wars during this period enabled Negroes to show their patriotism and to take pride in the fact that some--albeit with difficulty--became commissioned officers. And employment opportunities improved, but not without instances of discrimination and restriction.

By 1890, the Negro population of Minnesota had reached 3,683, an increase of 2,119 over 1880.<sup>1</sup> This indicated a fairly high birth rate since 27.5 per cent were

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<sup>1</sup>United States Census, Abstract, 1890, (Washington, 1896), p. 11; Harris, Negro Population, p. 9.

Minnesota-born in 1890 as against 24.4 per cent in 1880. Migration into Minnesota from other parts of the country also added to the population. Undoubtedly, the end of Reconstruction and the subsequent reestablishment of white supremacy in the South led many Negroes to migrate to Minnesota and other northern states. Further economic progress and the passage of favorable civil-rights legislation (and conversely the absence of restrictive legislation) also contributed to the migration of Negroes to Minnesota. In comparison with the growth of the Negro population, the total population increase in Minnesota for the same period was 67.8 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

The 1890 census showed that the Negro population of St. Louis County increased from 13 in 1880 to 228 in 1890.<sup>2</sup> The great majority of those Negroes settled in Duluth, an urban center, which became the third major area of Negro concentration in Minnesota.

The Negro population of Minnesota in 1900 was 4,959, an increase of only 1,276 from 1890. This small expansion paralleled the overall decline in population growth in the state for this decade, from 67.8 per cent to 33.7 per cent. Furthermore, the percentage of Minnesota-born Negroes in

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<sup>1</sup>Lowry Nelson and Hazel Clampitt, Population Trends in Minnesota, 1940, Bulletin 387, Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Minnesota, (June, 1945), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>United States Census, 1890, Population, Part I, (Washington, 1895), p. 417.

1900 had declined to that of 1880, due to the influx of out-of-state Negro migration during the previous decade.<sup>1</sup>

From 1900 to 1910 another large increase was recorded, and the census of 1910 listed 7,084 Negroes in Minnesota. In 1910, the Negro population represented only 0.3 per cent of the total in Minnesota, the same percentage of 1890. Better civil-rights protection through favorable legislation at the turn of the century and further progress in industry and employment were partly responsible for this large absolute increase, the last major one until the decade of the 1940's. The census of 1920 listed 8,809 Negroes in Minnesota, an increase of 1,725, which, while fairly sizable, does not compare to earlier increases. The percentage of Minnesota-born Negroes stood at 23 per cent and the Negro population represented 0.4 per cent of the total in Minnesota.<sup>2</sup> The increase after 1910 was undoubtedly the result of movement to the North during World War I when a premium was placed upon unskilled labor.<sup>3</sup>

This migration to the North actually began in 1915 and continued unabated until 1918, reaching its maximum in 1917. The virtual halt of foreign immigration due to the

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<sup>1</sup>Harris, Negro Population, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>United States Census, Abstract, 1910, (Washington, 1913), p. 601; United States Census, Abstract, 1920, (Washington, 1923), p. 101.

<sup>3</sup>John A. Kinneman and Richard G. Browne, America in Transition, (New York, 1942), p. 190.

onset of war in Europe, the movement of large blocs of the American labor force into the armed forces, the resultant demand for labor of all kinds to man the industries of the North, and bad climatic and economic conditions in the South were major factors that produced this migration. This movement, primarily North instead of West as previous migrations had gone, went chiefly to the industrial centers from Massachusetts to Iowa. Furthermore, it was a leaderless movement in contrast to that of 1879-1880.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout this quarter century, Minnesota did not contain as many Negroes as other northern states in the East and West North Central areas of the United States. Illinois had 109,049 and 182,274 in 1910 and 1920 respectively; Michigan had 17,115 and 60,082 on those dates. Indiana had 60,320 and 80,810, while Iowa had 14,973 and 19,005. The greater urbanization and industrial opportunities in those states apparently drew more Negroes than the relatively less urbanized and industrialized Minnesota.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Minnesota was too far North and West to be in the stream of migration from states like Mississippi and Alabama.

The concentration of Negroes into the three industrial and urban areas of Minnesota is illustrated by the population figures for 1910 and 1920. In 1910, there were 3,144 Negroes in St. Paul, 2,592 in Minneapolis, and 510 in

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<sup>1</sup>Work (ed.), Negro Year Book, 1918-1919, pp. 8-12.

<sup>2</sup>Kinneman and Browne, America in Transition, p. 57.

Duluth. A decade later, the figures for the same cities were 3,376, 3,927, and 495.<sup>1</sup> In other words, in 1910, 88.15 per cent of Minnesota Negroes were living in three urban areas; in 1920, the figure was 88.52 per cent. This condition had existed ever since Negroes started coming into the state and is one that has continued. The Negro population of Minnesota, like that of virtually every other northern state, was overwhelmingly urban. This concentration affected social problems arising from race contact and also created more political repercussions than if there had been a dispersal of Negroes throughout the rural areas of the state.

Very few Negroes went to rural areas in the Upper Midwest, and Minnesota was no exception. The following table shows this situation clearly.

TABLE 1

## FARMS OPERATED BY NEGRO OWNERS AND TENANTS--1920

State	Acres Owners	Acres Tenants	No. Owners	No. Tenants
Minnesota	1,657	700	24	9
Iowa	5,140	3,457	74	34
Wisconsin	3,476	592	41	5

Source: Work (ed.), Negro Year Book, 1925-1926, pp. 378-379.

In general, the number of Negro land owners and tenants in these three states declined between 1900-1920. A net decline

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<sup>1</sup>Harris, Negro Population, p. 12.

of 91 and 11 was registered for Iowa and Wisconsin respectively. Minnesota showed a net increase of two for the same period.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the three urban areas noted, there was some settlement in and around Fergus Falls in 1897-1898. When the Grand Army of the Republic held its 1896 encampment at the State Fairgrounds, some Negro veterans from Kentucky received advertising leaflets that were passed out by two real estate agents from Fergus Falls. This literature was taken back to Kentucky and discussed, and a group was formed for the purpose of establishing a colony in Minnesota. As a result, twenty Negro families arrived during 1897-98 and settled mostly in Fergus Falls, Akeley, and Nevis. The majority of men in this group were Civil War pensioners and also Baptists.<sup>2</sup>

During 1899, another realtor at Mille Lacs persuaded twenty-five Negro families from Kentucky to migrate to Minnesota. They settled in the vicinity of Wealthward, and were so successful that some of their friends evidently wanted to join them. Those interested were asked to contact the realtor, but the outcome is unknown.<sup>3</sup>

However, not all migrant Minnesota Negroes came from

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<sup>1</sup>Work (ed.), Negro Year Book, 1925-1926, p. 374.

<sup>2</sup>Fergus Falls Daily Journal, September 16, 1933.

<sup>3</sup>Afro-American Advance (Minneapolis), September 23, 1899.

the South; some were from Northern states. For instance, when the Armour Company established a meat packing plant in South St. Paul, in 1919, "a great number of Negroes" were brought in from Chicago, most of whom settled in St. Paul.<sup>1</sup>

The movement of Negroes from South to North was a general one, as has been noted. On the national scene before 1910, only about 10,000 Negroes per year went North; more than 500,000 migrated between 1916-1920.<sup>2</sup> How many of these migrated to Minnesota is not known, but perhaps no more than 500.<sup>3</sup>

The World War I and post-war migration created some unfortunate problems for Minnesotans, white and Negro. Because many out-of-state Negroes evidently regarded Minnesota as an "easy" state where law enforcement was lax, there was an influx of "undesirables," particularly from states in the South. As a result, "native" Minnesota Negroes attempted to protect themselves against this influx. In many cases, local Negro leaders and organizations "screened" the migrants and selected only those deemed "worthy" to enter the state.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>N. C. Hellevik, "Ethnology--South St. Paul--Relation of Industries to Nationalities," W. P. A. Writer's Project (St. Paul, 1936), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, February 28, 1958; interview with Louis Moore of the Commodity Credit Corporation and Cecil Newman, editor of the Minneapolis Spokesman.

<sup>3</sup>C. S. Johnson, The Negro in American Civilization, (New York, 1930), p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>No exact number could be found. Conversations with sociologists and Negro leaders in the Twin Cities indicate the approximate figure given.



One indication of progress by the Negro population was the expanding number of professional men who not only pursued their careers in Minnesota but also became leaders in many local and national Negro organizations. An outstanding example is Frederick L. McGhee, who was born in Aberdeen, Mississippi in 1861 of slave parents. After the Civil War, he attended Knoxville College in Tennessee through the aid of the Freedmen's Bureau. He went to Chicago in 1879, began studying law three years later, was admitted to the bar in 1885, and practiced in Chicago for three years. Arriving in St. Paul in 1889, he was reportedly the first Negro lawyer west of Illinois, and was definitely the first Negro to be admitted to the bar and to practice law in Minnesota. Also, he was one of the few Negro leaders of the period to become a Democrat. An ardent exponent of civil-rights, McGhee was director of the legal bureau of the National Afro-American Council for eight years. In addition, he was one of the founders of the Niagara Movement for national civil and political equality, and in the year of his death helped lay the groundwork for founding a branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in St. Paul. He died in 1912 in St. Paul, after having practiced law there for twenty-three years.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hennessey, Past and Present of St. Paul, p. 632; Upham and Dunlap, "Minnesota Biographies," XIV, p. 467; A. R. Fenwick, Sturdy Sons of St. Paul, (St. Paul, 1899), p. 95; Western Appeal, March 16, September 21, 1912.

In Minneapolis, William R. Morris was the first Negro lawyer to appear before the courts of Hennepin County. He was born of slave parents in Kentucky in 1859. At Fisk University, where he enrolled at age seventeen, he became an outstanding student; in 1887 he received his master's degree, after having taught mathematics, science, and languages at the University for five years. Morris was a public school teacher for a while, practiced law in Chicago, was admitted to the bar by the Tennessee Supreme Court, and continued his law practice in Nashville. In 1889, he went to Minneapolis, where he was a lawyer for thirty-five years. He was entitled to practice before the United States Supreme Court in 1912 and was also a member of the American Bar Association. Morris, like McGhee, was a leader in many organizations, including the local branch of the NAACP. He died in 1930 after having devoted his life and energies to the welfare of his race.<sup>1</sup>

Another leader, John Francis Wheaton, gained the distinction of being the first and only Negro ever to be elected to and serve in the Minnesota legislature. Born in Maryland in 1866, he was educated at Storer College in West Virginia and studied law at Howard University, graduating in 1892. He went to Minneapolis in 1893 and was graduated

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<sup>1</sup>Marion Shutter and J. S. McLain, Progressive Men of Minnesota, (Minneapolis, 1897), p. 447; Who's Who in Colored America for 1927, I, p. 145; The Crisis, XXXVII (March, 1930), p. 24, an unsigned news article.

from the University of Minnesota law school a year later. In 1898 he was elected state representative from the Forty-second District in Minneapolis. Strangely enough, he was chosen to represent a district that included less than a hundred Negroes, and he ran ahead of his Republican ticket in a year when the Republicans lost the governorship to John Lind. While in the legislature, Wheaton was a strong advocate of civil-rights proposals, but this office was not his only contribution to public life. Previously he had served as a congressional clerk, Minnesota legislative clerk, deputy clerk of the Minneapolis Municipal Court, and as a member of the Minnesota delegation to the Republican National Convention in 1896. He was also among those who called upon Governor David M. Clough in an unsuccessful attempt to get Negroes commissioned during the Spanish-American War. Shortly after serving his single legislative term, Wheaton went to New York, where he practiced law successfully for several years.<sup>1</sup>

William T. Francis, a St. Paul lawyer, also deserves mention because of his outstanding legal and political achievements. He came from Indiana to Minnesota as a youngster and received his education there. After serving as a legal clerk for the Northern Pacific Railway Company for

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<sup>1</sup>Shutter and McLain, Progressive Men, p. 350; Minnesota, Legislative Manual, 1899, p. 627; Western Appeal, July 9, November 12, 1898; Minneapolis Journal, July 30, 1898.

many years, Francis opened a law office in St. Paul shortly before World War I and soon became the leading local Negro attorney. During World War I he served in many appointive jobs. He was a representative of the Minnesota Public Safety Commission in 1917, observer of the draft board in the Eighth Ward, and special representative of the federal government to act on draft appeals in Division 7, St. Paul. In 1918 he was selected by the War Department as a speaker to explain to Negroes the war aims of the government. A one-time deputy Grand Master of the Odd Fellows, he was also a member of Mayor Lawrence C. Hodgson's St. Paul Legislative Committee, and in 1920 he was chosen a presidential elector by the Republican State Convention. In 1927, he was named United States Minister to Liberia, where he died in 1929 of yellow fever. A truly outstanding man, Francis was greatly respected by his colleagues, Negro and white.<sup>1</sup>

Another widely recognized Negro lawyer during this period was Charles W. Scrutchin, who practiced in Bemidji for many years. A native of Richmond, Virginia, he was graduated from the University of Michigan in 1894. Scrutchin went to Bemidji in 1898, at a time when no more than three Negroes resided there. Consequently, his practice came almost entirely from white clients.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Western Appeal, June 21, August 18, November 10, 1917; July 13, September 14, 1918; January 4, 1919; March 20, 1920; St. Paul Dispatch, July 15, 1929.

<sup>2</sup>Upham and Dunlap, "Minnesota Biographies," XIV, p. 685; Minneapolis Spokesman, May 27, 1949.

Negroes also became leaders in other fields. Among them was T. H. Lyles, who was born in 1843 in Frederick, Maryland. He came to St. Paul from Pittsburgh in 1874, and after working several years as a barber in the American House, became a real-estate dealer. Active in politics but never a candidate for office, and an advocate of civil-rights legislation, he was also an organizer and grand master of the Grand Lodge of Colored Masons, and helped found the Negro newspaper, Western Appeal, in 1885. He was also active in Pilgrim Baptist and St. James A. M. E. churches. Lyles opened an undertaking establishment in 1905 and operated it successfully until his death in 1920, after which his wife carried on the business for several years.<sup>1</sup>

Frederick D. McCracken was another Negro who became a successful real-estate and insurance man. Born and educated in Iowa, at one time a printer and newspaperman as well as a legal clerk and private secretary, McCracken entered the real-estate business in St. Paul in 1915. During World War I, he went to Washington, D. C., as chief of the Bureau of Housing for Negro war workers and, until June, 1919, was also field agent for the United States Housing Corporation. Following a short period as town manager for a government housing project in Virginia, McCracken returned in 1921 to his business in St. Paul. He was also active in the Negro

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<sup>1</sup>Fenwick, Sturdy Sons, p. 93; Western Appeal, September 20, 1920.

Business League and the Urban League.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. R. S. Brown, a graduate of Bennet Medical College in Chicago, went to Minnesota from Iowa in August, 1898. Although he was the first Negro licensed to practice medicine in Minneapolis, the first Negro physician licensed to practice in the state was T. S. Cook, who passed his state medical examination in April, 1898. Two months later, J. E. Porter passed his examinations, and became the second Negro physician licensed in Minnesota. Porter, a graduate of Fisk, was the first Negro to complete the four-year course of Northwestern University Medical School. He practiced in Minnesota until 1903, when he moved to Kansas. Dr. Val D. Turner was another prominent physician during this period. He graduated in 1894 from Meharry Medical College, took postgraduate work at the University of Minnesota, and served on the staff of St. John's hospital in St. Paul. A leader in the civil-rights fight, Dr. Turner was among a group of Negroes who delivered a personal protest to a state legislative committee in 1913 regarding a bill to prohibit Negro-white marriages.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Hector J. Bell of St. Paul was a prominent Negro dentist in the first decade of the twentieth century. Ap-

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<sup>1</sup>Who's Who in Colored America for 1927, I, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup>Western Appeal, April 16, August 27, 1898; April 18, 1903; Minneapolis Spokesman, May 27, 1949; Who's Who in Colored America for 1927, I, p. 207; Twin City Star (Minneapolis), February 8, 1913.

parently he was also a successful businessman, since he turned over \$24,000 worth of property in St. Paul in partial payment for \$40,000 worth of Montana farm land. Bell was also one of the few Negroes in this period who lived in a "white aristocracy" district.<sup>1</sup>

Among the Negro ministers during 1885-1920 were those who had organized churches in the 1860's and 1870's. Most evidently avoided publicity, since little mention of their activities is found in contemporary accounts. The Reverend Mr. Hickman, mentioned earlier, continued his work until his death in 1900. William H. Brown, a Methodist minister, arrived in St. Paul in 1879. He had been a slave, a soldier in a Negro regiment, and a minister in Indiana. Brown was affiliated with the African Methodist Episcopal Church in St. Paul. Another minister, the Reverend H. P. Jones of the St. James A. M. E. Church in Minneapolis, was among those who made the personal protest to the legislative committee against the mixed marriage bill of 1913.<sup>2</sup>

In 1888, a Catholic mission was established under the direction of Archbishop Ireland. When it became St. Peter Claver's Church in 1892, it benefitted from the services of several priests, the most prominent of which was Father Stephen Theobald, one of the first Negro priests in

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<sup>1</sup>The Crisis, I (December, 1910), p. 11, unsigned news article.

<sup>2</sup>Upham and Dunlap, "Minnesota Biographies," XIV, p. 85; Neill, Ramsey County, p. 501; Twin City Star (Minneapolis), February 8, 1913.

the United States, and a graduate of St. Paul Seminary. Father Theobald led the St. Peter congregation from 1910 until his death in 1932.<sup>1</sup>

Among the leaders who aided their people in various ways were Negro newspaper editors and publishers. Although Negro newspapers tentatively began in Minnesota during the 1870's, their first real impact was not felt until 1885 with the establishment of the Western Appeal. F. D. Parker and J. T. Burgett were the first editors of the paper, but the best known was J. Q. Adams, who assumed the editorship in 1887 and held the position until his death in 1922. This was a record tenure among Negro editors in Minnesota. Born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1849, Adams later served in several high posts in the Reconstruction government of Arkansas. He settled in St. Paul in 1886 and served for six years as bailiff of the municipal court. Throughout all of his life he took an active interest in politics. The organizations in which he took a leading part included the Minnesota Protective and Industrial League (forerunner of the Afro-American League and of the American Law Enforcement League), the Republican party, NAACP, and the Equal Rights Club.

In essence, Adams was a crusader for decency in social behavior and equality of opportunity. His philosophy was partially expressed in one of his first editorials: "We need more race love; the tie of racehood should bind us

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<sup>1</sup>St. Peter Claver's Church, St. Peter Claver's Church, Golden Jubilee, (St. Paul, 1942), pamphlet.



as the tie of brotherhood. . . . Our color will not [prevent us] from rising to as great heights as have been attained by any." In a later editorial he declared that Negroes were willing to undergo the same tests as whites in order to enjoy the same privileges, but "we wish our judges to be completely color-blind."<sup>1</sup>

Other newspapermen of this period included J. M. Griffin of the Twin City American (Minneapolis), later the Afro-American Advance; D. E. Butler and Frederick D. McCracken of the Northwestern Vine (Minneapolis); P. O. Gray of the Minneapolis World; A. G. Plummer of the Minneapolis Observer; Joseph Houser of the Negro World (St. Paul); and C. S. Smith of the Minneapolis Messenger. Each newspaper, for the most part, continued less than two years. However, all played a part in the development of the Negro press and race as well as furnishing Negro journalists with good experience. More permanent papers included the Twin City Star (Minneapolis) and the National Advocate (Minneapolis).<sup>2</sup>

Virtually all of the Negro newspapers proclaimed an editorial policy of independence and impartiality concerning political and racial questions. The Twin City American,

<sup>1</sup>Upham and Dunlap, "Minnesota Biographies," XIV, p. 5; Muller, History of the Police and Fire Departments, p. 153; Western Appeal, March 5, July 2, 1887; May 16, 1891; March 31, 1900; August 13, 1913; January 4, 1919.

<sup>2</sup>For a more complete listing of Negro newspapers, and descriptions of them, see the bibliography at the end of this study.

which eventually became the Afro-American Advance, stated in its first editorial that "we shall tell the truth and treat all race questions, parties and political movements with judicial fairness and impartial candor. . . ." Later it praised Minneapolis for its attitude toward Afro-Americans and urged Negroes in that city to take advantage of the opportunities available. And although the Negro had been the victim of many crimes committed by whites, the editorial concluded that he "should be careful and not offend" those white elements who "felt kindly" toward Negroes.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, this newspaper suspended publication in November, 1900, and its editorial policy, while inspirational, never had a chance to make an impact on the Negro population.

The Twin City Star made its debut with a more aggressive statement from the editor to the effect that "I am an agitator, a defender of right, and a believer in that theory. . . that one man in the right will sooner or later become a majority." The Star was a crusader for Theodore Roosevelt in 1912 and opposed the intermarriage bill of 1913. It spoke out strongly against the "pimps, loafers, and gamblers" among the Negroes of Minneapolis, and castigated the "exclusive" Negroes of that city who had become "leaders" but who did nothing to better civic conditions for the race.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>May 4, June 17, 1899.

<sup>2</sup>June 2, 1910; May 11, 1912; January 25, April 25, July 18, 1913.

It was the Western Appeal, however, that maintained a consistent and lengthy fight for equality and recognition. In elaboration of this basic idea, editor Adams asked that the Negro demonstrate the earnestness of his desire to advance. He further declared that the Negro was "here to stay. . . [and] we are human beings with feelings, desires, and ambitions such as other human beings have." Throughout the many years of its existence, the Western Appeal spoke out for Negro candidates in politics, favored most of the organizations that gave sincere attention to Negro problems, and demanded Negro officers for Negro troops in 1898. It publicized a moral "oath for Afro-American youth," and tried to combat discrimination after it had been determined there was really a basis for action.<sup>1</sup>

The increased number of Negro lawyers, doctors, ministers, and editors reflected a greater college enrolment among young Negroes. In absolute terms, this figure was small, for very few Negroes could afford a college education. Furthermore, while many schools could not legally exclude Negroes, there were ways to reject or discourage them. Many of the earlier Minnesota Negro leaders attended colleges outside Minnesota. Nevertheless, the increasingly greater number of Negro college graduates, with their higher status in the community and greater possibilities for advancement, had its impact upon the state.

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<sup>1</sup>June 13, 1885; June 11, 1887; April 28, 1888; March 23, 1889; May 21, 1898; June 21, 1913.

It is unnecessary to list all the Negro graduates of Minnesota colleges during this period. It is known that the first Negro graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1887. He was Andrew Hilyer, who later became a leader in Negro business associations and in the Union League of Washington, D. C. In 1904, the state university graduated its first Negro woman student, Miss Scottie Davis. Another Negro woman, Elvira Turner, a graduate of the university's class of 1906, became an instructor at Tuskegee Institute. In 1907, John Hickman graduated from the St. Paul College of Law, the first Minnesota-born Negro to graduate from any Minnesota law school. Catherine Lealtad, the first Negro graduate of Macalester College, received her degree in 1915. She was followed by J. K. Hilyard in 1917.<sup>1</sup> Miss Lealtad graduated with the highest scholastic rating in her class. In 1920, another Negro graduate of Macalester, Douglas Crane, graduated with high honors.<sup>2</sup>

This influx of Negro students, particularly at the University of Minnesota, led to the establishment of nationally affiliated fraternity and sorority chapters. By 1911 there were enough Negro students at the university to organ-

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<sup>1</sup>Minnesota Daily (Minneapolis), January 29, 1925; Minneapolis Spokesman, May 27, 1949; Western Appeal, May 28, 1904; August 25, 1906; June 29, 1907; June 12, 1915; March 15, 1919; interview with Dr. Margaret Doty, Dean of Women, Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>2</sup>The Crisis, XVIII (February, 1918), p. 37; XX (July, 1920), p. 17, unsigned news article.

ize a chapter of Pi Alpha Tau fraternity "for the mutual uplift and benefit of the race." In 1919, Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity was reestablished at the University of Minnesota after having been inactive for several years. Omega Psi Phi fraternity was organized at the University of Minnesota in May, 1921. Alpha Kappa Alpha, Negro sorority, was organized on the university campus in 1922; less than four years later; its membership had the highest scholastic average of all twenty-one Greek organizations there, although it had been at the bottom of the list only a year before. In 1924, Kappa Alpha Psi, another Negro fraternity, was organized on the university campus.<sup>1</sup>

While these lists of graduates and organizations are far from complete, they do suggest that by the 1920's an increasing number of Negroes found it possible to go to college and to take an active part in campus life. In turn, these Negroes became more active leaders in their communities.

Many Negro social, political, and civic organizations were established during this period. Some were short-lived--particularly the political clubs and societies, which flourished around campaign time and then disappeared. Certain of these political groups were revived every two or four years, and some managed to maintain a reasonably continuous exist-

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<sup>1</sup>Western Appeal, May 13, 1911; March 22, 1919; September 9, 1922; St. Paul Echo, October 2, 1926; Northwestern Bulletin-Appeal (St. Paul), February 9, 1924. The item on Omega Psi Phi fraternity was furnished by Dr. A. M. Butler of St. Paul, a charter member.

ence. Other types of societies such as cultural and literary organizations, were often ephemeral, but a few were forerunners of modern groups, sometimes under different names.

Among the early, major organizations of Negroes was the Protective and Industrial Bureau or League, which existed at least as early as 1887. One of its primary functions was to help get good land for Southern Negroes who expressed an interest in colonizing in Minnesota. It tried to keep out "drifters" and sought to bring in only the "hardier and bolder representatives of the race." F. D. Parker and J. Q. Adams were leaders in this League. On a national scale, this organization attempted to gather all Negroes into a "national federation" which would influence public opinion and "coerce politicians into taking a broader view" of Negro grievances while compelling them to pay more heed to Negro demands.<sup>1</sup>

Locally, the League attempted to better conditions for Negroes, open "new avenues of gaining a livelihood," and offer material assistance when possible. Thus, the Minnesota group was much less demanding and more fraternal than the national leadership declaration indicated. Patterned after the Niagara Movement, a national organization to promote racial opportunity, it was open to all, regardless of

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<sup>1</sup>Leslie H. Fishel, Jr., "The Negro in Northern Politics, 1870-1890," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLII (December, 1955), pp. 483-484.

color, creed, or sex, with a registration fee of fifty cents and monthly dues of twenty-five cents. A state convention was called in 1891 by a committee from the Twin Cities, Stillwater, Duluth, Faribault, Anoka, and other towns in Minnesota.<sup>1</sup>

The Minnesota branch of the American Law Enforcement League, which replaced the Afro-American League, was formed in 1898, largely through the efforts of Adams and William R. Morris. It was not limited, at least in theory or legally, to any one race, color, or creed. Its objectives were to secure moral and legal rights for Negroes, to suppress lawlessness among them, and "to seek larger opportunities and more varied avenues of employment" for Negroes. This organization operated for a few years in Minnesota and participated in at least one civil-rights battle when it tried to raise money in 1900 to combat discriminatory suffrage legislation in Louisiana.<sup>2</sup>

Another incident that occurred beyond Minnesota's borders brought action by the Afro-American League and incidentally led to the formation of another Negro organization in Minnesota. This was in response to the passage of

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<sup>1</sup>Western Appeal, December 31, 1887; November 9, 1887; November 9, 1889; May 16, June 27, 1891; Minneapolis Spokesman, April 18, 1958.

<sup>2</sup>Twin City American (Minneapolis), May 18, 1899; Western Appeal, March 31, 1900; Minneapolis Spokesman, April 18, 1958.

a "separate coach" act by the states of Tennessee, Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi in 1891, the year that the Afro-American League was to hold its national convention in Tennessee. The Minnesota branch of the League met to protest the laws, particularly that of Tennessee, petitioned against holding the convention in that state, and discussed means whereby the constitutionality of the act could be tested. A Minnesota delegate was sent to the convention, and he received the expected treatment from the railway. The League raised money to take the case into court but failed to overthrow the law. Meantime, a Citizen's Civil-Rights Committee had been formed at the Pilgrim Baptist Church which worked in conjunction with the League on the case.<sup>1</sup>

Political clubs were organized rapidly throughout these years. Included among them were the Central Colored Republican Club of St. Paul, Hennepin County Republican Club, Afro-American Republican Club, The Wedge (non-partisan), Federation of Colored Men of St. Louis County, Colored Political Club of St. Louis County, Young Men's Colored Club of Minneapolis, Ramsey County Afro-American Republican League, Afro-American Democrats of Ramsey County, Ramsey County Colored Democratic League, and the Negro Independent Progressive Club of Hennepin County (during the 1912 campaign).<sup>2</sup> Many of

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<sup>1</sup>Western Appeal, June 27, September 5, 12, 1891.

<sup>2</sup>Western Appeal, March 24, September 1, 1888; October 11, 1890; September 29, 1894; March 2, 1912; World (Minneapolis), May 9, June 13, 1896; Negro World (St. Paul),



these clubs proclaimed themselves permanent organizations, but few lasted for more than two years. Occasionally, some were revived or merged with others to carry on the same functions. But however ephemeral these groups were, their number indicated that the Negro population had become interested in politics, that its votes were sought, and that its influence grew as the years went by. It is true, however, that an occasional editor would decry all these organizations and declare that Negroes should perfect the ones they had rather than start new ones all the time.<sup>1</sup>

These clubs were mostly Republican, although Democrats were active on a small scale. Even though some of their leading newspapers urged them to vote independently in the interest of their political and economic rights, most Minnesota Negroes during this period voted the straight Republican ticket. This tendency was deplored in many editorials, which indicated a disappointment with "blind loyalty" and "one-party voting." But one newspaper stated hopefully: "We shall at any and all times be the grand advocate of equal rights to every man, woman and child. Our motto will be Race first and Party afterwards." A Democratic paper considered it unfortunate that the suffrage was thrust upon the Negro "at a time when he was entirely unprepared to

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March 31, 1900; Northwestern Vine (Minneapolis), October 4, 1902; Twin City Star (Minneapolis), May 11, 1912.

<sup>1</sup>The World (Minneapolis), June 13, 1896.

understand the responsibilities attached to it." The same paper castigated narrow loyalty to one party.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the Negro Republican newspapers echoed this sentiment. During the 1892 campaign, many Minnesota Negroes stated that if William Morris, a Negro, did not get the Republican nomination for the legislature, they would feel that their services to the party had not been appreciated. One of their organs made it clear that they would not go into the convention seeking "recognition as colored men, but as loyal republicans [sic] who have been tried and never found wanting." By 1902, the Negro press demanded permanent appointments and "no more menial jobs or election promises." Negroes were again urged to "get together as a race and work for the benefit of the race," instead of blindly following one party.<sup>2</sup>

In a broader sense, the participation of the Minnesota Negro in politics followed much the same trend, and eventuated in the same results, as in other northern states. According to a recent observer, the northern Negro was probably more perceptive politically than the southern Negro, but he "miscalculated the force and direction of politics with consequences that were to harm the race for years to come." In too many cases, including that of Minnesota, the

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Observer, August 16, 1900; Negro World (St. Paul), March 10, 1900.

<sup>2</sup>Protest (Minneapolis), August 20, 1892; Northwestern Vine (Minneapolis), October 18, 1902.

Negro "married himself to the Republican party." By 1885 and 1920, that party was no longer the sole possessor of the traits that had brought about such loyalty. However, it may be that by the 1880's, "separation had become difficult if not impossible," while many Negro leaders, out of self-interest, kept the party line ever-present. It is perhaps just as true to say that the white man often used the Negro but did not accept him.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Negro vote of Minnesota was small (3,390 in 1910), only between 0.3-0.45 per cent of the total, more perceptive Negroes used every means possible to increase their influence. As early as the 1880's, the Negro vote in the North was looked upon as a balance of power, particularly in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. And as the Republican party began to lose interest in the Negro vote by the turn of the century, the Democrats took more interest in it.<sup>2</sup> But, with few local exceptions, the Minnesota Negro vote was too small to serve even as a balance of power.

As a result of these developments, Negroes, including some in Minnesota, took solace and refuge in "low-level" patronage jobs, but they also began to scrutinize more closely the racial attitudes of white candidates in both parties. The Minnesota Negro was probably more aware of his political potential earlier, and more anxious to do some-

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<sup>1</sup>Fishel, "The Negro in Northern Politics," p. 466.

<sup>2</sup>Moon, Balance of Power, pp. 84-88.

thing about it, than Negroes in many other northern states.<sup>1</sup> Finally, he decided to run his own candidates. Interestingly enough, when this was attempted, the Negro discovered what other groups have found: race, group, or minority loyalties are not always as solid as one might want or suspect. After all, the Negro voted as an individual.

Not all Negro clubs in Minnesota were political. Many professional and social groups sprang up among the growing Negro population. One of the earliest was the Afro-American Social Club, organized in St. Paul in 1894 for the mutual literary and social uplift of its members.<sup>2</sup> Another early group, Biddle Circle, No. 38, Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic Club, was formed in 1898 with headquarters in Minneapolis. One of its functions was to give relief to sick, needy, and dependent members and their relatives, and to teach patriotism and good citizenship to children. In 1899, the Adelphai Club--a civic, educational, philanthropic, and artistic group--was organized with twenty members in Minneapolis and twenty in St. Paul. A similar organization, the Self Culture Club, was founded in 1907.<sup>3</sup> These groups,

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<sup>1</sup>Fishel, "The Negro in Northern Politics, pp. 471-473.

<sup>2</sup>E. P. Wade Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. The articles of incorporation are in this collection, as are those for the John Brown Monument Association of St. Paul, formed in 1895.

<sup>3</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, May 27, 1949; Twin City Observer (Minneapolis), May 28, 1953; Adelphai Club Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

along with the Masons, Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows, Knights Templar, Business Mens' Clubs, and church organizations gave the Negroes of Minnesota varied opportunities to express their social, civic, and fraternal preferences. Many of the social and literary clubs for women in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Duluth combined to form the Minnesota State Federation of Afro-American Women's Clubs, later known as the Federation of Colored Women's Clubs.

In addition to the more social and literary organizations, St. Paul Negroes maintained an Industrial Mission which carried on a mixture of charitable and educational activities. A reading room, night school, and restaurant were operated at the mission. Although the number of Negroes served was not large, such an undertaking represented the rather constant attempt made to bring education and understanding to those who could not afford to obtain it elsewhere. A few years later another institution in St. Paul, Welcome Hall, similar to the Industrial Mission, was dedicated. It was devoted "to the education and social betterment of the colored people of St. Paul."<sup>1</sup>

Civic duty often combined and "overlapped" with political ambitions. As a result, Negroes were mentioned or nominated for public office with increasing frequency. In

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel Noyes, "Charities in St. Paul," Minnesota Historical Society Collections, XII (December, 1908), p. 175; The Crisis, XVI (April, 1917), p. 31, an unsigned news article.

addition to Wheaton, whose service in the state legislature has been mentioned, other Negroes aspired to office, but met with very little success. J. K. Hilyard, an early settler and one of the founders of the Western Appeal, was nominated for alderman-at-large by the St. Paul Republican city convention in 1888, the first Negro to be proposed for that position. Although the Negro voters were exhorted, as they were on other occasions, to vote for the Negro candidate, Hilyard was defeated. In 1892, the Ramsey County Republican organization nominated Frederick McGhee as a delegate-at-large to the national convention, but withdrew his name without explanation.<sup>1</sup>

The rising young lawyer, W. T. Francis, received the Republican endorsement for assemblyman in St. Paul in 1906, was nominated in the primary, but failed to get elected. Francis ran for the legislature from the Thirty-eighth District South in 1916, but after winning in the primary, he was defeated in the general election. During the Wilson administration, Orrington C. Hall, prominent St. Paul Democrat, was mentioned for an appointment as minister to Liberia, a proposal that was never successfully pursued. These were the major Negro candidacies who sought political office prior to 1920; in none of the minor races in which they were involved, including a contest for the constable's position

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<sup>1</sup>Western Appeal, April 14, 28, 1888; April 2, September 17, 1892.

in St. Paul at the turn of the century, did Negro candidates win election.<sup>1</sup> Their failures were due to the fact that Negroes did not vote alike and because there were not enough Negro voters to elect their own candidates had they voted as a bloc.

Most of the appointments given to Negroes were clerical positions. One such appointment, however, launched a Negro in a lifetime job and gave Minnesota one of the finest records of service ever encountered at any level, and probably in any state. This was the appointment of "Billy" Williams, who had been a messenger to the governor in 1904, and who was named executive office aide by Governor John A. Johnson in 1905. Fifty-three years and fourteen governors later, Williams retired amidst expressions of regret, appreciation, and respect. On completing his fiftieth year as executive office aide, Williams was awarded "substantial retirement benefits" by the legislature.<sup>2</sup>

Other appointments included that of former army Lieutenant Paul Wigington as a Fire Prevention Inspector of Minnesota. Although not a government appointment, the fact that a Negro from St. Paul became an operator in the Postal

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<sup>1</sup>Western Appeal, March 10, 17, May 5, 1906; September 18, 1915; May 16, 1916; Negro World (St. Paul), April 21, 1900.

<sup>2</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, May 27, 1949; Minnesota, Legislative Manual, 1955, article and picture in unnumbered section. See also a feature article in the St. Paul Pioneer Press magazine section, January 3, 1954, and a retirement story in the Twin City Observer, July 4, 1957.

Telegraph cable office was indicative of the small but potentially important economic breakthroughs that began to occur with increasing regularity.

The participation implied in appointments, political activity, and civic duty indicated that "the colored people cannot be spoken of as a foreign element." Although the great majority of them were barbers, hotel waiters, and general laborers, many also owned real estate and had achieved "general financial prosperity. . . ." It should be noted, moreover, as the twentieth century entered its second decade that Minnesota Negroes gained ground in the skilled labor area and began to furnish their own shoemakers, tailors, cleaners, and pressers. However, the Negro still suffered from the lack of a trade school education. This was true on the national as well as local level.<sup>2</sup>

In the years immediately preceding World War I, some of the previously successful Negro organizations in Minnesota began to lose their effectiveness because of excessive narrowness, inadequate leadership, or internal strife. Beyond the borders of Minnesota, national organizations were founded, and these eventually established local branches in many states, including Minnesota. A number of Minnesota

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<sup>1</sup>The Crisis, XIX (November, 1919), p. 18; XX (October, 1920), p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Northwest Magazine, VII (February, 1889), p. 10; W. E. B. DuBois and Augustus Dill, eds., Atlanta University Publications, (Atlanta, 1912), p. 57.



Negro leaders felt that the time had come to take advantage of the weight and power of such national groups. As a result, efforts exerted in 1912, and later, led to the establishment of local branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Equal Rights League.

The NAACP was established nationally in 1910, and during the next two years, Minnesota Negroes, including Dr. V. D. Turner and Frederick McGhee, attended its conventions. Early in 1912, McGhee invited many people in the Twin Cities to a meeting to organize a "league" made up of residents of both cities who would "take up, discuss, and decide among themselves, questions affecting the Afro-Americans of the Twin Cities." In addition, the group was to discuss the possibility of affiliation with the NAACP. At a meeting on March 25, 1912, it formally took the name, "Twin City Protective League," and decided to affiliate with the NAACP. Within the next few months McGhee died, but the work went forward under the leadership of W. T. Francis, J. Q. Adams, and Dr. Turner. In November, 1913, at a meeting of whites and Negroes held at Plymouth Congregational Church in St. Paul, a branch of the NAACP was organized. With Dr. V. D. Turner presiding, Colonel J. H. Davidson was elected president, and other officers and committees were named.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Western Appeal, March 16, 30, 1912; November 22, 1913; NAACP, Fourth Annual Report, (New York, 1913), p. 57.

The St. Paul branch of the NAACP went to work immediately, its first major project being a Lincoln memorial meeting in February, 1914, at Plymouth Congregational Church. Notables on the platform included Governor Adolph O. Eberhart and the presidents of the University of Minnesota, Hamline University and Macalester College. From that time on, the St. Paul branch played a leading role in Negro life in the state. The Minneapolis branch, organized in 1914, was also active, but during much of this period it was not as strong as the St. Paul organization. S. N. Deinard was its first president; Gale Hilyer was secretary. Among the white and Negro members of its executive committee were Dr. R. S. Brown, William Morris, and Judge E. F. Waite.<sup>1</sup>

Local branches of the National Independent Equal Rights League were also set up in the Twin Cities. Although some good work came out of these branches, particularly from that in St. Paul, they met erratically and were constantly being "revived." The St. Paul branch, for example, was organized on January 8, 1915; its first formal meeting took place on January 24, when J. Q. Adams was chosen president. In March, 1915, it sent letters to Senators Knute Nelson and Moses Clapp protesting pending discriminatory legislation affecting the District of Columbia. In 1919, after a period of inactivity, the branch was resurrected, and another constitution and set of by-laws were adopted. In 1921, the

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<sup>1</sup>NAACP, Fifth Annual Report, (New York, 1914), p. 21.

corrrsponding secretary of the local branch was again trying to revive it.<sup>1</sup> Actually, many Negro and white leaders felt that the Equal Rights League and the NAACP fruitlessly competed with each other, that their functions overlapped, and that the NAACP, by and large, did a better job.

During this period Minnesotans participated in two wars--the Spanish-American War and World War I. Minnesota Negroes served in both and acquitted themselves well. During the Spanish-American conflict, manpower was obtained by calling for volunteers, so no draft problems or lengthy terms of service were involved; nor were casualty rates very high. But another issue which arose at this time remained unclarified until World War I, and was not completely resolved until World War II. This was the practice of always placing Negro troops under white officers, and refusal to grant commissions to Negroes.

Shortly after the Spanish-American War began, the Negro press in Minnesota declared that Negroes should fight for their country under officers of their own race. It hinted that delaying tactics in enlisting might be practiced until Negro officers were appointed to units raised by Negroes. By June, 1898, a Negro company of fifty-four men had been formed in Minneapolis, and a call was made for St. Paul to form its own company. Before going to duty, however, these Negroes sought to obtain officers of their own race.

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<sup>1</sup>Western Appeal, January 23, 30, March 13, 1915; February 1, 1919; January 15, 1921.

Wheaton and others presented their case to Governor David M. Clough, who reportedly told them they could have a charter to organize but must serve under white officers. The Negroes declined, although it was rumored they were willing to compromise on a white captain if the lieutenants were Negroes. Actually, the war was over before the matter could be pursued further. Despite the failure of the proposal and protest, Minnesota Negroes from the Twin Cities, St. James, Austin, Albert Lea, and elsewhere served their country during the conflict.<sup>1</sup>

World War I was a different matter. Millions of troops were involved, a draft was employed for the first time since the Civil War, and casualty rates had a greater impact on all classes and races than at any time since 1865. Moreover, the Negro population had grown to the point where it represented an important and vocal element in American society. In a war presumably fought to make the world safe for democracy, to which every group was expected to contribute, the Negro was willing to do his share, but he demanded certain forms of recognition not as yet accorded him.

Shortly after the United States entered the war, the Western Appeal began its fight for greater equality for the Negro. It declared editorially that every person born in the United States was an American and should be treated as such; he should be ready to do his duty for his country

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<sup>1</sup>Western Appeal, May 7, 21, 28, June 4, October 1, 1898; Minneapolis Journal, July 30, 1898.

but the nation should reciprocate. "No land is a democracy in which there are two classes of citizens," the paper stated. A sober yet hopeful note was sounded by a sister paper just as the United States entered the war; the Twin City Star (Minneapolis) told the Negro that he would have to fight to save his country "that he might enjoy Liberty in its fullest sense. . . that posterity shall awake in a new Americanism. This is our fight if America needs us."<sup>1</sup>

Minnesota Negroes remained completely loyal and asked only that they be given just recognition for deeds done and services performed. They were particularly incensed that some branches of the service did not permit them to participate in all of their units and functions. Their fight to prevent these abuses was only partly successful. It would take another World War to grant Negroes in the armed forces the recognition they deserved.<sup>2</sup>

Several Minnesota Negroes became commissioned officers during World War I, and many others performed ably in the various services as non-commissioned officers and in lower grades. Among the more notable were Lieutenant Sam Ransom, who won several citations overseas, Captain J. R. French, a dental officer, and Lieutenant Paul Wigington,

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<sup>1</sup>Western Appeal, June 30, 1917; Twin City Star, April 7, 1917.

<sup>2</sup>For a rather bitter statement on this topic, see the editorial in the Twin City Star (Minneapolis), June 24, 1916.

who served in the Quartermaster Corps.<sup>1</sup> Overall, 3,350 Minnesota Negroes registered for Selective Service. Between June 5, 1917 and November 11, 1918, 511 were inducted for a percentage of 53.16 of Negroes called as compared to 29.53 per cent for whites.<sup>2</sup>

There was military activity on the home front also. Both St. Paul and Minneapolis had Negro units in the Minnesota Home Guard. Companies A and B of the Sixteenth Home Guard Battalion were located in St. Paul, with Captains C. W. Wigington and Jose Sherwood (later a Major) as company commanders; Companies C and D were organized in Minneapolis, with Captains Gale Hilyer and Charles S. Smith in similar posts. Another volunteer group, called Bundrant's Volunteers, tried unsuccessfully to organize in both cities.<sup>3</sup> After the war there was an attempt to organize a Negro unit in the Minnesota National Guard. Although a bill for such a unit was introduced into the state legislature, it was defeated. Negro entry into the state guard had to wait until 1949.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Western Appeal, September 29, 1917; January 5, 1918; June 28, 1919; Twin City Star (Minneapolis), November 3, 1917.

<sup>2</sup>Work (ed.), Negro Year Book, 1918-1919, p. 216.

<sup>3</sup>Western Appeal, April 11, May 4, 1918; Twin City Star (Minneapolis), April 14, May 26, 1917.

<sup>4</sup>National Advocate (Minneapolis), March 8, August 23, 1919.

Throughout the period from 1885 to 1920 the Negro made gains against economic and other forms of discrimination, sometimes through legal action and sometimes through discussion, pressure, and simple perseverance. It was a continuous process that occupied most of the betterment associations and leagues that have been mentioned, including the NAACP.

Many Negro leaders felt that economic discrimination was a major factor in preventing better race relations. As early as 1890, the New England Furniture Company in Minneapolis was congratulated for employing Negroes. "Let a few more business men break down the barrier of race prejudice," a local Negro paper said, "and we will soon have a solution of the race barrier." At the same time, many responsible Negroes realized that, as in any group, some of their more irresponsible members could harm the cause of fair employment practices. One Negro paper stated its hope that the loafers and gamblers could be rounded up and sent to the workhouse or be given jobs that would keep them out of trouble.<sup>1</sup>

It is not possible to determine how many instances of discrimination occurred in this period, because only a few of the more flagrant cases were reported. In some, investigations were begun but never completed because of lack of evidence or confusion of reports. For example, it is

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Observer, September 13, 1890; Twin City Star (Minneapolis), April 25, 1913.

known that a committee of Negroes met with Mr. George Dayton in 1913 concerning an alleged case of discrimination in Dayton's department store. However, the results were indefinite, and the committee left after telling Dayton that they would take their trade elsewhere. The next year a more serious incident occurred when the city of St. Paul discharged some Negro laborers on an asphalt pouring job and replaced them with workers from Indianapolis. A mass meeting was held, and an Afro-American Labor League was formed; letters were sent to candidates for city offices to ascertain their stand on "St. Paul Men for St. Paul Jobs;" arrangements were made to set up a free labor bureau. But the league, like many other emergency organizations, soon lapsed into inactivity, and the workers were not rehired.<sup>1</sup>

Discrimination in restaurants, hotels, and theaters continued. Some suits were brought with increasing success under the state laws during the early 1920's, before the days of the Fair Employment Practices Commission and other anti-discriminatory laws. For example, a suit against the Nicollet Hotel in St. Peter was decided favorably for a Negro who had been denied the use of its facilities. General discrimination existed, as was evidenced by particularly drastic legislation proposed in 1913. In that year, a bill was introduced in the Minnesota legislature that would prohibit intermarriage between whites and Negroes. The bill

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<sup>1</sup>Twin City Star (Minneapolis), August 8, 1913; Western Appeal, April 25, May 2, 1914.



defined a Negro as anyone who had one-eighth African blood. It would make any marriage between a Negro and a white a misdemeanor, and such marriages performed outside the state would not be recognized. A committee of Negroes, including W. T. Francis, William Morris, Dr. V. D. Turner, and J. Q. Adams appeared before the House Judiciary Committee to protest against the bill, and it was never passed.<sup>1</sup> Within the next 15 years, similar proposals were defeated in Iowa, Michigan, and Ohio.

Several times during this period, Negroes and whites cooperated to prohibit the showing of the film "Birth of a Nation," which was enjoying considerable publicity. According to the Negroes and some whites, this film depicted the Negro in a bad light during the Reconstruction period. These protests occurred most often in 1915 and 1918, and in most instances the showing of the film was prohibited or the offending parts "clipped." In some cases, theater licenses were revoked. Similar success was recorded for Negroes in Ohio, Indiana, and Nebraska.<sup>2</sup>

On the whole, the period from 1885 to 1920 was one of progress for Minnesota Negroes. Their societies, leagues,

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<sup>1</sup>Twin City Star (Minneapolis), January 25, February 8, 1913; October 31, 1914; Minnesota, House Journal, 1913, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup>Twin City Star (Minneapolis), October 16, 1915; January 12, 1918; Western Appeal, November 13, 1915; May 18, 1918; Work (ed.), Negro Year Book, 1918-1919, p. 115.

protective groups, lodges, and fraternities multiplied rapidly. Cooperation between the races increased. Discrimination existed, but means of combating it were at hand. The Negro population grew to the point where it had to be considered, if only because of its size. In general, throughout the state, conditions were good. In Maple Plain, for example, the only Negro in town operated a grocery store, lunchroom, ice cream parlor, and barber shop and was the captain of the town's baseball team. There were no problems because of color.<sup>1</sup> Aside from a catastrophic incident in Duluth in 1920, to be described in the next chapter, no major anti-Negro displays were reported during this period.

It should be noted that the crime rate of Minnesota Negroes, especially in St. Paul, remained low during the first two decades of the twentieth century. In 1914, Negro youngsters committed only 2.6 per cent of juvenile crimes in St. Paul while in 1920, the rate was 0.5 per cent. The rates for comparable years in New York City were 2.8 per cent and 4.2 per cent.<sup>2</sup>

Minnesota Negroes had the lowest illiteracy rate in the nation during this period. Minnesota and Oregon Negroes had an illiteracy rate of 3.4 per cent compared to 13.7 per cent for Indiana, 11.1 per cent for Ohio, 10.5 per cent for

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<sup>1</sup>Western Appeal, July 12, 1913.

<sup>2</sup>Johnson, The Negro in American Civilization, p. 332.

Illinois, 10.3 per cent for Iowa, 5.7 per cent for Michigan, and 4.5 per cent for Wisconsin.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the feeling of the Negro population was best expressed by one of its leading newspapers. The Western Appeal declared that it was a "great benefit to reside in a state which does not generally discriminate against its citizens. There is room in the great state of Minnesota for others who wish to escape. . . degradation." The paper added that "those who come as men and demand respect as men will be treated as men." One of Minnesota's leading Negro figures, Attorney Francis, made a discerning observation on race relations when he said, "The solution of the whole problem. . . is simple justice, a recognition of the fact that the rights of the humblest citizens are as worthy of protection as the highest."<sup>2</sup>

Back in 1887, editor Adams made a point that could have been repeated with equal validity as the Negro moved into the post-World War I period. He said, "Unity among ourselves is desired but not isolation from those around us. We are Negroes, but we are also Americans."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Work (ed.), Negro Year Book, 1918-1919, p. 277.

<sup>2</sup>Western Appeal, June 13, 1914; January 22, 1916.

<sup>3</sup>Western Appeal, March 5, 1887.

## CHAPTER VI

### REGRESSION--DEPRESSION--PROGRESSION, 1920-1945

The quarter century following 1920 was an eventful and frequently paradoxical period for the Negro in Minnesota. Its beginning was marked by the only lynching of Negroes ever recorded in the state. Yet its end saw definite progress for the Negro through participation in World War II, more employment than ever before, better legal and personal relations, and recognition in many new fields, including sports and political-civic affairs. Between these developments there occurred a brush with the Ku Klux Klan and a switch in traditional voting patterns. There was vast unemployment and economic hardship during the "Great Depression" along with the inception of hitherto undreamed of social services. The growth of settlement houses and Urban Leagues, and a general increase in the Negro population also took place during this quarter century. For all these reasons, the figures and comparisons that follow are more meaningful, accurate, and valid than for previous years.

In 1920 there were 8,809 Negroes in Minnesota. In 1930, the Negro population stood at 9,445, an increase of

only 636. Ten years later it was 9,928, only 483 more than in 1930, the smallest increase during any recent decade. By contrast, Michigan gained 86,000 Negroes by migration alone, Ohio 91,000, and Illinois 120,000 during the same period. This slender increase for Minnesota, only 1,119 in twenty years, may have been due partly to the anti-Negro feeling that reached a peak in Minnesota--as in the rest of the nation--in the uneasy time after World War I, with its "red scares" and its suspicion of minorities. The lack of major industry in Minnesota played a part in keeping down Negro migration and the depression also contributed to this picture. In 1934-1936, for instance, Negroes comprised 21.5 per cent of new arrivals at public employment offices throughout the nation. This was a decrease of 19.9 per cent from the figures of 1920. This would indicate that there was a relative decrease in the total of Negro migration during the post-war depression period. Hard times often tended to keep people at home where there was some security.<sup>1</sup>

With economic recovery in the late thirties and the boom that accompanied World War II, along with the increasingly favorable social, economic, and political developments in Minnesota, the Negro population jumped to 14,022 by 1950. After this increase of 4,094 for the decade of 1940-1950,

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<sup>1</sup>United States Census, Abstract, 1920, (Washington, 1923, p. 101; United States Census, Population, 1930, p. 5; United States Census, Population, 1940, p. 10; Rupert B. Vance, Research Memorandum on Population Redistribution within the United States, (New York, 1938), pp. 98-99.

Negroes represented 0.5 per cent of the total population, a growth of 0.1 per cent over previous figures; most of these Negroes continued to concentrate in the Twin Cities area.<sup>1</sup>

This urban concentration in Minnesota was again in accord with the national picture. The migration to the north was predominately an urban movement and it is estimated that at least seven-eighths of the Negroes moving north settled in the cities. For instance, in 1930, Cook County contained 75 per cent of the Negroes in Illinois, New York City had 76 per cent of the Negroes in New York, and Philadelphia and Pittsburgh had 63 per cent of the Negroes in Pennsylvania. On the national scene, the number of urban Negroes increased from 27 to 44 per cent between 1910 and 1930. It is true that many became disillusioned when they did not find the economic and social paradise they expected, but this did not prevent them from moving North.<sup>2</sup>

In 1930 Minneapolis contained 4,176 Negroes and St. Paul held 4,001. Thus, these two cities had 8,177 of the 9,445 Negroes in the state, or 86.58 per cent. The main source of this population was migration. In fact, 74.5 per cent of all Negroes in Minnesota in 1930 had been born outside the state.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>United States Census, Population 1950, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup>E. Franklin Frazier, Black Bourgeoisie, (Glencoe, Illinois, 1957), 1921; Kinneman and Browne, America in Transition, p. 58; Frank Lorimer, Ellen Winston, and Louise K. Kiser, Foundations of American Population Policy, (New York, 1940), p. 22.

<sup>3</sup>Calvin Schmid, Social Saga of Two Cities, (Minneapolis, 1937), pp. 172-189.

Further contrasts and comparisons of the Minnesota Negro population and its status can be gained from the following figures:

TABLE 2

## NEGRO POPULATION AND PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION

	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950
Minnesota	7,084 (0.3)	8,809 (0.4)	9,445 (0.4)	9,928 (0.4)	14,022 (0.5)
Wisconsin	2,900 (0.1)	5,201 (0.2)	10,739 (0.4)	24,327*	28,182 (0.9)
Iowa	14,973 (0.7)	19,005 (0.8)	17,380 (0.7)	18,245*	19,692 (0.7)
Michigan	17,115 (0.6)	60,082 (1.6)	169,453 (3.5)	215,934*	442,296 (7.4)
Ohio	111,452 (2.3)	186,187 (3.2)	309,304 (4.7)	339,727*	513,072 (6.9)
Illinois	109,049 (1.9)	182,274 (2.8)	328,972 (4.3)	393,254*	645,980 (8.0)

\*Indicates "non-white" population and thus no percentages have been given. However, it is safe to assume that the Negro population constituted over 90 per cent of all non-whites in these states.

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1930, (Washington, 1930), pp. 13, 19; Statistical Abstract, 1941, (Washington, 1942), pp. 13, 18; Statistical Abstract, 1957, (Washington, 1957), p. 31.

TABLE 3

## NEGRO ILLITERACY, 10 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER

	1910	1920	1930
National	30.4	22.9	16.3
East North Central	----	7.3	4.7
West North Central	----	10.5	7.6
Minnesota*	3.4	3.1	2.0

\*The overall illiteracy rate in Minnesota for the same periods was 3.0, 1.8, and 1.2.

Source: Statistical Abstract, 1930 pp. 32-34; Statistical Abstract, 1941, p. 58.

These figures show that between 1920-1950, there was only a 0.1 per cent increase in the Negro population of Minnesota. With the exception of Iowa, which remained constant, every other state in the area had greater increases ranging from 0.7 per cent in Wisconsin to 5.8 per cent in Michigan. The industrial states of Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois registered the greatest increases of all. Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa, primarily agricultural states, had the smallest increases. This indicates that Negroes concentrated where industry offered employment.

The year 1920 started out quietly enough. The St. Paul and Minneapolis NAACP chapters were holding meetings, planning membership drives, and electing officers. There was, however, some bitterness among Negroes to whom the memory of the recent war was still painful. Thus the Western Appeal questioned whether Negro soldiers killed overseas and



buried in "free soil" should be returned for burial in the United States, since "This country is no place for a colored man when alive if he believes in democracy." Meanwhile, Negroes tried unsuccessfully to obtain their own home guard battalion. Some attention was given to the presidential campaign of 1920, and Mayor William "Big Bill" Thompson of Chicago was "nominated" for President by the Western Appeal. In St. Paul, Negroes continued to supplement the statistical report compiled by W. T. Francis two years earlier, when St. Paul Negroes had nineteen fraternal and benevolent organizations; Negroes in professional capacities included two lawyers, two physicians, two dentists, and one teacher in the public school system; in addition, Negroes operated fifty-six business establishments.<sup>1</sup>

Nationally, the General War Time Commission of the Federal Council of Churches in America, Committee of Negro Welfare, outlined what the Negro wanted after the war. Among the major desires were: universal suffrage; better educational facilities; abolition of "Jim Crow" cars; equality in military training facilities; equal wage scales; and better housing and sanitation facilities.<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Negroes had made definite progress toward all these goals, and ex-

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<sup>1</sup>Appeal, May 11, 1918; February 7, April 17, 1920; National Advocate (Minneapolis), March 8, August 23, 1919; Since the Western Appeal was now known as the Appeal, this title will be used in succeeding references to this newspaper.

<sup>2</sup>Work (ed.), Negro Year Book, 1918-1919, p. 120.

pected to continue.

The future looked bright. Suddenly, however, three Negroes were lynched in Duluth for an alleged assault on a white girl. From all reports, confusion and mob law ruled for a brief interlude in what had been a peaceful atmosphere. The Negroes who were arrested on suspicion, including those who were lynched, were not Minnesotans; they belonged to a traveling circus that was playing near Duluth and was about to move on to Virginia, Minnesota. The assault allegedly took place on the night of June 14, 1920, and six Negroes were arrested. The next night a mob, estimated at anywhere from 1,000 to 10,000, stormed the jail, held a mock trial, and proceeded to lynch three of the six Negroes. Of those who were lynched, one was supposedly a material witness, and another was to have turned state's evidence.<sup>1</sup>

During the mobbing of the jail, the police were ordered not to use firearms under any condition. Several Duluth citizens, including a district court judge, priests, and ministers, tried unsuccessfully to quiet the mob. Governor J. A. A. Burnquist immediately dispatched troops to the city to keep order, and instructed the Adjutant-General to make an independent investigation of the incident. Four city judges, including some who had tried to stop the lynching, signed an order convening a grand jury to investigate. It went to work immediately. In the meantime, the sheriff

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<sup>1</sup>Duluth Herald, June 15, 16, 1920.

of St. Louis County, acting upon the rumor that another attack on the jail was being planned, notified the population that the soldiers were armed and prepared to repel any attack on the police or jail.<sup>1</sup>

The lynching was condemned by virtually all the newspapers in the state, including the Duluth Herald.<sup>2</sup> But at least two Minnesota papers defended the lynchers. In its editorial of June 17, the Mankato Free Press stated that white men, "men of blood," must defend themselves when "black rascals pounce like fiends on white women." The editorial concluded that "mad dogs are shot to death without ceremony. Beasts in human shape are entitled to but scant consideration." A few days later the same paper spoke out sharply against W. E. B. Du Bois, the nationally known Negro leader, compared him to Karl Marx, and accused him of arousing the Negroes in this country. The whites should "take cognizance of the serious situation," it continued, "and squelch the menace in its infancy." The Ely Miner, while not taking such a strong anti-Negro stand, apparently approved of the lynching.<sup>3</sup>

The St. Paul and Minneapolis NAACP branches immediately investigated the case and reported their findings to

<sup>1</sup>Duluth Herald, June 16, 17, 1920.

<sup>2</sup>See particularly the St. Paul papers for this period.

<sup>3</sup>Mankato Free Press, June 17, 26, 1920; Ely Miner, June 18, 1920.

their local and national headquarters. They also raised money and sent Negro lawyers to Duluth to help those who were yet to be tried. One result of this aid and interest was the establishment of an NAACP branch in Duluth to complement those in the Twin Cities.<sup>1</sup>

The grand jury hearings and subsequent trials continued throughout 1920. Further arrests of Negroes brought the total to ten, two of whom were eventually indicted for the alleged assault for which three men had already died. Eighteen members of the white mob were finally arrested and indicted on murder and riot charges. Only two were found guilty of rioting and instigating riot and were given nominal sentences. One Negro was found guilty of assault. An attempt to get a pardon for him along with an appeal to the Minnesota Supreme Court filled the next two years, but these efforts failed. Finally, in 1925, Max Mason, the convicted Negro, was released from Stillwater prison on a conditional discharge thus ending the long battle to obtain justice. The general feeling among Negroes and many whites was that Mason had been an unwitting victim of race prejudice.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>NAACP, Eleventh Annual Report, (New York, 1920), p. 21; Appeal, July 3, 10, 1920; National Advocate (Minneapolis), June 26, 1920; Minneapolis Messenger, November 5, 1921.

<sup>2</sup>NAACP, Eleventh Annual Report, (New York, 1920), p. 21; Twelfth Annual Report, (New York, 1921), p. 30; Appeal, July 10, September 4, December 4, 18, 1920; National Advocate (Minneapolis), June 19, 26, July 3, 17, 24, August 14, September 4, 1920; Minneapolis Messenger, October 29, 1921; April 22, 1922; Northwestern Bulletin (Minneapolis),

Thus ended the most violent outburst against Negroes that ever occurred in Minnesota. It was unusually unfortunate, coming just after Negroes had given their lives for their country in World War I, after real strides had been taken toward improved relations during the previous decade, and particularly because there was some doubt whether an assault had ever taken place. However, it does show that anti-Negro feeling was more prevalent than the previously quiet decades had indicated.

The Duluth episode was not quickly forgotten by members of either race. Indeed, many felt that any repetition of so flagrant an injustice should be prevented by law. Within a year after the lynching, largely through the efforts of W. T. Francis and his wife, the legislature enacted an anti-lynching law. It defined lynching as the "killing of a human being, by the act or procurement of a mob." The law further specified that should a person be lynched, the county in which such act took place would be "liable in damages to the dependents of the person lynched in a sum not exceeding \$7,500." This sum was to be recovered through civil action. Furthermore, any officer of a county where lynching occurred, and who neglected to use "all lawful means" to prevent the act, would be guilty of "malfeasance"

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April 5, 1922; The Crisis, XXXI (November, 1925), p. 42; the figures on arrests, indictments, and convictions are contained in a letter to the author from W. S. Sorenson, deputy clerk of the St. Louis County district court, dated August 5, 1958.

and "shall be removed from office by the Governor. . . ."

Unfortunately, it took a violent action to produce such a law, but it has never been invoked because there have been no other lynchings in the state.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly after the tragic episode in Duluth, Minnesota Negroes gained a victory, this time in the field of sports. Negroes in the state had participated in sports as early as 1904, when a St. Paul Amateur Baseball Association had been formed with "Billy" Williams as captain of one of the teams. Eventually there emerged a highly respected Negro semi-professional baseball team known as the St. Paul Colored Gophers, which won the Negro world's championship in 1909 and sixty-two out of sixty-eight games played in 1910. By 1915, an Afro-American Athletic Association had been formed in St. Paul and had organized a basketball team that played its first game in December at Union Hall. This association was formed to provide an outlet for Negro athletes who were denied participation in events because of their race. H. R. Crawford, its General Secretary, defended the organization and stated that "the Negro is his own salvation. . . ." Only through such an approach, he said, would come the solution of those problems that had to do with the Negro race.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Minnesota, Session Laws, 1921, p. 612; Appeal, April 23, 1921; The Crisis, XXII (June, 1921), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>Appeal, March 19, 1904; July 16, 1910; March 20, 27, December 25, 1915.

These activities, while encouraging, were limited, and professional sports were still barred to most Negroes in 1920. This was especially true of boxing. A specific rule of the Minnesota Boxing Commission, operative since 1915, prohibited mixed bouts in the state. Minnesota Negroes declared that this rule violated their civil rights and urged its repeal. Hamlet B. Rowe, one of the state's outstanding Negro sports writers, had, with others, attempted to confer with the governor on this matter. He gradually made some headway. In March, 1923, an injunction was served on the commission asking for abrogation of the rule. In April, Judge Winfield W. Bardwell of the Hennepin County District Court, where the injunction had been filed, ruled favorably, and thus mixed bouts became legal in Minnesota. Even a majority of the commission members agreed that the rule had been unjust and should be eliminated. The first mixed bout in Minnesota was held on October 26, 1923.<sup>1</sup>

While the Equal Rights League, NAACP branches, and private citizens led the way toward more civil rights, preparations were made to bring a branch of another powerful organization to Minnesota. This was the Urban League, whose function was to develop job opportunities for Negroes, help overcome discrimination in industry and, in general supplement the work of other agencies by research and public education. Many Minnesota Negroes expressed the hope that the

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<sup>1</sup>Minnesota Messenger (Minneapolis), July 29, September 30, 1922; March 17, April 14, October 24, 1923.

Urban League would help reverse the unfavorable treatment they had received in economic and industrial areas during World War I and its aftermath.<sup>1</sup>

Negroes in St. Paul established a branch of the Urban League in July, 1923. Its board consisted of white and Negro members, including George McLeod of the Emporium Department store as chairman, W. T. Francis as vice-chairman, and Frederick McCracken and Roy Wilkins as officers and board members. In August, 1923, Elmer Carter, who had been associated with the Louisville, Kentucky, Urban League, arrived to become executive secretary.<sup>2</sup>

The articles of incorporation for the chapter specified that "coordination and cooperation" should be brought about among the already existent agencies and organizations for Negroes. The League was to develop still other organizations where necessary. It was to make studies of social and economic conditions among Negroes, "promote, encourage, assist and engage in" activities for the improvement of such conditions, and bring about better relations between whites and Negroes in St. Paul.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Twin City Star (Minneapolis), March 31, April 28, 1917; Minnesota Messenger (Minneapolis), July 8, 1922; Appeal, April 28, 1923.

<sup>2</sup>Appeal, June 30, July 7, August 18, 1923.

<sup>3</sup>St. Paul Urban League, 22nd Annual Report, (St. Paul, 1945), pp. 3-4; one of the League's mottos was: "Opportunity, not alms."



Minneapolis also made preparations to establish a branch of the League. The field secretary for the National Urban League spent some time there toward the end of 1924 while he investigated the prospects of setting up a branch which was formally established in the summer of 1925. Its executive secretary was Dr. Abram L. Harris, Jr., who had been associated with the League in other states and had more recently taught economics at West Virginia Collegiate Institute.<sup>1</sup>

From that time to the present, the two branches of the League have been exceedingly active in many aspects of race relations, among them research, population surveys, job interviews and placement, public relations, welfare services, educational programs, health improvement, housing, Community Chest drives, and forums. These activities indicate that the League has become essential to the Negro community. The 1947 Annual Report of the St. Paul League stated its philosophy and program in these words:

"To meet the interracial problem in St. Paul and other large American cities, we commend the Urban League formula. It is simple [and] consists of bringing the active interest of American people to bear upon social problems arising from race contacts; of explaining and analyzing the underlying facts and offering recommendations for using them; of developing common understanding and cooperative spirit among inter-racial leadership, thus leading to the solution of the problems and prevention of racial hostility."

Throughout their existence, both branches have hewed closely

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<sup>1</sup>Northwestern Bulletin-Appeal (Minneapolis), November 15, 1924.

to this basic philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

As the Urban League celebrated its fortieth anniversary on a national level, its yearbook noted the work done in the Twin Cities. The Minneapolis branch was praised for placing Negroes in industrial and defense plants and for giving special attention to Negro youths in such areas as vocational guidance and technical aptitude. The St. Paul branch was cited for its work in social research, housing, race relations, and helping cut the number of Negroes on relief from 68 per cent to a "negligible" figure.<sup>2</sup>

Partly as a result of this activity, some headway was made during the 1920's and 1930's in placing Negroes in industry and business. As always, there were setbacks, and for these the depression furnished a partial explanation. But even before the depression, bitterness was expressed about the lack of job opportunities for Negroes. To one editor, the alternatives were humiliation "by illegal discriminatory practices" or a "grim fight for the rights which are justly ours." Other sources remarked that restricting their right to work forced Negroes to "live on insufficient incomes and the penalty is a high rate of mortality, morbidity and a disproportionate amount of crime." A study made by

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Urban League, 24th Annual Report, (St. Paul, 1947), p. 8; on the accomplishments of the two branches, see Charles W. Washington, "A Social Work Program for a Racial Minority," The Tree, VII (February, 1935), pp. 6-8.

<sup>2</sup>National Urban League, 40th Anniversary Yearbook, (New York, 1950), pp. 93, 119.

the Minneapolis Urban League in 1926 among 476 Negro families in that city revealed some interesting facts about the employment of Negroes. More than eighty per cent of the men were employed as porters, janitors, and night watchmen, or were doing other menial work. The annual median wage of married men with families was \$1,172.60, compared to the figure of \$2,262.47 which the Bureau of Labor Standards cited as the minimum income for maintaining a family of five at a decent level in 1919. By contrast, the annual average earnings of all wage earners in the United States for 1926 was \$1,412.32. The study decried the unwillingness of many unions to accept Negroes as members, pointed out that many Negroes lacked skills and abilities that would enable them to get better jobs, and drew attention to the fact that some Negroes themselves were apathetic about their future.<sup>1</sup>

With the advent of the New Deal, the situation seemed to improve, but Negroes still lost jobs, and the suspicion was voiced that this was because the National Industrial Recovery Administration (NRA) prescribed higher wages than had been paid previously. Consequently, white workers were hired and Negroes were kept or forced into lower-salaried jobs. Also, NRA provisions on basic minimum wages were systematically evaded, either by reclassification of workers, or Ne-

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Echo, November 28, 1925; Twin City Herald (Minneapolis), April 30, 1927; Harris, Negro Population, pp. 16, 29, 36-41; St. Paul Pioneer Press, March 1, 1939; Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1930, p. 347.

groes were discharged and white workers employed. In other cases, minimum wages were paid, but Negroes were charged for meals, uniforms, and other services so that the charges levied equalled the difference between the NRA scale and wages formerly paid.<sup>1</sup>

Attacks were leveled against the Minneapolis Urban League for not doing as much as it could to keep Negroes in their jobs or to find new ones. The Minneapolis NAACP was charged with alleged inactivity during part of this period. Negroes did not want charity, it was said; they only wanted "the jobs that are our due." In one editorial, centered on the local brewing industry, Negroes and Negro organizations were urged to boycott the beer made by concerns that did not employ Negroes. "Slowly but surely," was the cry, "Negroes are being forced out of jobs," and no one seemed to do anything about it. A study published in 1937, however, stated that the proportion of the population gainfully employed was higher for Negroes than for whites, being 62 per cent to 53 per cent, respectively, in Minneapolis, and 58 per cent to 51.6 per cent in St. Paul. This seeming contradiction in the picture of Negro employment is explained in part by the fact that the study included the portion of the population ten years of age and older, and there was a higher percentage of child workers among Negroes than among whites. Furthermore, there were more Negroes employed in the very low paid

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<sup>1</sup>Work (ed.), Negro Year Book, 1937, p. 25.

service industries like janitors and dishwashers.<sup>1</sup>

However, the wage situation of Negroes, even in Northern cities, continued to lag behind whites. While the income of Negro families in the North was higher than in Southern cities, it was still below that of white families. In 1935-1936, the median income of native-born non-relief Negro families was \$1,350 as compared with \$2,110 for white families of the same status. The low "job ceilings" for Negroes was a major reason for this disparity.<sup>2</sup>

With the entry of the United States in World War II, employment opportunities for Negroes widened enormously. Thus a 1945 report stated that, at least after the summer of 1942, "every Negro in Minnesota capable of work has been able to secure a job at satisfactory wages."<sup>3</sup> In fact, with the commencement of World War II, there was an "extraordinary demand" for labor in industries which not only created employment opportunities for Negroes but "speeded up the movement of Negroes from the agricultural South to the urban centers of the North, South, and West." This migration "terminated in war-boom cities regardless of geographical location. . . ."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Twin City Herald (Minneapolis), September 9, 1933; September 10, 1938; September 9, 1939; Minneapolis Spokesman, November 30, 1934; May 23, June 21, 1935; Schmid, Social Saga, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup>Frazier, The Negro in the United States, p. 268.

<sup>3</sup>Governor's Interracial Commission, The Negro Worker in Minnesota, (St. Paul, 1945), p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Jessie Parkhurst Guzman (ed.), Negro Year Book, 1947, p. 9.

This development started, in fact, before 1942.

Slowly but surely, Minnesota Negroes found jobs in various industrial concerns as the problem of obtaining adequate manpower became more acute. In 1940, one Negro was employed by the Food Stamp Office of St. Paul; in 1941, a conference of state educators, labor representatives, industrial leaders, and government officials considered the problems faced by qualified Negroes in obtaining defense work. Within the next year, Negroes were placed at Northwest Airlines, Gopher Ordnance Company, Armour, Montgomery Ward, and the Ford plant. These plants, and others, had agreed to hire Negroes on the basis of their skills and backgrounds.<sup>1</sup>

The years of boom and depression were filled with other issues and problems for Negroes. Political participation and recognition continued to be very important to Minnesota Negroes who were still being urged to vote for candidates on the basis not of party affiliation but rather for their "record of fair treatment given to Colored voters." Once such candidates had been found, Negro voters were urged to get solidly behind them.<sup>2</sup>

Negroes not only tried to unite behind white candidates but also ran some of their own. The solidarity and

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Urban League, 17th Annual Report, (St. Paul, 1940), 9pp; 19th Annual Report, (St. Paul, 1942), 9pp; St. Paul Pioneer Press, October 9, 1941.

<sup>2</sup>Northwestern Bulletin (St. Paul), March 11, 1922; St. Paul Echo, May 26, 1926.

cohesion asked for was not conspicuous in either case. A Negro woman from Duluth, Mrs. Helen White, who ran for the state senate in 1925, was believed to be the first woman of her race to file for any state office in Minnesota. Her bid was not successful, possibly because it was alleged that she had a prison record in Wisconsin and also in Minnesota. A few years later, Gale Hilyer, Minneapolis attorney and leader in the local NAACP branch, filed for the judgeship of the Minneapolis Municipal Court but failed to get the nomination.<sup>1</sup>

Another unsuccessful race was made by S. W. Neal, candidate for alderman in Minneapolis, and the only Negro on the ballot in 1927. Harry L. Scott, a Minneapolis attorney, filed for state representative from the Thirty-fifth District in 1932 after having run a close but unsuccessful race in a previous campaign; again, he failed. Two years later he ran unsuccessfully for the state senate after having been endorsed by the Farmer-Labor party at a meeting of the Hennepin County central committee. St. Paul also had its Negro candidates, two of whom filed in 1934 for state representative from the Thirty-eighth District South but met the usual fate. In 1935, Daniel West, a Minneapolis Negro, won nomination for the library board in that city. He was the first Negro to poll more than 35,000 votes in any Minne-

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<sup>1</sup>Northwestern Bulletin (St. Paul), May 20, 1922; Minnesota Messenger (Minneapolis), August 4, 1922; Northwestern Bulletin-Appeal (St. Paul), April 11, May 16, 1925.

sota election and was reportedly the first Negro in the state to be nominated in a citywide primary. West was not new to the ballot, having run unsuccessfully for the park board in 1931, the state legislature in 1932, and for the office of register of deeds in 1934. This primary victory soon spent itself, however, after West was accused of dishonesty by the Herald, his former employer. The writer stated that an attempt had once been made to rehabilitate him but later concluded that West had a diseased mind and should be institutionalized. West lost the election.<sup>1</sup>

Although Minnesota Negroes almost never had been successful in contests that involved the voters, some continued to achieve political recognition in other ways. In 1922, Mrs. Mary Carter of St. Paul was elected a delegate to the Republican state convention, and S. Ed Hall, a leading St. Paul businessman, was the only Negro member appointed to Mayor Arthur E. Nelson's advisory board. Ten years later, Hall was named a presidential elector by the Republican state central committee. Talmadge B. Carey of Minneapolis was chosen by the Republican state central committee in 1934 to be state director for the organization of Negro voters; S. Ed Hall was designated director for Ramsey County, and Joseph Albright of Duluth became director for St.

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<sup>1</sup>Twin City Herald (Minneapolis), April 30, 1927; May 14, June 25, 1932; May 12, June 16, September 1, 1934; May 18, June 8, 1935. The candidates who filed in 1934 were M. G. Moody and Hector Vassar.



Louis County. Clifford Rucker, a man of whom much would be heard, was appointed a clerk of the state legislature in 1937.<sup>1</sup> Even more Negro appointments were made during the 1940's.

Actually, the Negro community received more than its quantitative share of political attention and appointments. The number of potential voters of all races in Minnesota in 1940 was 1,730,547; the number of potential Negro voters was 7,150, or 0.4 per cent. By contrast, the Negro vote in Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa constituted 5.1, 3.7, and 0.7 per cent respectively of the total potential vote.<sup>2</sup> This low percentage in Minnesota was one reason why Negroes could not get elected to office. It was also a reason why the Negro vote was not too important unless the contests were very close. Their considerable success in getting political appointments speaks well for their own abilities and the tolerant atmosphere of the state.

Many Negroes received appointments during this period in fields other than politics, and some carved out distinguished careers. One of the most outstanding was Leo Bohanon, formerly of Phyllis Wheatley Settlement House, who was appointed to the position of investigator with the Minne-

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<sup>1</sup>Northwestern Bulletin (St. Paul), March 25, July 8, 1922; Twin City Herald (Minneapolis), May 14, September 3, 1932; Minneapolis Spokesman, October 12, 1934; January 8, 1937.

<sup>2</sup>Henry L. Moon, Balance of Power: The Negro Vote, (New York, 1948). p. 237.

apolis public relief division in 1934. He later served successively as assistant supervisor of the transient bureau of the division; case supervisor of the Works Progress Administration with the Minneapolis Department of Public Relief; director of social service for the department; representative on the Minnesota Committee of the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy; vice-president of the Minnesota Conference of Social Work; administrative assistant on the overseas staff of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration; and eventually, executive secretary of the Omaha, Nebraska, Urban League.<sup>1</sup>

Other Negroes who received honors during this period included Raymond Cannon, noted Minneapolis businessman, who was elected national vice-president of Alpha Phi Alpha, Negro fraternity, in 1923, and in 1926 was named its president for the third consecutive time. Frederick D. McCracken was elected regional director of the National Negro Business League for three consecutive terms. Miss Gertrude Brown, head resident at Phyllis Wheatley House, was one of eleven Minneapolis citizens appointed by Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes to an advisory board to cooperate with the housing division of the Works Progress Administration. Jose Sherwood, a postal employee since 1901, and former major in the

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<sup>1</sup>Twin City Herald (Minneapolis), June 20, 1934; March 20, 1937; Minneapolis Spokesman, January 14, 1938; October 27, 1939; December 12, 1941; May 14, 1943; November 3, 1944; Twin City Observer (Minneapolis), September 6, 1946.

World War I Home Guard, was appointed a foreman in the St. Paul post office.<sup>1</sup>

Thus during the 1920's and 1930's, Minnesota Negroes gained national recognition in various areas. Six of them were included in Who's Who in Colored America for 1927: Raymond Cannon, pharmacist; Owen Howell, editor and publisher; Frederick D. McCracken, real estate and insurance dealer; William Morris, lawyer; Hamlet B. Rowe, editor, publisher, and sports writer; and Dr. Val D. Turner, physician.<sup>2</sup>

Still other Minnesota Negroes won recognition. Howard R. Barksdale, former St. Paul resident and graduate of Central high school in that city was named acting president of Florida Normal and Collegiate Institute, St. Augustine. Barksdale had been a faculty member there for three years and received his Master's degree at Fisk University. At Glen Lake Sanitarium, in Hennepin County, Alfred J. Elkins became a junior resident physician. Another St. Paul Negro, Roy Wilkins, later to become national executive secretary of the NAACP, was elected president of the Literary Society at Mechanic Arts high school in St. Paul.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Northwestern Bulletin (St. Paul), January 20, 1923; Northwestern Bulletin-Appeal (St. Paul), January 24, 1924; St. Paul Echo, January 16, August 28, 1926; Twin City Herald (Minneapolis), August 3, 1935; Minneapolis Spokesman, September 15, 1939.

<sup>2</sup>I (New York, 1927), pp. 25, 97, 128, 145, 175, 207.

<sup>3</sup>St. Paul Pioneer Press, May 12, 1941; The Crisis, XXXV (May, 1928), p. 14; and XVI (September, 1918), p. 29.

In Minneapolis, Negroes took pride in Miss Lena Smith, a woman attorney. Born in Kansas, she came to Minnesota in 1910, graduated from Northwestern College of Law in 1921, and was admitted to the bar the same year. She became president of the Minneapolis branch of the NAACP and a member of the board of directors of the Minneapolis Urban League. Miss Smith took a leading part in getting "Birth of a Nation" banned from showing in Minneapolis. William M. Smith, also of Minneapolis, and a postal employee for 31 years, eventually became foreman of his department.<sup>1</sup> A survey of Negro professional people in Minneapolis in 1925, made by the secretary of the Minneapolis Urban League, showed seven attorneys, two physicians, two dentists, eleven ministers, and two pharmacists.<sup>2</sup>

Central in the history and progress of the Negroes in the state were two settlement houses--Phyllis Wheatley in Minneapolis, and Hallie Q. Brown in St. Paul, both of which became agencies of the Community Chest. Phyllis Wheatley House was opened in 1924. Among those present at the ceremonies were Mrs. George Dayton, Sr. and Judge E. F. Waite, civic leaders, Mrs. Susan B. Evans, president of the State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, E. A. Carter of the St. Paul Urban League, and Mrs. James Paige, president of the Women's Christian Association, the organization that

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<sup>1</sup>Timely Digest, I (June, 1931), p. 11; and (September-October, 1931), p. 23.

<sup>2</sup>Harris, Negro Population, p. 18.

was instrumental in founding the settlement house. Miss Gertrude Brown became the head resident and guided its development until her resignation in 1937. The program of the settlement house was determined early and was described in a report made by Miss Brown after the house had been in operation for only six months. The program embraced four major areas: music, dramatics, education, and recreation, each directed by a department head and supplemented by the house auxiliary. Activities included basketball, baseball, Girl Scout work, glee clubs, dancing and dramatic art, kindergarten work, gymnastics, sewing, and cooking. Baths and showers and other sanitary facilities were provided, and the principles of hygiene were taught. In addition, the house sponsored programs designed to combat juvenile delinquency and aided other organizations for Negroes.<sup>1</sup>

Hallie Q. Brown House in St. Paul opened in 1929, when its own board of directors replaced the members of the Urban League who had operated the building since 1928. (It had been taken over in that year from the YWCA.) One of its stated purposes was to improve the "present cordial relationship between the white and colored citizens of St. Paul." In 1930, Dr. J. W. Crump became its president and held that position for twenty years. Miss I. Myrtle Carden

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<sup>1</sup>Northwestern Bulletin-Appeal (St. Paul), October 18, 1924; April 25, 1925; Twin City Herald (Minneapolis), September 25, 1937; W. M. Smith, "A Community Project of Worth," Timely Digest, I (January, 1932), p. 17.

became director, a post she occupied for twenty-one years. Under this dedicated leadership, Hallie Q. Brown House paralleled the activities of Phyllis Wheatley House in Minneapolis, and in more recent years inaugurated such services as well-baby clinics and "golden age" groups for people over age fifty.<sup>1</sup> These two organizations, with their many separate activities, have brought hope, comfort, enjoyment, and dignity to literally hundreds of Negroes.

In addition to these two houses, Welcome Hall, founded in 1917, teemed with activity as discussion and religious study groups, activity classes, and other clubs carried on their work there. Two years after Phyllis Wheatley House began operating, St. Paul Negroes started the construction of Christian Center designed for still more social service work. Made available to all Negroes in Minnesota, its facilities included a library, gymnasium, assembly hall, reading rooms, and a dining room.<sup>2</sup>

These developments were tangible signs of progress. In other less promising instances Negroes in Minnesota were called upon to assert their rights. They protested successfully in 1922 against a proposal to create a separate play-

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<sup>1</sup>Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws of Hallie Q. Brown House, (St. Paul, 1935), an eight page typewritten report; see the St. Paul Dispatch, April 25, 1951, for a feature article on Dr. Crump and the history of the house.

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul Dispatch, July 27, 1933; St. Paul News, July 23, 1926.

ground for St. Paul Negroes. They deplored the influence of the Ku Klux Klan in Minnesota and rejoiced when that organization was denied the use of the Minneapolis auditorium. Local branches of the Anti-Lynching Crusaders were organized in Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth. Negroes conducted a successful campaign to keep W. T. Francis in possession of the Maplewood District, St. Paul, property he had bought against the wishes of a local improvement association.<sup>1</sup>

Minneapolis had its housing incident also. In July, 1931, a mob of white citizens, estimated at 3,000, gathered around the newly purchased home of A. A. Lee, a postal employee, whose house was in a white neighborhood. The situation soon became tense. The Minneapolis NAACP contacted the chief of police, who massed squads of policemen and detectives to deal with the crowd. After a few days, the tension died down, the city government declared its intent to protect Lee, and no further incidents occurred.<sup>2</sup>

On the whole, housing conditions for Negroes continued to improve as to physical and legal aspects. As early as 1924, W. T. Francis had won the fight already mentioned. The next year Frederick McCracken, Negro real estate oper-

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<sup>1</sup>Northwestern Bulletin (St. Paul), April 15, September 30, October 21, 1922; Northwestern Bulletin-Appeal (St. Paul), December 6, 1924; for the Francis episode, see the St. Paul Pioneer Press, October 4, 1924. A meeting of the Cretin Improvement Association urged demonstrations and petitions against any Negro residency in the area.

<sup>2</sup>NAACP, Twenty-second Annual Report, (New York, 1931), p. 32; Minneapolis Star, July 15, 16, 1931.

ator, appeared before the St. Paul Real Estate Board and said that more attention and action must be given to the problem of Negro housing, particularly for those Negroes who moved into the state to work in industry. At the same time, Gertrude Brown, Head Resident of Phyllis Wheatley House, told the Minnesota State Conference of Social Work that living conditions for Minnesota Negroes were poor. She also cited the lack of recreational facilities and the subsequent effect on health and social problems.<sup>1</sup>

Although Miss Brown had pointed up the truth, in general, it was also true that, according to a reputable scholar, housing of Minnesota Negroes was better than that in other northern states. A survey made in 1925 revealed that 97 per cent of Negroes studied in Minneapolis had water, 90 per cent had sewer connections, 95 per cent had gas, and 74 per cent had electricity. Of 208 flats surveyed, 28 were categorized as "good," 49 "fair," 60 "poor," and 71 were unclassified. Out of 249 single family dwellings surveyed, 73 were termed "good," 38 "fair," 56 "poor," while 82 were unclassified.<sup>2</sup>

A decade later, construction was started on a housing project in Minneapolis called Summer Field Homes. These

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Pioneer Press, October 4, 1924; St. Paul Bulletin, January 21, 1925; Gertrude Brown, "Negro Problems in an Urban Community," Minnesota State Conference of Social Work, (St. Paul, 1925), pp. 1-10.

<sup>2</sup>Johnson, Negro in American Civilization, p. 214.



houses, occupied primarily by Negroes, and built in part with federal funds, were one and two story dwellings; they totalled 613 living units and were built on 32 acres on North 11th Avenue between Dupont and Emerson Avenues, at a cost of \$472,000. They were turned over to the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority in 1958. Because they were built upon clay beds which eventually became "dried out" because of increased use of water in the area, these units started to sink and had to be raised about two feet in 1959.<sup>1</sup>

In other developments affecting Negroes, the door-keeper of a St. Paul theater was found guilty by a district court jury of discriminating against four Negro women and was fined three hundred dollars. In Minneapolis, two Negro women, refused service at Powers Department Store, filed suit for damages and were awarded seventy dollars each.<sup>2</sup> At least one Minnesota Negro, Homer Smith, became disillusioned with life there. After going to Russia to make a film on Negro life in America, he decided to stay. He became a postal employee on a consultative basis and remained in the Soviet Union for several years. By 1958, however, he had returned to Minnesota and renounced his Soviet citi-

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<sup>1</sup>History of the Sumner Field Homes, City Planning Commission, (Minneapolis, 1936), 35pp.; Negro Year Book, (Tuskegee, 1938), p. 26; Minneapolis Star, November 10, 1959.

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul Echo, December 18, 1926; the women had been denied downstairs seats; The Crisis, XXXVII (December, 1930), p. 25.

zenship.<sup>1</sup> The inception of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps created other difficulties for Negroes. Those from Minnesota, it was learned, were sent to separate camps in the South rather than to mixed camps of the type that existed in Minnesota. The Minnesota Negro Council, Urban Leagues, and Negro newspapers protested to the governor, senators, congressmen, and other officials. The protests got as far as the Omaha Divisional Headquarters of the CCC, but the policy was not altered.<sup>2</sup>

By the end of the 1930's, the time had passed when the Negro was content to "take the position of the underdog and get his share of the bones of sympathy." As he moved into the 1940's he stood on the threshold of even greater progress. Many new organizations were founded, and a state-wide Minnesota Democratic League presaged a major shift in politics. An Associated Negro Credit Union helped tide some members over their economic difficulties. A Negro student council, organized in 1936 at the University of Minnesota, began the work of whittling away the barriers to dormitory housing. The Minnesota Negro Council, referred to in connection with the CCC episode, was formed in 1937 with representatives of various Negro organizations in the state making up its membership. Finally, a Joint Negro Labor Council

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<sup>1</sup>Twin City Herald (Minneapolis), September 17, 1932; Minneapolis Tribune, May 18, 1958.

<sup>2</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, July 30, 1937; September 23, 30, 1938.

of St. Paul was set up to coordinate and unify the efforts of the labor, civic, and church groups it represented.<sup>1</sup>

The formation of a St. Paul Interracial Committee brought even more attention to bear on the race question and provided an avenue whereby Negroes felt they were not conducting a solitary struggle. In 1936 this organization sponsored a conference at St. Catherine's College in St. Paul at which Reverend John La Farge, of New York, was the main speaker. He told this mixed group that racial prejudice could best be overcome by personal contact and study of common problems. La Farge placed great stress upon religious organization and cooperation as being the preferable avenue of attack upon prejudice. The next year, at Macalester College, St. Paul, another speaker from New York told a similar conference much the same thing. By now, the Interracial Committee was working with the Race Relations Committee of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, thus following up on what La Farge had advocated.<sup>2</sup>

In 1940 the NAACP branches bestirred themselves after a period of reduced membership and limited activity. Employment had picked up under the impact of the New Deal and the defense effort. Although 1940 seemed relatively un-

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<sup>1</sup>Twin City Herald (Minneapolis), September 5, 1936; May 29, July 24, 1937; April 23, 1938; Minneapolis Spokesman, February 19, 1937; February 4, 1938; June 30, 1940.

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul Pioneer Press, November 2, 1936; St. Paul Dispatch, January 3, 1937.

eventful in its early months, the United States and Minnesota were entering a new era. German armies swept through the Low Countries and France, Selective Service was instituted throughout the country, Franklin Roosevelt broke the third term tradition; war orders pumped new life into the economy; and the United States moved closer to actual participation in war. The likelihood of American involvement deeply concerned many Negroes. They recalled their participation in previous wars, their struggle to get commissions, and the fight to have their enlisted personnel accepted by all branches in all classifications and positions.

A cynical note entered their comments; the Twin City Herald editorialized: "We know that in war times Negroes are true Americans, temporarily, and that we are emergency cannon fodder, or stop-gap material but yet this is our country for what it means. When the populace decides to go to war and the bands are playing accompanying patriotic speeches let us shoulder our guns with the rest concealing our crossed fingers and fight for the only country we can call home."<sup>1</sup>

By the end of 1940, registration for the draft had started, and protests were raised because no Negroes acted as draft members or as medical examiners for future soldiers. In response, Governor Harold Stassen made initial appointments of one Negro each from Minneapolis and St. Paul to

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<sup>1</sup>April 6, 1940.

serve as examiners.<sup>1</sup>

A new issue soon arose over the formation of a home defense organization, a purely state unit set up after the National Guard division had been called to federal service. It was created by executive order and there was no provision that barred Negroes from serving in it. However, Negroes who volunteered were not accepted. During World War I, the Negroes who volunteered were not accepted. During World War I, the Negroes had had their own units, but in 1940 and 1941, with the changing times, they no longer were satisfied to be segregated. Again, protests were made to Stassen, and he set up the Negro Defense Committee to study the question. After examining its report and meeting with a number of Negro citizens from the Twin Cities, the governor averred that separate units were inadvisable. He added that he was seeking ways in which Negroes could participate in the defense program, and he made a broad appeal for racial tolerance.<sup>2</sup>

No progress toward mixed units was made, however, and in August, 1941, Stassen told a mass meeting called by the Negro Defense Committee that segregation and discrimination were being forced on him by federal practices in the military organization. The next move was made when the Negro Defense Committee sought an injunction in Federal District Court, filed on behalf of one Lee Turpin, who had at-

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, October 18, November 22, 1940.

<sup>2</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, February 28, June 13, 1940.

tempted to enlist in a defense unit and had been refused. Basically, the suit asked for a declaratory judgment and a permanent restraining injunction against the governor and others to prohibit them from excluding qualified applicants from the Minnesota home defense force on account of race and color. Less than a month after the injunction was filed there were rumors that the state planned to get around it by setting up separate units. The Negro leaders declared that they would not compromise, and the negotiations continued.<sup>1</sup>

Time and circumstances brought the controversy to a stalemate. The entry of the United States into the war, the direction of interest and energies into other channels, and the disposition of Negro soldiers into federal units while on active duty all contributed to the outcome. Negroes did not get into the home defense force. While the suit was pending, Turpin entered the army. His attorney asked for a continuance of the case until Turpin returned from the service. The opposing side argued that the question in the suit had become moot "since if the Court were desirous of issuing an order that Turpin had the right to join the Minnesota Home Defense Force, he would presently be unable to do so." Judge Gunnar Nordbye dismissed the case.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, August 29, November 14, December 5, 1941; NAACP, Thirty-second Annual Report, (New York, 1941), p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, April 30, 1943.

A few days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Spokesman set the tone for the Negro's attitudes toward this and similar issues: "All other matters and ills from which the Negro has and is now suffering under America's inconsistent application of democracy must now be subordinated for the all-important cause--defeat of Japan and the other aggressors." At the same time, the Negro Defense Committee pledged its loyalty to the cause.<sup>1</sup>

During World War II, Minnesota Negroes did the jobs that were given them, felt the same pain, slept in the same mud, loaded the same ships, built the same roads, and died the same deaths as did their fellow soldiers all over the world. Those who returned were glad to be home, but they came back determined that there must be no such regression as there had been after World War I.

As a race, they were in hearty agreement with the Gillem Report on Utilization of Negro Manpower in the Army which was approved by the War Department in March, 1946:<sup>2</sup>

The Negro is a bona fide citizen enjoying the privileges conferred by citizenship under the Constitution. . . . Testimony presented to this Board has indicated that the Negro is ready and eager to accept his legal and moral responsibility . . . [and] should be given

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, December 12, 19, 1941. Sam Ransom, who had been a Lieutenant in World War I, was commissioned a Major and appointed to Stassen's defense force staff. Some Negroes felt that this action was an attempt to dull the criticism and protests connected with enlistments and separate units; see the Minneapolis Spokesman, March 20, 1942.

<sup>2</sup>Guzman (ed.), Negro Year Book, 1947, p. 368.

every opportunity and aid to prepare himself for effective military service in company with every other citizen who is called.

The hope was that such status would accrue in all walks of life.

On the home front, all energies were bent toward winning the war. The Negro Defense Committee, NAACP branches, Urban League chapters, and other organizations worked to get employment for Negroes in various defense plants in the state. Governor Stassen promised to try to find jobs for them. When he left office to join the navy, his successor, Governor Edward Thye, followed the same policy. Under the pressure of war and the great demands made upon industry, Negroes were soon enjoying greater employment opportunities in more industries and were getting better wages than ever before.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the most notable example of Negro employment and integration during World War II occurred at the Twin Cities Ordnance Plant. Charles Horn, president of the Federal Cartridge Corporation, took the lead in hiring Negro workers and created in his firm an exemplary atmosphere of acceptance of racial minorities. Other concerns, of course, also made contributions, but the accomplishments of Federal Cartridge were on a large scale and represented more potential problems and adjustments than most. At one time, the

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<sup>1</sup>Twin City Leader (Minneapolis-St. Paul), December 28, 1940; St. Paul Pioneer Press, January 11, 1942; Governor's Interracial Commission, The Negro Worker, p. 11.



plant employed 1,200 Negro workers, skilled and unskilled, who were described by their supervisors as "faithful, loyal and industrious." All were hired and graded on the basis of ability and performance. In addition, Cecil Newman, Twin Cities Negro newspaper editor, was made an advisor to the supervisor of industrial relations at the plant and subsequently became director of Negro personnel.<sup>1</sup>

Other less dramatic activities and events during the war years indicated that Negro leaders continued to work for greater opportunity for their people. During the closing months of 1940, after a two-year effort, the St. Paul Urban League succeeded in getting a Negro woman assigned as a substitute teacher in the public school system for the first time since 1930. By the end of the year, Western Union had, for the first time, accepted Negroes as messenger boys in Minnesota. During the same year, Governor Stassen was asked to extradite to Arkansas a Negro convict who had escaped from a penal farm in that state nineteen years before. The governor, fearful for the man's safety, refused.<sup>2</sup>

This was a praiseworthy stand for Stassen to take but it is in strange contrast to his declared stand almost

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Star, October 17, 1945; Cecil E. Newman, "An Experiment in Industrial Democracy," Opportunity, XXII (April, 1944), pp. 52-55; Minneapolis Spokesman, May 15, 1942; Minneapolis Tribune, October 5, 1943.

<sup>2</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, November 1, 1940; Twin City Leader (Minneapolis-St. Paul), August 3, December 14, 1940.

twenty years later when he ran for mayor of Philadelphia. Then he promised to stop migration of Negroes to Philadelphia and said he would "hold firmly the bus depots and railroad stations" in order to keep them out. Granted that the migrant Negro situation was different than that of extradition, Stassen's general stand on the Negro question had undergone some change.<sup>1</sup>

Negroes served on various civilian defense committees. Frank Alsup, chairman of the Negro Defense Committee, was appointed to the Labor-Management Civilian Defense Committee of Minnesota, and four other Negroes were appointed to the Minneapolis Civilian Defense Council. In the area of politics both major parties named Negro presidential electors in 1944; Frank Boyd was selected by the Democratic-Farmer-Labor group, and S. Ed Hall by the Republicans. Negroes were also asked to participate and put on an exhibit in the St. Paul Festival of Nations, a recognition that increased their sense of being accepted by the state and community.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the most far-reaching action during this period occurred when Governor Thye appointed a Minnesota Interracial Council. This was set up because of a concern for the future of race relations, and as a result of the

<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Tribune, October 25, 1959.

<sup>2</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, January 16, 1942; April 21, 1944; Alice Sickels, Around the World in St. Paul, (Minneapolis, 1945), p. 192.

recent disastrous race riots in Detroit. Talmadge B. Carey, Major Sam Ransom, and S. Vincent Owens were among the original Negro appointees.<sup>1</sup> The work done by this council, and by the Governor's Interracial Commission, as it was later called, remains one of the outstanding contributions to improved race relations in Minnesota or any other state.

The Negro press continued to grow and perform its valuable service to the Negro community and to the state in general. The Appeal continued to be the leading Negro newspaper until it merged with the Northwest Bulletin in 1924. This latter paper suspended publication in the same year. Among the better papers that took its place were the Twin City Star (Minneapolis), Twin City Herald (Minneapolis), and the Minneapolis Spokesman. The Spokesman, under the able editorship of Cecil Newman, emerged as the chief agitator for Negro rights and purveyor of news about the Negro community. In the midst of the depression, the Spokesman advocated that the Negro be given the jobs that were their "due" and declared that Negroes did not want charity. It led the fight concerning enlistments in the Home Defense Force, called for unanimity once the United States entered World War II, and warned Negroes not to forget their struggles once the war ended.

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, December 10, 1943.

<sup>2</sup>May 24, 1935; February 28, 1941; December 12, 1941; August 17, 1945.

The St. Paul Echo, although published for only two years, had many worthy editorials. In 1925, it plainly told the Negro that he must face humiliation by "illegal discriminatory practices" or engage in a grim fight for the rights which were "justly his." Commenting upon the lack of Negro solidarity, the Echo declared that "cohesion" was the only practice that would bring any "material advancement" to the Negro. It passed out of existence shortly after warning the St. Paul branch of the NAACP to come alive and give proof of its existence.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to his own papers, the Negro received increasing coverage from the other newspapers in Minnesota, particularly in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Items about Negro appointments, political affairs, military participation, and the place of the Negro in Minnesota generally appeared with increasing frequency. In short, news about the Negro was treated more and more in the same manner as news of any individual or group, namely as part of the total story of the state and its citizens. In most cases, the use of the word "Negro" became less frequent, particularly in items dealing with news of a derogatory nature.

By 1945, Negro citizens of Minnesota could look back upon a quarter century of increasing social, economic, and political progress. Although service in the armed forces and employment in industry were important areas of progress

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<sup>1</sup>November 28, 1925; May 8, December 18, 1926.

in equality of opportunity, many Negroes felt that these and other gains had not permitted them full equality and that further progress would have to be made in the post-war period.

Recalling the reverses after World War I, the Negro press urged the Urban Leagues and similar organizations to begin planning immediately after the war's end for the years ahead.<sup>1</sup> Minnesota Negroes could take either of two paths--one led in the direction of the post-World War I period, which had seen regression and inconsistencies in our democracy; the other could lead to greater opportunities and more recognition for all citizens. The Negro chose the second; who would go with him?

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Spokesman, August 17, 1945.

## CHAPTER VII

### POSTWAR DEVELOPMENTS, 1945-1960

Despite the difficulty of assessing contemporary events objectively, and despite the explosiveness of racial questions throughout the country, several things are clear about Minnesota Negroes in the post-World War II period. They were not satisfied merely to retain what they had gained, but sought continuously to move ahead in the field of civil and economic rights. In this regard the Negroes in Minnesota fit into the national pattern of increased demands for first class citizenship. Negroes knew that they could not do this independently but would need help from the government, communities, churches, and other organizations.

One such organization was the Governor's Interracial Commission, later to be called the Governor's Human Rights Commission. It investigated and reported on various aspects of Negro life in Minnesota, among other things, and was responsible for placing before the public certain fundamental facts on which action could be based. In this way, for example, much valuable information on attitudes and needs with respect to Negro housing and employment was made available.

One of the first subjects dealt with by the Commission was that of Negro employment. Questionnaires were mailed to 2,231 employers in the Twin Cities and Duluth to ascertain which did and which did not employ Negroes. Other questionnaires were sent to labor unions requesting opinions on Negro membership and on union policy in cases where white employees objected to working with Negroes. Further studies were made of the depression period to determine the percentage of Negro relief recipients and WPA workers.<sup>1</sup>

The results of this study proved interesting. Of the 2,231 questionnaires sent to employers, 601, or only 26.9 per cent were returned. Of these, 117 employers stated they had hired Negroes, 321 others said they were willing to employ them, 89 said they would not, and 121 did not answer the question. Of the questionnaires sent to 457 unions, 109 were returned, or 24 per cent compared to the 26.9 per cent return by employers. These unions had 646 Negro members, as against 54,334 whites. Virtually all of those replying--101 unions, to be exact--favored accepting Negroes for full membership; three were opposed, three were undecided, and two did not answer the question. To the query of whether union members would object to Negroes should employers hire them, of those replying, 90 unions said yes and three answered no. This reflected a surprising amount of race prejudice among workers and probably represented a fear of Negro competition

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<sup>1</sup>Negro Worker, (St. Paul, 1945), pp. 7, 15.

for jobs among workingmen. Another part of the survey revealed that in 1936, 62 per cent of the Negro population of St. Paul was on relief or had a dependent status as against 23 per cent for whites; in 1938, 69 per cent of Negro families in the state, exclusive of single persons and those receiving old age pensions, were on direct relief or were working for the WPA.

Governor Luther Youngdahl, in the foreward to this report, summed up the case for fair employment: "Democracy suffers a tragic defeat and the fate of mankind becomes a little more insecure every time a member of our society finds the door of opportunity closed to him because of the color of his skin or the nature of his religious faith." Youngdahl concluded that the Negro worker asked only that "he be judged for a job on the basis of his qualifications to perform that job."<sup>1</sup>

In the same vein, another report of the Commission urged Minnesotans to hire workers on the basis of their abilities. Such action, it was said, would take them off relief, reduce expenses for that item, and, in turn, strengthen the economy.<sup>2</sup> In many respects, this appeal had more economic than moral overtones.

The Commission's survey of housing, published in

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<sup>1</sup>Governor's Interracial Commission, The Negro Worker's Progress, (St. Paul, 1949), pp. 9, 37, 56; Negro Worker, pp. 15-16.

<sup>2</sup>Negroes and Whites as Fellow-Workers in Minnesota, (St. Paul, 1948), 4pp.



The Negro and His Home in Minnesota, indicated that the movement to restrict Minnesota Negroes to certain localities had first become apparent about 1890, and that the Negro population of Minnesota always had been largely concentrated in the Twin Cities. The survey indicated further that by 1946, approximately 50 per cent of Negro dwelling units in Minneapolis and St. Paul were located in predominantly Negro neighborhoods, while 17 per cent were in mixed neighborhoods; one out of five Negro housing units needed major repairs or lacked one or more standard facilities, as against one in twenty for all housing surveyed; 68.4 per cent of Negro housing facilities had central heating, as against 85 per cent for all housing units; two in ten units saw Negroes living "doubled up," a figure which exceeded that for the general population. A similar survey in Duluth revealed much better conditions in that city and less segregation due, perhaps, to the smallness of the Negro population, only 314 in 1940. On ownership of dwelling units, the report revealed that Twin Cities Negroes owned 47 per cent of their dwellings, as against 51 per cent for whites. In Duluth, the figures for Negroes was 59 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere the report cited a state survey of white attitudes toward Negro residency taken by the Minnesota Poll in 1946. The survey included the following questions and responses:

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<sup>1</sup>The Negro and His Home, (St. Paul, 1947), pp. 10, 19, 22-25, 33-38, 39.

- A. Should a Negro be allowed to move into any residential neighborhood where there is a vacancy?

Should be able to move where they desire	30%
Should not be allowed to do so	60%
No opinion	10%

- B. How would they be treated if they moved into the neighborhood?

As other neighbors	37%
Would try to move them out	11%
Would not care	26%
Depends	11%
Undecided	8%

- C. What effect would it have on the value of your home?

No effect	22%
Would decrease	64%
Would ruin it	4%
Other	19%
Don't know	9%

- D. If you were selling your home and could get more from a Negro buyer, would you sell?

Yes	24%
No	63%
Don't know	13%

- E. Are Negroes living near you?

Yes	7%
No	92%
Don't know	1%

All these findings, gathered together in the Commission's report, helped pinpoint problem areas.<sup>1</sup>

Another survey of a slightly different type was made in 1950 by an independent investigator, Professor Gus Turbeville of the University of Minnesota, Duluth Branch. It concerned the 300 or more Negroes in Duluth. Among these Ne-

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<sup>1</sup>The Negro and His Home, p. 51.

groes it was found that 88 per cent of the heads of households had not been born in Duluth, and 55 per cent having been born in states of the Old South. However, the majority of heads of households had lived in Duluth for more than ten years. As for education, almost 16 per cent of the heads of households had completed one or more years of college, while 35 per cent had finished only four years or less of grade school.<sup>1</sup>

The postwar period saw Minnesota Negroes move ahead and build on the foundation laid during the war. In 1947, a conference of teachers, social workers, and representatives of minority groups met at the University of Minnesota Continuation Center and considered the possibility of uniting with the federal government to combat prejudice throughout the country. At the end of that year, S. Vincent Owens of the St. Paul Urban League stated that employment of Negroes had increased in St. Paul. According to his statement, less than one per cent of the Negro population in that city was on relief, compared to the 68-69 per cent before the war. Furthermore, Owens stated, in 1947 the Urban League had found jobs for 403 Negroes and had contacted 108 manufacturing and business places in the quest for jobs. This increased employment helped, in his judgment, to combat juvenile delinquency, improved the Negroes' buying power, and

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<sup>1</sup>Gus Turbeville, "The Negro Population in Duluth, Minnesota, 1950," Sociology and Social Research, XXXVI (March-April, 1952), p. 232.

proved to skeptics that Negroes could be competent workers.<sup>1</sup>

The Urban Leagues continued their activities, and each successive annual report indicated further progress in the industrial employment of Negroes. In 1949, the St. Paul League reported that sixteen more firms had added Negroes to their pay rolls during the year, but stated that this was "far short of what should be expected of a community like St. Paul." At the same time, the League was working out a cooperative plan with the Minnesota State Employment Service to further these efforts. Statistically, in 1949, the St. Paul League had work applications from 1,020 persons, placed 403, held 145 conferences with employers and 35 with labor unions. The Minneapolis Urban League worked closely with a Joint Committee for Employment Opportunity made up of local citizens to overcome racial and religious discrimination in the local job market. Help came from other quarters when the Small Business Administration (SBA) loaned money to a Negro photographer in St. Paul, Horace A. Brown, Jr. SBA officials lauded the recipient and stated that he deserved to expand his business, having built it up diligently over the years.<sup>2</sup>

The relatively favorable employment situation for

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Pioneer Press, May 20, 1947; St. Paul Dispatch, December 17, 1947.

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul Urban League, 26th Annual Report, (St. Paul, 1949), pp. 1-13; Minneapolis Tribune, November 19, 1950; St. Paul Pioneer Press, September 27, 1954.

Negroes in the decade following World War II was described by Shelton B. Granger, executive secretary of the Minneapolis Urban League. Granger showed that Negroes had increased their professional training and skilled personnel, and had been increasingly accepted in local business and industry. He mentioned among other accomplishments the employment of Negro saleswomen in department stores, the hiring of a Negro teacher in the Minneapolis public school system for the first time in thirty years, and the reduction of discrimination in many public accommodations. Granger also described how the organization had processed complaints about housing discrimination and stimulated community planning agencies to consider race relations in their work.<sup>1</sup>

The St. Paul Urban League began its planning for the postwar period as early as 1945, thus implementing the advice given by the Spokesman during the closing months of World War II. The League, in cooperation with the National Urban League, carried on a Vocational Opportunity Campaign through six radio stations in the Twin Cities and reached an extremely large audience. Three years later, the St. Paul organization interviewed 1,377 job seekers and placed 776. It found some fault with the employment services of the state and city because they apparently let the League assume all the burden of finding Negro employment. Nevertheless, the League deserved some praise for its accomplishments; 34 employers

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Star, May 12, 1956.

who had never before used Negroes had been approached successfully.<sup>1</sup>

In 1949, the St. Paul League deplored the fact that it had to back a fair employment practices bill in the state legislature. It was necessary, however, because of "narrow-minded employers." By 1950, the League had broken down a few more barriers. Through its efforts, a laboratory in the city had hired a Negro research chemist, eight Negro saleswomen were employed in four St. Paul department stores, and Negroes had been employed as receptionists, insurance salesmen, motormen, and streetcar conductors in the city. "It is becoming possible," Director Owens said, "to match Negroes to jobs best suited for them" rather than giving them servile work because they were Negroes.<sup>2</sup>

The decade of the 1950's saw even greater strides taken in the employment of Negroes on merit and ability. By 1952, the Minneapolis Tribune had employed a Negro research staff member while further breakthroughs into the male white collar and professional areas came in 1953. Four years later, the Yellow Taxi Company of Minneapolis hired its first Negro driver.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>22nd Annual Report, (St. Paul, 1945), p. 3; 25th Annual Report, (St. Paul, 1948), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>26th Annual Report, (St. Paul, 1949), pp. 3-5; St. Paul Pioneer Press, March 12, 1950.

<sup>3</sup>Jessie Gerzman, ed., 1952 Negro Year Book, (New York, 1953), p. 43; Minneapolis Urban League, Quarterly Bulletin, 11 (December, 1953), 5pp.; Minneapolis Tribune, October 2, 1957.

In 1958, Ashby Gaskins, industrial secretary of the Minneapolis Urban League, stated that Minneapolis compared favorably "with any other city in the country, north and south," in the area of job opportunities for Negroes. At that time, there were 40 Negro teachers in the Minneapolis school system, Negro social workers were employed by the state and city, and the state attorney-general's office employed some Negro attorneys. Later, Negroes were hired as checkers in supermarkets and more Negro cab drivers were added to the one hired in 1957. However, no Negro could drive a cab at night, according to existent regulations. It was stated by Gaskins that Negroes needed to take more advantage of educational opportunities which would enable them to qualify for higher skilled jobs.<sup>1</sup>

The Minneapolis League tried to supply these advantages through a career counselling program which included movies, tests, discussions and answers on such subjects as qualifications, training, and applications for jobs that require skilled labor. A parallel program, Tomorrow's Scientists and Technicians (TST), included a group of Negro professional men who tried to develop a "big brother" relationship with Negro youths interested in engineering and science. In essence, the League felt that Negroes could contribute more to the community and state if they were more skilled.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Tribune, November 16, 1958.

<sup>2</sup>Minneapolis Star, October 19, 1959.

These developments in Minnesota were part of a national trend. From 1940 to April, 1957, the number of Negroes, both male and female, that attained the various white-collar occupational levels increased at a more rapid rate than that of white workers except in the highest category of professional, and kindred workers. The number of Negro men in the clerical and kindred work category increased by 458.3 per cent. Those in managerial, official, and proprietary (except farm) groups grew by 74 per cent. The number of Negro sales workers increased by 37.9 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the Negro's chances of getting skilled jobs are still subject, in large part, to his chances of being accepted by unions. While this situation was better in 1960 than it had been in 1945, "some locals still find ways of keeping them out," according to Leonard Carter, regional field secretary of the NAACP. Carter's statement was countered by local labor leaders in St. Paul who declared that few Negroes apply for apprenticeship openings. These leaders stated further that "there is no tradition of skilled-craft labor in many Negro families," and therefore Negro youths get no impetus to seek apprenticeship in contrast to young people in many white families. However, according to these officials, the "great majority" of St. Paul

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<sup>1</sup>John Hope II, "The Problem of Unemployment as it Relates to Negroes," Studies in Unemployment, Special Committee on Unemployment Problems, United States Senate, 86th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1960), p. 185.



locals follow policies of non-discrimination.<sup>1</sup>

The housing situation for Negroes, too, has improved, but not so steadily as employment opportunities. This is not surprising in light of the conditions and attitudes expressed in the 1946 survey. A few months after the end of World War II, Negroes in the Twin Cities had formulated plans to improve their housing situation by getting the Twin City Negro Development Company to buy a tract of land on Rondo Avenue, St. Paul, on which an eighteen-family apartment unit would be built. Two years later both Minneapolis and St. Paul NAACP chapters exposed the Negro "ghettos" in their respective areas and called for positive action to remedy the situation. By 1950, the Twin City Negro Development Company undertook to build a \$90,000 apartment building at Chatsworth Street and Rondo Avenue, St. Paul, the second such building to be built by this company.<sup>2</sup>

The Urban Leagues and branches of the NAACP regarded housing problems as equal to those of employment. Virtually every report, bulletin, or interview in the postwar period mentioned inadequate housing and discriminatory real estate practices as central to the race relations problem. Even the Governor's Interracial Commission pleaded with Minnesotans to do away with segregated housing and give the Negro

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Pioneer Press, February 18, 1960.

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul Dispatch, November 14, 1945; March 28, 1947; August 4, 1950; Minneapolis Tribune, November 20, 1947.

a chance to live in a decent home.<sup>1</sup>

When it came to buying houses or moving into new neighborhoods in traditionally white areas, Negroes faced many difficult problems. In 1948, a house in one such area in Minneapolis was bought by a Negro who had once lived in Minneapolis but was then in Arizona. The negotiations had been conducted through a real estate agency, and the sellers did not know that the buyer was a Negro. When they learned the situation, the sellers brought suit to cancel the sale, but it was thrown out of court. Another episode took place in St. Louis Park in 1952, when a Negro research physicist, Woodfin Lewis, who was employed at Minneapolis-Honeywell Regulator Company, was threatened with eviction from the house he had rented. As a result of the work of the local ministers and the stand taken by the owner of the property, Lewis was allowed to remain.<sup>2</sup>

Many felt that property ownership by Negroes in white or mixed areas would depress property values, although opinion on this varied considerably. One realtor stated that depreciation would amount to 5-100 per cent while another agent called this opinion a myth. Negro real estate dealers advised other agents to stand up for what was right

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Urban League, Quarterly Bulletin, I (July, 1952), p. 3; and III (April, 1954), p. 3; Governor's Interracial Commission, The Negro as a Neighbor in Minnesota, (St. Paul, 1955), p. 4; Minneapolis Tribune, March 25, 1956.

<sup>2</sup>Minneapolis Star, November 30, 1948; Minneapolis Tribune, October 9, 15, 1952.

despite financial loss or pressure; Negro buyers were told to hold their ground regardless of odds.<sup>1</sup>

Despite these opinions and admonitions, housing incidents continued to occur. In 1955, a Negro family that attempted to move into a white area in Minneapolis found itself involved in a yellow paint-throwing incident and the recipient of threats. The next year the Minneapolis NAACP became involved in the case of a young Negro staff member recently hired by the University of Minnesota. He had been denied the privilege of buying a home on the basis that his residence in the particular project would jeopardize further sales. In 1958, Clifford Rucker, secretary of the Governor's Interracial Commission, charged that housing discrimination was affected more by real estate brokers than by the general public.<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime, legal backing came when Governor C. Elmer Anderson signed a bill that specifically banned racially restrictive covenants in real estate transactions. The enforceability of such covenants had been outlawed by the United States Supreme Court, but, as Rucker put it: "The enactment of this bill will give substantial reinforcement on the local levels." Unfortunately, people's attitudes do not always change with the law, and after it had been in

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Tribune, November 14, 1951; June 17, 1953.

<sup>2</sup>Minneapolis Tribune, September 15, 1955; July 19, 1956; January 12, 1958.

effect two years, William Cratic, Jr., president of the Minneapolis NAACP, stated that the previous summer (1955) had been the "worst in Minneapolis in 10 years" in terms of discrimination in housing. In 1957, however, Ernest Cooper, executive secretary of the St. Paul Urban League, said that Negro families were finding it easier to obtain nonrestricted housing in Minneapolis than in St. Paul. A year later Cooper pointed out that private construction firms, within the previous five years, had built 8,500 new housing units in St. Paul and an estimated 15,000 more in suburban areas, but less than 35, or .15 per cent of these, had been made available to nonwhites.<sup>1</sup>

During this period, problems posed by the projected freeways in Minneapolis and St. Paul, "open occupancy," and decreasing space for housing faced the Negro and white citizens of Minnesota, particularly in the Twin Cities. Past events indicate that a successful adjustment will be made. Governor Orville Freeman has appealed to local leadership and the "best instincts" of the people to help solve these problems, through education and action.<sup>2</sup>

As early as 1957, the Governor's Group to Look into

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<sup>1</sup>Minnesota Statutes, 1953, p. 3741; St. Paul Sun, April 23, 1953; Minneapolis Star, September 15, 1955; October 4, 1957; Minneapolis Spokesman, May 30, 1958.

<sup>2</sup>Minneapolis Star, March 6, 1958. For a more detailed and sociological study on Negro-white relationships involving housing, see Arnold M. Rose, "Neighborhood Reactions to Isolated Negro Residents," American Sociological Review, XVIII (October, 1953), pp. 497-507.

Racial Segregation in the Suburbs was hard at work to open areas around the Twin Cities to Negroes. These areas would accommodate those displaced by freeway construction. The usual uproar from residents resulted. The St. Paul branch of the NAACP threatened to seek an injunction against the state highway department in a matter stemming directly from the freeway proposals. The branch stated that "The difference between the court and state appraisals [of property] in many instances was fantastic." The difficulty of relocation in a confined area and the higher prices asked in "fringe areas" were also cited as being deterrents to both the Negro and the freeway.<sup>1</sup>

The housing situation was largely blamed for the racial violence that flared in St. Paul during the summer of 1959. Since this was an extremely rare occurrence in the state, it aroused many officials and Negro leaders to a new appraisal of conditions. There were expressions of shock at the flare-up but whites and Negroes felt that "tensions and hostilities [were] bound to arise as the result of inadequate housing, social and economic pressures." They pointed out that 90 per cent of the 8,500 Negroes in St. Paul lived in a district roughly one mile square, an area that would be in the center of the freeway construction.

As in most Northern states, Minnesota Negroes have been confined, or have confined themselves, to a general

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Star, October 17, 1957; Minneapolis Spokesman, May 9, 1958.

district populated by their own race. At the present time, there is a Negro "area" in St. Paul and Minneapolis. However, both areas are mixed today and have become increasingly so in the past 15 years.

The St. Paul situation is best described as mixed business and residential and non-industrial. Historically, St. Paul has not been as restrictive as Minneapolis, and with the coming of the freeways, there has been some pressure from both races which, in turn, contributed to an extension and mixture of the business and residential areas. While the freeway construction has contributed to the "piling in" previously cited, there has been some spread of the Negro population beyond the normally prescribed area that existed.

Minneapolis has been more concentrated and restrictive, both residentially and commercially. Because of the rapid expansion of population in Minneapolis and Hennepin County, there have been better opportunities for Negroes to obtain housing. However, this expansion has enabled and engendered Negro housing to be placed in specific areas thus continuing concentration.

In both cities there are individual families who have "escaped" from the Negro areas. In general, they have been accepted by their white neighbors. This has not come suddenly, as previously described incidents indicate. However, both races have followed a "gradualistic" policy in

respect to housing. While there is always a reluctance to change, whatever change that has occurred in the past decade has been without any untoward incident. The best that can be said is that while there has been slow progress, there has been no real regression. Some Negroes are as reluctant as whites to change. Many Negroes fear that any great influx of Negro migration into the state will bring a regression. Still others are more concerned about the Negro in the South than their own problems.

This area had a lower than average income, a greater than average percentage of social maladjustment, and a high rate of juvenile delinquency. Freeway clearing had already displaced 14 per cent of the Negro population, most of whom did not go into other areas but "piled in" on the already crowded district. This section was described as a "ghetto" by Ernest Cooper of the St. Paul Urban League. He blamed home builders and realtors for the plight of the Negro.<sup>1</sup>

Suburban areas contributed their part to the housing situation as late as 1960, despite the legislation and court decisions of the 1950's. The village clerk of Morningside, Hennepin County, declared that racial prejudice should not enter into the question of ownership of a lot bought there by a Negro employee of the Veterans Administration Hospital. The village council had questioned the ownership of the lot. Presumably, the village owned the lot but a search of the

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Tribune, September 6, 1959.

Hennepin County register of deeds office disclosed that it was deeded to the Negro purchaser by a Minneapolis contractor.<sup>1</sup>

Although the purchaser at first denied having bought the lot, he later admitted ownership. The denial was made only to avoid publicity for himself and his family, he stated. In the meantime, he made plans to construct a single-family dwelling on the property. These plans were challenged by an attorney and former mayor of Morningside who asked that the council use the property for a park if it were found to be owned "by a colored person." Other suggestions were made that it be used for a needed drainage basin.<sup>2</sup>

A few days later, a group of Morningside residents organized an informal committee to combat such discrimination. Their statement read in part: "We fully support the council in their policy that there must be no discrimination in the matter of ownership of property. . . ." The pastor of the Morningside Community Church called for "tolerant [sic], good will and deliberate understanding" and invited his church members to sign the statement drawn up by the committee.<sup>3</sup>

At a later meeting of the village council, a non-dis-

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Star, January 5, 1960.

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul Dispatch, January 7, 1960.

<sup>3</sup>Minneapolis Star, January 11, 1960.



crimination petition was presented bearing 251 signatures out of 600 households in the village. The Negro purchaser assured the council that he would take care of any drainage problem that might affect the village; the mayor declared that the whole situation offered the village "an opportunity to live the Golden Rule."<sup>1</sup>

In St. Paul, corporation counsel Louis P. Sheahan, in an oral legal opinion to the city council, stated that the city could not impose "special anti-discrimination regulations" in the sale of its land. The question had arisen when the St. Paul chapter of the NAACP asked that specific anti-discrimination regulations be set up in the proposed sale of the old city workfarm for private residential development.<sup>2</sup>

Parallel with these developments in the Twin Cities and immediate area, the Minnesota Conference of the NAACP charged that Negro soldiers in the Fairmount-Farmington-Northfield area were discriminated against when they tried to find housing for their families. The commanding officer of one of the units in Farmington admitted there had been some trouble initially, but said that various organizations in the town, including the Chamber of Commerce and the ministerial alliance, had found housing for Negro families. However, two of the seven Negro families affected were un-

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Star, January 19, 1960.

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul Dispatch, January 7, 1960.

able to find housing in Farmington and finally moved to St. Paul. While this caused the men to travel 80 miles daily to report to their unit, several white personnel were in similar circumstances due to the lack of housing facilities.<sup>1</sup>

The postwar period was not taken up solely with housing and employment problems. Negroes continued to be appointed and elected to various positions, to file for public office, and to receive honors and awards. Clifford Rucker was appointed information representative of the Governor's Interracial Commission and later became its executive secretary. Sam Ransom, Lieutenant in World War I and Major in World War II, also became a member of the Commission. Frank Boyd, elected chairman of the Twin City District O. P. A. Labor Advisory Board, was the first Negro to become chairman of a district board anywhere. S. Vincent Owens, outstanding leader in the St. Paul Urban League, was elected to the Social Action Committee of the National Conference of Social Work. Louis Moore was appointed marketing specialist with the Commodity Credit Corporation in Minneapolis. The Reverend Benjamin N. Moore, pastor of the St. James A. M. E. Church of St. Paul, was granted an honorary doctor of divinity degree by Wilberforce University for his outstanding religious and civic leadership.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Pioneer Press, February 14, 1960.

<sup>2</sup>Twin City Observer (Minneapolis), March 22, July 5, 1946; October 10, 1947; October 27, 1949; St. Paul Pioneer Press, May 19, 1953; St. Paul Dispatch, June 3, 1950.

By 1956, other posts and appointments had been filled by Negroes throughout the state, the variety of which indicated a growing faith in the appreciation of the Negro as a citizen and colleague. In 1954, St. Louis County appointed its first Negro deputy sheriff, while in Minneapolis, Negroes were admitted to membership in the Saturday Boy's Club and in St. Paul to the Exchange Club; Deaconess Hospital School of Nursing in Faribault accepted its first Negro applicants in 1955. Two years later Hobart T. Mitchell, Minneapolis resident since 1918 and former porter and newspaperman, became the first Negro member of the Minneapolis Board of Realtors. The years 1957 and 1958 saw two other noteworthy appointments to high positions: L. Howard Bennett was named municipal judge in Minneapolis, the first Negro judge ever to be appointed in Minnesota; shortly afterward, George Holland, a native of St. Paul, was appointed assistant manager of the Benefits Division in the Veterans Administration Regional Office at Fort Snelling, Minnesota.<sup>1</sup>

The doors of some religious groups outside the Twin Cities were also opened to Negroes during this period. True, there were not many Negroes in some of these localities, but the evidence indicated a growing acceptance by the churches of leadership in the struggle to overcome racial prejudice.

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<sup>1</sup>David Loth and Harold Fleming, Integration--North and South, (New York, 1956), pp. 18, 28, 36; Minneapolis Tribune, March 16, 1957; Twin City Observer (Minneapolis), January 9, March 20, 1958; St. Paul Pioneer Press, March 18, 1958.

In Mankato, for instance, where anti-Negro sentiment had been strong in previous years, Negroes were admitted into several all-white Protestant churches. In Winona, a Protestant church received its first Negro family in 1954. The congregation of the Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church in Minneapolis voted in 1956 to invite the all-Negro congregation of Border Methodist Church to merge with it. The offer was accepted by the Negro church, and some 60 of its members eventually joined the Hennepin church. Initial adjustment was not too difficult and integration took place rapidly. A related and equally striking event took place in 1957, when the Reverend Charles M. Sexton, former pastor of the Border church, was appointed pastor of an all-white Methodist church in Champlin, Minnesota, after having been approved by a unanimous vote of the congregation.<sup>1</sup>

As regards Negroes in political offices, there were many rumors and statements on probable candidacies in the postwar period, but by 1960 there had been only two major contests involving Negroes. In 1945, Mrs. Nellie Stone was elected to the Minneapolis Library Board. Three years later, James Griffin, a member of the St. Paul police department, filed for the legislature from the Thirty-eighth District South, placed second in the primary, but failed to

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<sup>1</sup>Loth and Fleming, Integration, p. 40; Minneapolis Star, December 24, 1956; February 5, 1958; "A Lay Decision," unsigned article in the Christian Century, LXXIV (February, 1957), p. 257; St. Paul Pioneer Press, September 18, 1957; February 9, 1958; Twin City Observer (Minneapolis), September 19, 1957.

win the final election.<sup>1</sup>

In another quasi-political development during the postwar period, Minnesota Negroes were among two minority groups which fell prey to some of the fulminations of the Democratic Nationalist Party, an anti-Negro, anti-Jewish organization. Discriminatory literature and propaganda was found in the Negro and Jewish districts of Minneapolis and St. Paul, and on the University of Minnesota campus. Authorities of both cities and President James Morrill of the University promised full cooperation in ridding the area of such practices. Actually, not much came of these outbursts and their failure would seem to indicate that Minnesotans were, in general, believers in tolerance and respect for minorities.<sup>2</sup>

The period since 1945 saw other honors given either to individual Negroes or to organizations and committees which had made important contributions to better race relations. For example, in 1950, seven St. Paul Negroes were honored by the National Urban League for their services to the community. The 1950 edition of Who's Who in Colored America contained the names of twelve Minnesota Negroes.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Tribune, June 10, 1945; Twin City Observer (Minneapolis), August 26, September 16, November 7, 1948.

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul Pioneer Press, February 18, April 6, 28, 1947.

<sup>3</sup>St. Paul Pioneer Press, April 16, 1950; January 3, 1954; Who's Who in Colored America for 1950, (New York,

In 1952, Cecil Newman, Twin City newspaper editor and civic leader, named as one of Minnesota's 100 "living great citizens" in 1949, became the first Minnesota Negro to appear in Who's Who in America; another Twin City newspaper publisher, Milton G. Williams, appeared in the 1954 edition of Who's Who in the Midwest. One of Minnesota's outstanding authors, journalists, and interpreters of contemporary events, Carl Rowan, received many citations for his reporting and writings from such groups as Sigma Delta Chi, journalism fraternity, the Sidney Hillman Foundation, and the Capitol Press Club. Recently, he was granted an honorary doctor of literature degree by Hamline University in St. Paul.<sup>1</sup>

In the areas of group awards and interracial cooperation, the Twin Cities were honored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews during Brotherhood Week of 1949 for offering a nationally outstanding object lesson in im-

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1950), pp. 57, 94, 176, 178, 331, 414, 449, 450, 453, 455, 543, 552; Martin Brookins, research chemist; James Griffin, St. Paul police officer; Mrs. Francis Hughes, librarian at Gillette Hospital; James Lee, sports figure and official; Reverend Benjamin Moore, pastor of the St. James A. M. E. Church; C. H. Roper, of the Sterling Club; and Hector Vassar, labor union official; Martin Brookins, chemist; Catherine Cater, college professor; Mary Ellis, kindergarten teacher; Louis Ervin, labor union official; Harriett Lane, social worker; Ruby Pernell, social worker; Clifford Rucker, accountant; Nell Russell, writer; Bartholomew Sayles, priest; Albert L. Scipio II, civil engineer; Earl Weber, dental surgeon; and Forrest Wiggins, university instructor.

<sup>1</sup>Who's Who in the Midwest, (Chicago, 1954), p. 890; St. Paul Dispatch, March 18, 1952; June 9, 1958; Twin City Observer (Minneapolis), May 29, 1958.

proved racial and religious relations. The Interracial Commission, Councils of Human Relations, and Urban Leagues were mentioned as being largely responsible for this achievement. Part of the credit for such an award was due to several church groups in the Twin Cities who, in 1947, planned a program whereby several Negro and Nisei children spent part of their summers with white families in rural Minnesota.<sup>1</sup>

Minneapolis received credit for integration accomplished in its public schools. In 1954, several white and Negro educators from North Carolina, Georgia, and Maryland met in Minneapolis to study integration and were impressed with what had been done. They agreed that the situation looked like democracy in action, but pointed out that they did not see much carry-over into the adult community, a telling point. They were "shocked" at the low number of Negro teachers in comparison to the number of Negro students enrolled but agreed that what they saw constituted a challenge to southern education.<sup>2</sup>

Another sign of progress came when Negroes were accorded the right to serve in the Minnesota National Guard. In 1947, Major Sam Ransom had held conferences with several veterans' organizations to explore the problem of Negro enlistment in the guard. In 1948 the Minneapolis NAACP sent

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Dispatch, May 23, 1947; St. Paul Pioneer Press, February 20, 1949.

<sup>2</sup>Minneapolis Star, October 12, 15, 1954; Winston-Salem Sentinel, November 1, 4, 1954.

a telegram to Governor Luther Youngdahl urging him to open the guard to Negroes on a completely equal basis. This was done by executive order in 1949.<sup>1</sup> Thus a Negro cause that dated back to the Spanish-American War finally met with success.

One of Minnesota's most important postwar accomplishments, which became known throughout the nation, was the passage of the Fair Employment Practices Act (F. E. P. A.) and the setting up of the Fair Employment Practices Commission (F. E. P. C.). The struggle to enact such legislation was long and arduous. A number of city organizations, such as the Minneapolis and St. Paul F. E. P. C.'s and the Councils of Human Relations, were tremendously helpful in the whole area of race relations and economic gains made by Negroes after 1945. However, the passage of F. E. P. C. on a statewide level provided all the citizens of the state with an effective instrument that could be used wherever unfair or discriminatory practices might exist.

The work done and energy expended by the Minneapolis and St. Paul F. E. P. C.'s, and the cooperation of the city Human Relations Councils, went far toward preparing the ground for passage of a state law. They were kept busy replying to attacks made upon their activities but found time to produce tangible results in their own areas of operation.

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<sup>1</sup>Twin City Observer (Minneapolis), July 4, 1947; July 1, 1948; St. Paul Dispatch, November 2, 22, 1949; St. Paul Pioneer Press, November 19, 23, 1949.



As early as 1951, the Minneapolis F. E. P. C. was instrumental in getting a Negro teacher hired in that city as well as sales clerks and industrial workers. Many of its reports give detailed stories of how the commission handled complaints, held conferences with employers, and cooperated with the city to invoke the law against violators of civil rights.<sup>1</sup>

Early in January, 1955, St. Paul moved toward the creation of an F. E. P. C., and a five member commission was appointed that same month by the city government. Shortly afterward, a similar commission was set up in Duluth. The St. Paul commission has had an active existence, moving against such things as discrimination by hotels, undertakers, and public transportation facilities.<sup>2</sup>

The Minnesota legislature grappled with a fair employment practices proposal for almost ten years before it enacted the present law. Throughout the late 1940's and until 1955, legislative debates and committee hearings, as well as discussions among civil and political organizations, continued. In 1947, for instance, Father Francis J. Gilli-

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<sup>1</sup>Minnesota Council for F. E. P., "A Reply to Otto W. Christenson's Comments on the Proposed Fair Employment Practice Legislation for Minnesota," (Minneapolis, 1950), 15 pp.; Minneapolis F. E. P. C., Employment on Merit, (Minneapolis, 1951), 15 pp. and What F. E. P. C. Means to You, (Minneapolis, 1952), pamphlet folder.

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul Pioneer Press, January 9, 1955; City of St. Paul, Fair Employment Practices Commission, (St. Paul, n. d.), 5 pp.; Minneapolis Spokesman, February 4, 1955.

gan, an outstanding advocate of the proposed law, stated that foes of the program were forcing into Communism some who were deeply opposed to injustice and discrimination. Hubert Humphrey, then mayor of Minneapolis, was another strong supporter of the legislation.<sup>1</sup>

Opposition to the proposal was voiced by Otto F. Christenson, executive vice president of the Minnesota Employers Association. In 1949 he said: "This is not a question of whether we should be fair to our minority groups. Every intelligent person knows that we should." Christenson felt that the legislature was dealing with a proposal which, if passed, would "put a police club in the hands of the state" and would "set up policy machinery to force association of people when they do not wish it" and would "put employers in jail if they do not comply with the order of a governmental commission." In 1955, Christenson reiterated his opposition to the bill and declared that the situation in Minnesota did not call for such legislation. He stated that there were adequate safeguards through other types of organizations, that costs of maintaining such a commission would be disproportionate to the number of cases handled, and that enforcement would involve unnecessary restrictions.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Information article, unsigned, in Interracial Review, XX (May, 1947), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>"Otto F. Christenson to the Minnesota League of Women Voters," November 21, 1949, issued by the Minnesota Employers Association, (St. Paul, 1949); Christenson, Statement to the House Labor Committee and Senate Judiciary Committee, Minnesota State Legislature, (St. Paul, 1955), pp. 1-15.

In 1949, an editorial in the St. Paul Dispatch indicated that Governor Youngdahl had been accused of pushing the bill too zealously, but added that he could be excused on the ground that he wanted action. The Minneapolis F. E. P. C. helped the cause somewhat by publishing a small pamphlet showing what had been done in that city; the pamphlet stated that "Clearly the community is the loser when workers are prevented from making the maximum contribution to production." In St. Paul, S. Vincent Owens, of the local Urban League, summarized statistics which, he said, showed an anti-Negro bias in St. Paul. Owens strongly urged that the legislature establish an F. E. P. C.<sup>1</sup>

During the next few years, until final enactment in 1955, the bill gradually gained support, and the more conservative blocs in the legislature began to give way. An all out effort to enact F. E. P. C. legislation was launched in 1953. Among the organizations that most actively supported the bill were the Minnesota Farmer's Union, Minnesota Association of Cooperatives, Minnesota Council of Churches, P. T. A., League of Women Voters, the branches of the NAACP, and the Urban Leagues. One survey indicated that 75 per cent of people polled favored a statewide F. E. P. C. Two years later the long campaign ended. The Fair Employment Practices Act went into effect on July 1, 1955, with the

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Dispatch, March 7, 1949; Employment on Merit, p. 3; St. Paul Pioneer Press, January 30, 1951.

following "Declaration of Policy:"<sup>1</sup>

As a guide to the interpretation and application of this act, be it enacted that the public policy of this state is to foster the employment of all individuals in this state in accordance with their fullest capacities, regardless of their race, color, creed, religion, or national origin, and to safeguard their rights to obtain and hold employment without discrimination. Such discrimination threatens the rights and privileges of the inhabitants of this state and menaces the institutions and foundations of democracy. It is also the public policy of this state to protect employers, labor organizations, and employment agencies from wholly unfounded charges of discrimination. This act is an exercise of the police power of this state in the interest of the public welfare.

The passage of this act was a milestone in the story of the Negro in Minnesota. Of course, Negroes were not the only ones affected by, or responsible for, the law. Like others who were subject to discrimination, they had tried hard to get it passed, and they had received support from many citizens and organizations. There was, however, continued discrimination and unfair practices. For instance, as late as 1958, the executive director of the F. E. P. C. sent a typewritten memorandum to school boards and administrators throughout the state in which he explained the law and reminded them to follow it when they hired teachers. Where race was involved, he said, merit should be the real consideration.

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Sun, February 19, 1953; Minnesota Statutes, 1955, p. 3231.

<sup>2</sup>Wilfred E. Leland, "Hiring Teachers on Merit and Without Discrimination," April 14, 1958, a memorandum issued by the F. E. P. C., St. Paul.

Despite the progress made by the various councils, commissions, and laws cited, discrimination in Minnesota continued. Shortly after the end of World War II, charges were levelled by Negro leaders that prejudice existed in civil service appointments in Minneapolis. In St. Paul, a distinguished Negro visitor from New York was refused a room in a hotel when he appeared in person, the reservation having been made in advance. A Minneapolis bartender was convicted of discrimination when Negroes won a suit originating out of an overcharge for drinks served them. In 1957, a large cafe in Minneapolis was found guilty of discrimination when the management refused to upgrade a Negro bus-boy to waiter. Two years later, the Hennepin County District Court awarded \$200 damages to one of six Negroes who had brought suit for discrimination against a suburban cafe in 1956. It can be said, however, that such incidents occurred with less frequency than formerly and the law has been fully publicized because of successful actions brought under it.<sup>1</sup>

The matter of discrimination in the adoption of non-white children was another issue considered in Minnesota. Two-thirds of the children available for adoption through the state public welfare department have been of minority backgrounds. In Ramsey County, 48 of the 173 children

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Tribune, January 3, 1946; St. Paul Dispatch, January 20, 1947; Florence Murray, ed., The Negro Handbook, (New York, 1949), p. 75; Minneapolis Tribune, October 12, 1957; April 24, 1958; Minneapolis Star, October 6, 7, 1959.

available for adoption in 1959-60 were Negroes, or almost 28 per cent. Although the problem of finding homes for these children was not new, it became intensified after 1950. The number of state wards increased 304 per cent between 1955 and 1960, but the non-white increase was 69 per cent. Ernest C. Cooper, executive secretary of the St. Paul Urban League, has stated that his organization agrees with the general policy that "the characteristics of an adoptive child should fit in with the over-all characteristics of family." He added that for every white youngster available for adoption there are ten couples interested in adopting, but for every ten Negro youngsters there is only one prospective adoptive home.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly, part of this problem arises from the fact that there are fewer Negro families in relative proportion to the higher number of Negro youngsters available. A more important deterrent to adoption may be the general economic status and the size of Negro families in the state. Another factor may be that some of these Negro children are of mixed parentage thus creating a hesitancy on the part of both Negro and white families to adopt them.

During 1959, Minnesota Negroes were touched slightly by the "Black Supremacy" movement that apparently had its inception in Chicago as early as 1932. By 1959, the movement claimed 250,000 followers in 29 cities. Working on

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<sup>1</sup>St. Paul Dispatch, February 26, 1960.

the assumption that "Every white man knows his time is up" and that white men are "the children of the devil," this movement has a small and ineffectual following in Minnesota. It is an emotional type of appeal which trades upon the names of "Moslem" and "Islam," and uses such symbols as a Negro hanging from a lynch tree, the United States flag, the cross of Christianity, and the crescent and star of Islam. Bitter attacks have been made upon "the Caucasian slavemaster" and Negroes who promote racial integration. Negroes are called upon to unite, fight the NAACP, remain racially pure, and be wary of Christianity since it is considered the white man's tool for "lulling the Negro to sleep." The year of "black supremacy" is believed to be 1970, at which time all the white nations will have exhausted themselves in war and "Black Africa will stand unchallenged." About 100 persons, most of them in Minneapolis, are believed to be members of the cult; all others have shunned and disavowed it.<sup>1</sup>

More recently, Minneapolis Negroes engaged in a less emotional and bigoted approach. The Minneapolis Youth Council of the NAACP began a local and peaceful protest against segregation policies at chain store lunch counters in the South. They inquired as to the need for a permit to enable them to picket the Woolworth store on Nicollet Avenue and were told none was necessary. They need only abide by

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<sup>1</sup>Time, (August 10, 1959), pp. 24-26; Minneapolis Tribune, August 30, 1959; St. Paul Dispatch, October 22, 1959.

the local ordinance which prohibits blocking traffic, littering the streets, or distributing literature. The Youth Council stated that its only purpose was to bring to Minneapolis "the story of segregation in North Carolina."<sup>1</sup>

It is in a hopeful climate, then, that the Negro in Minnesota approaches the future. His story is an interesting one, fraught at times with heartache, frustration, and failure but characterized on the whole by increasing accomplishment and recognition. The Negro population of Minnesota grew from 39 in 1850 to 14,022 in 1950, a sizable growth but still a very small minority of the total population. Minnesota Negroes had been held in slavery, freed by court action, and legislated for and against; they contributed to business, industry, the professions, and their communities. For the most part, they have been reasonable in their demands and understanding of their failures. In many ways, their story was summed up by Mary Kyle, Negro journalist and writer, in her poem, "Gifts in Ebony," written as part of the centennial edition of the Twin City Observer:<sup>2</sup>

Calling chains were quickly shattered  
In this land of lakes and forests,  
And the black man walked unhampered  
Over hills and fields and valleys.

Years rolled on and education  
Thrust aside the veil of ignorance

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Star, February 26, 1960.

<sup>2</sup>June 26, 1958. The selection given here is an excerpt from the complete poem.



Fitted him for skilled professions  
Beckoned him toward new horizons.

Years of progress lie behind him,  
Years ahead hold faith and courage.

"Progress," "faith," and "courage"--there are no better words to describe the story of the Negro in Minnesota. Well might it be said, "Prejudice is the child of ignorance."

## CHAPTER VIII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The history of the Negro in Minnesota indicates that a minority which always has been a very small part of the total population can have an impact on the history of a state. This study indicates that it is not necessarily the number of any one minority that makes for race prejudice. If one regards race prejudice as "an attitude with an emotional basis," replete with preconceived attitudes that are not based upon scientific knowledge or facts, such prejudice has always existed in Minnesota.<sup>1</sup> It is also true that color still retards the degree of integration in any area of the United States, including Minnesota. The struggle to overcome this prejudice and retardation has been constant there.

The Negro was accepted as a valuable member of various groups in present Minnesota, particularly by the fur traders. Perhaps this acceptance was an expedient based upon economic motivation, but it helped establish the idea of partnership and integration before territorial organiza-

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<sup>1</sup>Frazier, The Negro in the United States, p. 666.

tion in 1849. Undoubtedly, the fact that there were fewer than 100 Negroes in the area during this time helped to overcome whatever prejudice that might have existed. However, the level of accomplishment and education manifested by such Negroes as the Bongas and James Thompson contributed to a feeling of acceptance on the part of white officials, traders, and missionaries.

The mixed population that lived in Minnesota in pre-Territorial days was another possible reason for the leniency accorded Negroes. When Peter Garrioch spoke of the white, Indian, and Negro students who appeared in his school, he gave credence to the assimilative process that had been at work for some time. When Major Taliaferro freed his slaves he also contributed to the idea and fact that it was possible for free Negroes to live in and around the settlements then getting underway at St. Peter's and St. Anthony Falls. Other Negroes from Southern and Eastern states found their way to Minnesota and were received with no apparent objection. These early migrants helped to establish the idea that the new Territory of Minnesota was an area to which Negroes could escape. As yet, the white residents of the Territory had not become extremely agitated over the slavery question. That specific incentive did not exist as an attraction to Negroes who sought a home in a favorable social and political environment.

In the decade preceding the Civil War, it became

evident that Minnesota Negro residents had a part in the struggle for statehood. More specifically, the presence of Negroes in the Territory determined, in part, the political choices of white residents. The newly-formed Republican party was pictured as the friend and proponent of the Negro and his rights. The Democratic party, in general, opposed giving these rights and encouraged vacationing Southerners to bring slaves to Minnesota. The fact that a "Black Law" was defeated by a small margin in the Territorial House of Representatives indicated that anti-Negro sentiment was by no means an academic issue. The presence of free Negroes in Minnesota became a matter of concern in the United States Congress. When the admission of Minnesota was considered in 1856 and 1857, some Southern senators offered amendments to the Enabling Act which would have limited voting to citizens of the United States.

The best evidence of the role of the Minnesota Negro in the matter of statehood occurred in the state Constitutional Convention. The question of who should be granted suffrage led to a bitter fight and split the convention. It was brought together only temporarily by a compromise resolution. In the meantime, the Republicans were accused of wanting the Negro vote in order to control state and national elections, even the presidential election of 1860. It is difficult to imagine that 259 Negroes could contribute much toward political control but again numbers were not the

important issue. In a period when passions were inflamed over the legal and social status of the Negro, Democrats may have thought that Negro migration into the state would increase if they were given political and legal equality.

The decades of the 1850's and 1860's brought further evidence that the Minnesota Negro played a role in matters other than politics. The formation of an anti-slavery society, the attempt to segregate students in the public schools, and the actual freeing of a slave by court action were significant episodes. There was no leadership by Negroes during this period and it was the white population that took up the cudgels for emancipation and equality. The Negro had become a "catalyst of democracy." It is significant that the Negroes in Minnesota were granted the suffrage by state action, actually by vote of the people, two months before the Fifteenth Amendment was ratified. No evidence can be found that indicates any significant attempt by Minnesotans to restrict Negro suffrage from 1869 to the present.

Segregation in education has followed much the same pattern as suffrage. Once it was abolished by legal action in 1869, there has been no major effort to change the law. It is true that Negroes have not always been accepted willingly into all public schools of the state. However, there have been no incidents such as have occurred in the Southern states, and in some Northern states. The problem in Minne-

sota "is not one of educational doors being closed to any . . . racial . . . group" but rather one of "how far the doors are open, and whether some eligibles are permitted only an occasional peek within."<sup>1</sup>

The quarter century that encompassed the Civil War and postwar period was one of difficult adjustment but of real progress for the Negro in Minnesota. In one year, 1863, more Negroes entered the state than were resident in 1860. These newcomers were migrants, displaced by war, and for awhile were at the mercy of the army. They were resented by many of the laborers in Minnesota, particularly by those in St. Paul. The fact that most of these arrivals became urban dwellers accentuated a trend that continues to the present. A substantial number of newcomers without much knowledge of Northern ways or society was added to a Negro constituency that had been accepted by the white people. Not only would these migrants have to be assimilated into Northern society; they had to be accepted and oriented by the Negroes already in the state.

The latter situation was no problem. In fact, the rise of Robert Hickman, a newcomer, to a position of prominence among the Negroes of the Twin Cities was proof that leadership was not confined to the "native" Negroes. The enlistment into the Union army of many of the new migrants indicated no lack of patriotism or desire to capitalize on

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<sup>1</sup>Governor's Human Rights Commission, Human Rights Newsletter, I (February, 1960), p. 2.

their improved status. The entry of others into fire departments, the steamboat industry, barbering, and police forces was further proof of adjustment, assimilation, and progress. The willingness of many white soldiers from Minnesota to bring Negroes home with them upon discharge, or to make it possible for Negroes to be sent to Minnesota, portrayed another side to the story of how the Negro population increased. It also indicated that these soldiers felt their state was large enough and magnanimous enough to receive these homeless and often helpless victims of civil war.

The period 1865-1885 saw the real development of institutional life for the Negro population in Minnesota. The organization of churches was tangible evidence of such institutionalization. Negro leadership was more noticeable than in the past, but again white friends helped these new citizens with their religious development. Help was also forthcoming from the press which occasionally praised the Negro for his good conduct, industriousness, and sobriety. In addition to religious institutions, Negroes organized their Sons of Freedom, a fraternal society, to look after their economic and educational needs. The organization of a Masonic lodge, the use of Negro jurors, and the founding of a literary society in St. Paul increased the number of institutions and organizations for Negroes. At long last these people could take pride in their progress, take advan-

tage of help from their own leaders, and emulate their white neighbors. These separate Negro institutions undoubtedly created race pride and quite possibly contributed to a feeling of separateness, but Minnesota Negroes had the good will of the whites who were ready to help but not to accord complete social equality to them.

The inception of their own press in 1885 marked a milestone for the Minnesota Negro. This medium enabled him to editorialize on issues, brought news of local and national importance to his attention, and created a stronger feeling of racial accomplishment among the Negro population which then numbered several thousand. Furthermore, the existence of Negro newspapers made it possible for political issues to be debated. When Negroes ran for office, as they did with increasing regularity, their press became another avenue of expression. No longer did the Negro have to depend on non-Negro papers for his news and views, particularly since such papers gave scant attention to this minority.

Although many Negro newspapers were ephemeral in nature, and often lasted no longer than a particular political campaign, others clung to life and became permanent, or nearly so. Over the years, the development of objective and crusading editors such as J. Q. Adams, Charles S. Smith, Owen Howell, Milton Williams, and Cecil Newman did much to bring respect for their respective publications. How much impact these papers had on the Negro is difficult to ascer-



tain. Many of their editorials were reproduced or commented upon by non-Negro newspapers. Thus, they achieved some stature. As the Negro population of Minnesota moved toward 16,000 in the 1950's, their views and press became more important.

The Negro increasingly became an urban dweller during the late nineteenth and first quarter of the twentieth century. As such, he encountered the usual urban problems of housing and employment. Little by little the Negro residential areas in both major cities became crowded. A few Negroes "escaped" into white districts but hostility and discrimination persisted, sometimes in violent form. The influx of migrants from the South, due largely to economic factors and the dislocations occasioned by World War I, accentuated the twin problems of housing and employment. It also led to some fears on the part of "native" Negroes that Minnesota was being invaded by "undesirables."

One of the most important signs of Negro progress during this period was the increased number of professional men in the community. In many instances they became political and social leaders as well. Negro lawyers, physicians, dentists, real estate operators, undertakers, and shopkeepers appeared with frequency. Most of the early professional men received their training outside Minnesota but they were added to by graduates of Minnesota colleges and universities such as Macalester, Hamline, the University of Minnesota, and the St. Paul College of Law. As Negroes enjoyed the

suffrage, legally equal educational facilities, and their own press, the growth of a professional group presaged further growth and contributed toward greater acceptance by whites.

More institutions were organized during the pre- and post-World War I period: the Afro-American Council, NAACP, Negro Business League, churches, including Roman Catholic, fraternities and sororities, Protective and Industrial League, political clubs, Colored Women's Club, industrial missions, and Equal Rights League. These organizations furnished bases for Negro leadership and avenues for Negro attitudes and programs of local and national importance. While these activities brought the Negro into the economic and political life of the state, they also made him a part of the broader national scene where Negroes were moving slowly but surely toward greater participation and acceptance.

Participation in two wars between 1885-1920 placed the Negro in still another vantage point. He joined the ranks willingly, in most instances, but insisted on a greater share of the democracy for which he presumably fought. If Negro soldiers and sailors were to fight and die for their country and its announced principles of equality, they wanted to do so as equals. They wanted the opportunity to become commissioned officers during war time, not just cannon fodder. When they returned home after fighting the despotism

of Spain and the autocracy of the Kaiser, they wanted to be received as first-class citizens who would get their full share of the America that had aroused the admiration of the world.

Unfortunately, such acceptance was not forthcoming. The Negro, as did other minorities, fell prey to the economic depression and psychological regression that were manifested in unemployment, discrimination, "witch hunts," and lynchings. Although the Minnesota Negro fought against such things, and was supported by most clear thinking whites, he had to await the New Deal and World War II before any real progress was made.

Between 1920 and 1940, only two real victories were won in Minnesota. An anti-lynching bill was passed after the tragic episode at Duluth ran its course, and mixed boxing bouts were allowed in the state as a result of court action. But unemployment, worsening housing conditions, failure to be accepted into the National Guard, and increasing reliance upon relief constituted the real story of the Minnesota Negro for twenty years.

However, in the midst of this rather regressive atmosphere, the foundations were laid for real breakthroughs as the United States approached World War II. The establishment of the Urban League in Minnesota, coupled with the newly organized settlement houses, gave the Negro further institutions through which he would advance. The training

afforded in the settlement houses, the aggressiveness shown by the Urban League in finding jobs for Negroes, the need for manpower as industry prepared for war, and the generally more favorable atmosphere of the national government in terms of military service and industrial practices contributed to solid gains for the Negro in Minnesota, and elsewhere. The necessity and righteousness of such policies were recognized by state officials; the Negroes had their organizations that could implement the policies.

Specific proof of the "new look" in racial relations was seen in the increasing number of court cases that involved discrimination and that were decided favorably for the Negro. Acceptance of Negroes into the National Guard by executive proclamation solved a bitter issue that had disturbed Negroes for 50 years. The acquisition of commissions by Negroes during World War II solved another problem relating to discrimination in the military forces. The decrease in the number of Negroes on relief roles, construction of housing for Negroes, the appointment or election of Negroes to political positions in both major parties, and the appointment of a Minnesota Interracial Council by Governor Thye were increasing proof of real progress in the struggle against prejudice and discrimination. These were solid gains; they would not be reversed although implementations and strict observance often nullified the intent and substance of the progress that had been made.

The two most noteworthy events in the post-World War II period have been the studies and influence of the Governor's Interracial (Human Rights) Commission and passage of a Fair Employment Practices Act. At long last an agency of the state had explored Negro problems, made recommendations and kept the essence of minority rights before the public. The Fair Employment Practices Commission, created to implement the action of the legislature, has investigated, intervened, and decided hundreds of cases involving race prejudice and discrimination. In general, the courts have upheld the law, and social and economic integration has been brought closer to the realities of the situation in Minnesota. This does not mean that discrimination and prejudice do not exist, but the means for their eradication are now existent on all levels of government.

In recent years, the churches of the state have moved in the same direction as government. Some religious groups are guided by the policies of their national or international bodies but, in general, they have expressed themselves in favor of the removal of prejudice. Actions such as the merger of Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church with the Negro Border Methodist Church, the acceptance of a Negro pastor by an all-white church in Champlin, and the backing of open-occupancy in housing by the Lake Farriet Methodist Church are signposts on the road to a "Good Neighbor" policy sponsored by the Greater Minneapolis Council of

Churches.<sup>1</sup>

As Minnesota continues to move toward an urban economy, the problem of housing for Negroes likewise has continued to grow. This "urban sprawl" has been a cause of great concern for the Urban League of St. Paul. Its executive director, Ernest Cooper, has stated that whites will "[flee] to the suburbs" while newcomers, many of them Negroes, will inhabit "center city." Thus segregation will continue, not because of intent necessarily but because of geographical patterns. Educational, religious, and recreational facilities will be affected because of this almost accidental segregation.<sup>2</sup> In this type of situation, the drive for open-occupancy legislation and increased use of public facilities by all citizens of all races and groups will continue.

In a larger sense, the history of the Negro in Minnesota has been no different than that of his race in most other Northern states. He has fought for social, political, and economic recognition and equality. In most instances, he has been successful. Such progress is due in large part to the fact that there are many fewer Negroes in the Twin Cities, and Minnesota, than in many other Northern cities and states. Assimilation and other aspects of civil rights are more easily achieved under these circumstances. This does not derogate from the generally more liberal atmosphere

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<sup>1</sup>Minneapolis Star, March 5, 1960.

<sup>2</sup>St. Paul Dispatch, March 8, 1960.

found in Minnesota, but it is a factor. Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and other Northern cities with Negro populations that run into the hundreds of thousands have found their problems to be much more acute and constant. Negroes do have "a measure of protection" in the Northern and Western states, according to Rose. The Minnesota Negro has played an exceedingly active role as a "catalyst" and has obtained a great deal of protection. His progress in Minnesota in recent years points up the fact that no country, or state, "at a crucial moment in its history can stand to have . . . a substantial portion of its citizenry relegated to a second-class place."<sup>1</sup>

Eleanor Roosevelt, a consistent and persistent champion of equality, has stated that democracy is a form of government that tries to give equal opportunity and justice to all its people. As long as segregation exists, these objectives cannot be accomplished. According to Mrs. Roosevelt, we in the United States must "solve our difficulties and remove segregation from our country" in order to "attract the colored peoples of the world to our philosophy, to our form of government, and to our way of life. . . ."<sup>2</sup> Minnesota has moved a long way toward fulfillment of this task, although only a few people have been involved.

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<sup>1</sup>Rose, The Negro in America, p. 317.

<sup>2</sup>Eleanor Roosevelt, "Segregation," Educational Forum, XXIV (November, 1959) pp. 5-6.

The institutions of free men are always under attack, at home and abroad. The Negro is a free man by virtue of the Constitution of the United States. He is a free man by virtue of court decisions and legislative enactments in almost every state of the Union. He is a free man in his own mind. Will he become so in the minds of others?



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Minnesota Daily  
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New Ulm Journal  
New Ulm Review  
New York Tribune  
St. Anthony Falls Democrat  
St. Paul Daily Minnesotan  
St. Paul Democrat Weekly  
St. Paul Dispatch  
St. Paul and Minneapolis Pioneer Press  
St. Paul Pioneer  
St. Paul Pioneer Press  
St. Paul Daily Press  
Stillwater Democrat  
Winston-Salem (North Carolina) Sentinel

#### B. Negro

Afro-American Advance (Minneapolis).

Issued by the Advance Publishing Company, this paper represented a merger of the Twin City American and the Colored Citizen on May 27, 1899. The paper suspended publication November 17, 1900.

Appeal (St. Paul).

Originally called the Western Appeal, this paper was first edited by F. D. Parker and J. T. Burgett. It appeared on June 6, 1885 and continued with some changes until it merged with the Northwestern Bulletin in January, 1924. It was basically a four-page weekly and carried news, articles, editorial comment, and reprints from all over the world, along with the usual local and state items. In February, 1887, J. Q. Adams became editor and continued as such until his death on September 3, 1922. The paper was essentially Republican but occasionally hinted at independent action.

Minneapolis Messenger.

This paper first appeared May 7, 1921, and apparently ceased publication February 9, 1924; C. S. Smith was editor. It was a four-page weekly and carried more world and national news than many of the Negro papers, as well as the usual run of local and state news. It did some crusading, particularly in the Duluth lynching episode of 1920, and on the question of mixed boxing bouts. With the issue of April 15, 1922, its name was changed to Minnesota Messenger. It was one of the first Negro newspapers to carry a good summary of sports news. Editorially, the Messenger castigated both Democratic and Republican national administrations for not doing more for the Negro, and criticized Presidents Wilson and Coolidge severely in this respect. It also expressed dissatisfaction with what it called "the imperious methods of the Republican farmers in this state."

Minneapolis Observer.

The first issue appeared August 16, 1890; A. G. Plummer was editor. This paper originated largely as a campaign organ for the Negro Republicans but, like similar ventures, threatened to stay on in the journalistic field. Some of the editorials urged that prejudice be eliminated in business as a beginning of the solution to the race problem. It was a four-page weekly. This paper should not be confused with the Twin City Observer of more recent vintage.

Minneapolis Spokesman.

The first issue appeared August 10, 1934; Cecil E. Newman is the editor. It is a weekly with a basic format of six pages. It carries general national news, besides local items devoted primarily to Minneapolis and St. Paul. The editorials indicate a reasonably independent approach to politics but are positive in terms of civil rights and discrimination.

Minnesota Messenger (see Minneapolis Messenger).

National Advocate (Minneapolis).

This paper appeared in May, 1916 and continued at least through August 22, 1924; R. B. Montgomery was editor. It was an eight-page weekly and included world, national, and local news, along with a great deal of advertising. Its editorial policy was mainly Republican, but occasionally the voters would be urged to disregard party labels and support the candidate who had the interests of the Negro at heart.

Negro World (St. Paul).

The first issue of this paper was dated July 2, 1892, and apparently the paper ran until June 9, 1900; the editor was Joseph Houser. It was a four-page weekly and carried world and national news as well as several columns and notes on local happenings. It was Democratic in politics and sponsored Cleveland in 1892 and Bryan in 1900.

Northwestern Bulletin (St. Paul).

This paper first appeared on or about January 21, 1922 and continued until it merged with the Appeal on January 5, 1924. It had several different editors, among whom was Roy Wilkins. This was a four-page weekly, with occasional supplements; it carried general news along with local and state items of interest to Negroes. The editorials on politics urged the Negro to vote for those who would give him fair treatment or had done so in the past. The Bulletin was not enthusiastic about President Coolidge. On the local level, it maintained a reasonable degree of independence.

Northwestern Bulletin-Appeal (St. Paul).

This paper represented the merger of the Northwestern Bulletin and Appeal. A four-page weekly, it ran from January 12, 1924 to August 15, 1925. There were several editors, among them Owen Howell. It was advertised as an independent paper but generally allied itself with the Republican party, nationally and locally.

Northwestern Vine (Minneapolis).

The first number of this paper apparently appeared in June, 1901; F. D. McCracken was editor. News items were devoted mainly to events in Minneapolis and St. Paul, along with political articles on the local level. This was a decidedly Republican paper.

Protest (Minneapolis).

The first number of this paper probably appeared July 9, 1892; Z. W. Mitchell was editor. It was a four-

page weekly and called itself the "official organ of the Hennepin County Republican Club." The paper promised to look after the interests of the Negroes in the Northwest. Apparently it was established as a campaign paper but was expected to continue after the elections.

St. Paul Echo.

The first issue of this paper appeared November 7, 1925, and apparently ceased publication on June 25, 1927; Earl Wilkins was editor. It was also dated Minneapolis. A four-page weekly, this paper described itself as an "Independent Negro Weekly Newspaper." It contained news of general interest to Negroes as well as specific items for St. Paul and Minneapolis. The editorials maintained a reasonable degree of independence during political campaigns, both national and local, but were somewhat critical of President Coolidge's attitude toward Negroes.

St. Paul Recorder.

This paper is the sister edition of the Minneapolis Spokesman.

Twin City American (Minneapolis).

See the entry under Afro-American Advance.

Twin City Herald (Minneapolis).

This paper ran from April 20, 1927 to July 13, 1940; Cecil Newman was editor until he resigned to establish his own newspapers. It was a four-page weekly that included international and local news about Negroes, but it was essentially a Minneapolis paper. One of its major editorial policies was an aggressive crusade to get Negroes employed in Minneapolis industries. It encouraged Negroes to become candidates for city and state offices and urged unity among Negro voters rather than "blind" allegiance to any party or group.

Twin City Leader (Minneapolis and St. Paul).

This paper, which ran from July 20, 1940 to August 23, 1941, was the result of a division of the Twin City Herald into the Twin City Herald of Robbinsdale, although the latter was not a Negro newspaper. Edited by J. E. Perry, the Leader was a four-page weekly and carried some world news, but was essentially local in scope. The editorials indicated a continuation of the policies expressed in the parent Twin City Herald.

Twin City Observer (Minneapolis).

This paper has been published since May 7, 1943 and is edited by Milton G. Williams. It is an eight-page weekly and carries national and local news pertaining specifically to Negroes, or of interest to them. Edi-

torially, the Observer seems to be reasonably independent politically and favors both Democratic and Republican candidates and office-holders who favor the interests of Negroes.

Twin City Star (Minneapolis).

This paper ran from June 2, 1910 to December 28, 1918, with a temporary suspension from November 27, 1915 to January 1, 1916; it was edited by Charles S. Smith. It was a four-page weekly and carried world, national, and local news. It was essentially independent politically but leaned toward the Republican party. A great admirer of Theodore Roosevelt, the Star supported him in 1912 and followed him back into the Republican party in 1916. Many of its editorials spoke out against "exclusive society" among the Negroes in Minneapolis, castigated the Minneapolis NAACP for its "do-nothing" policy, condemned discrimination against Negro labor, and took a lively interest in local politics.

Western Appeal (St. Paul).

See the entry under Appeal.

World (Minneapolis).

This was primarily a Minneapolis paper but apparently it was first published in Chicago and then Duluth. It first appeared on or about July 25, 1895 and was edited by P. O. Gray. It ceased publication sometime after November 20, 1897. A four-page weekly, the World carried some world news, along with the usual collection of articles and local and state news. It was definitely Republican and supported McKinley and the gold standard in 1896. There is good coverage of Duluth and St. Louis County, Minnesota.

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