

THROUGH THE YEARS

AFRICAN - AMERICAN HISTORY IN CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

Special Millennium Issue

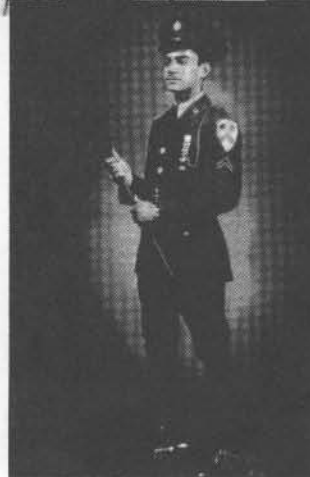
“A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words.”

Napoleon

By Doris Hoskins

Through The Years, African American History in Champaign County, comes home in words and pictures for the millennium issue of our newsletter. As you view this issue, you may perhaps recognize many of the people and places that have contributed much to the rich history of the African American experience in Champaign County.

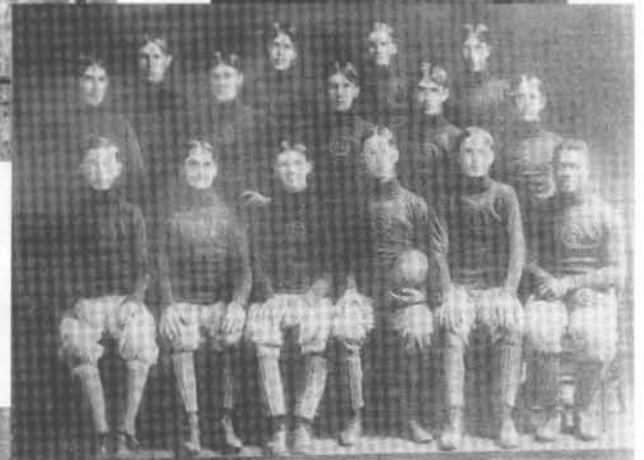
Early settlers arrived here prior to and after the Civil War. Some settled in the county as soldiers who had fought with the Union Army. When World War I broke out, many young black men from Champaign-Urbana joined forces with the 24th Infantry of the Illinois National Guard, fought and died for their Country. Some were given citations for bravery beyond the call of duty.



Circa 1900 through 1920



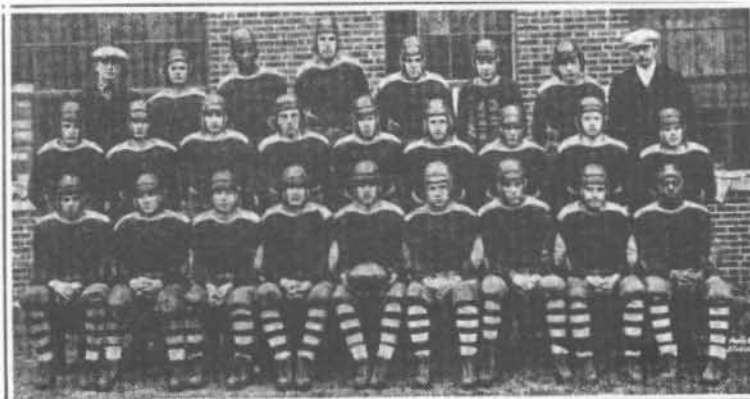
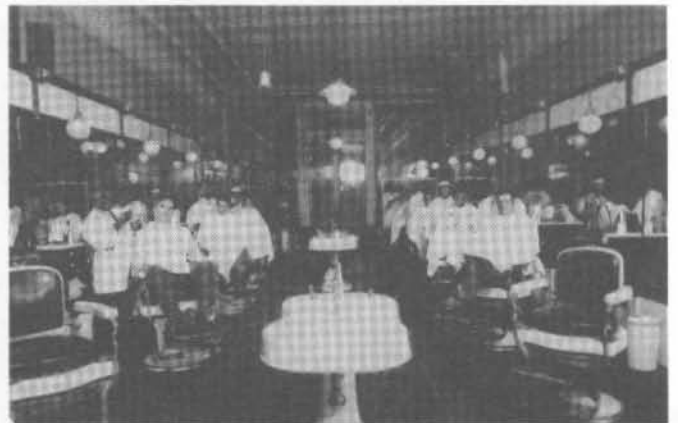
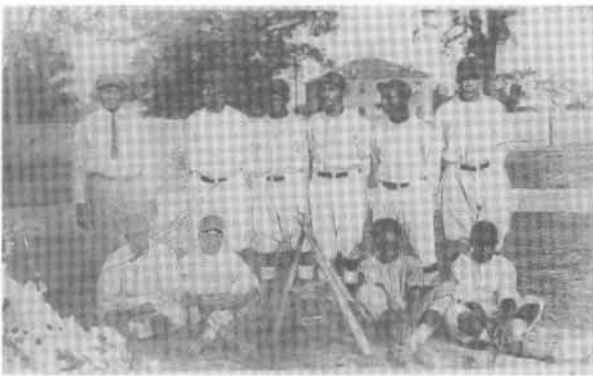
1. Alpha Kappa
2. Raymond A. Sandlock
3. Raymond A. Sandlock



Circa 1930

Religion has always played a most important part in the life of the African American community. The Bethel A.M.E. Church was founded in the early 1860s followed by the Salem Baptist Church. Music, both vocal and instrumental, was an integral part of their services. In addition, several orchestras and a marching band came into being made up of musicians who were members of both churches.

The impact of the "Great Depression" took its toll on the African American community as it did on everyone else; however, families survived and seemingly bonded together and with the help of some of the Federal Programs in place, put together groups who did great things in many ways to improve their lives and the lives of their children.



Circa 1940

When World War II was declared, young men and women joined in the war effort by serving in the branch of service of their choice. Those who did not, stayed home and did their part to help the war effort. It was during this period of time that recreation centers for the youth were established, first in neighborhood houses and then the Lawhead School. Through the concerted efforts of dedicated citizens - the first Douglass Center was built.



Circa 1940



Looking back to the earlier years as reflected in the pictures, sports and recreation has always been an integral part of life and so we can't overlook the accomplishments of early athletes such as Warren Foulks, a football star with the Sidney High School Class of 1904; William Frank Earnest, all-around athlete, Homer High School Class of 1915; Andrew Drake and John Pickens, both outstanding athletes, Champaign High School Class of 1921; and the Champaign High School Football Team of 1927. The early baseball and basketball teams were highly competitive and their games were well attended.



Circa 1950



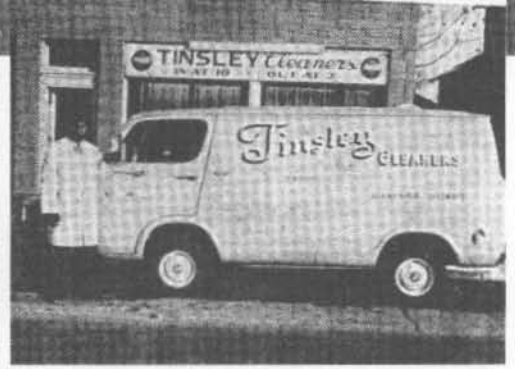
TEACHERS, PUPILS AID IN WASHINGTON SCHOOL PLANTING



Circa 1960

Fraternal organizations, like the Lone Star Lodge #18, F&AM, followed by the Deborah Chapter #27 O.E.S. were formed in 1897. To add to the social flavor of the communities, both male and female clubs were organized and contributed to the welfare of Champaign-Urbana.

Family owned businesses, such as barber and beauty shops, emporiums, cleaning and pressing shops were established in downtown Champaign and Urbana and eventually spilled out into neighborhoods as the population expanded.



Circa 1970

During the 1960s the issue of Civil Rights brought about the picketing of the new J.C. Penney Store, resulting in the hiring of African American clerks. The formation of the S.O.U.L. Group of young black men brought home the need for a health center to provide care for the underserved population. Through their efforts with community support, a center was formed. It later became the Frances Nelson Health Center as it is known today.



**The Tony Zamora
Jazz Ensemble**



Circa 1980 and 1990

This picture tribute could go on and on in recognition of the contribution of the many citizens both past and present who contributed so much to the history of the African American in Champaign County these past 100+ years. Many still are, each in his or her own way, whether it be in the arts, business, local and county government, public service or just being "good neighbors." It is a history to be very proud of and should be recognized by all.

We, the Committee on African American History in Champaign County, would appreciate your comments on this particular issue of our newsletter. Most importantly, we wholeheartedly welcome and invite you to share your family stories and pictures with us to use for future publications. You may contact us through the Early American Museum, P.O. Box 1040, Mahomet, IL 61853.



Contributors Carrie Banks, Doris Hoskins and Erma Bridgewater



"There is much to be gained in remembering the past and more to be gained by projecting into the future that which has been learned as it relates to the improvement of people."

Estelle Merrifield
Spring Newsletter 1997



**African-American History:
Today and Tomorrow**

The lifeline of any newsletter is the reaction of its readers. Please help us spread the word! Xerox and share this newsletter with others. Send your comments c/o Early American Museum, P.O. Box 1040, Mahomet, IL 61853 or phone 217-586-2612. If you live in Champaign County and would like to be included on our mailing list, please call 217-586-2612. More importantly, share in our mission by writing and sharing your reflections of our local history. We need YOU!

Visit our website at:
<http://www.advancenet.net/~early>
and
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Champaign-Urbana Convention & Visitors Bureau

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**In Recognition of
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