

## 2021 Exploring History & Culture in Central Minnesota - The Minnesota African American Heritage Museum and Gallery (MAAHMG)

Brought to you by the Benton, Morrison, Sherburne & Stearns County Historical Societies, the Minnesota African American Heritage Museum & Gallery, and sponsors Rethos: Places Reimagined and Sourcewell.

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### Black History Resource List

As part of the 2021 February event series, “Exploring History & Culture in Central Minnesota,” featuring programming from the Minnesota African American Heritage Museum & Gallery, we’ve compiled a list of reading materials on Black history. Several articles on Black history specific to the Central Minnesota area are attached (list below, all used with permission). Also attached is a list of books on Black history compiled by and available at the Great River Regional Library.

[Tina Burnside, “African Americans in Minnesota,” MNopedia, <https://www.mnopedia.org/african-americans-minnesota>, accessed February 6, 2021.]

[Grace Duxbury, “Jim Crow in Morrison County: Rose Winch’s Experience,” Volume 33, Number 3, 2020.] Used with permission, from the Morrison County Historical Society newsletter.

[Christopher P. Lehman, "Black Cloud: The Struggle of St. Cloud's African American Community, 1880-1920," Volume 66 Issue 6, Summer 2019.] Used with permission, Minnesota History, the quarterly of the Minnesota Historical Society.

[Christopher P. Lehman, “Jim Crow in St. Cloud: Restrictive Covenant,” October 2017.] Used with permission, Crossings, a member magazine from the Stearns History Museum.

[Christopher P. Lehman, “The Jodon Family & Morrison County’s Ties to Slavery,” Volume 29, Number 1, 2016.] Used with permission, from the Morrison County Historical Society newsletter.

[Christopher P. Lehman, “St. Cloud in the Chitlin’ Circuit,” April 2019.] Used with permission, Crossings, a member magazine from the Stearns History Museum.

[Christopher P. Lehman, “Virgil Black and the Desegregation of the St. Cloud Rox,” 2020.] Used with permission, Crossings, a member magazine from the Stearns History Museum.

[Grace Duxbury, “Jim Crow in Morrison County: Rose Winch’s Experience,” Volume 33, Number 3, 2020.] Used with permission, from the Morrison County Historical Society newsletter.

[Mary Warner, “The Search for Rachael Carew, Part 1,” Volume 33, Number 4, 2020.] Used with permission, from the Morrison County Historical Society newsletter.

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**Black History Reading List**

**Compiled from a list by Great River Regional Library**

Full list here: <https://griver.org/new-best-fun/anti-racism-reading-and-viewing>

Used with permission

**A Good Kind Of Trouble** by Lisa Moore Ramée

**A Good Time For The Truth : Race In Minnesota** by Sun Yung Shin

**All Are Welcome** by Alexandra Penfold, Suzanne Kaufman

**Black Card : A Novel** by Chris L. Terry

**Fatal Invention : How Science, Politics, And Big Business Re-create Race In The Twenty-first Century** by Dorothy Roberts

**Hair Love** by Matthew A. Cherry, Vashti Harrison

**Heavy : An American Memoir** by Kiese Laymon

**Hood Feminism : Notes From The Women That A Movement Forgot** by Mikki Kendall

**I'm Still Here : Black Dignity In A World Made For Whiteness** by Austin Channing Brown

**Let It Shine : Stories Of Black Women Freedom Fighters** by Andrea Davis Pinkney, Stephen Alcorn

**One Person, No Vote : How Voter Suppression Is Destroying Our Democracy** by Carol Anderson

**Slavery By Another Name : The Re-enslavement Of Black People In America From The Civil War To World War II** by Douglas A Blackmon

**The Fire Next Time** by James Baldwin

**The Story Of Ruby Bridges** by Robert Coles, George Ford

**They Can't Kill Us All : Ferguson, Baltimore, And A New Era In America's Racial Justice Movement** by Wesley Lowery

**We've Got A Job : The 1963 Birmingham Children's March** by Cynthia Levinson

# Black Cloud

THE STRUGGLES  
OF ST. CLOUD'S  
AFRICAN AMERICAN  
COMMUNITY,  
1880–1920



*Christopher P. Lehman*

**M**ORE THAN A CENTURY AGO, a small community of refugees of African descent lived in St. Cloud, Minnesota. They resettled there to flee the violence and oppression of the Jim Crow South. Some of them were ex-slaves. Comprising a fraction of the town of 10,000 people, this African American community never exceeded 20 people. They worked as porters, day laborers, and barbers, and some operated independent businesses. In 1910 the community consisted of two single men, two couples, and two families. The families included the first African American children raised to adulthood in the city, and those children attended desegregated public schools.

In the 1910s, however, the community collapsed. The number of residents sank to single digits and

remained there for more than 40 years. The independent businesses closed. No African Americans attended the city's public and private schools after the early 1910s, because no African American children lived in the city. The community's young adults vacated, leaving behind only their parents' generation. By 1920, none of the African Americans who had lived in St. Cloud in 1910 still resided there. A few newcomers arrived after 1920, but the community stayed in the single digits until the 1960s.

This community's history typifies the experiences of African American communities in Minnesota outside the Twin Cities immediately following the Civil War. Where Minneapolis and St. Paul had growing African American populations and multi-

generational families after the 1850s, St. Cloud's community repeatedly rose and fell in number and did not regenerate itself through families. In fact, it took until 1883 for the city to consistently have at least one African American resident.

St. Cloud's strong segregationist Democratic politics repelled most African Americans, and segregation of the community intensified during the 1910s. The city did not offer jobs outside of menial labor to young black adults, and the dearth of single young adults left few African American prospects for marriage. As the young generation relocated, the elders died without heirs to preserve their legacies locally. Furthermore, nearly all the migrants were renters. The limited income obtained from menial labor as barbers, porters, and domestics kept them from purchasing real estate in St. Cloud, thus preventing them from passing on tangible local wealth to their children. The community's decimation was not as complete as the total evacuation of African Americans from Montevideo, Minnesota, in 1903; nor was it as violent as the lynching of African Americans in Duluth in 1920. Nonetheless, Jim Crow and limited job opportunities stifled the community's growth for generations.

## **AFRICAN AMERICAN SLAVERY**

shaped St. Cloud's first decade. Founded in 1856, the town drew wealthy southern slaveholders, who during summer months vacationed in Upper Town—the northernmost section—for the cooler seasonal climate. Some of them purchased real estate there. About one dozen southerners of English and Irish descent permanently left their homes in Tennessee and Virginia to reside year-round in St. Cloud, and by purchasing land they controlled

*St. Cloud's strong segregationist Democratic politics repelled most African Americans, and segregation of the community intensified during the 1910s.*

the town's politics through the pro-slavery Democratic Party. German Catholic immigrants, who comprised the section known as Middle Town, supported the Democrats for their favorable stances toward both immigrants and Catholics; this party affiliation aligned the German immigrants with advocates for slavery. Southern St. Cloud, known as Lower Town, was the domain of antislavery Republicans of Scottish and German heritage who had moved from the East Coast. During the Civil War, the enslavers left St. Cloud with their slaves, and Middle Towners remained in the Democratic Party. They outnumbered the Republicans in neighboring Lower Town, which meant the Democrats continued to rule city government. Downtown St. Cloud—the town's business community—lay in Middle Town.<sup>1</sup>

Not surprisingly, then, St. Cloud had only one Republican-leaning newspaper, the *St. Cloud Journal-Press*, while two—the *St. Cloud Times* and *Der Nordstern*—promoted Democratic ideas. The *St. Cloud Times* preached the Democratic message of intolerance, even with no African Americans in town. In 1864 it proclaimed: "The white man first, and the negro afterward,' is the motto of Democrats." It elaborated: "We believe the government as it is was made by the white man for the benefit of the white man, and that it should remain so." It complained that Republicans wanted to make a "nigger's government," and it asserted, "We deny that it is proper for negroes to make laws to govern white men." When the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution granted the vote to the nation's African American

men in 1870, they overwhelmingly supported the Republican Party. The *St. Cloud Times* blamed their votes for the elections of Republicans to the US presidency: "We have always believed that enfranchised Sambo would prove a black Republican elephant, and this appears to point in that direction." The newspaper also warned that African American voter strength would yield an African American like "Fred Douglass or some other colored 'gemmin'" to the presidency if Democrats did not win.<sup>2</sup>

The St. Cloud Democratic press also worried about the impact of demographics on local political divisions. If any African Americans moved to the town, their support for local Republicans might upset the Democratic Party's local control. In 1871 the *St. Cloud Times* warned readers about sizable arrivals of African Americans: "Quite a number of the 'self conceited' Sambos arrived in this city on the Eastern train Monday evening and are just from the 'Sunny South.'" None of them, however, remained permanently. By 1875, St. Cloud's African American population had returned to zero.<sup>3</sup>

The local German-language newspaper, *Der Nordstern*, also made pejorative references to African Americans. For example, when it published a complaint from a resident about a political candidate's failure to pay him fully for work, the resident recalled having "*arbeitete wie ein Nigger*," which translated into English as "worked like a nigger." Another issue mentioned an upcoming minstrel show in 1883 by referring to the blackface performers as "*weisse Nigger*," or "white niggers."

The slur also appeared on multiple occasions in the publication's regular column "*Der Pennsylvanier*" ("The Pennsylvanian").<sup>4</sup>

After the Civil War, some African Americans fleeing the South's oppressive segregation and lynch mobs reached St. Cloud. These migrants had no ties to the enslaved people who had preceded them in the antebellum period; they did not come from Tennessee and Virginia; nor did they have relatives in town. The earliest of these refugees may have lived elsewhere in the Northwest before moving to St. Cloud to find work. St. Cloudites, however, did not recruit African Americans en masse for employment. Upon arrival, they discovered that local merchants did not need their ex-slave experience as farm laborers and domestics. Local farmers assigned tasks to their own children instead of hiring outsiders.

Only a few African Americans found work and stayed permanently. Most of these refugees were single men, but one exception was Billy Lee—an ex-slave from Harrison County, Kentucky. When Nehemiah Clarke hired him to work on his Meadow Lawn farm in St. Cloud in 1883, Lee brought his wife, Sally—a fellow ex-slave from Kentucky—and their four children to town. They moved to southeastern St. Cloud, where Swedish American immigrants had already settled to find work in the local granite industry. For years the Lee family were the sole African Americans on the southeast side of town, but they coexisted in peace with their Scandinavian neighbors. Lee spent nearly all of his life in St. Cloud as a day laborer.<sup>5</sup>

Other African American St. Cloudites had migrated directly from northern cities and were skilled laborers. They worked downtown as barbers and cooks at Josiah Hayward's Grand Central Hotel, the primary

gateway for African American migrants to enter the community. The hotelier was the only local European American resident to hire African Americans in the 1880s and 1890s. John Wesley Webster—an ex-slave from Pendleton County, Kentucky—worked as a barber in Delphos, Ohio, when he decided to transfer to the Grand Central in 1888. He lived in one of the buildings in the downtown area. Three years later his wife, Elizabeth—an educated woman born to freed people in Ohio in the 1850s—and their four children joined him. For the first time St. Cloud had a double-digit African American population. After Hayward died in 1895, his family employed African Americans for the next two decades.<sup>6</sup>

The Websters thrived in St. Cloud. In 1892 Hayward bought another commercial property downtown, the West Hotel, and allowed Webster to



Billy Lee, *St. Cloud Times*, July 25, 1939

operate an independent barbershop there. Webster followed Hayward's example of recruiting African Americans from larger midwestern cities to work for him, and two of these hires later briefly ran their own barbershops in town. Webster himself left the shop to start a cloth-dyeing business in 1899, and Hayward's daughter loaned space in one of her downtown buildings for the new venture. Meanwhile, the Websters distinguished themselves among St. Cloud's African Americans. Whereas nearly all the community's members rented space either in the downtown area or on the southeast side, the Websters bought a home in Lower Town in the early 1900s, making them the first African Americans to own St. Cloud property.<sup>7</sup>

During this time frame, the African American community's children received educational opportunities in St. Cloud that their parents had been denied due to slavery and plantation labor. The children attended public school in Lower Town, which remained the city's Republican stronghold. They sat alongside European American children in classrooms. As a result, the African American children became literate at much younger ages than their parents had. Also, unlike most African American children at the time, those in St. Cloud had time for extracurricular activities because they did not work on farms after school. Ruby Webster, for example, played in St. Cloud High School's band.

A studious girl, Ruby also achieved more academic accomplishments than her African American peers. Having moved to St. Cloud at age three, she attended local public schools throughout her childhood, and she benefited from having an educated mother. She graduated from high school in 1908 and then enrolled in St. Cloud Normal School, just a few blocks north of her house, to train for



Ruby Cora Webster, *Class of 1909* photo, *St. Cloud Normal School*

a teaching vocation. In June 1909, she became the institution's first African American graduate, earning a degree in elementary education.

None of the Webster or Lee children, however, stayed in town. Whereas St. Cloud's employment options for African Americans were limited to porters and domestics, the education the city's schools provided had prepared the younger generation for a broader array of opportunities. Furthermore, other cities offered larger pools of eligible African American single adults for marriage. Lee's sons, Edward and Arthur, moved to Minneapolis, married, and started families there. Webster daughters Addie and Emma moved with their husbands to St. Paul, and their sister Ruby settled with her husband in Kansas City, Missouri, where she became a teacher. Both Arthur and Emma had been born in St. Cloud, and their departure in 1913 made them the last of the small community's children to leave town.<sup>8</sup>

Ironically, the Haywards employed their highest number of African Americans at the Grand Central in 1910, but all were adults and they lived in the hotel. Married couple

*The Websters bought a home in Lower Town in the early 1900s, making them the first African Americans to own St. Cloud property*

Albert and Margaret Payne came from Ionia, Michigan, to cook in the hotel kitchen, and the unmarried Charles Dejohnette of Alabama and John Winbrush of Virginia worked as porters. None of these employees, however, lasted beyond 1913, and African Americans did not replace them. Their departures and the withdrawal of the young generation from the community reduced the population's number to single digits by 1913, and each of the remaining residents—Billy Lee, John Webster, and Elizabeth Webster—was at least 60 years old. The Websters remained in their Lower Town home, but Lee moved to multiple locations in the

downtown area over the next few years and occasionally worked as a live-in employee of Lower Town residents. Meanwhile, African American migration from the Twin Cities was unlikely, for newspapers in Minneapolis and St. Paul ignored the African American community and portrayed St. Cloud unfavorably. Most newspaper references to the town were found in announcements about convicts who were being sent to the St. Cloud State Reformatory.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, local anti-African American sentiment remained strong outside of Lower Town and the southeast side. In 1910, African American boxer Jack Johnson defeated

European American opponent Jim Jeffries in a championship match, and European Americans who gathered outside the St. Cloud Times building for bulletins were incensed over the outcome. A reporter mused, "It is doubtful if a colored man would have escaped from the crowd had one been there." The four African American employees at the Grand Central nearby likely held their celebrations privately in the hotel, in the kitchen if not in their rooms.<sup>10</sup>

The *St. Cloud Times* continued to malign arrivals of African Americans. In 1913 a visiting African American baseball team twice defeated St. Cloud's team, the Pretzels, and the *Times* referred to team manager Samuel Gordon derisively as "Mistah Gordon," mocking the idea that African Americans deserved the same titular respect as European Americans. The newspaper quoted Gordon speaking words of goodwill in dialect to the Pretzels: "We suah got good

*St. Cloud Normal School, 1915. Ruby Webster was the institution's first African American graduate.*



treatment up heah, and I wants to say youh boys ain't only ball playehs but they'se gemmen besides." A few years later, when the Great Northern Railway temporarily brought 10 African Americans into St. Cloud to break a union strike, the *Times* claimed that they were robbing people but provided no proof for the accusation.<sup>11</sup>

Just as Democratic president Woodrow Wilson segregated Washington, DC, in the 1910s, St. Cloud adopted a more aggressive practice of Jim Crow. For example, central Minnesota's baseball league voted to sign only European American players for the 1915 season, ensuring that no more African American players would defeat them. Furthermore, a downtown restaurant not only restricted African American diners to a specific time frame and a separate section but also charged them extra for the segregation. The restaurant desegregated after an African Amer-

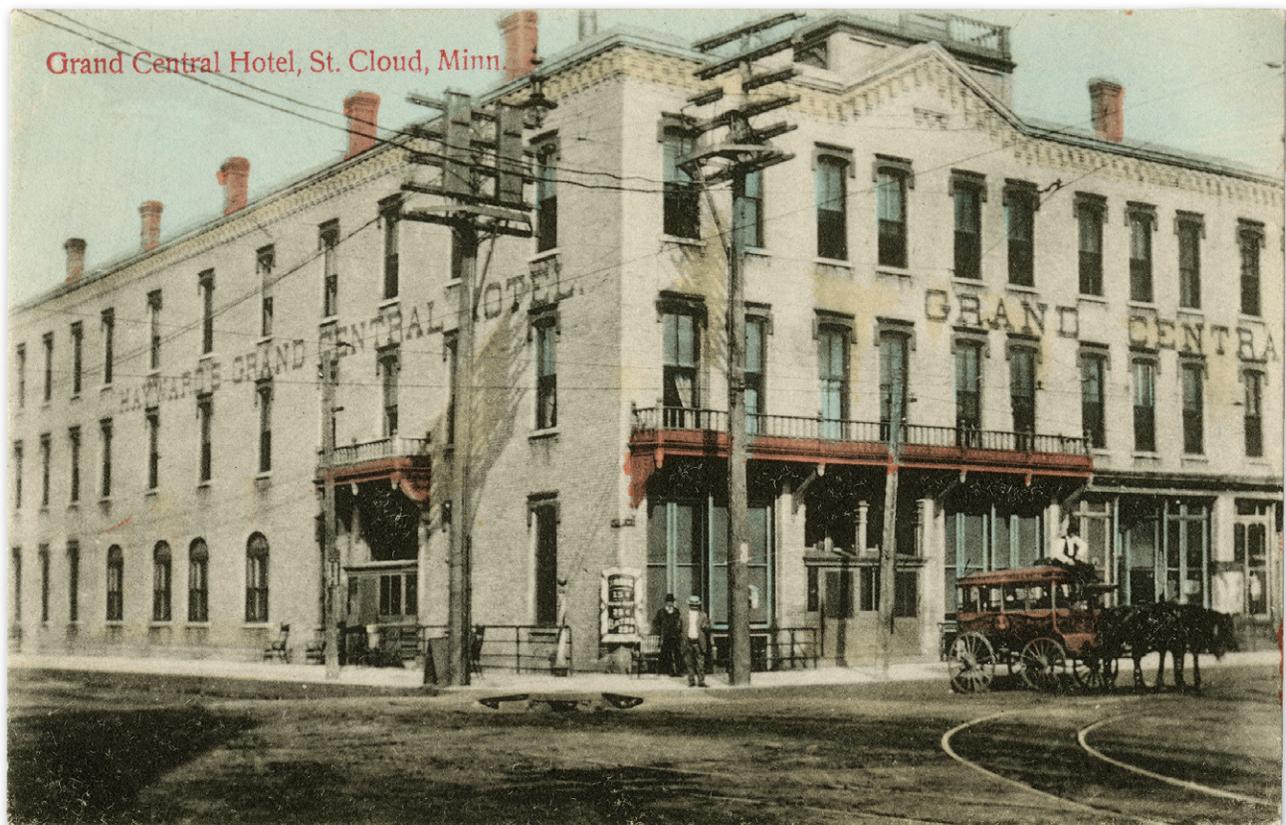
ican customer contacted county attorney Paul Ahles—a Lower Town resident—who then reminded the manager that Minnesota state law required desegregated public accommodations. Moreover, *St. Cloud Times* owner Frederick Schilplin supported segregationist Woodrow Wilson's campaign for reelection and served as a national delegate to nominate him at the Democratic National Convention of 1916.<sup>12</sup>

**THEN THE UNTHINKABLE** happened. In the fall of 1917, Katherine Tierk—a 25-year-old woman from St. Cloud's German American community—began fraternizing with an African American in his twenties named James Boozer. She met with him a few times downtown at the Neme-

Theatre, where he ran the projector. He had moved to St. Cloud one year earlier from South Carolina, where he had worked on the same land where his grandfather had toiled as a slave. His new job as a projectionist allowed him to financially support his widowed grandmother. Tierk was an unlikely candidate to have a relationship with him, for her German immigrant parents had raised her in the Roman Catholic church and sent her to parochial school. The Tierks' house at 309 Eighth Avenue North sat just three streets north of the downtown area, where, by this time, all of the city's African American migrants besides the Websters lived in rooms in saloons.<sup>13</sup>

Tierk's father had died around 1910, as she entered adulthood. By 1917 she worked downtown at The

*The Grand Central Hotel, about 1912. In the 1880s and 1890s, the proprietor, Josiah Hayward, was the only local St. Cloud business owner who would hire African Americans.*



Valet Cleaners to provide money for her family. Her job exposed her to her neighbors of color. Valet sat at 20 Sixth Avenue South in the H. B. Papermaster building. Next door was a building where an African American lived and ran a shoeshine stand. One street to the east was Fifth Avenue South, where Boozer and a porter resided above a saloon. At some point, Tierk and Boozer's paths crossed. Tierk had to walk just outside the cleaners to the corner of Sixth Avenue and West St. Germain—the heart of the downtown area—and then cross two streets on West St. Germain to reach Boozer at the Nemec. In addition, she likely asked someone from a downtown restaurant to deliver lunches to him.<sup>14</sup>

Boozer's job was a significant advancement for St. Cloud's African American community. He became the first African American since John Webster to not cut hair, shine shoes, or perform domestic work for employment. Also, Boozer received high public visibility in St. Cloud. The Nemec Theatre sat on St. Cloud's busiest downtown street, and the venue exhibited popular motion pictures within weeks of their premieres. When the pro-Klu Klux Klan movie *The Birth of a Nation* came to town in 1916, it played at the Nemec.

One night, after Boozer's shift ended, he and Tierk left the Nemec together, and Boozer walked her the



At the time she met James Boozer, Katherine Tierk worked at The Valet Cleaners (pictured ca. 1922), located in the Papermaster building in downtown St. Cloud.

unaccustomed to seeing an African American in their part of town. Middle Towners tolerated the presence

The negative reaction among German Americans in Middle Town may have been partly due to the fact that they were already feeling anxious. Seven months earlier the United States had entered World War I to fight Germany, and federal and state officials nationwide began questioning the loyalty of German American citizens. Officials discouraged the printing of German-language newspapers, and popular German items in the United States were renamed; for example, *frankfurter* became "hot dog" and *sauerkraut* became "liberty cabbage." St. Cloud's German

*Then the unthinkable happened. A 25-year-old woman from St. Cloud's German American community began fraternizing with an African American.*

four blocks to her house in Middle Town. By accompanying her, he prevented her from having to walk the streets alone at night. Tierk's German Catholic neighbors, however, were

of African Americans downtown and in Lower Town. Boozer, however, violated cultural norms not only by entering their community but also by courting one of their women.

American majority shielded the city from some of this backlash, but the local Catholic bishop called for the churches in the Diocese of St. Cloud to start offering one English-language sermon each Sunday. By dating Tierk, Boozer was yet another outsider causing trouble, just like the government and religious officials harassing German Americans.<sup>15</sup>

As the affair reverberated through St. Cloud, Boozer and other local African Americans suffered the repercussions. The Nemeč's management fired Boozer, and the theater never hired another African American. Boozer's dismissal reduced St. Cloud's African American community once again to only domestics, bootblacks, and barbers—limitations that would remain for more than a generation. Meanwhile, some Middle Towners were determined to lynch Boozer by hanging if he did not stop fraternizing with Tierk. This was not the first time such threats had been made in

*As the affair reverberated through St. Cloud, Boozer and other local African Americans suffered the repercussions.*

Minnesota, for throughout the state's history angry mobs had attempted to kill—and occasionally succeeded in killing—people suspected of committing crimes. The victims represented various ethnic backgrounds, but the majority were African Americans and Native Americans. The danger to Boozer's life fit this historical pattern. Moreover, the mob ignored that Tierk engaged with Boozer, and it neither threatened her nor gave her the responsibility for ending the relationship.<sup>16</sup>

Police Chief Edward J. Brick prevented mob violence from taking place but at great cost to Boozer. To

quell the public outcry, Brick ordered Boozer but not Tierk out of St. Cloud. Boozer agreed to leave his home behind, fleeing the city on November 26. According to the *St. Cloud Times*, "a Southern family, making St. Cloud their home" offered to shelter him, but he refused. By the end of the month, Boozer had resettled in Minneapolis.<sup>17</sup>

The whole affair put Brick in an uncomfortable position. The chief and some of his officers were neighbors of the Tierks in residential Middle Town, but the police had not prevented Boozer from entering their neighborhood and fraternizing

*St. Germain Street, the heart of St. Cloud's downtown area, 1917, the year James Boozer was banished from the city.*



1104 ST. GERMAIN ST. LOOKING EAST, SHOWING POST OFFICE, ST. CLOUD, MINN.

## NEGRO ORDERED OUT OF THE CITY

COLORED PORTER AT LOCAL THE-  
ATRE WAS ATTENTIVE TO  
WHITE GIRL.

## "NIGGERJIM" GETS WALKING PAPERS

LOCAL SACCHARINE BABY GOT TO  
FOOLIN' RAOUN WITH  
A WHITE GAL.

LOSES HIS JOB AND WILL BE  
ORDERED OUT OF TOWN BY  
ST. CLOUD POLICE.

Headlines from the *St. Cloud Daily Journal-Press* and the  
*St. Cloud Times* describe James Boozer's banishment from *St. Cloud*.

with Tierk. This fact further incensed Middle Towners. When a mob formed in response to Boozer's breach of their section of town, the vigilantes implied that they would provide the protection if Brick did not. The expulsion satisfied the mob, and no violence occurred that day. However, the police's actions in the name of defending Middle Town cost Boozer his civil rights, which the police refused to defend.

The reflexive response of Middle Towners to protect their neighborhood may have been partially incited by an article in the *St. Cloud Times* just a few days earlier. The newspaper complained that Brick had sent an accused rapist out of town instead of killing him. To justify death for the rapist, the newspaper quoted a notorious segregationist from South Carolina, US senator Benjamin "Pitchfork" Tillman, who said, "We men of the South will protect our women!" At the time, Tillman was known nationally for his vitriol about defending the virtue of European American women. His speeches praised ex-slaves for retaining their humility, but he denounced free African Americans as a

threat to white supremacy. He advocated lynching the latter to preserve this supremacy. Years earlier, in 1903 in Minneapolis, he had warned that equality would produce "intermarriage, amalgamation, degradation, hell-fire, and damnation." He said that "rivers of blood" would flow in South Carolina before that happened.<sup>18</sup>

Throughout its history, Minnesota never outlawed courtships and marriages between people of two different skin colors. Thus, Boozer and Tierk did not commit a criminal act by forming a relationship. Nevertheless, legal issues mattered little to the Middle Towners, and the former projectionist's banishment marked an extralegal milestone in *St. Cloud*. Brick sent several people out of town during his tenure as chief, but he considered those exiles to be guilty of crimes. In Boozer's case, Brick sent away someone who had not been accused of an actual crime, and the expatriate's dark skin color was more than a coincidence.

*St. Cloud's* purging of Boozer was not unique among American cities. In the first century after the end of legal slavery, cities and towns

across the country removed African Americans from within their borders. "Race riots" in places like Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1898 and Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921 consisted of European Americans resorting to violence to force out African Americans because of the alleged criminal actions of a few. Innocent African Americans fled their homes and jobs, and some were killed as they tried to escape. Similarly, in 1903, European American residents of Montevideo, Minnesota, removed the town's single-digit African American population after an African American from out of town assaulted a resident. *St. Cloud's* African American community lost one individual through expulsion by city law enforcement. Thus, Boozer's removal constituted an official municipal act.<sup>19</sup>

To the *St. Cloud Times*, Boozer's departure was good riddance. The newspaper printed a tirade about the relationship between Boozer and Tierk, calling Boozer a "saccharine baby," a "saccharine boy," and a "black boy" despite his adulthood. Crudely calling attention to his skin color, the report referred to him as

“Nigger Jim” and noted in dialect that he “has got hisself” in trouble by “foolin’ raoun with a white gal.” The article also criticized Tierk, saying she “cast self-respect to the winds” when meeting with Boozer. The report was not critical of the prospective lynch mob; rather, it referred to their threat to “treat Jim to a ‘necktie party’” as a mere point of fact. Nor did the article express disappointment that the police had banished him.<sup>20</sup>

The expulsion did not entirely put the matter to rest. Days later the local press learned that on November 30 Boozer and Tierk had applied for a marriage license in St. Paul. According to the court commissioner’s office, the couple went together to get the license. The Republican-leaning *St. Cloud Journal-Press* assumed that they married after acquiring the license, but actually, the two never wed. Instead, Tierk returned to St. Cloud and kept working at Valet Cleaners. Tierk’s lawyer, Harry Rauch, demanded a retraction of the *Journal-Press*’s report. Fearing a reaction from Tierk’s neighbors, Rauch cryptically noted, “You can readily understand what it means to her to have an article of that kind published in her home town.”<sup>21</sup>

After the couple parted ways, the local press did not mention the relationship or Boozer’s expulsion. Tierk married a European American local resident named Thomas W. Brown, and she attended social events in the city over the years. Meanwhile, the story of the relationship never appeared in newspapers outside St. Cloud, and Boozer started his new life in Minneapolis in anonymity. He worked on the Great Northern Railway, but he had little time to adjust to his new job before joining the army. He had asked to be excused from the draft due to his grandmother’s financial dependency on him, but when she died on November 10, 1917, he

## *It took outside forces to revive St. Cloud from its 40-year slump in African American population.*

no longer had this excuse for deferment. Consequently, in 1918 he was drafted, and he fought in World War I in defense of a country that restricted his freedoms of residence and courtship. He briefly returned to the railyard in Minneapolis after the war before moving permanently to Utah in 1922, where he finally experienced professional and personal stability. He worked as a chauffeur and married a European American woman in Salt Lake City, where they remained together until his death in 1925.<sup>22</sup>

**AFTER BOOZER’S EXPULSION** from St. Cloud, the last of the city’s African American migrants from the 1880s departed, leaving only newcomers who settled there in the 1910s and afterward. John Webster died in 1918, and his widow moved to daughter Addie’s house in the Twin Cities, where Elizabeth died in 1923. Billy Lee, having outlived the other community members of his generation, moved to Minneapolis to live with his son Arthur. A mob unsuccessfully tried to prevent Arthur and his family from moving into a “whites only” neighborhood in South Minneapolis in 1931, and the Minneapolis police’s protection of Lee’s rights contrasted with the St. Cloud police’s expulsion of Boozer in the face of mob violence. In July 1939, Arthur accompanied his father for a one-day visit to St. Cloud, and local radio station KFAM interviewed Billy that day. After the interview, the Lees returned to Minneapolis, and the ex-slave from Kentucky died there three months later at around the age of 95.<sup>23</sup>

Meanwhile, St. Cloud’s African American community stayed in the

single-digit range well into the 1950s. During World War I, businesses in the Twin Cities recruited thousands of African American southerners to fill job vacancies during the absence of European American workers who went overseas to fight, but St. Cloudites made no such offers. In fact, St. Cloud’s African American population declined from 1910 to 1920, even as the cross-regional Great Migration began, bringing thousands of African Americans to northern states. Despite this decline, some city neighborhoods established restrictive covenants to keep those few migrants from owning real estate in those places. Nelson Carwell was one of the community’s few newcomers in the 1920s, leaving Duluth after three African Americans were lynched there in 1920. Having witnessed deadly vigilantism in Duluth, the refugee viewed St. Cloud as an improvement over places that actually lynched people.<sup>24</sup>

It took outside forces to revive St. Cloud from its 40-year slump in African American population. The New York Giants major league baseball team sent Virgil Black to its minor league affiliate, the St. Cloud Rox, in 1951, and Black’s arrival broke the Rox’s color barrier four years after Jackie Robinson desegregated the major leagues. The Rox subsequently brought in at least one player of color each summer from 1953 until the team folded in 1971. Meanwhile, federal- and state-run facilities like the Veterans Administration hospital and the state reformatory at St. Cloud started bringing African Americans to the city for jobs in the 1950s, thus increasing the demographic and expanding fields of employment for them. The Fair Housing Act of

1968 banned restrictive covenants and forced the city to allow African Americans to live wherever they desired in St. Cloud—even in residential Middle Town. In recent years residents of the city have honored its first African American residents. Mayor Dave Kleis dedicated a new park in Middle Town in May 2017 named after the first African Americans in St. Cloud: Mary Butler (born a slave) and her son, John, born in St. Cloud. One year later, St. Cloud State University renamed its building 51B, the former facility of the business school, Ruby Cora Webster Hall, after John Wesley Webster's daughter, Ruby. These changes came too late to save the African American community of 1880 to 1920 from destruction, but newcomers who arrived starting in the 1950s rebuilt from the foundations the ex-slaves and their children had left behind.<sup>25</sup> □

## Notes

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# Jim Crow in St. Cloud Restrictive Covenants

By Christopher P. Lehman

In 1930, the U.S. Census listed the population of Stearns County at 62,131 and noted that 23 African Americans lived there — 0.04% of the population — at the VA Hospital or on Fifth Avenue South. Four decades later the general population stood at 95,400, and the African American percentage had risen to 0.4%. The growth in African American numbers from two to three digits during those years show that the ethnic group's presence increased at a much faster rate than the boom of the county's overall demographics. On the other hand, St. Cloud had even more potential to diversify its population during those years, but ethnic restrictive covenants between 1920 and 1968 prohibited anyone but people of exclusively European heritage from living in at least four of the city's subdivisions. City governments, real estate developers from inside and outside the city, and homeowners practiced systemic ethnic discrimination through housing segregation for nearly 50 years. People of European heritage — those accepted as "white" — collected social, political and economic advantages for themselves, and they locked ethnic minorities out of social networks, neighborhood perks, and property ownership.

St. Cloud was not unique in denying housing to ethnic minorities. Communities across the country used restrictive covenants to develop and preserve "whites only" neighborhoods. Many of them came from the North and the Midwest, where African Americans had started to migrate during World War I. They were refugees fleeing the violent segregation of the South, and they took jobs that European Americans had vacated to go to war overseas. They still encountered segregation in their new locations, however, and housing discrimination was but one example.

The Minneapolis-based firm Dickinson and Gillespie expanded beyond the Twin Cities to develop the

plat for Villa Park in St. Cloud in 1920. The new subdivision included houses numbered in the 800s on 17th through 20th Avenues North, houses in the 1000s on 17th Avenue North, and even-numbered houses in the 800s and 900s on 21st Avenue North. In each deed Dickinson and Gillespie dictated that "no person or persons other than the Caucasian race shall be permitted" in Villa Park for the next 15 years after buying the land. However, the firm experienced financial troubles during the Great Depression in the 1930s, and the residents who remained did not renew the ethnic restrictions in deeds after the original expiration dates.

Another outsider — auctioneer Leonard Americus Fellows of Rochester, Minnesota — developed the subdivision Memorial Acres. He successfully presented it before St. Cloud's city commission in its meeting of May 6, 1947, and two days later Stearns County's Board of Commissioners approved the plat. Fellows immediately advertised the subdivision in the St. Cloud Times, announcing that he would auction 39 of the forty "beautiful homesite tracts" on May 18. Memorial Acres was to appeal to "the homeseeker that wishes to avoid the confinement and congestion of the average city building lot," and he promised "the privacy of an urban home, yet within the city, just three minutes from the main business section of town." The advertisement did not mention its restrictive covenant but did refer to "reasonable building restrictions." Therefore, he sought to bait people to the subdivision by providing residential distance from urban problems, and he only introduced the ethnic restrictions to serious buyers. Several people attended the auction and signed deeds with him during the following week.

Memorial Acres was part of a wave of post-World War II real estate development throughout the nation. In the first quarter-century after the war ended in 1945, the city of St. Cloud alone received

over 150 designs of residential plats. Fellows designed Memorial Acres at the intersection of Washington Memorial Drive and Roosevelt Road, and the houses lay on the southern side of the intersection. Over the next 20 years, the subdivision included odd-numbered houses between 1303 and 1409 on Roosevelt Road, even-numbered houses between 1302 and 1414 on Cooper Avenue South, the 1700s and 1809 on 14th Street South, and houses 1421 and 1425 on Washington Memorial. Also, in 1947 Harold Bauerly bought lots that he later separated from Memorial Acres as his own plat of Glendale Addition in 1965, and it consists of houses 1305 through 1319 on 18th Avenue South.

For 20 years the residents of Memorial Acres adhered to Fellows's rule that "each and all lots in said MEMORIAL ACRES until June 1, 1967 ... shall not be sold, conveyed or leased to, or occupied by any person of the Negro, Chinese or Japanese races." The covenant and its deadline first appeared in his first deed — to buyers John M. and Thea Olson on May 19, 1947, and it last appeared when resident Marion Reinert sold a lot to Mathew Ampe on September 28, 1966. Moreover, the restrictive covenant outlived its author, for Fellows died in October 1964. The residents remained committed to keeping minorities out of the subdivision over the next three years, but they did not include the ethnic restrictions in deeds after 1967.

Two more restrictive communities emerged in Stearns County in late 1956, and both came from residents of the county. William and Hilda Jewison transformed their farmland by Zumwalde Lake in Wakefield, Minnesota into a plat for the Cedar View Addition, and the county approved it on August 17. Steve and Elizabeth Sauer of Colledgeville developed a similar lakeshore subdivision by Island Lake in St. Joseph and named it Islewood Beach, which the county approved two months later. Each buyer of both subdivisions had to promise, according to the deeds, not to allow occupation of the property "by anyone not a member of the Caucasian race" for the next 30 years after acquiring the land. Thus, when Loyal and Eloise Keller bought their lot in Cedar View on November 8, 1956, they agreed to keep it among Caucasians until November 8, 1986.

These subdivisions provided several perks for the European Americans living there. By buying and selling only to one another, they kept the wealth from homeownership strictly among themselves. They were also able to pass their property down to successive European American generations, as when George and Frances Benoit of Memorial Acres transferred ownership of their lot to their son

**PUBLIC AUCTION**  
**39 Beautiful Homesite Tracts**  
*To Be Known as*  
**MEMORIAL ACRES**  
 Also 9-Room Brick Home  
**SUN. MAY 18** 1:30 P. M.

Located in St. Cloud, Minn., Facing Memorial Drive and U.S. Highway No. 152, at the Point of Intersection, and Bordered On the Rear by Cooper Avenue, Across U.S. Highway No. 152 from Juneman Nursery.

MEMORIAL ACRES is St. Cloud's newest residential addition, and has been planned and developed to cater to the homeseeker that wishes to avoid the confinement and congestion of the average city building lot. In this subdivision you will find beautiful, spacious, level building tracts that will afford you the privacy of an urban home, yet within the city, just three minutes from the main business section of town. Reasonable building restrictions have been placed on this property to assure you protection on your investment. THIS ASSURANCE IS YOUR INSURANCE. The soil is of good fertile loam which affords wonderful gardening and fruit possibilities. We are proud to offer MEMORIAL ACRES as a project in the expansion program of fast growing "Friendly St. Cloud," a city with a great past, that is bidding for a far greater future commercially and industrially.

DRIVE OUT NOW—INSPECT THIS PROPERTY—LOOK IT OVER—BUT DON'T OVERLOOK IT! (If you desire any information telephone 2072-LJ or make inquiry at the residence on the property).

THE TERMS ARE SO EASY YOU CAN'T RESIST! DON'T POSTPONE THE PLANS FOR YOUR NEW HOME ANOTHER DAY! One-fourth down at time of sale, and the balance in 6 or 12 equal monthly payments at 6%. Two percent discount will be given for cash on deferred payments. Title is guaranteed.

**\$250 FREE — \$250 FREE — \$250 FREE — \$250**  
 \$250.00 worth of attractive useful merchandise gifts will be given away absolutely free at this AUCTION. You need not bid or participate in the Auction in any way to be eligible—just be on the grounds at time of sale. Everyone 16 years of age or over is entitled to share in the gifts. The gifts will be on display in the window of the GRUNDMAN MOTORS LINCOLN-MERCURY DEALERS, 401 St. Germain.

REMEMBER IT'S ALL FREE — IT'S FUN!  
 —BE THERE—

**9-ROOM BRICK HOME**

This home is situated on one of those choice tracts of over an acre in size, and this particular tract includes a large gardening area that is all planted, a large fruit orchard, and many nice trees.

The home is of brick construction and has 5 rooms downstairs and 4 up, with front and rear screened porches downstairs, and a screened front porch upstairs. There is a large cellar that is completely cemented, and home is electrically equipped and has forced water pump. Home can be utilized as an income property as it has an outside entrance and stairway to second floor to facilitate a duplex. Possession can be had 15 days after AUCTION. TERMS CAN BE ARRANGED SO THAT YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO RENT.

SECURE YOUR SECURITY! BUY A HOME NOW AT YOUR OWN PRICE—ABSOLUTE AUCTION—\$1,000.00 down and balance on contract for deed at 6%, payable \$35.00 per month. All cash will be acceptable if you so desire.

**President Truman Requests a Cutback in Prices!**  
 We are going one step further. We aren't setting any prices. That is all absolutely up to you. Whether you are interested in the home or in a tract for a home of the future, we are giving you the opportunity of making your own selection and at a price that you alone will be the sole judge. We think that we have a very nice offering for you and are certain that you will agree when you see it, so from now on in, this proposition is up to you.

WE MEAN BUSINESS! THE TROTTLE IS WIDE OPEN! WE'RE GOING TO CLEAN HOUSE!

**L. A. FELLOWS, Owner**  
 Sale Conducted by FELLOWS AUCTION CO.  
 Rochester, Minn. (Home Office)  
 Clerk: E. C. Wilhelm, St. Cloud, Minn.

St. Cloud Times, May 1947.

381-300

489

This Indenture, Made this 28th day of September 1966  
between Marion Reinert (a single person of legal age)

of the County of Hubbard and State of Minnesota, part 1  
of the first part, and Mathew A. Ampe and Margaret A. Ampe (husband and wife)  
of the County of Stearns and State of Minnesota, parties of the second part,

Witnesseth, That the said part 1 of the first part, in consideration of the sum of One  
Dollar and other valuable considerations, to her in hand paid by the said parties of the second part, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do hereby Grant, Bargain, Sell, and Convey unto the said parties of the second part as joint tenants and not as tenants in common, their assigns, the survivor of said parties, and the heirs and assigns of the survivor, Forever, all the tract or parcel of land lying and being in the County of Stearns and State of Minnesota, described as follows, to-wit:

Lot numbered thirty-four (34) in Memorial Acres, an addition to the City of St. Cloud, in Stearns County.



U. S. Revenue \$2.20  
Minnesota State Tax \$2.20



This deed is made and accepted subject to the following covenants, conditions, easements and restrictions regarding each and all lots in said MEMORIAL ACRES until June 1, 1967 viz: That the same shall not be sold, conveyed or leased to, or occupied by any person of the Negro, Chinese or Japanese races; that any dwelling house to be erected thereon shall be of stucco, lumber, stone, or brick, costing not less than \$4,500; that no old house or shack shall be constructed or moved thereon; that no garage, trailer, shack or other small structure shall be used for dwelling purposes thereon except during the construction of a dwelling and after contract therefor is let; that no unsightly small building shall be constructed or maintained

Marion Reinert to Mathew Ampe, 28 September 1966, Deeds Book 348, 489, Stearns County Recorder Office.

in 1948. Residents of Villa Park were the beneficiaries of a new park — Centennial Park — because the city placed it at the northern border of the subdivision.

Also, these areas attracted people of diverse vocations and generated a social network of professionals in multiple fields. A mechanic named Merle Nordquist lost a runoff election for city councilman in 1960 but became vice president of the city's Zoning Board of Appeals the following year, and insurance agent A. Richard "Dick" Johnson

received 17% of the vote — 1,246 votes — when running for mayor in 1964. Calvary Baptist Church built a new facility that bordered many Memorial Acres homes in 1963, while the ethnic restrictions remained in effect, and one official church activity — the "Calvary Baptist Circle" — was hosted at Johnson's home in 1964. Meanwhile, Islewood Beach residents included a medical doctor named William D. Davidson and the College of Saint Benedict's director of physical education Elaine Henke.

The practice of the restrictive

covenants became illegal nationwide shortly after the assassination of civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. He had demonstrated against housing segregation in the last two years of his life, and President Lyndon Johnson signed the Fair Housing Act days after King's death in April 1968. The ethnic restrictions at Cedar View and Islewood Beach were still in operation at that point, and many of them were at least two decades away from expiration. One of Stearns County's last deeds with a restrictive covenant was filed in April 1981, when Earl McGill —

one of the original residents of Cedar View — sold his property. Although the prohibition was no longer legally enforceable, the stipulation's inclusion in the deed reflected the technicality that the covenant's expiration was still six years from then.

Stearns County has evolved significantly since the signing of the Fair Housing Act. The formerly restrictive subdivisions have added houses since 1968, and none of the new residences have been subjected to documented ethnic prohibitions. The signers of the deeds between 1920 and 1968 have passed away, and the subdivisions have ethnically diversified. Nevertheless, the houses at Villa Park, Memorial Acres, Cedar View, and Islewood Beach serve as a collective visible reminder of how residential Jim Crow marked Stearns County for almost half a century.

Editor's Note: The Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968) introduced federal enforcement mechanisms. It outlaws: Refusal to sell or rent a dwelling to any person because of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, or national origin.

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## The Jodon Family & Morrison County's Ties to Slavery

*Part of the intrigue of history is that new information can come to light on topics that have been previously covered. Such is the case with the Jodon house in Little Falls. As the oldest house still standing in town, built in 1858, it has received attention from the Morrison County Historical Society from the aspect of preservation. Because the house was built so early, a mere two years after the formation of Morrison County, records from the era regarding Zachariah Jodon, the house's builder and first owner, are sparse. The following article, written by guest writer Christopher Lehman, provides new information that gives the story of the Jodon house added dimension. - MW*

One of the rare relics of Minnesota's ties to slavery stands on a street in the community of Little Falls in Morrison County. The relic is a house of Greek-Revival architecture, and this style was popular among southerners. Zachariah Jodon, who built the house, had indirectly participated in African American slavery in the southern state of Maryland before moving to Minnesota. Therefore, his wealth from ownership of African Americans helped enable his investments—including real estate—in Morrison County.

Zachariah was born to a slave-less

family in the first decade of the nineteenth century in Frederick County, Maryland. By 1840 his mother Susan led a household of three women, and Zachariah headed his own household, which included a free African American man for a boarder. Within the decade all of the Jodons moved to western Virginia, and they shared a house in Lewis



**The house built by Zachariah Jodon in Little Falls, MN, in 1858. It is located at 213 Second Street Northeast and is constructed in the Greek Revival style.**

County. Zachariah led the household, and the other residents were his elderly mother, his children, his younger sister Adeline, his younger brother Benjamin, and Benjamin's wife and children.<sup>1</sup>

The 1850 Slave Schedule for Lewis County reveals Zachariah's indirect involvement in slavery. No free African Americans resided there with the Jodons, but Benjamin held four valuable slaves at the family home. He owned a woman in her twenties, a six-year-old boy, and two girls—ages four and one. If the woman birthed all three children,

her fertility and prolific reproduction meant possible new slaves for Benjamin via childbirth instead of additional purchases. Also, the children had potential to grow into healthy and fertile adult slaves. At the time a slaveholder could sell slave women and their children as a collective unit for thousands of dollars, and all of this prized human property was under Zachariah's roof.<sup>2</sup>

Slave ownership set the Jodons apart from most of their neighbors in Lewis County.

Western Virginia's rocky soil and mountainous terrain discouraged most of its residents from holding slaves, and that portion of

- Continued on Page 2 -

~ Continued from Page 1 ~

the state depended on slavery much less than eastern Virginians did. None of the Jodons were farmers or planters, and they did not run a massive plantation that required dozens of slaves. Rather, most slaves in western Virginia were domestic, and Benjamin's ownership of a young woman and three toddler children suggested that he did not require a strong and numerous unfree workforce at home.<sup>3</sup>

Susan died in 1853, and by 1857 the rest of the family left Virginia and moved to Minnesota. From there, however, the family split into two households in two different cities. Both Zachariah and Benjamin were physicians, and they ran practices in their respective communities. Also, the separation allowed Zachariah to sever his connections to Benjamin's involvement in slavery. Zachariah and his new wife Sarah settled in Little Falls, and the couple purchased Lots 7 and 9 of Block 17 in town and built the Greek-Revival house. At St. Paul, Benjamin headed a household consisting of his nuclear family, his sister, and at least one African American from Maryland.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, the US Supreme Court's *Dred Scott* decision in March 1857 legalized slavery in all territories—including Minnesota. Before *Dred Scott* the institution was illegal there via two federal laws—the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 and the Missouri Compromise of 1820—and Minnesota Territory's own legislation from 1849. Longtime residents did not engage in the practice after the verdict, and they pushed for Minnesota to enter the Union as a free state. Minnesota achieved free statehood in May 1858, but Benjamin may have legally kept his African American occupant as a slave in St. Paul during the fourteen months that *Dred Scott* applied to Minnesota Territory.<sup>5</sup>

The Civil War further separated the Jodon siblings, and sectional loyalties may have played a role in their estrangement. During the conflict Benjamin's household returned to Lewis County in West Virginia, and he reported announced that he was "in favor of the South." In contrast, Zachariah and his family stayed in the North in Minnesota. By then they had left the Greek-Revival house and moved to Stearns County, and Sarah became a proprietor of the town of Cold Spring. After the war Zachariah moved to Ohio, where he died in 1873.

Benjamin relocated there soon after his brother's death.<sup>6</sup>

As for the Greek-Revival house, it remains at 213 N. E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Little Falls. The Jodon family no longer owns the property, but in recent years local residents have considered the building of significant historic value. They have worked to restore the house and to secure its placement on the National Register of Historic Places. Their efforts have indirectly resulted in the preservation of a landmark that embodied how slavery and the Civil War tore families apart in "free" Minnesota.<sup>7</sup>

~ Christopher P. Lehman  
Guest Writer

*Christopher P. Lehman is a professor of ethnic studies at St. Cloud State University. He was a visiting fellow at Harvard University in the summer of 2011.*

#### Endnotes

- 1) US Federal Census 1840, District 5, Frederick County, Maryland, 5, 9; US Federal Census 1850, District 30, Lewis County, Virginia, 17.
- 2) US Slave Schedule 1850, District 30, Lewis County, Virginia, 1.
- 3) Christopher P. Lehman, *Slavery in the Upper Mississippi Valley: A History of Human Bondage in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011), 133-134.
- 4) Minnesota Census 1857, Little Falls, Morrison County, 4; *St. Cloud Democrat*, 11 August 1859, 5; Minnesota Census 1857, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, 433.
- 5) Henry A. Castle, "General James Shields: Soldier, Orator, Statesman," in *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society*, vol. xv (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1915), 721.
- 6) US Federal Census 1860, Stearns County, Minnesota, 49; "Jodon, Chalfant, & Co.," *Weston Democrat*, 4 April 1870, 3; *St. Cloud Democrat*, 11 September 1862, 3; US Federal Census 1870, Weston, Lewis County, West Virginia, 11; US Federal Census 1880, Clinton, Wayne County, Ohio, 9; *Weston Democrat*, 1 September 1873, 3; *Weston Democrat*, 18 October 1875, 3.
- 7) Mary Warner, "It's Greek Revival," Morrison County Historical Society, [http://morrisoncountyhistory.org/?page\\_id=4765](http://morrisoncountyhistory.org/?page_id=4765).

MCHS board meetings are held monthly at The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum. Call 320-632-4007 for date and time. All members are welcome to attend.

## PEEP

Every year for the last number of years, staff at the Morrison County Historical Society have picked a theme around which to organize exhibits and events. We've covered aprons and footwear and music and heirloom arts. Last year, we focused on the colors black and white. For 2016, we've picked a word for our theme: Peep.

Peep is the sort of word that immediately brings to mind salacious peep shows with scantily clad women. We're aware of that connotation. Rest assured, you will find no scantily clad women in our Peep exhibits and events, but we do want to rouse your curiosity with the idea of peeping. The study of Morrison County's history means peeping into the lives of others, peeping into our past. That's something we *should* be curious about.

With board member Pat Quinn leading the charge (and doing most of the work!) we're presenting an exhibit called "Peep" at the Weyerhaeuser Museum. To draw people into the physical act of peeping, to pull them further into the exhibit, a couple of our exhibit cases are covered with cloth that features peep holes. The exhibit also contains various peeping devices, like eyeglasses, a stereoscope and a View Master.

We've got a few more peep-related activities in the works for the year and will announce them as they approach. But do stop out to the Weyerhaeuser Museum and peep into history via the Peep exhibit. Museum hours are 10-5, Tuesday through Saturday, year-round.

Thanks to Pat Quinn, Judy Glaze, Deb Collis, and Virginia Jaramillo for their work on the exhibit.

~ Mary Warner  
Interim Executive Director

**Peep Contest  
Dioramas  
Are Due  
April 15, 2016!**

# St. Cloud in the Chitlin' Circuit

by Christopher P. Lehman

St. Cloud does not have an extensive history as a location on the Chitlin' Circuit. This circuit consisted exclusively of venues that African Americans owned and operated, and the proprietors booked African American entertainers for performances. Many bars and theatres across the country served and hired only European Americans during the era of legal segregation in the United States (1865-1965), but the Chitlin' Circuit guaranteed service to African American customers and work for African American performers. The outlets of the circuit were primarily located in cities and towns with sizable African American populations. St. Cloud, however, did not have an African American population above two dozen people before the 1970s, and African Americans consequently did not perform often in the city.

Nevertheless, St. Cloud does have some history in the circuit through one business — the Dew Drop Inn at 629 Lincoln Avenue Southeast. An African American from New York named Francis A. "Frank" Gould came to St. Cloud by 1919 with his wife Mamie, and they started the business as a grocery store. The city's directory for 1927 still listed Gould as a grocer, and the 1930 U.S. Census called his business a "confectionary store." In the following year's local directory he was a "restr" or restaurateur, having transformed the store into a restaurant. He offered chicken sandwiches for 25 cents, beer for five cents, and "Home-Made Chili" for 15 cents, according to an advertisement in the *St. Cloud Times* from June 11, 1934. By then, the business became a nightclub. Whether a store, restaurant, or a club, the Dew Drop Inn also served as the Gould residence.

In the mid-1930s, Gould advertised the Dew Drop Inn in the *Times* in a manner that emphasized its entrance into the Chitlin' Circuit. He announced that an African American musician named Edna "Edie" Crump would perform there in August 1933. One of very few woman bandleaders at the time, Crump had been a member of the African American all-woman group the Dixie Sweethearts. She toured on the circuit in the group and as a solo artist, and Gould booked her for his club as a solo act. At the time, she lived in St. Paul at 590 West Central Avenue. Years after her St. Cloud date, she became the leader of another African American all-woman group — the Harlem Playgirls.

Gould promised "Colored Entertainment EVERY NITE" at the club, according to the advertisement in the *Times* from June 11, 1934. Other entertainers he promoted named Charley Harrington and a performer who called himself "Yowser Man." However, after 1934 the Dew Drop Inn stopped advertising specifically about African Americans in the newspaper. Gould continued to run the business for seven more years, but he no longer used ethnicity to try to draw customers there.

In the meantime Gould also became an African American pioneer in St. Cloud through his personal life. Sometime in the 1930s he married a local European American woman named Leona Marie Diederich. She was born in Iowa but raised in Minden Township in Benton County. Before the end of the decade, the newlyweds started a family with their children, Francis and Beverly. At the time over one dozen states outlawed marriage across the color line, and only two decades earlier, in November 1917, the St. Cloud Police Department had banished an African American man named James Boozer from the city for courting a European American woman. In contrast, the Goulds stayed in St. Cloud after marrying and kept the Dew Drop Inn in operation.

**DANCE**  
HANSEN'S  
ROCKVILLE  
FRIDAY, JUNE 15th  
Music by Special Arrangement  
Eddie Lohm and His  
Melody Makers

**Colored Entertainment  
EVERY NITE  
DEW DROP INN**

**FOR GOOD EATS  
MODERATELY PRICED**  
Eat at the  
"Tony" Nierenhausen  
Cafe  
RICHMOND, MINN.

**DANCE**  
and be  
**Entertained**  
at the  
**BREEN HOTEL  
TAP ROOM**  
●  
No Minimum or Cover  
Charge  
**TONIGHT**

**FREE OLD-TIME  
DANCE**  
Wednesday, June 13th  
**PINK ELEPHANTS**

**FREE DANCE At  
PLEASANT LAKE  
BATH HOUSE**  
Good Music and Entertainment  
for Beer and Lunches to  
Under New Management

**CARD PARTY**  
at ST. JOSEPH, MINN., on JUNE 14th  
THURSDAY EVENING—8 P. M.  
Bill, Bridge and Skat Liberal Cash Prizes Free Lunch  
Come to St. Joseph for Your Good Times—Bring Your Friends  
ADMISSION 25c ST. JOSEPH COMMUNITY CLUB

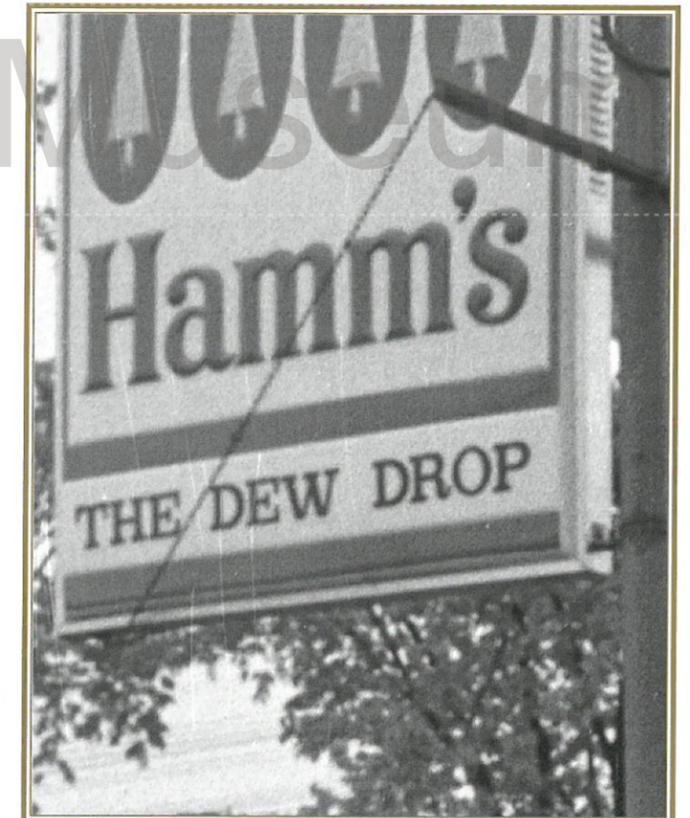
**SPECIAL DANCE** **GRANITE CITY  
COLISEUM**  
THURSDAY, JUNE 14th  
By popular request we are featuring MILT  
ASKEW and ORCHESTRA, the Extraordinary  
BAND. A BAND that will make you dance.  
Our patrons requested an OLD TIME DANCE, Friday, June  
15th, so we are presenting "WHOOPEE JOHN" and his OLD  
TIME BAND. Don't miss this Nite of real entertainment.  
Coming Sunday, June 17th—Orvis Orioles Orch.  
"Northwest's most popular modern dance pavilion"

St. Cloud Times advertisement, June, 1934. Dew Drop Inn as in upper right corner.

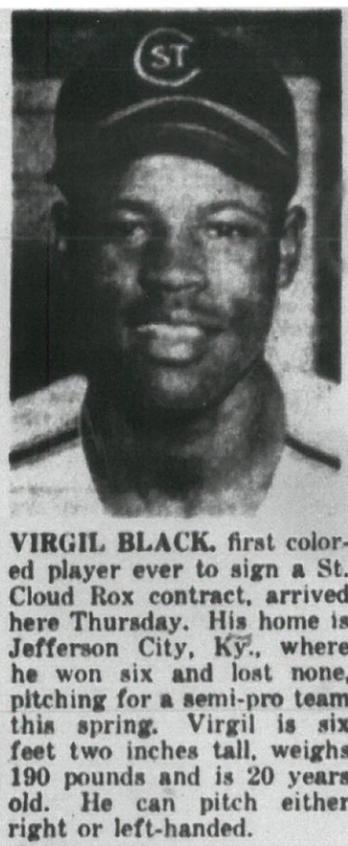
Then on July 2, 1941, Frank Gould died. His survivors eventually left St. Cloud, and Leona sold the business. Remarkably, the Dew Drop Inn still stands today. It has undergone multiple transfers in ownership since Gould's death, and it now has the name Lincoln Depot. Its days as part of the Chitlin' Circuit are long gone, but it stands as one of the few relics of African American entrepreneurship in Central Minnesota from the days of Jim Crow.

## About the author

Christopher P. Lehman is a social historian and author in the department of Ethnic and Women's Studies at St. Cloud State University.



Dew Drop Inn Sign, 1974.



**VIRGIL BLACK**, first colored player ever to sign a St. Cloud Rox contract, arrived here Thursday. His home is Jefferson City, Ky., where he won six and lost none, pitching for a semi-pro team this spring. Virgil is six feet two inches tall, weighs 190 pounds and is 20 years old. He can pitch either right or left-handed.

A newspaper clipping on Virgil Black from the June 9, 1951, *St. Cloud Times*.

## Virgil Black and the Desegregation of the St. Cloud Rox

By Christopher P. Lehman, St. Cloud, MN

St. Cloud's Rox Minor League Baseball team was one of the few avenues by which African Americans entered the city midway through the 20th Century. Before that time, African Americans came to work as porters and barbers in hotels. In the late 1940s, St. Cloud State Teachers College began admitting African American students on a more frequent basis, but none of them resided in the city after graduating

for another 20 years. As a result, the ethnic group's population did not exceed two dozen people until after the 1960s. Society did move ever so slowly to break down barriers for citizens of color. In 1951, Minnesota Governor Luther Youngdahl ordered the desegregation of the St. Cloud Reformatory, and the facility hired its first African American staffer. That same year an African American played for the St. Cloud Rox baseball team for the first time.

Nationally, baseball teams began to address the issue of race and the game. From the late 1940s through the '50s, the New York Giants sent their players to the Rox to gain professional playing experience before joining the Majors. Giants' owner Horace Stoneham was an early champion of the desegregation of the Major Leagues after Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. Stoneham initially sent African American players to the Minneapolis Millers, and Willie Mays enjoyed a brief run there in 1950 before going to the Majors. So, Stoneham set a precedence. The following year, the Giants sent Virgil Vanoy Black to St. Cloud.

Black's arrival in June 1951 made the Rox the second to the last team of the Minors' Northern League to desegregate. The Northern League consisted of eight teams from Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Organizations in South Dakota and Wisconsin, the Fargo-Moorhead area, and the City of Duluth signed African American players before that year. After the Rox acquired

Black, the last "whites only" holdout in the Northern League was the Grand Forks Chiefs.

Positive word-of-mouth about the new Rox player accompanied his arrival. He had just turned 20 years old when baseball scout Bob Martin signed him with the Giants franchise. Black had already started the spring of 1951 as a player on a semi-professional team. A resident of Missouri, he pitched six games for the African American team, the Jefferson City Dodgers. The team won all of those contests. One highlight was his one-hit shutout against Sedalia. The *St. Cloud Times* wrote on June 8 and 9 about his stellar record in Jefferson City when announcing his addition to the Rox roster.

However, segregated baseball in the South could not prepare Black for adjustments he had to make when desegregating a team in a city without a sizable African American population. On Jefferson City's segregated team, Black represented the city's African American community. On the Rox, he was the sole African American within an organization. He became the youngest African American resident in St. Cloud and one of only three African American residents overall. The other two were middle-aged couple, Walter and Cleo Major.

Black arrived in St. Cloud on June 7 and departed with his team the following day for a series of 10 scheduled away-games in the Dakotas. He pitched in only one of those contests. Team manager Hal Kollar chose not to use the new roster addition until the second week of the road trip. In the seventh away-game, on June 15, Black pitched against Fargo-Moorhead. He had an awful debut for the Rox, giving up five hits and four runs in just two innings, so Kollar relieved him in the third. The other two Rox pitchers also fared poorly. Norm Rynard allowed four hits and four runs in three innings, and Arthur Sauer gave up six hits and seven runs in two. Kollar sat Black the remainder of the road trip until after the Rox returned home to St. Cloud. Perhaps, not coincidentally, the three remaining away-games that Black did not play in were against the "whites only" Grand Forks Chiefs.

On June 20, Black made his first home game appearance when the Rox squared off against the Aberdeen (South Dakota) Pheasants. This time he entered the game in the fourth inning and pitched the remaining six. Black continued to struggle on the mound: eight hits and five runs. The game improved his pitching statistics slightly, but he gave up an average of 1.5 runs per inning.

Rain kept the Rox and the Sioux Falls (South Dakota) Canaries from playing on June 22. When they faced each other the following day, Kollar started Jim Mazzola, but the hurler gave up four hits and couldn't get out of the first. Relief pitcher Art White replaced Mazzola but allowed six hits and four runs in two innings. Kollar replaced White with Black in the third, and he pitched the remaining four. The three days of rest seemed to have significantly helped the rookie pitcher. He gave his best performance since joining the Rox, completely shutting out the Canaries by yielding no hits and no runs.

The Rox lost the game, but Black received significant local press attention for keeping Sioux Falls from scoring further. The June 25 issue of the *St. Cloud Times* noted, "In the third, White was relieved by Virgil Black, who stopped the flock cold the rest of the way." Despite the victory by Sioux Falls, one newspaper from that city extensively discussed the canceled momentum of the Canaries after the third inning, and it made a point of identifying Black's ethnicity when doing so. The June 24 issue of the *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader* stated, "A crowd of 1,613 watched as the reliever Virgil Black, the ambidextrous colored pitcher, shut the door in the Canaries' face after entering the fray in the third inning." The Northwest was unaccustomed to African Americans playing such pivotal roles in local sports. In St. Cloud, African American pitcher Walter Ball played for a local team five decades earlier in the early 1900s. The last player before Black was John Donaldson in 1928, some 23 years prior. As a result, when Black pitched his shutout against Sioux Falls, he introduced at least one generation to integrated baseball.

Moreover, an African American pitcher had not



The St. Cloud Rox president greets the team in April 1951.

dominated a Northern League team before the Canaries-Rox game of June 23. Black's performance over Sioux Falls was new to the Canaries, but it was also unique for the Rox themselves. After two mediocre games at best, Black suddenly played measurably better than the other two Rox pitchers in the game. He stopped Sioux Falls after his teammates had failed to do so. If any players or spectators had embraced any stereotypes about African American athletic inferiority, Black directly challenged that perception.

Black's overpowering performance occurred at home in St. Cloud, where residents rarely saw African Americans at all, let alone in contests like the Canaries-Rox game. Whether the public complained to the Rox, or whether Black experienced any wrath from teammates, the Rox did not give the pitcher another chance after staving off the Canaries. He never played in another game with them after June 23, and at month's end, he departed St. Cloud for good. The *St. Cloud Times* announced on June 28 that Black had returned to Missouri. The Giants would not send another African American to the Rox for the remainder of the 1951 season, nor did others join the team the following year.

In terms of diversity, the Rox improved from Black's days on the team. From 1953 onward, the Giants sent at least two players of African descent to join the Rox, meaning that no one else would have to desegregate the team alone. Other players like John I. Kennedy and Lou Brock eventually joined Major League teams after their seasons in St. Cloud. Kennedy desegregated the Philadelphia Phillies after having been the first African American to join the Rox since Black's departure. The gradual desegregation of the team dovetailed into other aspects of local society. With the increased enrollment of students of color at St. Cloud State Teachers College and the hiring by the Veterans Administration Hospital of African Americans in the latter half of the 1950s, the community became less homogeneous.

Meanwhile, Black spent the rest of 1951 and early 1952 pitching for a Minor League team in Centralia, Illinois. He played for Jefferson City again in the summer of 1952 and all of 1953. Black then threw for the Mount Vernon (Illinois) Kings in 1954, but his baseball career ended after that season. He eventually returned to Missouri and died there on February 9, 2012. He did not play long for the Rox, but his brief presence paved the way for African Americans and other ethnic minorities to take up residence in St. Cloud and shape the city — both inside and outside of baseball.

*Christopher P. Lehman is a professor of ethnic studies at St. Cloud State University and a former summer visiting fellow at Harvard University. He recently won a 2020 Minnesota Book Award for his nonfiction, "Slavery's Reach: Southern Slaveholders and the North Star State." He is also the newest member of the Stearns History Museum Board of Directors.*

# THE MORRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2020 - Vol. 33, No. 3



THE  
CHARLES A.  
WEYERHAEUSER  
MEMORIAL MUSEUM

## Jim Crow in Morrison County: Rose Winch's Experience

In 1921, teachers were needed for schools within Morrison County, so superintendents began taking applications from beyond the county boundaries. Rose Winch, a Browerville resident, had a first grade teaching certificate with 11 years of experience under her belt when she was hired to teach for District 97 in Granite Township. Prior to her application to District 97, she had taught in Wadena, Erhard, Foxhome, and others. Her most recent appointment was District 151 in Todd County, where she received praise for her students' progress.

Her qualifications made her a "desirable find" (*Little Falls Daily Transcript*, October 20, 1921) for the school district. However, as soon as she was brought in to sign her contract in October, the clerk saw that she was black and turned her away.

Rose's father, Prince Albert Honeycutt, was a runaway slave during the Civil War. In 1862, at the age of 10, he joined the Union Army in Tennessee, hoping to serve as a drummer boy. Since he was too young, he instead served as an aide to Captain James Compton. When Compton moved to Minnesota after the war, Prince Albert followed. He was the first black settler in Fergus Falls.

He held a number of odd jobs in town, which included some firsts for Minnesota. He ran for mayor in 1896 and is believed to have been the first black mayoral candidate in Minnesota.

Though he lost the election, he still gained 130 votes. He was also considered the first black baseball player and team organizer in the state, having formed the Fergus Falls North Stars (*Fergus Falls Journal*, June 8, 2015).

Both of Honeycutt's daughters, Rose and May, graduated high school

dismiss her based solely on her race. Many stated they would not send their children to the school if it meant they would be taught by a black woman. According to Rose's husband, though, there was also a petition in support of her hiring signed by 24 residents (LFDT, October 29, 1921).

Rose resigned from her position at District 97 before it even began, and instead applied to District 144, also in Granite Township. There she was able to maintain a teaching position for the 1921-22 school year. Later in 1937, school district clerk Glenn King would

**"She is colored and this seems to be the sole objection which the Morrison county patrons are urging against her."**

*Little Falls Daily Transcript, October 29, 1921*

in Fergus Falls. They were trained as teachers in Moorhead and taught in various country schools throughout the state after that.

There were two official reasons given as to why Rose was not hired for District 97. The first was that the district had not officially met to vote on her hiring. Only two out of three board members had met and approved her. The second was that her teaching license had expired that August, and that it had been modified without approval. Where her maiden name had once been, she had since put her married name. The superintendent of her previous school district vouched for her abilities and stated she would most likely not have any trouble renewing the license.

However, the *Little Falls Daily Transcript* noted that there was public outcry from parents for the board to

note in the WPA project chronicling the history of Morrison County Schools:

*"Our first teacher was a colored lady yet the children liked her very much and some did not know she was colored—That is, to them she was just their teacher. M.E. Barnes, Assistant Superintendent of Morrison County Schools opposed our hiring this teacher; but Mr. Sheldon okayed it. She was first hired in the Jake Nohner district east of Pierz but when the people saw her they wouldn't have her. She had a wonderful education so I petitioned the whole district #144 and all signed it."*

After 1922, there are no other records of Rose teaching in Morrison County. She passed away in 1965 and is buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Onamia.

(See page 4 for more on this story.)

~ Grace Duxbury  
Museum Assistant

## Collection Connection

## Keep Me & Never Go Broke



One-Cent United States Coin Token (front & back) from Larson Oil Company of Little Falls, Minnesota, 1946. Morrison County Historical Society collections, #2016.60.1.



**K**EEP ME AND NEVER GO BROKE. Who could resist a statement like that? This one-cent United States coin token was a clever way for the Larson Oil Company of Little Falls, Minnesota, to advertise its value and economy to customers and the community. The coin is dated 1946, one year after the end of World War II and not that far from the end of the Great Depression in 1939. The message is clear – frugal folk, we provide top value for the amount you spend.

The token consists of a one-cent United States coin encased in a 3/8" wide silver metal border with raised text and graphics. The text – KEEP ME AND NEVER GO BROKE – is prominent on the front side and is juxtaposed with the image of President Lincoln, one of the most trusted and venerable leaders of the United States. President Lincoln has graced the penny since 1909, the centennial of the year of his birth.

The coin token was donated by Jeff Garland of Dayton, Minnesota. His comment when donating the token to the Morrison County Historical Society (MCHS) is worth quoting:

*My parents, Harold and Audrey Garland from St. James, MN, had this coin in*

*their collection. I had never heard them talk about Larson Oil Company, so I don't know when they obtained it. I enjoy keeping history alive, and wanted to donate the coin for other generations to see and experience the past. Thank you! (Jeff Garland to MCHS, August 12, 2016 [Letter])*

History is alive and kicking thanks to people like Jeff. Thanks to everyone who helps support cultural resources across the globe by saving, sharing and supporting cultural resource institutions and organizations. History does matter – past, present and future.

~ Ann Marie Johnson  
Preservationist

*Would you like to help the Morrison County Historical Society save local history in perpetuity?*

*Consider making a Bequest to the Society.*

*Discuss your plans with an attorney or give the Society a call at 320-632-4007.*

~ Continued from Page 1 ~

### Jim Crow in Morrison County: Rose Winch's Experience

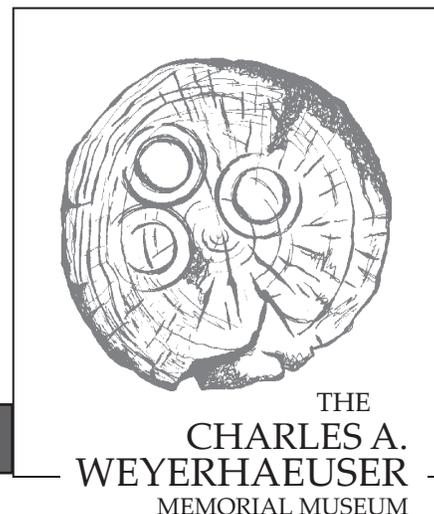
"We feel that this woman concealed an important fact from us in not telling us in her application that she was a negro and while of course the matter of color is not one that the law recognizes, yet if you had heard the demonstrations of those patrons, you could not help but say that it was an important one that must be considered."

*Excerpt, letter from Crawford Sheldon, County Superintendent of Schools, Morrison County, Minnesota to G.M. Cessander, Inspector, Minnesota Department of Education, in regards to Rose Winch's application to serve as a teacher in Morrison County, October 18, 1921.*

According to Isabel Wilkerson, author of "The Warmth of Other Suns" about the migration of black people out of the South, while there may not have been Jim Crow laws in the North, in practice black people faced similar discrimination in northern states, just like Rose Winch did. Imagine being expected to reveal your skin color prior to a job application if you were white.

# THE MORRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2020 - Vol. 33, No. 4



## The Search for Rachael Carew - Part 1

### A Story Waiting to Be Told

The search for Rachael Carew began with a handful of local items in the Lincoln column of the *Little Falls Herald*.

“May 8. – Two families of negroes came here Friday and have settled on land in section 15-132-32, Fawn Lake township. There were eleven of them and two more are coming with car. They seem to be intelligent and look as if they might be workers and they to be religious. Their names is Carew [sic].” (1)

“May 15. – Messrs. Schwab, who sold the land to Mr. Carew, the colored man, sent a man up to show him his land or such other land in that vicinity that he owned and they called on S.L. Staples to show him the lines. He rather surprised them with his pocket compass as he found the quarter stake a half mile from the cor-

ner and when he run south a quarter of a mile he told them he did not need a compass and called their attention to a hill three miles away and told them that the hill was where this same line run. Mr. Carew was perfectly satisfied and took the land that was described

died last Friday and is to be buried at Lake Alexander. Mr. Carew is the colored man that moved here last spring.” (3)

“Some of the good citizens of Fawn Lake, Todd county [sic], passed through town on their way to Lake Alexander to dig a grave in the Scandia Valley burying ground to bury Mrs. Carew, a resident of that township.” (4)

**STATE OF MINNESOTA**  
Division of Vital Statistics  
CERTIFICATE OF DEATH 15633

County: *Todd*  
Township: *Fawn Lake*  
Village: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
2 FULL NAME: *Rachael K. Carew*

3 SEX: *Female*  
4 COLOR OR RACE: *Colored*  
5 MARRIAGE: *Widowed*  
6 DATE OF BIRTH: *Nov 4 day November 1844*  
7 AGE: *75*  
8 OCCUPATION: *Domestic Servant*  
9 BIRTHPLACE: *Alabama*  
10 NAME OF FATHER: *Samuel Lyons*  
11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER: *Virginia*  
12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER: *Unknown*  
13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER: *Unknown*  
14 The above is true to the best of my knowledge.  
(Informant): *Robert W. Carew*  
(Address): *Lincoln Minn*  
15 FILED: *Sept 12 1919*  
16 DATE OF DEATH: *3 9 1919*  
17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from that I last saw h... alive on... and that death occurred, on the date stated above, at... The CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows:  
*Acute Myocardial Infarction*  
*Food Poisoning*  
18 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE: \_\_\_\_\_ yrs. \_\_\_\_\_ mos. \_\_\_\_\_ ds.  
19 PLACE OF BURIAL OR CREMATION: *Lincoln*  
20 UNDERTAKER: *Al. Nanning*

Rachael K. Carew's death certificate, Todd County, Minnesota, March 9, 1919.

in his original contract.” (2)

“Mrs. Carew, who lives with her son's family in section 15, Fawn Lake,

Because land in Central Minnesota was first home to the Dacotah, then the Ojibwe, followed by predominantly settlers of European origin, with a majority of the area's population having been white since Morrison County's founding in 1856, I was curious as to what the Carew family's experience was like as one of the few black families in the area. Where had they come from? What drew them to Central Minnesota? Living as they did in Todd County, how did Mrs. Carew

~ Continued on Page 2 ~

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come to be buried in Morrison County? So many questions from these few brief articles.

As with much of local history, it takes time, often years, to fully develop a story. I set these items aside, periodically taking them out over the years to reread them. I had not come across any other items on the Carew family in my decades of research at the Morrison County Historical Society (MCHS).

Following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020, I reread the Carew articles again, wondering how I could highlight their lives and the lives of other black residents in Morrison County. (5)

### A Fortunate Break in the Carew Research

Another curious feature of history research is the amount of serendipity involved. Around the time I was trying to figure out how to tell the story of the Carews, I got an email from Dan Dobrick, one of our past researchers and a contributor to the *Find A Grave* website. Via email, he asked if we were aware that "there is a person who was born into slavery buried up at the Scandia Valley Cemetery (Ogema Point), old part" and provided a link to the *Find A Grave* information he had entered. (6)

The *Find A Grave* entry was for Rachael K. Tynes Carew, born 1844 in Alabama, died March 9, 1919 in Todd County, with burial in Scandia Valley Cemetery West, Cushing, Morrison County, Minnesota. (7)

Over the course of seven emails, Dan revealed the information he had uncovered about Rachael, including a copy of her death certificate, and launched me on a fascinating search to discover more about her and her family. That death certificate contains key information, including the fact that she was "Born in Slavery" in Alabama in 1844, with the month and day of birth unknown. Her father was Samuel Tyons, who was born in Virginia. Her mother's name and place of birth were unknown. She was a

widow at the time of her death. Her son, Robert Abraham Carew, attested to the truth of the provided information. Rachael's death was caused when her "clothes took fire" and she "died from effect of burns." She was buried in Lincoln, Minnesota, on March 13, 1919. (8)

When I searched for Rachael's death date on the Minnesota Historical Society's *People Search* database online, I couldn't find her. Dan informed me that it's because her name is spelled "Garew" in the database. When looking carefully at the death certificate, Rachael's name is handwritten and, indeed, her last name appears to be "Garew" on the document. It's a good reminder that when conducting research, being open to alternate name spellings is important.

### Field Trip to the Ogema Point Cemetery

In trying to find Rachael, my husband and I visited Ogema Point Cemetery located on the north shore of Lake Alexander in Morrison County. It's a gorgeous spot for a cemetery, shaded with tall pines. The cemetery is split by a road, with the lakeside portion being the oldest. This part of the cemetery, which has a fairly large fenced-in area, has very few grave markers in it. The portion of the cemetery across the road is also fenced and has many markers that appear to be much newer than the few we found in the old section. What's delightful and curious about the new section of Ogema Point Cemetery is that so many of the grave markers are shrines to those buried in it. There's not just a standard headstone; loved ones have added knickknacks, artwork, statues, planters, flags, windchimes, birdfeeders, photos, and other assorted items that indicate the personality of the individual being memorialized.

My husband and I walked both sides of the cemetery, searching in vain for a marker for Rachael.

A little research in the cemetery files at the Morrison County Historical Society showed that Ogema Point Cemetery was established on the lakeside or west side of the road in 1907.

The east side portion was established in 1939. A call to the cemetery record-keeper, Judy Altrichter, revealed that many of the graves on the west side never had markers. Around twenty years ago the cemetery tried to have graves identified using wooden crosses and Sharpie markers. A few were identified during this effort, but the location of Rachael's grave, which ought to be on the west side of the road based on the date of death, remains unknown.

Because locating Rachael's grave hadn't panned out, it was time to see if I could discover where she and her family had come from. Serendipity from two different sources played a role in this portion of the search as well. The first came from attending the Rethos/MCHS class *Slaveholders and Real Estate in Minnesota* taught by Dr. Christopher P. Lehman. Dr. Lehman is a Professor of Ethnic Studies at St. Cloud State University and has written numerous books on African American history. His most recent book is *Slavery's Reach: Southern Slaveholders in the North Star State*, which examines the investments in organizations and property that southern slaveholders made in Minnesota.

My other serendipitous resource was the book, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*, by Isabel Wilkerson. It tells the story of the decades-long migration of black people out of the South and into the North and West in order to escape their treatment under Jim Crow laws and other forms of oppression. I had picked up a copy earlier in the summer in order to learn more about this major long-term event in American history, not realizing it was going to provide valuable information related to my search for Rachael Carew.

~ Mary Warner  
Executive Director

*To be continued  
in next MCHS newsletter ...*

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# NEWS & NOTES

## ABOUT THIS AND THAT

### Morrison County CARES Grant

The Morrison County Historical Society recently applied for and received a CARES Grant offered by Morrison County and administered by the Morrison County United Way. These CARES Grants were to assist county nonprofits in covering expenses that arose from the pandemic. MCHS received a grant for \$2,980 to cover the cost of 2 laptops for staff, a Zoom subscription for remote meetings, and the Plexiglas shields at the front desk of the museum.

Thank you to Morrison County for the grant and for making this program available!

### A Letter About Mattresses

In response to Writing Intern Ray Mulvey's article about WPA mattresses in the last issue of the MCHS newsletter, we received a handwritten letter from member Pat Bumgarner. Pat shared her appreciation for the article along with a story about her mother, Agnes Czech Richter, who lived in Sobieski.

*"[Agnes] owned a cabin on Big Sandy from 1962 to her passing [in 2014]. Like most cabins it was furnished "old Polish" from the city home. We her family started replacing worn items - especially mattresses. At mom's age she could recall replacing corn stalks in canvas sacks for their mattress as kids (13 of them). Her bed at the cabin was a tall metal double bed and the support frame was a flat criss-crossed mess of wires on which rested a striped mattress about 5-6" thick. She was not there when we replaced it with a 'new' bed & mattress set ... oh dear ... she was not happy at all and least of all thankful. Her response was 'What did you do with that perfectly good mattress?' That happened about 2000. Now you have me wondering who made this?"*

We wonder, too, Pat! Thanks for your letter and for adding to our history. We will keep it in our files.

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MCHS board meetings are held every 4-6 weeks online via Zoom during the pandemic. Call 320-632-4007 for date and time. All members are welcome to attend.

### IN MEMORIAM

#### Helen Isaacson

Helen Isaacson, long-time member of the Morrison County Historical Society, passed away September 4, 2020. Her daughter, Dianne McClenahan, made a contribution to MCHS in Helen's memory. It was Helen's wish that the donation be used to help with MCHS's work.

We send our condolences to Helen's family and friends and our gratitude for the family's generous contribution.

#### Shielia Perrault Conrad

Shielia Perrault Conrad, mother of former MCHS museum assistant Aimee Conrad, passed away October 19, 2020. Shielia and Aimee taught a class on how to make dreamcatchers at the museum several years ago.

We share our condolences with Shielia's family and friends.

#### JoAnn Shelley

JoAnn Shelley, wife of past MCHS board member Dale Shelley, passed away November 10, 2020.

We extend our condolences to JoAnn's family and friends.



#### Citations: The Search for Rachael Carew

1. *Little Falls Herald*, May 10, 1918
2. *Little Falls Herald*, May 17, 1918
3. *Little Falls Herald*, March 14, 1919
4. *Little Falls Herald*, March 14, 1919
5. MPR News, *The killing of George Floyd: What we know*, <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2020/06/01/the-killing-of-george-floyd-what-we-know>, accessed November 11, 2020.
6. Email correspondence from Dan Dobrick to MCHS, July 17, 2020.
7. *Find A Grave*, entry for Rachael K. Tynes Carew, [https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/151163242/rachael-k\\_-carew](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/151163242/rachael-k_-carew), accessed November 11, 2020.
8. Death certificate of Rachael Carew, State of Minnesota, March 9, 1919.



## HERITAGE FUND

The Morrison County Historical Society has recently received donations for the following:

### MEMORIALS

#### B.G. Gary LeBlanc

from  
Anita LeBlanc

#### Shielia Lenora Perrault Conrad

from  
Aimee Conrad

#### JoAnn Shelley

from  
Jan Warner

## GIFTS

#### Cathy Adamek

for Christmas  
from  
Jan Warner



## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN HVAC

### DEDICATED TO

#### John & Margaret May

from  
Richard May

#### Shielia Lenora Perrault Conrad

from  
Erik & Mary Warner

#### Art & Jan Warner

from  
Erik & Mary Warner

#### MCHS Staff

For going above & beyond during  
COVID  
from  
Camille Warzecha