

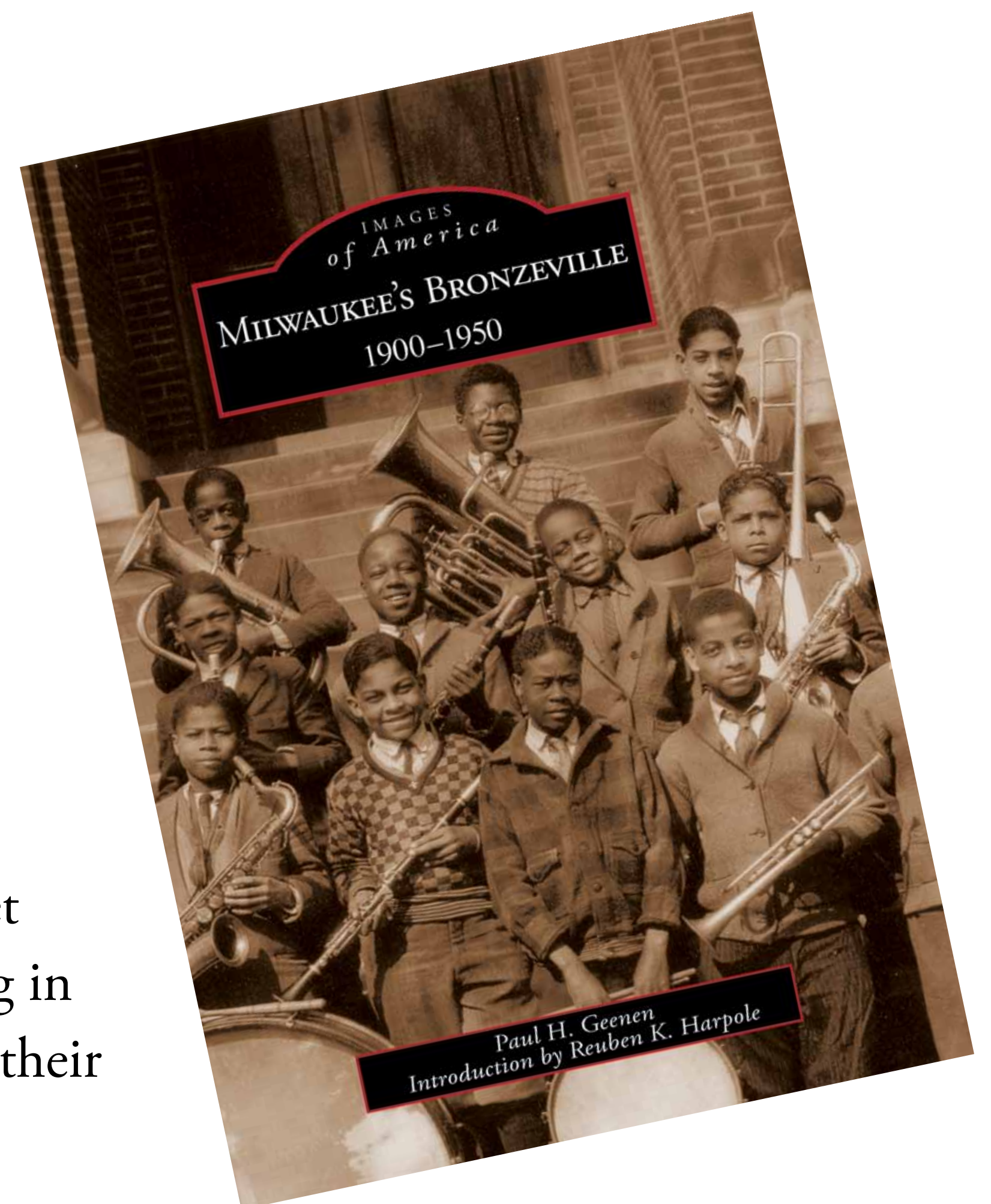
MILWAUKEE'S BRONZEVILLE 1900-1950

This photography exhibit will enhance your appreciation of First Stage's production of *WELCOME TO BRONZEVILLE*.

Bronzeville was where the Dubois' daily lives happened: shopping on Walnut Street, enjoying musical performances at the Regal Theater, playing in Lapham Park, and spending time with friends at the Haymarket or the Booker T. Washington YMCA.

The photographs in this exhibit were carefully chosen by Paul Geenen for his book *Milwaukee's Bronzeville, 1900-1950*. We are deeply grateful to him for allowing us to reproduce images and content from his book so we could bring you a closer look into Bronzeville's past. We also want to acknowledge the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Mary L. Nohl Fund, for their generous support of this exhibit.

As you'll see, life was not easy in Bronzeville, yet its citizens overcame hardships, nurtured loving families, and created a vibrant community. Life is not easy in today's Bronzeville, yet many of its citizens are overcoming hardships and succeeding in creating a supportive community, following the examples of their ancestors.



There is a lot of beauty in this community. By telling the Bronzeville story, I hope to inspire young people and families of all races to forge their own journey of self-discovery, re-examine the choices they make, be more thoughtful to one another, and find ways to connect with and celebrate their unique cultural heritages.

-Sheri Williams Pannell, playwright and director of *WELCOME TO BRONZEVILLE*

EARLY DAYS

The story of Milwaukee's Bronzeville began over 100 years ago when a small group of African American families moved to Milwaukee after the Civil War. During World War I, increasing numbers moved from the South escaping segregation and violence, hoping to find good jobs in Milwaukee's tanneries, foundries, and factories, and to provide better opportunities for their families. An even larger wave of Southerners came during World War II. In 1910, Milwaukee's African American population was about 1,000, growing to over 20,000 by 1950.



A pair of galloping white horses pulls a wagon down unpaved Walnut Street, before it was widened, while pedestrians wait to cross the street, sometime during the early 1900s. There were about 1,000 African Americans living in Milwaukee in 1910. *Photograph courtesy of Milwaukee Jewish Historical Society.*

Walnut Street is mentioned in [WELCOME TO BRONZEVILLE](#)



Woodrow Wilson (left) and Lester Wilson pose with their dress walking canes in 1917. Woodrow was born in 1885, migrating to Milwaukee in the early 1900s. He worked for Heil Company as a laborer, read the daily *Wall Street Journal*, and only bought his clothes in fashionable stores. *Photograph courtesy of Chuck Holton.*



Nace Holton (left) and John "Hack" Welch departed St. Louis for better jobs in Milwaukee around 1917. Welch was married to Holton's sister Etta. Both Hack and Etta worked in a meat packing house. *Photograph courtesy of Doris Woods.*



The Surlow (Srulowitz) family displays a fine selection of fresh vegetables and eggs sometime in the early 1920s. Corner stores were an important part of life in Bronzeville. "If your parents did not have any money, we still got what we needed from the store," one former resident said. "We would pick up what we needed and be told 'tell your Ma or Dad to pay me next week.'" Starting in 1901, Russian Jews from Eastern Europe immigrated to Bronzeville, living in the neighborhood with African American immigrants from the South. This began a relationship in Milwaukee between these two ethnic groups that continued through the 1960s civil rights movement to today. *Photograph courtesy of Milwaukee Jewish Historical Society.*



The Jacob Goldberg Drugstore, shown here in 1920 at Tenth and Walnut Streets. *Photograph courtesy of Milwaukee Jewish Historical Society.*



A streetcar heads south on Third Street after crossing Walnut Street on a chilly winter morning in this undated photograph. The Milwaukee County Lines were thought of as being one of the best systems in the country. Quiet trolleys ran every ten minutes, taking passengers to virtually anywhere in the County and running in the night for second- and third- shift workers. *Photograph courtesy of Historic Photograph Collection/Milwaukee Public Library.*



The Regal Theater was first called the Rose Theater in 1916, and was a popular place to view silent movies and Yiddish dance troupes. In 1938, it was purchased by partners James Dorsey, a successful African American attorney, and Samuel Ludwig, a Jewish businessman. It received extensive remodeling in 1938, getting a new marquee that extended over the sidewalk, luxurious red curtains, and a 40-foot-wide plush red carpet running down the aisles of the theater. On a Friday or Saturday night, after the late movie, the Regal held amateur jitterbug dance contests and other entertainment by local talent. These amateur nights were training grounds for pianists like Billy Wallace and other local artists such as Bunky Green, Willy Pickens, Phoenix Newborn, and Mary Young. The Regal was the place to be on weekends. Children from the neighborhood could spend practically the whole day at "The Flicks", watching a triple feature of westerns and cartoons. *Photograph of charcoal drawing by Sylvester Sims.*

The Regal Theater is mentioned in [WELCOME TO BRONZEVILLE](#)

FAMILY



Frank Holton, age 25, worked for Greenbaum and then Albert Trostel Tannery in 1933. Starting work at 15, he often worked two to three jobs at the same time. He was the youngest of a family of nine children. *Photograph courtesy of Doris Woods.*



Brookie McClain (holding her infant Earleen) and her husband Buffus McClain migrated in 1938 from Philadelphia, Mississippi, to Milwaukee with their two young children to join his father. *Photograph courtesy of Eibelen Sartin (née McClain).*



Fanny Holton (center) appears reserved and dignified. Although she experienced the abuses of slavery, it is told that very few things ruffled her, and she maintained a strong moral compass through it all. Beatrice Holton (left) died as a teenager, and Irma Holton (right) married Rufus Crawley and had nine children. *Photograph courtesy of Doris Woods.*



Mary Holton was the Holton family matriarch, shown here in 1933 sitting in her backyard on Tenth Street. A story handed down through the family says that when Mary Holton was approximately eight years old, she saw her sister sold into slavery. The story goes that Mary last saw her sister on the back of a wagon calling, "Good bye! I love you!" *Photograph courtesy of Doris Woods.*



Three generations of Holtons are in the front porch of their Tenth Street house in 1931. Grandmother Mary Holton is on the left of her oldest grandchild, Birdie Young, holding six-month old Chuck Holton. Frank Holton, Chuck's brother, is in the rear. *Photograph courtesy of Chuck Holton.*

Bronzeville was a place where African American families worked hard to make a living and to build a community where people supported each other. Family, faith, education, and work were pillars of life in this tight-knit community.



Calvin A. Reeves, the first African American to live in Fox Point, was born approximately in 1852, although the exact year is not known. Escaping from slavery in either Missouri or Mississippi, he was a water boy for the Union Army and followed a Union soldier home to Milwaukee. He was between ten and twelve years of age when he arrived in Milwaukee in 1863, two years before the Emancipation Proclamation. Reeves worked on a farm called Mack and Sweitzer's that was located between Dean and Brown Deer Roads. He worked many years for the Uihlein family, training and doctoring horses. Reeves married Wilhelmina Schroeder, shown here, who was white; theirs was one of the first interracial marriages in Milwaukee. *Photographs courtesy of Lenore Matthews.*

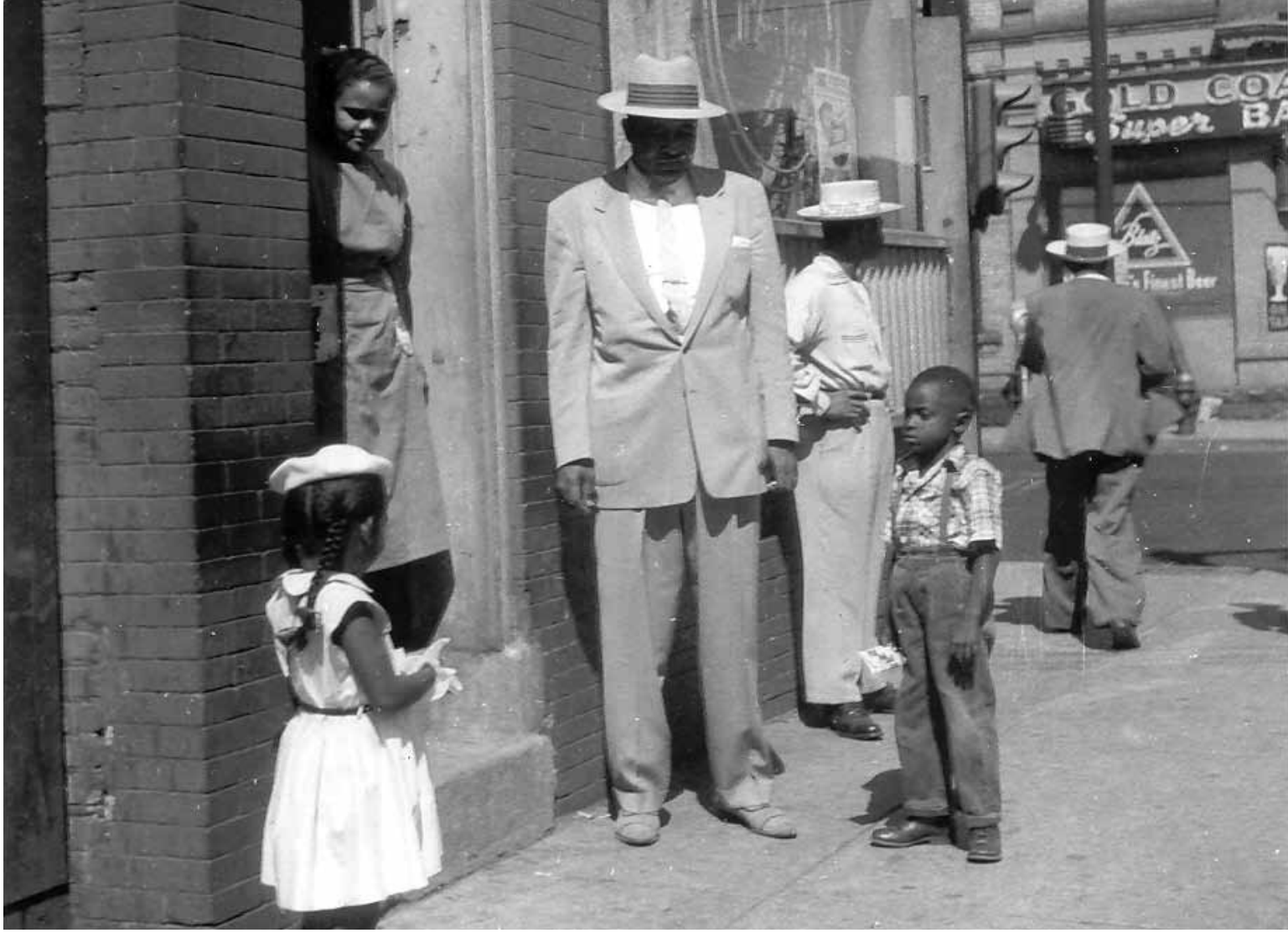


The handsome couple, James and Justine Coleman, enjoyed some precious time together during the war. James was one of the many African American men and women from Bronzeville who served in all-black units during World War II. *Photograph courtesy of Virginia McKinney.*



In 1948, Archibald D. Savage (left) and Mattie Savage moved five of their ten children from Memphis to Milwaukee in search of better educational opportunities. Education was key to the Savages, and all of their children attended at least one year of college, most earning an undergraduate degree, and three earning advanced degrees. Savage was the first African American licensed car salesman in Milwaukee and sold cars for the Nash Automobile factory located at Holton Street and Capitol Drive. He was also a self-taught professional photographer, sold real estate part time, and, after graduating from a seminary in 1966, spent his last 29 years as an ordained minister. On January 12, 1996, Mattie Savage, at 92, was a special guest of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and became the first African American to watch a shuttle launch from the area reserved for the families of the flight crew and other astronauts. Savage's reaction to the launch was "If I was a young woman now, I think I would enjoy being an astronaut". *Photograph courtesy of Mary Savage-Mitchell.*

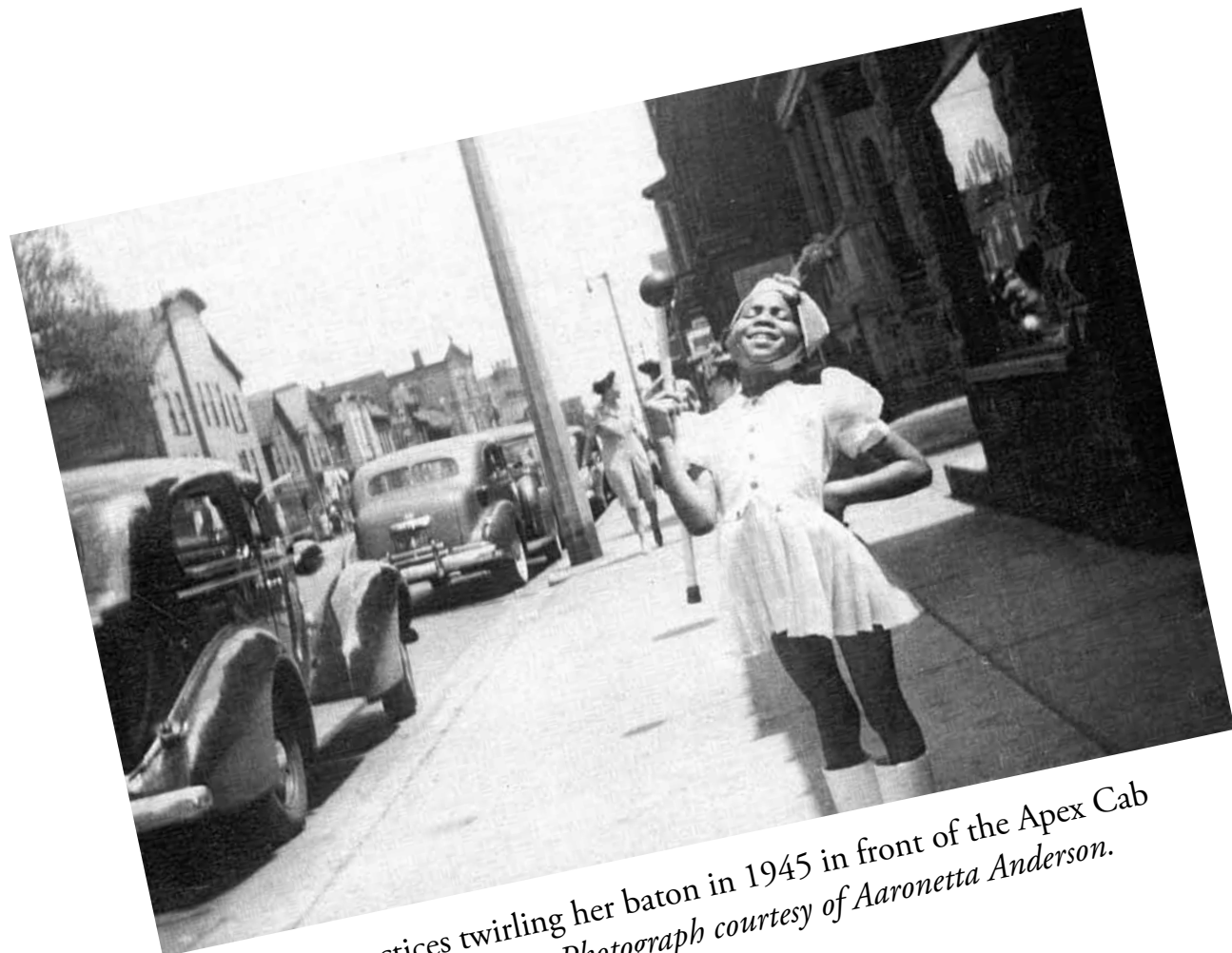
EVERYDAY LIFE



Isaac Coggs (center) stands in front of his "700 Tap", a popular tavern in Bronzeville. Pictured with him are his daughter Elizabeth (left) and his wife Marcia (in the doorway). Isaac, who also owned the Rendezvous and the Cross Town Tavern, began his education at Marquette University and finished at the University of Wisconsin-Madison after serving in the U.S. Army during World War II. *Photograph courtesy of Elizabeth Coggs-Jones.*

Segregation forced the African Americans migrating from the South to live in a very confined area of Milwaukee. In 1930, this area was bounded by Highland Boulevard on the south, Walnut Street on the north, and ran east to west from Third Street to Twelfth Street. By 1960, this area had expanded to Keefe Avenue on the north, Juneau Street to the south, the Milwaukee River on the east, and Twenty-first Street to the West. This was the area known as Milwaukee's Bronzeville.

Milwaukee's Bronzeville is remembered as a good place to grow up in the first half of the 20th century. The pace was slower... As one former resident said, while recalling that folks slept out in their front porches when it was hot, "No one really locked their doors; the screen doors were held with just a hook. Everyone used the same kind of skeleton key to get in the front door."



Ozzie Evans practices twirling her baton in 1945 in front of the Apex Cab Company on Walnut Street. *Photograph courtesy of Aaronetta Anderson.*



Howard Fuller, seen here with his family, is a professor of Education and the founder and director of the Institute for the Transformation of Learning at Marquette University. *Photograph courtesy of Howard Fuller.*



Dian Wyatt, Janet (?), and Cookie Williams are playing in the backyard on the 1700 block of Third Street. The backyard was an open grassless area, where people parked their cars. Recreation space for children was limited. Lapham Park was the place where people went if they wanted some green space. *Photograph courtesy of Virginia McKinney.*



Chuck and Frank Holton spent a lot of time at Lapham Park in 1937, when this photograph was taken, going over in the morning, returning in the afternoon, walking home for supper, then going back to the park. *Photograph courtesy of Chuck Holton.*

Christmas is a special time for families to get together. The three girls proudly show off the dolls they got from Santa in 1943. From left to right, first row, are Bonnie Ware (née McClain) and Earleen Campbell (née McClain); second row, Ethelen Sartin (née McClain); third row, Buffus McClain, Brookie McClain (née Baylor), and the infant Lavern Shadd (née McClain). The McClain family also had three boys: Charles, Lonnie, and Rudy. *Photograph courtesy of Ethelen Sartin.*



Sisters Cora Bowers (left) and Anna Payne Cox pose before an outing, in 1930. Cora later helped brother-in-law Londy Cox raise his three girls after Anna Cox died. *Photograph courtesy of Harriet Spicer (née Cox).*



These young men are in front of the Northside Sandwich Shop on Tenth and Garfield Streets, all dressed up for "Walnut Night". As described by participants, Walnut Night was a Saturday evening of cruising from Third Street to Twelfth Street in their 1950s Buick Roadmaster, complete with whitewalls. *Photograph courtesy of Harriet Spicer.*

FAITH



After 31 years at its first location, St. Mark African Methodist Episcopal Church purchased this building in 1914, at 1525 North Fourth Street between Cherry and Galena Streets, from a German Reform congregation. *Photograph courtesy of St. Mark A.M.E. Church.*



St. Mark African Methodist Episcopal Church Combined Choirs fill the entire sanctuary for a picture in 1948. The congregation worshipped 39 years in this building. Ten years later, the Milwaukee County Redevelopment office notified the congregation that they would have to move to make way for the new freeway, Highway 43. *Photograph courtesy of St. Mark A.M.E. Church.*



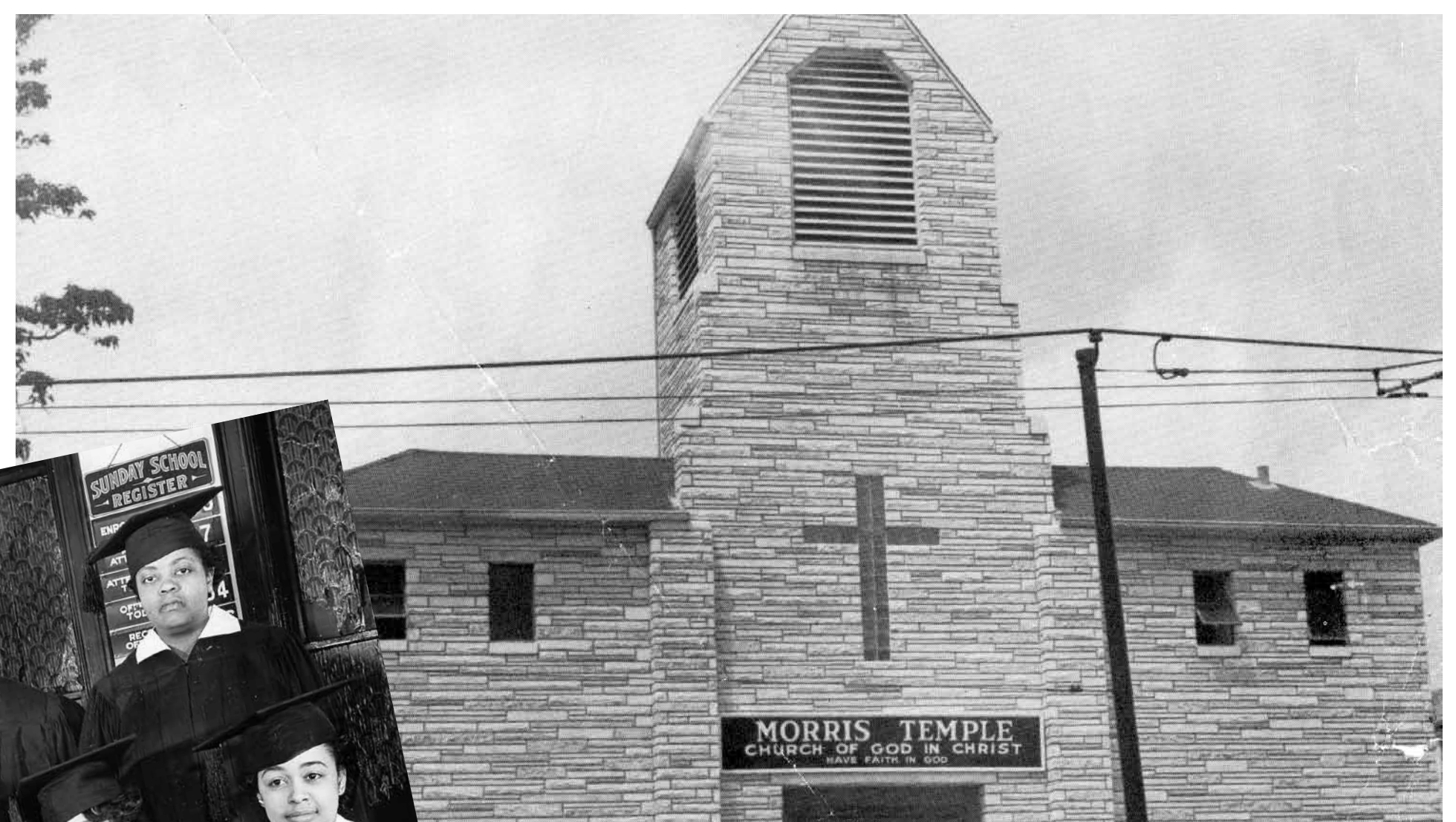
The Greater Galilee Choir is seen here in the second church, at 808 West Walnut Street, sometime in the mid-1940s. *Photograph courtesy of Greater Galilee Church.*



The Greater Galilee Church is seen here at its present location, 2432 North Teutonia Avenue. The congregation purchased this former synagogue in 1963. It describes itself as "The church with a heart for the heart of the city." *Photograph courtesy of Greater Galilee Church.*



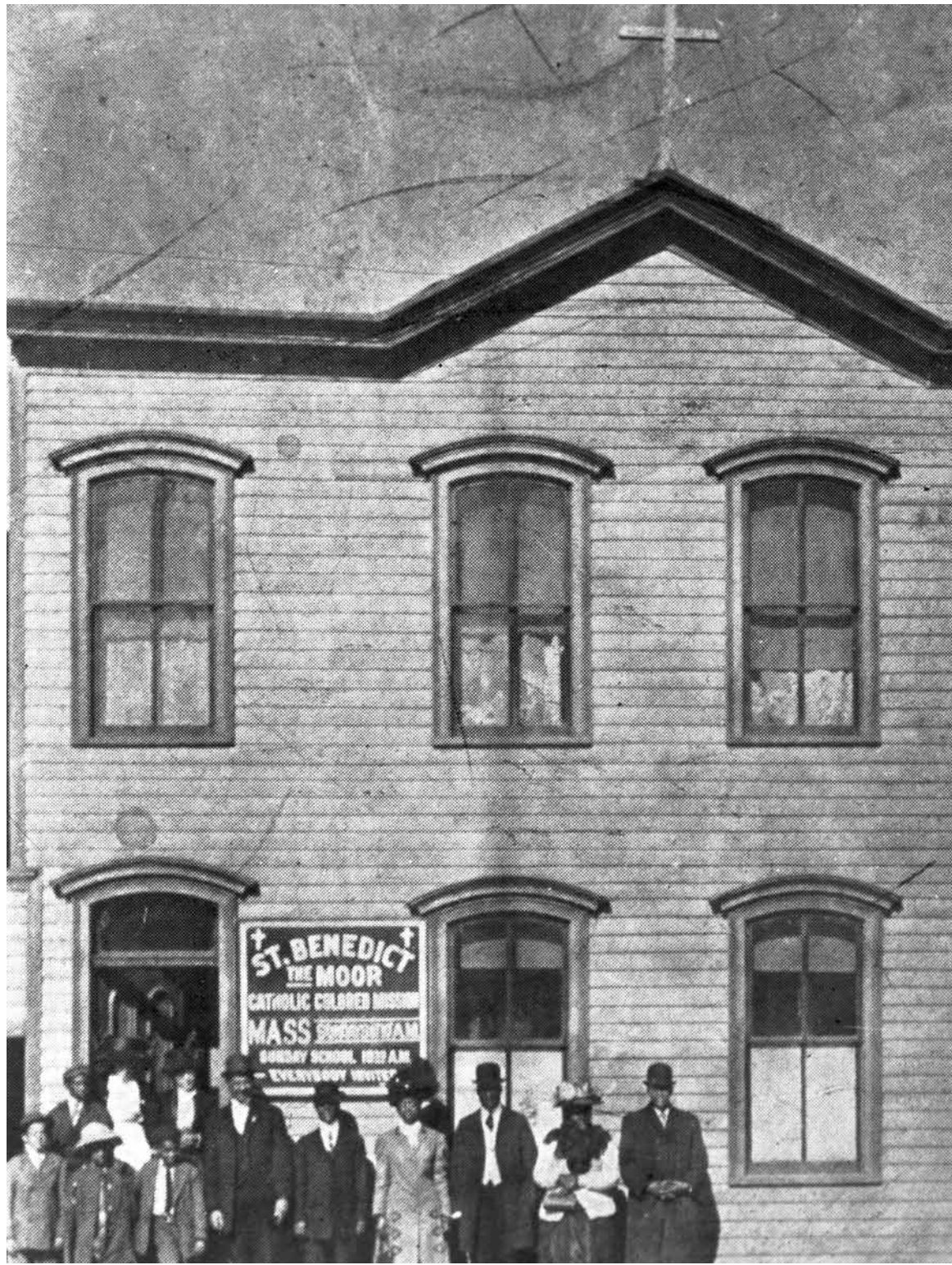
Sister Beason praises God in song over WEMP radio in 1945 while Bishop Morris watches behind the lectern. Sister Beason was known for her strong, talented voice. *Photograph courtesy of Ida Hortman.*



The Morris Memorial Church of God in Christ was built at 1035 West Walnut Street by Bishop W. L. Morris in May 1942. It was the first church built from the ground up by African Americans in Milwaukee. Reuben Harpole sold advertisement booklets on Galena Street for 10 cents to help raise money for his church. The church was torn down to make room for the Hillside Housing Project. *Photograph courtesy of Ida Hortman.*



The Radio Choir from Morris Memorial Church of God in Christ poses before Sunday services. Minister Garnett Herron is sitting on the left side of the photograph. *Photograph courtesy of Ida Hortman.*



In August 1908, Capt. Lincoln C. Valle established the first St. Benedict the Moor mission in a storeroom at 272 Fourth Street. The new church had bare walls, not a stick of furniture, and no lights. The nearby Methodist Church lent the new mission some chairs so that members could have seats during Sunday service. *Photograph courtesy of the Archives of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.*



The groundbreaking for the new St. Benedict the Moor Chapel at 311 Ninth Street (now 1041 North Ninth Street) is pictured here. The cornerstone of the church was set on October 7, 1923, by a missionary who had spent 46 years in Africa. *Photograph courtesy of St. Benedict the Moor Church.*

St. Mark African Methodist Episcopal Church was the only African American church in Milwaukee from 1869 to 1900, but by 1920, Calvary Baptist, St. Benedict the Moor Mission and School, and the Church of God in Christ were serving the spiritual, social, and economic needs of African Americans in Bronzeville. These churches supported clubs and other social outlets to give the new poor families from the South an opportunity to mingle with the families already living in the area. They also established schools, employment agencies, and social welfare agencies such as the Urban League and the Booker T. Washington Social and Industrial Center, to serve the community.

Calvary Baptist Church is mentioned in [WELCOME TO BRONZEVILLE](#)



St. Benedict the Moor Chapel is seen here in 1928. The entire cost of this church was donated by Ernest G. Miller, president of the Miller Brewing Company. St. Benedict the Moor was "a humble and sainted disciple of St. Francis," according to a 1912 history of the St. Benedict the Moor Church. *Photograph courtesy of St. Benedict the Moor Church.*



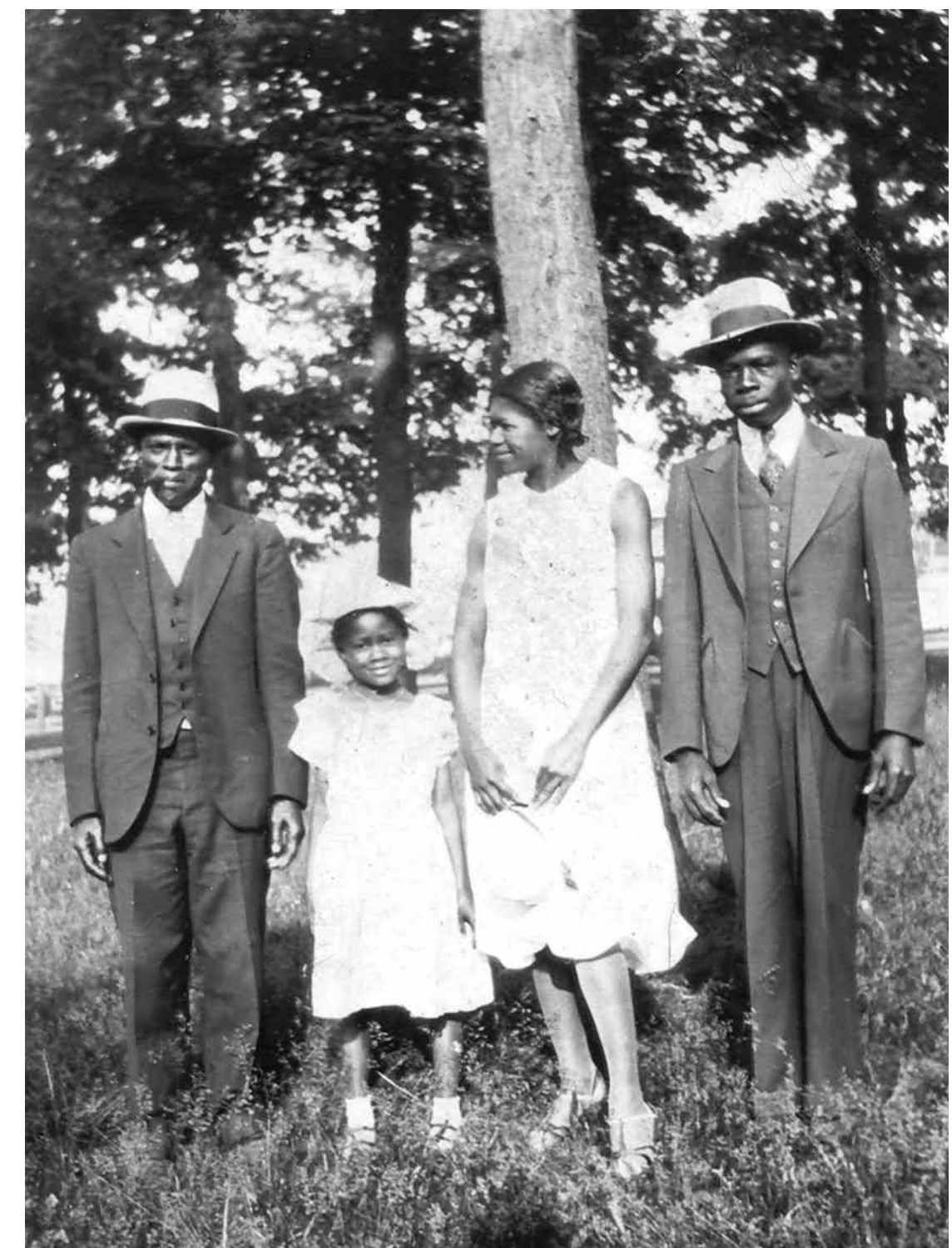
The students of St. Benedict the Moor hold their hands up to pray for special intentions. The idea was to "storm heaven" nine times with petitions, and contributions were gratefully accepted. The children are seated by grade, with the Notre Dame sisters holding down the strategic positions at the ends of the pews. *Photograph courtesy of St. Benedict the Moor Church.*



St. Benedict the Moor Holy Name Society is seen here in the early 1930s. Attorney James Dorsey is pictured in the first row, third from left; Bob Baker, Sylvester Sims' uncle, is fourth from left; Fr. Phillips in the center; and Granville Sims, Sylvester's father, is second from right. *Photograph courtesy of Sylvester Sims.*



A second grader poses for her First Communion picture in front of the rectory in spring of 1925. *Photograph courtesy of St. Benedict the Moor Church.*



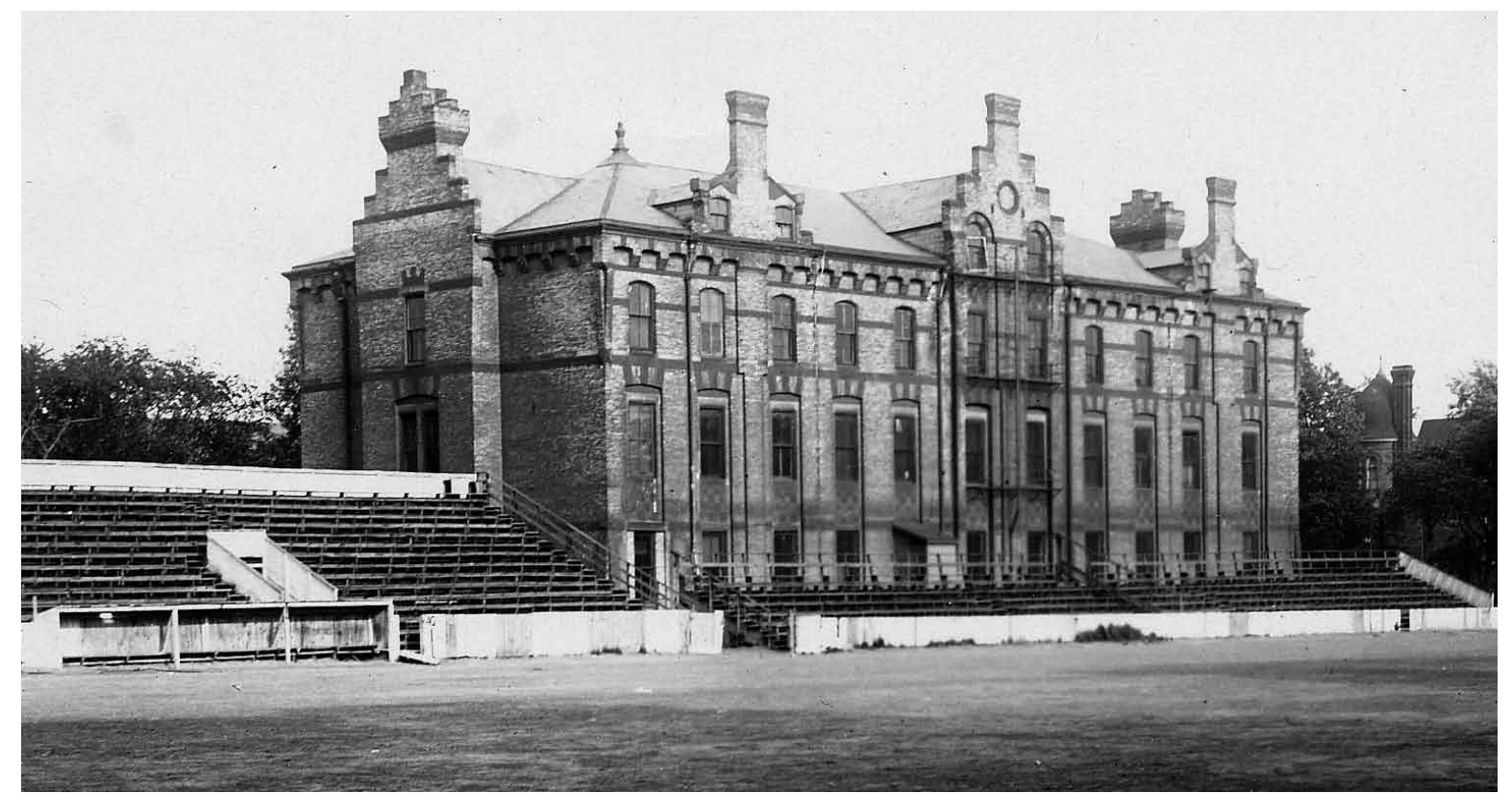
Virginia McKinney, her mother Daisy Collins, and two young men who were staying at the Collins' home at the time, pose at the All Churches picnic at Lake Park in the early 1930s. This was an annual event where members of all the African American churches got together for fellowship in Lake Park. *Photograph courtesy of Virginia McKinney.*

EDUCATION



This is an aerial photograph of St. Benedict the Moor Mission taken in 1934. The School and Dormitory for Large Boys is the large, four-story building on the left, on the far side of Tenth Street. The church, located on State Street, is in the center of the photograph. To the left of the church is the rectory, and behind the billboard is the Girls' Residence. Behind this building are smaller buildings, the Dormitories for Small Boys and Girls. *Photograph courtesy of St. Benedict the Moor Church and the Archives of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.*

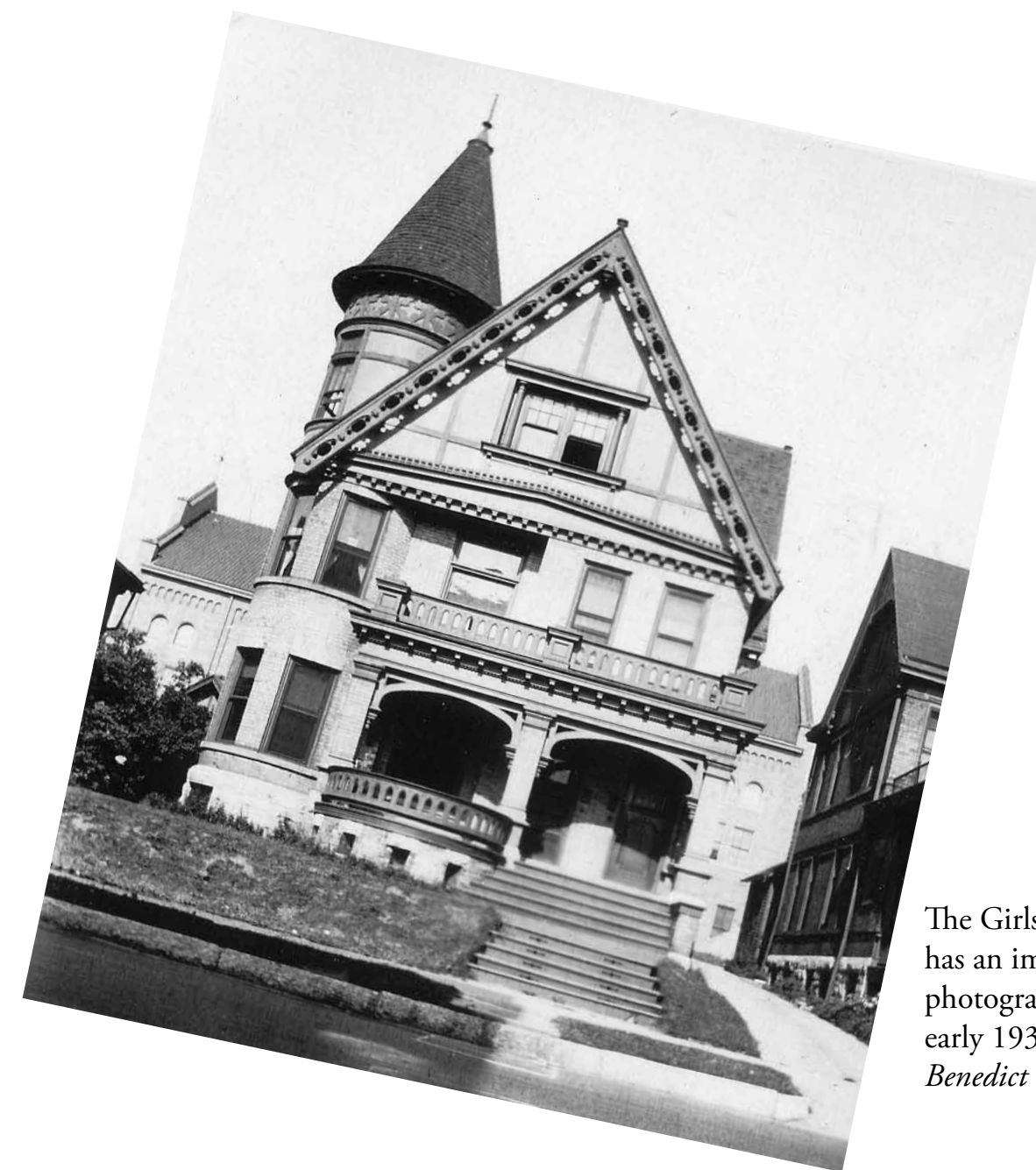
St. Benedict the Moor was the only Catholic boarding school for African Americans in the country. Many of the students came from Chicago, and others, often the children of movie stars or professional sports figures, came from all over the country. Local children also attended, many on scholarships.



The School and Dormitory for Large Boys overlooks the athletic field, where many highly competitive baseball and football games between classmates were held. The building was razed in the mid-1960s, and the boys' school was moved to Marquette University High School. *Photograph courtesy of Archives of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.*



In Grade School, the emphasis was on reading, writing, and arithmetic, with a lot of memorization, while in High School, fine arts, public speaking, and dramatics were added to the curriculum. Prominent black leaders were brought to the school to speak and act as role models to the students. The school set aside the month of February to lift up their heroes from the past, a precursor of Black History Month. *Photograph courtesy of the House of Peace.*

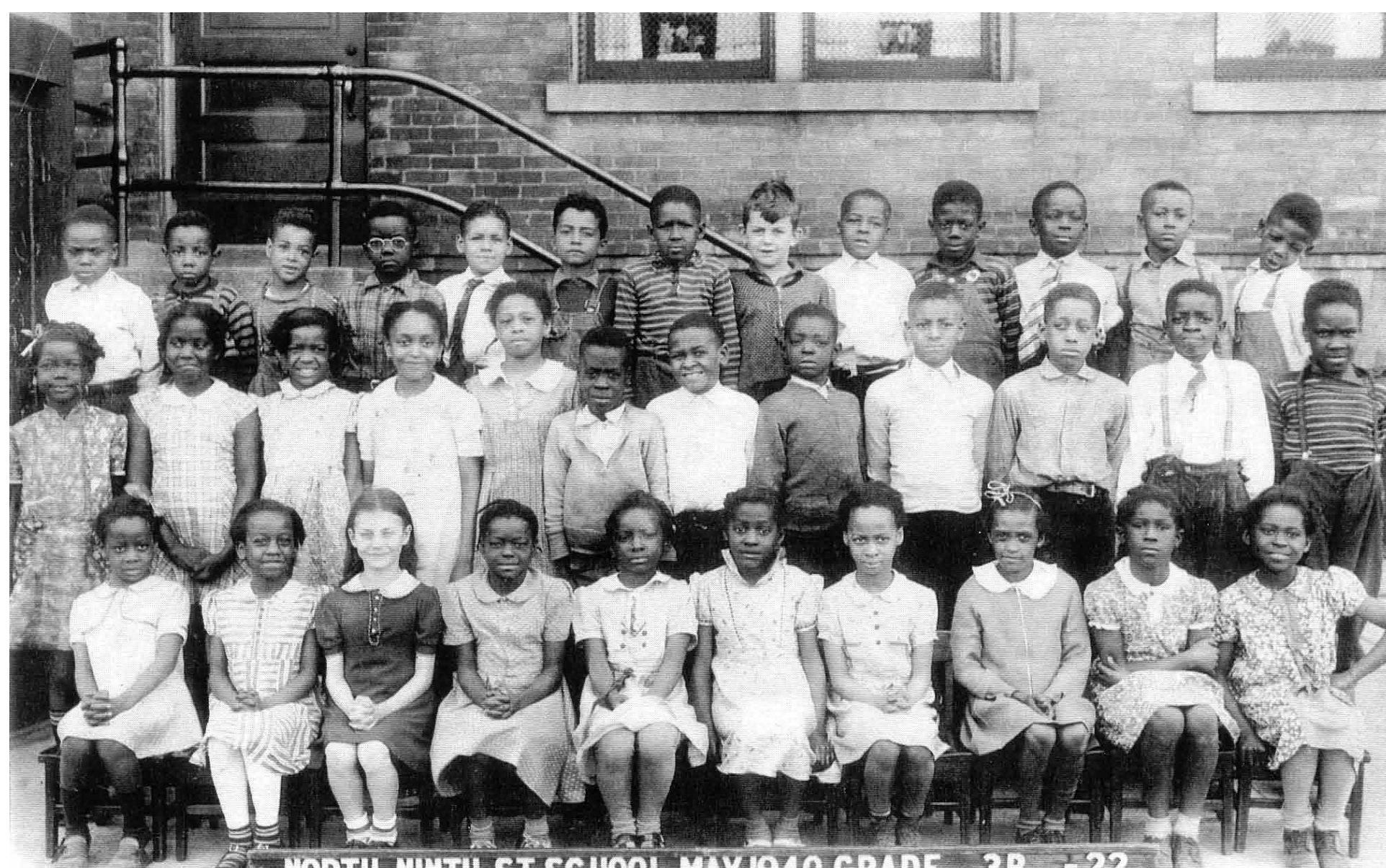


The Girls' Residence on State Street has an impressive tower. This undated photograph was probably taken in the early 1930s. *Photograph courtesy of St. Benedict the Moor Church.*

In the days of Milwaukee's Bronzeville, the forces of segregation kept the African American students of this tight-knit community within the boundaries of ten schools: Fourth Street (now Golda Meir), Siefert, Lloyd Street, St. Francis, Ninth Street, Roosevelt Junior High, St. Benedict the Moor, Lincoln High, North Division High, and Girls' Tech.



The Ninth Street School was torn down in the 1960s for construction of Highway 43. *Photograph courtesy of Larry Miller.*



The five girls standing in the second row at the Third Grade, Section B in the Ninth Street School class are, from left to right, Barbara Washington, Lettie Phelps, Sally Jackson (née Riley), Lois Wade, and Shirley McHenry. Most of the teachers at Ninth Street School were white. *Photograph courtesy of Sally Jackson.*



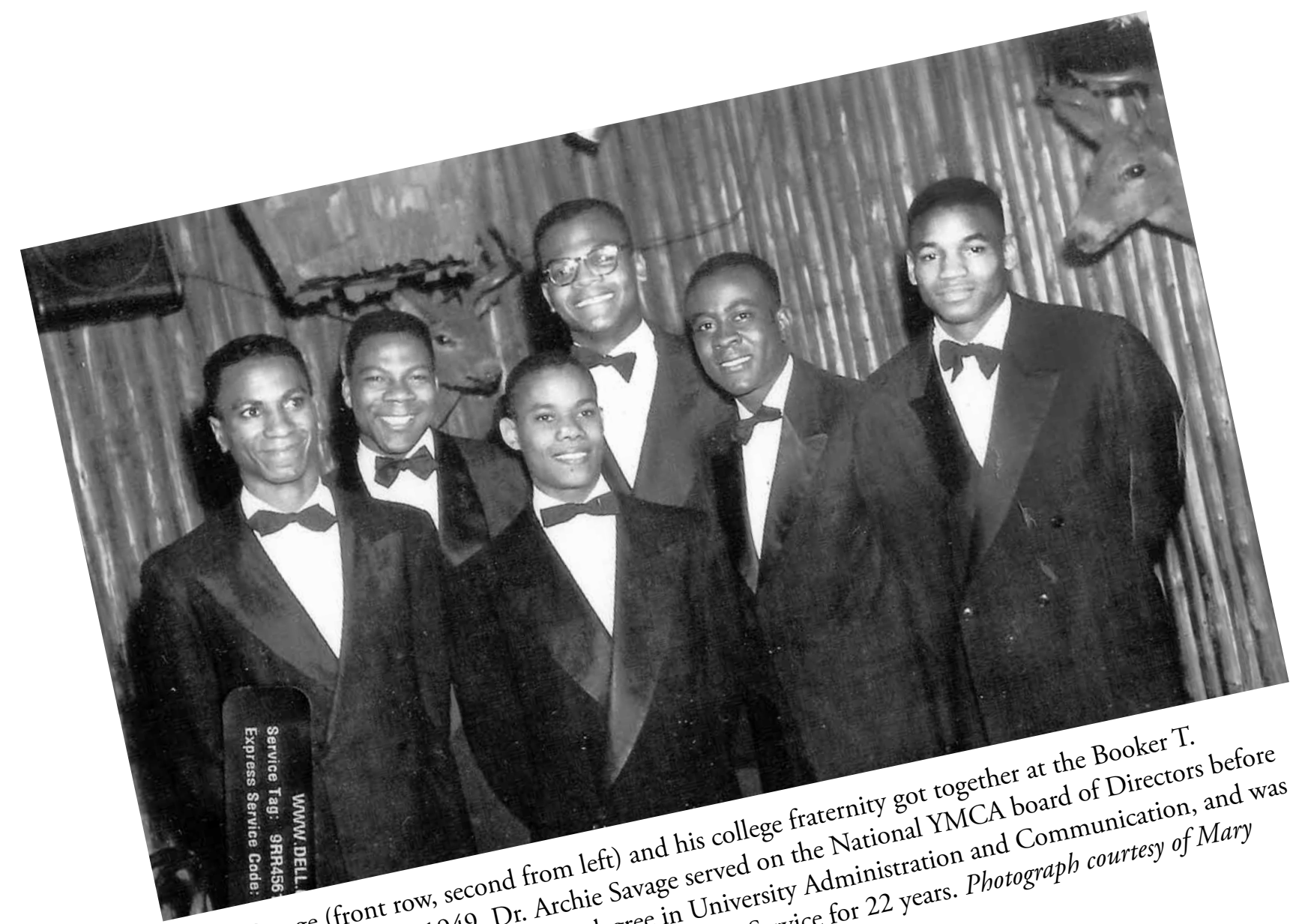
Harriet Spicer (née Cox) is shown in the middle of the second row, in her fourth grade class, in 1945. Harriet remembers her teachers as being strict and kind. *Photograph courtesy of Harriet Spicer.*



Miss Chorine Standish keeps a strict and watchful eye on her eighth grade graduation class at Fourth Street School on January 31, 1931. Mary Young, a talented dancer who later married band leader Bernie Young, is in the front row, second from the right. After graduation, Mary went to Vocational School at Nineteenth Street and Wells Street, while dancing in late night amateur contests at local theaters where she always took first or second place. *Photograph courtesy of Mary Young.*



Harriet Spicer (née Cox) is the fifth girl from the left, third row down, in this Roosevelt Junior High School class picture. She says she always did her homework and avoided detention since she had to open her father's restaurant, the Northside Sandwich Shop, after school. *Photograph courtesy of Harriet Spicer.*



Archie Savage (front row, second from left) and his college fraternity got together at the Booker T. Washington YMCA in 1949. Dr. Archie Savage served on the National YMCA board of Directors before his death in 2011. Savage received his degree in University Administration and Communication, and was a special agent for the U.S. Government Intelligence Service for 22 years. *Photograph courtesy of Mary Mitchell (née Savage).*

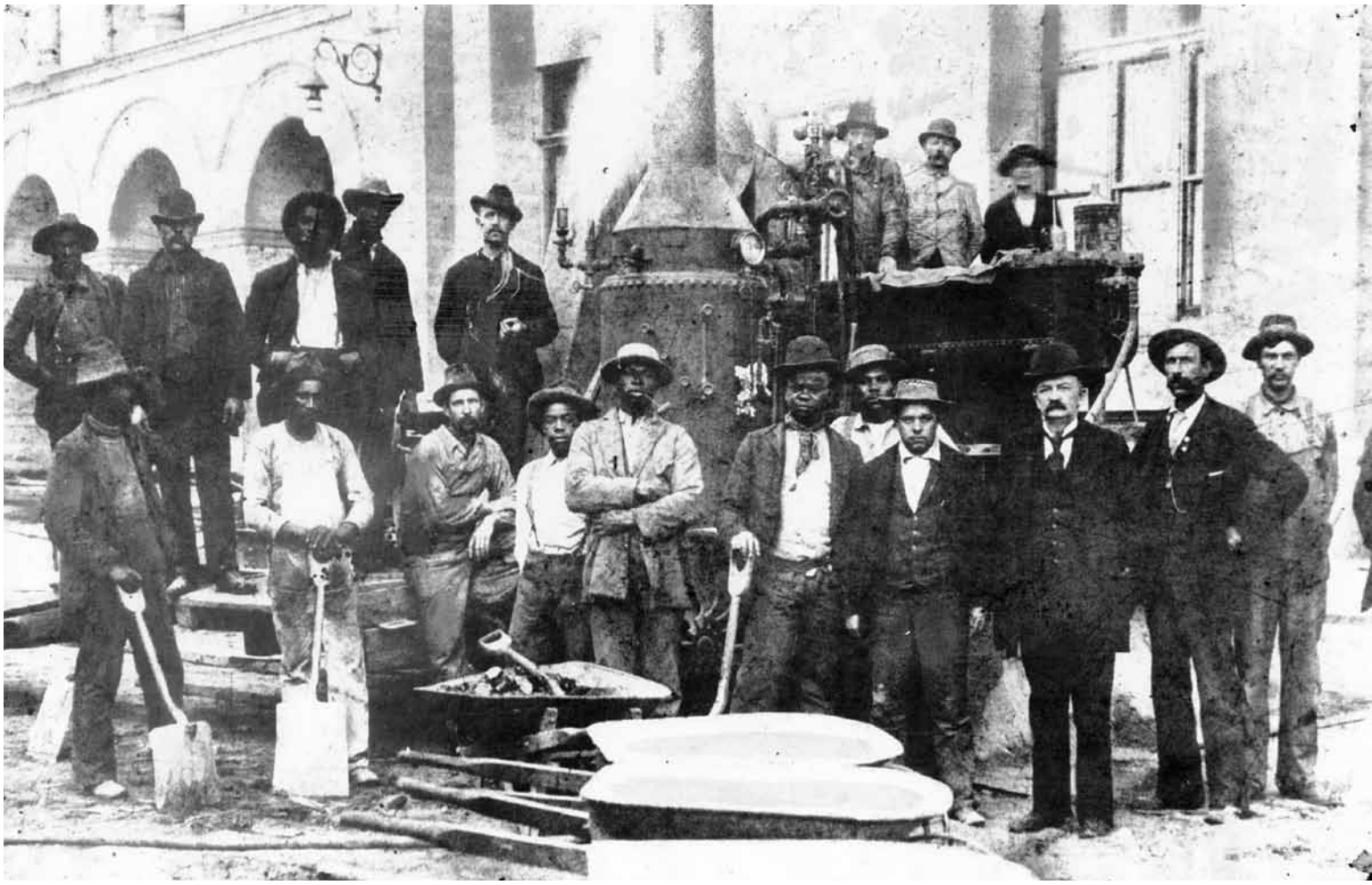


Bob Harris is shown here in Absom City, Korea, on May 10, 1945. He and his brother Nate Harris, both athletes with sports credentials earned while in the armed service, returned to Wisconsin and enrolled in the University of Wisconsin-Madison. They were denied athletic scholarships because the university was on a strict quota system, handling out only a very limited number of scholarships to African Americans. Robert Harris, their father, encouraged the brothers to go to college in spite of their disillusionment. *Photograph courtesy of Bob Harris.*



Ethelen Sartin (née McClain), the first African American nurse hired at Milwaukee Sanitarium, works at her desk in 1958. She went to North Division High School, two years of Junior college, and received her licensed practical nurse degree from Milwaukee Area Technical College. *Photograph courtesy of Ethelen Sartin.*

WORK



African Americans working as mason helpers pose in front of Milwaukee's city hall sometime during 1896. The wide shovels they are holding work well for shoveling sand and coal. *Photograph courtesy of Historic Photograph Collection/Milwaukee Public Library.*



After World War II, many returning veterans used the GI Bill to finish their education. African Americans who graduated from college found professional positions in teaching, social work, and the government. *Photograph courtesy of Bob Harris.*



The hiring of these men as bus drivers for the Milwaukee Transit Company was a major breakthrough for the African American community. The black bus drivers usually were scheduled to drive just on the North Side of Milwaukee, although they were occasionally given South Side routes. It was not uncommon for white transit riders to have a negative reaction to the new black bus drivers. Management of the transit company hired men who had good customer service skills and dressed well. *Photograph courtesy of Historic Photograph Collection/Milwaukee Public Library.*

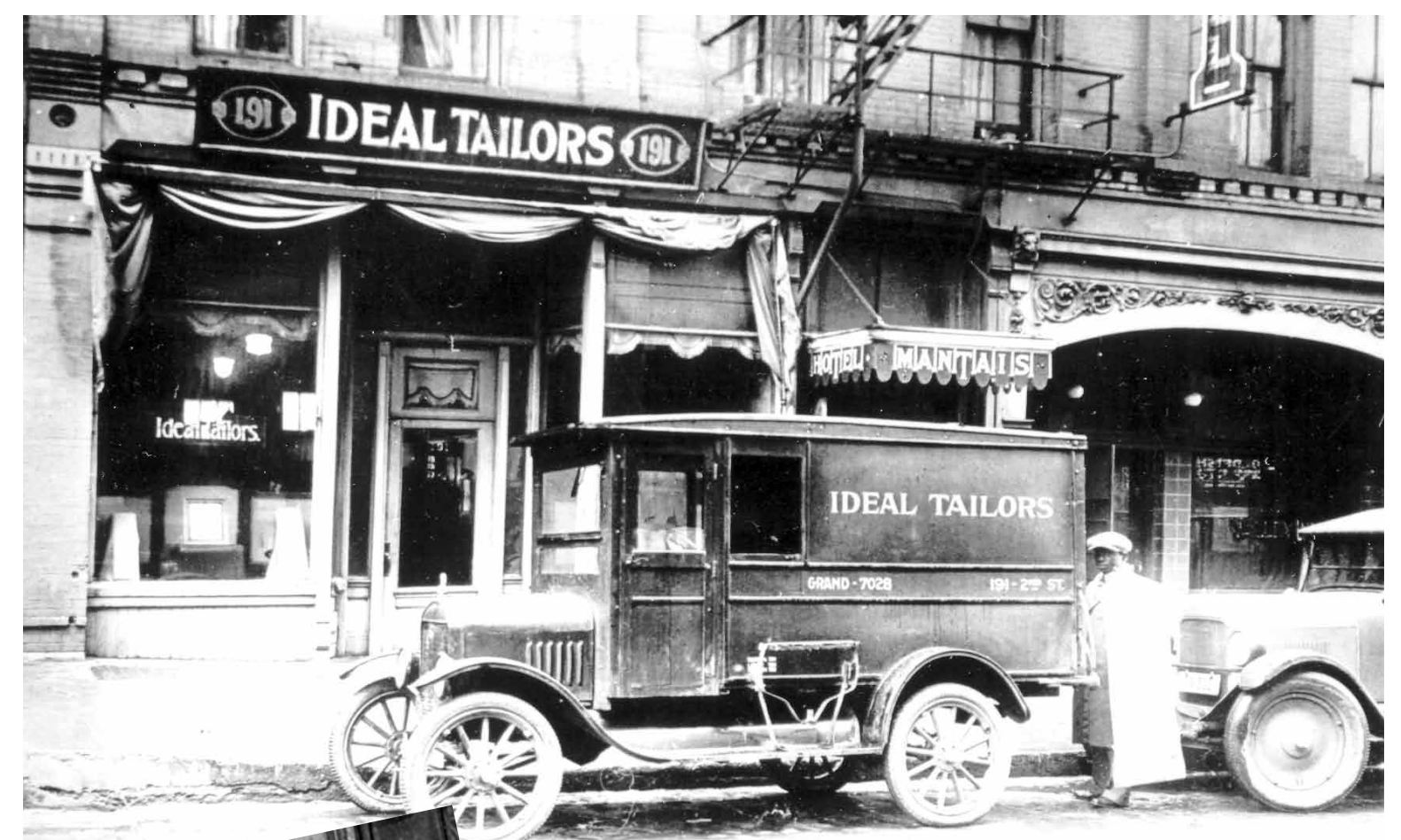
The victories are that people dealt with discrimination and poverty and created a positive environment where people like me could succeed.

~Howard L. Fuller, Ph.D. Distinguished Professor of Education and Director of the Institute for the Transformation of Learning, Marquette University

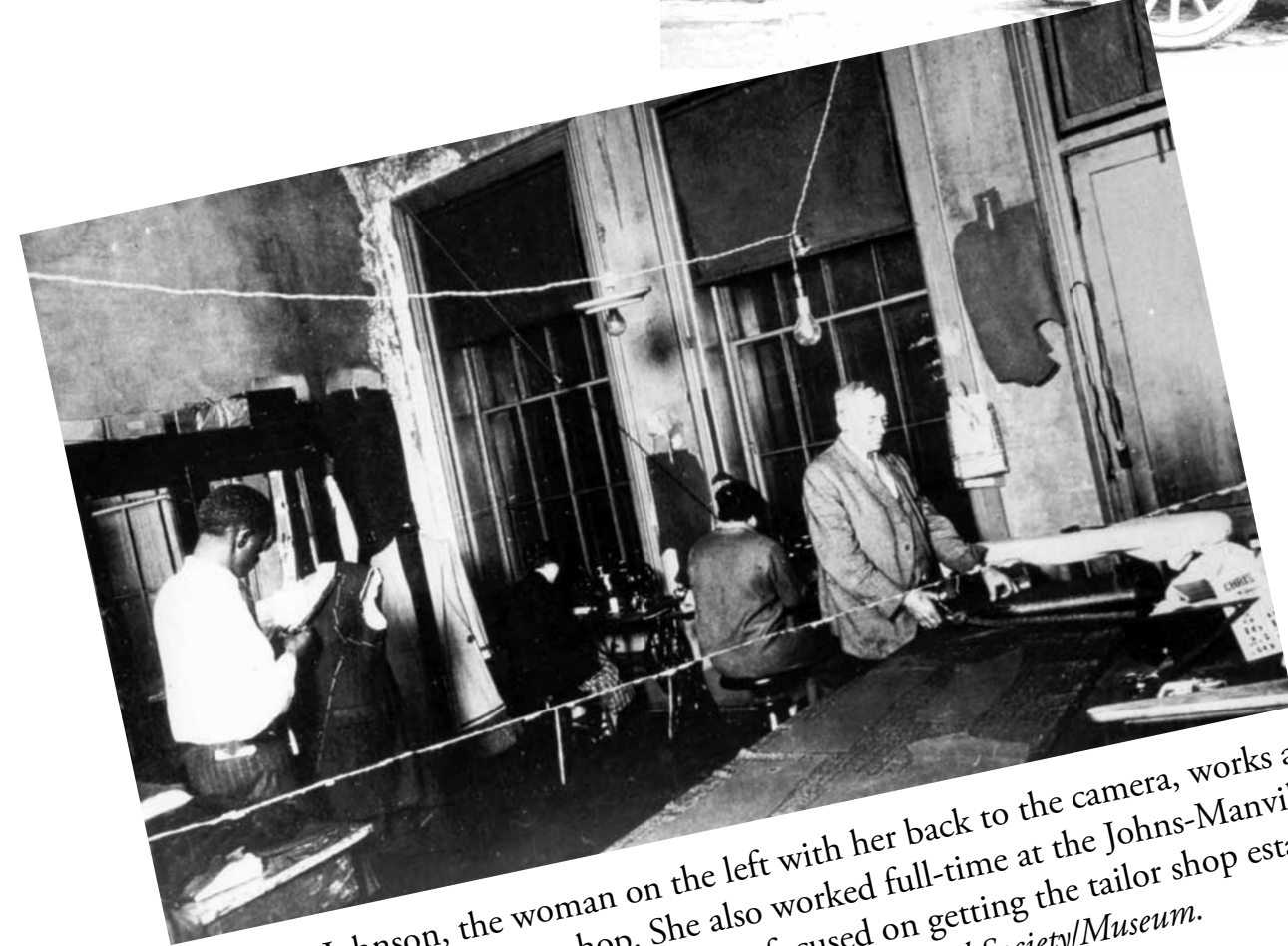


The Red Cross Nursing Service provided health care to Bronzeville residents. Many of the services were segregated during this time, with black nurses serving only black patients. Nursing was one of the few career options open to African American women. Mrs. Reed (left, in the back, with glasses) was the leader of this Lapham Park Social Center Red Cross group. *Photograph courtesy of Larry Miller.*

The Southern migrants emulated this country's other immigrant groups in shaping their own community with hard work and entrepreneurship. In spite of the discrimination that kept African Americans at the bottom of the economic ladder, in the mid-1920s Bronzeville residents started creating their own service businesses, financial institutions, churches, self-help agencies, unions, sports, and entertainment options. By the 1930s, the Columbia Savings and Loan Association, Ideal Tailors, and the first African American physician practices were established.



Ideal Tailors opened in 1921 when business dropped in the foundry in Beloit where Clarence was working. The Johnsons had difficulty getting white property owners to rent to them and initially leased the building shown here through a white intermediary. *Photograph courtesy of Wisconsin Black Historical Society/Museum.*



Cleopatra Johnson, the woman on the left with her back to the camera, works at the sewing machine in her shop. She also worked full-time at the Johns-Manville Company for some time while Clarence focused on getting the tailor shop established. *Photograph courtesy of Wisconsin Black Historical Society/Museum.*



Cleopatra Johnson is one of the characters in WELCOME TO BRONZEVILLE

Clarence and Cleopatra Johnson opened their shop working closely together as partners and creating the first successful black business in Milwaukee. Clarence was one of the founders of Columbia Savings and Loan, which opened in 1924 and was the first financial institution to provide loans to black residents. Clarence Johnson is also credited as being one of the founders of the Booker T. Washington YMCA on Eighth and Walnut Streets. *Photograph courtesy of Wisconsin Black Historical Society/Museum.*



The Near North Side Businessmen's Advancement Association supported the growth of African American-owned businesses in the Bronzeville area. From 1940 to 1950, the number of African American-owned businesses almost doubled, growing from 109 to 210. According to the *Negro Business Guide to the State of Wisconsin* of 1950-1951, there were 170 boardinghouses, 35 taverns, 27 restaurants, 20 dry cleaners, 15 beauty shops, 12 barbershops, 12 grocery stores, 11 automobile repair shops, 11 fuel and ice companies, 10 painters, and three funeral homes in Milwaukee. Also listed in this directory were 26 ministers, seven attorneys, seven doctors, six dentists, 11 entertainers, and five orchestras. Isaac Coggs was president of the Near South Side group and used the networking potential of his office as a springboard to being elected to the Wisconsin legislature. *Photograph courtesy of Elizabeth Coggs-Jones.*

SPORTS

Sports in Bronzeville occurred within the boundaries of centers such as the Lapham Park Social Center, Booker T. Washington YMCA, and the Urban League. No matter what the sport, segregation made it almost impossible for young black athletes to get into the kind of colleges where they could get the training required to gain wider fame. In spite of this, many excelled, like Sylvester Sims who went on to become the first African American to win the Wisconsin Amateur Athletic Union State Diving Championship. He learned to dive in the Lapham Park Pool.



Boxing was the first sport to cross the color line. Second from right, Bob Harris, a member of the Army of Occupation Japan Boxing Team, shows off the diamond studded watch he won for beating the Korean Welter Weight Champion in two rounds before 35,000 people on July 4, 1946. This photograph was taken in Korea. Although the U.S. Army was segregated, the boxing team was integrated. Everyone was allowed to compete, and the best men were put on the team. *Photograph courtesy of Bob Harris.*



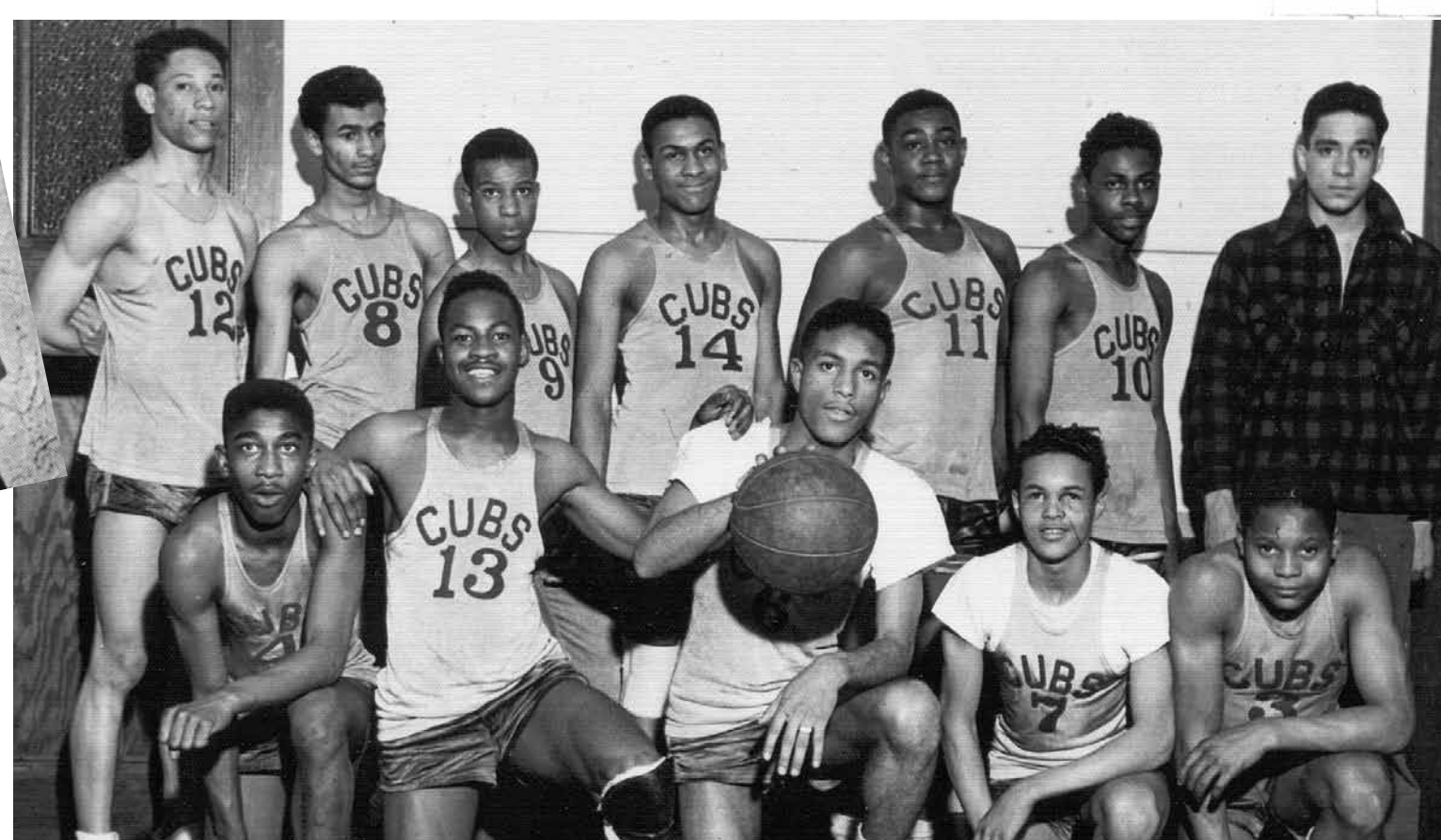
The geographic boundary between North Division and Lincoln High Schools ran right through the middle of Bronzeville, so most Bronzeville students went to one of these Milwaukee Public Schools. Here, the Lincoln High School football team poses for a team picture in 1943. *Photograph courtesy of Bob Harris.*



The Booker T. Washington Men's Basketball Team played teams from the downtown and other YMCAs in Milwaukee, and traveled to Evanston, Illinois, and Beloit, Wisconsin, to play the black teams from their YMCAs. From left to right, are Richard Bower and Ted Washington; second row, Ralph Jefferson, unidentified, James Knight, Lenwood Rayford, and Arthur Bacon. *Photograph courtesy of Sally Jackson.*



The Urban League Men's Baseball Team is pictured in the early 1930s. *Photograph courtesy of Aaronetta Anderson.*



The boys line up for a photograph of their basketball team in the Lapham Park Social Center gymnasium. From left to right, front row, Edward "Tish" Fawson, Earl Williams, Thomas Grider (with ball), Jones and Bugs Holt; back row, unidentified, Bruce Richardson, Richard "Tootie" Bennett, Thurman Hawkins, William Boyers, Gene Moore, and Francis "Big Bunky" Green (in plaid shirt). *Photograph courtesy of Larry Miller.*



Sylvester Sims passed away in 2012 at the age of 83. Besides his accomplishments as an athlete, he was a successful self-taught artist who received many awards from juried art competitions. His work is displayed in both public institutions and private collections. *Photograph courtesy of Sylvester Sims.*

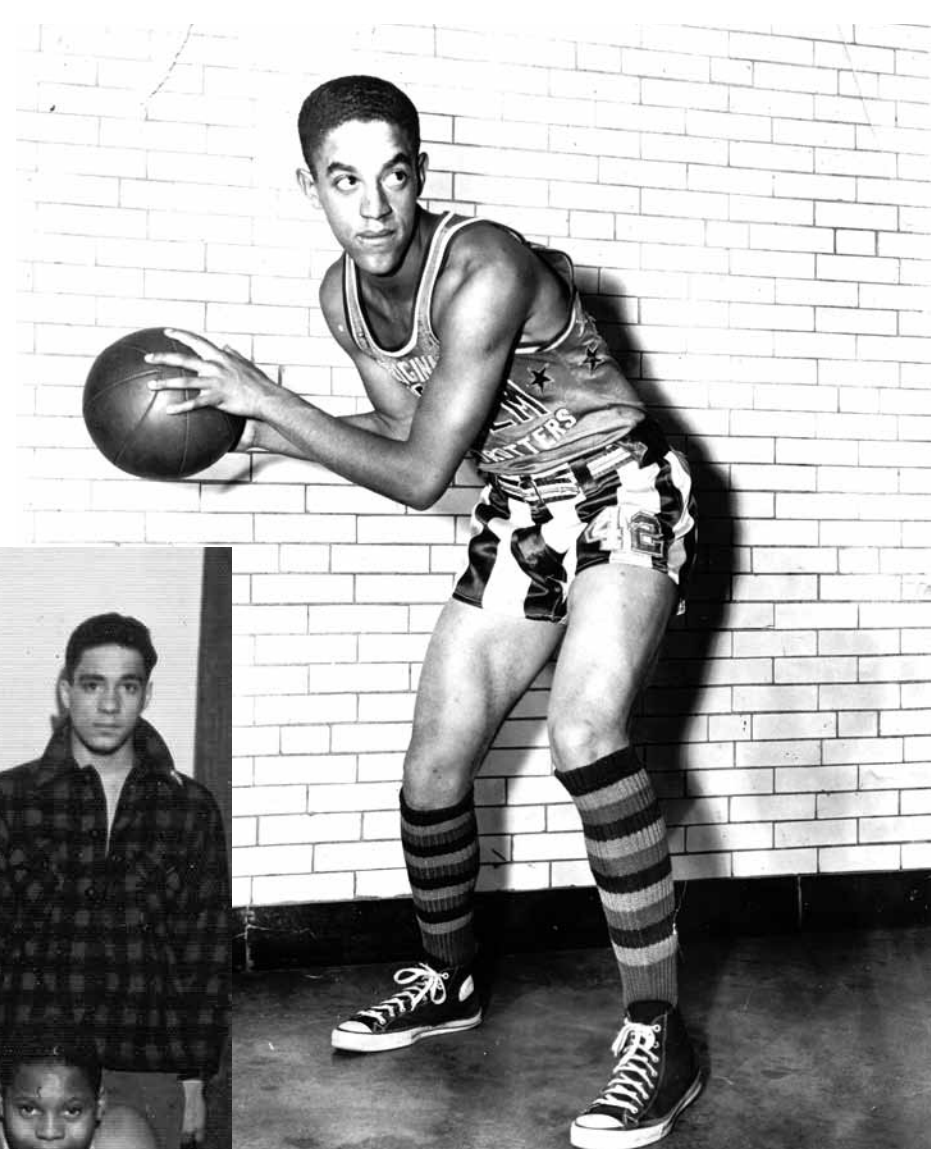


Sylvester Sims went on from this annual Bronzeville swim meet, held on August 6, 1944, to win the Amateur Athletic Union State of Wisconsin Diving Meet. *Photograph courtesy of Sylvester Sims and Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.*

The Lapham Park pool is mentioned in [WELCOME TO BRONZEVILLE](#)



Pictured on the Booker T. Washington Girls Basketball Team in 1930, from left to right, front row, are Bertha Fields, Sarah White, "Lee" Fields, Clara Kries, and Johnnie North; second row, Kerby Klingart (coach), Lucille Williams, Byford Broadway, Clara Stanton, Susie Brazil, and John Wilkes. *Photograph courtesy of Aaronetta Anderson.*



Chuck Holton played forward for the Harlem Globetrotters in the early 1950s. Holton went to St. Norbert's College in De Pere, Wisconsin, where he was spotted by a scout and invited by the team owner to try out for the Globetrotters. Holton earned a spot on the team and played for the Harlem Globetrotters for six years. *Photograph courtesy of Chuck Holton.*

MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT

Because they were not allowed in the white clubs and hotels, African Americans created their own vibrant entertainment district in Milwaukee. When white patrons from Bayside, Whitefish Bay and Shorewood were attracted to the jazz and blues offered by the black clubs, the Bronzeville entertainment district became one of the few points of racial interaction in Milwaukee in the first half of the 20th century.

The Metropole was the first Bronzeville club to attain popularity in the late 1920s, and the Flame and Moon Glow were two that lasted the longest.

The Flame and Moon Glow are mentioned in [WELCOME TO BRONZEVILLE](#)



This advertisement was published in the Negro Business Directory in 1953. Image courtesy of Sylvester Sims



Virginia McKinney (right) parties at the Flame with her friend Maxine in the late 1940s. Photograph courtesy of Virginia McKinney.



Saturday night was "Walnut Night" at the Moon Glow. This photo was taken in 1950, a time when the guys would get dressed up to impress the girls. Photograph courtesy of Virginia McKinney.



The ladies are celebrating at the Moon Glow on a Saturday night in 1945. Photograph courtesy of Virginia McKinney.



The Bernie Young Band saxophone section is pictured here in 1941. Photograph courtesy of Mary Young.



J.D. King, one of the saxophone players in the Bernie Young Band, takes a solo. Photograph courtesy of Mary Young.



Tuesday night was Celebrity Night at the Flame, where special guests in the audience were "called up" to perform. Photograph courtesy of Mary Young.



Nellie Wilson, one of Bronzeville's most popular hostesses at both the Flame and the Moon Glow, scats with the ivories in 1950. Photograph courtesy of Aaronetta Anderson.

Social clubs rented their space on Sunday afternoons to hold "matinees", providing entertainment that ranged from amateur hours to nationally known entertainers. Social clubs raised money for events like the spring dance at the Booker T. Washington YMCA, or to help those in need.



Some matinees, such as this one, were organized to provide high-class entertainment, and the dress code was formal. The Flame was the most popular place for social clubs to hold matinees. Entertainment might be provided by one of the top local groups or even by a national headliner. Photograph courtesy of Virginia McKinney.

SOCIAL LIFE

In Bronzeville, neighbors were often best of friends and looked out for one another. They enjoyed their time together at the Lapham Park Social Center and the Booker T. Washington YMCA, main hubs of activity in a community that valued friendship, solidarity, and respect.

The Booker T. Washington YMCA is mentioned in [WELCOME TO BRONZEVILLE](#)



This photograph was taken at a Fashion Show at the Booker T. Washington YMCA in 1957. *Photograph courtesy of Herb Ware.*



The timeless sport of Ping-Pong was very popular at the Lapham Park Social Center. This photograph was taken in 1941. *Photograph courtesy of Larry Miller.*



This evening sewing class, held in 1941, was the first of its kind at the Lapham Park Social Center. It offered women the chance to work on treadle machines. *Photograph courtesy of Larry Miller.*



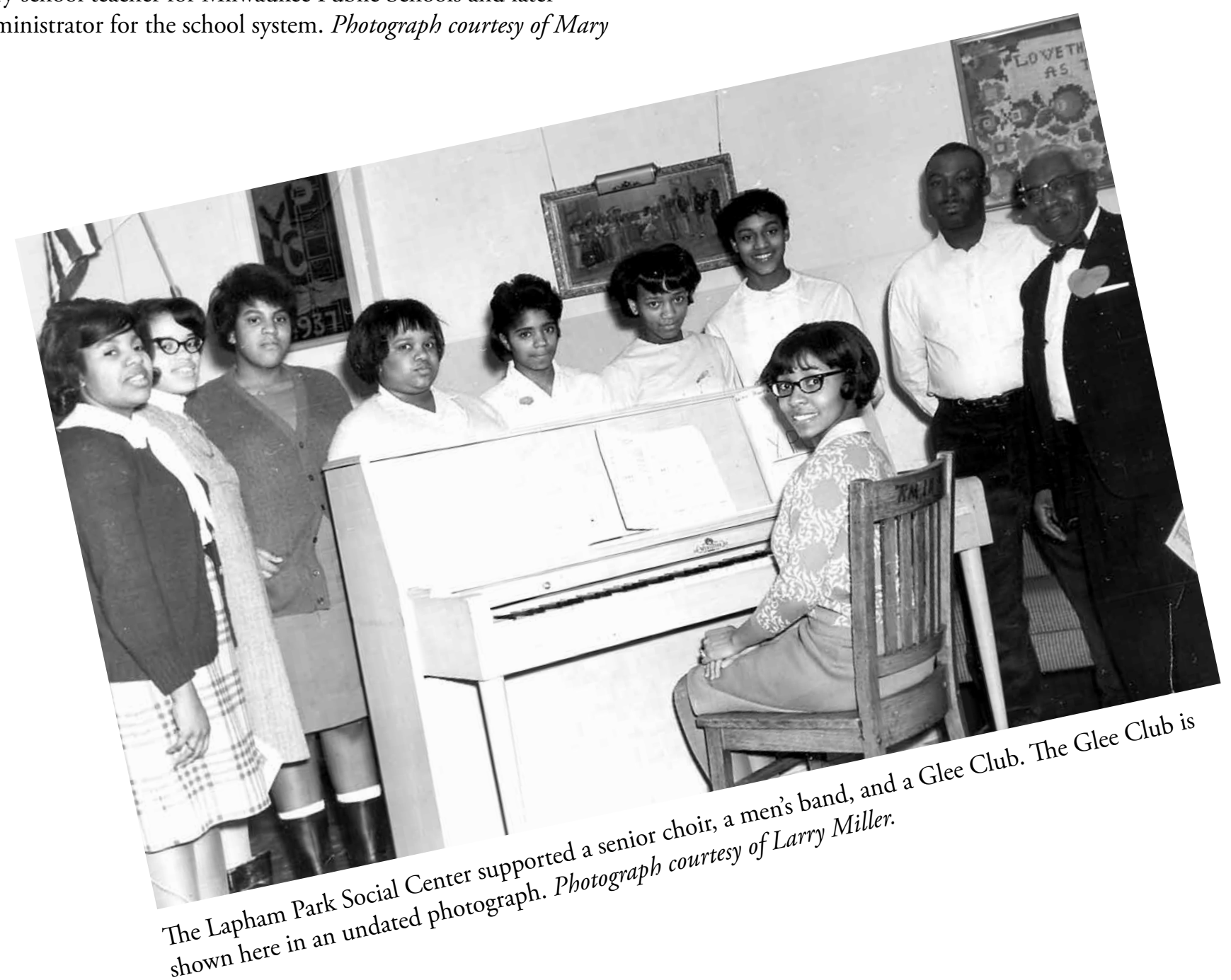
Formal dances were held at both the Booker T. Washington YMCA and the YWCA. In this photograph, high school students line up for a group picture at the spring dance at the YWCA in 1946. *Photograph courtesy of Sally Jackson.*



Rossetta Foote (née Savage) dances with friends at the Booker T. Washington YMCA. Foote was an elementary school teacher for Milwaukee Public Schools and later became an assistant administrator for the school system. *Photograph courtesy of Mary Mitchell (née Savage).*



Mr. Cheeks, back row, fifth from left, chaperones his young men in the Lapham Park Social Center Boys Club at a Valentine's Day Dance in the late 1940s. *Photograph courtesy of Larry Miller.*



The Lapham Park Social Center supported a senior choir, a men's band, and a Glee Club. The Glee Club is shown here in an undated photograph. *Photograph courtesy of Larry Miller.*

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Ardie Halyard is one of the characters in WELCOME TO BRONZEVILLE



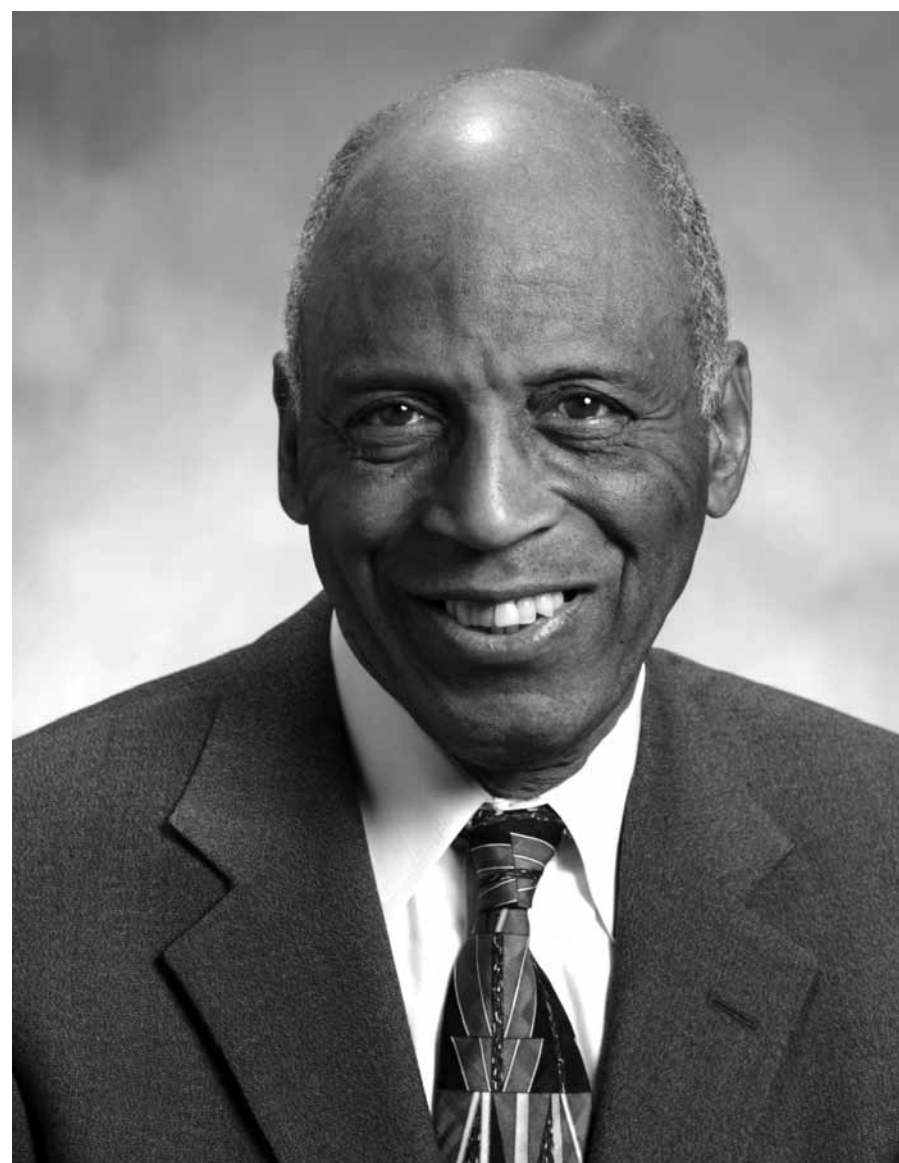
Wilbur Halyard was born in South Carolina and graduated from Morehouse College. His wife, Ardie, was born in Georgia and graduated from Atlanta University. They married and moved to Beloit in 1920, where they managed a housing camp for workers at Fairbanks-Morse Corporation. In early 1923, they moved to Milwaukee, opening the Columbia Savings and Loan in 1924, the first financial institution to provide loans to Bronzeville residents. Ardie Halyard started as a sorter in the production line at Goodwill Industries in 1923, and rose to become the personnel manager of the organization, working there for many years. The couple made good business partners, with Wilbur managing the office during the day and Ardie doing the book work in the evening. She was a major force in both the local and national NAACP. Photographs courtesy of Lenore Matthews.

Columbia Savings and Loan is mentioned in WELCOME TO BRONZEVILLE

Bernice Copeland Lindsay, born in Winchester, Indiana, was the first African American to graduate from the Ohio State University School of Journalism. She worked as a social worker in Indianapolis before moving to Milwaukee in 1928. She was the first African American executive director of Milwaukee's YWCA but lost her job because she did not agree with the manner in which black women were served. The practice was to turn black women out after two weeks residence while the white residents were allowed to stay as long as they wished. In 1933, Lindsay started the Mary Church Terrell House at 3002 North Ninth Street, where young women could live and receive an education. She was a member of both city and state human rights commissions. The city of Milwaukee has a street named after her, and a successful housing development between Seventeenth and Twentieth Streets, called Lindsay Heights, is named for her. Photograph courtesy of Wisconsin Black Historical Society/Museum.

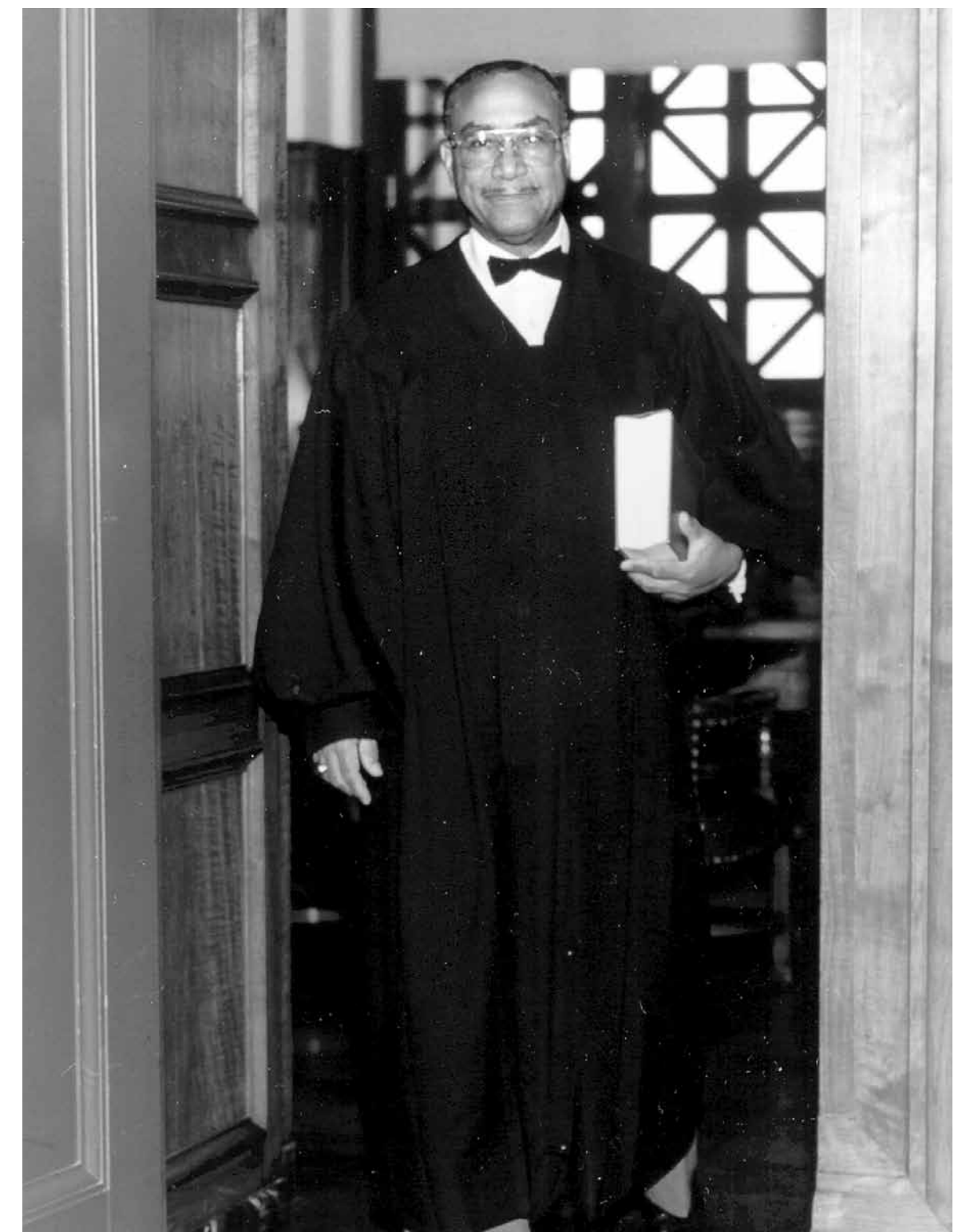


Pauline Coggs, wife of attorney Theodore Coggs, was a school social worker for the University of Wisconsin Extension. As director of the Urban League during the Roosevelt years, she became a friend of Eleanor Roosevelt. One of her skills was working with community groups in annual planning sessions. Photograph courtesy of Chuck Holton.



One of the characters in WELCOME TO BRONZEVILLE is named after Reuben Harpole

Reuben K. Harpole, Jr. is a UWM School of Education alumnus who worked at the School of Continuing Education for 31 years and was a senior outreach specialist at the school's Center for Urban Community when he left UWM in 1997. He was program officer at the Helen Bader Foundation until he retired in 2009, and has a life-long commitment to the youth of Milwaukee. In 1998, he and his wife Mildred established a scholarship to encourage African Americans, particularly males, to go into teaching. The Harpoles have had founding roles or involvement in numerous organizations in Milwaukee neighborhoods. Photograph courtesy of Bader Philanthropies.



Clarence Randolph Parrish received a degree from St. John's School of Law in Brooklyn, N.Y., and a law degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1952. His family lived on Ninth Street, directly across the street from the Mary Church Terrell Club. This social club elected Clarence Parrish the "Mayor of Bronzeville". He was appointed to Milwaukee County Circuit Court in 1980 and held that position until he retired in 1992. He was the first African American to win a contested judicial race. Photograph courtesy of Sheila Parrish-Spence.



Dr. John W. Maxwell Sr. went to Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia for his undergraduate work, and then on to Meharry Medical School in Nashville, Tennessee for his medical degree. His brother-in-law, Wilbur Halyard, put a good word in for him, and Maxwell was hired at St. Anthony's Hospital as a physician. Later, he was promoted to chief of staff and held that position until he retired in 1973. His grandson, Tony Rhodes, says, "he made a lot of opportunities for people." Photograph courtesy of Tony Rhodes.



Layola Fields was trained at Homer G. Phillips Hospital in St. Louis and came to Milwaukee in 1938. She joined the Visiting Nurses Association, and from 1941 to 1945, was the field representative to the National Tuberculosis Association. She established "best practices" for foundry factory workers, and by 1948 reduced the tuberculosis death rate among African Americans in Milwaukee County by two-thirds of the 1929 rate. Photograph courtesy of Wisconsin Black Historical Society/Museum.



Using a scholarship and money raised in the community by the barber Eugene Matthews, Vel Phillips earned her undergraduate degree at Howard University, in Washington, D.C.. In 1951, she earned a law degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, becoming the first African American woman to do so. She and her husband, W. Dale Phillips, were the first husband and wife attorney team to practice in the federal court. In 1956, she became the first African American woman to serve on the Milwaukee Common Council, where she served for 15 years. In the 1970s, she became the first woman judge in Milwaukee County and the first African American to serve in Wisconsin's Judiciary. In 1978, she was elected as Secretary of State of Wisconsin, again being the first African American to do so. Photograph courtesy of Wisconsin Historical Society.

Just a few leaders are featured in this space as a testimonial to the vitality of the Bronzeville community and their ongoing influence in Milwaukee. They continue to be an inspiration to those who are following them.