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Black Des Moines: a study of select Negro social organizations in Des Moines, Iowa, 1890-1930

John Charles Lufkin
Iowa State University

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Black Des Moines: A study of select Negro social organizations in Des Moines, Iowa, 1890-1930

by

John Charles Lufkin

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Major: History

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa

1980
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Negro Communities in the Midwest, 1890-1930

The period from about 1890 to 1930 marked the rise of Negro populations in large northern and midwestern cities, and, as a result, the ghetto's development has played an important role in shaping the Afro-American experience. During this time thousands of blacks began to leave the South, seeking a new life in cities such as Chicago, New York, Detroit and Cleveland. This migration pace accelerated during the years immediately preceding and following World War I. As black populations grew in these cities, a transformation occurred in each black community's social order, its leaders' political goals and its class alignments. This study will place the development of black Des Moines' social, religious and political institutions in perspective with the experiences of Negro society in other prominent midwestern American cities. This study will also claim that while the general pattern of black social group formation remained consistent with other cities, black Des Moines' social institutions did not develop as fully as those in the larger cities.

Des Moines had emerged as Iowa's political and economic center by the late 19th century and concurrently became the home of the state's principal black leaders, the center of Iowa's small but growing Negro community. The rise of Negro
populations in Des Moines and larger American cities occurred as blacks nationwide felt the sting of white racism.

Although Yankee and midwestern politicians passed the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments, these same leaders expressed little or no will to enforce the rights guaranteed to Negroes following the Reconstruction Era. Hence, southerners instituted a variety of discriminating measures such as Jim Crow ordinances. During the 1870s and 1880s in the North, however, Negroes did make some progress in gaining full employment of their constitutionally guaranteed rights. These gains proved shortlived because race relations reached a low point from 1890 to 1930, a time in which the status of Negroes plummeted to its nadir since slavery. Whites in general perceived Negroes as biologically inferior beings. This belief found expression in political, social and economic terms.¹

National court decisions and local legal practice reflected national discrimination patterns. An 1883 Supreme Court decision declared the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional. The Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court case of 1896 constituted another blow to the black man's cause. This decision validated the separate-but-equal clause supported by southern segregationists who could thereafter legitimately promulgate Jim Crow laws which separated the races in restaurants, restrooms, public conveyances and other similar public and private places. By 1900 most southern states had passed
such ordinances. Northern states, however, did not strictly follow this trend. In fact many, including Iowa, passed civil rights acts during the 1800s and 1890s. These laws gave blacks an equal opportunity to enjoy services offered in restaurants, hotels, barbershops, public conveyances and places of amusement; but slack local enforcement as well as white indifference and hostility rendered these measures ineffective. Therefore, in most large Northern cities, including Des Moines, blacks conformed to Jim Crow ways, especially in private business, but also in many public places.²

Beginning in the 1890s, the northern Negroes' political fortunes also declined. Most blacks had joined the Republican Party following the Civil War. Yet, the party's white leaders made few attempts to alter unfavorable social and economic trends effecting Negroes. Black political participation in the South decreased drastically as traditional southern Democratic leaders resumed political power following Reconstruction. Negroes in the North fared better in the 1870s and 1880s as voters placed some blacks in local positions. By 1890, however, few Negroes won local elections, and white leaders increasingly discouraged black political participation. Also, national progressive-minded Republican presidents such as Theodore Roosevelt and William H. Taft did little to endear the hearts of blacks. Thus, northern Negroes saw their political power lessening. Most southern blacks could not even vote as
the grandfather clause, literacy tests and pool tax qualifications served as effective subterfuges of the fifteenth amendment. 3

Negro leaders reacted to these deteriorating political conditions by unintentionally fostering increased black alienation from white social and economic institutions found in northern urban centers. In the world famous Atlanta Compromise speech in 1895, America's leading Negro leader, Booker T. Washington, espoused the idea of accommodation. Washington urged his brethren to cease temporarily demanding the right to vote. Instead, he urged fellow blacks to eschew politics, accept Jim Crow laws and pursue economic and financial self-development. Through industrial education and the growth of self-reliant Negro businesses that Negro customers supported, blacks could uplift themselves economically. Washington hoped that the Negroes' gradually rising economic status would, in turn, move the race towards social and political equality. In reality, this philosophy encouraged a stronger class consciousness within the Negro community, especially in northern cities. 4

Washington's objectives for Negro advancement failed. Most southern blacks lived in a rural setting; they participated in a sharecropping system which exploited them economically, keeping them at the bottom of the economic ladder. In the North two-thirds of the Negro population lived in cities. Most male Negroes held menial, unskilled jobs in heavy industry,
while black females labored as servants or held similar jobs in the service industry. Many of these Negroes left the rural South in hopes of finding better financial opportunities, free from such manifestations of racism as lynching. But as more blacks populated the nation's leading northern industrial cities, hostility grew more pronounced through violence, threats of violence and various forms of deceit. Whites had begun to push blacks into densely populated city neighborhoods.

As hostile whites locked blacks into select sections of these northern cities, more Negro leaders, by necessity, de-emphasized mingling with whites as a part of Washington's beliefs. Instead, these leaders developed power bases within the growing black communities. As a result, Negro owned and operated businesses increased along with the growing Negro clientele. Negro business and professional men organized and led many kinds of clubs and fraternal organizations patterned after similar white groups. This development reflected a new sense of community for blacks, a social community separate from the larger city. Working class blacks and poor, transient Negroes found consolation for their plight in the churches—the leading Negro social institution whose leaders also wielded great influence. The separate, developing black communities occurred in different forms in other midwestern cities.

Scholars have just begun to reach general assumptions about the developing Negro communities in the North and the
Midwest from 1880 to 1930. These assumptions have come from single city case studies. The best of these pioneering studies have examined leading midwestern cities: Chicago, Detroit, Omaha and Cleveland. Therefore these cities and, on occasion, New York, will serve as bases of comparison to Des Moines.

Chicago attracted southern black immigrants because it was America's second largest city, the most vivid example of American civilization in the industrial age. It was the nation's railroad center, stocked with a countless array of industrial and commercial enterprises. Attending these businesses were thousands of foreign born people and Negroes, the city's largest ethnic group. The Negro population grew from 30,150 or 1.7% of the city's total population in 1900 to 44,100 or 2% in 1910. An even greater increase occurred during the following decade as the Negro population rose 148% to become 4.1% of the city's total population. This increase carried through 1930 as well. By then blacks constituted 6.9% of the city's inhabitants.7

As the presence of Negroes grew more conspicuous in Chicago, white racism emerged. For example, a pattern of discrimination in housing and occupational advancement developed. Tension between the races mounted when blacks obtained jobs as strikebreakers in the large factories and plants. Open hostility broke out in 1919, when a riot shook the city for several days, resulting in many deaths. This violent period reflected
the blacks' frustration with conditions in Chicago and the whites' determination to maintain the blacks status.  

Residential segregation and the systematic practice of Negro exclusion in Chicago's employment market also hastened the development of a ghetto. For example, only 3% of the black population could secure decent quarters, which they found along the ghetto's periphery. The remainder lived in crowded, dilapidated tenements and apartments within a tautly defined area. The only jobs Negroes could obtain were those in the domestic and service fields such as barbers, porters, launderers, waiters and janitors. Occasionally blacks secured positions in large factories, but only in a few cases did labor unions allow nonwhite members. White collar jobs proved especially difficult to obtain; Negroes made up only 1% of this segment in the labor force.

Blacks formed a community within the larger city, complete with their own separate leaders, self-sufficient businesses, separate recreational facilities and their own churches. However, as Negroes developed their own social, business and political groups in Chicago's ghetto, only a few actually achieved successful careers and were effective community leaders. They led the all-Negro civic institutions and usually supported the ideals of self-reliance and racial solidarity because they relied on the Negro community for support. An older set of leaders, who reigned before the migration years
of heightened discrimination and racial tension, relied more on white support and acceptance. The remaining Negro masses found the church the most effective Negro institutions for meeting their community as well as spiritual needs. The largest congregations were African Methodist Episcopal and Baptist. Negroes controlled and supported these institutions from the beginning. The churches strongly appealed to the masses because church activities delivered a multitude of social help programs for newcomers which filled a need other all-black social institutions did not meet. The spiritualist and store front churches especially fit these needs, and cumulatively drew more worshippers than the older churches. 10

The black experience in Detroit was similar, especially in so far as employment and housing were concerned. A small black population resided in Michigan's largest city throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, a black community generally tolerated by whites since it constituted few numbers. Detroit's black population grew steadily, like Chicago's. In 1890 Detroit had 3,431 blacks or 1.7% of the total population. Twenty years later the black population had risen almost 40%, but it was only 1.2% of the city's population. But between 1910 and 1920 black Detroit multiplied sevenfold, to 40,000, or 4% of the city's population. As in Chicago, the migration years of the World War I era left a mark on black Detroit's housing and living situation. 11 With few exceptions, Negroes
in Detroit tended to live on the city's near east side. As the leading historian on this subject put it, "Detroit's 'black bottom' became literally a city within a city; the variety and breadth of life and institutions within the black community could match that of Detroit itself." 12

Detroit's black community experienced major changes in leadership. Well-established elites with family ties going back to ante-bellum days dominated black society and identified with white society. Their social status laid tenuously between that of whites and blacks. Only black elites enjoyed the benefits of economic mobility, choosing to pursue individual ends. One observer stated that "they failed to imitate the patterns of ethnic cohesiveness that surrounded them." This deprived one of the city's largest minorities of effective leadership until emerging leaders from the middle class came into increased influence over most of Detroit's Afro-American institutions. Composed largely of prosperous wage earners and small entrepreneurs, the new Negro leaders, like those in Chicago, established close ties within the black community itself, in accordance with Booker T. Washington's ideals. 13

Church membership also reflected a growing sense of social status within Detroit's black community. Upper-class blacks worshipped either in the white churches or in one black Episcopal church. The African Methodist Episcopal churches had the largest Negro following. Composed primarily of middle
income blacks, this denomination became the largest after the World War I migration years. The Baptists drew many southern-born blacks, most of whom came from the lower stratum of black society. Black clubs and fraternal organizations represented another indication of divided black social mixing which placed black Detroit into a dual caste system. The upper-class in the splintered Negro community consisted of professionals who stressed individualism. They remained preoccupied with gaining a prestigious position in the city. Therefore, black Detroit's leaders failed to institute united activities in the whole Negro community, except in politics.\textsuperscript{14}

Upper and middle class blacks were the race's only political spokesmen in Detroit. They selfishly worked to obtain token positions for themselves to enhance their prestige. Those blacks who won political office through election or secured an appointment through patronage remained content to press for limited demands. During the nineteenth century black political participation was largely united, but fragmenting interests by 1900, which reflected the Negro community's leadership struggle, resulted in no election of any blacks to political office from 1900 to the 1920s. Thus, the political failures of nineteenth century Negro leaders and changes in black community leadership significantly altered Negro social organizations which became all black in composition. As a result of these developments, blacks occupied a
weak position from which to demand solid, meaningful conces-
sions from the dominant white Republican majority in Detroit. 15

To the west of Des Moines lay Nebraska's largest city, Omaha, in which 5,000 out of the city's 124,000 were black in 1900. By 1919, over 10,000 blacks out of nearly 200,000 represented a significant sized ethnic group in the city. As in Chicago and Detroit, residential confinement practices began appearing against blacks in the early 1900s. This trend became more pronounced between 1910 and 1920. Also like their brethren in Chicago and Detroit, Omaha's blacks could only secure domestic and unskilled jobs that afforded little or no mobility. Despite limited opportunities for Negroes in employment, enough blacks competed with whites to generate racial tensions that peaked in 1919. Assorted disturbances kept the city tense that summer. Three persons died, including the lynching of one black. The consequence of white segregation in Omaha, and sporadic interracial violence, was that blacks never blended into the mainstream of white Omaha as most European immigrants did. Hence, Omaha's blacks developed their own separate community within the larger city. 16

These same conditions surfaced in other industrial cities such as Cleveland, Ohio, where the Negro community underwent a marked change from 1870 to 1915. Like Chicago and Detroit, Cleveland had emerged as a large urban center, the sixth largest city in the United States. As Cleveland grew, so did
its Negro population. The period of greatest growth occurred from 1910 to 1930. A 300% increase in Negroes from 8,448 to 34,451 occurred from 1910 to 1920. By 1930 there were nearly 70,000 Negroes residing in Cleveland. Concurrent with the growth of Cleveland's black population, the city's blacks could reside only in certain neighborhoods; unlike Chicago and Omaha, Cleveland's blacks did not suffer violent actions directed to restrict the size of segregated neighborhoods, largely because efforts by whites to segregate were not as dramatic as to precipitate great racial tensions. Yet other discriminatory trends remained. Along with residential segregation blacks could only obtain the semi-skilled jobs which accompanied the city's burgeoning steel industry and other jobs in manufacturing plants.\textsuperscript{17}

As blacks suffered from the effects of institutional segregation and discrimination at the hands of Cleveland's white community, class lines also appeared within the Negro community. This separation divided Negroes into three distinct groups—an upper, middle and lower strata. These black Clevelanders differentiated themselves in church membership, social group associations and even residence. The first black church was an African Methodist Episcopal denomination, founded in 1830; by 1916 there were seventeen Negro churches. Black elites attended a congregational church or a Episcopal church, while most other Negroes joined either the African Methodist Episcopal church or the Baptist churches. The latter grew
appreciably between 1890 and 1915. Lower class blacks usually joined the Baptist sects because their leaders helped the growing number of newcomers from the South. The elites also marked their distinct associations by joining specific Negro fraternal lodges, middle class working blacks joined a different set of lodges. 18

A change in black Cleveland's class lines had occurred by 1915, similar to that in Chicago and Detroit: a new set of leaders, chiefly businessmen, began dominating Negro life. They relied more on business patronage from blacks, unlike the older leaders. But many professional blacks still had ties with whites, and unlike Chicago, the new set of leaders did not eliminate the older leaders. Hence this rivalry further splintered the black community until the new leaders had triumphed by 1930. During this struggle, a clearly marked ghetto existed in Cleveland. 19

Hence, by the end of the 1920s a clear, discernible pattern had emerged in black communities in large northern cities. An older order of leaders with community roots predating the Civil War previously composed the upper crust of Negro society; members of this group usually had ties with white society. The emergent set of twentieth century leaders who usurped the former elites followed Booker T. Washington's tenets stressing economic racial upliftment. By turning inward—that is, associating with other Negroes—these new Negro leaders and
their followers enjoyed some financial gains, but their fail-
ures outweighed their gains. Negroes still did not blend into
American society as immigrants had, and Negroes did not over-
throw the weight of prejudice and its tangible manifestations.
Their political gains were rare. Thus black masses turned to
their churches for the only enduring source of comfort and
guidance in a world of racial and interracial separation,
employment discrimination and residential segregation. Of
course, these developments did not unfold in exact chronologi-
cal order in each city, but the patterns were similar.

Chicago stands as a case of a Negro ghetto's development
in its extreme form. While residential segregation occurred
in the other cities mentioned as well as most other industrial
northern urban centers, the extent of segregation varied in
degree as well as in time. The development of black Des Moines'
segregated community occurred in a fashion more similar to that
of Cleveland. Likewise, community-wide social groupings within
the Negro community developed like Cleveland, Chicago, and
Detroit, but black Des Moines' social institutions never
developed as fully or as rigidly by class. For one reason,
its leadership ranks were even smaller than those in larger
northern cities. Also, the remaining blacks did not seem to
unite with their leaders often enough. Thus, with a lack of
effective, enduring leaders, black social institutions did not
flourish. With these larger patterns in perspective, we should
turn to the black experience in Des Moines.
CHAPTER II. THE NEGRO COMMUNITY
IN DES MOINES, 1890-1930

United States soldiers established a fort on the site of Des Moines on the eve of central Iowa's settlement in 1843. A treaty consummated the year before with the Sac and Fox Indian tribes gave whites the right to settle a huge region of central Iowa territory beginning in 1845. The army decided to establish a military post in the heart of this land cession to protect the Indians from encroaching upon white settlers and to promote the area's orderly, peaceful settlement. The forks of the Raccoon and Des Moines Rivers provided a suitable spot to dispense these duties. 20

From Fort Des Moines' inception, pioneer settlers considered it an important locus in the central Iowa region. It soon emerged as a political and economic center. Its strategic location amidst a rapidly developing agricultural state helped shape the city's development. Des Moines became a land office for filing settlement and homestead claims; hence, thousands of people swarmed into the city. Not all of them left to farm. In 1857, there were 3,500 inhabitants, a large enough population to convince state legislators that Des Moines should become the new capital instead of Iowa City since Des Moines was near the state's center. The designation assured the city of subsequent growth. Additional agricultural and economic
developments pushed Des Moines into the forefront of the state's financial life by the end of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{21}

One factor, making this possible, was the arrival in 1866 of the first railroad into Des Moines. It connected the capital to cities in eastern Iowa, heightening Des Moines' commercial importance. Connections with other transcontinental railroad lines made the city a regional railroad hub in the heart of America's most productive and prosperous farm region. Hence, Des Moines came to occupy a crucial position in the developing national and international agriculture business. Farm products grown nearby went from Des Moines to eastern and European markets. Local commercial businesses catered to the needs of farmers living in the surrounding area.\textsuperscript{22}

In spite of these impressive economic gains, industrial development in Des Moines was meager in comparison to cities like Chicago, Omaha, Detroit and Cleveland. Those industries that did develop did not attract thousands of unskilled or semiskilled laborers who would have caused dramatic population growth. One industry, however, did bring in many workers: coal mining. Starting in the 1840s, it was a principal industry from the 1880s until the early 1900s. Thousands of men worked the mines in the Des Moines area. In fact, operators employed more workers than any other industry. Some mines operated right in the city or at its outskirts; others were scattered throughout Polk County.\textsuperscript{23}
Two other industries, still important today, developed simultaneously during the late nineteenth century. The first, insurance, did not attract thousands of unskilled workers as compared to giant manufacturing establishments. Also, the supporting industry for insurance, printing, did not require a large labor pool. 24

Accompanying these economic developments came the city's physical expansion. Originally settled at the forks of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers, the city initially grew north of the Raccoon, and both east and west of the Des Moines River. In 1880 over 22,000 persons lived in the city. This number nearly tripled by 1900, with a population of over 62,000. Successive decades of growth pushed the population to 126,000 by 1920, far behind that of cities caught in the industrial revolution. 25

Like most American cities, Des Moines had a potpourri of ethnic groups sprinkled throughout the city. The Swedes settled mainly on the east side of the Des Moines River. They displayed ethnic awareness by organizing their own social organizations like Grandview school, a theological college, and Evangelical and Lutheran churches. The Swedes also started their own businesses, by successfully becoming a part of the city's financial mainstream. A fairly large contingent of Italians also lived in the city. They occupied the village of Sevastopol which became a part of Des Moines after annexation
early in the twentieth century. The Italians, like the Swedes, exhibited unique ethnic traits. They published an Italian language newspaper and founded their own social organizations. Also like the Swedes, the Italians became a part of the city's overall economy. 26

One of Des Moines' largest ethnic groups, the Negroes, made its presence felt at the turn of this century; but the first Negroes to arrive in the city came in 1843--two women slaves owned by an Indian interpreter for a major at the fort. During the 1850s, Des Moines was an Underground Railroad stopping place for slaves who fled northward to escape bondage. The intrepid abolitionist John Brown escorted a group through the city in 1858; other abolitionist sympathizers housed the slaves on their trek to Canada. About 1862, the first band of thirteen runaway slaves from Missouri made their home in Des Moines. Among them was an early leader in the black community, Jefferson Logan. Logan's group found three other Negroes living in the city. One was Adeline Henderson who came to the pioneer town and worked for many of the families as a servant. Another early settler, who came a few years later, Robert N. Hyde, became one of the city's most successful black businessmen. 27

By 1880, 672 Negroes resided in Polk County, most of whom lived in Des Moines. By this time, blacks had begun to form separate institutions. There were two Negro churches before
1870, one Methodist, one Baptist. Burns Methodist Church started in 1866; Des Moines' small Negro community used it both as a social center and as a school until Negroes could attend public schools in the 1870s. Another form of racial expression occurred in the 1880s when a black-owned newspaper, the Rising Sun, began publishing in 1883. It lasted only a few years, but gave Negro leaders impetus to start another periodical. The Avalanche, whose editors supported the Republican Party, appeared in 1891. Another paper followed the Avalanche three years after its demise, a paper that became one of the oldest black newspapers in the country. The Iowa State Bystander commenced publication in 1894, and its endurance reflected the development of the Negro community in Des Moines displaying pride and ethnic awareness.

The black community continued to establish separate social institutions in Des Moines throughout the early twentieth century because its population continued to grow. Characteristics of Des Moines' Negro population appeared similar to black communities in Chicago, Cleveland and Detroit. Negroes in Des Moines remained secondary in economic and social status compared to the remainder of the city's residents. Evidence of these factors appeared in the low rate of Negro homeownership and mounting residential segregation by the 1920s in Des Moines. Furthermore, job opportunities remained limited for blacks, as did the chance for Negroes to operate their own
The increased migration of southern-born blacks who possessed skills suited only for general labor jobs contributed to keeping Negroes in a position at the bottom of the city's social and economic class.

But unlike other urban areas in the Midwest, Des Moines' black population did not undergo a dramatic growth spurt upon the eve of World War I. The increase occurred more gradually—yet the same pattern of segregation and limited employment and educational opportunities arose in Des Moines that never fit the designation as an industrial metropolis.

The figures in Table 1 demonstrate the black populations' steady growth from 1900 to 1925.

In 1900, over 1,600 blacks made up nearly three percent of the city's total population, a higher percentage in comparison to most larger midwestern cities. This figure rose to 3.8% or 4,062 by 1915. In the following ten years, the largest increase of blacks occurred: by 1925, over 6,000 Negroes represented 4.2% of the city's 141,441 inhabitants. Proportionately, this number was less than the peak year 1920, but the largest number of Negroes residing in the city was in 1925, a time when black institutions had developed as more cohesive social units and when the whole city had grown significantly.

A comparative description of Negro residential location in Des Moines from 1905 to 1925 showed the beginnings of segregation in 1905, and shifting places of black settlement pointed
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total county population</th>
<th>Total city population</th>
<th>Negro population in county</th>
<th>Negro population in city</th>
<th>Percent Negro population of city</th>
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<td>1880</td>
<td>42,395</td>
<td>22,408</td>
<td>672</td>
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<td>1890</td>
<td>65,410</td>
<td>50,093</td>
<td>1,194</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
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<td>1900</td>
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<td>62,139</td>
<td>2,041</td>
<td>1,675</td>
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<td>1910</td>
<td>110,438</td>
<td>86,368</td>
<td>3,591</td>
<td>2,930</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<td>1915</td>
<td>129,121</td>
<td>105,652</td>
<td>4,488</td>
<td>4,062</td>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>154,029</td>
<td>126,468</td>
<td>5,837</td>
<td>5,512</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>169,146</td>
<td>141,441</td>
<td>6,042</td>
<td>6,060</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>172,837</td>
<td>142,559</td>
<td>5,713</td>
<td>5,428</td>
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to signs of stratification in 1925. In 1905 well over half of the city's Negroes lived in wards three and four located west of the Des Moines River. Most of those who did not reside in these wards either lived in the second, fifty or sixth ward.

As Table 2 indicates, comparatively few blacks lived in wards eight and nine. Only maids, housekeepers, servants, chauffeurs and other domestic laborers who generally resided in their employer's residence lived in the city's affluent areas. Most other domestic laborers lived in the populous black sections. The city's more affluent and prosperous whites lived in ward one, an area of Des Moines with a small black representation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>No. of Negroes</th>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>No. of Negroes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>203</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,438</td>
<td></td>
<td>295</td>
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*a1905 Iowa State Census Manuscripts.*
By 1925, Negroes lived in only a limited number of neighborhoods. In fact, by this time, segregation had become increasingly rigid. Examining black residential location by precinct in Table 3 revealed this segregation. In most of the populous black wards, Negroes usually resided in one or two of at least six precincts. For example, in ward three over five hundred of 879 blacks lived in two of that ward's eight precincts. This tendency was even more pronounced in the city's two most populous black wards. Well over nine-hundred of ward four's 1,016 blacks lived in two of eight precincts. On the east side of the river, ward seven had the largest black population with 1,602 persons. Over one thousand resided in precinct one and over three hundred in precinct five. The most evenly distributed area of blacks was ward five, located along the west bank of the Des Moines River. In those precincts carrying a small proportion of the ward's total black population, blacks usually resided on one street, or in one part of a neighborhood. Hence, in examining the city's black population only by ward in 1925, a fairly even dispersion appeared deceptively evident; but Negro residents who lived in these wards could see their living space narrowing.

Besides increasing segregation between 1905 and 1925, another demographic change was the significant increase of blacks on the city's east side. By 1925, a little over half of Des Moines' blacks dwelt on the east side, where the local
Table 3. Negro population by ward and precinct, Des Moines, 1925\(^a\)

**West side**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward 1</th>
<th>Ward 2</th>
<th>Ward 3</th>
<th>Ward 4</th>
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<td>Precinct #</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>1,019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**East side**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward 6</th>
<th>Ward 7</th>
<th>Ward 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Precinct #</td>
<td>Precinct #</td>
<td>Precinct #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>194</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>1,602</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)1925 Iowa State Census Manuscripts.
Klu Klux Klan emerged. Hence, Negro residents lived on both sides of Des Moines, and no clearly defined ghetto emerged. This trend was unlike other cities, which usually contained only one or two sectors of black residents. Instead, Des Moines' Negroes lived in clusters or multiple nuclei, not predominantly in one ward, but in one or two precincts.

The balance of Negroes living in both the east and west sides was achieved within a relatively brief time. As late as 1917, most Negroes probably lived on the city's more populous west side. There were also two other sectors of Des Moines in which blacks resided. In a Sevastopol neighborhood on the city's south side lived a group of inter-married couples. Social pressures applied by both blacks and whites dictated that these couples congregate in this neighborhood only. The second area consisted of a settlement of poor whites and indigent Mexicans—all of whom mixed indiscriminately in, as viewed by a contemporary black, a "filthy and wretched environment."29

Black homeownership continued to increase in spite of restricted residency location through the 1920s. However, black owners experienced a unique set of problems. When most sections in Des Moines remained open to black settlement from the late nineteenth century until about 1910, blacks could buy a home and live where they desired as long as they could afford the home's purchase price.30 Reports in the Iowa State
Bystander, however, did allude to problems in housing discrimination by white real estate dealers as early as 1905. But one editorial blamed blacks for this condition and scolded the race for not meeting mortgage payments; this fact, the writer contended, served to reinforce a poor reputation for all blacks. Naturally, whites would prove reluctant to sell or rent property to Negroes. Future Bystander editorials and reports also complained of similar problems Negroes confronted while attempting to purchase a home.

To exacerbate the problem of segregation in Negro home buying during the first two decades of the twentieth century, Negroes usually lived in houses of lower quality compared to those owned by whites. Charles Ruff, a Negro printer and linotype operator for both the Bystander and the Des Moines Register and Tribune, addressed the homeownership and segregation question in a 1908 study of black Des Moines. Ruff indicated a trend toward increased Negro homeownership at that time. But, he also observed a mixture of "good homes as well as indifferent and bad ones among the Des Moines Negroes, very naturally a larger proportion of indifferent and bad than among the whites. Among the 700 to 750 Negro families in Des Moines, it is estimated that from 175 to 200 owned homes . . . . The poorest are perhaps poorer than the poorer white homes." The five hundred black families who did not own homes "do not live half so well as the renting white families." Ruff complained
of widespread discrimination against blacks who sought to rent in desirable districts. White landlords also allowed the property rented by blacks to remain in disrepair. ³²

Half of the Negro homeowners listed their homes' value in 1905; these figures indicate a wide range in dollar value. The two with the highest value listed at $5,000. Twelve others owned homes valued between two and five thousand dollars. These two price categories represented a homeowner who probably received a moderate to high income. Most of the remaining homes ranged in value from $500 to $1,000. ² In 1910, 227 Negro families in Polk County owned their own homes. Of these, 114 were free, 79 encumbered and 34 unencumbered. The encumbered figure represented over 31% of the homeowners. Also, thirteen blacks on the average lived in each home. Included in the ranks of the homeowners were three farmers who together owned a little over one hundred acres of land. ³³

Another study conducted by a Negro ten years following Ruff offered a different perspective. Victor Cools found no essential differences between poor white men's and poor black men's homes; both lived in "revolting" conditions. But the white man's income was larger and he could find a house in any city locality and pay a lower rent. ³⁴

In 1917, two black real estate dealers revealed the problem of home encumbrance. A black buyer did not receive a title
deed or abstract on the property until he completed all installments. He would only possess a contract stipulating the installment terms. Many of these contracts included provisions declaring that the occupant must meet obligations pertaining to taxes, water, insurance and repairs. Even after making the last payment, the grantor, probably the mortgage company, maintained an option to revoke the contract if the grantee failed to comply with all provisions; thus, the prospective black owner would completely forfeit his investment. Since there was no standard contract, real estate dealers could use this forfeiture device to discourage a Negro family from buying in certain areas of town by writing an unfair contract or one impossible to honor. 35

Homeownership figures for the year 1925 indicated that more blacks owned their dwellings than in 1910, and more blacks listed their homes as free than as encumbered. As the figures in Table 4 showed, almost seven hundred Negroes owned their homes. Nearly four hundred homes did not have mortgage payments due. 36

Hence, in looking at black homeownership, there was a steady increase up to 1925 despite evidence suggesting discrimination against buyers in the predominantly white areas of town. Still, a large proportion of blacks accepted rented living quarters. Apparently, they could not purchase and own their own dwelling.
Table 4. Negro homeowners by ward and precinct, free and mortgaged, 1925

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Precinct</th>
<th>Free</th>
<th>Mortgaged</th>
<th>Ward total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 &amp; 6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3 &amp; 7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>63</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2 &amp; 4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>342</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{a}\)1925 Iowa State Census Manuscripts.
The increased but still limited number of blacks who could not afford to buy a home suggested that Negroes had restricted job opportunities in Des Moines. Some fields remained almost exclusively closed. Those occupations blacks did secure were usually in the area of domestic help, personal service, unskilled and semi-skilled labor and trades which afforded limited chances for increased salaries. Table 5 shows the employment situation for Negroes in 1905.

Those blacks included as skilled laborers, farmers and government employees such as policemen and firemen consisted of a tiny percentage of the work force. General labor was the predominant occupation listed in the area of trade and transportation; this classification signified the unskilled and semi-skilled work class. Hence, Negroes found domestic and personal service jobs. Women usually worked as maids, washers and seamstresses; men as janitors, cooks, porters and barbers. Porters worked for the city's busy railroad stations and numerous hotels. Black barbers ran successful shops because they attracted a significant white clientele. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Negroes dominated this occupation in Des Moines.

But black dominance declined during the first two decades of the twentieth century. In 1907, there were ten blackowned barber shops. Fourteen years later, as the city's Negro population began to reach its peak, blacks owned only eleven
Table 5. Selected Negro occupations, Des Moines, 1925\textsuperscript{a}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percent of Negro labor force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation and trade</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamsters, coachmen</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers, unspecified</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bricklayers and masons</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail dealers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public service</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skilled labor</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoemaker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeweler</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stenographer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic and personal service</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janitors</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks and waiters</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servants</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbers</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porters</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, unspecified</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miners</td>
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<td>12.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housewives</td>
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<td>Students</td>
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<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaccounted</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a}1905 Iowa Census Manuscripts, Polk County.
barbershops. But as early as 1909, one black saw a trend away from Negro dominance in the city's tonsorial business. While addressing the Negro Lyceum, Dr. John Williams pointed to the decline in the black barber business and other unspecified occupations which he indicated blacks had formerly dominated: "I have no doubt each and all of you can recall the time when the Negro fared better." Williams explained this assertion by maintaining that blacks did not utilize their talents to full advantage; they lost traditionally held jobs, but not exclusively because of prejudice. Instead, Williams saw a failure of his brethren to emulate "the ability of . . . foreigners to increase the importance of the places sought and captured." He also observed that the Swedes had come to dominate the janitor business in 1909 because the Swedes organized the trade and efficiently trained their own, nudging out the unorganized blacks. The same happened in the barber business: whites "by organization have driven every Negro barber from the business district." Furthermore, Williams declared that white shoe polishers had supplanted Negro bootblacks by transforming a "menial occupation into a well-organized operation." 

In 1914, Negro barber Sam Lewis provided further comment concerning black employment in Des Moines. Lewis delivered a speech at a Negro Businessman's League meeting entitled "Forty Years in the Barber Business in Des Moines." He lamented the general scarcity of Negro barbers in the city. Young blacks,
he maintained, seemed uninterested in learning the trade. Lewis predicted that if interest in this occupation among blacks had not waned his race would not have lost the barber trade. "When I first came to Des Moines all of the best shops were owned by colored men and they were having good trade, but could not take care of the trade with so few barbers. So now we have but a few shops . . . ."40

Although Negroes lost the monopoly on barbering and other services related jobs, coal mine owners in the Des Moines vicinity and surrounding townships readily sought Negroes to labor in their mines; in fact, from 1900 to 1925, more black males worked in Polk County's numerous mines than in any other single occupation. For example, in 1905, twelve percent or 275 Negroes worked in coal mines. Some resided in the city but most lived in camps located near the mines. In 1905, twenty-three percent of the county's blacks lived in townships outside Des Moines, as the figures in Tables 5 and 6 indicate.

Life in these camps was probably unhealthy and monotonous; but workers of both races participated in union activities. Negroes could join the United Mine Workers Union locally as well as nationally.41 In fact, this was the only labor union in the Des Moines area to admit Negroes freely and to share in the administration of union affairs.42 A black representative of Polk County even attended the state miner's convention as early as 1900. Two years later, the Saylor camp sent two
Table 6. Negro population in townships, Polk County, 1905

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Township</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent of County population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elkhart</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Mile</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saylor</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walnut</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webster</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)1905 Iowa Census Manuscripts, Polk County.

deleagtes to another state miner's convention. In 1903, a deleagte from Des Moines sat at the United Mine Workers' national convention. The following year the national convention convened in Des Moines; of the seven Negroes attending as local representatives, one was a leader from Saylor, James James.\(^43\)

Aside from their union participation, blacks in the larger mining camps formed their own social institutions apart from Des Moines Negro community. One of the largest camps was at Enterprise in Douglas township with about eighty families in 1904. Blacks in the Saylor camp also organized political groups; one was the McKinley Club formed in 1900, which included black and white members. Although union leaders allowed
for Negro representation and fair treatment, occasional racial disturbances did occur. One in 1905 happened because, as the Bystander stated, "simple hatred or prejudice . . . the failure to grant equal opportunity" stirred trouble. The Bystander, however, did not disclose any details of this incident. 44

Despite union representation in the mines, blacks initially received little welcome. As in the case of union admittance in Chicago, many Negro miners procured positions as strikebreakers. Naturally this aroused bitterness among the white union workers who eventually admitted blacks in face of the realization that the union carried more influence and strength with greater numbers. The Bystander's editor discouraged Negro miners from joining the union because its leaders repeatedly expressed a desire to block black admittance. Now, the Bystander claimed, union leaders only sought to use the Negroes to further the leaders' and white miners' interests. 45

For miners and most other Negro job holders in the Des Moines vicinity, full employment was not a constant reality. Even males with year-around jobs experienced difficulties in supporting their families. Eighty-eight percent of the adult labor force was either fully employed or only without work up to three months. About fifteen percent found work from six to eight months out of the year. Probably in most cases the husband's wages proved insufficient to meet all expenses,
necessitating a second income. Therefore, over seventy percent of the married black women worked. In fact, in 1905 about nine of ten adult Negroes in Des Moines worked, including most adult women. Many children frequently contributed to family income as soon as they reached working age, probably working part time. 46

One reason for unemployment figures for many blacks was the seasonal character of the mining industry. During periods of exceptionally cold weather some mines closed. During times of inactivity, the company officials would allow workers to stay in the company owned camp houses, which were usually small one-story frame structures. Yet when a coal vein exhausted, the mine owners would naturally close the camp, closing the town and forcing its workers to travel to another camp in search of similar work. Norwoodville was such a tiny community north of Des Moines founded in 1900. Its population included about fifty to one hundred Negroes out of a total of two hundred inhabitants. By the mid-1920s, the mine yielded no more coal and its workers had to leave. During the interim between jobs, months of unemployment time increased. 47

But not all of Des Moines' Negroes toiled for limited wages. Like black communities in most sizable cities, there were some Negro professionals who earned a comfortable living even by white standards. This tiny group also filled the black community's leadership ranks. Among the more successful
were the lawyers and a few doctors who reaped the benefits of educational opportunities closed to most blacks. A more diverse, but very small contingent within the professional ranks financially were black businessmen. Some enjoyed successful careers, but most struggled to survive the pressing problems caused by little cooperation among Negro businessmen and limited black business patronage.

Negro businesses increased in number during the early twentieth century. Zealous Bystander editors revealed what they considered as encouraging business statistics about the Negro community by describing the more prominent businesses owned by Des Moines' Negroes. As Table 7 shows, blacks owned and operated only a few shops. But ten years later, Negro observer G. Victor Cools reported an upward trend: thirty Polk County blacks operated their own businesses. In 1917, more gains and the existence of businesses that did not appear in the previous studies showed further improvement for the black businessman; Negro store ownership included pool rooms, bars, hotels and a drug store. Table 9 for 1921 shows yet more businesses that did not previously appear in association with the Negro.

A principal reason for the limited number of Negro owned businesses in the first decade of the twentieth century was the small clientele of black customers. During the late 1890s and early 1900s, Bystander editorials regularly consisted of
Table 7. Negro owned businesses, Des Moines, 1907

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life insurance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber shops</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment agency</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Iowa State Bystander, 25 May 1907, p. 1.*

Table 8. Negro owned businesses, Des Moines, 1917

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barber shop</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants and cafes</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bars</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pool rooms</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery stores</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoe repair shops</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sanatoriums</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Drug store</td>
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<td>Soap factory</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate agency</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
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</table>

pleas for full support of black-owned businesses. One editorial in 1897 strongly urged either this practice or Negro buying from white-owned stores that either hired blacks or ran advertisements in the *Bystander*. Those blacks who did not follow these recommendations, the paper cautioned, betrayed the great cause of Negro self-help and pride. As both the Negro population and Negro-owned stores multiplied in number, the *Bystander* ceased its agitation for Negro patronage. 48

Black business leaders started a few organizations whose purpose was to encourage intraracial cooperation through
patronage. The first was a statewide auxiliary of the National Negro Business League, a self-help group recently inaugurated by Booker T. Washington. Des Moines' black community included two representatives. One was the Bystander's editor and owner for about eighteen years, John Thompson, and the other was entrepreneur Robert N. Hyde. The activities of this statewide auxiliary proved negligible. But in 1907, Des Moines' Negroes organized a local Business Men's League whose function was practically identical to the Iowa branch of the National Business League. With twenty-eight members and Thompson as its first president, the organization was a modest success. A meeting in March of that year ended with the enunciation of the League's goals and principles: Negro patronage, cooperation and an expression of discontent with the black business conditions. In 1908, the Negro Business League declared its first year of existence encouraging because membership had doubled to sixty. Many new black-owned establishments also opened during that year.49

This important rise in support occurred for two primary reasons. First, the new blacks who arrived in Des Moines came from southern states. Southern-born blacks had become accustomed to dealing with members of the same race. Second, blacks mistrusted many white businessmen. One Negro declared that whites acted "solicitous about his (Negro) money and cares little for his personal welfare." The black businessmen in
general probably sensed this attitude by many white businessmen and capitalized on it by extending a more personal interest and better service to Negro customers. With these factors in mind, the same Negro observer of black businesses predicted that "if the economic future of the Negro depended on the patronage the businessmen received from their people, it is safe to say that a bright future awaits him."  

Despite these encouraging remarks and the successes of the Business League, some members remained dissatisfied because the League's goals had remained unfulfilled. Representatives of the Business League stated that in proportion to black businesses in other cities, blacks in Des Moines owned as many businesses. But the League miscalculated the number of blacks in Des Moines, listing the over-estimated number at ten thousand. An editorial in the Bystander urged that the League's leaders take steps to encourage the black community to patronize its own stores. "Must Negro business and professional men wait until complete Jim Crowism prevails in this city before the proper support comes?" the writer bellowed.  

Black church leaders took steps to help the discouraged business community and formed the Ministerial, Professional and Businessman's Alliance in February, 1921, as a result of these sentiments. The papers indicated that with the backing of the city's black church leaders, the organization was more likely to succeed where apparently the others experienced
problems in cooperation and attaining positive results. But even this organization never fully satisfied the black community; a Bystander editor in 1927 compared Des Moines and Chicago business groups and concluded that black Des Moines still had "no business organization to speak of."52

Perhaps the best known Negro entrepreneur in Des Moines was Robert N. Hyde, a businessman who dabbled in a number of ventures and made his influence felt in both community and political affairs. Born in Alexandria, Virginia, in 1855, he came to Iowa at the age of nineteen and settled in Des Moines a year later. Hyde's career began modestly. He labored as a janitor in white-owned firms. Early in the 1900s he worked for another white-owned business that specialized in house and carpet cleaning. While working here Hyde experimented with various carpet cleaning techniques which resulted in the preparation of a more effective carpet cleaning solution. Hyde successfully marketed this soap solution in about 1889. The same year he launched an enterprise which manufactured his H & H Soap. Hyde, who owned half the business, also distributed the soap. By 1893, he had expanded operations by utilizing two other devices which he helped develop. The Electric Carpet Cleaning Company began operation that year, and Hyde, who had built the electric carpet cleaner, maintained a half controlling interest in the company. The Bystander editor overzealously claimed that Hyde invented the electric
fan; but he probably added some modification to the device. In addition to these business commitments, Hyde became involved in real estate speculation around 1905, acting as manager of Hyde Investments and Real Estate Company. In late 1906 he owned seventeen homes and seven vacant lots which he rented to both whites and blacks. Hyde also opened a restaurant in 1903.53

Business was not Hyde's only form of public activity in the community. An ardent Republican, like most blacks, Hyde participated in many political activities. During the 1890s he served as a delegate in local Republican conventions. An early Negro rights organization, the Iowa State Afro-American League, elected him president in 1897; this position spread Hyde's name beyond the reaches of the Des Moines area. Little is known of his tenure in this office, but he did serve as catalyst behind a successful civil rights suit. Local Republican party leaders rewarded Hyde for his loyalty by naming him an alternative delegate at the national Republican convention in Philadelphia in 1900. In 1905, Hyde was president of the Negro Republican Club of Polk County. Upon the founding of the N.A.A.C.P. in the city, he served on that organization's executive committee.54

Hyde also participated in other political activities. He served in positions that afforded little influence, but provided considerable esteem within the Negro community. For
example, Hyde became chairman of Iowa's Public Comfort Com-
mittee during the inauguration ceremony of popular Republican
President Theodore Roosevelt. In 1909, Hyde probably accepted,
for the purposes of forwarding his career, the elected posi-
tion of chief janitor in the state legislature. Doubtless
the affluent Hyde did not need the salary, but the Bystander
always ostentatiously reported the attainment of positions
like these by Negroes, especially in state or city government.
Another possible reason a man such as Hyde sought this posi-
tion might center on his desire to enhance his reputation in
the cleaning business. Potential customers probably viewed
him as a conscientious businessman, the image black observer
Victor Cools thought Negroes in Des Moines began to project in
the mid-1900's.

This desire for prestige felt by Hyde was shared by others
in black society. Negroes achieved this by acquiring jobs,
especially in government because blacks obtained them so rarely.
In addition to listing the number of doctors and lawyers in
Des Moines, the Bystander always reported the number of police-
men, firemen, mail carriers and similar jobs. For example, in
1907 the Bystander listed black jobs in occupations such as
court bailiff, a civil engineer, a palmist teacher, a con-
tractor, a county recorder and forty high school and university
graduates. Even the janitorial positions included the place
in which the janitor worked, such as the courthouse.
These positions not only received mention in the paper; they usually appeared on the front page. Evidently the editor of the _Bystander_, John Thompson, realized these jobs were largely unskilled, but he viewed them as important for another reason. In reporting janitor jobs in 1900, he said "As all honest labor is honorable labor and each man thus is expected to do his part, promptly and punctually ... thereby leaving a good record ... so that in after years others of our race may have it easier to secure places in the future."\(^{57}\)

Thompson's prediction remained unfulfilled. But his thinking helped explain the importance attached to gaining a job with the city or state government. One example was the situation of Negroes in the postal service. In 1909, four blacks secured appointments as mail carriers. This was the first time in about ten years, the _Bystander_ stated, that a Negro had served in this capacity. Positions on the police force related similar stories of occasional employment of a few blacks. But there were more encouraging instances such as in 1915 when the mayor, William Hale Thompson, proclaimed that to deny equal opportunity to blacks stood out of harmony with American ideals of liberty and justice. To show his faith in these tenets, he gave jobs to about two hundred Negroes, and Thompson described his duty as one of elevating, not degrading, the race. Most jobs were either with the bureau of streets, the waterworks or the garbage plant; but seven blacks
secured jobs in the law department as clerks, investigators, assistant city attorneys and an assistant corporation counsel.\textsuperscript{58}

This outburst of sympathy and help offered by Mayor Thompson proved a rare deed. Most blacks did not fare as well as those who found jobs in local government agencies. Also, many blacks living in Des Moines could not obtain semiskilled positions or private industry. One explanation for this condition may be the background of many of Des Moines' Negroes, a background similar to blacks then living in Chicago. The predominance of Negroes in unskilled occupations, like those in Des Moines, retarded opportunities for black occupational advancement. This situation existed in part because so many Negroes did not possess training or experience to procure jobs in the city.\textsuperscript{59}

The situation of Negroes in Des Moines fit this pattern, especially during the early years of the twentieth century. Editorials in the \textit{Bystander} viewed with distaste the influx of so many southern blacks. In fact, one editorial in 1905 flatly stated: "For it is a well-known truism that the Negroes of the South as a whole, are cowards, morally as well as physically." The article also claimed that southern Negroes accounted for ninety percent of crimes committed by blacks and that somehow northern Negroes should take steps to curtail the northward migration of the southern "criminal element."\textsuperscript{60}
The heavy migration of southern blacks into Des Moines did not occur until World War I. As Table 10 shows, about one-third of Des Moines' Negroes in 1905 were born in Iowa. Most of Polk County's Negro residents born outside Iowa came from states of the upper-South, such as Kentucky, Tennessee and especially Missouri. About 678, or 29% of Des Moines' blacks reported their birth place as Missouri. Most of the remaining Negroes came to Iowa either from neighboring mid-western states or from states of the deep South. In all, well over nine hundred traveled to Des Moines and its environs from former slave states.

Table 10. Nativity of Negroes, Des Moines, 1905

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of Negroes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No. of Negroes</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Former slave states</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>65</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>702</td>
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<td>Ohio</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.6</td>
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<td>East coast states</td>
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a 1905 Iowa Census Manuscripts, Polk County.
Despite the increased growth of Des Moines' Negro population during and after World War I, Iowa's capital city never attracted Afro-Americans in proportional numbers compared to other large midwestern cities. Many Negroes who did come, arrived through a United States War Department decision to establish a Negro officers' camp at Fort Des Moines in June, 1917. This brought hundreds of black recruits along with their families into the city or its vicinity. In October, 1917, over six hundred men earned commissions and the training camp closed. Less than one year later Camp Dodge, located just north of the city, became a training camp for up to fifteen thousand Negro soldiers. This larger contingent brought even more blacks into the city. Most of these soldiers came from Alabama and other states in the deep South. Many from this group did not return home; instead they preferred to stay in Des Moines.

The sudden growth of the city's Negro population created new challenges for the whole black community. One black observer called attention to an influx of "nomadic types" drawn by the troops. These people of "questionable character," served only to "create a difficult civic problem" for Des Moines. Other Negroes expressed serious doubts concerning ways to curb the migration. In fact, one of the leaders even visited the governor to see if the state could impose any restrictive measures on their entry.
This restrictionist movement shortly collapsed as a larger and probably more representative group of black leaders forcefully denounced those who opposed the coming of southern blacks. Led by editor John Thompson, this faction issued a proclamation welcoming the new blacks and promising help and friendly greetings to the newcomers, many of whom direly needed housing assistance. The Des Moines Chamber of Commerce recognized the serious problem. This group observed that the newcomers could not acclimate themselves to the city conditions and might cause undue suffering and problems, which the housing crisis only exacerbated. An interracial committee (unnamed) formed to examine the problem. Thus, leaders in both the black and white community recognized the significant presence of new blacks and resolved to combat its accompanying problems. 64

In November, 1917, just before the statement by the Chamber of Commerce, Negroes founded a Home Maker's League for the purpose of finding homes for recent arrivals as well as to provide them with various forms of assistance. With over one hundred members, the Home Makers's League was probably more representative of attitudes toward the new Negroes in the city—that is, like Thompson's group, welcoming the arrivals and willing to help them in getting established. 65

In a brief analysis of black population growth in 1920, the Bystander editors commented on the reasons why black southern newcomers, especially the Camp Dodge troops from
Alabama, chose to stay in Des Moines. For one reason, Iowa enjoyed a better civil rights record. This factor, as stated earlier, also facilitated black business ownership. The most ambitious Negroes coming northward, however, would generally move from Des Moines after arriving, choosing Chicago or Cleveland instead; where "superior advantages" existed especially for job-seekers and blacks who sought to open a business. The article did indicate, however, that Des Moines could accommodate more blacks: "There is work for all and the wages are good." But these newcomers needed help to get started. The newly organized N.A.A.C.P. needed to lead strenuous endeavors to infuse American values and ways into these blacks, changing them into "substantial, intelligent citizens."66

Besides a commendable civil rights record and the availability of some jobs, educational opportunities in Iowa exceeded those in the South. "Negroes in other parts of the country," claimed one study, "were aware that the public schools of the state were fair to the Negro." The basis for this claim stemmed from the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1884. Patterned after the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1875, this law forbade segregation in such places as inns, public conveyances, barbershops, theatres and other places of amusement. Another legislative act in 1892 extended this list to restaurants, chophouses, eating places, lunch counters and other
establishments that served refreshments, including bathhouses. Although the law made no direct reference to public institutions, the spirit of its message included schools.67

In 1905, over three-hundred Negro children attended the city's public schools. During the period from 1900 to 1910 between ten and fifteen blacks attended high schools per year, but only one-third of them managed to graduate. In the spring of 1902 the Bystander mentioned that only two black participants took part in high school commencement. The paper blamed parents who did not encourage their children.68 By 1919, the Bystander listed blacks who attended the city's three high schools. The largest was West High with thirty Negro students. The same year, black parents founded an organization whose purpose was to help black pupils with problems related to school activities. The Dubois Parent-Teacher Association, affiliated with the P.T.A., promoted racial harmony in the public schools and worked to open communication between parents and teachers as well.69 This organization assisted many students because there were more black students to help--over nine hundred in 1921 according to the N.A.A.C.P.'s educational committee. Fourteen schools scattered throughout the city listed at least twenty blacks in attendance: the two with the largest number of Negro students had 129 and 97 respectively. Moreover, twenty-seven schools showed less than twenty blacks attending.70
One obstacle faced by black students was that teachers expressed an attitude that Negroes generally were inferior students compared to whites. This attitude by white teachers helped explain why so few Negro students finished high school. In 1917, a questionnaire distributed to principals and teachers in an elementary school where many black children attended showed that attitudes on the part of educators probably impeded the ambition and motivation of these children. The questions covered four major areas: scholarship, application, general intelligence and deportment. The teachers conjectured that the average black's learning level was one to two years below the average white. Negro students excelled only in music and art, usually performing below average in mathematics "or any subject which required concentration." To make matters worse, the teachers maintained that black pupils lacked initiative and needed constant supervision; Negro pupils generally behaved well, but they sometimes reacted to situations in class in an oversensitive, stubborn and resentful manner. Teachers displayed a wide range of opinion regarding general intelligence of Negro students. Hence the attitudes held by white teachers about their black students hardly encouraged blacks to pursue a high school education.

Despite this seemingly poor academic environment, Negro students in Chicago fared much worse. Although lawmakers passed ordinances integrating Chicago's schools, black students
attending schools with large white student bodies experienced frequent episodes of hostility. Whites often protested against black entrance in the Chicago public schools and frequently caused disturbances, even riots. Between 1900 and 1915, whites presented proposals to segregate Chicago's schools, and school board members in the largest city in the Midwest openly discussed the subject which received considerable press coverage. Black students in Des Moines rarely bore these forms of open hostility.  

In black Cleveland the educational institutions cooperated with Negroes largely on a nondiscriminatory basis with the exception of trade schools that usually discouraged black attendance. But unlike the situation in Des Moines, school officials in Cleveland hired Negro teachers.  

As early as 1899, black leaders claimed the need for at least two Negro teachers in Des Moines, as well as a black school board member. This apparently never happened; as late as 1925, Negro leaders had unsuccessfully forwarded a demand for the hiring of black teachers in schools attended by blacks.  

Hence, the average Negro in Des Moines, like Chicago and Cleveland, faced a wide array of obstacles that worked to block the black man's entrance into the mainstream of the city's society. Most Negro males who headed a family could not purchase homes, and those who did purchase a home experienced restrictions as to where they could live. Besides
residential discrimination, limited opportunities in jobs and education perpetuated low homeownership of blacks. In fact, these demographic conditions, together with the arrival of many unskilled Negroes from the South, served to hold Des Moines' Negro population into a position at the bottom of society's economic and social structure. As these conditions developed in Des Moines during the first quarter of the twentieth century, blacks in Iowa's capital formed a variety of social institutions with primary, if not exclusive, Negro participation. Even though a well defined ghetto had not taken shape, Negroes in Des Moines responded similarly to their brethren in other cities by perforce forming separate social institutions.
CHAPTER III. SOCIAL CLUBS AND CHURCHES

The effects of neighborhood segregation extended into the blacks' social order. The average middle-class Negro citizen in Des Moines found outlets for group participation in all-black clubs, secular societies and, most importantly, the all-black churches. Des Moines' Negroes, like their brethren in other metropolises, experienced little social interaction with whites. Therefore, they either devised separate social groups or formed local chapters of national Negro social organizations such as fraternal or masonic lodges and women's social clubs. In addition to identifying status within the black community, these social organizations provided an outlet for group participation in recreational activities and served as a means for organizing charitable affairs. The activities of these organizations, especially the women's groups, showed the Negroes' reaction to segregation and their lower class status. Closely intertwined with the charitable and other forms of assistance offered by the women's clubs were the activities of the Negro churches. Those blacks who did not participate in the clubs joined programs sponsored by one of the many Negro churches. The activities of social groups and churches combined demonstrated how blacks tended to differentiate social rank within their own community, and as the lives of certain black women leaders will suggest, some leaders displayed a genuine concern for their race's plight.
In black America only middle and upper income Negroes joined social groups such as clubs and fraternal organizations. These all-black bodies generally emulated the activities of white social organizations nationwide. However, two important differences emerged between black and white social groups. First, black women's clubs heavily stressed charitable activities designed for their race's betterment, a much lesser concern of their white counterparts. The needs of an ostracized people were greater, and the employment situation for the average Negro created the need to assist the jobless and their families. In 1895, the National Association of Colored Women was founded. Its chief function was to promote Negro social welfare; in fact, the Association became the first social service agency in America. Black women's clubs in Iowa and Des Moines organized a state chapter in 1902 called the Iowa State Federation of Afro-American Women, which emphasized the same goals as other branches nationwide. This organization's constitution emphasized harmony and co-operation between clubs as well as among all Negroes. The Federation, both nationally and locally, worked directly with black church groups and other voluntary organizations, establishing nurseries, homes for the elderly and centers for rehabilitating juvenile delinquents. 76

The second difference between black and white social organizations nationwide was the greater degree in which black
institutions mirrored social stratification or status differences within the Negro community. The make-up of these black community organizations in Cleveland, Ohio, for example, in part reflected living trends of northern urban blacks. Membership in black clubs and fraternal organizations in Cleveland drew attention to three distinct social classes in the black community. Upper-class elites occasionally associated with white organizations or served as officers in the Masonic orders and lodges. They also gravitated toward one church and its auxiliary societies; they socially shunned the largest group of Negroes who had little education and moderate or low paying jobs. The middle level social group tended to join a different set of clubs and churches in order to secure a sense of common class identity. This group formed the bulk of membership in the African Methodist Episcopal and Baptist churches. These two denominations assumed a very active role in social and welfare work, especially the Baptists, which had become the major church following the post World War I migration. A statewide colored federation of women's clubs marked the middle class black women's rise in influence. The third class of blacks, those with the lowest incomes, generally did not belong to any social clubs. These Negroes only joined churches as the only social outlet. Lower class blacks usually affiliated with Baptists or fundamentalist sects whose activities the black press ignored.
Apparently the situation in Des Moines was only slightly different from Cleveland and other large northern cities similar to it. Leadership in Des Moines' fraternal organizations was largely composed of the elites. But the emergence of three distinct Negro social classes was not strikingly evident in Des Moines; however, a small group of blacks definitely dominated club and church activities. Yet some black leaders in Des Moines—especially women—transcended typical upper-class snobbery and noblesse oblige to help the black community's needy.

Despite the prevalence of the Negro religious institutions, many of Des Moines' Negroes also found secular clubs attractive to join. In 1896, at least a dozen national secret orders and clubs, most with national ties, had established branches in Des Moines. Some of these were the North Star Lodge, Naomi Lodge, the Hiram Chapter and the King Solomon Commandery. Another nationwide fraternal group was the Knights of Pythias with a branch in Des Moines, formed in the 1890s. The Paul Lawrence Dunbar Society attracted members who sought cultural improvement by performing literary readings and discussions. There was also an Iowa Afro-American League which promoted racial pride. This club advertised its intention to organize and promote a "colored industrial fair" in Muchikinock, Iowa, in 1897.78
These organizations grew in size during the twentieth century. Many served as insurance companies providing assistance to fellow members in times of need such as unemployment or stipends to a deceased member's widow. A few clubs such as the Harriet Beecher Stowe Club for women, which organized a local club in the 1890s, doubled as a charitable agency and a center for social and cultural improvement. The North Star Lodge served in a similar capacity to the Harriet Beecher Stowe Club. It had fifty members in 1902.

By the 1900s, the number of clubs and societies grew. Des Moines' Negro clubs played a dominant role in the state Federation and the club activities showed increased diversification. Reverend F. C. Lomack, pastor of the First African Baptist Church, cooperated with women's societies and established a home for infirmed and aged blacks in 1903. The following year the State Federation of Afro-American Women received a morale boost when visited by two prominent national Negro leaders, Mrs. Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois. Mrs. Washington spoke at St. Paul's A.M.E. Church. As Vice President of the National Association of Colored Women, she urged charitable work. Mr. DuBois attended a meeting of the National Congregational Council. At this convention, which the Bystander proudly reported as devoid of "friction," DuBois introduced a resolution thanking a local white philanthropist, James Callanan, for his contribution to the Negroes in the
city, especially for black education. \textsuperscript{82} Callanan had donated funds to some local black institutions; among them, the churches received $1,000 and the Home for Aged Colored Folk received $500. \textsuperscript{83}

Next, the Negro women formed the Des Moines Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, an organization designed to coordinate the growing number of women's clubs and societies. Mrs. Belle Graves, the wife of a minister, was an early women's club activist who became the club's first president. Her commitment to promoting social welfare was shown through her leading role in forwarding an appeal to the city for the right to allow Federation members to visit and provide comfort to blacks in jails and hospitals. \textsuperscript{84} As president of the Iowa Federation of Afro-American Women, Graves continued her social welfare activities, especially in education. She was also an active member in the State Mother's Child Study Committee. \textsuperscript{85} Hence, as a member of Des Moines' black upper-class, Mrs. Graves showed interest in promoting the needs of all blacks, not a select few.

As Mrs. Graves activated the Federation, leaders of individual clubs within the Federation intensified their programs. The Sunshine Circle of the King's Daughter held the largest party of the year in 1905, attended by two hundred persons. The party's purpose was to raise money for charity and social welfare projects. The Sunshine Club concentrated attention on relief of the poor, care of the sick and any
other form of philanthropic work the club could administer. An active club member best expressed the diversified nature of this and other clubs. In a plea for increased organization and cooperation between clubs she made the following statement:

In these strenuous times through which our race is passing, it is the time for us to show our worth . . . we are striving to show our sisterly love by sowing seeds of kindness and each of us in mind, heart and power all using all of our appeal, example and inspiration to draw others into this line of work . . . . I don't suppose there is one woman that belongs to a club that has not been benefited by club work, even if only in a social way. Club life brings us the knowledge or causes and results and living interest in life . . . . One of our objects is to secure harmony in action and cooperation among the members.

She recognized the need for helping the black community in solving its various problems. She also stressed the need for concerted efforts in providing for the community's needs and hoped for additional participation by the whole Negro community. Just as importantly, relaxation or the need to have fun was another method of appeal she used to stimulate club activity.

Still, Negro leaders did not waver from addressing the needs of their race. Even though the membership of the state Federation composed the economically comfortable upper crust of Negro society who seemed bent on maintaining a self-created higher status, its members frequently expressed a feeling of responsibility for lower class Negroes. George Woodson, President of the Iowa State Negro Bar Association in 1905,
addressed the Federation's annual meeting at Muscatine, Iowa. He urged black women to embark on a number of social help activities: "The well meaning, but low and unfortunate people of our state, white and black, are anxious to come in contact with the helpful influence of our best women." At the same meeting, the Federation's Educational Committee suggested a broad approach; they urged their members to "give . . . a thorough technical, religious, moral and industrial training." 88

Accompanied with the rise in club membership of all kinds and the explication of lofty goals, came the Negro women's increased confidence in their ability to earn recognition for their activities. With the boost given by Mrs. Washington's visit in 1904, some blacks sought unification with the more numerous white women's clubs. But a coalition of this type remained unacceptable to white club members as leaders of one Negro club discovered.

In January, 1906, Mrs. Graves and other black women of an all-Negro women's club paid a surprise visit to the all-white Des Moines Federation of Women's Clubs. The black women probably hoped the Federation would ask them to join and participate in the white organization's proceedings. The white members did not oblige; in fact, some members took offense of the Negroes' visit. However, the white Des Moines Federation of Women's Clubs did agree to extend a sympathetic gesture to the Negro women and their activities. The Federation endorsed
the black women's endeavors to promote both racial betterment and provide comfort to the needy. Despite the Negro women's failure, this episode revealed this zeal, and daring, and demonstrated a desire of the Negro women's clubs to further their own social status. 89

Black women's clubs rarely precipitated similar episodes with whites. Instead, black women leaders worked within their community. Sue Brown was probably the preeminent Negro woman in Des Moines, as well as the state. She participated in countless clubs and activities, ranging from an executive position on the Intellectual Improvement Club with its exclusive Negro membership to president of the Des Moines branch of the N.A.A.C.P. Her activities best demonstrated a desire to help the entire Negro community, not a mere leader of a black bourgeoisie. Like her husband, attorney and community leader S. Joe Brown, Mrs. Brown joined many clubs and social groups, and constantly tried to organize activities within the black community. A part of Des Moines' black upper class, she continuously led crusades or drives to better the entire black community. Born in Virginia in 1877, Mrs. Brown moved to Iowa in her late teens and attended high school in Oskaloosa. In 1902 she married S. Joe Brown and accompanied him to Des Moines where he began practicing law. That same year, Mrs. Brown, as she wrote years later, "became affiliated with the Women's Club in Iowa and began to make a study of the achievements of
the members of my race, especially those of our women, concerning whom very little had been published prior to this time." Brown immediately began joining a variety of clubs in the Negro community upon arriving in Des Moines and she swiftly rose to leading positions. Around 1910 she began the first of six terms as district superintendent of the A.M.E. Sunday School. Brown later organized an A.M.E. welfare agency called the Richard Allen Aid Society. She also helped form the Des Moines Mother's Congress and founded and edited a section of the Bystander entitled "Iowa Colored Women." 90

Mrs. Brown joined the National Association of Colored Women and served on various committees in this organization. She worked with editor Mrs. Booker T. Washington by serving as business manager of that organization's news disseminator, "National Notes." 91 She also served as vice president of the National League of Republican Colored Women. Following these social and political connections, she ably served as president of the Des Moines Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. in 1925 and participated in administering the organization's youth branch. 92

Like her husband, Mrs. Brown participated in most facets of Des Moines' black society, and Bystander writers consistently praised her tireless efforts. Brown embodied a characteristic shared by most black women leaders—that is, she did not restrict membership in one form of activity, but involved herself in almost every organization. Her last
significant contribution to the black community probably was a pamphlet she wrote in 1940 describing the history of the Central Association of Colored Women in at least a ten-state area. She was president of this association, the only officer from Iowa. 93

Mrs. Brown's friend, Gertrude Rush, played a crucial role in the city's social welfare work; her activities also showed a tendency to rise above bourgeoisie snobbery. Born in 1880, she spent her early years in Texas and Kansas. Rush moved to Des Moines at the age of twenty and soon established herself as a leader within the Negro community. She threw herself into the affairs of many women's clubs, and worked to link them to national women's organizations. She was president of the Iowa State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs from 1911 to 1915, but nevertheless found time to attend Des Moines College. After graduation, in 1914, she enrolled in Drake Law School. In 1918 she had passed the bar, becoming the first black woman attorney in Iowa. After finishing school she received an appointment as head of the National Association of Colored Women's Department of Law and Legislation. In addition to handling the Association's legal business, Rush also functioned as a legislative watchdog, and kept abreast of proposed state and federal legislation potentially harmful to the interests of black Americans. 94
Mrs. Rush also worked energetically to help Des Moines' needy blacks in law school; she founded the Charity League for blacks. Rush also served on the board of directors of the Des Moines Health Center and headed a protection home for women and girls. She helped initiate a drive for clothing, food and fuel for the city's indigent families. In the young girls' home Mrs. Rush arranged a program of wholesome recreation including lectures, sewing and classes in domestic science and discouraged attending public dance halls. For these efforts, the Bystander praised Mrs. Rush as an active social reformer known throughout the state. In the paper's words, she had "...looked after the housing, clothing and food of the dependent colored people of this city and helps find homes for friendless children." Mrs. Rush skillfully used the organizations to which she belonged together in her various campaigns. Thus, while president of the Iowa Federation of Colored Women's Clubs in 1914, she cooperated with the National Baptist Convention's social services community to encourage collections for the needy in all black churches, probably enhancing the amount of support for the poor.

As president of the Des Moines home for women and girls and superintendent of the mothers department of the local branch of the N.A.C.W., Rush successfully advocated the consolidation of white and black welfare agencies in 1919. The war had brought matters to a near crisis, for the Negro
population was increasing from the soldiers' camps and southern migration. The agencies were forced to pool resources and talents to handle the new scale of problems. The Protection Home was the largest black run institution of its kind, capable of sheltering one hundred persons. Still, it had to turn away many needy. To meet the crisis, Rush helped open a newer, larger facility. She assisted in persuading the leader of a white-run welfare bureau and two Negro organizations to agree to extend cooperative services. Leaders of the Chamber of Commerce's Public Welfare Bureau in 1917 had hoped to see two predominant Negro charities, the Charity League and the Home Maker's League, coordinate their efforts. Rush helped these organizations negotiate an agreement in which the Public Welfare Bureau would help finance future cooperative efforts. The Home Maker's League president extended aid to travelers who needed temporary accommodations and helped new arrivals find more permanent quarters. Rush assisted in setting up a booth in the railroad depot to help the shelterless. Special representatives in each church established city wide networks to accommodate these arrivals. Volunteers of both the Home Maker's League and Charity League also helped families in times of illness and lent assistance to those in immediate need of a job.98

Hence, the activities of the women's organizations showed a great spirit of cooperation. The effective leadership of
the Des Moines Federation of Colored Women's Clubs helped promote this cooperation. Mrs. Booker T. Washington stimulated the club's harmonious spirit in another visit to Des Moines in 1914. At the invitation of Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Washington, who was president of the National Association of Colored Women, spoke at St. Paul's A.M.E. church. Washington stressed the need for continued charitable action and reiterated the need for racial cooperation as she expressed in her previous visit in 1904. Mrs. Mary Talbert, who succeeded Mrs. Washington, also visited the city and had a brief chat with the governor. This occurrence helped promote unity among the local clubs.99

The Negro women's clubs did have occasional contact with white organizations. The Des Moines Chamber of Commerce provided more help than any other white organization by contributing relief funds to the Charity League and the Home Maker's League. But an even more generous disbursement of funds from the Chamber of Commerce came forth in 1920. Leaders of various local clubs sponsored a drive to collect $165,000 for a racial welfare program which included a black Y.M.C.A. and other unspecified community service programs. The Chamber's Public Welfare Bureau organized the drive and finished with a sum exceeding the projected goal. Undoubtedly, whites contributed much, and this generosity was probably stimulated by the hard working black women's agencies. These agencies built an impressive record by alleviating poverty at
its worst. One black observer claimed in 1918 that few Negroes lived in conditions of extreme destitution. The secretary of the City's Associated Charities indicated that a small percentage of Negroes sought aid; in fact, the secretary disclosed that this percentage was lower than that of white applicants in 1917. 100

In conclusion, by promoting successful charitable activities the women's clubs encouraged participation by the entire black community. But in reality, overall black community participation was meager indeed. Few blacks were in an economic position favorable enough to extend substantive assistance to their brethren. The organizations' principal leaders consisted of the black upper class, one the wife of a professional man, the other an attorney herself. Also, these and a handful of other Negroes were the leaders of most clubs or organizations. In essence, the same small body of leaders led many clubs which had many of the same leaders. Therefore, since large numbers of blacks did not affiliate with clubs, they flocked to the all-Negro churches.

The Negro churches at the turn of the century constituted a critical part of black society in America as well as Des Moines. They served as a social focal point and as a source of leadership. Ministers of the larger black churches often assumed leadership roles in the black community outside of their prescribed clerical roles. Also, membership in
individual churches often reflected stratification of classes within the black community. Many blacks also found their church the only organization for social participation and self-expression. These trends occurred in Negro churches in Cleveland, Chicago, New York and Detroit. Individual church members in these cities also weakened their church's influence and credibility by forming factions usually centered around which faction should dominate church affairs and church policies. This competition between church members, as well as between whole churches, sometimes ended Negro ministerial leadership and stymied any united community-wide church functions. Members of Des Moines black churches also divided by class, and weak clerical leadership fueled factionalism as church members vied for power and influence.

Cleveland's black church participants, like those in Des Moines, attended church according to Negro class divisions. The African Methodist Episcopal churches attracted the largest membership until World War I. Cleveland's middle class blacks who had lived in the city for generations usually attended these churches. Upper-class Negroes who belonged to the African Methodist Episcopal church almost universally worshipped in the African Methodist Episcopal's most prestigious church or a predominantly white Methodist Episcopal congregation. With more members, the African Methodist Episcopal church generated the highest income. Its members also instituted the most
active social work and charity programs. In fact, African Methodist Episcopal congregants were the first to inaugurate such programs. But after World War I, the Baptist churches had grown considerably, boasting the highest membership which consisted chiefly of newly arrived low income southern and middle income blacks. The Baptists responded to both the spiritual and social needs of the community and the congregation by instituting a variety of charitable community programs. The Baptists' emergence caused a numerical decline in African Methodist Episcopal membership and membership rolls between the two churches became a gauge measuring social class lines. Most of those who switched to the Baptist churches were the middle and mostly lower level income blacks who hoped to benefit from the Baptist's charity services. Fundamentalist churches also flourished during and following the time when blacks came from the South. Editors of the established Negro-owned and operated newspapers gave these churches no coverage. This snub apparently meant that the newspapers relied on middle and upper class black readers who apparently cared little for the fundamentalist churches whose services were marked by uninhibited expression and unrestricted ceremonies. 101

Churches in black Chicago had been separate before the Civil War. Blacks formed their own churches because they frequently encountered hostility at white churches. The black church became the most enduring social institution among
Negroes because churches in Chicago, as in Cleveland, served as places for social interaction. The largest Baptist church in Chicago, Olivet's Baptist Church, had forty-two auxiliary departments in its social organizations. Among those departments were charity organizations and employment offices. Some social and political movements started in the church without the clergy's sanction and sometimes against ministerial protest. Despite such problems between the clergy and the congregation, many preachers of the larger churches enjoyed both prestige and popularity and tenures of up to forty-four years, which reflected their esteem in the Negro community.102

In the 1920s, Baptists formed the most black churches in Chicago, followed by the African Methodist Episcopal. Many schisms occurred within both these church groups. This persistent dissension probably explains, in part, why over half the Negro population in Chicago during this time had no church affiliation because high membership dues charged by the established churches prohibited the poor from joining. Poor blacks formed a core for the spiritualist or store-front churches that formed after World War I. Attracting large numbers of southern newcomers and lower-class native blacks, these small churches with emotionally oriented services became an important force in Chicago's Negro community after World War I. It was not until after the war with the emergence of many spiritualist churches that Negro churches reflected Negro class lines. The
large established Baptist and African Methodist Episcopal churches had a middle class following, and the appearance of more Baptist churches around World War I attracted members who expressed discontent with the established churches and the store-front churches. 103

Like black churches in Cleveland and Chicago, those in New York played an important role in the Negro community. As Harlem developed into a ghetto in the 1910s, most Negro churches previously scattered throughout the city relocated in Harlem and occupied those churches that whites had fled. Baptist and African Methodist Episcopal churches probably had the largest congregations. Also like other large northern cities, membership in select churches mirrored social divisions. The wealthiest Negroes usually attended St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church. The most successful churches usually revolved around an effective minister. New York's Negro churches did not perform as crucial a role in welfare and charity work as the black church members did in Cleveland and Chicago. Y.M.C.A.s and white sponsored philanthropic groups filled this role. 104

Blacks in Detroit joined select churches in accordance to class divisions within the Negro community. The upper-class blacks such as the professionals and race leaders either attended white churches or the most prominent church, St. Matthews Episcopal. Most middle-class blacks, however,
maintained membership in the African Methodist Episcopal churches and, like in Cleveland, Chicago and Detroit, the Baptists attracted members from the working class. Also, the Baptist churches in Detroit gained ascendancy after the turn of the century as poor southerners moved into the city. The second largest Negro church group in Detroit, the Methodists, reserved decision making power to laymen as ministers moved to other churches on a biennial basis. Therefore, city leadership did not come from this church group.105

Blacks in Des Moines formed church groups that reflected similar developmental patterns in the Negro churches of Cleveland, Chicago, New York and Detroit. Des Moines' black clergymen did assume a leadership role in the black community, but not consistently. Church membership did reflect class divisions within the black community, yet these divisions sometimes did not appear rigidly drawn. Black Des Moines' churches also served as vital social institutions because most Negroes probably belonged to a church. One reason for large membership was because members could freely participate in church-sponsored activities. High attendance and enthusiastic participation by members and short stays by preachers tended to weaken the preachers' leadership role; however, the weak leaders could not stop the frequent factional outbursts and discord both within and between black churches. But some instances of effective, united leadership between the clergy
and cooperation between the congregations resulted in successful social aid programs.

In 1866, black Methodists banded together to form Burns Church, named after the first Negro Methodist Episcopal bishop in America, Francis Burns. Des Moines' first Negro residents organized the Corinthian Baptist Church at about the same time. Both of these churches became among the most prestigious and influential within Des Moines' black community. During the 1870s and 1880s whites might have attended these churches because so few Negroes lived in the city during this time. Whites contributed money to the construction of Burns first chapel in 1873.106

Yet, by the 1880s, whites and blacks in Des Moines worshipped in separate churches. In 1897, six Negro churches advertised service schedules and social activities in the Bystander. Eight more Negro churches had formed during the next twenty years. The Holy Jumpers had the most churches with four. These were the store-front type churches whose members participated in emotional, uninhibited services. There were six Methodist Episcopal branches including three African Methodist Episcopal Zion churches and two African Methodist Episcopal churches. Another Baptist church had formed after the Corinthian church and there was a Congregational Church and a black Church of God and Saints of Christ.107
As the data in Table 11 show, the number of Negro churches in 1926 exceeded the number of black churches in 1918 by one. But this probably obscured the churches' collective growth. Since the Negro population increased substantially from 1918 to the mid-1920s, the established churches like the Corinthian, Baptist and St. Paul's probably increased in number. Also, since many new black arrivals during this time came from the South, they probably joined the store-front churches as blacks did in Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit and New York. The student who compiled the church figures probably did not consider the store-front churches as genuine churches, an attitude shared by the Bystander editors and Negro newspaper editors in other cities. Hence, Holy Jumper churches do not appear on Table 11.

Despite the exclusion of the Holy Jumpers, spiritualists and pentecostal churches, in Table 11, the table still demonstrates which churches middle and upper class blacks preferred to attend. In 1918, the churches of Methodist Episcopal affiliation out numbered the Baptist ones in Des Moines. Although Table 11 supplied no membership figures, the combined enrollment of the six Methodist Episcopal churches probably equalled or surpassed the three Baptist churches in membership. Yet, by the 1920s, with a full account of the Baptist and Methodist Episcopal churches available, the total Baptist membership doubled that of the Methodist Episcopal organizations. Therefore, middle class blacks turned increasingly to
Table 11. Negro churches in Des Moines by denomination, 1926

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Date organized</th>
<th>No. of members</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>No. in Sunday school</th>
<th>Minister's salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corinthian Baptist</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>$2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Street Baptist</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burns African Methodist Episcopal</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colored A.M.E.</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Baptist</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyles A.M.E. Zion</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Congregational</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul's A.M.E.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethel M.E.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Olive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shiloh</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of God (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of God in Christ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of God &amp; Saints of Christ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazarene Holiness Church</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,669</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>1,362</td>
<td>1,528</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aHazel Smith, p. 37, 13-18; Iowa State Bystander, 12-25-07, p. 1.
the Baptists like their Negro counterparts in Cleveland, Chicago and Detroit.

Black Baptist ministers' salaries surpassed that of the other churches. Not surprisingly, the older more prestigious Corinthian Baptist Church paid its minister the highest salary. The Maple Street Baptist Church congregation, with the second highest membership, did not offer as generous a salary as the Corinthian, but the minister's pay in the smaller church still ranked among the top. The Methodist Episcopal churches cannot be fully compared in regard to salary because the largest of this group, St. Paul's had no ministerial salary published. St. Paul's enjoyed more prestige than any other black Methodist Episcopal church. The other four Methodist Episcopal congregations paid considerably different salaries, less than the Baptists. These higher salaries of Baptist ministers indicated the prestige enjoyed by this predominant church group. Also, many members of the black upper and middle classes belonged to a Baptist church. 108

Yet, during the late 1890s and 1910s, African Methodist Episcopal church activities received more Bystander coverage than any other black church. For example, the Iowa District Conference, which attracted Negro church leaders from across the state, received fairly detailed treatment. In examining the conference's schedule, which consisted of many talks and presentations, one subject of primary interest, besides
doctrinal or spiritual topics, related to the social needs of the churches' constituents. Apparently, one of these needs centered on cultural or educational enrichment. The Bystander's writers constantly made favorable references to such activities as choir recitals and hinted that these were the types of programs in which blacks should more fully participate. One in 1897 proudly boasted the attendance of the governor and lieutenant governor at Burns church; the guests reportedly enjoyed the choir's performance. Burns' church membership enthusiastically supported many social functions. The arrival of Reverend T. A. Clark in the 1890s proved an impetus for further church sponsored activities. Clark strongly encouraged his congregation to organize a variety of events. He took an active part in establishing a schedule of musical recitals, probably religious in character. Clark also organized and participated in a series of lectures by members that touched on a wide range of educational topics. Active participation in such activities, he believed, would serve to encourage racial pride, thereby helping to raise the Negroes' inferior status in American society. In fact, racial pride probably was the underlying intent of most Negro musicals, lectures and lyceums.

In addition to these activities--also sponsored by independent clubs--the African Methodist Episcopal and other churches held camp meetings. One African Methodist Episcopal church organized an "old-fashioned" gathering for ten days in
August, 1899, in the city's Chautauqua Park. Its organizers welcomed members of all congregations in the county to this event. \(^{111}\) Two years later, the African Methodist Episcopal Congress sponsored a show proudly entitled the "Exhibit of the Afro-American" which included a gathering of locally successful blacks and speakers who discussed famous Negroes around the country. The Exhibit added a music day to its program. \(^{112}\) Once again, this church sponsorship demonstrated a definite commitment to racial pride in encouraging these and similar functions.

Black churches in Des Moines also assumed the responsibility for imparting a Christian education. As the Table 11 of 1926 churches showed, the major churches undertook Sunday School programs. Not surprisingly, the largest churches had the most active Sunday Schools. Church leaders taught adults as well as children. The Bystander published notices for as many adult classes as children's classes. Churches also cooperated in organizing multi-denominational Sunday School classes. In 1910, the Iowa-Nebraska Sunday School Convention met in Des Moines. A Negro minister from Des Moines served as its president. \(^{113}\) This group held other regular meetings in Omaha as well as Des Moines, once again showing the churches' deep commitment to Christian education.

Despite these concerted Christian education efforts, ministers usually operated social and religious functions
independent of other black churches. St. Paul's African Methodist Episcopal Church probably served as the model of a leading church that functioned in this manner. Members had their own facilities for Sunday School meetings, club gatherings, and the functions of other auxiliaries. The clubs sponsored charitable events for fund raising. 114

Reverend S. L. Birt came to St. Paul's in 1914 and became one of the church's most active leaders. As pastor he launched many drives to enlarge St. Paul's congregation. 115 Birt enthusiastically explained in an open letter to the Bystander, in 1918, that the "African Methodist People" planned a new church to accommodate the growing number of Negroes who streamed into the city in the wake of Camp Dodge's opening for Negro soldiers. "The prosperous city of Des Moines," he exclaimed, "has attracted large numbers of our people within her gates, the recent migration from the southland has swelled our colored population many times over and the colored churches have grown in proportion." 116

Birt also showed concern for acclimating black immigrants of rural southern origin to their new city home. Like other Negro church leaders, Birt took steps to assist the newcomers. Members of St. Paul's, Burns African Methodist Episcopal and the Corinthian Baptist Churches, organized agencies to set up programs in which a church member would visit the arrivals and offer assistance to them by telling about living conditions
and job opportunities in Des Moines. Birt and other preachers repeatedly expressed concern for newly arrived blacks.

Besides inter-denominational Sunday School Conferences and programs designed to help new blacks coming into the city, most church members participated in ad hoc meetings in response to a single event. One example prompting united action came from the Negro community's shocked reaction to a speech that United States Democratic Senator Benjamin Tillman of South Carolina delivered in Des Moines in 1901. Sponsored by a white organization, Tillman's speech caused universal Negro wrath. Tillman passionately defended the doctrine of white supremacy and uttered many racial slurs. In response to this speech, leaders of the Corinthian Baptist and St. Paul's churches headed a mass meeting of blacks to protest the speech. The Negro church leaders wrote and issued a "union manifesto" labeling the speech seditious and recommended that Tillman never again be invited to Des Moines.

Booker T. Washington's second visit to Des Moines again caused united action by the black churches. A Bystander writer declared that Washington's speech, delivered to 1,500 people, infused spirit and optimism in the race: "This meeting united all the churches into a union never before heard of and may never again be attempted; yet it was great to see us together for once." Washington promoted his famous theme of self-help that he discussed at Chautauquas and other gatherings nationwide.
Perhaps by coincidence leading black clergymen formed a Ministerial Alliance a month after Washington's stimulating visit. Open to all black city clergymen, the Alliance promoted interracial cooperation. The organization's first and only known activity was a financial help rally in April, 1918. The federated convention of eight Negro churches assembled in an auditorium for a concerted money raising rally. To symbolize the church leaders' cooperative spirit, the Federation formed a choir consisting of representatives of all eight churches. Each church ran a booth or table for the purpose of collecting money. Under Birt's direction, St. Paul's received the largest contribution. Listed according to contribution size, the other churches were as follows: Bethel African Methodist Episcopal, Maple Street Baptist, First African Methodist Episcopal, Asbury Methodist Episcopal, Corinthian Baptist and the Union Congregational. The Bystander editor lauded the program as a success because three thousand people attended. In addition to helping each church's finances the editor declared that the meeting helped form "a closer relationship and mutual understanding" among the churches.

Despite these encouraging displays of unity and mutual cooperation, an underlying current of disunity and hostility among and within each congregation existed. But editors of the Bystander announced a policy decision not to discuss instances of disunity in detail. John Thompson, for example,
called this practice "muckraking," and thought it was harmful to the race as a whole. Negroes received enough derisive publicity in the white press, Thompson declared, without black newspapers reporting their brethren's activities in a negative vein; the paper would present to its readers the race's positive achievements. But in announcing this policy the editor admitted to problems within the black churches.

Occasionally the *Bystander* 's writers did report some problems, often in vague language. For example, in 1897 the editors published a column called "Des Moines Would be Better Off." One suggestion was that Des Moines' blacks would fare better with two black churches instead of six because so many churches bred competition and hostility. The article's writer suggested that fewer churches would correspondingly reduce tensions. Another writer referred to an individual church's internal problems: ". . . it is a fact that there is trouble and dissatisfaction among some of the best, oldest and most reliable membership of said (A.M.E.) church--all caused by the pastor . . . ." In reporting the activities of an annual Iowa African Methodist Episcopal conference, a *Bystander* writer alluded to much disagreement between the ministers and their respective congregations. Although the journalist did not explicitly define the problem, he did indicate that it centered on delegate selection to the General Conference, "an all absorbing theme." Delegates helped
formulate church policy and apparently enough power or prestige was at stake to foster serious quarrels.

Apparently, ministers contributed to the problem of fighting among and within the churches. Competition for membership proved keen as ministers spent considerable time on recruiting activities and financial solicitations. One black observer, Victor Cools, suggested that local Negroes of ill-repute received key church leadership appointments in return for sizable financial contributions. Ministers did not remove these leaders because the secular members would join another church which would benefit from the additional financial contributions. 127

In attacking clerical leadership, Cooks made insightful observations on how church competition effected the entire black community. Ministerial leadership stood to suffer in the long run because the churches failed to furnish sufficient recreational activities for the young. "Negro churches," Cools maintained, "are often bitter enemies to all forms of recreation. In this they seem even more reactionary than white churches of similar denominations." Secular leaders whom Cools interviewed128 favored more church sponsored recreational functions and saw the ministers' position on this matter as causing a negative effect on the community's youth because the young blacks would become less involved in the church. 129
Even the church operated social centers created a harmful condition for the whole Negro community, Cools believed. Limited coordination of social events served to prevent the building or forming of a single institution for the membership of all blacks. "Properly speaking there are as many social centers as there are denominations, for each church is in itself a social center." Each insular social center stood as an obstacle impeding united action and interaction between churches. It also served to further a self-defeating competition that undercut Negro solidarity.\footnote{130}

An anonymous contemporary of Cools sarcastically suggested that practically all blacks belonged to a church. But only one-third of the black church-goers constituted "devotees" --those who earnestly followed and believed in their church's doctrines and contributed time to charitable activities and related functions. Others were members in name only; they appeared on church rolls so the minister could disguise the church's true membership. Additional members did little more than participate in social functions put on by the churches.\footnote{131}

These problems suggested that the preachers' diminished leadership role affected the black community's social structure. The congregations within the churches assumed leadership in their churches. This, in turn, engendered infighting between individual members that further splintered the whole black community. Short tenure suggested the Negro ministers'
diminished leadership position. The current minister's average time at the Methodist Episcopal churches was about three years, with a similar figure reported for the Baptists. Such turnover reflected leadership instability. White ministers, by comparison, stayed at churches longer than black ones in Iowa. By the time a new and effective minister could become settled in Des Moines, begin to become acquainted with his congregation and gain their respect and trust, the minister was likely to exit enroute to a new assignment in another city. Such a practice hardly facilitated a sense of continuity. 132

Apparently, most congregations could vote a minister out of their church. Some probably left Des Moines for more lucrative jobs. But other, perhaps more definitive reasons for ministerial turnover remain unclear.

The larger churches, notably St. Paul's and the Corinthian Baptist, experienced more continuity in ministerial tenure which probably helped maintain their stability. During the early twentieth century, St. Paul's had a series of short-termed preachers until Reverend Birt arrived. An effective and popular minister, Birt remained at St. Paul's for almost a decade. Another minister with a comparably long tenure was Reverend T. L. Griffith of the Corinthian Baptist Church. He served from 1900 to 1915. No other minister in early twentieth century Des Moines had such a record as Birt or Griffith in this critical time of growth and change within the Negro community. 133
Most Negro ministers probably did not become effective leaders because they came from another state and were not familiar with Des Moines. In 1926, a survey of four black preachers revealed that all the preachers in Des Moines previously had been pastors in other states. The pastor of the Colored Methodist Episcopal church held ten previous ministerial positions before coming to Des Moines, all but one outside Iowa. The pastor of Burns served in six out-of-state positions before coming to Des Moines. He only held one job in Iowa before Burns. Kyles' pastor held four of five out-of-state positions before coming to Des Moines, and Bethel's pastor five of nine previous out-of-state jobs. If these four churches reflected the average out-of-state ministerial positions held by Des Moines' Negro ministers then few newcomers would have a first hand awareness of conditions unique to the black community of Iowa's capital city. They would be ill-equipped to deal with these conditions effectively.

In 1927, a Bystander editor criticized Negro churches in Iowa and, by implication, Des Moines as well. In reporting the expulsion of a minister at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Des Moines, the editor insisted that the minister's program did not meet the congregation's approval. This event, the editor suggested, reflected a problem at least in the African Methodist Episcopal churches: "It is unfortunate for Iowa churches that it is a dumping ground of the
How often this "dumping" actually happened in the past, however, remains unclear. The implication of this statement was that preachers of the best quality rarely came to Iowa's capital city, which deprived the Negro citizens of Des Moines with a much needed core of leaders.

As weak Negro church leaders could do little to unite the city's black churches, strife occurred within each church. Upper-class Negroes usually joined the older, more established churches as their brethren did in Chicago, Cleveland and New York. Likewise, poorer blacks generally joined the spiritualist or store-front type congregations. News coverage in the Bystander, middle and upper-class paper, reflected the class alignment. The middle class African Methodist Episcopal and Congregational churches received the most thorough coverage. Editor Thompson, a Congregationalist, also gave the Baptist churches some news space. Bystander announcements of Negro church meetings usually occupied conspicuous places in the paper so as to catch the eye of the Negro reader. If he sought to find information concerning the Holy Jumpers, the black reader would search the Bystander in vain. As formerly stated, the paper's editors never acknowledged the existence of the Holy Jumper churches whose members collectively numbered about one thousand in 1918. But Victor Cools did discuss them in his study of black Des Moines. He probably reflected the
upper-class attitude toward the Holy Jumpers held by Thompson and other members of Negro elite in the established churches. Holy Jumpers, Cools stated, held their services in shacks. Ceremonies were of a more emotional and uninhibited nature which Cools dismissed as "paganistic" and "peculiar." Thompson and his Bystander associates probably echoed these same sentiments and to show their disapproval, Thompson continuously refused to recognize these churches.

Another illustration of class consciousness in the Negro churches was the organization and demise of the Union Congregational Church. Established in the early 1900s, the Congregational Church had few members from the beginning, thirty-one charter members and ten affiliated ones. However, the Union Church grew steadily. Its members erected a church building after sharing quarters with another church for a few years. Some of the best known Negroes in the city joined. But, in 1917, the fortunes of the Congregational Church began to slide. Even though contemporary blacks thought it was among the most forceful churches in the black community, a sudden decline in membership occurred in 1917. Certain members allegedly tried to make church membership exclusive. This movement precipitated ill-feelings between many members. Those who did not display proper social demeanor or meet any other criteria that the self made caste demanded, withdrew and joined another church. As a result, a reduced congregation forced the
pastor's withdrawal because of insufficient financial support. 138

Trouble erupted at other churches too. But Bystander writers made only occasional references and directed vague reprimands to those who fostered troubles. One instance in the African Methodist Episcopal church demonstrated the competition between pastors. An elder accused Reverend Graves of a dozen undefined improprieties. The African Methodist Episcopal Midwest region's bishop came to Des Moines from Indianapolis and held a closed hearing. Despite the Bystander's vigorous declaration of Grave's guilt, the bishop exonerated him. 139

Other instances appeared from time to time which were more minor in nature. But, these relatively insignificant instances contributed to the black ministers' deteriorating leadership position. Negro ministers in Des Moines could not dominate the local scene by overseeing broader Negro community undertakings and did not act as authoritative spokesmen for the Negroes. This condition had consequences for all other aspects of the lives of blacks in Des Moines—their businesses, their politics, and their civil rights. No single cleric emerged with a long-term dominant position in the community and, as a result, a diverse social structure in the Negro community formed. Ministerial leaders, like black politicians, never really articulated long range self-help doctrines for
the black race because the preachers could not quell inter-racial strife in its worst form. Hence, a relatively leaderless Negro society proved easier to manipulate by the city's white community. A reporter for St. Paul's expressed his concern for the state of the Negro Church in the city and how it effected Negro society:

Much of the work to be done by the Negroes will be constructive rather than reconstructive and a broad foundation must be laid upon which our social superstructures must be reared. Negroes must work out a more tangible idea of the meaning of society. A deeper regard for things spiritual, for mortality and the forming of social groups which are in sympathy with and which stand for certain ideas—until this is done we shall always be held up as hypocrites and false pretenders and without social pedigree.140
CHAPTER IV. POLITICS

There is nothing so important and so much needed than race unity and loyalty. In every vocation, department and avenue of our commercial and religious sphere of life we see our race divided up into little cliques and factions . . . each trying to tear the other up; especially if the other party seems to be succeeding . . . Churches quit your bickering with each other; professional men, quit criticizing your brother . . . let us go forth as a band of untied people to be honest true and work together in peace and unity. 141

Bystander editor John Thompson probably wrote this plea that revealed a great problem Des Moines' Negroes faced—their own disunity. This condition was especially apparent in black political participation. White indifference and hostility compounded the problem by undermining Negro attempts to unite and pursue common problems. Blacks promoted dissension by competing with each other for the few available political posts. Black political leaders also risked alienation from the whole Negro community because these leaders had to maintain effective relations with white politicians. In common with black Americans everywhere, Des Moines' Negroes played a limited role in municipal politics. The dilemma of trying to win support from both blacks and whites prohibited blacks from working with a common set of political objectives. Just as white imposed residential segregation and limited employment opportunities forced Negroes to live in certain city neighborhoods, white political manipulation of Negroes created bitter rivalries.
that black leaders could not overcome, and black political participation became a quest by a few Negroes to gain coveted political jobs. Thus, the Negroes' weak political position in Des Moines reflected the discrimination and segregation that infiltrated every aspect of the city's Negro community.

Negroes in Des Moines tried three political approaches. First, blacks attempted to forward their own spokesmen for elected city positions. Second, they sent representative Negro delegates to local Republican conventions to speak on behalf of Des Moines blacks. Third, blacks strived to secure the few political jobs handed out by white Republicans. All three approaches demonstrated limited success. Only one Negro won a political election, although Negroes tried six other attempts at political office. Representation in G.O.P. convocations outwardly appeared more successful, but often times blacks wielded only slight influence. Political jobs proved difficult to obtain for blacks and competition for coveted positions created jealousy and rivalry within the ranks of Negro leadership. This form of rivalry became so intense—sometimes reaching open fighting—that not one strong, truly representative and revered Negro leader did not emerge.

The principal factor influencing unsuccessful Negro participation in Des Moines' politics was the city and state's historic party alignment. Truly competitive two party politics did not exist because Des Moines and Iowa remained solidly
Republican from 1860 through the 1920s. Hence, party nominations in state and city elections were usually more important than the general election because Democrats seldom won. Most Negroes expressed fervent Republican allegiance thanks to that party's Civil War heritage. Yet, with so few voters—never more than a few thousand—blacks could not be a critical factor in electoral contests between the major parties. That is, solid Negro voting for one party made little impact on local elections. Hence, Negroes could not demand concessions or favors because of the Republicans' dominance.

Before 1890, Negroes played virtually no role in city politics. But in 1868, a significant event for blacks throughout the state occurred in Des Moines. Negroes gathered in vain to support an amendment to enfranchise blacks in Iowa. This event marked the first time in the history of Iowa that its Afro-American citizens collectively flexed their weak political muscles. Alexander Clark of Muscatine, Iowa, led the convention. Clark later became minister and counsel general to Liberia. Nineteen years after this convention, the first attempt by a black to win a city election in Des Moines occurred. Negro Republicans nominated city constable G. H. Cleggett for police judge. Cleggett lost. 142

In the 1890s, blacks regularly attended, voted and participated in local Republican functions because the Republicans, proud of their historic tradition, were willing to allow at
least token recognition and representation of Negroes. Usually no more than two or three blacks attended local party activities. There were, however, a few exceptions. In 1897, for example, seven blacks attended the Polk County Republican convention. In March of the following year, Mayor John MacVicar appointed ten black delegates to help nominate party candidates for district judgeships. Among the delegates were black leaders John Thompson and Robert N. Hyde. These few appointments did not effect the weak position blacks held in municipal politics.

The only Negro politician elected to office in Des Moines was Frank Blagburn. In early February, 1899, a party of Negroes met at the Polk County courthouse and nominated the first black candidate for public office in twelve years. Blagburn won the office of market master in a Republican sweep. A market master supervised the organization of and licensing of merchants who participated in the large weekly markets. The Bystander's writers jubilantly announced the election of the first Negro to public office in the city. But the journalists also expressed dismay over Blagburn's small majority. He won by seventy-five votes; the lowest majority earned by a white Republican was over one thousand votes. Despite the editor's consistent Republican stand, he showed concern over the market master's slim victory. Republicans did not support Blagburn "... because he was a colored man and that only." Avoiding
a direct salvo against the party's leadership, the editor blamed the "foreign element" who voted for the white Democratic candidate. Blagburn's opponent, in fact, ordered a recount in June. The winner's majority swelled to 183 votes as a result of the new tabulation and the Negro market master won reelection in 1900.145

The year 1899 appeared bountiful for Negro politicians in Polk County. Two blacks in the Saylor coal mining town north of the city won elections, one as a constable, the other as justice of the peace.146 But after this banner year there were no causes for victory celebrations. An ambitious John L. Thompson ran for justice of the peace in Des Moines township in 1900. Running with him was another black who sought the office of constable. Both lost. In a rare fit of truculence, a Bystander editorial that Thompson probably wrote listed two reasons for the losses. First, white voters would not support blacks. Thompson labeled as a falsehood white promises to help black workers. Second, black voters did not fully participate. As an example, one precinct had only fourteen of eighty potential Negro voters. In another precinct only twenty-three of ninety-six blacks voted. If the Negro voters had responded in force, the paper predicted, Thompson and the other candidate would have won.147

This commentary proved a portent for aspiring Negro politicians as their fortunes dimmed in the 1900s and 1910s.
In 1902, Blagburn did not seek re-election. The Negro community, displaying disunity, forwarded no replacement for market master, a post that Negroes had hoped to keep. In 1904, another Negro, James James, unsuccessfully ran for market master. The same year another black, Ira M. Jones, lost an election for constable. The Bystander's editor dejectedly declared: "Thus is seems that the colored people secure nothing, as usual, from the hands of the Republican party." In fact, future commentary in the Bystander increasingly voiced dissatisfaction with the party; yet this was a newspaper of Republican persuasion. Usually the editors criticized the party's stand on issues important to blacks. The paper's editors said that during election time white candidates promised blacks fair treatment and a proportionate share of patronage spoils. These same white candidates would visit the black community during election season, but as soon as the white candidates were in office, they would forget their promises. But blacks occasionally sat on the powerful Republican Polk County Central Committee. John Thompson became the first black elected to the committee in 1899. In 1916, two Negro Republicans sat on this important committee. Lawyer S. Joe Brown was one of two Negroes elected.

These and other forms of black political participation in Des Moines mirrored national trends during this, a time of change in black political strategy of accommodation urged by...
Booker T. Washington. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries marked a new trend in black political leadership across the nation. Tension grew between traditional Negro leaders established since the Civil War and those who emerged after 1920. The nineteenth century black elites emphasized intergrationist policies because they were more accustomed to associating with whites. The older generation Negro leaders also favored the elections of blacks to public office. As a rule these leaders relied heavily on white support to maintain an advantageous economic and political position in Negro society. But with the gradual emergence of a new group of Negro leaders, changes occurred in black political policies. The new leaders favored all-Negro businesses and social establishments, and they believed in more black self-reliance over white patronage. White hostility and the ghetto's formation caused many new black leaders to believe that integration was fruitless. Token political appointments did little for the whole race. As part of this belief the new leaders did not favor close contact with whites as did the older leaders. But contact between whites and blacks still occurred more in medium-sized cities.

Negro leaders in a large city like Cleveland divided over the approaches they should take in trying to improve black economic and political conditions. The leaders who dominated the Negro community before World War I usually favored integration. Before thousands of jobless blacks migrated into the
city curing and immediately following the war, the small Negro population of Cleveland could not establish independent financial and political institutions. Therefore, most Negro leaders encouraged and welcomed any assistance whites would render, even help of a black candidate seeking election. White support, in reality, touched only black leaders; who, therefore, favored this self-serving integration and extolled the merits of individualism and free enterprise. They viewed as futile concerted efforts by so few blacks and clung to the individual or self-help policy preached by Booker T. Washington, the preeminent Negro leader during the late nineteenth century. But black Cleveland's leaders after World War I usually deemphasized direct election as a viable political pursuit. Instead, these leaders attempted to develop financial and political institutions as independent as possible of white support. Given Cleveland's increased Negro population following the first World War, such an approach proved more feasible. Separate developments of black institutions also conformed to Booker T. Washington's policy of self-development, but in practice this approach differed from the approach taken by the older set of leaders causing leadership struggles between the two.¹⁵³

In Cleveland and the nation this dual leadership approach to elective politics did not always follow a clear distinction. Traditional Negro leaders sometimes risked white favor by agitating for civil rights. Likewise, black leaders in the
1920s sometimes sought elected office if it might prove advantageous to the whole Negro community and not just the individual politician. These inconsistencies reflected the dilemma shared by black leaders: the need to develop a sense of racial self-help and unified action for pride’s sake and the need to assimilate and identify with whites and their values for practicality’s sake. 154

Des Moines’ two principal Negro political leaders also experienced this dilemma. The first, John L. Thompson was the most powerful and effective black leader in Des Moines from 1900 to about 1920. He mainly fit the traditionalist political approach followed by contemporaries in America. Through his unsigned editorial in the Bystander, Thompson supported the contention that blacks should inculcate the middle class values of personal gain shared by whites. Although he personally maintained contacts in the white community, Thompson apparently moved freely among Negroes. Hence, despite the traditional example he set of assimilating in white society, Thompson was a concerned leader of the city’s black community. He did not shun or desert his brethren.

John Thompson was born in Decatur County, Iowa, in 1869 and began his education in the county district schools. After graduation from Callanan Normal College in Des Moines in 1890, Thompson taught school for a few years in Missouri. He returned to Des Moines and attended Drake University Law School
probably as the only black student in his class. At the same time, Thompson wrote for the city's newly created Negro newspaper, the Bystander. Upon his graduation from Drake, he became the second Negro attorney in Iowa. Thompson's career embraced many political, social, religious and business activities. He became the Bystander's editor, owner and publisher by 1896. Editorials in the Bystander revealed his political convictions. Though unsigned, the editorial style and political stance remained consistent throughout Thompson's association with the paper. While editor, Thompson travelled throughout the state and occasionally to Minnesota, Illinois and Missouri reporting the activities of Negro settlements in small and large towns. Through these travels, Thompson met and befriended many Negro leaders. This extended contact helped him emerge as a major black leader in the Midwest.

The newspaper apparently did not supply Thompson with a substantial income. He, therefore, took advantage of his legal education to obtain other jobs. He was an Iowa Senate file clerk from 1899 to 1901. In 1900, he also became the first black county employee, a clerk in the treasurer's office. By 1904, Thompson had become special deputy county treasurer, together with his Polk County Republican Central Committee membership. Thompson, by necessity, came in frequent contact with white politicians. He apparently mixed freely in white company because he was an occasional guest speaker at white
socials such as the Lucy Stone Equal Rights Club in 1899. Thompson also associated with black social and political groups. He befriended all classes of Negroes in the settlements all over the state, something the traditional Cleveland elite did not do. Moreover, Thompson was a member or officer in many of the Des Moines' black social and fraternal societies, and he was treasurer and trustee for the predominantly black Union Congregational Church.

Thompson received national recognition for his activities with the Bystander. In 1907, he was elected Vice President of the Western Negro Press Association. Three years later he became the Chairman of the Association's executive committee. In 1912, Thompson reached the height of his career in the black community both locally and nationally, for in 1912 he served as treasurer of the National Negro Press Association. During his tenure, Thompson chaired a committee that issued a manifesto condemning lynching as well as all other forms of discrimination and segregation. He and his colleagues supported the printing of news "without fear or favor" on instances of radial injustice within each editor's community. Thompson also showed his support for Negro owned businesses by addressing, at Booker T. Washington's invitation, a National Negro Business League meeting concerning his experiences as a newspaper editor. In Iowa, Thompson won two statewide elections in Negro organizations that placed him near the top of the state's
black leadership. In August, 1912, the Masonic Lodge of Iowa made him Grand Master. Four months later he became president of the Iowa Negro Bar Association.

In some ways, Thompson seemed representative of the traditional elite. He worked with whites on his city and county jobs. As a candidate for public office, he favored integrationist policies. But Thompson artfully followed the approach taken by those leaders who supplanted the traditional leaders by espousing the development of all-black organizations. His editorials sometimes supported Booker T. Washington's policy of deemphasized black political activism and more self-help activities. Thompson also practiced self-help tenants by owning the Bystander as well as a hotel, the Thompson. He also glorified the Negro soldier by writing a history of the Negro training camp at Fort Des Moines. Hence, he epitomized both types of leaders. By remaining a staunch Republican, he could secure prestigious appointments the same way as traditional Negroes gained them. By keeping active in Negro society he rose to the heights in their leadership ranks. By publishing his honors in the Bystander he kept himself in the black community's limelight.

Attorney S. Joe Brown was the second Negro leader who emerged a few years after the height of Thompson's leadership. Brown's influence lasted well into the 1940s. Born in 1866, the youngest of six children, Brown grew up in Keosauqua, a
tiny village in southeastern Iowa. His Missouri-born mother, who cleaned the homes of the town's most prominent attorneys, encouraged young Joe to enter her employers' profession. At the age of ten, Brown and his family moved to Ottumwa. When he was fourteen, his parents died. Inspired by his mother's wish, young Joe worked his way through high school at a local hotel as night bell boy, earning a dollar a week and room and board. In 1894, he graduated from Ottumwa High School as class orator, the only black student in the school. He entered the University of Iowa that fall, with but forty dollars in his pocket. Again, Brown worked as a hotel porter while attending classes as the university's only black student. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1898. The next year he was principal at the public school in Muchakinoch. Then he attempted a professorship of Greek and Latin at Bishop College in Marshall, Texas. In 1900, he returned to Iowa City and finished his legal education. Brown graduated first in his class of one hundred forty students, and in 1902 he became one of the first Negroes in the school to receive an A.M. in constitutional law. He then became a law partner with black attorney George Woodson. Woodson practiced at the predominantly Negro coal mining town of Buxton in southern Iowa as well as at Muchakinoch, while Brown practiced in Des Moines. This partnership was to last nearly twenty years. Brown amassed an impressive criminal justice record, gaining acquittals for eleven of thirty clients
charged with first degree murder. None of the others were hanged. He also was active in initiating discrimination and civil rights suits. In one, taken to the Iowa Supreme Court, Brown plead for a Negro who charged the wife of a Des Moines chief of police with refusing to serve him a meal. The court unanimously found her guilty.165

Although S. Joe Brown maintained constant contact with whites from school days to adulthood, he also actively participated in Des Moines' black community life. He organized and taught religious education services as an active member of St. Paul's African Methodist Episcopal Church. During the 1920s, he was the only black executive committee member in the Polk County Council of Religious Education. Also, his knowledge of ecclesiastical law won him a place on an A.M.E. national committee that wrote the Book of Discipline and articles of incorporation. In addition to his religious activities, Brown, like Thompson and most other Negro elites, joined a host of fraternal and masonic organizations. He served as Most Worshipful Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of Iowa and also was Grand High Priest of the Iowa-Illinois jurisdiction of Royal Arch Masons.166

In addition to his activities in legal, religious and fraternal articles, Brown engaged in local politics both as an organizer and a candidate. To win white support, Brown affiliated with predominantly white groups as well as the
all-black clubs, and from most indications he moved freely within both circles. In 1907, Brown served as a member of the city's committee who drafted the Des Moines Plan of Commission Government. The year before the Plan's promoters captured the city's attention, Brown entered his first political race by nominating himself as a candidate for county district judge. He lost.

Despite the setback, Brown continued to establish affiliations among city Negroes by founding the Des Moines Negro Lyceum Association and serving as president of the Iowa Afro-American Council. While presiding over this organization, Brown labored hard to increase its effectiveness as an agitator for civil rights. He wanted it to serve as a focal point for all black institutions throughout the state so the Negro community's voice could be loudly heard. In an open letter published in the Bystander in 1908, Brown urgently insisted that the Afro-American Council be strengthened. "The criminal, economic, and political status of the race in this state has assumed a phase that is probably more serious than ever before met, at least in our generation . . ." he warned. Though disorganization remained active in Iowa and Des Moines, it never attained the height of influence Brown desired. Brown hoped this club would serve as a vanguard in a local civil rights movement. His prestige alone, however, could not pull all of the Negro organizations together and initiated such a movement that he envisioned.
Another indication of Brown's limited leadership position centered on his attempts at elective office. Not all Negroes approved of Brown's bids for local positions. In 1910 he ran for city council. His nomination sparked rivalry between Brown and Thompson as well as within the Negro community. That January the Des Moines Negro Civic League hastily formed and nominated Brown as an at-large candidate for councilman, a move stimulating the Bystander's invective. Apparently the League's organizers intended to discuss the feasibility of running a black candidate. But Thompson, through the paper, stated that the League nominated a candidate without participation from the whole Negro community: "Is this the right way to do when you are expecting the support of the people, for a little clique to get together, invite only a few of the people, then expect all to abide by what they may do or say. We question this method of uniting the race." The "clique" contained fifty members, and its president was Reverend T. L. Griffith of St. Paul's A.M.E., of which Brown was a member. Through the paper, Thompson spurned the meeting's proceedings, charging that the League "trumped up" support for Brown in an underhanded manner. The city council did not need a Negro, Thompson insisted. He sniped at Griffith's "disgusting" participation and that of other West Side Negro ministers who lowered "the dignity of their calling" by "wading in city politics."
Griffith, Brown and the others whom Thompson took umbrage against took no heed of the criticism. Brown proceeded with the election and campaign. Once again, he lost. The victor (white) tallied nearly seven thousand votes in comparison to Brown's six hundred. Brown probably expected more votes because municipal judges, attorneys and three city newspaper editors led in signing Brown's nominating petition, the largest on the ballot. Brown was able to muster some white support, but apparently he could not secure full cooperation from either the Negro community or the whites. Thompson's opposition undoubtedly damaged Brown's bid for full support from the black community.  

This intra-racial strife between the Negro community's two principal leaders illuminated the fundamental political problem of black leadership. Both Brown and Thompson successfully cultivated personal relations with elements of white society--Thompson through political appointments and Brown by earning a top leadership spot in the interracial N.A.A.C.P., which initially consisted of top white and black leaders. Both leaders' ability to befriend whites probably caused frequent misunderstandings and jealousies between Brown and Thompson and lower status blacks. The two leaders, therefore, probably never gained full acceptance from their own race, who, as a whole, did not want to mix with whites. Yet both continued to try to gain white support. The small black population could
not serve as an effective power base for aspiring Negro politicians who therefore, tried unsuccessfully to court both races. Brown's law partner, George Woodson, said at a meeting in Des Moines, "our leadership in many cases must as a means of self-preservation, ignore the welfare of the race and enter an individual fight." 175

Negro candidates for office like Thompson and Brown followed this advice and still achieved practically no success. Individual fights and political flirtations with whites did not prove effective. In fact, no Negro conceived effective strategy for elective office. Brown and future N.A.A.C.P. leaders in Des Moines discovered that the most effective means of gaining political favor was through organized protests, punctuated with effective publicity, a united black front and support from key whites. When two aspiring blacks with separate bases of support in the Negro community ran, the community splintered, hardly a favorable situation for blacks in city politics.

In 1917, several Negro politicians addressed the problem of leadership within the black community. Most of these politicians concluded that no single leader emerged as undisputed head of the Negro race. Black voters, therefore, reluctantly accepted white politicians, leading to corrupt ballot use. Many white politicians either purchased Negro votes or promised jobs to black voters--something Negro politicians obviously
One black leader mentioned the graft and bribery he saw his brethren practice. "Des Moines' experience with the Negro in politics," he declared, "has not been of the best." He witnessed Negro politicians promising support to white candidates for a payoff. One crafty black even sold his support to two opposing white candidates. Another worker for an Iowa Republican congressman boasted that black votes sold for fifty cents apiece. How extensive this practice was is not clear. But with both honest and unscrupulous black leaders competing for support within their community, no effective group of black leaders could emerge.

The fact that uncooperative black political groups existed within the ranks of the Republican party probably illustrated the Negroes' lack of confidence in their party. Most Negroes actively involved in politics sought jobs in return for party allegiance. Most city-wide issues probably did not interest the average Negro voter. Employment with the city, county or state for Negroes meant both steady income and prestige as well. With few government jobs available to Negroes, they probably supported the Republican candidate most likely to give jobs. A leader, like Thompson, stood to gain much more if he supported the right politician and, as Victor Cools said, Republicans made no serious bids for Negro support. As a result, the average black voter "stays at home on election day and consoles himself with the thought that the 'white folk' will
get along without his vote anyway. He (the Negro) assumes an attitude of indifference toward this most important obligation of citizenship."

Jobs proved the key factor for blacks in city politics in the late nineteenth century. For example, in 1899 Mayor John MacVicar hired the first Negro city health officer. The mayor negated this popular move in the black community by laying off a black policeman and a black patrol driver, leaving only one Negro on the Des Moines police force. 

John Thompson probably composed an editorial in 1912 which reiterated the importance jobs played to blacks. He observed how courteously white candidates behaved to blacks during election time. White politicians, Thompson charged, "... will promise ... anything to secure your support ... " Aware of factionalism within the black community the writer advised his readers that they should pick a candidate with the best record for hiring blacks. Throughout the early twentieth century the Bystander editor viewed Negro hiring a critical issue.

When MacVicar sought re-election in 1900, the paper's editor remembered the mayor's past actions, but endorsed him anyway, because MacVicar's opponents did not support Frank Blagburn's re-election effort for market master. Thompson said that Negro voters should not react with hostility toward the mayor; "be calm, cool and conservative. While we may receive but little from Mr. MacVicar, we would perhaps receive less as
But the man who defeated MacVicar knew how to obtain votes from blacks; he became popular by re-appointing the two black policemen his predecessor had fired.

Most blacks also viewed employment as the major issue in the 1907 Des Moines Plan for Commission Government. This new type of administration eliminated the traditional ward system. City council members no longer would represent politically drawn districts. The voters would elect a smaller administrative body that had specific administrative tasks within the city. There were four councilmen, elected at-large, and the mayor. The Plan's advocates predicted the new government would operate more effectively and mitigate graft that was endemic in the ward system; opponents of the Plan deplored the Plan because it seemed to eliminate the city's previous representative city council. The *Bystander*'s editor did not join the chorus of criticism coming from various groups throughout the city. The present city administration performed insufficiently, the editors charged, but the men who operated the system, not the system itself, bred incompetence. After six months under the Commission government, Negroes expressed discontent over the government's broken promise to appoint blacks to municipal positions.

The trend toward seeking political patronage continued into the 1910s and 1920s. With the exception of a few attempts
for election, the Negroes' hope centered more on obtaining jobs from the Republicans. Some Negro leaders still tried to win election for political office. James B. Rush, an attorney, ran for municipal court judge in 1916. Twenty-one candidates competed; the four with the most votes won. Rush finished a poor sixteenth. In 1928, S. Joe Brown ran for the same office. He fared better than Rush, finishing seventh in a race for the first eight positions that qualified for the general election. Brown lost this next election, his third in as many attempts. But he managed to attract white and black support; he won seven thousand votes even though only 2500 blacks could vote in the city then.

In conclusion, black political participation consisted of two related themes—splintered Negro leadership and the constant quest for jobs. Graft also played a role; it placed honest politicians like Thompson and Brown in a dilemma. They needed to maintain close ties with white institutions for support in election bids and to secure jobs. These leaders also needed at least a glimmer of upper-class prestige within the black community. Yet to try both resulted in a lack of strong leadership in Iowa's capital city. Tension between jobs and leadership caused strife within the black community; it did not enhance internal political cooperation. In 1927, the Bystander, under Negro leader James B. Morris, recognized this persistent problem plaguing Des Moines' black leaders. After
reviewing successes by black politicians around the country, Morris complained that Des Moines' blacks still could not pick one black nominee for political office.¹⁸⁸

Finally, these related problems all contained roots in the social, economic and political position Negroes held in the city. As occupants of the lowest status in the society, the average Negro voter and politician expressed primary concern over jobs. The Des Moines Negroes' weak political position displayed their social position in the society as a whole. Hence, with limited concern over white dominated politics, blacks, like their brethren nationwide, turned to their churches and separate social institutions for meaningful participation.
Blacks obviously were segregated from whites in twentieth century Des Moines. If members of the races mingled, this was a rare occasion; indeed no important inter-racial organization took shape until 1915, upon the founding of the Des Moines branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.). Eleven years after the Des Moines N.A.A.C.P. branch organized, the Des Moines Inter-Racial Commission formed. These two organizations were important, especially the N.A.A.C.P., because both represented the most effective attempts by black and white leaders to help the entire Negro community. Activities of the Des Moines N.A.A.C.P. branch reflected national trends. But more unique to Des Moines' black community, race leaders found an institution in which to practice effective leadership roles and develop more effective organizational skills. Lastly, the activities of this organization suggested that although many of the achieved results amounted to only symbolic and rarely substantive changes, they still breathed hope into the soul of the city's black community. Given the climate of the times which saw widespread Ku Klux Klan activity in Des Moines during the 1920s, these organizations fared remarkably well.
The N.A.A.C.P. was formed in 1909 in New York largely in reaction to increased lynching activity in the South and impatience over Booker T. Washington's leadership. Whites actually initiated the organization's formation, though it did gain impetus from the black-led Niagara Movement which was started by nationally known leaders such as W.E.B. DuBois and William Monroe Trotter in 1905. Initial support came from Jewish leaders, such as Joel Spingarn, Unitarian clergymen, and a host of liberal political activists including New Republic editor Oswald Garrison Villard and wealthy New York social activist, Mary White Ovington. Blacks also represented some of the organization's leadership, most notably W.E.B. DuBois, who became editor of the Association's official communications organ, the Crisis. From its beginning, the Association pursued the goal of enlisting notable white members—as well as black ones—in order to build prestige and secure adequate operating funds. An interracial leadership mixture would hopefully serve to promote a better understanding between the races.

This formula worked well during the Association's early years as both white and black leaders headed branches mainly in larger cities along the east coast. By 1919, over three hundred cities nationwide had local organizations with over 91,000 members. Of these, approximately nine-tenths were black. Under the guidance of the national chapter, local
branch organizations sought to lessen the more harmful mani-
manifestations of racial prejudice by seeking legal redress for
unjustly prosecuted Negroes. Local unit members also estab-
lished bureaus of information, organized mass and parlor
meetings and held memorial exercises to honor either past
Negro leaders or prominent contemporary American blacks. Local
branch leaders also pursued the assigned task of studying local
race conditions, influencing the white press in a manner favor­
able to blacks, pressing for the enforcement of civil rights
and establishing all-black civic centers.\textsuperscript{190}

During 1914 and 1915, national board chairman Joel
Spingarn launched two western trips in an attempt to form new
branches and increase membership of existing ones. In January
of 1915, Des Moines was on his itinerary. Months before
Spingarn's projected arrival, S. Joe Brown received literature
from the National Secretary explaining the purposes and plans
of the organization, called the "movement." The letter includ­
ed a request for organizing a membership branch in the city and
indicated Spingarn's proposed visit. Brown enthusiastically
responded to the request, managing to gather twenty-five
initial committee members to help finance the visit. The local
branch counted thirty-one charter members. But this number
swelled following the first open meeting held on the day of
Spingarn's stop. Iowa Governor George W. Clarke addressed the
audience and introduced the guest from New York. A progressive
follower of his dynamic predecessor, Albert Baird Cummins, Clarke paid tribute to the accomplishments of the race and expressed hope that one day blacks would enjoy equal opportunities in Iowa. The remainder of the program, including Spingarn's speech, was held in the Corinthian Baptist Church. The convocation drew eight hundred persons, mostly blacks. With the Governor's attendance at the first meeting, the Des Moines branch gained immediate local attention and prestige. Shortly after the meeting ended, over one hundred persons joined. By September, 1915, the branch's first president, S. Joe Brown, who served until 1917, led a drive that resulted in a total membership of two hundred.

From the standpoint of membership, the first year proved successful. Prominent local whites joined this branch in accordance with the national organization's strategy. The governor paid his dues as did a number of high ranking city officials, prominent attorneys and civic leaders, many of whom did not take an active part. Just over a year after the Des Moines N.A.A.C.P.'s inception, the national headquarters sent a congratulatory letter to Brown and his fellow members expressing pleasure over the progress made in the city mayor, three justices of the State Supreme Court, other state officials and city councilmen. This surge continued as membership climbed over five hundred by 1919. Drives for even larger membership rolls occupied the energies of local
N.A.A.C.P. leaders into the 1920s. But these drives were not confined to Des Moines. The branch in the capital city, whose membership stabilized at about five-hundred during the 1920s, assumed the responsibility of promoting the formation of branches in other Iowa cities. S. Joe Brown, the state's district organizer in 1920, laid the groundwork for the chapter that formed in Centerville. Additional Iowa branches in Council Bluffs, Davenport, Waterloo and Cedar Rapids formed during the 1920s.

Activities of the Des Moines N.A.A.C.P., in accordance with the policies formulated by the national directors, included educational programs, youth organizations and legal action. Promoters of the educational program aimed their efforts at whites equally as much as blacks. In fostering programs designed for a white audience, the N.A.A.C.P. sought to dispel adverse perceptions of Negroes held by many whites who seldom met or became even causally acquainted with a black. Hence, the way to change these images was to enlist the services of prominent whites. Branch leaders therefore, invited whites to speak on behalf of Negro rights. At the same time the white leaders championed the black man's cause N.A.A.C.P. officers hoped that other key whites who proved receptive to such rhetoric would join the branch, giving it added prestige.

In pursuing this goal, Des Moines N.A.A.C.P. leaders achieved limited success. The enrollment of respected white
leaders at least proved a start in conveying a positive image of Negroes, away from depictions of blacks as kowtowing, burlesque figures or savages. In working with Negro members and the Negro community in Des Moines, the educational arm of the organization stressed the need to develop skillful leadership qualities and recognized the need for Negro leaders to sharpen their skills in asserting fuller citizenship rights for the whole race.

In a 1921 membership drive, the N.A.A.C.P. successfully employed the tactic used six years earlier upon the inception of the Des Moines chapter. The city Chamber of Commerce responded favorably to a request by branch members to endorse the drive. A ministerial association also expressed its endorsement of the N.A.A.C.P.'s efforts. Perhaps the most important expression of support, from the standpoint of prestige, came once again from the state's governor, Nate Kendall. Governor Kendall addressed a convocation of city ministers and other clergymen held at the all-black Maple Street Baptist Church. He urged more support from them besides a verbal endorsement and a written proclamation and the governor urged them to join the N.A.A.C.P. en masse. Terming the N.A.A.C.P. the most potent force in solving the city's racial problems, Kendall admirably lent his support in compliance to the aims of the educational committee.
But the most effective white civic leader to crusade under the N.A.A.C.P.'s education program was Harvey Ingham, editor of the Des Moines Register and Tribune. Joining the organization during World War I, Ingham became the N.A.A.C.P.'s most powerful publicity backer. His prominence and local esteem injected the educational program with much needed enthusiasm. As editor of a leading white-owned newspaper he could see that fair, if still extremely limited, stories concerning Negroes came off his presses.

Ingham participated in the 1920 educational drive, climaxced by Governor Kendall's supportive speech a year later. That year, Ingham's efforts helped provide momentum for the drive. The editor attacked Capital City Community College in Des Moines for refusing to admit black students. Ingham condemned the school's policy in a speech he delivered at a gathering held at that school. A Bystander writer estimated that as a result of the speech the school's officials considered changing their discriminatory policy. But the paper never mentioned in subsequent issues if the college board did indeed decide to integrate the school. Nevertheless, Ingham, with the indefatigable S. Joe Brown, followed a veritable lecture circuit, addressing a variety of civic groups in Des Moines during 1920. As a result every week the organization gladly welcomed applications from persons who filed for membership. Among those prominent white educators who joined at this time
were Edgar Harland, Curator of the Historical Department of Iowa and the city's superintendent of the public school's extension department.

Aside from his direct involvement in N.A.A.C.P. affairs, Ingham assisted the N.A.A.C.P. quest for achieving civil rights through the use of his influential position. In editorials he castigated the nationally re-emergent Ku Klux Klan in uncompromising terms. He especially disapproved of the Klan's tendency to take the law into its own hands, which stood in contrast to the N.A.A.C.P.'s primary protest strategy or promulgating law suits. Another example of Ingham's invaluable help, a purely symbolic gesture that black leaders nonetheless considered highly important, was the editor's willingness to capitalize the word Negro in the Register and encourage the city's other white-owned newspapers to do the same. The organization considered this gesture a breakthrough, a first step on the long road leading to the enhancement of the white man's image of the Negro. In 1929, branch president Mrs. S. Joe Brown helped pass a proposal giving Ingham a duly earned award as the branch's honorary president.

Even though N.A.A.C.P. leaders in Des Moines directed educational efforts toward soliciting support and financial assistance from the city's white populace, they did not ignore black members. Negroes probably comprised the majority of the Association's rank and file membership and participated the
most in daily organization tasks. S. Joe Brown and his wife sponsored many programs directly for black members, and Brown, like Ingham, gave many speeches. He also organized groups or seminars attended mainly by Negro members. Seminar participants discussed problems that blacks regularly encountered, and suggested possible solutions. Only black leaders in Des Moines involved in creating similar forums were Brown's successors, Elbert Hall and James B. Morris, a Negro attorney who effectively served as president of the local N.A.A.C.P. from 1920 until 1923. Hall helped organize a drama club which staged allegorical plays about the N.A.A.C.P., designed to boost the black viewer's morale and self-esteem. The national organization even recognized the Des Moines branch by congratulating Hall for promoting inter-racial understanding. 203 The Crisis also sponsored the club's doings. 204

In addition to promoting educational programs, the Des Moines N.A.A.C.P. from its beginning attempted to appeal to Negro youth. This interest culminated in the organization of the Des Moines N.A.A.C.P.'s Junior Chapter about 1922 by Mrs. S. Joe Brown. She received a hearty letter of congratulations for this effort from Robert W. Bagnall, the national Director of Branches, who oversaw local branch activities. 205 Bagnall reflected the national organization's continuing desire to not only increase its membership, but also to promote participation by Negroes of all ages. Thanks to
Mrs. Brown's unselfish devotion to the Junior Chapter and help from Ingham who commended the Juniors in an editorial, blacks won another symbolic recognition from at least one white. In 1924, leaders of the Des Moines N.A.A.C.P. rejoiced to find a dairy company's advertisement in the Des Moines Register that pictured a Negro baby. This was probably the first time in the city's history, said an N.A.A.C.P. leader, that an advertisement did not intend to depict a black in derogatory fashion.

That same year, the Junior chapter put on one of its most important events. The Chapter's members staged a drama entitled "The Awakening" at the city's Lincoln Theatre. In a report to the national office concerning local events, a Des Moines member wrote to the Director of Branches that this play served as one of the most effective appeals for the N.A.A.C.P. in the local branch's history. Miss Mary White Ovington of New York wrote the play which contained an allegorical plot defining the association's goals.

The N.A.A.C.P.'s emphasis upon youth encouraged the formation of the Negro Y.M.C.A. during the early 1920s. This youth-oriented group inaugurated a series of mass meetings and speeches similar to those of the educational committee and tried to attract speakers of "international fame" who could publicize the N.A.A.C.P.'s crusade for equal rights. In 1924, missionary Sherwood Eddy came to Des Moines and spoke to a
few thousand people, mostly whites. Like Ingham, Eddy
denounced the Ku Klux Klan. His speech, an N.A.A.C.P. member
averred, "... will have a profound effect in favor of colored
people in Des Moines. It will do much to allay the rising tide
of prejudice engendered by the untiring efforts of the local
Klan organization."209

This statement, if overzealous, certainly reflected the
excitement and enthusiasm with which local blacks received
the N.A.A.C.P. Its considerable accomplishments enhanced
racial pride. Even if whites failed to enact many real,
meaningful changes for the black community's benefit, some
white leaders did prove more attentive to the Negroes' needs.
But the few changes that did occur encouraged blacks suffi-
ciently enough to agitate for civil rights, chiefly by means
of law suits. Even though the N.A.A.C.P.'s first important
suit failed, it showed more white support than blacks sus-
ppected.

Less than a year after its founding, the Des Moines
N.A.A.C.P.'s legal committee faced its first test. It was
according to S. Joe Brown, a "herculean task." Nationally
known movie director D.W. Griffith introduced one of Holly-
wood's first blockbuster full length films, the epic Birth of
a Nation in 1915. Though it revolutionized the motion picture
industry, the movie contained a number of scenes depicting
blacks in uncomplimentary and subservient roles. Stylized after
a play written ten years earlier, *The Clansman*, the motion picture angered the N.A.A.C.P.'s national leadership who denounced it as slanderous and instructed members of local branches to prevent its showing. A local theater scheduled the movie's debut in April, 1916. By January, 1916, the forces opposing its showing began their agitation. The N.A.A.C.P. was one of many groups participating in the protest with representatives of the Iowa Purity Association. The N.A.A.C.P.'s legal redress committee's representatives and their attorneys visited the mayor's office and forwarded a formal protest. A city councilman was also a member of the redress committee. In response, the mayor promised to discuss the demonstrators' demand with the city superintendent of safety. He also pledged support in attempting to secure the theater owner's voluntary withdrawal of the movie.

The N.A.A.C.P. received further support from other city groups as sentiment against the movie's showing mounted. The editor of the Des Moines *Capital* and the *National Prohibitor* opposed the movie and tacitly supported the N.A.A.C.P.'s efforts. The local Grand Army of the Republic and the white City Federation of Women's Clubs also denounced the movie. Faced with this continuing pressure, the mayor and the Superintendent of Public Safety acted. They persuaded the theater manager to show the movie privately to interested city officials and representatives of the protest groups before its public
opening. The mayor hoped he could fairly determine if its content warranted censorship. \(^{212}\)

Besides exerting public pressure, the legal redress committee also had a legal point to argue, based on statutory precedent which the N.A.A.C.P. eventually argued in a courtroom showdown. The legal precedent stemmed from a 1907 city ordinance passed in response to *The Clansman*, which played that year in Des Moines. S. Joe Brown wrote the ordinance that barred the play from returning to the city. N.A.A.C.P. attorneys argued that *Birth of a Nation*'s plot so much resembled the play that to allow its showing was, in effect, allowing the play to return, but only in different form. N.A.A.C.P. attorneys initially protested the movie to city hall. Persuaded by the precedent and the attorneys' line of reasoning, the Des Moines city council voted to prohibit the movie's showing. Only one member voted in opposition. But to insure against it showing the city needed a court injunction restraining theater operators. So the city attorney did this, at the request of the N.A.A.C.P. \(^{213}\) The city attorney's request touched off litigation resulting in a Municipal Court decision to allow the movie's showing because it did not violate the 1907 ordinance. \(^{214}\) The statutory precedent argument failed and the projectors rolled.

Hence, the Des Moines N.A.A.C.P. lost its first and perhaps one of its more important legal battles. Yet it still
gained much needed city-wide publicity and demonstrated that
the black led N.A.A.C.P. proved capable of mobilizing a con­siderable amount of support. One student of Negro history,
Herbert Aptheker, concluded that while the effort proved un­successful, the Des Moines Branch members discovered more
friends and supporters than they realized, and the movie's run
ended faster than scheduled. 215

Black attorneys also received the opportunity to practice
their skills in future legal battles. The N.A.A.C.P.'s griev­ance committee formed to investigate and report to the local
branch leaders all forms of racial discrimination in Des Moines.
The N.A.A.C.P. attempted to publicize these findings and
pressed to end all discriminatory practices. 216 One report
attacked theatre operators who segregated, and committee
leaders issued a formal protest to the city. The committee
members urged the city council--using a method similar to that
of the legal redress committee--to pass a resolution "...pro­hibiting the continuance of this pernicious practice." The
protesters enunciated the practice of "Anti-Negro exhibitions
and segregation in the theatres. Little, if nothing, resulted
from this appeal; the city council failed to take heed of this
protest and demand. 217

Mindful of failure, members of the grievance committee
tried a different protest approach. They organized large
gatherings to magnify their protest in 1920. Miss Pearl
DeJarnette, an assistant attendance officer of the city public schools, wrote and circulated a proposal to the Board of Education. She called for the complete segregation of the public schools and suggested that the eight hundred Negro students attend one school. This proposal angered many blacks. The N.A.A.C.P. committee hastily united the DeJarnette opponents and organized a demonstration. The gathering so impressed one Bystander writer that he called it a "monster mass meeting" of Negro citizens.

About 1,200 persons, mostly blacks, filled the St. Paul's African Methodist Episcopal Church in response to a call by N.A.A.C.P. president Elbert Hall. The convocation opened with what the Bystander called "stirring addresses" by several black leaders. Then grievance committee head, W. H. Lowery, proposed several resolutions. The first resolution questioned the practicality of Miss DeJarnette's proposal for two reasons: one, the school building she recommended for Negroes contained only eight rooms, insufficient for 800 students; two, the proposal contradicted Iowa's civil rights statute. The second resolution intimated that DeJarnette's proposal was the Board of Education's response to an N.A.A.C.P. request for the Independent School District of Des Moines to hire Negro instructors in proportion to the number of Negro students. If this was the Board's response, Mr. Lowery insisted that it was entirely unsatisfactory to the black citizens in the district.
The third resolution pursued the issue of hiring Negro teachers. There were none on the city payroll as in other large cities around the country, the resolution stated. Moreover, Lowery used the city's attendance department's own figures to point out that in at least one public school, half the students were black, and in another, forty percent were black. This evidence, Lowery reasoned, justified the hiring of Negro teachers. The meeting's participants unanimously accepted these resolutions and adopted them for presentation in the form of a public protest.

Although it was unclear whether Board of Education members intended to create a separate school as the N.A.A.C.P. suspected, such plans, if entertained, were thwarted. But even if Board members were not plotting segregation and the N.A.A.C.P. overreacted, the resolution carried enough force to elicit an official response from the city's educational policymakers. The Board members and the city superintendent wrote to the N.A.A.C.P. stating that its official policy did not include segregation. They insisted Miss DeJarnette's suggestion represented that of a single officer only and should be properly interpreted as such.

The N.A.A.C.P. followed through in its agitation for Negro teachers, but its request fell upon deaf ears. In 1921, Hall wrote to Miss Ovington in New York requesting help. He said that the Des Moines branch would continue to press for the
hiring of Negro teachers; it needed statistics showing city officials that other cities hired blacks in their school system as the N.A.A.C.P. claimed in its resolution during the De-Jarnette affair. Hall also told Miss Ovington that the local branch had the help and support of the "largest white church in Iowa."\textsuperscript{221} Still nothing positive from the N.A.A.C.P.'s viewpoint resulted from Hall's efforts, as well as those of his immediate successor. By 1930, the Des Moines branch still continued to strive for this goal, with no success. Another factor that contributed toward stopping this effort besides white reluctance to have black teachers was that some black leaders favored separate schools.\textsuperscript{222}

Despite the losing effort in this Jim Crow fight, the N.A.A.C.P. battled on other fronts, chiefly through legal action, rather than protest meetings. The early 1920s saw the Association's most important victories. In 1920, for example, the Association became involved in a residential segregation case. Miss Dorothy Quail, a light skinned black woman, agreed to purchase a home in an exclusively white neighborhood. After signing the contract, the real estate agent discovered Miss Quail's racial identity and sought to cancel the agreement. The previous owner of the home, Arch I. Madden, initiated a law suit, seeking an injunction to prevent the sale. He claimed he had made an oral agreement with his real estate agent to sell only to whites.\textsuperscript{223}
Then, the N.A.A.C.P. seized the initiative and decided to provide Quail with legal assistance. N.A.A.C.P. member John Thompson accepted the position of chief counsel; fellow black attorney George Woodson, formerly from the predominantly Negro coal mining community at Buxton, Iowa assisted him. The local branch bolstered defense funds to defray all legal expenses. To the Negro community this became an important test case: the N.A.A.C.P. viewed this case as a challenge to the city's realtors who surreptitiously agreed to keep blacks out of certain metropolitan districts. But the municipal court denied the injunction Madden sought. Thompson and Woodson deftly handled the case, arguing that the real estate firm, in ejecting Quail from her home, violated the fourteenth amendment of the United States Constitution as well as the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1884. The Bystander's editors hailed this victory, but cautioned that more battles over discrimination would follow.

In the summer of 1923, the N.A.A.C.P. once again intervened on behalf of a victim of segregation. Negroes complained of discrimination at a municipal bathing beach. The beach manager denied Negro patrons the right to swim there. S. Joe Brown reacted to these complaints by helping to appeal to the city council, whose members had shown sympathy in the past. Once again Brown found the council members receptive to the protesters' pleas. With support from his fellow councilmen, the mayor introduced and secured the passage of a resolution
banning future introduced discriminatory practices at any city
bathing beach or park. The national office commended these
efforts. 227

The Quail suit and Brown's protest of the beach's segre-
gation occurred under the Association presidency of lawyer
James B. Morris, who had become editor of the Bystander in
1922. During this N.A.A.C.P. administration, Morris teamed
with Volney Diltz, a white state legislator to gain another
victory for black Iowans. The state had passed a Civil Rights
Act of 1884. But Morris, along with Polk County representa-
tive Diltz, believed that the penalty imposed under the law
was too severe to secure convictions. Hence, the law's very
severity rendered it ineffectual.

As part of a report on local legislative activities,
Morris reviewed a plan devised by Diltz addressed to National
Director of Branches, Robert W. Bagnall. Morris wrote that
attorney Diltz, an N.A.A.C.P. member, formulated the plan while
running for office. If elected, Diltz promised to introduce a
bill reducing the penalty for the State Civil Rights Bill
violators. On the surface, Diltz's bill appeared to represent
a lessening of the state's concern for protecting the rights
of blacks. But this proposed legislation actually intended an
opposite effect. Diltz, who won election, authored the bill
in the 40th General Assembly in 1923, which, as Morris described
to Bagnall, "put teeth in the law." The previous version of the
bill stipulated that the accused violator must appear before a grand jury and face indictment before standing trial. Under Diltz's amended bill, the grand jury procedure was waived, eliminating the necessity of an indictment. Morris intimated that the reason so few people had received convictions was because "the information has died behind closed doors of the grand jury."\textsuperscript{228}

The same year that Diltz and Morris planned the passage of this legislation, a young black woman, Dottie Blagburn, tested the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1884. In November, 1923, she sought redress from a Des Moines theater manager who seated Negro Patrons in a Jim Crow area. Ms. Blagburn refused to sit in the section and ushers forced her to leave. The N.A.A.C.P. agreed to support her in a law suit. Her attorneys successfully persuaded the all-white jury to issue a guilty verdict. According to the Des Moines branch's secretary, William Taylor, this marked the first case in which the state actually prosecuted and convicted any white for racial discrimination.\textsuperscript{229}

The early 1920s marked the most impressive series of victories for the Des Moines N.A.A.C.P. James Morris served with much skill and success. The national secretary, Walter White, referred to the "splendid work" achieved by this branch in 1923. White promised that the \textit{Crisis} would carry a praiseworthy story describing Des Moines' successes.\textsuperscript{230} The following year, the N.A.A.C.P. earned a significant victory against
segregation. A Council Bluffs chiropractor, Dr. Samuel Barrett, wrote the national branch about a pending bill in the state legislature which purported to forbid racial inter-marriage. Three days later, President Morris received instructions from the Assistant Secretary to take steps to defeat this "inquisitive legislation." Morris and his successor, Dr. J. Jefferson, lobbied for the bill's defeat. With help from Diltz, the law never passed. In fact, a similar bill introduced a few years later also failed.

By 1928, Mrs. S. Joe Brown, Association president from 1925 to 1930, could boast of impressive gains. In addition to defeating three Jim Crow marriage bills, she reported to the national office of three convictions of state civil rights violations. Mrs. Brown also reported to the national office of her husband's unsuccessful bid for municipal judge that got a surprising amount of help from the white community.

What she did not indicate was that after the mid-1920s, the city's Ku Klux Klan's outbursts dissipated. Previously received N.A.A.C.P. support from the public leveled off and those who continued to help the Negro could do little to break the wave of racism. In 1930, the Association's grievance committee reported its investigative activities, whose grievances echoed the same problem with only minor variations: the discontinuance of a post office in a black-owned drug store, the discharge of Negro city hall employees and the alleged refusal
of a store to serve a Negro customer. 235

A summary of the N.A.A.C.P. must include distinctions between the substantive gains and transitory victories that effected the whole Negro population. Most decisions rendered suggested that black persons in Iowa and especially Des Moines enjoyed the same basic rights as whites. According to the civil rights statute, Negroes could not be barred from any political, social or economic activity. But blacks still constituted too few numbers to sustain any political influence; social barriers remained as firm as ever and, perhaps more importantly, the employment market worsened for Negroes by the late 1920s. Many blacks left Des Moines for such cities as Milwaukee or Chicago in search of better job opportunities. 236

One lasting accomplishment of the 1920s, important as any legal precedent, was the added confidence the N.A.A.C.P. encouraged among black leaders. Brown, Morris and Howard fought with considerable skill in the courtrooms of the city. They held a high position in black society as a result. Brown stayed involved in a variety of club and church related activities, almost always holding a prominent position. Morris and Howard too followed a similar course: Morris edited the Bystander in 1922 and practiced law, and Howard also continued his law practice.

Whites played a crucial role in making the N.A.A.C.P. the first genuinely effective organization for all blacks. Harvey
Ingham, Casper Schenk and Volney Diltz headed the first whites in the organization. Although at least two governors and other prominent white members participated sparingly, their very endorsement and membership aided in enhancing the Association's local prestige and served to give it much needed respect. Still, the effect of prestigious membership proved minimal at best because the Association could not harness enough strength to gain even a toehold in the practically all-white job market. Employment competition during the 1920s in Des Moines prior to the Great Depression probably fueled the growing amount of racial tension.

Black and white leaders formed the Des Moines Inter-Racial Commission partially in concern for this tension. The so-called "inter-racial movement" began following World War I in Georgia and Tennessee. White and black ministers of several denominations formed a Commission on inter-racial cooperation with headquarters in Atlanta. The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, a New York based organization, soon took over the inter-racial commission and transformed it into a nationwide movement. The Des Moines Y.M.C.A.'s general secretary, George Weber, a white man, first expressed interest in the inter-racial movement in 1924. He pushed to organize a joint meeting of the Religious Work Committees of the white Central Association of the Y.M.C.A. and the Colored Men's Branch for the purpose of forming such a commission in
Des Moines. After holding a weekend caucus of black and white leaders at the Y.M.C.A. camp near Boone, Iowa, north of Des Moines, the leaders determined to form the Des Moines Interracial Commission. The thirty original members included fifteen whites and fifteen blacks of several different denominations. A white man, Professor H. T. Steeper, principal of West High School, was elected chairman; S. Joe Brown was vice-chairman. Harvey Ingham, James Morris and the pastor of Corinthian Baptist Church, Reverend George Robinson, held other executive positions.

The Commission did little during the first year. In fact, its members never issued a clear definition of the organization's goals and intentions, probably because the members were unsure of what direction to take. Their meetings consisted of monthly luncheons designed to acquaint members and executives with one another. The national commission's first annual convention in 1925 had Des Moines representatives. The Des Moines contingent received a recommendation to add women of each race to the executive committee. The Des Moines members responded by placing one black woman and one white woman on the committee. The black representative was Mrs. N. C. Marshall who chaired the "Colored Women's Branch" of the Blue Triangle Y.W.C.A. The white woman was Delia Wilson, General Secretary of the Des Moines Y.W.C.A.
Sensing the organization's relative inactivity, white leaders requested the Negro representatives to produce a document listing objectives blacks in Des Moines sought that would make living conditions for them more desirable. In response, Brown, Morris, Robinson and Mrs. Marshall met separately to consider the proposal. They drafted a document outlining in as detailed a fashion as any protest held before, the problems for Negroes in the city. Styled "The Desiderata of the Des Moines Negroes," the document contained fourteen objectives that the commission adopted.

1. The abolition of separate bathing beaches and separate everything else (sic) supported by public taxation.

2. The abolition of discrimination in the buying and renting of property.

3. The abolition of segregation in hotels, restaurants, theatres and other places of public accommodation.

4. The abolition of the custom that has prevailed in Polk County for twenty years of excluding all Negroes from the Grand Jury lists.

5. Representation in proportion to our population in all city and county labor and office work, with a definite program for the interviewing of employers of labor and the heads of the Labor Unions to the end that more Negroes may be employed in other than menial jobs; and that the Labor Unions may take a fairer attitude toward Negro mechanics of the respective trades.

6. Several more carriers and at least one clerk in the Des Moines Post Office.
7. A member in the attendance department of the Des Moines Public Schools; and at least one teacher in those schools which we furnish about 50% of the pupils as we do in Franklin and Logan schools.

8. Better attendance of white people upon Negro meetings for which an invitation is extended to the general public.

9. More opportunities for Negro speakers to appear before audiences of white people, more especially groups of white children.

10. The introduction of a course in Negro history into the Des Moines Public Schools.

11. At least 200 white men and women to become members of the Des Moines branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.


14. A Negro member on the Des Moines Board of Education.

Three years later the Commission drafted a constitution and enunciated its goals, stressing the need for better communication between the races in a "friendly forum." Through this means a greater degree of mutual understanding could be reached. The desired result was less prejudice and the reduction of inter-racial misunderstandings; committees formed to study housing problems, sanitation problems, educational and industrial relations.

The result of this organization's efforts pointed to a record of modest accomplishment. In 1929, it sponsored a visit
from Congressman Oscar DePriest, a noted black Chicago politi-
cian, and shortly afterward, from George Washington Carver.
But the organization's members who followed an unwritten pact
to maintain an equally balanced black-white membership, could
boast of few fully attained goals as spelled out in 1925. Dis-
rimination still remained the norm in most business places. A
Negro did not serve on the county Grand Jury until 1942, more
blacks did secure jobs on the city and county payroll, but many
held only token positions as assistants such as Assistant State
Doorkeeper, Assistant Sargeant-at-Arms and Assistant Post
Mistress to the State Legislature. Blacks made no real inroads
with white labor unions, and no Negro teachers worked in city
schools as of 1944, only student teachers.243

Hence, in reviewing the activities of these two inter-
racial organizations--N.A.A.C.P. and Des Moines Inter-Racial
Commission--important observations arise as to the alignment of
Negro leadership and social institutions. First, the activi-
ties of the groups displayed what kind of person reached the
pinnacle of black leadership. The attorneys who could demon-
strate specific achievements gained immeasurable prestige with-
in black society. Brown and Morris held leadership positions
in almost every club or society in which they were members.

The confidence of black leaders was contagious, as the
whole black community received the N.A.A.C.P. enthusiastically.
But most Negroes did not witness many real substantive changes
in their living conditions; they only achieved a few piecemeal gains. Discrimination persisted in most private business houses. The N.A.A.C.P.'s leaders helped lessen segregation in some public places. They also could only lower political barriers in a few instances. Perhaps most important from the average black's perspective, job opportunities did not appear more encouraging as a result of the N.A.A.C.P. and Inter-Racial Commission activities. But the two agencies still represented a start for blacks, organizations in which political, religious and civic leaders--black and white--could gather to discuss problems in race relations and confront segregation in some of its worst forms.
CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSION

This study adds to the growing body of works that have examined early twentieth century Negro communities in large northern cities. The conditions and development of leading black social organizations in Des Moines, Iowa elucidated many aspects of the general urban pattern as described in Negro Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit and New York. Although developmental phases of the Negro communities in these larger, industrial cities did not apply to Des Moines, many patterns proved nearly identical.

One difference between the black experience in Des Moines compared to these other cities was in the age of Des Moines' Negro population. Des Moines formed in the 1840s, but was not a city of over ten thousand until the Civil War. Hence, a sizable ante-bellum Negro community did not exist, as Des Moines was still a frontier capital city at the eve of the Civil War. Not until the 1880s were there over a few hundred blacks in Des Moines, enough to develop any semblance of an individual, cohesive community. Therefore, no rigid "old" class of Negro leaders with ties stretching back two generations ever existed to exert any influence on the Negro community's development. This factor influenced the direction of Des Moines' twentieth century Negro leaders who more closely typified the "old" elite leaders than their contemporary counterparts in Chicago and Cleveland. This occurred because
black leadership developed more slowly in Des Moines. In
addition to age, the population of Des Moines' Negro community
differed from those in other cities under comparison, as does
the black community's growth rate. Negro population growth in
Des Moines was anything but astronomical. Instead its growth
remained gradual. Although the number of Negroes rose markedly
between 1915 and 1920, this growth did not reach the propor­
tions of Negro population growth in Chicago, Cleveland or
Detroit. Des Moines itself did not enlarge much either. It
had no significant industrial base, or the hope of good jobs--
factors which beckoned southern blacks to other northern and
midwestern cities.

Accompanying a modest growth rate for Des Moines' black
community was a slowly developing segregated area for the
city's blacks. Not a ghetto in the traditional urban sense,
Des Moines black community developed in pockets throughout the
city; however, the largest pocket, just north of the downtown
business section, was the heart of the Negro community. Blacks
lived in scattered neighborhoods, or multiple nuclei, in a
surprisingly widespread area compared to other cities.

Even though a rigidly drawn ghetto with definite boun­
daries never formed in dramatic fashion in Des Moines, it did
not mean a better quality of life for the city's Negro inhabi­
tants.
The Negro social groups that emerged in the early twentieth century demonstrated the Negro community's quality of life. This development underscored the continued emphasis on fundamental needs for Des Moines blacks. The major Negro social groups--fraternal or club organizations, churches and political institutions--demonstrated a pervasive concern by blacks to help their community at-large. As a result, Negro community help programs proliferated. Clubs continued to sponsor programs designed to succor the blacks' plight. Church groups likewise extended aid to needy Negroes, and the few black politicians active in city affairs competed in a more selfish sense for rare coveted jobs, one of the black community's greatest qualitative needs.

Negro social organization seldom transcended a concern for basic economic needs which was reflected in limited club activity. Black women's organizations enjoyed only sparse participation. Since no ante-bellum social clubs existed in Des Moines, Negro migrants had no real social mechanisms from which to build. Shunned by white society, Negroes in Des Moines unsuccessfully attempted to form what contemporaries viewed as "wholesome" social groups. These failures reflected limited leisure time for men as well as black women workers. Engrossed in a struggle to attain an economic foothold in Des Moines, blacks had little time to develop more refined social activities, and a paucity of effective leaders only
compounded the problem. Issue after issue of the *Bystander* mirrored this frustration—as scores of black organizations never outgrew their embryonic stages and did not become viable, black community-centered institutions.

Those organizations which did develop usually were led by the small black elite who valiantly, but unsuccessfully tried to enlarge black community participation. Led by John Thompson, Robert Hyde, Gertrude Rush and Mr. and Mrs. S. Joe Brown, the local Negro elite largely failed to sustain any enduring Negro community-wide programs designed to better the race. The average Negro cared little for such groups.

The local Negro churches enjoyed high attendance in the wake of social club stagnation. Baptist and Methodist churches competed to provide fundamental material needs as well as giving spiritual needs to its congregation members. Shunned by widespread proscription and segregation in social, economic and political spheres, blacks found their churches welcome spots to release emotions through uninhibited worship.

As in other cities, Des Moines' blacks created or tried to create their own social units, totally apart from those of whites. So the story of black community social development in Des Moines was a story of some individual achievement, but not one of community success. Nevertheless, the variety of accomplishments experienced by Des Moines' blacks attested to slow, but evolving, black community development and willingness to try and create a meaningful community life.
Just as the dominant white community effected the iniquitous social, economic and political barriers confronted by blacks, whites began to lift some of these worst restrictions in Des Moines. A white man instigated both the Des Moines N.A.A.C.P. and the Des Moines Inter-Racial Commission, although blacks ran the local N.A.A.C.P. branch. In fact, this organization served as a springboard for the development of future generation Negro leaders such as James Morris. The success of the N.A.A.C.P. as the lone group in Des Moines to effectively crusade for the Negro's cause demonstrated that one aspect of the Negro Community had not changed from the 1890s to 1930. That is, the Negro community had not been totally transferred into a distinct community within the city, like Chicago, because dealing with whites perforce continued. Blacks in business, and black professionals and politicians could not function without some form of white help. The Negro community developed from its nineteenth century infancy; but it had not become a "black metropolis" within the city at-large.

In a larger, or nationwide, sense the experience of Afro-Americans in Des Moines affirms the claim that Negroes were helpless victims of America's great chase for wealth. Comparative studies have chronicled the black man's struggle to survive in large, industrial metropolitan areas. But Des Moines was a service-oriented town in America's most prosperous agricultural region. Yet, the Negroes' plight was little better
here, suggesting deeper reasons or roots for segregation and discrimination systems besides that of economic determinism.

Even in a city like Des Moines where blacks did not pose an economic threat, whites did not treat them as equal citizens. Blacks exercised virtually no influence in economic or political development in the city, and most of their social groups received no recognition from the dominant white majority. Indeed, Des Moines was no melting pot, no place of unlimited opportunity for those of African descent.
1 Information concerning the black experience from Reconstruction through the Depression has been treated by many sociologists and historians. The best single source pulling together various Afro-American historical developments is August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, From Plantation to Ghetto (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976).


5 Meier, From Plantation to Ghetto, pp. 194-253.

6 Ibid., pp. 194-253.


9 Ibid., pp. 129-166.

10 Ibid., pp. 51-110, 167-200.


12 Katzman, Before the Ghetto, pp. 53-80, 207.

13 Ibid., pp. 135-206.

14 Ibid., pp. 135-160.

15 Ibid., pp. 175-211.


19. Ibid., pp. 113-155, 235-270.


29 Gabriel Victor Cools, "The Negro in Typical Communities of Iowa" (Master's Thesis, University of Iowa, 1918), pp. 11-12.

30 Ibid., p. 10.

31 Iowa State Bystander (Des Moines, 6 September 1905, p. 1. Cited hereafter as the Bystander.


35 Ibid., pp. 36-37.

36 Census manuscripts did not always reveal the remaining amount of mortgage. Therefore, no conclusion can be reached as to the amount of indebtedness of Negro homeowners.

37 Bystander, 25 May 1907, p. 4.

38 Ibid., 22 September 1921, p. 1.


40 Ibid., 17 April 1914, p. 1.


43 Bystander, 16 February 1900, p. 1; 7 March 1902, p. 2; 6 February 1903, p. 1; 25 March 1904, p. 4.

44 Ibid., 9 December 1904, p. 4; 5 September 1900, p. 1; 17 November 1905, p. 5.


47 Interview with Reno Bianchi, former miner (white) and Norwoodville resident, 22 September 1978.


52. Ibid., 10 February 1921, p. 2; 8 October 1927, p. 1.


54. Ibid., 24 December 1897, p. 9; 24 September 1897, p. 1; 4 June 1900, p. 5; 21 December 1906, p. 3.


56. Ibid., 24 May 1907, p. 4.

57. Ibid., 12 January 1900, p. 1.


61. Ibid., 20 December 1918, p. 1; John L. Thompson, "History and Views of Colored Officers Training Camp for 1917 at Fort Des Moines, Iowa" (Des Moines: Bystander Press, 1917).


63. Bystander, 30 November 1917, p. 2.

64. Ibid., 7 December 1917, p. 2.

65. Ibid., 30 November 1917, p. 3.

66. Ibid., 26 August 1920, p. 2.


69 Ibid., 31 October 1919, p. 3.
70 Ibid., 10 March 1921, p. 1.
71 Cools, "Negro in Typical Communities," pp. 81-82.
72 Spear, Black Chicago, pp. 22-23, 201, 203-5.
73 Kusmer, Ghetto Takes Shape, pp. 182-183.
74 Bystander, 19 February 1899, p. 1.
75 S. Joe Brown, "20 Years of Interracial Work in Des Moines, Iowa. A History of the Des Moines Interracial Commission" (Des Moines, 1905), p. 5. Pamphlet held in the Des Moines Public Library.
77 Kusmer, A Ghetto Takes Shape, pp. 92-155.
79 Ibid., 26 September 1902, p. 1.
80 Ibid., 17 October 1902, p. 1.
81 Ibid., 20 March 1903, p. 1.
82 Ibid., 21 October 1904, p. 1.
83 Brigham, Des Moines the Pioneer of Municipal Progress, 1:388.
84 Bystander, 6 October 1905, p. 1.
85 Ibid., 6 October 1905, p. 1; 27 October 1905, p. 1.
86 Ibid., 3 November 1905, p. 1.
87 Ibid., 19 October 1906, p. 1.

Bystander, 12 January 1906, p. 1. The name of the black club is unknown.


Ibid., 26 July 1918, p. 1.

Ibid., 26 July 1918, p. 1.

Ibid., 4 December 1914, p. 1.

Ibid., 4 December 1914, p. 1; Mather, Who's Who of the Colored Race, 1:255; Bystander, 26 July 1918, p. 2; 1 October 1919, p. 1; 25 April 1910, p. 3; Cools, "Negro in Typical Communities," p. 54.

Bystander, 4 December 1914, p. 1; 1 June 1917, p. 1.


Spear, Black Chicago, pp. 91-97, 174-179.

105 Katzman, pp. 135-147.


107 Bystander, 2 December 1897, p. 1; Cools, "The Negro in Typical Communities," p. 46. City and county directories for those years did not list the Holy Jumpers either.


109 Bystander, 8 November 1899, p. 1.

110 Burns United Methodist Church, p. 4.

111 Bystander, 11 August 1899, p. 1.

112 Ibid., 17 May 1901, p. 1. Groups such as these invariably appeared in the Bystander. Yet, many such as the A.M.E. Congress never appeared again.

113 Ibid., 24 June 1910, p. 1.


115 Bystander, 18 March 1918, p. 1.

116 Ibid., 16 August 1918, p. 1.

117 Burns United Methodist Church, pp. 5-10.

118 Bystander, 18 August 1901, p. 1.

119 Ibid., 17 March 1911, p. 1.


121 Bystander, 21 April 1911, p. 1.

122 Ibid., 26 April 1918, p. 3; 3 May 1918, p. 2.

123 Editorials of this nature occurred during the late 1890s until about 1915.
124 Bystander, 22 October 1897, p. 1.
125 Ibid., 6 February 1903, p. 1.
126 Ibid., 9 April 1903, p. 1.
128 This does not necessarily represent a cross-section of secular leaders' feelings. Cools did not indicate the interviewees' names.
130 Ibid., pp. 57-58.
131 Ibid., p. 46.
132 Smith, "Negro Church in Iowa," p. 61.
134 Smith, "Negro Church in Iowa," p. 47.
135 Bystander, 29 October 1927, p. 1.
137 Bystander, 25 December 1903, p. 1. In subsequent issues the paper alluded to increased church membership and mentioned names of participants and leaders in church related announcements.
139 Bystander, 27 March 1907, p. 1.
140 Ibid., 6 February 1920, p. 2.
141 Ibid., 15 March 1907, p. 1.
142 Bergman, The Negro in Iowa, pp. 52, 46.
143 Bystander, 16 July 1897, p. 1.
144 Ibid., 4 March 1898, p. 1.
145 Ibid., 11 February 1898, p. 1; 1 April 1898, p. 1; 10 June 1898, p. 1; 22 February 1900, p. 1; 30 March 1900, p. 1.

146 Ibid., 11 November 1898, p. 1.

147 Ibid., 4 May 1904, p. 1.

148 Ibid., 8 April 1900, p. 1.

149 Examples of this attitude appeared frequently in the Bystander. Two examples can be found in: Bystander, 6 June 1901, p. 1; 6 April 1906, p. 1.

150 Ibid., 7 April 1899, p. 1.


153 Ibid., p. 113-154.


155 Mather, Who's Who of the Colored Race, p. 262; Bystander, 10 June 1904, p. 4.


158 Mather, Who's Who of the Colored Race, p. 262.

159 Bystander, 16 August 1907, p. 1.

160 Ibid., 2 December 1910, p. 1.

161 Ibid., 30 August 1912, p. 1.

162 Ibid., 9 August 1912, p. 1. The year before Booker T. Washington had visited Des Moines and stayed at Thompson's home during his stay.

163 Ibid., 2 August 1912, p. 1.

165 S. Joe Brown, "From 'Hangman's Hollow' to a Chair of Greek and 46 Years at the Iowa Bar," Manuscript held at the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

166 Bystander, 21 July 1916, p. 1; Bergman, Negro in Iowa, p. 82.

167 Mather, Who's Who of the Colored Race, p. 45.

168 "From 'Hangman's Hollow','" p. 11; Bergman, Negro in Iowa, p. 82.

169 Mather, Who's Who of the Colored Race, p. 45.

170 Bystander, 19 June 1908, p. 1.


175 Iowa Writers Project Files, p. 343.


177 Iowa Writers Project Files, p. 346.

178 Bystander, 28 February 1902, p. 1.


180 Bystander, 6 May 1899, p. 1.


182 Ibid., 9 March 1900, p. 1; 30 March 1900, p. 1.

183 Ibid., 4 May 1900, p. 1.

184 Ibid., 14 June 1907, p. 1.

185 Ibid., 18 September 1908, p. 1.


187 "From 'Hangman's Hollow','" p. 12.
188 Bystander, 10 December 1927, p. 1.


190 Ibid., pp. 120, 137.


193 Ibid., 10 March 1916, p. 1. Throughout 1915 and 1916 the Bystander listed the names and positions of new members.

194 Bystander, 20 December 1918, p. 5.

195 Ibid., 28 March 1919, p. 3.

196 Ibid., 18 June 1920, p. 1.

197 Director of Branches to Mrs. S. Joe Brown, 27 May 1926, Records of the N.A.A.C.P., Des Moines, Iowa, Box G-68, folder 2, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Hereafter Library of Congress is indicated by the symbol LC.

198 Bystander, 19 May 1921, p. 1.

199 Ibid., 26 February 1920, p. 3.


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230 Walter White to S. Joe Brown, 5 May 1923, Box G-68, folder 1, RNAACP; Assistant Secretary, national branch to James Morris, 23 December 1923, Box G-68, folder 1, RNAACP.

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