The black middle class in Buxton, Iowa

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The black middle class in Buxton, Iowa

by

Phyllis Ann Gray

A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
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MASTER OF SCIENCE

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Signatures have been redacted for privacy

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
1984
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Charles Gray and Mrs. Elbertha Gray, my sister, Mrs. Delores Smith, to other members of my immediate family, and to my late brother-in-law, Rubin Powell, Sr. Thanks for all the encouragement and support.
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

In the early 1900s, life chances for black Americans were restricted, and most black Americans lived in a state of relative deprivation. One exception is found in the local history of black Americans in Buxton, Iowa. Buxton was a mining camp and company town in the early 1900s, one of three owned and operated by the Consolidation Coal Company, a subsidiary of the Northwestern Railroad. Muchakinock was the first of the three company towns. Later, Consolidation relocated to Buxton and then to Haydock.

The Consolidation Coal Company experienced a strike in Muchakinock by its white workers. Company agents subsequently recruited black labor from the South in the 1880s. The history of blacks in Buxton began with this labor recruitment.

The Company engaged in welfare capitalism in Buxton. According to Brandes (1976:5-6), welfare capitalism is "any service provided for the comfort or improvement of employees which was neither a necessity of the industry nor required by law." These services in Buxton were seen in medical care (doctors, dentists), housing and recreation. By way of illustration, the Consolidation Coal Company built the nation's largest black YMCA in Buxton. More importantly, the Company manager in Buxton made certain that black employees experienced life chances equal to that of whites. Wage rates, housing, and access to education, freedom to use public accommodations, and political participation were all relatively unrestricted by race. This local history stands in sharp contrast to the treatment of blacks in the larger nation at the time.
Need for the Study

The sociology of black America is based on a national history of black Americans. Within this general history of blacks, there are regional, state, and local variations. The study of Buxton, Iowa is meant to be a contribution to the appreciation for local variations in black-American history. This study also helps to fill the gap between the sociology of black America on a national level and the sociology of black America on regional, state, and local levels.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to report on the local history of blacks in Buxton, Iowa, and to compare it with the national history of black Americans between 1900 and 1920. Blacks faced systematic barriers and deprivation in the larger nation, which restricted them to limited life chances. In contrast, blacks in Buxton had relatively unrestricted access to the opportunity structure of that community. One consequence was the emergence of a black middle class in Buxton, a class of people who were at least as prominent in that community as were their white counterparts.

Organization of the Thesis

Following this introduction, Chapter II is a review of literature on the history of blacks in the United States from 1900 to 1920. Chapter III is a brief history of Iowa and a history of blacks in Buxton during this same time period. Chapter IV describes the black
middle class that emerged in Buxton. Chapter V is a discussion of this study and its significance for a sociology of black Americans.

Methods Used in the Study

The data used in this study were drawn from a study conducted by Dorothy Schwieder, Joseph Hraba, and Elmer Schwieder. This study was funded by the Department of the Interior Office of Historic Preservation. The data collection is described below.

Interviews

Interviews with former Buxton residents were conducted. Former residents recounted actual experiences and primary perceptions of Buxton. From these interviews, life in Buxton could be described. The interviews included questions on background data, such as age, date of birth, place of birth, residence prior to Buxton, date moved to Buxton, length of time in Buxton, place of residence after leaving Buxton, names of both parents, and names of children (if any).

Questions on occupations included those on family members who worked outside the home, what type of occupation they held, and length of employment in Buxton. If the interviewee was a miner, he was asked his age when he first worked in the mine, length of time spent in the mine (average work day, number of years, any slack seasons), names of mines where employed, jobs held, responsibilities in the mine, wages, union membership, illness or injuries that were mine related, and satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the job.
The interviewees were asked about housing: Was their residence a private or rented house, was it a company house, the size and location of residence, facilities (plumbing, heating, lighting) in the house, how was garbage disposed of, did any homes have telephones, were there homes with basements, were there garden facilities, and what were floor plans or furnishings in their house. Household composition was also asked.

Questions on the Buxton community included the number and types of churches, lodges, or other voluntary associations, type and nature of community stores, what kinds of goods were purchased at company or other stores, what goods were made at home, and what goods were purchased in nearby communities.

There were questions about the educational facilities, ethnic composition of the community and its medical facilities. Questions on education included the number of schools, classes or courses taught, remembrance of teachers or other students, adequacy of school building, playgrounds, etc. Former residents were also asked about different ethnic groups in Buxton, for example, what interaction took place between groups; was there any evidence of separation or discrimination; what were the racial and ethnic background of friends and neighbors, and were there inter-racial families. Questions about what type of medical services included those about hospital facilities, doctors, midwives, and what kind of medical care was provided to miners.

There were questions on leisure time and household activities. They included those about the YMCA and its activities, dances, celebrations or other special occasions, holidays, musical band concerts,
orchestras, family entertaining, and sports. There were also questions on daily routines of family members, division of household labor, food preparation and preservation, parental talks to children about how to behave, family travel outside of Buxton (when and where), holiday celebrations.

The final questions were those on disharmony, such as strikes or lockouts, juvenile delinquency, law and order problems, drinking, rough parts of town, and law enforcement. Other questions included those on photographs of Buxton, and did the interviewees have any relatives buried in Buxton's cemetery.

**Census data**

Iowa State Census of 1895, 1905, 1915, and U.S. Bureau of the Census of 1900 and 1910 were used to supplement the information reported by former Buxton residents in the interviews. Categories used from these censuses were: name, age, sex, race, years of public school education, occupation, place of birth, relation to household, birthplace of father, and birthplace of mother. From the interviews, names that were frequently mentioned were selected and researched through the census for verification of economic and social status. These selected individuals were considered for middle-class status. The criteria for this consideration were based on these selected individuals' occupations, social involvement in the community and the social roles they played.
The Iowa State Bystander Newspaper

The Iowa State Bystander was a black newspaper that ran a weekly news column on Muchakinock and Buxton. From these columns, information was collected on the life style of blacks in Buxton. This information supplemented the interviews and census data. The social and economic conditions of these residents were reflected in these writings in the Iowa State Bystander. Buxton's prominent black residents were highlighted in the weekly columns of this newspaper.

Photographs

Photos were collected from former residents, duplicated and were used in reconstructing life in Buxton. These photos helped document the physical conditions of Buxton and the living conditions of its residents.

Other data

Other data sources included excerpts from the Olin Papers, articles written on Buxton, and the Memoirs of Reubin Gaines, Jr. The Memoirs of Reuben Gaines, Jr. are an autobiographical account of his life in Buxton. From this account, much was learned about the Gaines family. Reference was also made to the private lives of other individuals. This helped in constructing the chapter on the black middle class in Buxton.

All of these data sources; interviews, census data, the Bystander, photos, and other data, were combined to provide a thorough study of black life in Buxton. Contradictions and inconsistencies arose among
interviews of former residents. For example, some said Hobert Armstrong was a black man and some said he was not. Census data provided Armstrong's race as being mulatto, and mulattoes are considered to be black. Census data and the Iowa State Bystander were also used to supplement the interviews.

Problems that were not easy to solve were encountered while using the census data. In certain places, the writing was not legible, which made census information hard to read and understand. The townships were unknown for certain individuals who were selected for the black middle-class status. In this case, the interviews and The Iowa State Bystander were used for names and other clarification.
CHAPTER II. BLACKS IN THE LARGER SOCIETY

Between 1900 and 1920, black Americans faced systematic barriers and deprivation in the larger nation. They had low levels of education and were restricted to the most menial jobs. Blacks were discriminated against and segregated in public accommodations, and disfranchised in political participation. The history of blacks in Buxton must be put into the context of this national history.

Occupation

In the early 1900s, most blacks continued the same work they had done during slavery. More than half of all blacks in the labor force worked in agriculture in 1890, and more than 30 percent worked as domestic servants. Most blacks who worked in agriculture were laborers (Sowell, 1981). Domestic service employed more than 60 percent of the blacks living outside the South. Only about 1 percent of black workers were professionals at this time (Greene, 1970).

In the larger society, a split-labor market existed between blacks and whites. This split-labor market as defined by Bonacich (1972:549) "must contain at least two groups of workers whose price of labor differs for the same work, or would differ if they did the same work. The price of labor refers to total cost to the employer, including not only wages, but the cost of recruitment, transportation, room and board, education, health care, etc." (Bonacich, 1972:549).
Within split-labor markets, conflicts arise among three different groups: business or employers, higher paid labor, and cheaper labor. According to Bonacich (1972:553-554):

1. Business or employers - This class aims at having as cheap and docile a labor force as possible to compete effectively with other businesses.

2. Higher paid labor - This class is very threatened by the introduction of cheaper labor into the market, fearing that it will either force them to leave the territory or reduce them to its level. If the labor market is split ethnically, the class antagonism takes the form of ethnic antagonism.

3. Cheaper labor - The employer uses this class partly to undermine the position of more expensive labor through strike-breaking and undercutting. The forces that make the cheaper group cost less permit this to occur. In other words, either they lack the resources to resist an offer or use of force by business, or they seek a quick return to another economic and social base.

In the split-labor market in this country, whites were the higher paid laborers and held the better white and blue-collar jobs. Blacks were the cheap laborers and had to settle for the less desirable positions. Table 1 illustrates this point.

Blacks were kept out of the white-collar jobs primarily because of their low levels of education in the early 1900s. They were also under-represented in skilled and semi-skilled occupations. About one-half of all blacks were in agriculture. Most of these blacks were laborers. Black Americans were also highly represented in service work. Because of the split-labor market, blacks rarely advanced beyond the most menial jobs.
Table 1. Percent distribution of whites and blacks employed by occupational fields, in the United States, 1910 and 1920

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1910 White</th>
<th>1910 Black</th>
<th>1920 White</th>
<th>1920 Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White collar</td>
<td></td>
<td>(percent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/semi-professional</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue collar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled workers</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled workers</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service workers</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All sectors</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99.1(^b)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Source: Hiestand, 1964.

\(^b\)Note: Due to rounding, all figures may not equal to 100 percent.

Education

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, most of the black population was uneducated. In 1860, slaves constituted 90 percent of the black population, and virtually all slaves were illiterate. In this year, only 2 percent of school-aged blacks attended school (Broom and Glenn, 1965). By 1900, the illiteracy rate declined and fell below 50 percent. By 1920, it fell below 25 percent of the black population.
After Emancipation, black Americans went from a state of being nearly 100 percent illiterate to almost 75 percent literate by 1920 (Sowell, 1981). Table 2 shows the percentage of persons age 5 through 20 who attended school from 1890 to 1920 by race.

Table 2. Percentage of persons age 5 through 20, attending school by race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Ratio of black to white</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Although blacks' literacy rates increased after Emancipation, earlier efforts had been made to change their low levels of education. In 1807, the 500 "free persons of color" built the first school for black children in Washington, D.C. This school, Dunbar High, was the first of many private schools which free black children attended before they were finally admitted in 1862 to city's public school (Greene, 1970).

In the immediate years following the Civil War, northern whites, mostly from the American Missionary Association, went into the South to establish schools for black children. More than a thousand schools were established in less than a decade, and more than two thousand
teachers went into the South. An estimated $57 million were contrib­
uted to black education by northern sources, and blacks themselves
contributed an additional $24 million in the half century after the
Civil War (McPherson, 1975). The major contributor to black education
during the early post war years was the Freedman's Bureau, which contrib-
uted about $3.5 million from 1965 to 1980 (Sowell, 1981).

Schools for blacks in rural areas in the South remained far behind
schools in other areas of the country. In 1911, many rural areas had
no schools at all for black children. This prompted philanthropist,
Julis Rosenwald, to establish a fund to contribute to the building of
black schools in the South. With contributions of more than $4 million
from this fund, more than 50,000 schools were built over the next two
decades. It was as late as 1916 before there were as many black youths
attending public or private high schools. More than one-fourth of all
black children in the country were being taught in schools Rosenwald
funded, when he died in 1932 (Frazier, 1949).

Numerous black colleges and universities were founded by the
American Missionary Association and by black religious groups. Many
of these black colleges, Fisk University, Atlanta University, and
Hampton Institute, actually taught pre-college material at first, and
then gradually moved up to the college level. Due to the scarcity of
blacks with sufficient education to teach in a college, these colleges
were essentially white-run schools for black students (Sowell, 1981).

Less than two thousand blacks received college degrees throughout
the entire nineteenth century. In 1828, the first black man to receive
a college degree graduated from Bowdoin College (Woodson, 1972). In 1862, 34 years later, the first black woman to receive a college degree graduated from Oberlin College (Johnson, 1938).

Life chances for black Americans between 1900 and 1920, in occupations and education, were discussed in this section. During this period, blacks had very little education, and this restricted them to the most menial jobs in society. A split-labor market existed, which further restricted blacks. By the same token, blacks had made efforts to improve their competitive resources by increasing their literacy rates and educational levels.

Segregation

Black Americans experienced enforced segregation in this country in the early 1900s. In the North, segregation occurred in two phases: prior to migration, and after that migration, when a racial caste system developed. In the South, at the close of Reconstruction, Blacks faced strict segregation in all public accommodations. The Jim Crow laws legally sanctioned segregation. A pattern of race etiquette also developed. In addition, blacks faced violence and severe intimidation.

Before the great migration occurred, black life chances were better in the North than they were in the South. Northern blacks had access to the voting booth, to public accommodations, and to a wider societal role. In Philadelphia, blacks were among the leading caterers (DuBois, 1967). Black dentists and physicians had predominantly white clients in Detroit (Katzman, 1975). In Michigan, a predominantly white
electorate elected black politicians to public offices (Katzman, 1975). In Chicago, business as well as social relations between blacks and whites were accepted and even inter-racial marriages were allowed (Drake and Cayton, 1970). However, a sharp reversal of these trends occurred in the beginning of the twentieth century.

Migration to the Northeast and Midwest in the 1890s was more than double what it had been in the 1880s (Sowell, 1981). Migration out of the South continued into the first decade of the twentieth century, doubling in the second decade, and almost doubling again in the 1920s (Farley, 1968).

As emancipated blacks entered these northern cities, conflicts occurred between them and those who were already there. Discriminatory practices and laws arose. These laws barred black adults from equal access to public accommodations, and black children from some public schools in the early 1900s (Sowell, 1975).

At the onset of the twentieth century, the southern migrants soon became the bulk of the northern black communities. However, the masses of these uneducated, unacculturated, rural southern blacks who flooded northern cities were bitterly resented by blacks and whites (Sowell, 1981). The northern press and the black middle class denounced these masses of blacks as crude, unwashed, rowdy, vulgar, and criminal (Frazier, 1970; Henri, 1976; and Osofsky, 1966), and as a menace to the standing of the whole race in the eyes of the larger white community (Drake and Cayton, 1970).
During this era of great relocations of the black population, the northern black ghettos started. In these ghettos, blacks felt trapped and had little hope of ever improving their lives. A caste system developed. Blacks were considered to be of lower status than whites, regardless of their social class. In this way, blacks were restricted from free competition in society. Because of this restriction, blacks could not change their status in society (Myrdal, 1962; Bonacich, 1972).

This caste system developed customs, laws, and beliefs to prevent undercutting in the labor market, resulting in a split-job market. Higher paid laborers (whites) monopolized better occupational positions and were paid at one set of wages, while the cheaper laborers (blacks) were restricted to the less desirable positions and were paid at a lower wage rate. The groups rarely occupied the same positions, but when they did, blacks were paid at a lower wage rate (Bonacich, 1972; Myrdal, 1962).

Evidence for this split job market occurred in the white-collar jobs (professional/semi-professional and business), where whites monopolized. The split job market also occurred in the blue-collar jobs, where most whites were in skilled and semi-skilled occupations. Wages in the categories in which most whites worked were much higher than wages in service work and general work, in which most blacks were employed. Although many blacks and whites worked in agriculture, most blacks were laborers rather than farmers (Hiestand, 1964; Myrdal, 1962).

Before the great migration to the North occurred, at least 90 percent of black Americans lived in the South. In the 1920s, more than
three quarters of a million blacks left the South. Those who remained in the South experienced greater hardships than those who migrated to the North (Sowell, 1981).

Between 1900 and 1920, state after state in the South passed laws which effectively separated blacks and whites in most areas of public life. Southern blacks were completely segregated in restaurants, cemeteries, theaters, and public conveyances by 1900. School appropriations for black children were cut, and black adults could not serve on white juries. Black adults were also relegated to the most poorly paid jobs and menial work (Meier, 1963; Sowell, 1981).

The passage of the Jim Crow laws were accelerated when the 1896 Supreme Court decision on Plessy vs. Ferguson gave legal sanction to separate but equal facilities in education. Blacks were also given poor public accommodations, more menial occupations, and the worst districts for residence. They were also barred from the white educational institutions. Thus, they received lower or inadequate levels of education (Wilson, 1973; Lewinson, 1963; Myrdal, 1962; Woodward, 1966).

Race Etiquette

A part of Jim Crow was the pattern of race etiquette. This pattern referred to the norms of subordination in race contacts. This racial etiquette will be described with emphasis on segregation in public places, contact between black men and white women, and forms of address.

Segregation in restaurants meant that blacks had to sit at separate tables, and whites were served first. However, males of both races
could drink intoxicating liquors and smoke cigarettes together. A white person could drink out of a black person's bottle first, but the reverse never occurred (Kennedy, 1973; Myrdal, 1962).

Black men were to keep away from white women. It was even dangerous to approach a white man's house and ask for a drink of water, for white wives were known to scream hysterically at the unexpected sight of a black man. A black male was not supposed to offer to light a white female's cigarette, for this was an intimate gesture for white males only (Kennedy, 1973).

Another important interracial etiquette was that of how to address the other race. Whites always called blacks by their first names. They never said "Mr.", "Mrs.", "Sir", or "Ma'am". Whites addressed blacks as if they were children. This was the socially approved form of interracial address (Kennedy, 1973).

Blacks were restricted in access to the homes of whites. They were not allowed to enter front doors, but whites could enter the front doors of blacks at any time. Blacks could not sit in the homes of whites unless they were employed there, and even then they could only sit in the kitchen or in special quarters (Kennedy, 1973).

On the roads and sidewalks, blacks had to give whites the right of way. White pedestrians has the right to cross the highway in front of black drivers at any time. Blacks had to step off of sidewalks when white pedestrians approached (Kennedy, 1973).

There were many other race etiquette situations in the 1920s. Blacks were never to assert that a white person was lying. They were
never to impute dishonorable intentions to whites. Blacks were never to suggest that a white person was of an inferior class. They were never to claim superior knowledge, curse a white person, laugh at a white person, nor were they to comment upon the physical attractiveness of a white person of the opposite sex (Kennedy, 1973; Myrdal, 1962).

Violence and Intimidation

During the Reconstruction Era in the South, civil rights and political power had emerged for blacks, but were strongly resented by white southerners. After Reconstruction and with the Compromise of 1877, blacks in the South were left defenseless against assaults on their civil and political rights. Black political influence diminished because of the widespread use of intimidation, fraud, violence, and the manipulation of registration and voting procedures (Pinkney, 1969).

According to Cox (1948), this violence and intimidation against blacks was used to keep them in their place in the South. Blacks did not have the protection of the law, which left them as open targets for this harsh treatment. This often took the form of illegal intimidation and terror from such groups as the Ku Klux Klan. The number of lynchings peaked at 161 per year in 1892 (Motley, 1970). This was a common practice in the South, but only after 1886 were more blacks than whites lynched (Bureau of the Census, 1970). Over time, this practice became primarily one of whites killing blacks (Sowell, 1981). Consequently, blacks had to seek protection from their white employers.
In the North, riots against blacks followed their great migration to that region. W.E.B. DuBois stated that there were riots in 26 cities in the United States in 1919.

The most notorious was the Chicago riot in which 15 whites and 23 Negroes were killed, and 178 whites and 342 Negroes were injured. The riot in Phillips County, Arkansas, in the same year, saw from 25 to 50 persons killed. During the war, the most notorious riots were those in East St. Louis, Illinois, during which at least 39 Negroes and 8 whites were killed, and in Houston, Texas, where 17 whites were killed and 13 Negroes were hanged, 41 were imprisoned for life, and 40 others held for trial. Before the war, the most deadly riots were the Atlanta, Georgia riot of 1906, which killed 10 Negroes and 2 whites, and the Springfield, Illinois riot of 1908, which cost the lives of 2 Negroes and 4 whites (DuBois in Myrdal, 1962:567).

Lynchings, riots, and other violent attacks on blacks left them defenseless of their civil rights. Because blacks had no protection of the law, they had to seek protection from their white employers. By doing this, they were kept as cheap black labor in the caste system. Violence and intimidation were used to buttress the subordination of blacks and to reinforce the racial caste system (Key, 1949; Hraba, 1979).

Politics

After Emancipation, black Americans experienced restrictions to political rights and participation. During the Reconstruction period, blacks voted in large numbers until the Compromise of 1877. With this Compromise, disfranchisement of blacks became effective in the South.

Before the disfranchisement of blacks, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were added to the Constitution to protect blacks' voting rights. Between 1866 and 1875, three civil rights acts were enacted as
a means of assuring equality of black Americans, including their right to vote. These acts were the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the Civil Rights Act of 1870, and the Civil Rights Act of 1875 (Aiken, 1962).

In the Reconstruction Era, blacks held important offices at the state and local levels. They were appointed or elected to such public offices as lieutenant governor, state treasurer, supreme court justice, superintendent of public instruction, secretary of state, and other public offices. Blacks were well represented in state Constitutional Conventions, especially in Louisiana, Florida, South Carolina, and Virginia. At no time, however, did they effectively control affairs of any state (Pinkney, 1969). A black American served in the United States Senate, and two black Americans served in the United States House of Representatives during the 41st Congress (1869-71). From 1869 to 1901, blacks served in every United States Congress, except for the 50th Congress (The Negro Handbook, 1966).

Southern blacks voted in large numbers, starting in the elections for the Constitutional Conventions in 1867. In the South, blacks took advantage of the franchise throughout Reconstruction. Unfortunately, in 1877, white supremacy was restored, and the gains of black Americans in the earlier period disappeared. With disfranchisement of southern blacks after 1900, they were hardly represented in public offices in that region during the first part of the twentieth century (Pinkney, 1969).

Certain states adopted what they called Grandfather Clauses after Reconstruction, which prohibited registration and voting to
those blacks who were freed before Emancipation. These clauses were introduced in the 1980s, and states that persons could vote only if their grandparents had voted. Most blacks had no such ancestors. The Supreme Court, in 1915, finally declared this practice unconstitutional (Lieberson, 1980; Aiken, 1962). Although this practice was declared unconstitutional, the voting situation of blacks did not change in practices.

Social Class

Due to the occupational and educational compositions of black Americans, most belonged to the lower class between 1900 and 1920. As poor blacks migrated to the industrial North from the rural South in significant numbers, black enclaves began to appear in various parts of these cities. These neighborhoods were reflections of both racial segregation and the class composition of blacks. Many of these blacks were illiterate and had little education. They were among the unskilled workers, who earned a day-to-day living on irregular employment (Drake and Cayton, 1945; Daniels, 1914). The lower-class of blacks were basically the same in both the South as in the North. In southern towns and smaller cities, blacks provided the cheap and causal labor that was needed (Wilson, 1978).

The black middle-class and the upper class were not well defined in the early 1920s. The criteria for the middle class and the upper class varied from city to city and from community to community (Meier, 1963). Most of the middle-class individuals were self-made men, who followed the philosophy of Booker T. Washington's self-help and racial solidarity (Meier, 1963). In the North, this class of blacks had a back-
ground of a stable family life, a good education, and an adequate income for a respectable way of life. They struggled to escape from lower-class blacks by moving into middle-class residential areas (Frazier, 1949).

Beginning in the late 1880s, a few blacks who were considered upper class, made fortunes out of investments in real estate and white corporations. These blacks included Thomy Lafton of New Orleans, who owned an estate of half a million, Wiley Jones, a street car owner in Pine Bluff, Arkansas who obtained a fortune of two-hundred thousand dollars, and R.R. Church of Memphis, Tennessee who claimed over a million dollars in real estate (Meier, 1963).

The Black Community

Within the larger society, blacks formed a subsociety (Gordon, 1964). Within this subsociety, blacks had their own institutions. Religion was very important in the lives of black Americans. Denied participation in white voluntary associations, blacks also formed their own associations. These voluntary associations were geared toward the progress of the race. Prominent black leadership also emerged during the 1900s. This section describes these dimensions of the black community at the turn of the century.

Religion was an important factor in the lives of black Americans. After being denied as equals in the religious life of the larger society, blacks organized their own religious denominations. These six Christian denominations are: The National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., The National Convention of America, The Progressive National Baptist Convention, The

Black churches were the primary sources of social life for black people in the early 1900s. The black church was the medium through which the black community maintained its social cohesion (Pinkney, 1969). This social cohesion played a vital part in guiding blacks as they migrated out of the South into other parts of the Country (Pinkney, 1969).

Voluntary associations in the black community included social clubs, recreational organizations, lodges, fraternities, sororities, civil improvement societies, self-improvement societies, and occupational associations. Those blacks who were considered upper and middle class belonged to more associations than those who were considered lower class (Myrdal, 1962).

The fact that blacks were not allowed to participate in the organized sector of the larger society led them to become active in these voluntary associations. According to Robert Merton:

The tremendous amount of club activity among Negroes is, in one sense, a poor substitute for the political activity they would like to participate in but cannot because of caste. Negroes are largely kept out, not only of politics proper, but of most purposive and creative work in trade unions, businessmen's groups, pressure groups, large-scale civic improvement and charity organizations, and the like (in Myrdal, 1962:953).

Black groups were forced to be "race conscious" and most tried to improve the position of the black race. The most positive thing that could be said about these associations, especially the lodges, is that they provided sickness insurance and death benefits for members. These
associations also provided recreation for the black community (Myrdal, 1962).

Prominent black Americans emerged within the race. Frederick Douglas became one of the first national black leaders. In both the antebellum and post Civil War years, he was a lecturer, writer, and a political leader. He fought for abolition, full civil rights for blacks, and advocated self-help among blacks. In the South, the Jim Crow laws and lynchings destroyed all hopes of his wishes by the time of his death in 1895 (Sowell, 1981).

In the same year of Douglas's death, Booker T. Washington, a new black leader emerged. He was born into slavery but freed as a child because of the Emancipation Proclamation. He then acquired a hard­earned education and worked as a teacher. Later he became head of the newly founded Tuskegee Institute in Alabama in 1881. He urged the blacks in the South to work out their destiny there (Sowell, 1981). Washington delivered a speech at the Atlanta Exposition in September 1985, which launched his career as a black leader and granted him national recognition. His later rival, W.E.B. DuBois, was among those who sent congratulations to him on his Atlanta Exposition speech (Harlan, 1972).

Washington had many goals and ideas concerning black people. His first priority was to meet "the real needs and conditions of our people," with basic skills and discipline, which were not only job related but also "how to bathe, how to care for their teeth and clothing" (Washington et al., 1965:79). The thrust of his general
political and social philosophy was "the promotion of progress among the many, and the special culture of the few." He stated that "political activity alone" could not save blacks, for "back of the ballot he most have property, industry, skill, economy, intelligence, and character...." From the beginning, he expressed his desire that "all privileges of the law be ours," that there be "universal free suffrage," and that the law be applied "with absolute honesty...to both races alike" (Washington et al., 1965:79).

Through these quotes were Washington's wishes and desires, he seldomly dwelled on these sayings. In private, he supported and financed federal court disputes pertaining to Jim Crop laws. From behind these scenes, he favorably encouraged political decisions effecting blacks (Sowell, 1978). However, his major concern was educational activity toward economic advancement and character development among the black people. He did not consider this goal as the ultimate limit of black aspirations, but as a necessary historical stage that would "prepare the way for successful lawyers, Congressmen and music teachers" (Washington et al., 1965:78).

While Booker T. Washington's aim was primarily adapted to the condition of the black masses, another leader W.E.B. DuBois arrived on the scene in the early twentieth century as a spokesman for what he called "the talented tenth." A descendent of free mulattoes, he was raised in Massachusetts among educated whites, and was the first black man to receive a doctorate degree from Harvard University. As one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement
of Colored People (NAACP), his educational emphasis was on liberal arts, and his political emphasis was that of unrelenting public pressure for full civil rights as soon as possible (Frazier, 1949; Myrdal, 1962; Sowell, 1974).

Even though Washington and DuBois served their people in two different ways, both recognized the needs of the black masses. These needs were to learn the discipline and the skills necessary to succeed in a modern complex economy (DuBois, 1973). However, some thought of Washington as the leader for the lower classes, who were descendents of slave field hands (Birmingham, 1977). The NAACP, of which DuBois was a founder, was initially preserved for the black elite on the other hand. Some lower-class blacks thought of it as "the national association for the advancement of certain people" (Birmingham, 1977:15).

Conclusion

Between 1900 and 1920, life chances for black Americans were restricted. They experienced systematic barriers and deprivation. Blacks had little education and were relegated to the most menial jobs. A split-labor market existed between blacks and whites, which further deprived blacks' advancement in occupations. Although blacks had low levels of education, there were efforts to improve their education. By 1920, nearly 75 percent of the black population was literate.

Before their migration from the South to the North, 90 percent of black Americans lived in the South. Blacks were completely segregated in all public accommodations and common carriers. The Jim Crow
laws greatly enhanced this segregation. A part of Jim Crow was the pattern of race etiquette, which made blacks inferior to whites in racial contacts. Blacks were also violently attacked, intimidated and had no protection of the law. They were left defenseless and deprived of their civil and political rights.

Life chances were better for blacks in the North than they were in the South. Before the migration, blacks had access to most public accommodations. After the migration of the black masses, segregation was more enforced. A racial caste system developed in the North, which restricted blacks to subordinate states.

Black Americans had very little political rights and participation. During Reconstruction, they took advantage of the franchise. Two amendments were added to the constitution to protect their freedom as citizens. After the Compromise of 1877, disfranchisement of blacks became effective in the South. To enforce the unconstitutional disfranchisement, practices such as the Grandfather clauses were implemented by whites to keep blacks from voting.

Due to the occupational and educational composition of blacks, most belonged to the lower class. The middle and upper classes were better educated, and had better jobs, but these classes were not well-defined. At the very least, these classes were only recognized as middle and upper classes by the black population. In the larger society, they would have been considered lower-middle and middle, respectively.
Within the larger society, blacks formed a subsociety. Black religion was an important aspect in that subsociety. Blacks also formed their own voluntary associations. These associations were geared toward the progress of the race. Prominent blacks and outstanding leaders also emerged.
CHAPTER III. IOWA AND BUXTON

Iowa

The first inhabitants of Iowa were Indians. There were 17 tribes in the state during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Neither the exact time of their arrival in Iowa nor the exact numbers of the respective tribes are known. The Ioway, Sauk, Fox, Pottawattamie, Winnebago, and the Sioux had extensive contact with the white settlers (Sage, 1974).

White settlers came to Iowa in the late seventeenth century and challenged the Indians for dominance of the trans-Mississippi lands. On June 17, 1673, Father Jacques Marquette, S. J., a priest-missionary, along with Louis Joliet, a woodsman, trapper, explorer, and mapmaker, and their five companions moved out of the Wisconsin River into the Mississippi River and along the Iowa border. This marked the first time in recorded history that the land of the future state of Iowa was explored by people of European descent (Sage, 1974).

During the territorial period of Iowa history, opinion was mixed over the issue of statehood. Some were ready for statehood while others were not. On October 7, 1844, the Constitutional Convention was held. At this Convention, the question of the status and rights of blacks arose. In reference to this issue, Convention members, as well as many of their constituents, were no more or less liberal than their contemporaries throughout the entire country (Sage, 1974).
Proposals to exclude blacks from residence in Iowa were seriously considered by Convention members. The issue phrased by an elect committee was the "admissions of people of color on the same footing as whites" (Bergmann, 1948:390). The committee replied "they could never consent to open the doors of our beautiful state and invite them (blacks) to settle our lands. The policy of other states would drive the whole black population of the Union upon us" (Bergmann, 1948:390). Also, "the results would take the form of a train of evils, which would be incalculable" (Bergmann, 1948:390). Thus, a member replied, "the people of Iowa did not want blacks swarming around them" (Bergmann, 1948:390). Another member reminded the others that such a provision might prevent the admission of Iowa as a state. The elect committee report was submitted to, but rejected by, the Constitutional Convention (Bergmann, 1948).

Iowa's boundaries

Iowa's boundaries were an even more important issue before the Constitutional Convention. This problem began as far back as 1839, when Governor Lucas first recommended certain far-flung lines for the state. The Constitutional Convention's committee on boundaries, led by the former Governor Lucas, recommended these lines to the Convention. Known as the Lucas Boundaries, these lines would have enclosed an area roughly equivalent to present Iowa and a great deal of southern Minnesota. These lines posed a problem so serious that the boundary issue held up Iowa's admission as a state (Sage, 1974).

In the United States Congress, the acceptance of Iowa as a state rested on several issues. Anti-slavery people argued for the area
west of the Mississippi River to be divided into as many states as possible, creating more potential votes in Congress against slavery. The size of Iowa was a part of this issue. Pro-slavery people argued for the Lucas Boundaries, with the intentions of creating fewer potential votes in Congress against slavery (Sage, 1974).

An act was drafted in Congress that coupled Florida as a slave state and Iowa as a free soil state for admission into the Union. This was the first time that the admissions of two states was ever provided in the same act. Although the idea of balancing slave and free states had been used with Missouri and Maine, their admission was accomplished in separate acts. Such balancing never was officially admitted, but it was known that such was the case (Sage, 1974).

In the United States Congress, the pleas for the reduced state boundaries of Iowa prevailed. The House substituted the Nicollet lines for the Lucas Boundaries. It passed a bill for the admission of Iowa into the Union in that boundary form, as did the Senate. Just one day before his term expired, President John Tyler signed the act admitting both Iowa and Florida into the Union on March 3, 1845. This act qualified Iowa for statehood in April 1845, on the condition of Congress' acceptance of the Nicollet Boundaries (Sage, 1974).

Fifty-nine days after Iowa's admission into the Union, on December 28, 1845, the General Assembly chartered a "State University of Iowa," making the University of Iowa the oldest institution of higher learning in the state. However, classes were not held until 1855. Iowa State University was founded in 1858, known then as the Iowa State Agricultural
College and Model Farm. In 1876, The University of Northern Iowa at Cedar Falls was founded, and in 1881 Drake University at Des Moines came into existence (Sage, 1974).

In 1851, Iowa's Third General Assembly passed legislation restricting the settlement of blacks in Iowa. Those blacks living in Iowa at the time were able to stay, but blacks who came after the passage of the bill were given three days to leave the state. If they refused to leave, they were fined $2.00 for each day they stayed. Although the bill passed both houses of the State General Assembly, it never became law (Bergmann, 1948). This bill is significant because it reflects Iowa's attitude toward blacks in the mid-1800s.

Farming

Iowa is one of the greatest farming states in the United States, ranking second to California in the total value of crops and livestock. It is known as the corn state and as "the land where the tall corn grows." Iowa farmers provide 7 percent of the United States' farm products. However, leadership in United States corn production passes back and forth between Iowa and Illinois (World Book Encyclopedia, 1981).

Iowa's total farm area covers about 34 million acres of land. This area makes up 95 percent of the entire state. About 20 percent of Iowa's workers are farmers and 80 percent of these farmers own or partly own their land (World Book Encyclopedia, 1981).

Hogs are Iowa's leading source of farm income. They provide an annual income of about $2 billion. More hogs are raised in Iowa than
in any other state. The State's farms have about 14 million hogs, which comprise about one-fourth of the country's supply (World Book Encyclopedia, 1981).

Soybeans and corn are Iowa's chief crops. Soybeans rank first among the crops and earn an annual income of about $1 billion. The state produces about 200 million bushels of soybeans annually. Only Illinois produces more soybeans than Iowa (World Book Encyclopedia, 1981).

Corn ranks second among Iowa's chief crops. It provides an annual income of about $1 billion. In some years, Iowa leads the country in corn production and is second to Illinois in other years. Corn grows on a third of the total area of the state. Iowa produces about a fifth of all the corn grown in the United States (World Book Encyclopedia, 1981).

Railroads

On May 15, 1856, by an act of the United States Congress, a gift was made to Iowa of alternate sections of land for four railroads. The need to go further west and to reach the Pacific Coast made Iowa the target spot for the railroads. These four roads were to be situated at Burlington, one at Davenport, one at Lyons (North Clinton), and one at Dubuque (Sage, 1974).

Farmers in Iowa became angry with the railroads during the early 1870s. They felt the railroads charged unfair rates for freight. The legislature in 1874 passed laws that regulated freight rates in the
state. In 1878, these laws were repealed in favor of the railroads. At this time, a state appointed commission drew up rates acceptable to both farmers and railroad managers. During the early 1900s, railroads were responsible for the building up of new markets for industries throughout the state of Iowa (World Book Encyclopedia, 1981).

Coal mining

Coal mining brought the first major industrial operation to the state of Iowa. Following the Civil War, commercial production of coal was centered in the Des Moines River Valley. Iowa coal attracted capital from outside the state and labor from Europe and the Eastern coal-mining states. Coal production in Iowa was 10,000 tons in 1848, 150,000 tons in 1867, 1,250,000 in 1876, 5,000,000 tons by 1899, and 8,965,000 tons in 1917 (Swisher, 1945). Mine operators were even able to sell slag piles during World War I (Rutland, 1956).

Coal Camps and Company Towns

As coal mines in Iowa began to appear, so did coal camps. Owners of these coal camps had to provide housing for mine workers and their families because most coal mines were located far from large populated cities. Therefore, coal company officials provided company towns for workers and their families. These company towns provided housing, a company store, and generally shaped the communities in which the workers lived (Allen, 1966).
Muchakinock

The company town of Muchakinock was an atypical coal camp. This town became one of Iowa's most unusual coal mining towns in the nineteenth century. Soon after Muchakinock's take over in 1881 by the Northwestern Railroad, it became a predominantly black community (Olin Papers, Vol. III, Folder 3). The Company's name was then changed from the Iowa Central Coal Company to the Consolidation Coal Company (Olin Papers, from the Albia Republican, March 10, 1910).

In the same year, 1881, the Company's white workers went on strike because of a wage dispute. As a result, Hobert Armstrong, a black businessman was sent by Company officials to recruit black laborers from the South. When the blacks arrived in Muchakinock, they learned how to mine from white miners. The Company continued this recruitment into the twentieth century (Carl Kietzman).

In 1900, faced with declining coal production in Muchakinock, the Consolidation Coal Company moved its operations and started the new community of Buxton. Located in northern Monroe County, Buxton existed as a major coal mining town for 22 years. This company town occupied an unusual position in the history of Iowa's coal mining industry (Reubin Gaines, Jr., Olin Papers, from the Albia Republican, March 10, 1910).

Before describing the history of Buxton, one must understand the nature of company towns during the 1900s. A company town is just what the name implies -- a town owned and run by a company. Mining companies found it necessary to build houses and stores, and to provide recreation and other social activities in order to attract and keep large numbers
of workers. In most of these towns, the company ran, owned, and operated every aspect of social life, including the churches, general stores, schools, homes, and recreational facilities. Private businesses were seldomly allowed (Levenson, 1977).

Living conditions varied. Some company towns were considered "model" communities, while others amounted to little more than a gross abuse of workers. During the 1920s, federal investigations of company towns took place. The government felt that company towns were essential for the development of the coal industry and thus wanted to make sure that living conditions were suitable for the citizens (Levenson, 1977).

Some early camps were filthy and unsightly, with poor sanitary conditions, little social activity, and oppressive company control. The federal investigations were essential in improving these conditions. While some company towns had abysmal conditions, other communities, defined as model communities, had adequate housing, community services and a strong community spirit. When inadequate living conditions existed, coal companies received more unfavorable publicity in reference to their company towns than did any other industry. Although many of these towns represented the worst conditions, some became desirable communities in every respect (Allen, 1966).

Almost every town had a company store located in the center of the community. This store undoubtedly served many functions. It was the community shopping center, a town gathering place, a pay office, a post office and a bill collection office (Allen, 1966). Employees were usually paid in script, which was used as credit on the basis of wages
earned but not yet received, thus, workers and their families were required to use the script in the company store (Allen, 1966; Levenson, 1977). Since the company store was the most typical feature of the town, it became the point of company domination and of worker control. If the workers traded somewhere else, their jobs would have been at stake (Allen, 1966).

These company towns were not incorporated, paid no taxes and had no elected government. The Company was the government. Internal political activity had little relevance, and in national elections, the company greatly influenced the residents. Companies exerted considerable power over their employees, which resulted in total dependency of the workers (Allen, 1966).

The companies constructed and operated community facilities in company towns. Business, health and welfare, recreation, religious activity, and education were typically provided by the companies. Companies often built the churches and paid ministers. Most company towns did not have fire departments per se, but rather relied on volunteers in case of an emergency. The company provided these volunteers with a monthly allowance. Baseball and other recreational activities were provided by the company. Also, various social organizations helped provide the town's entertainment (Allen, 1966).

Though company towns were controlled by whites, many contained various races and nationalities. Many workers came from Europe to the company towns, arriving flat broke, and the company provided them with a place to live and credit in the company store. Segregation according
to national origin and race was common in these towns. Different groups tended to live in different sections of town. Particularly in the West, some towns experienced racial conflicts between white European immigrant workers and other racial groups (Allen, 1966; Levenson, 1977).

There were advantages and disadvantages to living in company towns. One great advantage was the company store provided credit, and workers were provided with a place to live in company housing. Companies allowed workers credit from the company store during economic hard times, such as times of unemployment and economic depression. Inexpensive housing, low hospital bills, lack of need to commute to work, lack of need to travel far from home, even on weekends, and good pay all combined to make company town living attractive and constructive (Allen, 1966).

The isolation of these towns from major cities sometimes proved to be an advantage for workers. Because of a lack of places to spend their money, residents were provided a chance to save enough money to purchase homes elsewhere upon retirement. Many of these communities were located near facilities that provided such things as hunting, fishing, hiking, and various winter sports. Outside merchants were allowed to come in on a periodic basis to help relieve the problem of purchasing goods and services not available through the company store (Allen, 1966).

Disadvantages of living in a company town were also seen. The need for medical care and attention was a pressing problem resulting from isolation. Due to the size and location of the town, the extent of this problem varied. Sometimes only a nurse was available. In case of serious illness or accident, nearby hospitals handled residents at the
company's expense. In a few other cases, good medical facilities existed that included company physicians, dentists, and optometrists. To help pay for these special services, the company deducted a dollar or two from the worker's wages, but in most cases, the company hospital still operated at a loss (Allen, 1966).

Paternalism, defined as a system under which an authority treats those under its control in a fatherly way, especially in regulating their conduct and supplying their needs, prevailed throughout most of the company towns (Lindsey, 1939). Some companies controlled the town's entire life, and some even tried to tell their workers how to vote in national elections. If the company discharged a worker, or if a worker resigned, the company had the right to take the worker's house and his job in order to make room for the worker who would take his place. These disadvantages, along with others, led to a decline in company towns (Allen, 1966).

Buxton: An Unusual Company Town

Ben E. Buston became Consolidation Coal Company's general superintendent in 1900. He named the coal camp of Buxton after his father, John Emory Buxton, who served as Consolidation's general superintendent from 1881 to 1896 (Olin Papers, from Albia Republican, March 10, 1910). The Company built homes for workers, which had five or six rooms. The Company also provided trains to transport workers back and forth to work (Olin Papers, from the Albia Republican, December 15, 1910).

As more families moved into Buxton, the number of businesses also increased. The major business of the town was the Monroe Mercantile
Company Store, erected by Consolidation Coal Company in 1901. The store was known as the largest department store west of the Mississippi River, and it employed more than 100 people at one time (Olin Papers, from the Albia Republican, March 10, 1910).

In November of 1902, the Company contributed $20,000 for the erection of a Young Men's Christian Association building (YMCA). Although the YMCA was used for social events by blacks and whites, the Iowa State Bystander newspaper (1902) indicated that the building was a facility for the black people of Buxton. In 1910, the YMCA was expanded to include a swimming pool.

Buxton was not an incorporated town. Because of a lack of zoning ordinances, residents were able to locate businesses anywhere in the town. Thus, Buxton had no municipal government, no law enforcement structure, and no maintenance staff or equipment to provide roads and streets (Olin Papers, from the Albia Republican, December 15, 1910).

**Ethnic composition**

Buxton was unusual in that it contained many ethnic groups but black Americans were the largest until 1915. In 1905, blacks comprised 55 percent of Buxton's population. The other 45 percent were native born whites and European immigrants (Iowa State Census, 1905).

The European immigrants were mostly from Sweden, Slovakia, and the British Isles. There were also other immigrant groups in smaller numbers represented in Buxton. However, immigrants were never more than about 14 percent of the Buxton population (Iowa State Census, 1905).
Buxton was virtually a bi-racial coal mining town. Over the years, whites became the majority group in Buxton. By 1915, the black population had declined from 55 percent to about 40 percent of the town's nearly 5,000 residents (Iowa State Census, 1915).

In Buxton, most of the workers were miners or were otherwise in coal production. The mining work force at Buxton included not only miners but also Company personnel and independent coal operators. In 1905, nearly 95 percent of the work force were miners. In 1915, miners constituted about 97 percent of the work force (Olin Papers, from the Albia Republican, December 15, 1910).

**Occupation**

Unlike in the larger society, there was no split-labor market in Buxton. The company treated all workers fairly and did not discriminate. Whites did not dominate the better jobs, and blacks did not have to settle for the less desirable ones.

Buxton did not have an overall caste system, but racial and ethnic stratification did occur at the very top of the labor force. A native-born male was always the superintendent of Buxton's mines. Miners could make more money than most company personnel in Buxton. This difference motivated more men to be miners rather than company personnel (Olin Papers, from the Albia Republican, March 10, 1910).

Blacks were not paid lower wages than whites for doing the same type of work, as was the case in the caste system of the larger society. The policy of both the United Mine Workers of America and the Consolidation Coal Company was to pay coal production workers the same wages
regardless of their race or ethnicity. The only wage differentials permitted were by occupational category. Most former residents recalled that the Company treated blacks as fairly as whites. No discrimination was found in differential wages, nor on the trains that brought mine workers to and from work (Earl Smith, Mike Onder, Vaeletta Fields, and Gus Holm).

There were various occupations in Buxton's labor force for both white and black workers. In 1905, there were more whites in professional, semi-professional and business occupations, than were there blacks. In this same year, there were more blacks in coal production than whites. By 1915, there was a decrease in white and an increase in black professionals. At the same time, there was a decrease in blacks and an increase in whites in coal production, as white workers were displacing blacks in the mines. Whites dominated in agriculture, as blacks were merely represented. Table 3 illustrates the percentage distribution of black and white workers by occupational groups in Buxton, between 1905 and 1915.

Occupations in Buxton are converted into census occupational categories in Table 4. This facilitates a comparison of the occupational composition of blacks in Buxton with blacks in the larger society. Because mining was considered a skilled occupation, nearly 80 percent of the black workers in Buxton were in skilled occupations, as compared to about 3 percent in the larger society. About 20 percent of the black workers in the nation were laborers as compared to about 5 percent
Table 3. Percent distribution of black and white workers by occupational groups, Buxton, 1905 and 1915<sup>a</sup>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational groups</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1915</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/semi-professional</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisans</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers in coal production</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and communication</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service work</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labors (including domestics)</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>25.3&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Source: Schwieder et al., 1984.

<sup>b</sup>Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not equal 100 percent. Workers in miscellaneous jobs, the military, retired, disabled, and students have been excluded because they were not in the civilian labor force.

in Buxton. There were also more blacks in service work in the larger society than in Buxton.

About one-half of all blacks in the nation were in agriculture. Most of these blacks were laborers rather than farmers. In Buxton, only about 1 to 2 percent of blacks were in agriculture.
Table 4. Percent distribution of blacks in the larger society and blacks in Buxton employed by occupational fields, 1905-1910<sup>a</sup>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational groups</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1915</th>
<th>1920</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buxton</td>
<td>LSOC&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Buxton</td>
<td>LSOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White collar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/semi-professional</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Source: Schwieder et al., 1984; Hiestand, 1964.

<sup>b</sup>LSOC (larger society).

<sup>c</sup>Note: Workers in miscellaneous jobs, the military, retired, disabled and students have been excluded because they were not in the civilian labor force.

There is no significant difference in the middle class occupations (professions and businesses) when comparing blacks in the larger society with blacks in Buxton. Table 4 illustrates this comparison of blacks in Buxton with blacks in the larger society.
**Education**

Buxton contained three public schools by 1900, one in East Swedetown and two in central Buxton. Each school had four teachers, and a total of 669 pupils were enrolled in these three schools. In 1906, a high school was built, but it was destroyed by fire in 1907 and never rebuilt. School officials held graduation ceremonies at the end of the school year in the YMCA (Robert Wheels; Gertrude Stokes; Vaeletta Fields).

All of these schools were racially integrated. The school in East Swedetown served a predominantly white and Swedish neighborhood, one based on voluntary segregation. The other schools had black and white students as well as teachers of both races. Although the racial composition of the schools varied, blacks in Buxton had equal access to public education (Clyde Wright; Vaeletta Fields; and Robert Wheels).

Unlike in the larger society, most blacks in Buxton had a greater chance of continuing their education beyond high school. For example, the Iowa Bystander Newspaper and former Buxton residents reported that some blacks in Buxton went away to college. Vaeletta and Hubert London, children of Minnie B. London, who was a school teacher and later a principal in Buxton, attended the University of Iowa (Vaeletta Fields).

**Segregation**

At the turn of the century, black Americans experienced enforced segregation in education and public accommodations, and a split-labor market existed by race in the country. Blacks were forced into a racial caste system in the North and faced strict Jim Crow laws in the South.
A part of the Jim Crow laws was the race-etiquette pattern that reinforced black inferiority in racial contacts. Blacks also faced harsh violence and severe intimidation from whites. However, this was not the case in Buxton, Iowa.

There was no enforced segregation in Buxton. Blacks had equal access to all public accommodations. They were not segregated in the movies, hotels, nor in the stores. There was neither enforced Jim Crow laws nor a pattern of race etiquette in Buxton. Moreover, blacks did not have to settle for the worst living conditions or undesired residences in Buxton. As families moved to Buxton, housing was assigned on a first-come-first-serve basis. Housing was mostly owned by the Company, therefore, housing was racially integrated on this same first-come-first-serve basis. Later, people could relocate and segregate themselves (Reubin Gaines, Jr.).

The Swedes were a good example of this voluntary segregation. Many of them built their own homes in the two Swede towns. There was a Lutheran Church in East Swedetown and a Methodist Church in West Swedetown (Jeanette Adams; Wilma Stewart; and Reubin Gaines, Jr.). The Swedetowns and the areas immediately outside Buxton proper were predominantly white.

The Slovaks were found throughout Buxton, but tended to concentrate in the Northwest corner. Some lived on farms outside of Buxton. They segregated themselves in private life, but were also more integrated into the public life in Buxton (Clifford Lewis).
Black Americans did not experience harsh and violent treatment from whites in Buxton. Outside of Buxton, groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, operated in nearby towns (Harold Reaseby; Clifford Lewis). While in Buxton, however, blacks were not intimidated.

Though blacks experienced a different life style in Buxton, voluntary segregation still existed. There was little mixing of races in clubs, dances, and churches. In order to attend these functions of another race, one had to be invited by someone of the hosting race. This applied to both black and white functions (Robert Wheels; Vaeletta Fields; Reubin Gaines, Jr.).

Politics

In Buxton, black Americans had full political rights. They experienced no disfranchisement, voted and participated in elections. They were great supporters of the Republican Party and dealt diligently with race issues. Both Republicans and Democrats held rallies in Buxton, but blacks in Buxton supported the Republican Party. During the November 1902 election, the Republicans won out over the Democrats in Buxton (Iowa State Bystander, November 1902).

Racial issues that affected Buxton's black residents were brought to the public attention at the State Capitol in Des Moines. For example, George Woodson, Buxton's black attorney attacked the bill which prohibited black lodges to take the same name and regalia as white lodges, and got it defeated. In 1919, Woodson ran for the office or Representative to the Iowa State Assembly from Monroe County but lost (Iowa State Bystander, November 1919).
Buxton's Black Community

The black community at Buxton was very similar to that of other black communities in the larger society. The main difference was the freedom Buxton blacks experienced for better life chances. The black church in Buxton was very important and influenced black life. Buxton's black residents participated in voluntary associations. Prominent blacks and outstanding leadership also emerged. Blacks freely participated in the public activities held in Buxton.

Religion and voluntary associations

Blacks had the best developed ethnic community in Buxton, and the church was the center of that community. Over the years, there were several black churches in Buxton: A Congressional Church, three African Methodist Episcopal churches, and three Baptist churches. Members of those churches were active in both spiritual and social affairs. Each church contained clubs and sponsored social activities, including literary groups, choirs, and missionary societies. Church services were held on Sundays and during the week at night (Vaeletta Fields).

Churches were segregated institutions in both Buxton and the nation. Whites attended black churches only if they were invited by blacks in Buxton. One noted exception was the case of Nellie King. She was a white lady who was married to a black man. Nellie attended black church services (Nellie King; Vaeletta Fields).

Voluntary associations were also a part of the black community. There were many clubs, musical groups, lodges, political associations,
sporting teams. The voluntary associations consisted of a Colored Women's Club, Eastern Star, Household of Ruth, Daughters of Taborhave, Ladies Industrial Club, Phi Delta Phi, Progressive Women's Club, Sweet Magnolia Club, and Virginia Qum Court No. 8. These were associations for black females. Fraternal orders for black males consisted of the Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Muchakinock Lodge No. 2209, and the Elks. "These associations provided a rich and varied social life in the black community at Buxton" (Iowa State Bystander, November 6, 1905).

Other kinds of voluntary associations found in Buxton's black community were musical societies, choirs, choral groups, and various bands. For example, the Buxton Band was at one time a 36-piece group and the best known band in Buxton. The Buxton Band traveled throughout the state of Iowa and the West, and was well-known. Along with the Buxton Band, there was a men's Glee Club at the YMCA, the Buxton Cornet Band, Professor Jackson's Braves, and Dick Oliver's Band (Iowa State Bystander, November 17, 1905).

Various sports were played in Buxton, including football, basketball, tennis, and handball. Horse racing was also popular. The Buxton Wonders Baseball team was the most famous of all sport teams in the community. The team was mostly black with a few white players. The Buxton Band performed at the Buxton Wonders' games (Clyde Wright; Nellie King).

There were two distinct Buxton Wonders' teams. The first team was organized by B. F. Cooper, a black pharmacist in Buxton, and this team
played at the amphitheatre, a ball park in South Buxton. This team broke up in 1914, and the ball park was torn down. Later, the Buxton Wonders were reconstituted under Ed Peterson, and played at a ball park in northwest Buxton. The team was later known as the White Sox in the 1920s (Nellie King; Reubin Gaines, Jr.).

It was reported that the Consolidation Coal Company supported the Buxton Wonders, donating land, building bleachers, and buying their uniforms. It was also reported that the Buxton Wonders' managers supported the team, and that the players, along with admission fees (.50) paid for the uniforms. Ball playing was generally limited to the weekends because most team members were miners. Occasional road trips did cause team members to miss some work. Teams from Chicago, Kansas City, and Birmingham, Alabama were said to have played the Buxton Wonders in Buxton (Nellie King).

The national holidays were celebrated with special events in Buxton's black community. The Fourth of July, in 1907, was celebrated in this way:

July 4th was a day long to be remembered in Buxton. Work was laid aside long before the appointed hour, 1:30 p.m. The line was formed in front of the business organizations of Buxton, the YMCA and Sabbath Schools were represented in the parade through the streets of Buxton, thence to the park...Judge M.A. Roberts...was the speaker of the day...Miss Daisy Lee read the Declaration of Independence.... At 9:00 p.m., a brilliant display of fire works was had...(Iowa State Bystander, July 12, 1907).

On Labor Day, miners marched in traditional parades. Emancipation Day was also celebrated by blacks in Buxton:
On Saturday, September 21, Emancipation Day will be celebrated in Buxton... All business will be suspended so that all can enjoy the celebration. At 11 o'clock, there will be a grand parade, headed by grand marshall and assistant, a platoon of police, and Buxton Cornet Band. There will be speaking by... Music by A.M.E. choir and Cornet Band. There will be a roasted calf and a pig, there will also be sport of every kind... All of Des Moines is expected (Iowa State Bystander, September 6, 1901).

Summary

In the earlier history of Iowa, blacks constituted about 1 percent of the state's population. Between 1890 and 1920, two unique coal camps existed with large black populations. Blacks were first recruited from the South to work the Muchakinock coal mines. Later, when the Consolidation Coal Company moved its operations to Buxton, Iowa, blacks relocated there, too. Buxton became a bi-racial town. After Buxton, Consolidation relocated at Haydock.

In Buxton, life chances for blacks were superior to what they were in the larger society. Blacks experienced no systematic barriers or deprivation. They received a good education, steady employment, above average wages, good housing, and a minimum amount of discrimination. Blacks had the protection of the Company, which did not allow for a split-labor market system and Jim Crow laws to develop.

There was no enforced segregation in Buxton, as was the case on the national level. Blacks had equal access to all public accommodations. There was no racial caste system, although stratification did occur at the very top of the work force. Moreover, blacks exercised full civil and political rights in Buxton.
In contrast to the larger society, most blacks in Buxton were not confined to the lower class. Over 95 percent of all blacks were in coal production. The majority of these blacks were miners. Miners were paid well in Buxton. This income provided most blacks with above average wages, good housing, and a comfortable life in Buxton. Buxton's black community was very similar to the black community in the larger society, with religion and voluntary associations at the center of the community.
CHAPTER IV. THE BLACK MIDDLE CLASS IN BUXTON, IOWA

The class structure in Buxton included the Company's general superintendent, at the top of the class hierarchy. Next, were the Company managers and officials, other professional and business people, lawyers, doctors, school teachers, pharmacists, miners, and farmers, followed by laborers and service work personnel. This stratification was based on occupations and wages.

Black professional and business people occupied important social and economic positions in the community. The wealthiest businessman in Buxton was black. There were two black school teachers, a black lawyer, a black doctor, and a black pharmacist in Buxton. These individuals were at least as prominent as their white counterparts in Buxton. This chapter highlights these individuals and their accomplishments in Buxton.

Hobert A. Armstrong

Buxton's most prominent black citizen was Hobert A. Armstrong, more commonly referred to as Hobe Armstrong. He was born in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1850. When Hobe was 12 years old, he experienced the death of his parents. Hobe was then taken in and raised by a white man whose name was Dr. Perdue. Eventually, Dr. Perdue moved to Kansas and took Hobe with him (Carl Kietzman).

In the mid 1870s, Hobe moved to Muchakinock, Iowa. In Muchakinock, he developed a good business association with the Iowa Central Coal
Company. Hobe bought mules for the Company on commission. Most of the mules were purchased in Manchester, Missouri. Hobe also agreed to provide mule drivers for the Company's coal mines (Carl Kietzman).

Armstrong opened a meat market in Muchakinock, Iowa. This meat market became Hobe's main business. It was not Company-owned, but miners paid for their meat purchases with Company script, which was then processed through the coal Company's business office. Thus, the Company checked off the meat to residents for Armstrong (Olin Papers, Vol. III, Folder 2).

Hobe bought a lot of farms around Buxton. He owned about 17 or 18 farms in southern Mahaska and northern Monroe counties. On these farms, Hobe raised thoroughbred horses, but very little livestock, though he ran the slaughter houses in both Muchakinock and Buxton. He also owned an ice house and rented farms to other people (Carl Kietzman).

Armstrong was best remembered by Buxton residents as the man who brought the first blacks to work for the Consolidation Coal Company. In the 1880s, Armstrong went into the South, particularly to Virginia, and recruited black workers for the Company's coal mines. At the time of Hobe's recruitment of these black workers, the Company was experiencing a strike by its white workers. These black laborers were brought in as strikebreakers. Hobe recruited anywhere from 15 to 30 men at a time who were first brought to Muchakinock and later moved to Buxton, Iowa (Carl Kietzman).

Hobe was thought to be the wealthiest man in Monroe County. When Consolidation decided to move its operation in Buxton, Hobe moved his businesses there, too.
Hobe and members of his family were considered to be among the elite of Buxton. Armstrong and his wife, Anna, the daughter of a German farmer, had 11 children: Lottie, Ide, Anne, Nettie, Ethel, Stella, Hobe Jr., Charlie, Ralph, Art, and Emory. Hobe Armstrong remained in Buxton until he died (Carl Kietzman).

George Woodson

George Woodson was born in Wytheville, Virginia, the son of ex-slaves. He attended the Petersburg Normal University at Petersburg, Virginia, and graduated in 1890. Woodson then enlisted in the United States Army. Later, he attended Howard University and received a law degree. At Howard, Woodson graduated at the head of his class in 1895, and received the class medal for oratory. In 1896, he settled in Muchakinock, Iowa, and practiced law. In 1900, he moved to Buxton, Iowa, and became a well-known attorney (Olin Papers, Vol. IV, Folder 1).

In Muchakinock, Woodson soon became active in professional and political activities. He served as vice-president of the Mahaska County Bar Association. Woodson also became active in the Republican party, and attended both county and state conventions as a delegate from Muchakinock. In January 1898, Woodson ran for the position of file clerk in the Iowa Senate and lost by only one vote. Later, he ran unsuccessfully for County Attorney of Mahaska County (Iowa State Bystander, 1906).

When George Woodson moved to Buxton, Iowa in 1900, he was nominated by the Republicans as a candidate for state representative but lost the
election. The next year, in 1901, he organized the Iowa Negro Bar Association. Headquarters for this organization was in Des Moines. Woodson served as the first President (Iowa State Bystander, 1901).

In 1909, Woodson ran on the Republican ticket to represent the District in Monroe County for a seat in the Iowa House of Representatives. He campaigned constantly, and in the primary he received nearly all of the Republican votes and half of the Democrat votes. "However, in the general election, he was defeated badly because the Republicans switched over with the Democrats and elected a candidate of their choice" (Reubin Gaines, Jr.). So, in 1909, it was yet too early to elect a black man to that position in the United States. In 1912, Woodson ran for the office of Representative to the Iowa General Assembly from Monroe County, but lost again. Later in 1925, he organized the National Negro Bar Association. He served as first president of this association ("Editorial", 1939).

Attorney George Woodson was highly respected in both Muchakinock and Buxton, Iowa. He was an extremely popular public speaker and often spoke at church gatherings, the YMCA, school functions, and other special events. Woodson also had the distinction of defending more murder cases in Iowa than any other lawyer, until his record was later broken by a Des Moines attorney. Woodson later moved to Des Moines, Iowa. Here, he was said to have been struck by an automobile and was injured badly. He later died there in Des Moines (Reubin Gaines, Jr.).
Minnie B. London

Minnie B. London was born Minnie B. Robinson in 1861, in Lexington, Missouri. Minnie's sister, Jennie Brooks, lived in Muchakinock, Iowa. After being raised and educated in Lexington, Minnie moved to Muchakinock with her sister in 1891 (Vaeletta Fields).

In the same year of Minnie's arrival in Muchakinock, Iowa, at age 23, she married William Henry London. William was born in Charlottesville, Virginia. He first came to Muchakinock as a miner, but later worked at the Company Store in the hardware department. In Buxton, his family owned a grocery store that was located in Coopertown (Vaeletta Fields).

Minnie B. London was very active in Buxton. She taught at 5th Street and 11th Street Elementary schools. She was also the principal at School No. 2. Minnie was the only black who was a school superintendent in Monroe County. Minnie taught both of her children in Buxton's elementary schools. After schooling in Buxton, her children went on to college. Both children graduated from the University of Iowa. Minnie continued to teach in Buxton until the Consolidation Coal Company relocated in Haydock. She later moved to Waterloo with her daughter (Vaeletta Fields; Nellie King).

After graduating from the University of Iowa, Minnie's son, Hubert London became the last black medical doctor to practice in Buxton. He later moved to Des Moines, Iowa. At the University of Iowa, Minnie's daughter, Vaeletta London Fields, majored in English and minored in botany. After graduating, Vaeletta went to Petersburg, Virginia to
teach. Buxton had declined by this time. Vaeletta later returned to Waterloo, Iowa and worked for the YMCA for 20 years (Vaeletta Fields).

Edward A. Carter

Dr. Edward A. Carter was born in Charlottesville, Virginia on April 11, 1881. His parents were ex-slaves, who came to Muchakinock, Iowa in 1882. His father worked as a coal miner. He had four brothers: Clayborne, Clinton, David, and Lawrence (Olin Papers, Vol. III, Folder 2).

In 1895, Carter graduated from 8th grade, in Muchakinock and then attended Oskaloosa High School. In 1889, he graduated from there and enrolled at the University of Iowa. Carter supported himself through college by being a waiter at local hotels and by lighting furnaces. He also worked in Buxton mines during the summer (Olin Papers, from the Albia Republican, December 15, 1910).

In 1907, Carter received his medical degree. Back in Buxton, he was employed by Dr. J. S. Henderson as an assistant physician and surgeon for the Consolidation Coal Company. In 1910, Carter served as first assistant to Dr. Burke Powers, head physician for Consolidation. Later, he was appointed to work with Dr. Ralph Early (Iowa State Bystander, 1910).

Dr. Edward Carter was very prominent in Buxton's social life. He was affiliated with the YMCA in 1910, and served as a member of two committees. He often spoke to church groups, schools, and YMCA members. Dr. Carter remained in Buxton until 1919, when he moved to Detroit (Iowa State Bystander, 1910, 1911).
Benjamin Franklin Cooper

Benjamin Franklin Cooper, commonly known as B.F. Cooper, was born in Missouri in 1864. His parents moved to Mt. Marian, Illinois and then to Clinton, Iowa. In Clinton, Cooper received an education and worked in a drugstore for $.50 a day. Later, he graduated from the pharmacy college in Omaha, Nebraska. When he returned to Iowa, he worked in the coal mines at Muchakinock. After working as a miner, he worked in the drugstore. When the Consolidation Coal Company made the move to Buxton, Cooper purchased land from Reubin Gaines, Sr. and opened the first drugstore in 1900. He also built a grocery store and a dance hall (Iowa State Bystander, 1915).

Cooper, the pioneer pharmacist in Buxton, was very active in the community. He was a member of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Cedar Grove Masonic Lodge, the Odd Fellows Lodge, and the Elks Lodge in Buxton. He was also the manager of the first Buxton Wonders Baseball team. Cooper became one of the wealthiest black men in Iowa. In 1915, Benjamin Franklin Cooper died in the hospital at St. Louis, Missouri (Iowa State Bystander, 1915).

Lola Reeves

Lola Reeves was born in Davenport, Iowa but was raised in Anamosa, Iowa. There were only three black families in Anamosa when she lived there. After graduating from high school, Lola took the county examination to teach in Buxton, Iowa. She passed it and got a job as a teacher. She moved to Buxton in 1914, just as Buxton had started to decline. In
Buxton, Lola experienced a different social life, living for the first time with people of her own color (Lola Reeves).

Lola taught school in Buxton for eight years. At 5th Street School, she taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and spelling. Lola lived across from the school where she taught. After leaving Buxton, her teaching certificate expired. Lola then moved to other parts of Iowa; first to Haydock, then to Des Moines, and later to Rex 5, where she worked at a day care center (Lola Reeves).
CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study of Buxton was to compare and contrast the local history of blacks in Buxton with the national history of blacks between 1900 and 1920. In the larger society, black Americans experienced systematic barriers and deprivation, which restricted them to limited life chances. In contrast, blacks in Buxton had relative unlimited access to the opportunities there.

Buxton, Iowa was a coal mining company town that existed in the early 1900s. It was owned and run by the Consolidation Coal Company, that was owned by the Northwestern Railroad. Buxton was unusual for its time. It contained a variety of ethnic groups, but black Americans were the majority during most of Buxton's history.

Unlike the larger society, there was no split-labor market and no racial caste system in Buxton. Blacks were experiencing the same type of life chances as whites in Buxton. Although most of the black workers were miners, Buxton also had black professional and business people, such as Attorney George Woodson, Dr. Edward Carter, pharmacist Benjamin F. Cooper, school teachers; such as Minnie B. London and Lola Reeves, and businessman Hobert A. Armstrong, who was the wealthiest man in Buxton.

In contrast to the larger society, blacks had access to all public accommodations in Buxton. They were not segregated in the movies, restaurants, nor in stores. There was no Jim Crow law and no race-etiquette. Although groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, existed right
outside of Buxton, no violence or intimidation took place within Buxton. Blacks in Buxton could also vote, and often exercised this right in elections.

There are several reasons why blacks in Buxton had access in Buxton's opportunity structure for better life chances, as opposed to blacks in the larger society. The Consolidation Coal Company, through the Chicago headquarters, engaged in welfare capitalism in Buxton. Brandes (1976:5-6) defined Welfare Capitalism as "any service provided for the comfort or improvement of employees which was neither a necessity of the industry nor required by law." These services in Buxton were seen in medical care, housing, and recreation in Buxton. By way of illustration, the Consolidation Coal Company built the nation's largest black YMCA. More importantly, the Company manager in Buxton made certain that black employees experienced life chances equal to that of whites. Wage rates, housing, and access to education, freedom to use public accommodations, and political participation were all relatively unrestricted by race. This local history stands in sharp contrast to the treatment of blacks in the larger society at the time.

Because of this welfare capitalism, blacks in Buxton had the protection of the Company in a controlled environment. The Company controlled the activities of the community and treated all residents as equals. In this way, blacks were not at a disadvantage in Buxton. However, once outside of Buxton's controlled environment, blacks experienced a different situation.
Within Buxton itself, the power structure was based on an alliance between two elite families - the Buxtons and the Armstrongs. Ben E. Buxton served as Buxton's general superintendent, and Hobert A. Armstrong was Buxton's most prominent black citizen. Together they controlled the affairs of Buxton.

Armstrong had a close relationship with the Company. He recruited black labor from the South to work the Muchakinock and the Buxton mines. The Company allowed employees to check purchases at Armstrong's markets. He owned many farms, and was a man with a considerable amount of power in Buxton. Hobert Armstrong and Ben Buxton implemented a policy in the Buxton community to insure that blacks were treated as fairly as whites.

The main reason for the recruitment of blacks in Muchakinock and Buxton, was to have them work in the coal mines. About 95 percent of the black workers were miners and miners were paid well. Because of this narrow occupational structure, the white workers could not get the upper hand on the job market. Therefore, no split-labor market could exist between blacks and whites. The policy of the Company and the Union allowed blacks to remain in the mines. The Company also allowed for blacks in Buxton to have access to the educational system, and blacks were not segregated in public accommodations.

Hypothetically, blacks were not the only ones to benefit from the opportunity structure in Buxton. It was a reciprocal situation in which the Company, Armstrong, and blacks benefited. To Illustrate, the Company hired Armstrong to recruit blacks from the South; blacks worked the mines, and the Company paid them above average wages. Black
miners and their families consumed goods from the Company Store and from Armstrong's meat market. Moreover, the Company provided blacks with good housing and blacks paid them rent. Therefore, the more blacks recruited, the more goods they consumed, and the more money the Company and Armstrong made. Because of this, no caste system developed and blacks experienced a good life in Buxton.

Around 1914, a change in the power structure of Buxton took place. Buxton got a new superintendent and the Buxton/Armstrong alliance deteriorated. Also, the mines were being worked out, and whites were displacing blacks in the mines. Due to these changes, blacks were forced to move on, seeking employment in other parts of the country.

By 1920, Buxton had become almost a ghost town; earlier it had been a good place for blacks to live economically and socially. After leaving Buxton, blacks soon realized that life in the larger society was in opposition to what it was in Buxton. Within Buxton itself, many blacks played prominent, professional, social, and educational roles. After relocating to other parts of Iowa, the Midwest and the country, these prominent blacks were no longer respected and immediately discovered the harshness of black life in the larger society. Thus, to understand the special history of Buxton, one must understand the larger and contrasting history of blacks in other parts of the country.
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