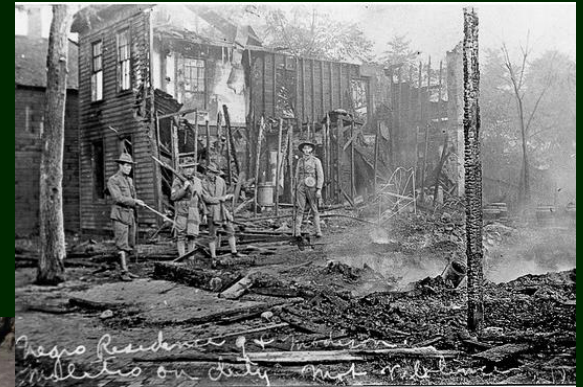


The 1908 Springfield Race Riot: Current and Future Research

by
Floyd Mansberger
and
Christopher Stratton

Fever River Research
Springfield, Illinois

Springfield Chapter NAACP
Lincoln-Douglas Freedom Fund Banquet
Springfield, Illinois
February 10, 2019



On the morning of August 14, 1908, Mabel Hallam accused George Richardson of having raped her the night before.



Mabel Hallam (21; wife of streetcar motorman William Hallam)



George Richardson (36; construction laborer)

Although Mrs. Hallam was later to recant her story, absolving Mr. Richardson of any wrong-doing, her actions unleashed a fury of violent activity that was to wreck havoc with the City of Springfield.

The Illinois State Journal

SEVENTY-SEVENTH YEAR

SPRINGFIELD ILLINOIS SATURDAY AUGUST 15 1908-10 PAGES

PRICE 5 CENTS

**Frenzied Mob Sweeps City,
Wreaking Bloody Vengeance
For Negro's Heinous Crime**

**MOB WRECKS
LOPER'S CAFE
DURING RIOT**

Through Atlanta Restaurant
Owned by Man Who Took
Suspect Away

PLACE TOTALLY RUINED

Picture, Chair, Table and
Other Valuable Burned
In the Street

AUTHORITIES HELPLESS

Walter F. Rouse and William A. Rouse

VICTIM OF NEGRO ASSAULT



DOI: 10.1002/for

NEGROES REMOVED TO BLOOMINGTON

OFFICERS FEAR VIOLENCE AND
SPRINT PRISONERS AWAY

United Allocated From County Jail To
False Alarm at Fire Wrecking Operation
Nevada's Municipalities are coming into
Automobile and Motor Car—Prison
on Train Near Prison.

[illegible]

The results pattern was suggested by a statistical analysis of the data. A general linear model was fitted to the data, and the results were compared to the results of a similar analysis of the data from the other two studies.

Early in the morning when the clouds of the great big
tempest were still hanging
over the city, the
people were seen to
be standing up and
looking at the sky.

THE CASUALTIES

1084

LEWIS JOHNSON, 100 East Riverside Street, shot through the air.

1999年12月31日

ALBERT HOFFERLING, 410 South First Street, shot through the left hip during street raiding.
 GEORGE STUBBS, 404 North Tenth Street, shot through the left arm during street raiding.
 ARTHUR ALLENHOLM, 219 East Jefferson Street, shot through right arm, left shoulder.

WILSON G. FARRING, 120 1/2 South East street, mother of Gertie, now owner of Fido company. Shot in the head while returning toward restaurant.

DR. J. B. BROWN, JR., photo in the head with sword.
DR. J. B. BROWN, JR., photo in the head with sword.

1988 IN CAMPBELL, using permission not to work any, his
with books

ROBERT DUMLENDORF, Director, Section 5, with condition 10000
DAVID HALEY, struck on head with brick
ALEX. GUTWIRTH, telephone, struck with brick.

THOMAS REAVEL of Elmhart, age 40, told agent he never

ALLIGATOR ALLIGATOR, alligator, struck by Wayne Smith.
 ALLIGATOR ALLIGATOR, alligator, and head badly slashed;
 ALLIGATOR ALLIGATOR, struck in head with stick.

EUGENE W. CHAFFIN, *Prothonotary capridactylus* has presided. You had

1988 Phil W. IVINS, *Pythium canaliculata* (ex. conspurcator), left hand 60th eye.

6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

TWO ARE KILLED
AND MANY HUR
AS MOB WOR

Springfield Helpless in
Hands of Thousands of
Frenzied Citizens.

ASSAULT INCITED 6

East War Follows the All State by Negro Open Local Woman.

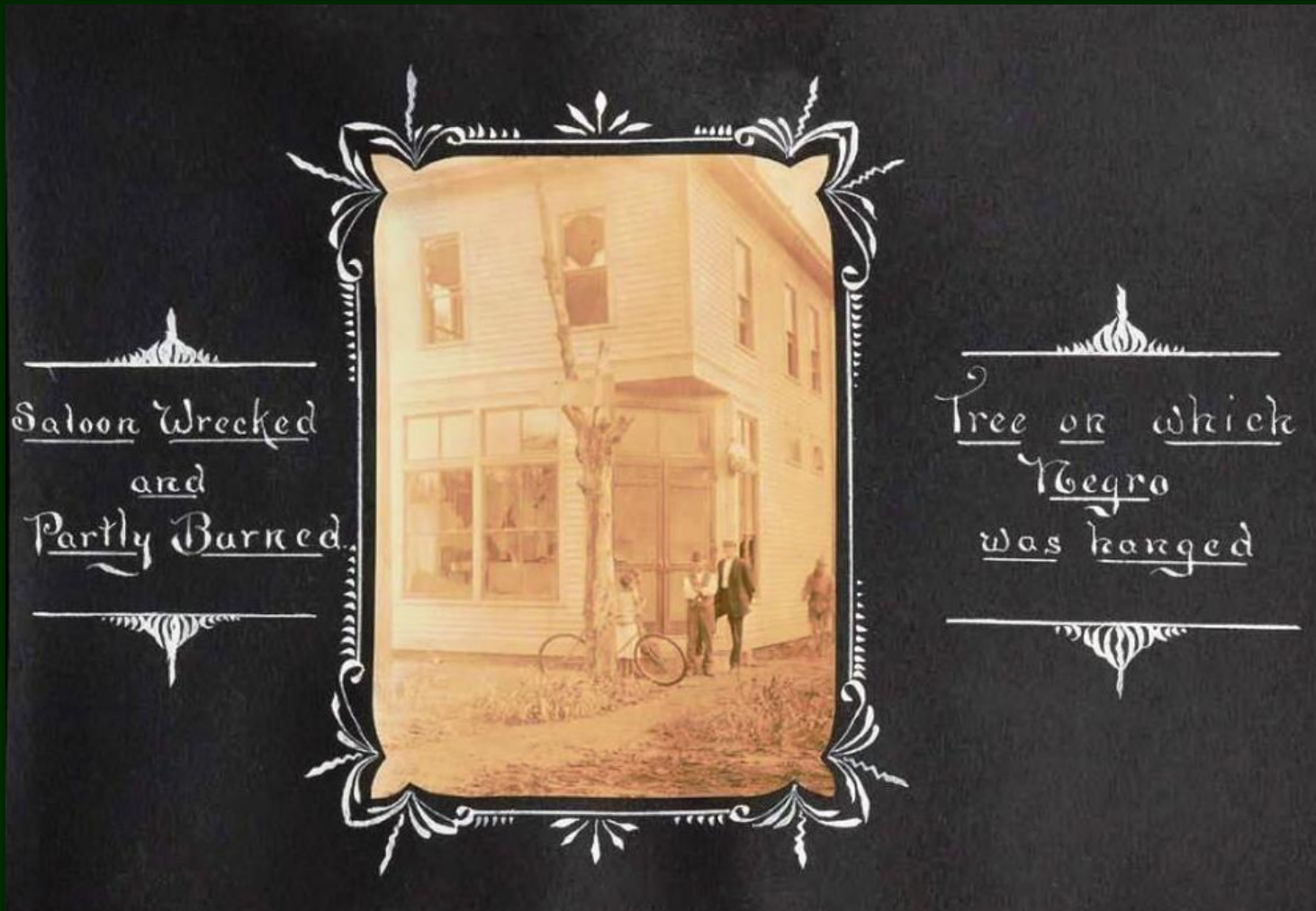
RESTAURANT IS RUIN

Unidentified at Jail, Grand Jury

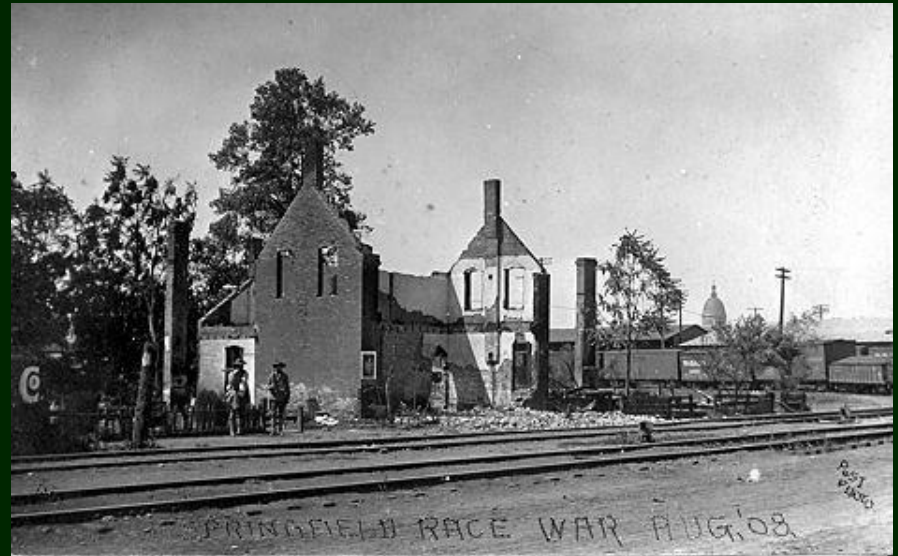
On August 14th, 1908, the City of Springfield erupted in racially motivated mob violence that lasted for several days, resulting in the destruction of numerous houses and businesses within the city...



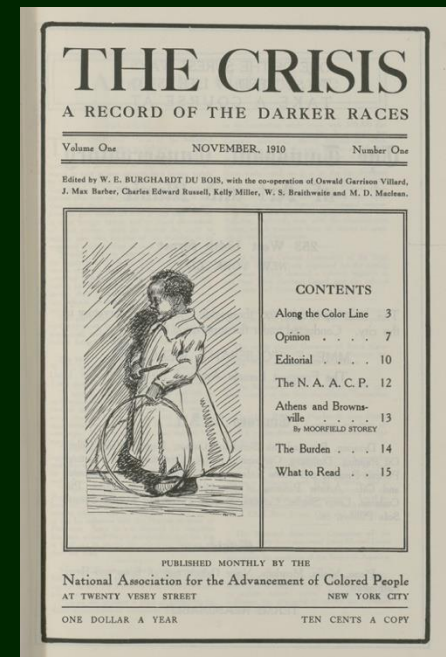
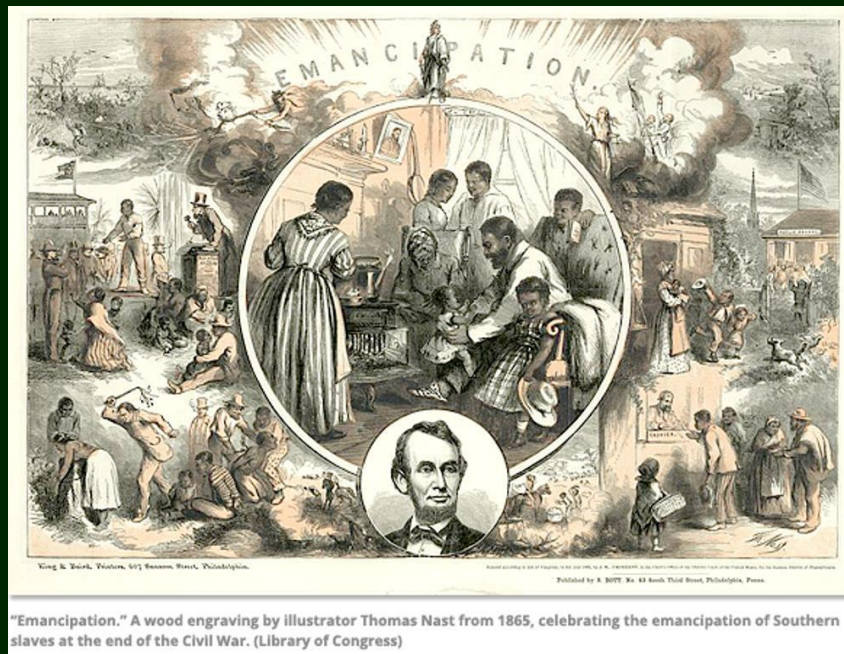
... and the lynching of two African-American citizens (William Donnegan and Scott Burton).



Photographs of East Madison Street, and National Guard in Springfield (August 1908).

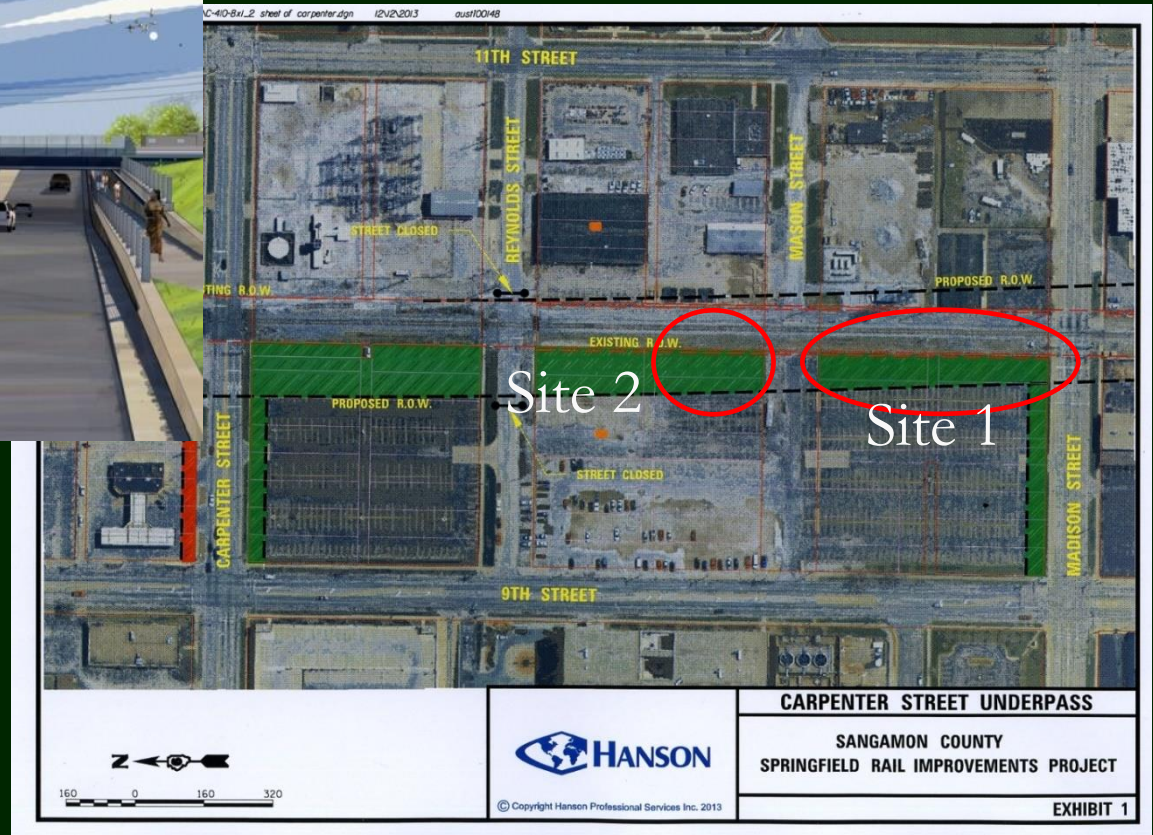


The Springfield Race Riot of August 1908 was one of the catalysts that resulted in the formation of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. On February 12th, 1909 (in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of Lincoln's birth), the organization was formed. As quoted in the NAACP's webpage, "The NAACP was formed partly in response to the continuing horrific practice of lynching and the 1908 race riot in Springfield, the capital of Illinois and resting place of President Abraham Lincoln."

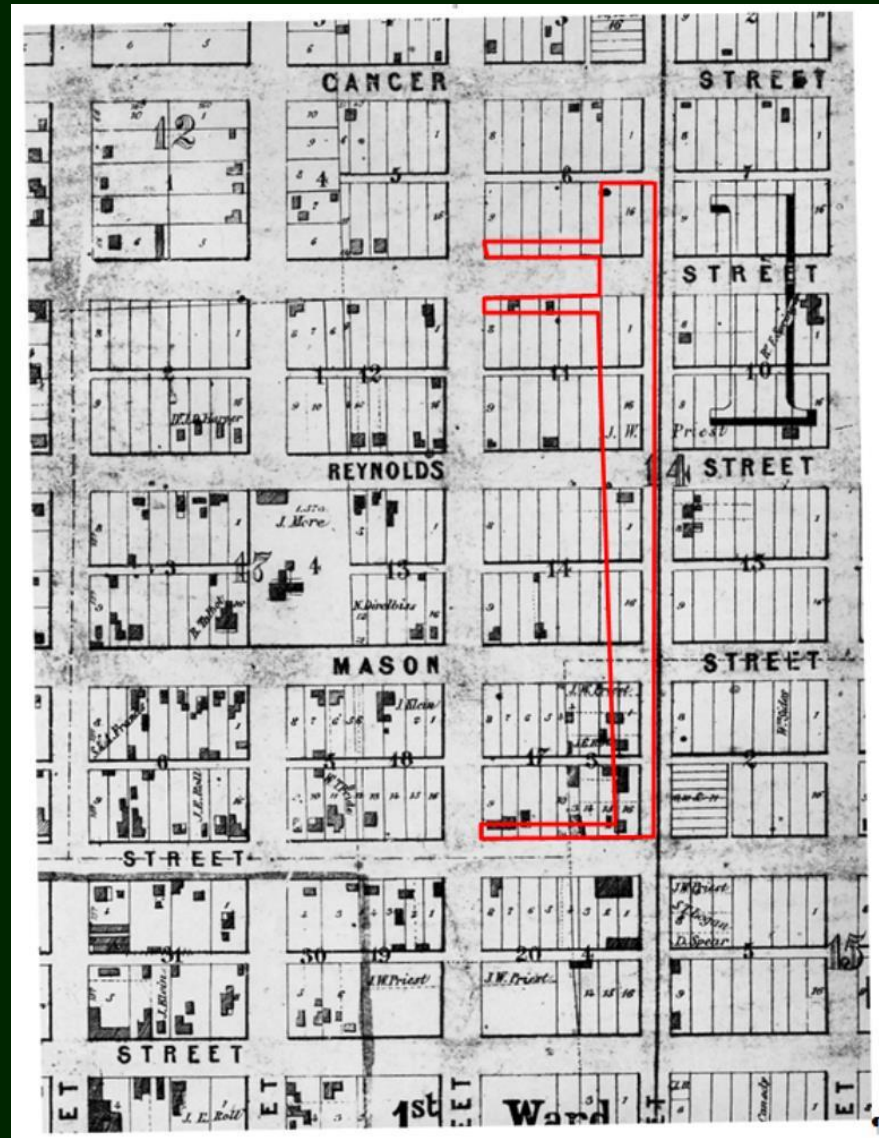


Over 40 houses and businesses were destroyed in the Badlands—that neighborhood targeted by the angry mob during the 1908 riots. This map depicts the location of the houses and businesses destroyed in the Badlands at that time (as depicted on the 1896 Sanborn fire insurance map). The current project area is circled in red. The blue arrows indicate the perspective view of the historic photographs of the event.

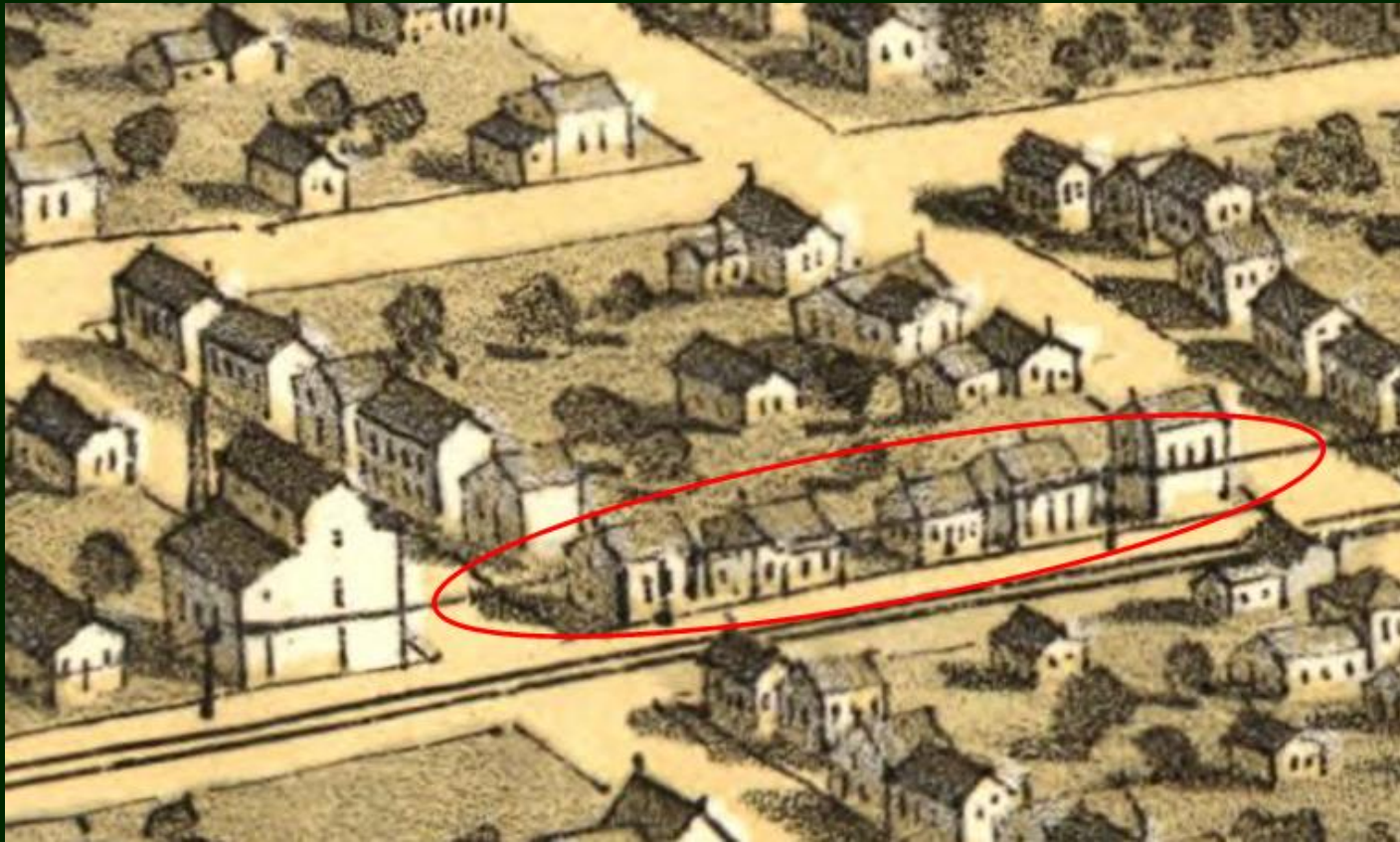
In late 2013, archival research was conducted to assess the potential impact of the construction of a new vehicular underpass on potential archaeological resources in downtown Springfield along the Tenth Street rail corridor. Research for the Carpenter Street Underpass Project identified two areas of high archaeological potential that warranted further investigations.



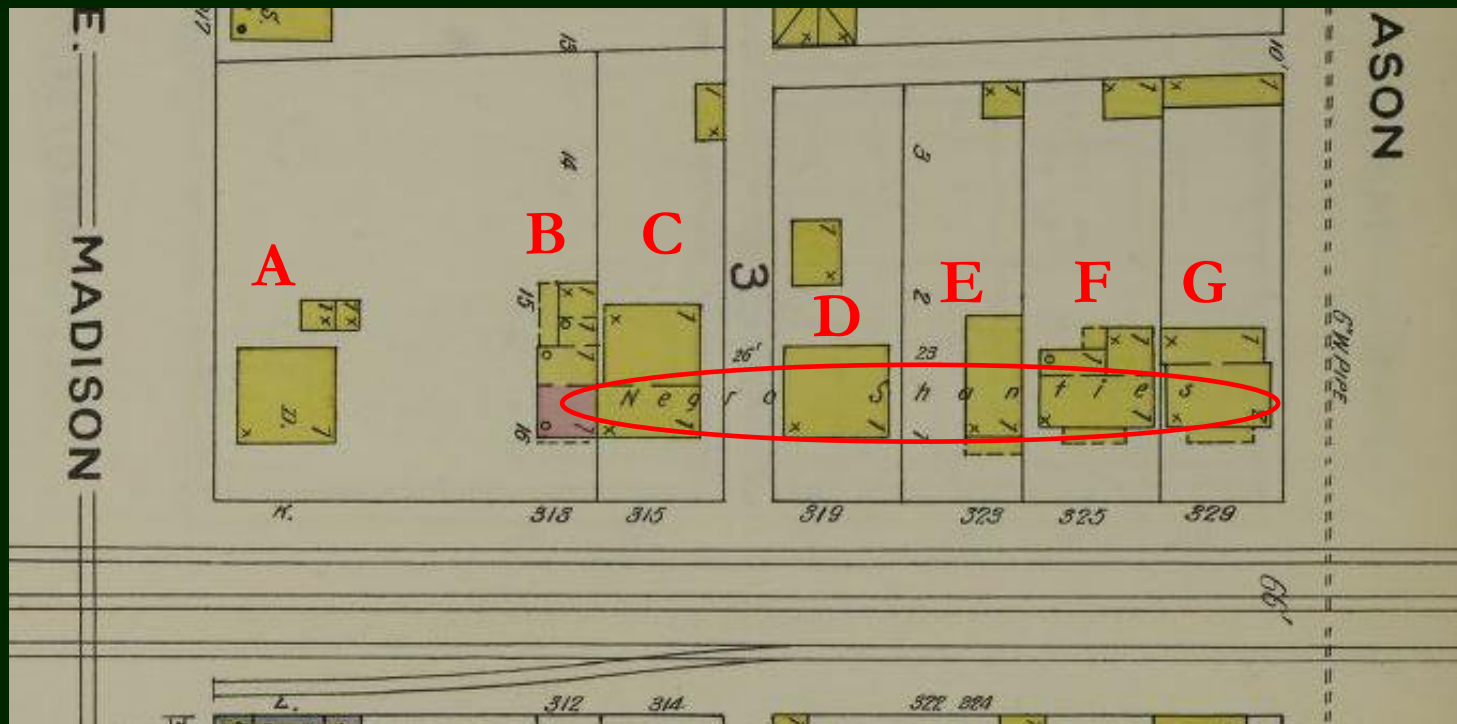
Archival research indicated that the south end of the project area had been well-developed by the middle 1850s. By 1858, five houses were located along the west side the Tenth Street rail corridor. The rail line had been constructed through the neighborhood only a few years earlier.



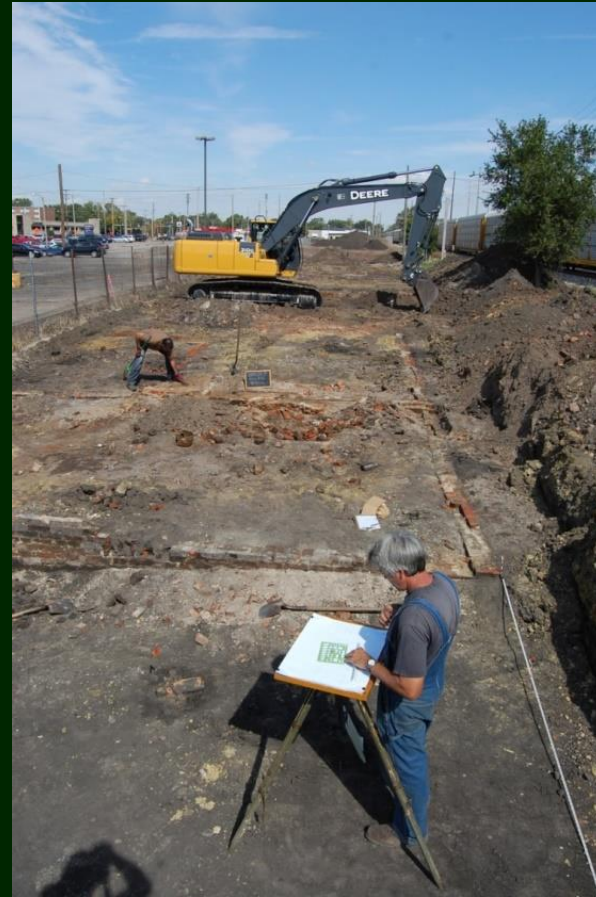
By 1867, a seventh house had been constructed on this street. Detail of the 1867 *Bird's Eye View of Springfield* illustrating the southern end of the Carpenter Street project area. Note the large Phoenix Mill located across Madison Street to the south.



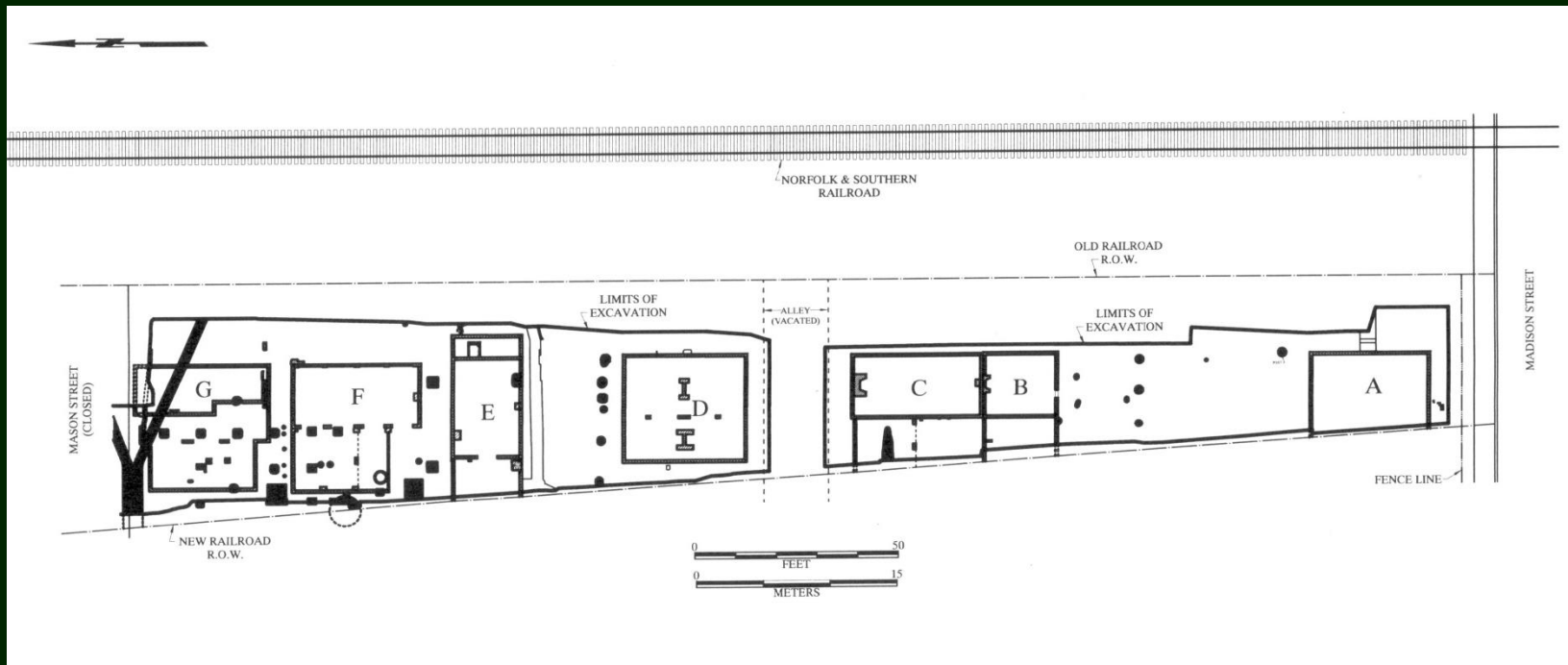
The 1896 Sanborn fire insurance map labeled the houses along Tenth Street, between Madison and Mason Streets as “Negro Shanties.” By this date, seven houses were present, which we identified as Houses A through G. Archival research suggested that several of these houses may have been burned during the riots of August 14, 1908.



In the summer of 2014, Phase II archaeological testing was conducted by Fever River Research at this location to determine if any of the seven houses documented by the archival research had any subsurface archaeological integrity.



As the archaeological investigations indicated, the seven houses did indeed have *remarkable* subsurface integrity, and resulted in the removal of overburden exposing the physical remains of seven middle nineteenth century houses. The current project area only impacts the front portions of the house lots (that area fronting Tenth Street), with the rear yard activity areas associated with these houses lying to the west beneath the existing parking lot.



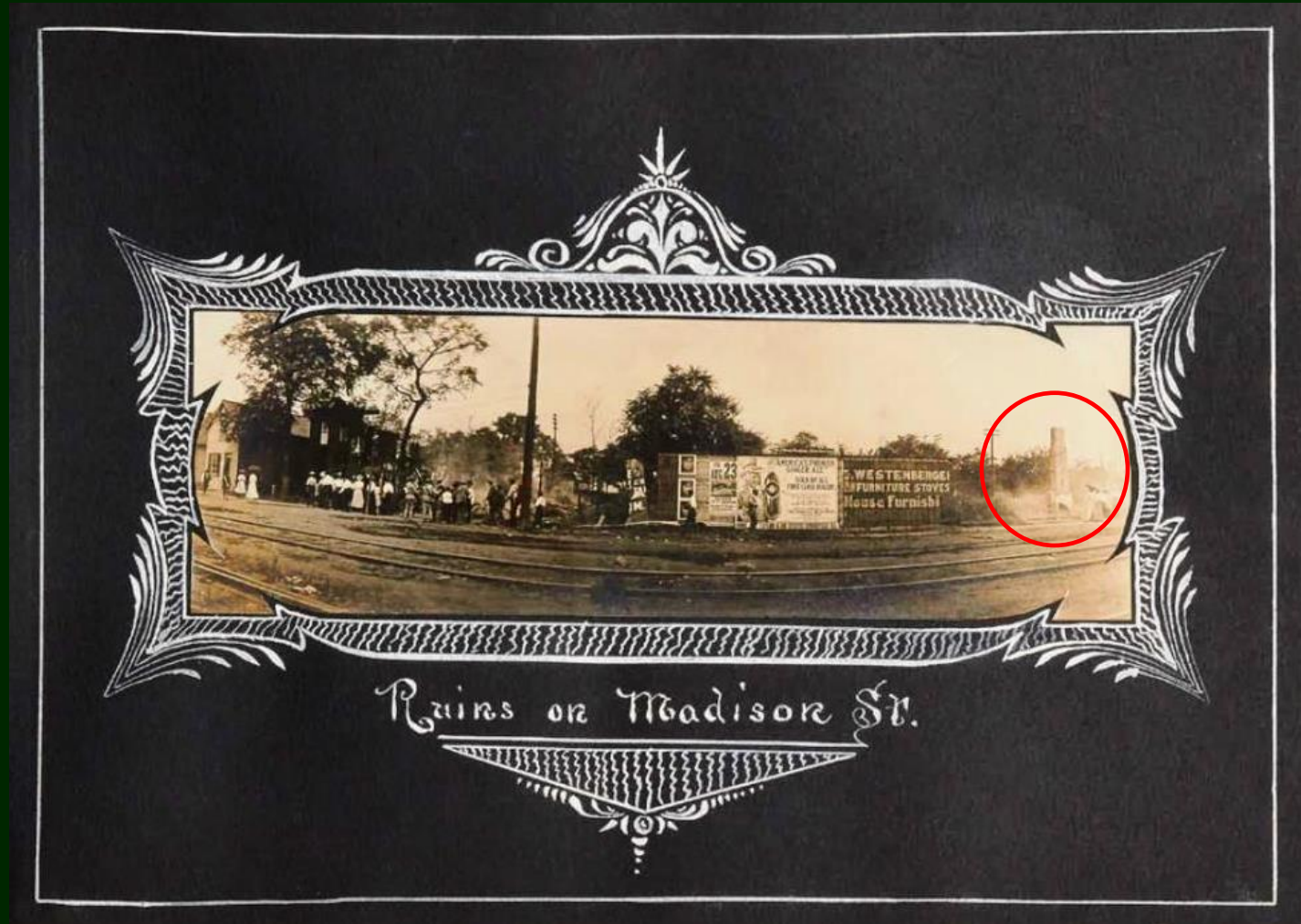
Views of Houses A (left) and B (right) during Phase II testing. House A appears to have been occupied by, among others, the Smith family at the time of the 1908 riot. The occupants of House B in August 1908 are unclear. Both houses were destroyed by fire in August 1908.



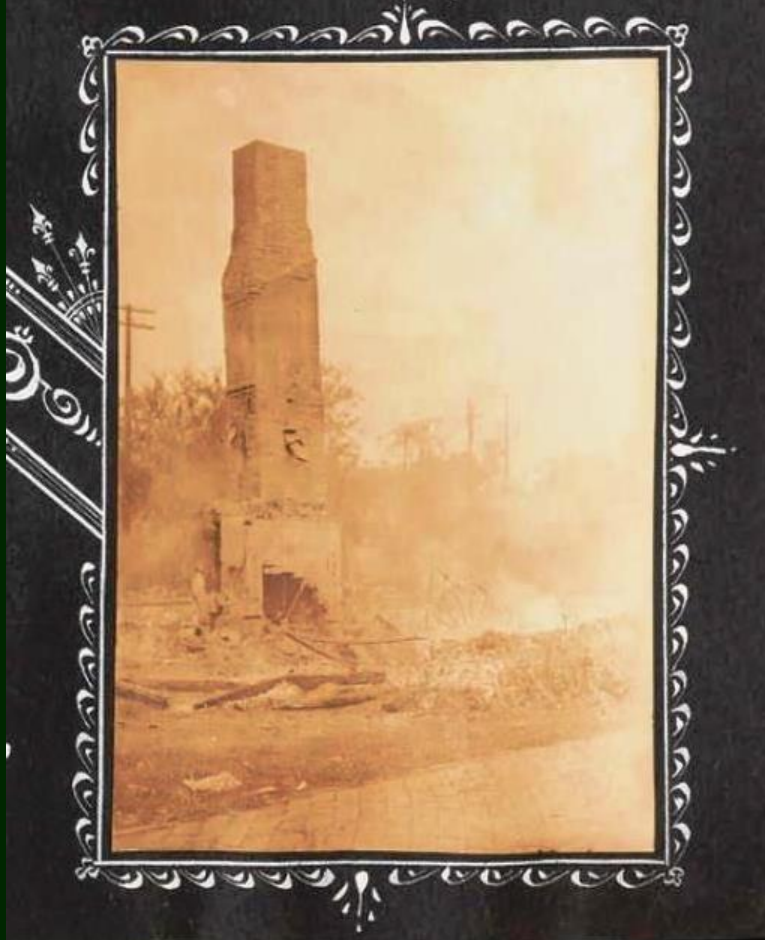
Of the seven houses identified by the archaeological research, five of the houses (Houses A through E) exhibited physical evidence of having been catastrophically destroyed by fire.



One of only two historic photograph from August 1908 illustrating the houses in the rail project. The chimney stack of House A is circled in red.



Remains of a Negro Cabin
burned during the Riot.



The second
photograph also
illustrates the
chimney stack of
House A.

The fieldwork conducted in the fall of 2014 consisted of mapping the exposed features...



... followed by minimal testing (excavation) within each house to assess the depth of fill deposits, character of the artifacts present, and complexity of the resource. The fill depths varied by house, but pre-fire, fire (August 14, 1908), and post-fire deposits were apparent in all test units excavated.



Archaeological deposits associated with the August 1908 riot, and subsequent destruction by fire of the five houses, were well documented, and include these items from the fire-deposits of House A. These three images depict materials presumably in a back bedroom of the house at the time of the August 1908 house fire (Test 1).

Left: small vase (little to no fire damage)

Middle: partially melted medicine bottle and drinking glass

Right: fire smoked and broken wash basin



Unlike House A (which had a shallow crawlspace beneath it), House B has a substantial basement cellar beneath it. The small test unit excavated in this cellar resulted in the recovery of a wide range of artifacts directly associated with the 1908 occupants of that dwelling (and included cups, saucers, bowls, plates, and platters). This is a fairly intact table setting recovered from House B. The artifacts suggest that the house may have been ransacked prior to the fire.



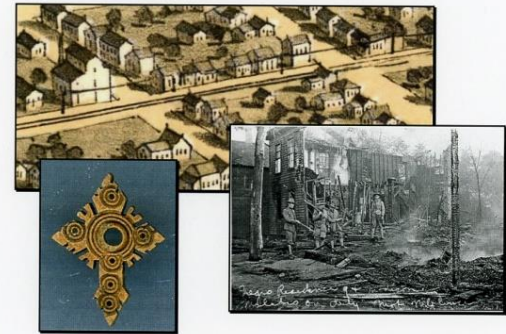
This small bone cross (right) was recovered from the upper fire deposits of House D. This fret-sawn and drilled bone stylized cross may be a rosary cross similar to the one illustrated here (left). These rosary crosses often held a small Stanhope in the center opening. The Stanhope was a small magnifying lens which contained an image. Although images depicted in Stanhopes—particularly those associated with rosary crosses—often were of a religious nature, they also included landscapes, famous individuals, and even erotica. This rosary cross suggests that one of the site occupants during the latter years of the house's occupation may have been a Christian.



The results of the Phase II investigations have been summarized in the report entitled *Results of the Phase II Archaeological Investigations of Sites 11SG1432 and 11SG1433 for the Proposed Carpenter Street Underpass, Springfield Rail Improvements Project, Springfield, Illinois*. This report was submitted in March 2016.

[This report, and a variety of other materials relating to this project, is accessible on our website: [Illinois Archaeology.com](http://IllinoisArchaeology.com).]

RESULTS OF PHASE II ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS
OF SITES 11SG1432 AND 11SG1433
FOR THE PROPOSED
CARPENTER STREET UNDERPASS,
SPRINGFIELD RAIL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT,
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS



Fever River Research, Inc.
Springfield, Illinois

2016

The archaeological site (identified as 11Sg1432) was backfilled, and fenced—awaiting completion of the Section 106 review process, which consisted of a multi-year coordination effort with local groups (and/or “Consulting Parties”) formulating ideas as to how to proceed with the project.

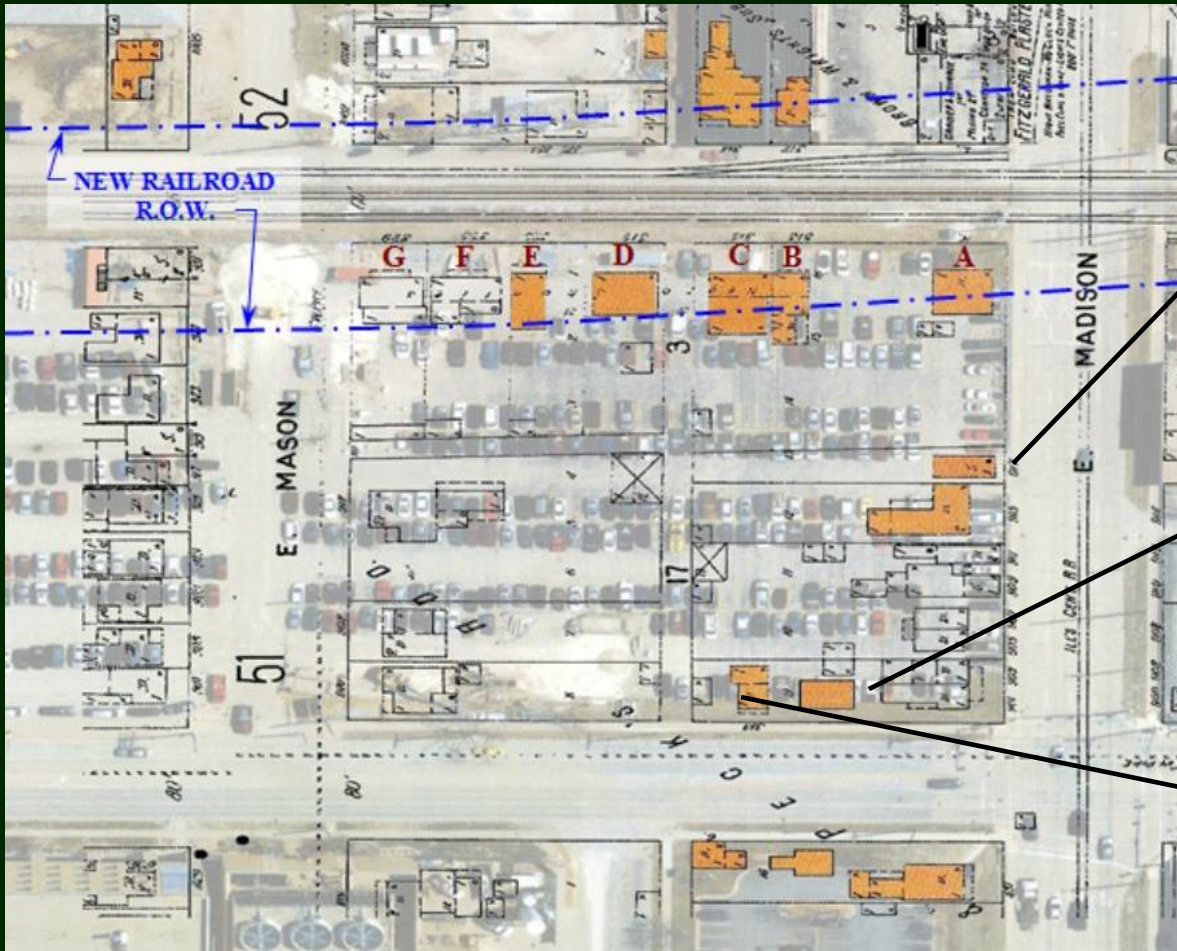


The Phase II archaeological testing indicates that the subsurface integrity of this site is excellent, and it meets the standards for National Register eligibility under Criterion A (social history) and D (archaeology). The archaeological resources at this site have the ability to contribute to our understanding of past lifeways in Springfield, and has both local and national relevance (or significance).

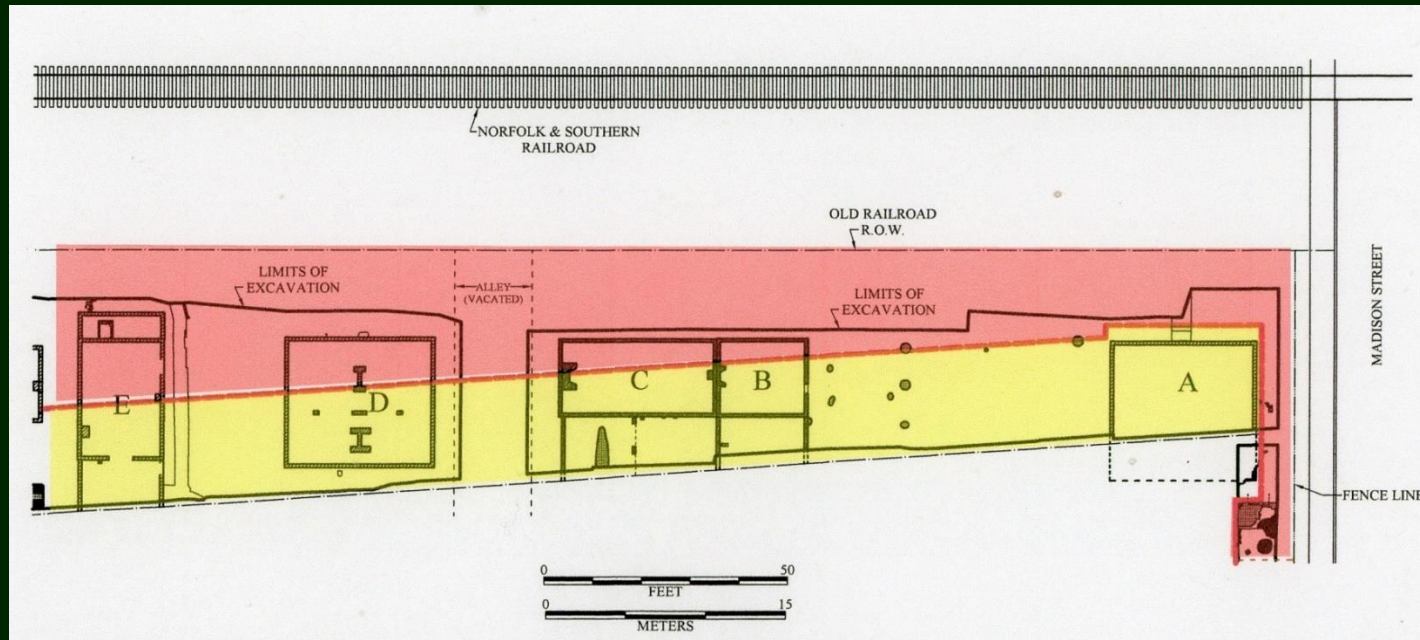
On the ***local level***, the site can contribute to our understanding of the early settlement history of Springfield, and speak to the cultural diversity of the community in the city's early settlement era.

On the ***national level***, this site is significant for its association with the 1908 Springfield Race Riot, which was a seminal event in the history of the city, as well as of national importance due to its role in the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). *This site has the ability to “give a new voice” to the victims of the dramatic events that transpired in mid-August 1908, and is a tangible link to the individuals that experienced that horrific August weekend firsthand.*

Location of burned (A-E) and unburned (F and G) houses in the Tenth Street Corridor, overlain on existing aerial view. Buildings highlighted in orange were destroyed by fire in the August 1908 Springfield riot. The railroad right-of-way depicted here was the original proposed right-of-way as envisioned in 2014.



In late October 2018, the Section 106 process was completed. Coordination with “Consulting Parties” has resulted in the re-design of the project right-of-way and the shifting of the right-of-way edge to the east in an effort to avoid Houses A-E as much as possible. This re-design of the project will result in the preservation in place of all of House A, and minimizes the impact of the proposed project on Houses B, C, D, and E. As soon as the weather permits, those areas of Houses B-E highlighted in red will be excavated. It is our hopes that the areas highlighted in yellow will be preserved and incorporated into a National Memorial commemorating the events of that fateful weekend of August 1908.

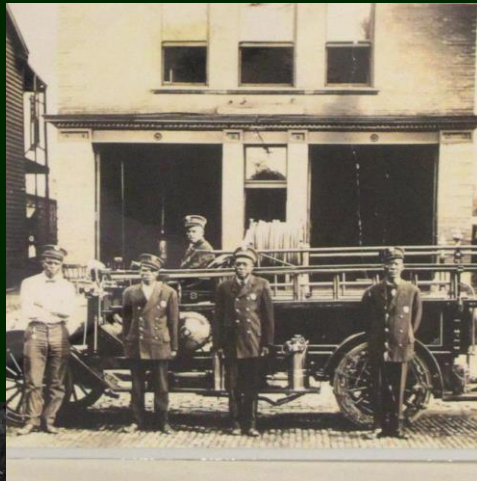


One recent outgrowth of this current project has been the hope to create a National Monument on the site of these five homes, memorializing the events that transpired that fateful weekend (“Lest We Forget”), and to commemorate the formation of the NAACP.



[Click here to view video of the proposed memorial.](#)

Also, this past year, the City of Springfield sponsored a *National Register of Historic Places Thematic Survey of Springfield's African-American Community*.



**National Register of Historic Places
Thematic Survey of
Springfield's African-American Community,
And the
Central East Neighborhood,
Springfield, Illinois**



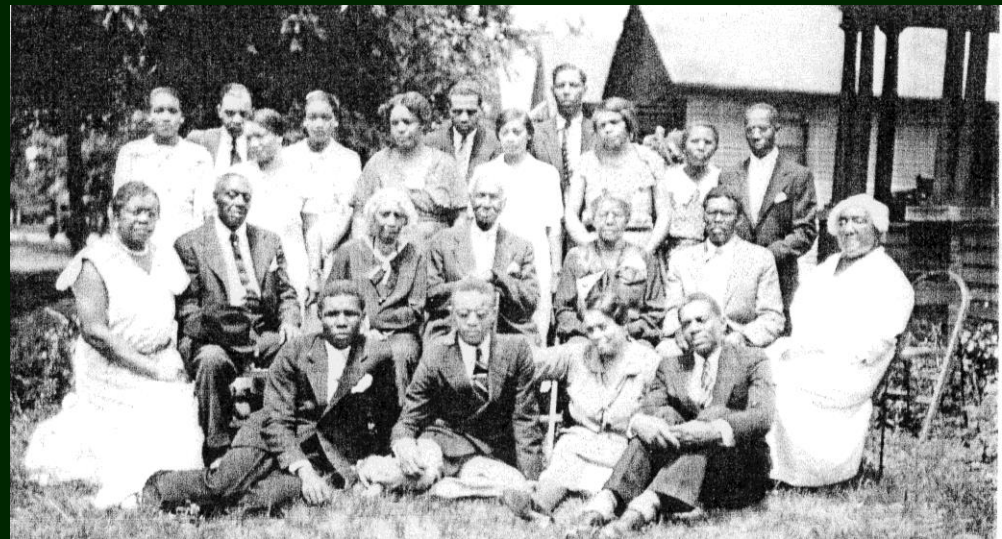
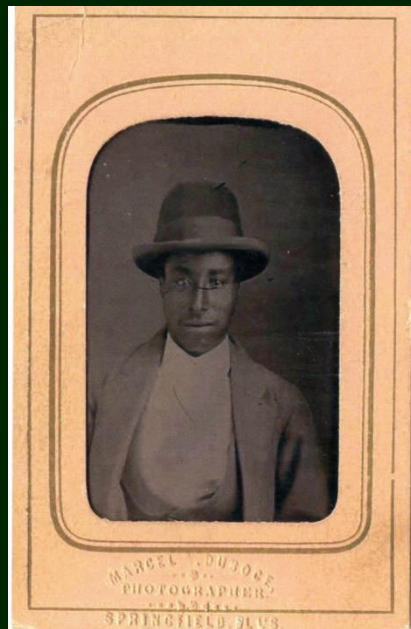
By
Floyd Mansberger
and
Christopher Stratton

Fever River Research
Springfield, Illinois

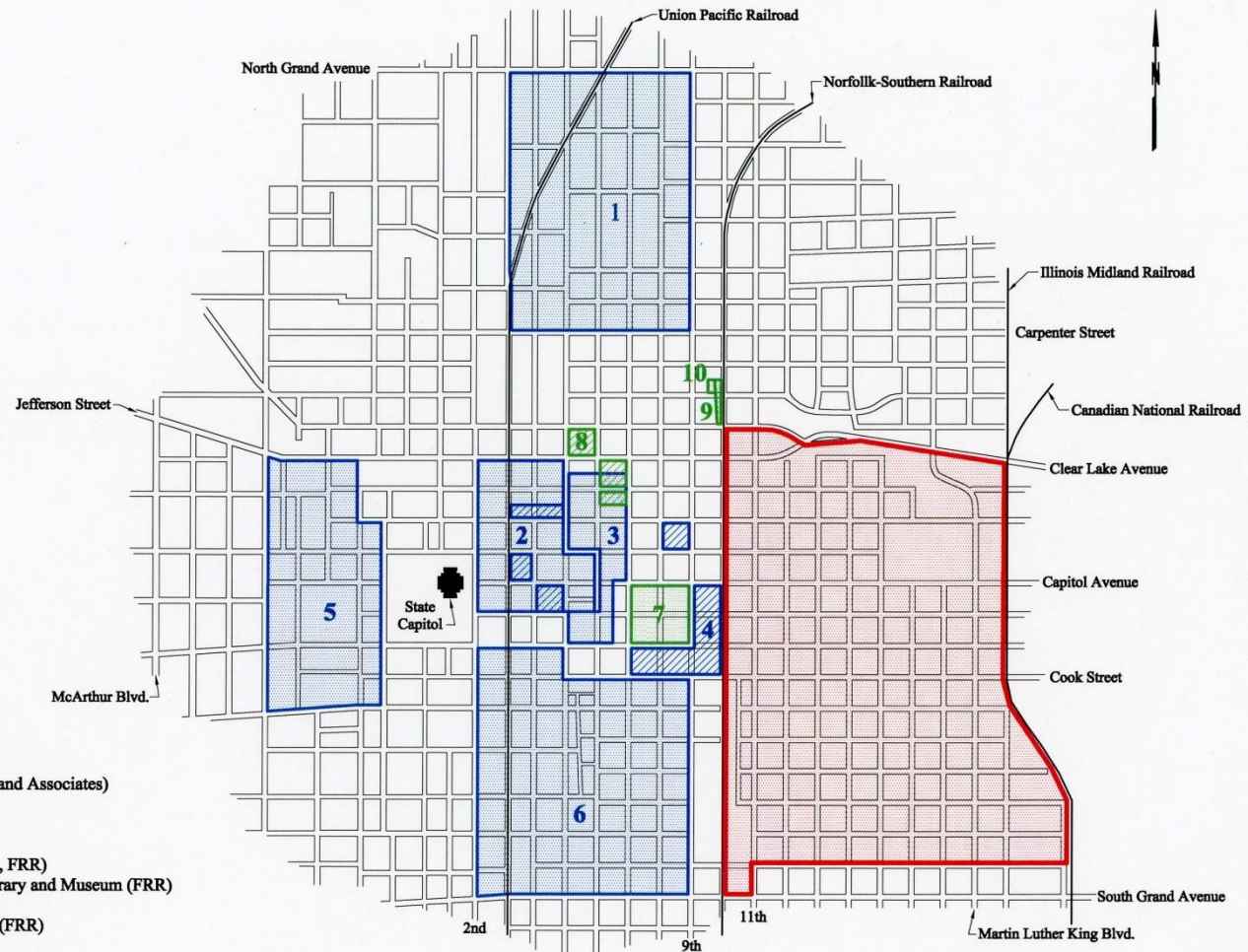
Prepared for
Historic Sites Commission
City of Springfield
Springfield, Illinois

August 30, 2018

This survey is the first of a multi-phased project dedicated to identifying historic resources associated with the dynamic African-American citizenry of Springfield, from its earliest settlement days through the present. The research provides a significant historical context for the current archaeological research, lends itself to a variety of educational venues, and will contribute to the understanding of our collective history.



Location of Central East Neighborhood Survey Area



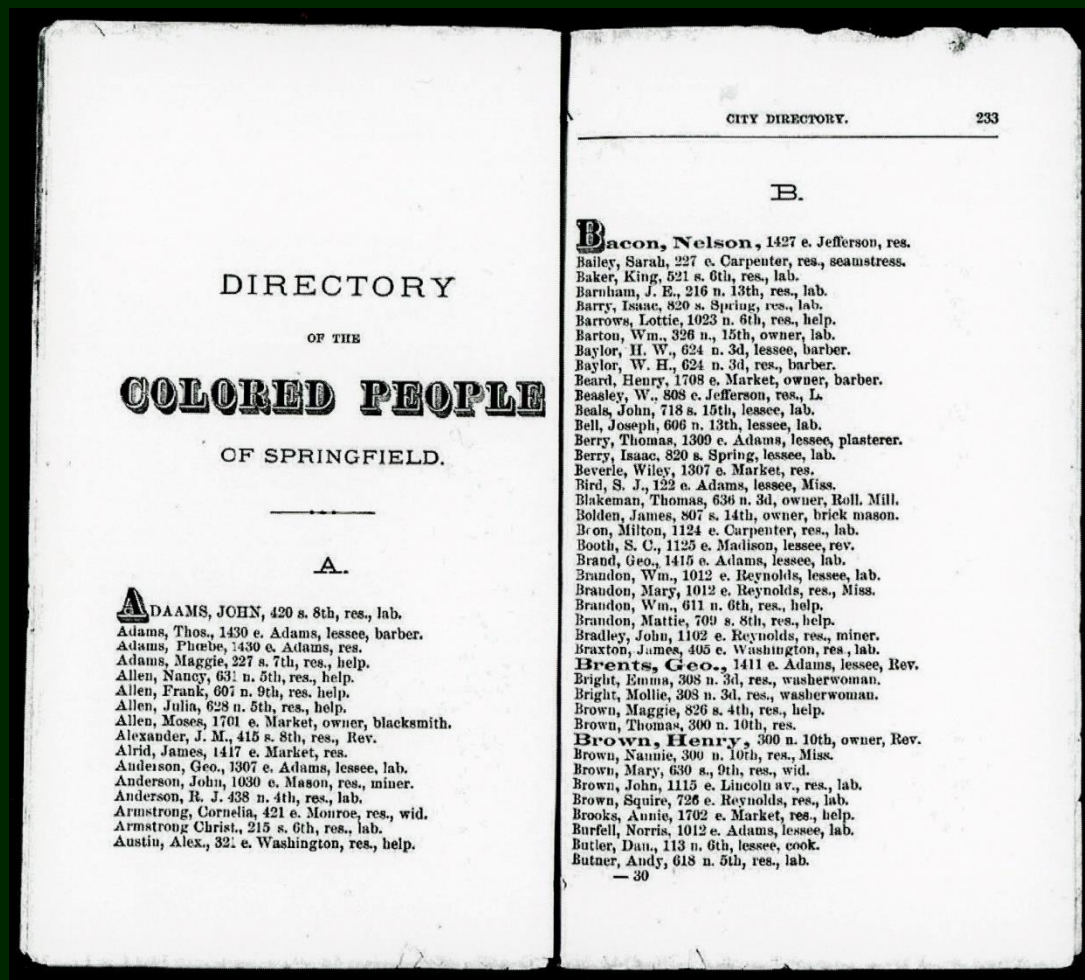
Previous Surveys/Investigations

1. Enos Park (FRR)
2. Central Business District (FRR)
3. Central Business District (Kirchner and Associates)
4. Lincoln Center (FRR)
5. West Side Capitol (FRR)
6. Aristocracy Hill (FRR)
7. Lincoln Home Neighborhood (NPS, FRR)
8. Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (FRR)
9. Carpenter Street Underpass (FRR)
10. St. John's Medical Office Building (FRR)

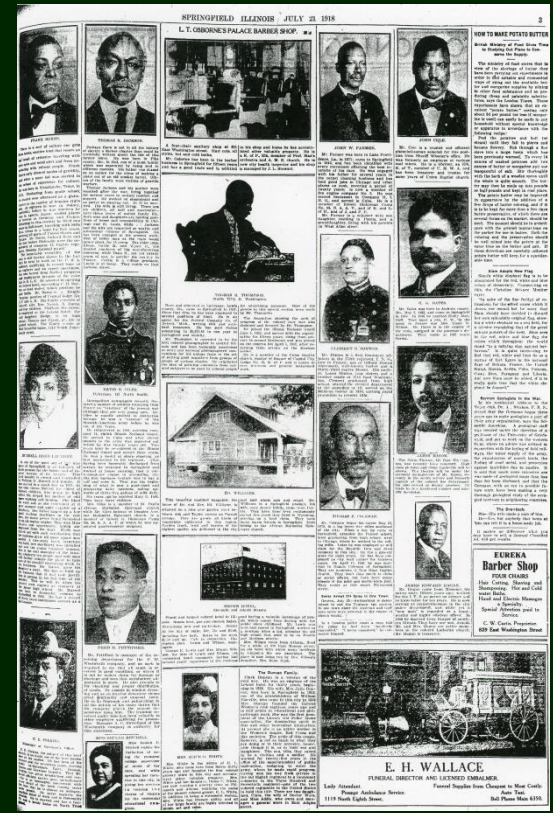
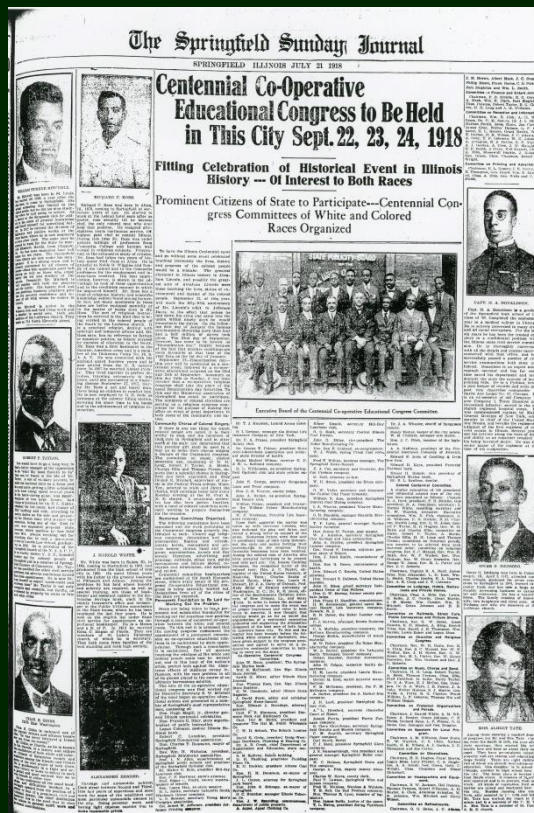
The project area was bordered on the west by 10th Street, on the east by 19th and Wirt Streets, on the south by South Grand Avenue and Brown Street, and on the north by Madison Street and Clear Lake Avenue. This entails a very large area (over 500 acres in size) with over 1,300 primary buildings.



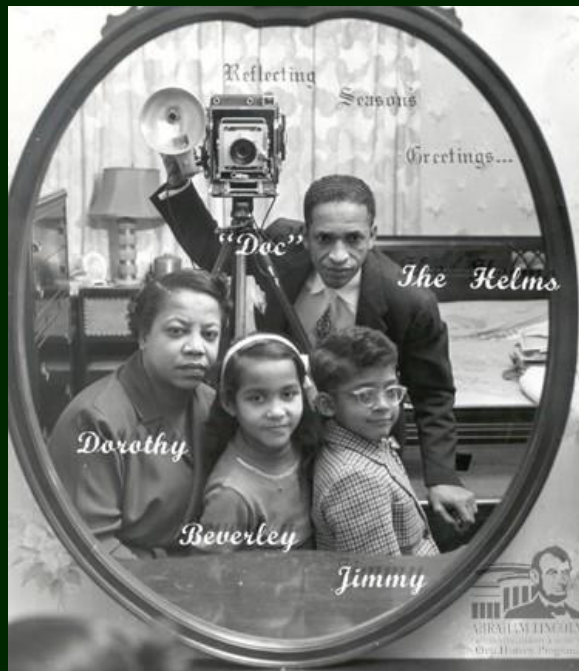
This project utilized a wide range of archival resources, such as this city directory which was published in 1876 at the time of the country's centennial celebration. This directory included a seven-page *Directory of the Colored People of Springfield*.



The July 21, 1918 issue of the *Illinois State Journal* announced the formation of the Centennial Co-Operative Educational Congress, which was in conjunction with the State's Centennial Celebration. The Congress exposition was to begin on *September 22nd* of that year, and the newspaper included three pages highlighting the achievements of Springfield's African American community.



Historic Photographic collections of families, work, and buildings. Many of the photographs used in this presentation are from the Sangamon Valley Collection at the Lincoln Library. Additionally, the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum has a substantial photographic collection of Springfield images. Eddie “Doc” “One Shot” Helm was the chief photographer for the Illinois Secretary of State, and he recorded many images of African American life in Springfield from the 1940s through the 1990s (some of which are in the ALPLM; others currently on display at the AAHM).



Early 1950s Christmas Card from the Helms



Helm Residence, 1128 S. Pasfield St.

One of the most cited examples of significant buildings associated with the African American experience in Springfield is the former Engine House No. 5 at 1310 East Adams Street. An all-black crew that manned this station responded to the fires during the August weekend in 1908. Later the building became the home to the local African-American Masonic lodge.



Another example of a significant place for this theme is the *Lincoln Colored Home*, which is located at 427 South Street. It currently is listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places. The home was established by Eva Monroe in 1898, with the existing structure being constructed in 1904. An outgrowth of Monroe's work was the establishment of the Springfield Colored Women's Club—an organization of black women dedicated to social reform.



The Monroe Sisters. Eva C. Monroe is circled in red.



The Judge Wycliff Taylor House at the corner of Twelfth and Cass Streets is also one of the more cited examples for Springfield. Built in 1857 as a private residence, the home later housed the Ambidexter Industrial and Normal Institute, a school for black youth that taught arts and sciences, domestic skills, and period trades.



A number of lesser well-known properties exist in Springfield, a couple of which we illustrate here. Dr. Ewin Lee and the Lee Medical Building. Dr. Lee was admitted to the Sangamon County Medical Society in 1949 and practiced medicine in Springfield until within months of his death 1993. His office at the corner of Jackson and Thirteen Streets, built in 1958, was the first medical office building in Springfield owned by black physicians.



Lee Medical Building (top; corner of Jackson and Thirteen Streets, built in 1958) and Lee residence (bottom; 920 South Wheeler Avenue).

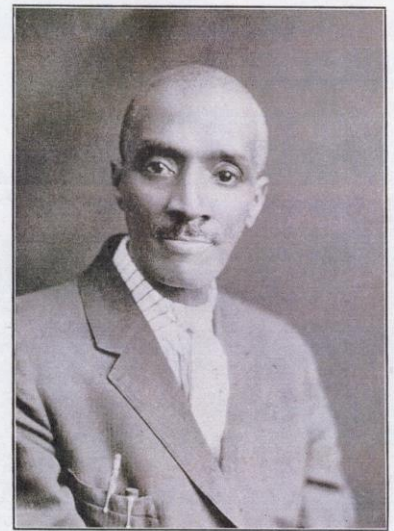


Dr. Edwin Lee

Elmer Lee Rogers was the founder and editor of two local black newspapers, *The Forum* (1904-1927) and the *Illinois Conservator* (1905-1950). Rogers resided at this location (905 S. Fourteenth Street) from circa 1915 through at least 1926. He died in Springfield in 1957 (Camara 2015).



Former home of Charles S. Gibbs at 816 South Fifteenth Street. Gibbs was an attorney, prominent civic leader in Springfield's African American community, and leader in the civil rights movement at an early date. His wife Mary was equally active, serving for a time as President of the Springfield Colored Women's Club. Charles Gibbs resided here from 1921 until his death in 1927.



CHARLES S. GIBBS,
Attorney at Law

Charles S. Gibbs, our able lawyer and fellow citizen is an illustration of what pluck and brain can accomplish for us. Born to a life of toil and enjoying but meagre advantages in his youth, he set out to overcome the obstacles in his way and devoted himself to the study

Many young African-American tradesmen went into business for themselves, often working exclusively for fellow African-American clients during the Jim Crow era. One such tradesman was the carpenter/builder Oscar Birdsong who came to Springfield, from Pulaski County in southern Illinois, in 1903. Presumably, the house identified with him in the 1926 directory at 823 S. Fifteenth Street (Casey 1926) was built by him, and represents the “beautiful home” described in his 1918 biography (*Springfield Sunday Journal*, 21 July 1918).



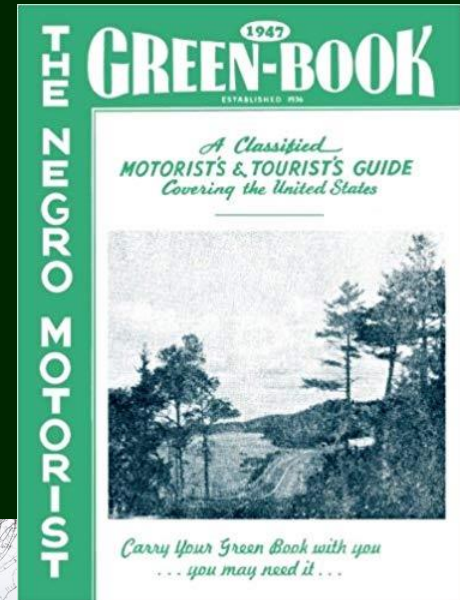
OSCAR G. BIRDSONG.

Oscar G. Birdsong was born in Pulaski county, Ill., April 9, 1873, attended common schools, gardened for seven years, came to Springfield in 1903, learned carpenter trade and has now a large and steadily increasing business as carpenter and contractor. He has a beautiful home. The family consists of himself, wife, two daughters and three sons. Mr. Birdsong and wife are members of the Lutheran church.



Only two of the former “tourist houses” advertised in the Negro traveler’s *Green Book* over the years for Springfield have survived within the Central East Neighborhood.

Left: 1616 East Jackson Street, operated by H. Robbins.
Right: 1501 East Jackson Street, operated by B. Eskridge.



We are honored to be part of this project, to add through archaeology (and material culture studies) another “voice” to the discussion of this significant local event--an event that was the catalyst for the establishment of a nationally significant organization which strives to improve race relations in our country, and to foster discussion among its citizenry in hopes of improving the quality of life for all Americans, regardless of race or color.

