

Archaeological Insights into the Anonymous Victims of the 1908 Springfield Race Riot: An Update of the Carpenter Street Investigations

by
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and
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Springfield Chapter NAACP
Lincoln-Douglas Freedom Fund Banquet
Springfield, Illinois
February 9, 2020



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 3 CENTS

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

MOB WRECKS LOPER'S CAFE DURING RIOT

Throng Attacks Restaurant
Gnawed by Men Who Took
Suspect Away.

PLACE TOTALLY BURNED

FRIGID CHAIRS, TABLES AND
OTHER FURNITURE BURNED
IN THE STREET.

AUTHORITIES HELPLESS

Mayor, Police and National Guards
Unable to Control Mob.

VICTIM OF NEGRO ASSAULT.

MRS. J. L. HALLAM.

Mrs. J. L. Hallam, who is the wife of the man who was shot by the mob, is shown in the photograph. She is the only woman who was injured in the riot. She is now in the hospital, and her condition is serious.

NEGROES REMOVED TO BLOOMINGTON

OFFICERS FEAR VIOLENCE AND
SPRIT PRISONERS AWAY.

Group Released From County Jail By
Police After a Few Days' Detention.
Negroes Released and Taken Into
Automobile and Taken City-Wide.

A group of about 200 negroes were taken from the county jail and taken to the city. They were taken to the city in a large number of automobiles. The police were unable to control the mob, and the negroes were taken to the city. The police were unable to control the mob, and the negroes were taken to the city.

The taking away of the negroes was a very serious matter. The police were unable to control the mob, and the negroes were taken to the city. The police were unable to control the mob, and the negroes were taken to the city.

THE CASUALTIES.

DEAD.

W. J. BRYCE, shot by a mob; killed.
GEORGE STONE, shot by a mob; killed.

INJURED.

ALBERT BRYCE, shot by a mob; injured.
GEORGE STONE, shot by a mob; injured.
ALBERT BRYCE, shot by a mob; injured.
GEORGE STONE, shot by a mob; injured.

ALBERT BRYCE, shot by a mob; injured.
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ALBERT BRYCE, shot by a mob; injured.
GEORGE STONE, shot by a mob; injured.

TWO ARE KILLED AND MANY HURT AS MOB WORKS

Springfield Helpless as
Hands of Thousands of
Frenzied Citizens.

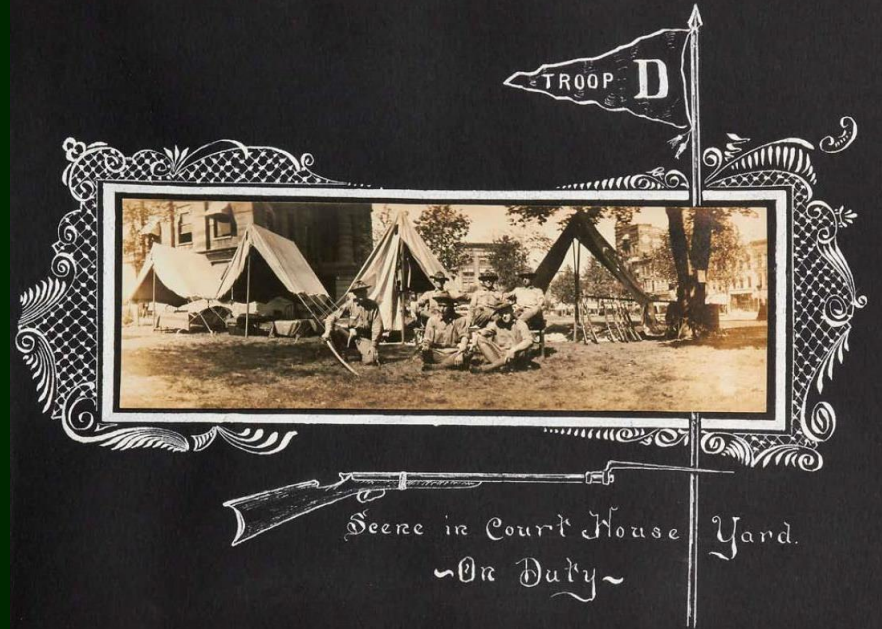
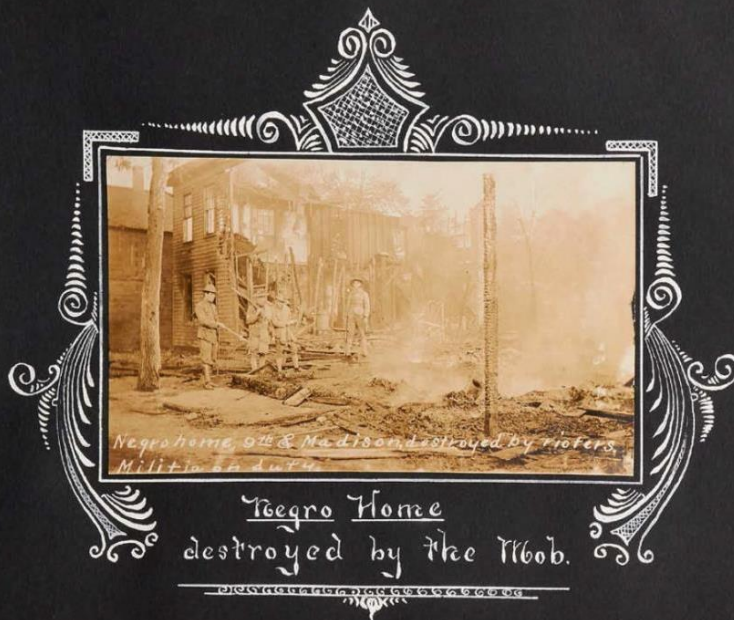
ASSAULT INCITED BY

State War Follows the Act
Made by Negro Cyphers
Local Woman.

RESTAURANT IN RUIN

Unidentified as the One Who

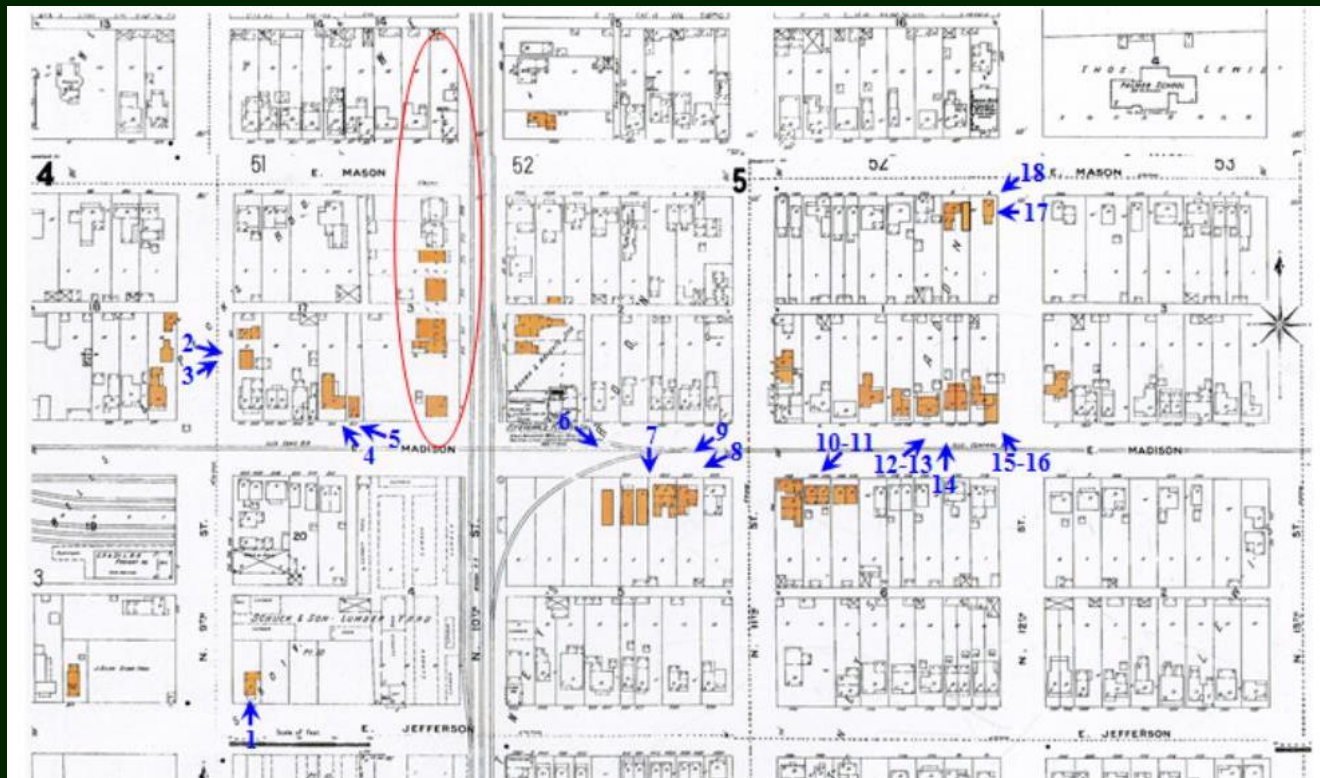
On August 14th, 1908, the City of Springfield erupted in racially motivated mob violence that lasted for several days, and resulted in the lynching of two African-American citizens, as well as the destruction of numerous houses and businesses within the city. Much of the violence was centered on the Levee commercial district and residential Badlands. The violence was subdued through the efforts of the Illinois National Guard.



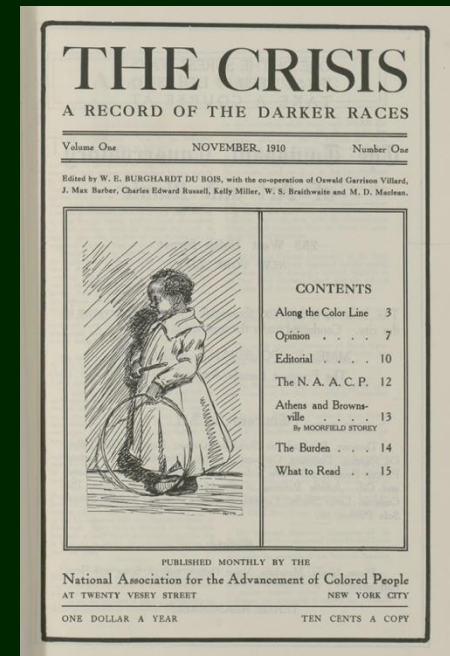
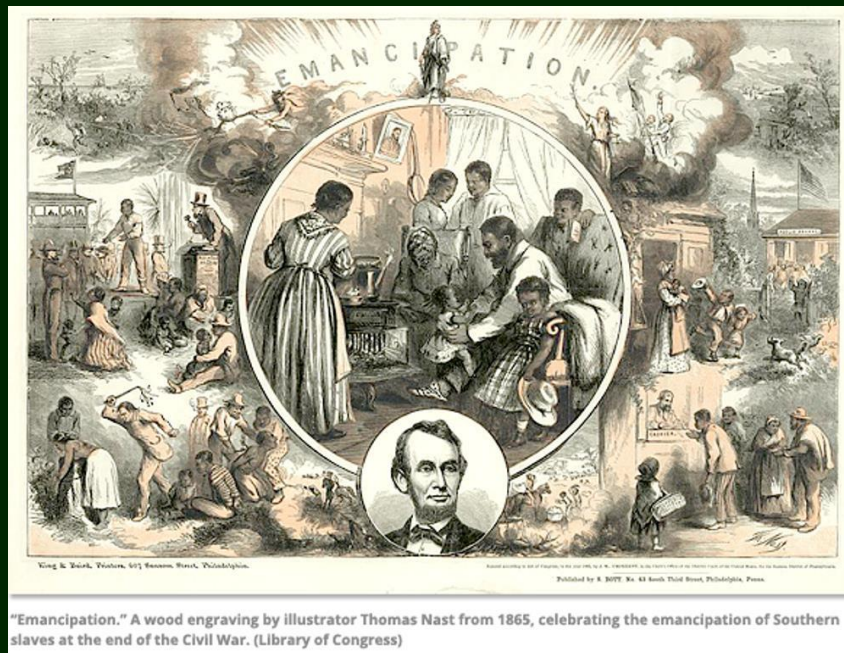
Photographs of East Madison
Street, and National Guard in
Springfield (August 1908).



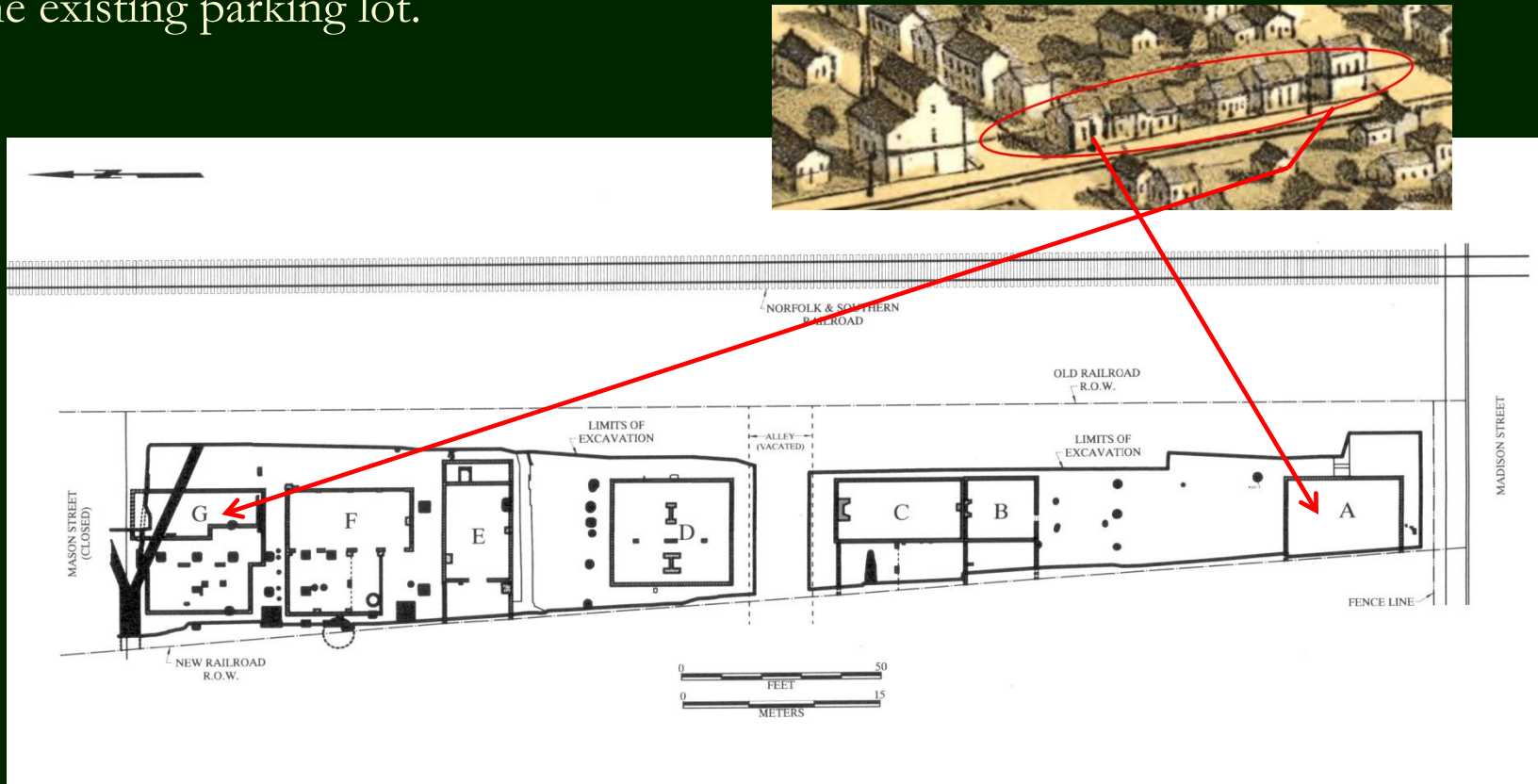
Over 40 houses and business were destroyed in the Badlands during the August 14th-15th, 1908 weekend in Springfield. This map depicts the location of the houses and businesses destroyed by fire during the riots (as depicted on the 1896 Sanborn fire insurance map). The current project area is circled in red. The blue arrows indicate the location of perspective view historic photographs. No photographs have been located depicting the houses in the existing project area.



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."



Phase II archaeological testing of the project area was undertaken in late 2014. This work documented the well-preserved remains of seven nineteenth century houses—five of which had been burned in the riots of August 1908. Only the front sections of the houses were located within the proposed project area, with the rear yard activity areas associated with these houses located 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. At the time of the Phase II research, the occupant of House B at the time of the riots was unknown.



Two views of House E (and associated brick walkway) during Phase II testing. This house was occupied by the Isaac Smith family for much of the nineteenth century. At the time of the 1908 riot, the house was reportedly occupied by “H. Stoutmeyer.”

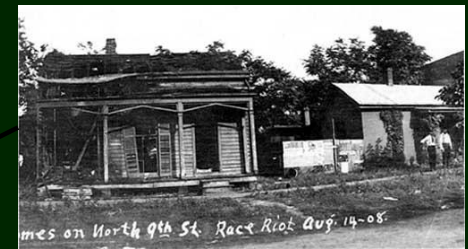
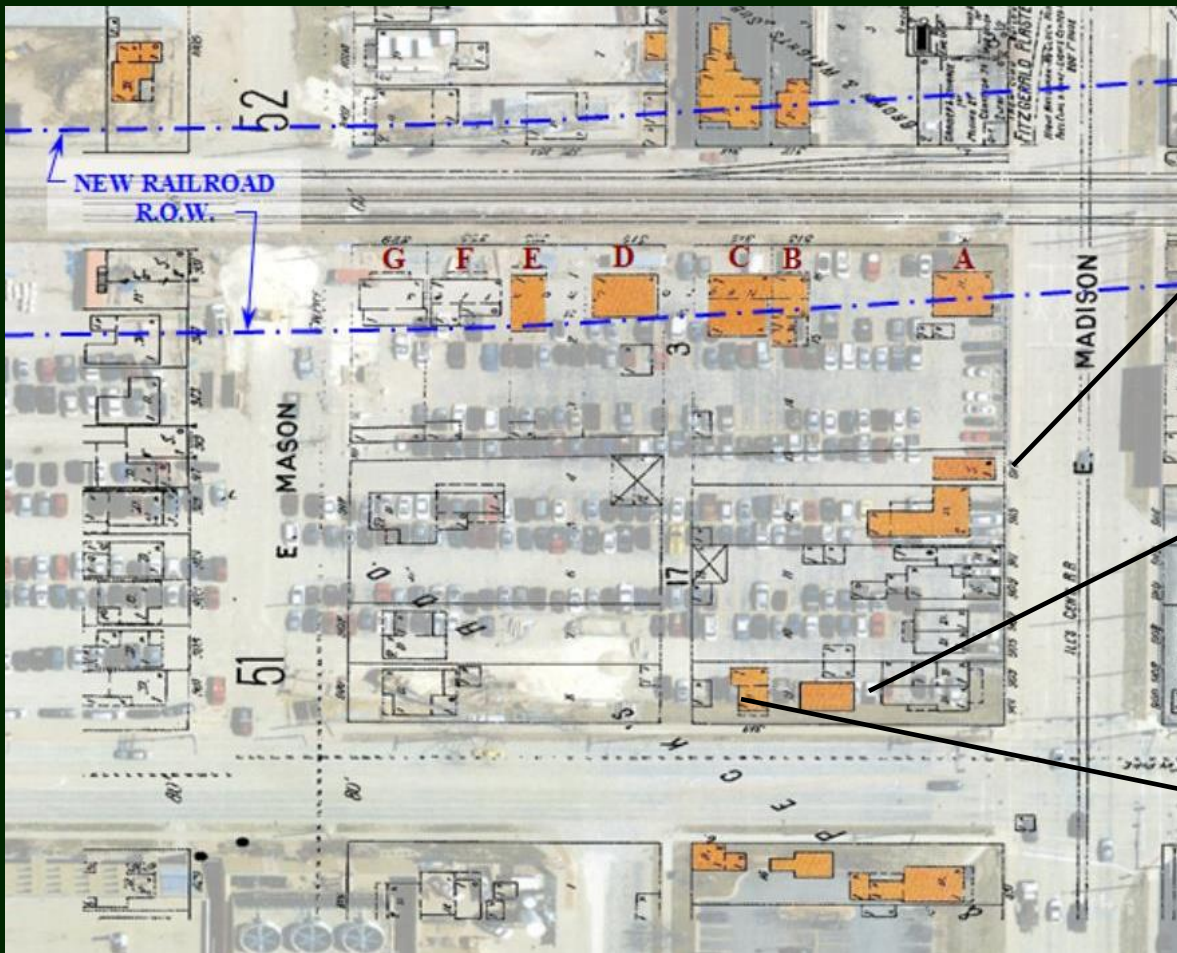


Looking west

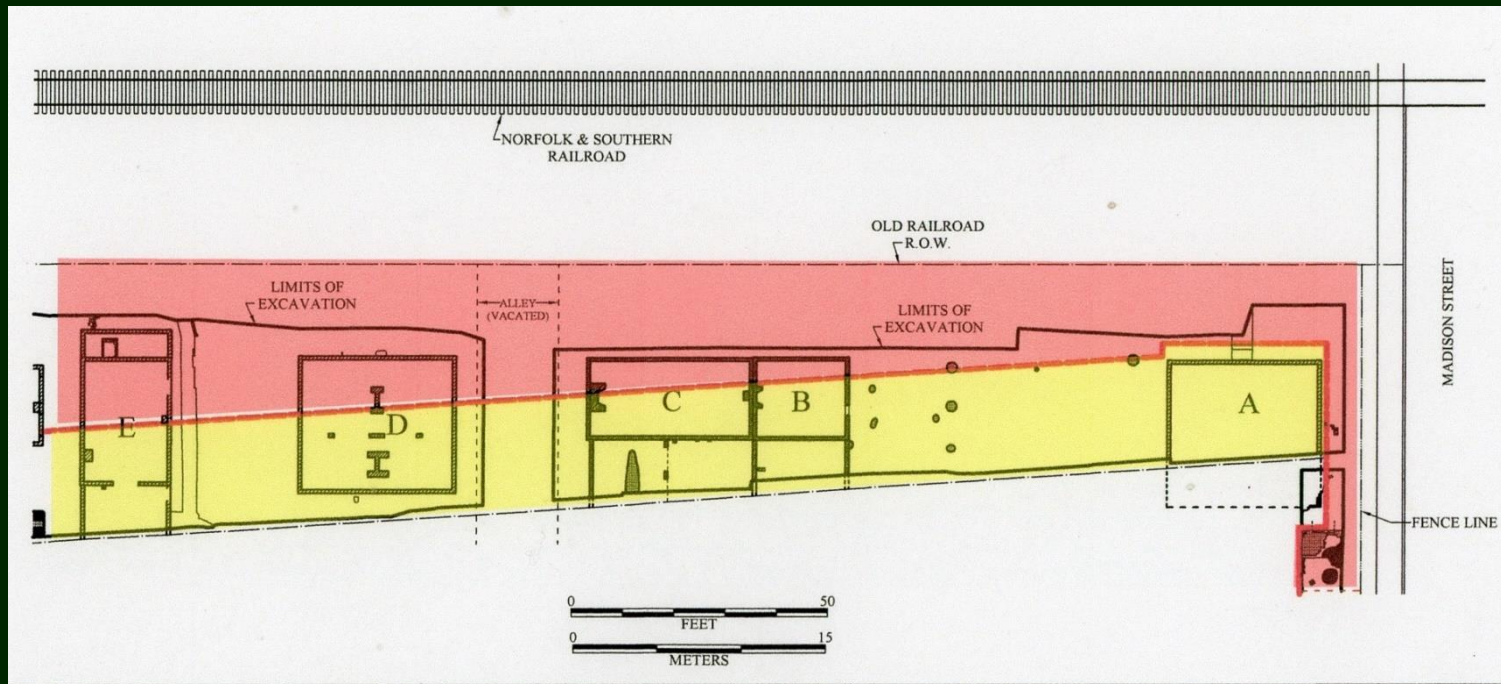


Looking south

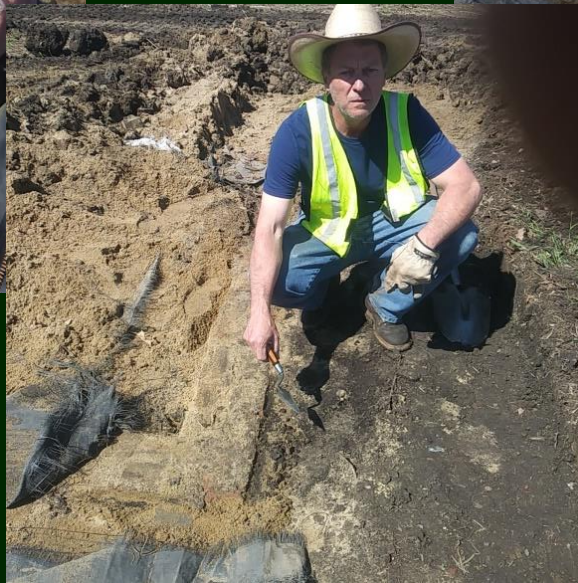
Location of burned (A-E) and unburned (F and G) houses in the Tenth Street Corridor, overlain on existing aerial view. Buildings highlighted in orange were destroyed by fire in the August 1908 Springfield riot. The railroad right-of-way depicted here was the original proposed right-of-way as envisioned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



After four years of coordination with various state and federal agencies, and the community (“Consulting Parties”), the decision was made to 1) shift the railroad right-of-way 22’ to the east to preserve in place those areas of Houses A through E outlined in yellow, and 2) completely excavate those areas within the new right-of-way that could not be preserved in place (those areas outlined in red).



Beginning in mid-April 2019, we began the mitigation of the Race Riot Site, with work being initiated at House E. Excavations continued through the summer and early fall of 2019.



Excavations proceeding on House E.



First half of House E checkerboard nearing completion



House E after completion of the first half of the checkerboard (left), and after completion of the fieldwork (right)



Site conditions in the middle of May. House E is on the right at 50% excavation. House D is on the left, with excavations only beginning.



Panoramic view courtesy of Chelsea Coates.

House D after completion of the first half of the checkerboard (left), and nearing completion of the second half of the checkerboard (right).



House C after completion of first half of the checkerboard (left), and nearing completion of the second half of checkerboard.



House B after completion of first half of the checkerboard (left), and nearing completion of the second half of the checkerboard.



Now that the fieldwork has been completed, our focus is with the artifacts—which have all been washed and are in the process of being inventoried. Our Data Recovery Plan specifies that we need to have the artifacts processed, and report completed, in 18 months.



A cache of materials recovered from within the fire deposits of House E (Tests 10, 12, and 13) included the contents of a trunk, and included a wide range of small finds (jewelry, dominoes, rubber balls, hair combs, slate writing stylus, and even a toothpick), clothing, multiple books, and even an insurance policy.

Canvas Covered Stateroom Trunks

No. 21633 Iron center band, steel trimmings. Made to go under berth of any steamship. This is a very convenient trunk for short journeys; japanned iron trimmed; bumpers, clamps, and corner shoes; large flat steel key, lock, side pockets, and set up tray.

28 inch.....	\$3.00	32 inch.....	\$3.50
30 inch.....	3.25	34 inch.....	3.75

No. 21635 Leather bound brass excelsior lock steel trimmings, covered tray. Cheapest leather bound trunk made, canvas duck covered, edges bound with heavy leather, and leather center band, best steel bumpers, clamps, corner shoes, valance clamps, hinges, etc., excelsior lock, full covered tray, linen lined throughout

30-inch.....	\$6.25	34-inch.....	\$7.25
32-inch.....	6.75	36-inch.....	7.75



Among the items in the trunk was this finely-made, bone china demitasse cup and saucer, manufactured by the Rosenthal Company of Bavaria (Germany) sometime between 1896 and 1907.



In the trunk was a wide variety of clothing fragments and buttons—representing numerous garments, including a suspected corset, and shoes.





We have only recently begun the sorting and identification of the fabric remnants. The objective is to sort the fragments by individual garment, and are confident that the analysis of these garments, along with the other items in the trunk, will tell us much about the occupants of the House E.



Among the artifacts in the trunk was the burned remains of a life insurance policy issued by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. This policy was relatively new in August 1908 (note printed 1907 date on fragment).



Metropolitan Life Insurance Company

HOME OFFICE: NEW YORK CITY.

In Consideration of the payment of the premium mentioned in the schedule below, on or before each Monday, Both hereby Agree, subject to the conditions below and on page 2 hereof, each of which is hereby made a part of this contract and contracted by the insured and every person entitled to claim hereunder to be a part hereof, and with the privileges and concessions to policy-holders on pages 2 and 3 hereof, which are hereby made part of this contract, to pay an Endowment, on the anniversary of this Policy next after the insured shall have passed the age of seventy-nine years, upon surrender of this Policy and the Premium Receipt Book, the amount stipulated in said schedule; And Both further Agree, subject to the conditions aforesaid, if the insured shall die prior to the date of the maturity of the Endowment, to pay upon receipt of proof of the death of the insured made in the manner, to the extent and upon the blanks required herein, and upon surrender of this Policy and the Premium Receipt Book, the amount stipulated in said schedule. Provided, however, that no obligation is assumed by the Company prior to the date hereof, nor unless on said date the insured is alive and in sound health; but should the proposed insured not be alive or not be in sound health on said date, any amount paid to the Company as premiums hereon shall be returned. The Company may make any payment or grant any non-forfeiture privilege provided herein to the insured, the executor or administrator, husband or wife, or any relative by blood or connection by marriage of the insured, or to any other person appearing to said Company to be equitably entitled to the same by reason of having incurred expense on behalf of the insured, or for his or her burial; and the production of a receipt signed by either of said persons, or of other proof of such payment or grant of such privilege to either of them, shall be conclusive evidence that all claims under this Policy have been satisfied.

SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO.		
Number of Policy 52872947	Date JAN. 18, 1916	Name of the Insured MARY ANTHEY.
Age next birthday 20 years	Weekly premium 10.00	Amount payable at end of Endowment period or in the event of death after six months \$180-
One-half only of the above sum payable if death occur within six calendar months from date.		
<i>In Witness Whereof, the said Metropolitan Life Insurance Company has, by its President and Secretary, signed and delivered this Policy on the date named in the said schedule.</i>		
<small>Adult Endowment Policy, payable on date of Policy after age 75. Partial Death Benefit Payable First 10 months. Distribution of Surplus Fifth Year and thereafter Annually. Form 1281-B — RA 8-1916. (2-15) April 15, 1916 P-B-1-10110</small>		

James E. Roberts Secretary

Example of similar policy, albeit dated 1916.

This is a fragment of a book found in the trunk, entitled *The Mechanics' and Laborers' Ready Reckoner* (which was originally published in 1847).



THE MECHANICS'

AND

LABORERS'

READY RECKONER.

CONTAINING

WAGES BY THE DAY, BOARD BY THE WEEK
WAGES BY THE HOUR, FORMS OF
WAGES BY MONTH, FORMS OF
WAGES BY THE YEAR, FORM OF
CONTRACT FOR BUILDING

NEW YORK.

PUBLISHED BY C. P. HILL
104 Nassau, corner of Ann.

20 WAGES BY THE DAY.

Table 23, —\$1,62½.

Showing the rate of wages from 1-4 to 6 days, at \$1,62½ per day, or \$9.25 per week.

Days.	Dols.	Cts.
1	40	1
1½	1	21½
2	1	62½
2½	2	03
3	2	43¾
3½	2	84½
4	3	25
4½	3	65½
5	4	06½
5½	4	46¾
6	4	87½
6½	5	28
7	5	68¾
7½	6	09½
8	6	50
8½	6	90½
9	7	31½
9½	7	71¾
10	8	12½
10½	8	53
11	8	93¾
11½	9	34½
12	9	75

Table 24, —\$1,68½.

Showing the rate of wages from 1-4 to 6 days, at \$1,68½ per day, or \$10.11 per week.

Days.	Dols.	Cts.
1	42	1
1½	1	26½
2	1	68½
2½	2	11
3	2	53½
3½	2	95½
4	3	37½
4½	3	79½
5	4	22
5½	4	64
6	5	06½
6½	5	48½
7	5	90½
7½	6	32½
8	6	75
8½	7	17½
9	7	59½
9½	8	01½
10	8	43½
10½	8	86
11	9	28½
11½	9	70½
12	10	12½

This is one small fragment of a nearly complete book from the trunk. Based on the limited text transcribed to date, and references to Christ, Noah, and various biblical references (including book, chapter, and verse), this probably was a Christian devotional text.



This scrap references Christ, and the book of Acts.

...from the beginning...
...should give Him loving...
...for by His very loving...
...obedience...
...In His image...
...condemned...
...abhorrent...
...he never...

Transcribed fragment of text

Among the items from the trunk was this stack of three similarly sized books with identical covers—potentially suggesting a three-volume set. Unfortunately the subject matter of these three books is unknown.



Although the subject matter of the three books is unknown, one of the books had a signature across its top apparently of its owner—a Jeff Sammack [?]. Unfortunately, no information has been found regarding Mr. Sammack or the Sammack family in Springfield.



One of the more intriguing class of artifacts from the trunk was its *jewelry*. The jewelry included multiple brooches, a collar stud, several sets of cufflinks, and a 14 carot gold wedding ring.

Cufflinks



Oval and round brooches,
all of same style



Toys recovered from in the trunk included small pressed wood dominoes, and three small rubber balls.



This advertising pocket knife was found in close proximity to the trunk. It was a promotional item for the *Broderick and Bascom Rope Company*, a St. Louis firm that was established in 1876. The firm manufactured “wire rope.”



BRODERICK & BASCOM ROPE CO.,
—MANUFACTURERS OF—

**“PATENT STEEL”
ROPE.**

THE MOST DUR-
ABLE ROPE
MADE.

IT HAS NO
EQUAL.

AND ALL GRADES OF
Iron and Steel Ropes and Street-Railway Cables
ST. LOUIS, MO.

A second concentration of artifacts was found in Test 11, and included a small marble slab (believed to represent the remains of a marble-topped dresser) and casters. These two images depict the burned floor boards, floor joists, and remnants of the marble-topped dresser (with remnant burned clothing).



Bureaus and Dressers.

72550 Bureau, antique finish, four drawers, no mirror; height, 3 ft. 7 in.; width, 3 ft. 1 in.; weight, about 75 pounds. Price, complete.\$5.00

A good line of dressers to go with iron beds.

Unlike the trunk, the only items present in the dresser were the remains of several fabric garments. As with the fabrics from the trunk, these fragments are being sorted by individual garment—such as this two blouses. The garments appear to represent predominately women's clothing.



Two coal buckets (or “hods”), and a cluster of unfired shotgun shells were also recovered from the floor of House E.



U. M. C. "Walsrode" Paper Shell.
(Salmon.)



47350 U. M. C. Walsrode Paper Shell, Salmon Color No. 3, primer and battery cup, made especially for any proper charge of Walsrode powder. It is not adapted to any other powder.

—100 in a box—	
12 Gauge, 2 1/2 in.	Per box. \$7.00
12 Gauge, 2 1/2 in.	Per doz. \$0.70
12 Gauge, 2 1/2 in.	Per doz. \$0.50
12 Gauge, 2 1/2 in.	Per doz. \$0.75

U. M. C. Smokeless Paper Shells.
(Salmon.)



47351 The New U. M. C. Smokeless Red or Salmon Color Paper Shell, made expressly for (SS) smokeless powder and the best low-priced shell for E. C. Schultz and Wood powders, using the Long, reserve No. 3 primer made by the U. M. C. Company, only. With "Nitro" powder of any kind this is much the *quickest* and strongest shell now upon the market for the price. See that your shells take the LONG No. 3 PRIMER, for they are *much* the best. (The long No. 3 primer is twice as long as other primers.)

12 gauge, 2 1/2 in., per box of 100, Weight 2 1/4 lbs.	
	\$0.83
	\$7.80

Winchester "Leader" Paper Shell.



47358 Winchester Leader Smokeless Paper Shell, can be reloaded; for nitro or black powders; using No. 3 W. nitro primer.

Per 100 Per 1,000	
12 gauge, 2 1/2 in.	\$0.83 \$7.80
12 gauge, 2 1/2 in.	.80 8.00
12 gauge, 3 in.	1.00 9.00
10 gauge, 2 1/2 in.	.80 8.50
10 gauge, 3 in.	1.00 9.00
10 gauge, 2 1/2 in.	.85 8.25

Winchester "Blue" Rival Paper Shells.



47359 Winchester Blue Rival Paper Shells, waterproof, quick and reliable, using No. 3 W. primer; can be reloaded; for black or nitro powders.

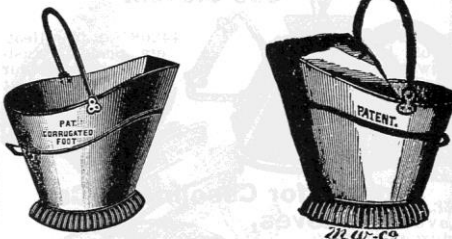
Per 100 Per 1,000	
12 gauge, 2 1/2 in.	\$0.58 \$5.39
12 gauge, 2 1/2 in.	.49 4.45
12 gauge, 3 in.	.54 5.30
12 gauge, 3 in.	.65 5.90
10 gauge, 2 1/2 in.	.54 5.30

Rival Paper Shells.



E No. 57.

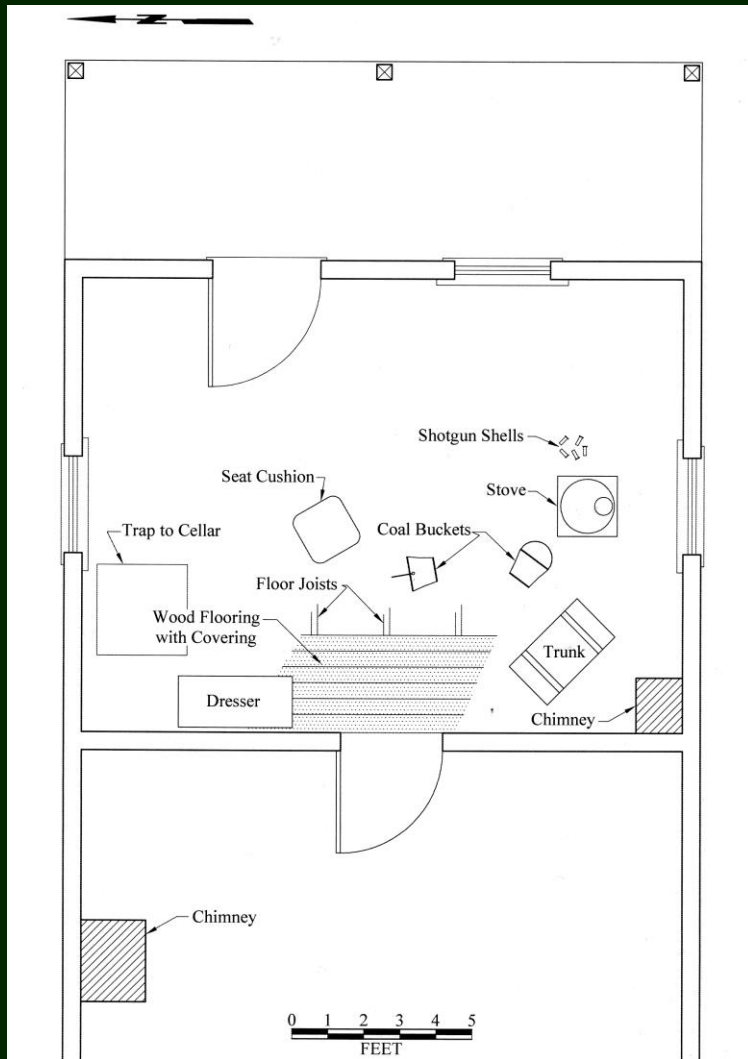
Coal Hods.



44380 Open Coal Hods, japanned. We do not sell less than one dozen at dozen price. 16 in.

Each Per doz.	
17 inch, each	\$0.18 1.80
17 inch, each	.20 2.10
18 inch, each	.25 2.50
Per dozen	2.50

44384



The excavation of House E has resulted in the partial reconstruction of the floor plan of the front portion of this house, as it appeared on the day of the riots in August 1908.

This political lapel pin was recovered from the burned floor of House D.



Charles Deenen
was elected to the
Governor's Office
in 1905. He had
sought the Black
vote.

During the Phase II investigations, a nearly complete ceramic table setting was recovered from House B. The artifacts suggest that the house may have been ransacked prior to the fire.



Medals recovered from the fire deposits of House B.



Illinois Militia and/or National Guard “Long and Honorable Service Medal” (center); “Spanish-American War, Cuba Campaign Medal” (Center and Right); Issued to a member of the 8th Regiment, which was composed solely of African American soldiers and officers—and was the first in U.S. History to be officered by black soldiers!

Black soldiers served gallantly in the Cuba campaign. Although the 8th Illinois did not arrive in time to see combat, they served with honor as the Army of Occupation at Santiago. **Robert H. Wright**—an occupant of House B at the time of the riots—was a member of that regiment in Cuba.



Some of our brave colored Boys who helped to free Cuba.

Educational Outreach has been a large part of the Phase III mitigation strategy. In June, we held an open house for public viewing of the excavations.



Dr. Lynn Fisher's (Department of Sociology/Anthropology; UIS) *Introduction to Archaeology* class (Left).

Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum's Summer Camp visit to the site (right).



U.S. Representative Rodney Davis visiting the site.



U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth visiting the site.



The project has bipartisan support for creation of the *Springfield Race Riot National Historic Monument*, which would memorialize the events that transpired that fateful weekend (“Lest We Forget”), and to commemorate the formation of the NAACP.

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 139

To establish the Springfield Race Riot National Historic Monument in the State of Illinois, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
JANUARY 3, 2019

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To establish the Springfield Race Riot National Historic Monument in the State of Illinois, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Springfield Race Riot National Historic Monument Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) HISTORIC MONUMENT.—The term “Historic Monument” means the Springfield Race Riot

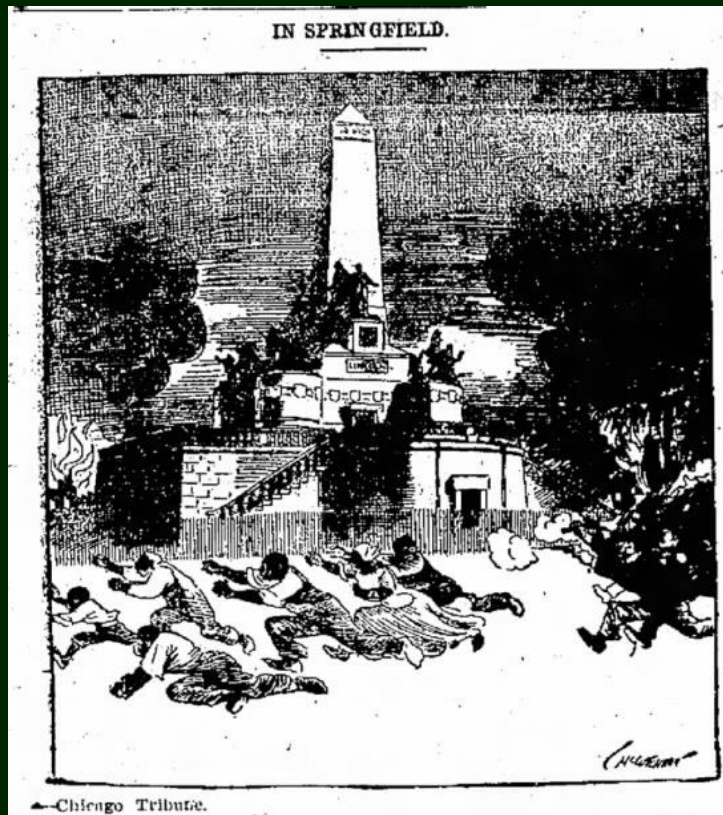
[Click here to view a video of one memorial proposal.](#)



Teresa Haley (President, Illinois NAACP), U.S. Representative Davis, and Dr. Carla Hayden (Librarian of Congress)—discussing the significance of archaeological remains recovered from the Phase II investigations.



THE PERCEIVED “REALITY” OF THE PRESS



Contemporary press described residential area as the *Badlands*... *infested* by negroes... living in *huts and shanties*... *disreputable*...

“It was not the fact of the whites' hatred toward the negroes, *but of the negroes' own misconduct, general inferiority or unfitness for free institutions that were at fault*” (*Illinois State Journal*, as cited in Merritt 2008:54).

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL “REALITY”

The archaeological research in Houses A-E illustrates a very different picture—a picture detailing individuals/families of color trying to survive in a community which was rife with racial bigotry and hatred, and sometimes making decisions that are at odds with today’s standards. In the archaeology we see evidence of the victims...

Political Activity and/or Engagement

Service to Community

Service to Country (Military Service)

Religious Devotion and/or Conviction

Integration into Middle Class Respectability

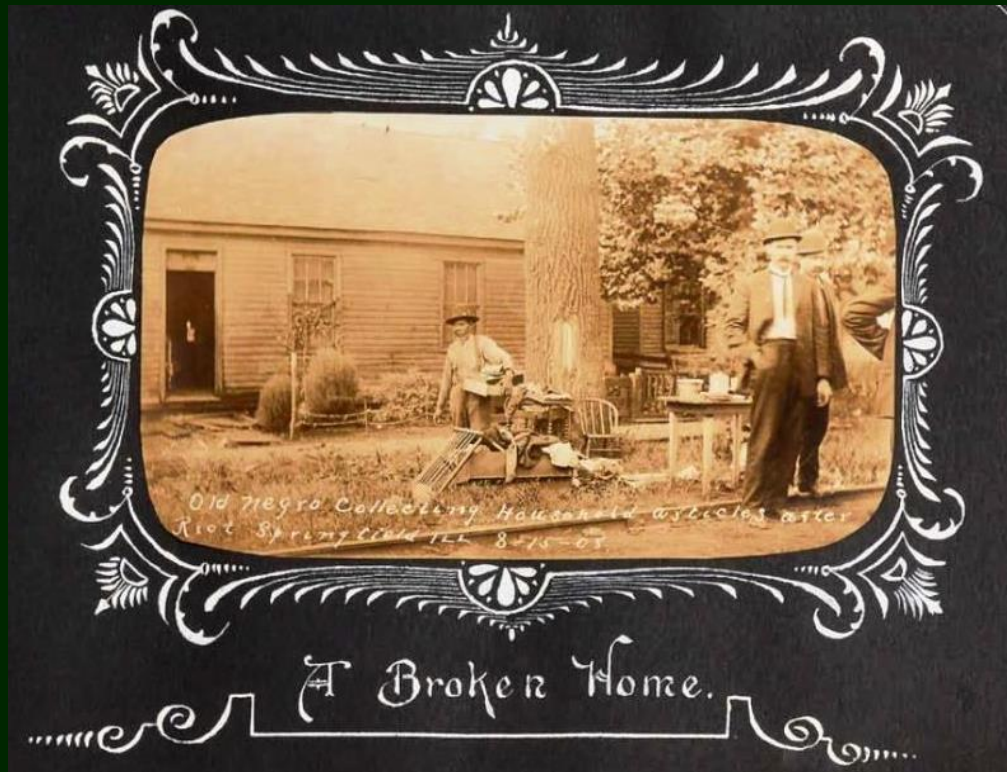


“Springfield had no shame. She stood for the action of the mob....” (Walling, September 1908).

After the riots, people—both black and white—seldom spoke of the events that transpired on that horrific weekend. It was an event that was quickly “swept under the rug” and not talked about for a long time. By the 1970s many Springfield residents were not even aware of the event, let alone its significance.

The archaeology of the Race Riot Site has given voice to the practically anonymous individuals that experienced this horrific event, and hopefully will yield a more holistic interpretation of who the people were who had the misfortune of being caught in the middle of this historical event.

History is complex, has multiple viewpoints, and must be interpreted in its proper context. Hopefully, this research will contribute to further discussion as to who we are as a society, to understand our past so that we can improve our future—**LEST WE FORGET.**



Questions Or Comments?

Email Contact: fmansberger@comcast.net

Facebook Coverage of Project: **Fever River Research**

Reports and PowerPoint Presentations: IllinoisArchaeology.com
[Go to "Miscellaneous Papers"]