

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of the Liberal Arts

BLACK EAST ST. LOUIS: POLITICS AND
ECONOMY IN A BORDER CITY, 1860-1945

A Thesis in

History

by

Charles L. Lumpkins

© 2006 Charles L. Lumpkins

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2006

The thesis of Charles L. Lumpkins has been reviewed and approved* by the following:

Nan Elizabeth Woodruff
Professor of History
Thesis Adviser
Chair of Committee

Daniel L. Letwin
Associate Professor of History

Alan V. Derickson
Associate Professor of History

Robyn Spencer
Assistant Professor of African/African American Studies and History

Lovalerie King
Assistant Professor of English

Sally McMurry
Professor of History
Head of the Department of History

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation, covering from the 1860s to 1945, is the first study to center African Americans in the history of the politics and economy of the small industrial, majority white city of East St. Louis, Illinois. This investigation adds to the literature the border region concept, black people's pivotal relation to real estate politician-businessmen whose politics and economic policies proved disastrous to city residents, and the importance of patronage and black machine politics. It examines the African American urban experience in context of continuous waves of black migrations, urbanization, industrialization, progressive era politics, the Great Depression, and the World Wars. Though black East St. Louisans, between the 1890s and the 1920s, encountered increasing segregation, discrimination, and racial violence, they experienced, not a nadir, but much ferment, building a rich institutional culture, entering the urban industrial economy in significant numbers, undergoing class differentiation, and engaging in a wide range of political and social actions, including electoral politics to secure patronage and win political seats in city and county governments. Black townspeople saw their nascent independent black political machine, but not their community, destroyed during the infamous 1917 "race riots," which until this dissertation had been the sole topic of black history in pre-World War II East St. Louis. Black residents continued with their political and social actions after the riots, but in a more sharply

segregated environment. Black East St. Louisans reentered city affairs, but only as junior partners when shifts in the national economy and politics occurred during the Great Depression and the Second World War. Research employs primary source materials in local, regional, and national archives and libraries and, to a lesser extent, secondary literature and oral history. This study concludes that black politics became acceptable to local white power holders when it no longer advanced independence from white political machines.

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	vi
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1. Historical Roots of an African American Community	
In a Small Industrial Border City, 1800-1900.....	15
Chapter 2. Black East St. Louis in the Progressive Era, 1900 to 1915.....	66
Chapter 3. The Wartime Great Migration, Labor Conflicts, Political	
Struggles, and Mass Anti-Black Violence of May 1917.....	117
Chapter 4. To Make East St. Louis a “White Man’s Town”: Mass	
Anti-Black Violence of July 1917.....	168
Chapter 5. To Restore Black Political Power, 1917-1929.....	223
Chapter 6. To Break the Deadlock, 1930-1945.....	275
Postscript.....	330
Bibliography.....	334

Acknowledgments

I extend my thanks for the assistance that I received during the dissertation process. I am grateful for the financial support from the King V. Hostick Award of the Illinois Historical Society, the Huggins-Quarles Dissertation Award of the Organization of American Historians, the Ford Foundation Minority Dissertation Fellowship, and the Newberry Library Short-Term Fellowship that allowed me to conduct the extensive archival research necessary for the project.

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my “East St. Louis contacts.” I was honored to have met East St. Louisans Phillip L. Beck, Sr., Lee Annie Bonner, Marion Dunn, Jeanne A. Faulkner, Mattie Malone, Lillian Parks, Frances Nash Terrell, Claudia Nash Thomas, William Thomas, Olga Wayne, Lena Weathers, Katie Wright, Richard Younge, and Wyvetter Hoover Younge. Their generosity in granting me oral history interviews formed my imperative to finish this dissertation. I am truly grateful to Dr. Andrew Theising who shared scholarly research on East St. Louis, extended hospitality, gave guided tours of the city, and engaged in conversations with me about my topic. Through Andrew I contacted Dr. Malcolm McLaughlin of England, then completing his dissertation on the 1917 East St. Louis race riots.

I am thankful for the assistance of staff at the Illinois State Library, Missouri State Historical Library, St. Louis Public Library, Olin Library at Washington University in St. Louis, Chicago Public Library, Newberry Library, Belleville (Illinois) Public Library, East St. Louis Public Library, Library of Congress, and National Archives in Washington, D.C. I want to thank individually Cheryl Schnirring at the Illinois State Historical Library, Charles L. Cali at Illinois State Archives, Doris Wesley at Thomas Jefferson Library at the University of Missouri, Martin Tuohy at National Archives—Great Lakes Facility, Stephen Kerber at Lovejoy Library of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, and Dr. Walter Hill at National Archives II in College Park, Maryland.

I wish to thank those at The Pennsylvania State University who assisted me. My committee members Dr. Nan Elizabeth Woodruff (chair and adviser), Dr. Daniel Letwin, Dr. Alan Derickson, Dr. Robyn Spencer, and Dr. Lovalerie King had the patience of Job. I appreciated the writing grant that the History Department awarded me. I give heartfelt thanks to former fellow graduate student, Dr. Barbara A. Gannon, for her assistance and encouragement. I thank the African/African American Studies Department faculty, in particular Dr. Cary Fraser for countless hours of intellectual exchange and Dr. David McBride for keeping me focused. I extend my appreciation to departmental secretaries, Darla Franks, Antonia Mooney, and especially Amy Dietz for their support.

Finally, I express my thanks to friends and relatives. I am grateful for the encouragement I received from Jay Pomponio, Leslie Shriver, Roslyn Nadler, and my Russian friends Eugenni, and Yuri. My deepest thanks and love go to my son Charles and Rita, my “better half,” for their willingness to embark on this adventure. Rita read

drafts and often discussed with me the East St. Louis story. I take sole responsibility for any errors or omissions in this work.

Introduction

Historians usually think of East St. Louis, Illinois, as the place where the first major wartime “race riot” occurred in July 1917 when mobs of white people invaded a black enclave in the downtown district and assaulted and murdered innocent people.¹ No one, however, has looked at this event within the larger context of the city’s history and the continuing history of African American politics that both preceded and followed the July massacre.² This dissertation, centering the actions of black people in the historical narrative, traces the history of black politics, particularly in the electoral arena, from mid-nineteenth century through World War II, revealing the institutional structures of that politics and the goals that African Americans sought to achieve in relation to local and national economic and political transformations.³

¹ Quotation marks enclosing “race riots” indicate the need to employ an appropriate term for a specific form of mass racial violence. H. Leon Prather, Sr., *We Have Taken a City: Wilmington Racial Massacre and Coup of 1898* ([Canbury, N.J.] Associated University Presses, 1984), 11, 173, wants to replace the term “race riot.”

² Presently two scholarly histories exist. The first, and now classic, work is Elliott M. Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964). The second is Malcolm McLaughlin, *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005). McLaughlin responds to, updates, and corrects Rudwick, uses social psychology to explain white assaults on black people, and adds an epilog on the issue of reparations.

³ Since black East St. Louisian sources no longer exist, evidence for black politics comes mainly from white sources like the *East St. Louis Daily Journal*. Titles of black East St. Louisian newspapers whose issues no longer exist are *Messenger* (late 1890s), *Southern Illinois Press* (early 1920s), *Advance Citizen* (1920s), *East St. Louis Globe* (early 1930s), *East St. Louis Citizen* (1930s), *Spotlight* (1930s), *East St. Louis Gazette* (late 1930s), *The*

East St. Louis emerged as an industrial city across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, Missouri. Like Gary, Indiana, was to Chicago, East St. Louis became an industrial satellite of the commercial metropolis of St. Louis. Railroads sliced through neighborhoods, establishing large train yards and acres of repair shops and freight houses that made the city a national railroad hub second only to Chicago. By 1910, the city had become a center of heavy industrial manufacture that included meatpacking and food processing plants, iron and steel foundries, and glass factories. East St. Louis city had a highly diversified economy, making it different from other industrial satellites with one dominant industry, for example, Gary with steel or Camden, New Jersey, with shipbuilding.⁴

African Americans who had been residing in the area since the antebellum era, had their numbers augmented beginning in the late 1870s with the arrival of rural Southerners escaping the suppression of black political rights in the South. Once North, migrants joined black people who had been exercising the franchise, acting as powerbrokers in closely contested elections, and running for, and at times winning, political office. African Americans entered the working class in this industrializing city, toiling mainly as unskilled laborers in meatpacking, iron founding, and glass making factories and in railroad yards. During the latter decades of the nineteenth century, black

Crusader (1940s). Titles briefly described in "East St. Louis Newspapers," folder 14, Box 42, *Negro in Illinois Papers*, Illinois Writers' Project, Chicago Public Library.

⁴ On industrial suburbs see Graham Romeyn Taylor, *Satellite Cities: A Study of Industrial Suburbs* (New York: Appleton, 1915; reprint, New York: Arno Press, The New York Times, 1970); Raymond A. Mohl and Neil Betten, *Steel City: Urban and Ethnic Patterns in Gary, Indiana, 1906-1950* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986); Howard Gillette, *Camden after the Fall: Decline and Renewal in a Post-Industrial City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

East St. Louisans built a vibrant community rich in institutional culture. This community became a platform for political mobilization as African Americans lived through urbanization and industrialization, black migrations, trade unionism, progressive era reforms, segregation, two World Wars, the Great Depression, and the rise of a strong federal government.

This study of black politics in East St. Louis stresses that African Americans experienced not, as some historians claimed, a nadir, but, like black people elsewhere, much ferment in community building, class differentiation, and political action from the latter third of the nineteenth century into the twentieth century.⁵ This ferment proved more important in shaping black communities than the process of ghettoization—white hostility that forced black people to reside in specified areas.⁶ The study draws from an urban African American historiography that describes how through intra- or interclass unity black people sought to improve their neighborhoods, attain social and economic advancement, and achieve political power. It argues that black men and women workers, many arriving from the South before as well as during and after the First World War, contributed as much, if not more, than their middle class neighbors, in building communities diverse in institutional and political culture.⁷

⁵ On the nadir see Rayford W. Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901* (New York: Dial Press, 1954). On black ferment see August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963).

⁶ On ghettoization see, for example, Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto, 1890-1903* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966); Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

⁷ On empowerment see Earl Lewis, *In Their Own Interests: Race, Class, and Power in Twentieth-Century Norfolk, Virginia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). On black working class actions see Joe William Trotter, Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The*

This exploration of black politics in East St. Louis draws from the literature that describes how African Americans engaged in a wide range of political activities to overcome their position of social and economic disadvantage relative to white people. This study stresses how local people, as opposed to national leaders and organizations through community actions and formal politics attempted to improve their working and living conditions and achieve equality.⁸ But in contrast to scholarship that sees black northern freedom struggles beginning in the World War I era, this study shows such struggles occurring in the postbellum decades.⁹

This study adds three themes to the historiography of the urban black experience of community building, class formation, and African American politics in small northern industrial cities.¹⁰ The first is the idea of a border region along the historical boundary between free and slave states where northern industrial and southern folkway cultures

Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-45 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Richard W. Thomas, *Life for Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

⁸ Robin D.G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Charles M. Payne and Adam Green, eds., *Time Longer Than Rope: A Century of African American Activism, 1850-1950* (New York: New York University Press, 2003); Nan Elizabeth Woodruff, *American Congo: The African American Freedom Struggle in the Delta* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

⁹ Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Theoharis and Woodard, eds., *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).

¹⁰ More studies of black people in small, majority white cities are needed, according to Kenneth W. Goings and Raymond A. Mohl, "Toward a New African American Urban History," in Goings and Mohl, eds. *The New African American Urban History* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1996: 1-16).

overlapped. The border region paradigm explains the complexities that black people faced living in an area where public life was a patchwork of segregation and integration.¹¹ The next theme is that African American interaction with real estate politician-businessmen proved pivotal in East St. Louis and perhaps, as further research might reveal, in other cities. This relationship goes beyond concerns of residential segregation and landlord-tenancy to include issues of landownership and land development in an urban context. This study posits the view that African American confrontations with real estate men, though often subtle when compared to labor disputes and mass racial violence, greatly influenced the extent of black politics in a jurisdiction.¹² The third theme is the importance of patronage and black political machines for black people in need of resources when occupational and residential opportunities had been severely restricted between the 1860s and 1945, the period covered by this study. Patronage must be seen as a form of wealth or income redistribution, though crude and extremely inefficient, and black political machines as vehicles for African American attainment of political power independent of white control.

The central narrative of Chapter One focuses on the foundation of nineteenth century black East St. Louis. Black people built their community, obtained factory jobs, and engaged in a wide range of political actions in a tough, wide-open town dominated by real estate politician-businessmen. These business leaders directed economic growth,

¹¹ On Ohio River border region cities see Joe William Trotter, Jr., *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998).

¹² On importance of real estate interests in developing cities see, for example, John R. Logan and Harvey L. Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

commanded City Hall, and derived revenues from the city's saloons while tolerating, if not encouraging, a culture of gambling, prostitution, and criminal violence.¹³ But the growing black community placed additional demands upon white political and economic leaders who had structured the city to meet the needs of the business community and industrialists, not those of black, or even white, working people.

As narrated in Chapter Two, from the 1900 to 1915, black East St. Louisans expanded the scope of their political influence and increased their political strength in face of intensified segregation and discrimination. They turned their community into a vehicle to extract resources from white politician-businessmen. Black politicians continued to win patronage and appointive and elective office. Their incremental successes and skill at swinging elections forced white political machine bosses to rethink the extent of the patronage they awarded to black people in exchange for votes. African Americans connected their strengthening powerbroker status to demands for patronage and a share of political power. They skillfully played one set of machine politicians against another, but in the process bound themselves to a political machine mentality and mode of operation. As black politicians became more involved with the white machine, progressive reformers who aimed to end boss rule sought to diminish black influence in city governance. By 1910, some black politicians began building a black political machine independent of white bosses. Their actions worried both white city leaders, including real estate men, who feared an undermining of their rule and sources of wealth

¹³ On East St. Louis's industrial and political development see Andrew J. Theising, *Made in USA: East St. Louis, The Rise and Fall of an Industrial River Town* (St. Louis, MO: Virginia Publishing, 2003).

and income, and progressive reformers who considered black people incapable of conducting good government. African American residents knew that neither boss politicians nor reformers wanted an independent black machine. By 1915 African Americans found themselves at the center of a heated power struggle between white machine politician-businessmen and progressives for control of City Hall and the future of East St. Louis.¹⁴

As seen in chapters three and four, the historiography views the July 1917 and other World War I era “race riots” as resulting from turmoil caused by wartime conditions, the Great Migration, and white resentment and fears of black Southern migrants as competitors for jobs and housing and as anti-union laborers and potential strikebreakers. Scholars acknowledge that these outbreaks of mass racial violence had their origins “embedded deep in the social, economic, and political structure of the city,” but their primary focus has been on the wartime Great Migration that they argue triggered the riots.¹⁵

¹⁴ On white progressives and African Americans see, for example, William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 125-142; Steven J. Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 9, 125-126; Heather Cox Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).

¹⁵ Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis*; Allen D. Grimshaw, “A Study in Social Violence: Urban Race Riots in the U.S.,” Ph.D. diss.: University of Pennsylvania, 1959; Grimshaw, ed., *Racial Violence in the United States* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969); William M. Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), quoted passage from Tuttle, 65. Dominic J. Capeci, “Race Riot Redux: William M. Tuttle, Jr., and the Study of Racial Violence,” *Reviews in American History*, 29, n. 1 (2001): 165-181.

Chapter Three explores the wartime Great Migration and its impact on East St. Louis from 1915 to 1917 and its connection to the May 1917 “race riot,” which laid the groundwork for the horrific mass violence in July of that year. Hundreds of thousands of black, mainly rural, Southerners migrated to Chicago, Detroit, East St. Louis, and other northern industrial cities as jobs opened up when the First World War ended European immigration. Migrants left the oppressive world of plantations, legalized segregation, disfranchisement, and terror, hoping to find a more hospitable environment that allowed them to exercise their civil rights and provide a better way of life for themselves and their families. Instead, they confronted obstacles such as segregated housing and other forms of de facto segregation, job discrimination, and racial violence. Migrants transformed the wartime migration into a form of everyday political activism that altered the political dynamics in northern cities.¹⁶ As did migrants in, for example, Milwaukee and Chicago, those in East St. Louis augmented the black vote and strengthened black political power.¹⁷ Black East St. Louisan politicians arrived in April 1917 at the threshold of achieving their dreams of an independent black political machine when they wielded the

¹⁶ On everyday politics see Robin D.G. Kelley, “‘We Are Not What We Seem’: Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South,” *Journal of American History*, 80 (June 1993): 75-112.

¹⁷ On rural black Southerners’ drive toward equality in face of planters’ dominance and violence see, for example, Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in the Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Knopf, 1998); Woodruff, *American Congo*. On segregation enforced by laws that do not mention race, see David Delaney, *Race, Place, and the Law, 1836-1948* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998). On the Great Migration see, for example, Joe William Trotter, Jr., *Black Milwaukee*; Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks’ Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916-30* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1987); James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). On political impact of migrants see Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 88; Grossman, *Land of Hope*, 6, 19, 38-40, 57, 161.

black community as a powerbroker and swung the city election. But their election success did not bring about an independent black machine like the one that African Americans created in Chicago. Instead white machine bosses and their allies orchestrated a riot in May to weaken the black community politically. When riot schemers failed to achieve their desired result, they began to plan another round of anti-black violence.¹⁸

The narrative in Chapter Four begins with the second East St. Louis “race riot” that occurred on July 2 and 3, 1917. This episode constituted a continuation of the May riot. But unlike the earlier episode that resulted in no reported deaths, the July event was a mass, murderous affair that shocked contemporaries who never thought racial violence of that magnitude possible in a northern industrial city. Assailants, seeking to turn East St. Louis into a sundown, or all white, town, beat and shot black victims, forcing at least seven thousand black people to seek haven across the Mississippi River in St. Louis, Missouri, and an unknown number to flee to surrounding towns in Illinois. But African Americans in black neighborhoods in the city’s South End did not join the exodus from the city; they instead responded to anti-black assaults with armed self-defense.¹⁹ Illinois and federal authorities moved to suppress the riot that halted wartime industrial

¹⁸ On black Chicagoan machine politics see Martin Kilson, “Political Change in the Negro Ghetto, 1900-1940s,” in Nathan I. Huggins, Martin Kilson, Daniel M. Fox, eds., *Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971). On politician-businessmen as key instigators see, for example, Roberta Senechal, *Sociogenesis of a Race Riot: Springfield, Illinois, in 1908* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Brian Butler, *An Undergrowth of Folly: Public Order, Race Anxiety, and the 1903 Evansville, Indiana Riot* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000).

¹⁹ On brief history of black armed self-defense see Christopher B. Strain, *Pure Fire: Self-defense as Activism in the Civil Rights Era* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 8-32. Sundown, or all-white, towns, often by force to expel African Americans, commonly occurred in Illinois and elsewhere, see James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: New Press, 2005).

production and interstate commerce for several days. By official accounts thirty-nine black men, women, and children and nine white men had been killed. But according to some observers, many more black and white people had perished.

The political restructuring of municipal government in the several months following the July “race riot” continues the narrative in Chapter Four. Tellingly, before the riot ended, white officials decapitated black political leadership by arresting and charging prominent black townspeople with organizing a black militia to provoke a riot. Authorities, within a few days after the violence, removed African American elected and appointed municipal and county politicians from office. Political retaliation against black politicians continued unabated for several months as a coalition of state prosecutors and local white progressive reformers brought accused black leaders to trial. Reformers, looking to end black political influence and machine boss rule, reconstructed city government by instituting a commission form of municipal government that replaced ward level-based elections with citywide voting.²⁰ After the First World War African Americans continued to agitate for democratic rights, but within the limits of what white leaders deemed tolerable.

This study argues that the mass racial violence of July 1917 emerged from rapidly shifting political dynamics involving long-standing interactions between the African American community and white political and economic leaders, not from labor disputes

²⁰ On reformers controlling black political activism see, for example, John Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 129-130.

as commonly argued.²¹ Other “race riots” in 1917 also exploded from non-labor-related issues. For example, the Houston “race riot” in August 1917 erupted when black soldiers retaliated against the police for their habitual abuse of black civilians and military personnel. Another altercation occurred in Philadelphia in 1917 when a middle class black woman moved into an all white neighborhood.²² These outbreaks of mass racial violence conformed to decades-long pattern of pre-World War I “race riots,” like the one in Springfield, Illinois, in 1908, where politician-businessmen, not white workers and industrialists, planned and led, usually through proxies, mass violence to squelch black insistence upon equality. This study sees the East St. Louis “race riots” as another episode in the nation’s history of white violence in reaction to an assertive black politics that sought to realign political relations.²³

²¹ The chief source for the May and July 1917 episodes of mass racial violence is the voluminous United States. Congress. House. Special Committee To Investigate the East St. Louis Riots, *Transcripts of the Hearings of the House Select Committee That Investigated the Race Riots in East St. Louis, Illinois, 1917* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1918), microfiche and microfilm editions. On the May violence see also Illinois State Council of Defense (World War I). Labor Committee, *Labor Committee Report on East St. Louis Race Riots, June 1917*, RS #517.020, Roll 30-873 (Springfield: Illinois State Archives). Another good source on the July event is *Lawrence Y. Sherman Papers*, Illinois State Historical Society Library, Springfield, Illinois.

²² Robert V. Haynes, *A Night of Violence: The Houston Riot of 1917* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976); Garna L. Christian, *Black Soldiers in Jim Crow Texas, 1899-1917* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995). On racial conflicts in 1917 in Philadelphia and Chester, Pennsylvania see Allen D. Grimshaw, ed., *Racial Violence in the United States* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969), 60. On other World War I era urban “race riots” see, for example, Scott Ellsworth, *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1982).

²³ On political elements responsible for the East St. Louis “race riot” of July 1917, see Malcolm McLaughlin, “Reconsidering the East St. Louis Race Riot of 1917,” *International Review of Social History* 47 (2002): 187-212. On a white coup d’état against a local democratic town government dominated by black citizens see David S.

Chapter Five shows African Americans engaged in a wide range of political activities from 1917 to 1929 as they recovered from the mass violence of July 1917 and other anti-black race riots. Many black people joined with returning African American veterans to pursue objectives such as the expansion of civil and political rights and the attainment of independence from white people.²⁴ The postwar decade in East St. Louis began with various “New Negro” movement expressions that articulated the ideals of economic self-help, black independence, and racial solidarity.²⁵ New Negro actions spanned the spectrum from working outside the electoral system independent of white people to asserting African American interests within the electoral arena. By the mid-1920s, black East St. Louisans increasingly concentrated on protests and electoral politics to improve their conditions and gain patronage. One significant sign that black people, at least in East St. Louis, had begun overcoming their fear of another outbreak of mass racial violence was their willingness to challenge white politician-businessmen, but within the white controlled framework of political parties and the precinct committee system.

As Chapter Six documents, African Americans built interracial coalitions to overcome economic deprivations of the Great Depression and to end segregation and

Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson, eds., *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

²⁴ Steven A. Reich, “Soldiers of Democracy: Black Texans and the Fight for Citizenship, 1917-1921,” *Journal of American History* 82 (March 1996): 1478-1504.

²⁵ Judith Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986); Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Verso, 1998); Christopher Robert Reed, *The Chicago NAACP and the Rise of Black Professional Leadership, 1910-1966* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Woodruff, *American Congo*.

discrimination at the workplace during the Second World War. African Americans saw their demands for relief and jobs being met by New Deal programs. Black workers became deeply involved in the labor movement, especially with organizing unions through the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Their campaign for equal access to industrial employment and democratic rights received a boost when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt agreed to demands advanced by the March on Washington Movement to end discrimination in war production industries.²⁶ But coalition-building in East St. Louis and across the nation failed to dismantle segregation, eliminate discrimination, and secure civil rights.²⁷

This study of black politics in East St. Louis ends in 1945 on the eve of the post-World War II civil rights movement that came to galvanize the nation in the 1950s and 1960s. The movement proceeded in East St. Louis without mass racial violence largely because leading black and white townspeople reached an accord. At the same time white

²⁶ Michael K. Honey, *Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights: Organizing Memphis Workers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*; Elliott M. Rudwick, "Fifty Years of Race Relations in East St. Louis: The Breaking Down of White Supremacy," *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* 6 (Spring 1965): 3-15.

²⁷ See, for example, Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*, 158-160; Rick Halpern, "Organized Labor, Black Workers, and the Twentieth Century South: The Emerging Revision," in *Race and Class in the American South Since 1890*, ed. M. Stokes and R. Halpern (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1994); Robert J. Norrell, "Caste in Steel: Jim Crow Careers in Birmingham, Alabama," *Journal of American History* 73 (1986): 669-694; Robert Korstad and Nelson Lichtenstein, "Opportunities Found and Lost: Labor, Radicals, and the Early Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of American History* 75 (1988): 786-811; Michael Goldfield, "Race and the CIO: The Possibilities for Racial Egalitarianism During the 1930s and 1940s," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 44 (1993): 1-32; Halpern, "Organized Labor," 43-76; Andrew Edmund Kersten, *Race, Jobs, and the War: The FEPC in the Midwest, 1941-46* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000); Bruce Nelson, *Divided We Stand: American Workers and the Struggle for Black Equality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

city officials acknowledged that East St. Louis had failed to expand its industrial base not only during the interwar period, but also during the booming economy of the Second World War. White politician-businessmen included black residents in postwar planning and political life because they wanted to both avoid racial strife and attract the industry that ensured future economic growth. But new industry never came to the city, and existing industry left. City leaders remained wedded to the idea of a pre-World War I industrial economy and never jettisoned their machine politics, leaving these as a legacy to African Americans in post-1970 East St. Louis.

Chapter One. Historical Roots of an African American
Community in a Small Industrial Border City, 1800-1900

As early as the late eighteenth century, black people, as slaves, had been living near the site of the future East St. Louis on the American Bottom, a fertile floodplain that stretches for miles along the Mississippi River in southern Illinois. With the end of slavery in Illinois in the 1820s, they and African Americans who later settled in the area forged a rich institutional culture. Black people proved determined to live as equals with their white neighbors in a region where southern and northern cultures overlapped along the Missouri and Illinois border and the Ohio River between Kentucky and her northern neighbors Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.¹ Border region African Americans after the Civil War neither experienced the racial egalitarianism of black citizens in northerly locales like Cleveland, Ohio, nor the systematic repression of political rights of the Deep South.² In the last decade of the nineteenth century, African Americans in East St. Louis rapidly expanded their community as they entered industrial employment in noticeable numbers

¹ On black life in the Ohio River border region see Joe William Trotter, Jr., *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998).

² On a brief period of racial egalitarianism in a northern locale see Kenneth Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976). On mass violence as repression, see, for example, Robert L. Zangrando, *The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching, 1909-1950* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 5, 8, 12-17; James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: New Press, 2005).

earlier than in many other urban areas, North or South. They agitated for social and economic advancement, political power, and equality while engaging in sometimes adversarial but at other times cooperative interactions with white working and middle class residents, industrialists, and politician-businessmen.³ Black townspeople through community institutions and political mobilization linked national issues to local concerns, making East St. Louis a historical microcosm of urban African American life.

Postbellum black people's drive for freedom, citizenship, and equality has often been viewed in the historiography in context of the African American position within the labor market or involvement in the trade union movement. The literature shows that by the end of the nineteenth century black people encountered increasing discriminatory treatment from both white employers and coworkers.⁴ Black workers endured racial subordination and skill and wage disparities that employers structured into the workplace in order to segment the labor market, divide and control workers, and to weaken, if not destroy, unions.⁵ In addition, they experienced many, if not more, instances of white

³ On black working people shaping urban life see, for example, Joe William Trotter, Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Richard W. Thomas, *Life for Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

⁴ A significant proportion of African American historiography on postbellum urban African American life and rural to urban migrations focuses on black people as laborers and their political and social relationships with black middle class people and white workers, trade unionists, and employers. For an overview see Joe William Trotter, Jr., "The African American Worker in Slavery and Freedom," in Arvarh E. Strickland and Robert E. Weems, Jr., eds., *The African American Experience: An Historiographical and Bibliographical Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 33-43.

⁵ David M. Gordon, Richard Edwards, and Michael Reich, *Segmented Work, Divided Workers: The Historical Transformation of Labor in the United States* (New York:

worker rejection than welcomes into the house of labor from union members and workmates.⁶

African American involvement in the labor movement, community building, and electoral politics have occupied a prominent position in the historiography. Black Southerners—and Northerners—fighting to win and maintain their civil rights, for example, figure significantly in the literature. Accounts abound of African Americans building churches, mutual aid societies, and other institutions, developing a viable community life and culture, and opposing myriad manifestations of racism.⁷ Narratives of black working men and women as political actors have increasingly been the subject of recent scholarship. Debates often pivot around the nature of political action across the spectrum from everyday actions to electoral politics and social movements.⁸ But as historians have shown, black (and white) working people relied upon their community networks of families, neighbors, and local organizations to support political and labor

Cambridge University Press, 1982); Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1979).

⁶ On anti-black hostility and white identity in the labor movement see, for example, David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991). On workers' interracial unity see, for example, Eric Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class and Politics, 1863-1923* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁷ Steven Hahn, *A Nation under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 163-313.

⁸ See for example, Robin D.G. Kelley, "'We Are Not What We Seem': Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South," *Journal of American History* (June 1993): 75-112.

actions that advanced their interests.⁹ The postbellum African American experience in East St. Louis reflects some of the findings of this historiography. But the history of African Americans in the city shows black people gaining strength in formal politics at a time when African Americans across the nation had been politically marginalized or disfranchised.

The story of African Americans in late nineteenth century East St. Louis adds to the historiography urban black people's decades-long struggle to win a share of political power from a crucial, if not key, sector of the white population: politician-businessmen who derived their wealth from ownership or sale or rental of commercial or residential property and the development of urban infrastructure.¹⁰ Black people's encounters with real estate politician-businessmen were often not as dramatic or direct as their interactions, for example, with white workers or employers. But their efforts to carve a place for themselves in urban America meant confronting a class of white people who wielded considerable power at the local level and who had a material stake in maintaining this power. African American interaction with real estate men involved more than

⁹ For example, John T. Cumbler, *Working-Class Community: Work, Leisure, and Conflict in Two Industrial Cities, 1880-1930* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979); James R. Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago's Packinghouse Workers, 1894-1922* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1987), discuss the importance of community culture in labor struggles as a corrective to scholars like Harry Braverman and Michael Reich who stress solely structural relations in labor and economic markets.

¹⁰ Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

landlord-tenant issues or even residential segregation.¹¹ These land interest entrepreneurs, like their counterparts across the United States, made land a commodity and tied personal economic gain to city growth.¹² African Americans often mobilized behind leading black politicians and political operatives to secure patronage from local white politicians. Black clients of patronage reaped most of the benefits and gained prestige within their communities, but if they wished to retain positions of leadership, they had to dispense favors and services to African American townspeople.¹³ Black people's use of the patronage system and their community institutions and participation in city affairs challenged real estate men who to a great extent controlled the city through political machines.¹⁴ Black East St. Louisans during the last decade of the nineteenth

¹¹ Urban African American historiography, which often overlaps discussion of black labor, looks at white real estate men in context of residential segregation and the development ghettos. See, for example, Alan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967); Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York, 1890-1930* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968).

¹² On the importance of land as commodity in developing cities and shaping social relationships see, for example, John R. Logan, Harvey L. Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). On land entrepreneurs in a small industrializing city see Herbert G. Gutman, "Class, Status, and Community Power in Nineteenth-Century American Industrial Cities: Paterson, New Jersey: A Case Study," in Gutman, *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working-Class and Social History* (New York: Vintage, 1977), 234-260. For arguments about cities built fundamentally by struggles between capital and labor see, for example, David Harvey, "Labor, Capital and Class Struggle around the Built Environment in Advanced Capitalist Societies," *Politics and Society* 6, no. 3 (1976): 265-295, and *The Limits to Capital* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

¹³ Martin Kilson, "Political Change in the Negro Ghetto, 1900-1940s," in Nathan I. Huggins, Martin Kilson, Daniel M. Fox, eds., *Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 2:171-172.

¹⁴ On local small businessmen as masters of their cities see James Weinstein, *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State, 1900-1918* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 92-116.

century became an influential voice in municipal politics. Their progress toward economic and social advancement considerably depended upon how they negotiated their political relationship with real estate politician-businessmen.¹⁵

Land Interests Shaping the City

Revolutionary War veteran and pioneer settler Captain James Piggott founded in the 1790s the village of Washington, a site of the future East St. Louis and established there a passenger and cargo ferry service. Piggott and other settlers built an economy that provided agricultural surpluses and other services to St. Louis, Missouri, a rapidly expanding city on the west bank of the Mississippi River.¹⁶ Early promoters of East St. Louis continued to think of their town as an economic provider to St. Louis. They, like boosters in many municipalities, encouraged the development of railroads to bolster economic growth.¹⁷ In 1837, Louis Boismenu and other local businessmen joined with former Illinois Governor John Reynolds to build a six-mile horse-drawn railroad to carry

¹⁵ Real estate men discussed, but not seen as key contestants in Elliott M. Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964); Malcolm McLaughlin, *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

¹⁶ “The Great Ferry Monopoly,” and “The Wooden Railroad,” *ESLJ*, “Jubilee Edition,” 26 May 1940, 12-C, 8-D, 10-D; Carl R. Baldwin, “East St. Louis,” *St. Louis Commerce* (November 1982): 69-70; Robert A. Tyson, *History of East St. Louis: Its Resources, Statistics, Railroads, Physical Features, Business and Advantages* (East St. Louis, Ill.: John Haps & Co., 1875), 24; Andrew J. Theising, *Made in USA: East St. Louis, The Rise and Fall of an Industrial River Town* (St. Louis, MO: Virginia Publishing, 2003), 63.

¹⁷ Zane L. Miller, Patricia M. Melvin, *The Urbanization of Modern America: A Brief History*, 2nd ed. (San Diego, Calif.: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1987).

coal from mines on the nearby bluffs overlooking the American Bottom to Illinoistown, the new name for village of Washington, for shipment to St. Louis.¹⁸

The first generation of real estate politician-businessmen in the middle third of the nineteenth century, however, foresaw a town economically independent of St. Louis. They began a series of actions to turn East St. Louis into an industrial powerhouse in the Midwest. At the same time, through their control of City Hall, they converted land into profit and transformed the city into an economic growth machine.¹⁹ These entrepreneurs, not unlike enterprisers in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and St. Louis, occupied a pivotal position in industrializing their town.²⁰ They pursued the dream of East St. Louis as an economic competitor of St. Louis, which had evolved from a French colonial trading post in the 1760s to, by mid-nineteenth century, a gateway to the trans-Mississippi West, a busy river port, vibrant commercial center, and thriving market for agricultural products.²¹ But East St. Louisan economic leaders first sought to end their town's role as an economic appendage of St. Louis.

Real estate politician-businessmen who wanted a city economy independent of their Missourian neighbor took advantage of the St. Louis-Chicago rivalry with the

¹⁸ "The Wooden Railroad," *ESLJ*, "Jubilee Edition," 26 May 1940, and 8-D, 10-D.

¹⁹ On the city as an economic growth machine see Logan, Molotch, *Urban Fortunes*.

²⁰ Richard Wade, *The Urban Frontier: Pioneer Life in Early Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Lexington, Louisville, and St. Louis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959); Paul W. Gates, *Landlords and Tenants on the Prairie Frontier* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1973); Wyatt Winton Belcher, *The Economic Rivalry Between St. Louis and Chicago, 1850-1880* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947); Eric H. Monkkenon, *America Becomes Urban: The Development of U.S. Cities and Towns, 1780-1980* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

²¹ "East St. Louis: Manifesting Determination to Hold Enviably Won Among Important Cities of the Union," *ESLDJ*, 22 May 1901, 2.

objective of transforming East St. Louis into an industrial city to overshadow St. Louis. East St. Louisans became aware during the 1850s and 1860s of occurrences that proved salient in transferring the economic leadership of Midwestern cities from St. Louis to Chicago. First, one influential group of leading St. Louisans preferred river over railroad commerce, ignoring Chicago's economic growth based on rail connections to populous, industrializing northeastern cities.²² Second, some eastern financiers moved their investments from St. Louis to Chicago in the 1850s when national politics over slavery destabilized the business climate in St. Louis.²³ Finally, St. Louis's leaders who favored rail over river transport saw their plans to build their city's economy collapse when the southern states seceded. In addition, Chicago's aggressive railroad expansion had taken productive hinterland of the upper Midwest away from St. Louis.²⁴ St. Louis continued, however, to attract eastern financiers, capitalists, and railroaders like J.L. Pennifill of the Springfield, Jerseyville & St. Louis Railway, as they sought to tap that city's still lucrative commercial markets.²⁵

Like many urban entrepreneurs in antebellum America, East St. Louisan boosters recognized the railroad's importance in developing a modern industrial economy and encouraged railroads to locate in the area. Soon East St. Louis joined cities like Chicago and Atlanta in becoming railroad hubs for passenger and freight service. East St. Louis

²² Belcher, *The Economic Rivalry Between St. Louis and Chicago, 1850-1880*.

²³ Jeffrey S. Adler, *Yankee Merchants and the Making of the Urban West: The Rise and Fall of Antebellum St. Louis* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

²⁴ James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri, 1764-1980*, 3rd ed. (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1998), 188-226.

²⁵ J.L. Pennifill, Vice-President, Springfield, Jerseyville & St. Louis Railway, to T.J. Potter, Asst. General Manager, CB&Q RR, October 1, 1880, *Burlington Archives*, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois.

was the closest point on the east bank of the Mississippi River to St. Louis and thus a logical location for railroads to establish terminals. In 1852, city leaders welcomed the first steam railroad, the Ohio and Mississippi, to their town.²⁶ Within a few decades, railroads laid tracks stretching as straight as arrows through miles of open country before East St. Louis expanded its population and territory. As the city grew around the rail lines, train yards and freight houses dominated along the river bank. In short time East St. Louis became a national railroad hub second only to that of Chicago.²⁷

Real estate men, envisioning a prosperous city, promoted East St. Louis to industrialists. These city boosters embarked on a program to obtain industrial investments by marketing the town's geographical advantages, altering local governance, reshaping the topography, and improving the infrastructure.²⁸ In 1861, they renamed Illinoistown, East St. Louis, hoping to increase their town's attractiveness by profiting from St. Louis's favorable image as a cultural center.²⁹ Boosters advertised the availability of cheap southern Illinois coal, inexpensive flatland for factories, a dense rail network, and close proximity to St. Louis.³⁰ Politician-businessman, landowner, real estate lawyer, agent for the Connecticut Land Company, and several times mayor John

²⁶ "High Lights," in *East St. Louis Centennial Program, 1861-1961* ([East St. Louis, IL.: Centennial Committee, 1961]). On railroads in Atlanta see, for example, Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*.

²⁷ *1912 City Directory*, 1415. The Mobile & Ohio, Illinois Central, Louisville & Nashville, Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, and Great Northern numbered among the railroads that operated equipment repair facilities and freight houses in East St. Louis.

²⁸ "Early Realtor boosted City," *ESLJ*, "Jubilee Edition," 26 May 1940, 12-D.

²⁹ "Present Name of E. St. Louis Adopted Before Civil War," *ESLDJ*, 15 June 1924, 1-C, 3-C. On renaming towns after culturally advanced cities, see Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*.

³⁰ "About the New Bridge," *ESLDJ*, 24 February 1901, 4.

Bowman, an aggressive economic growth advocate, pursued the goal of building an international reputation for East St. Louis as an industrial city.³¹ Bowman and attorneys William G. Kase and Mortimer Millard obtained in 1865 a charter from the state legislature authorizing a change in municipal organization from that of a town to a city.³² Prominent landowning families such as Abt, Kurrus, Lovington, Sexton, Weiss, and Winstanley expanded East St. Louis beyond Illinoistown by absorbing Illinois City, St. Clair, New Brighton, and other villages.³³ Thus land interests attracted industrialists with a city charter that guaranteed them less interference from state government and expanded territory under one rather than several local governments.

Real estate men, bankers, contractors, and land speculators knew that manufacturers required an infrastructure that was not vulnerable to annual flooding from the Mississippi River. Those most eager for industrial development realized that such an infrastructure called for a strong pro-industrialist City Hall willing to finance expensive flood control and terrain alteration projects. One initially controversial undertaking involved high grading, the elevating of principal streets and public buildings above the highest known flood level. Those favoring high grading expressed a willingness to implement massive public works programs to control flooding by creating levees and

³¹ "A Cowardly Assassin," *St Louis Globe Democrat*, 21 November 1885, 7; "City Celebrated When First Building Was Erected Above Level Reached by 1844 Flood," *ESLDJ*, 24 August 1924, 1-C.

³² "Semi-Centennial of East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 11 April 1915, 4, 5.

³³ Names of prominent landowners and subdivisions on East St. Louis plat maps in *Standard Atlas of St. Clair County, Illinois, Including a Plat Book* (Chicago: Geo. A. Ogle & Co., 1901).

drainage canals.³⁴ They initiated what became a two decade struggle for political control of the city. In 1866, Mayor Bowman and John B. Lovington, lumber dealer, Workingmen's Bank board member, and city councilman, signaled to railroaders and manufacturers an eagerness to commit the city to flood control projects, welcoming their participation in city government as advocates for high grading. In the 1870s, Patrick Vaughan, of the Indianapolis and St. Louis Railroad, and John Doyle, of the St. Louis Transfer Railway Company, were among several corporate representatives on the city council. High graders argued for approval to obtain bonds and loans for flood control and related infrastructure work, including the paving of streets and the installation of sewers, water lines, and sidewalks.³⁵

Anti-high graders charged that the high grading project had the potential to plunge the city into massive debt. Some feared that the high-grader dominated City Hall planned to confiscate property, including their own, that fronted streets to be elevated. Also, anti-high graders associated with the Wiggins Ferry Company, successor to Piggott's ferry service, disapproved of the project because of a grudge they held against Bowman for his support of the construction of the Eads Bridge. The structure connecting East St. Louis and St. Louis that opened for business in 1874 had effectively ended Wiggins's monopoly on transporting freight and passengers to and from the Missouri city.³⁶ Anti-

³⁴ "No More Floods," *ESLJ*, "Jubilee Edition," 26 May 1940, 10-E, 14-E.

³⁵ Theising, *Made in USA*, 72-73.

³⁶ "Semi-Centennial of East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 11 April 1915, 4-5; *City Directory of East St. Louis and a Street Directory* (East St. Louis, IL.: East St. Louis Publishing Company, 1912), 1325, hereafter cited as *1912 City Directory*; "Eads Bridge, Wonder Span," *ESLJ*, "Jubilee Edition," 26 May 1940, 1-D; Baldwin, "East St. Louis," 70; Tyson, *History of East St. Louis*, 46-51; Theising, *Made in USA*, 64, 72-73.

high graders within the Wiggins Ferry Company, angered by the political maneuvers of the Bowman faction, rose to action, increasing the likelihood of conflict over the grading issue.

The battle over grading culminated with those on each side of the debate instituting their own city government in a display more of factionalism than dual power. In 1876, Bowman won the mayoral election and, claiming a mandate, applied the state's "Cities, Towns and Villages Act" of 1872, known as the "General Law," and implemented high grading ordinances over his opponents' objections. Calling Bowman's actions illegal, anti-high graders organized their own government, based upon a special state legislative charter act that authorized metropolitan councils. Each government maintained its own police force and city council. Each also had its own mayor: grocer Maurice Joyce presided over the charter government while East St. Louis Bank board member and Bowman protégée Thomas Winstanley headed the general law government.³⁷ In 1878, high graders and anti-high graders employed violence to achieve political objectives as the two police departments sparked gun battles that sometimes resulted in fatalities.³⁸ The high-graders learned in 1880 that the state had declared their government illegal, though the state Supreme Court later found the metropolitan police act unconstitutional. By that time, Bowman had left political office as his opponents consolidated their power through illegal voting procedures. After "unnamed" policemen

³⁷ "Semi-Centennial of East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 11 April 1915, 4, 5; "'English' McCarthy Settled in East St. Louis in 1765," *ESLDJ*, 10 February 1929, 1-A, 2-A; "The Great Charter Battle," *ESLJ*, "Jubilee Edition," 26 May 1940, 10-F; Williams et al., *Gateway to the Past*, 95-97; Theising, *Made in USA*, 72-75.

³⁸ "Present Name of E. St. Louis Adopted Before Civil War," *ESLDJ*, 15 June 1924, 1-C, 3-C.

assassinated Bowman in 1885, high-graders rallied around his protégée, former Ohio & Mississippi Railroad engineer Melbern M. Stephens, and continued to promote high grading as the key to city development.³⁹

In the 1880s, high-graders pushed the city toward gross mismanagement of municipal governance. Melbern Stephens and local newspaper publisher and city booster James W. Kirk favored high grading and a reliance upon deficit spending to fuel economic growth. As a mayoral candidate in 1887, Stephens had promised to operate the city on a cash basis. But in the year following his election, Stephens and his allies convinced voters to approve the issuance of \$650,000 in twenty year five percent bonds to settle an indebtedness of between \$850,000 and \$950,000. They argued that the money was needed to elevate and pave streets, install sewers, curbs, and electric streetlights, and make other public improvements.⁴⁰ From 1889 into the 1890s, economic growth high graders gained support even from those initially opposed to high grading as property owners saw real estate values soar from \$40 to \$200 per front foot.⁴¹ Those who had been against high grading came to agree that the city make only interest payments on the bonds for high grading projects. Their agreement stretched the program

³⁹ “East St. Louis,” *St. Louis Evening Post*, 19 July 1878, [2]; “The Bloody City,” *St. Louis Evening Post*, 24 July 1878, 1; “A Cowardly Assassin,” *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 21 November 1885, 7; “Semi-Centennial of East St. Louis,” *ESLDJ*, 11 April 1915, 4, 5; “‘English’ McCarthy Settled in East St. Louis in 1765,” *ESLDJ*, 10 February 1929, 1-A, 2-A; “The Great Charter Battle,” and “Mayor Bowman Murder Still Unsolved Crime,” *ESLJ*, “Jubilee Edition,” 26 May 1940, 10-F, 12-F, 14-F; Williams et al., *Gateway to the Past*, 95-97; Theising, *Made in USA*, 75-83.

⁴⁰ *1912 City Directory*, 1325, 1335; “Semi-Centennial of East St. Louis,” *ESLDJ*, 11 April 1915, 4-5; [“Malbern Stephens”], *Betty Allen Papers*, privately owned by Andrew Theising.

⁴¹ Baldwin, “East St. Louis,” 74. *Illinois and Its Builders* ([S.l.]: Illinois Biographical Association, 1925), 314.

into the early decades of the twentieth century, leaving the debt principal untouched.⁴²

In the meantime, landowning real estate boosters J.T. McCasland, H.D. Sexton, and J.W. Renshaw founded in 1889 a real estate association, to coordinate the actions and collective power of real estate men.⁴³

Economic growth advocates, while building a national and international reputation for East St. Louis as a manufacturing center, unintentionally turned the city into an industrial satellite of St. Louis. Typical of many industrial suburbs located next to large cities, the Illinoisan municipality attracted both industry and a host of attendant social problems. East St. Louis joined the ranks of similar industrial suburbs located across state lines from their respective metropolises, for example, Camden and Trenton, New Jersey, neighbors of Philadelphia, and Gary and East Chicago, Indiana, adjacent to Chicago. East St. Louisian boosters used differences in state laws between Illinois and Missouri and municipal ordinances between East St. Louis and St. Louis to their advantage.⁴⁴ They built a diverse industrial base that prevented East St. Louis from being dominated by a single industry as steel had lorded over Pittsburgh and Gary,

⁴² Theising, *Made in USA*, 134-135; "Moving West Side Dirt to Raise Levels," *ESLDJ*, 24 January 1926, 1-C.

⁴³ "City's Population Trebled Since Realtors Formed Board," *East St. Louis Daily Journal*, 30 January 1927, 2-E, 6-E, 10-E; the 1889 Real Estate Exchange in "High Lights," *East St. Louis Centennial Program, 1861-1961* ([East St. Louis, IL: Centennial Committee, 1961]); Theising, *Made in USA*, generally.

⁴⁴ On industrial suburbs see Graham Romeyn Taylor, *Satellite Cities: A Study of Industrial Suburbs* (New York: Appleton, 1915; reprint, New York: Arno Press, New York Times, 1970); Edward Greer, *Big Steel: Black Politics and Corporate Power in Gary, Indiana* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979); Mohl and Betten, *Steel City*; John T. Cumbler, *A Social History of Economic Decline: Business, Politics, and Work in Trenton* (Rutgers University Press, 1989); Spencer R. Crew, *Black Life in Secondary Cities: A Comparative Analysis of the Black Communities of Camden and Elizabeth, N.J., 1860-1920* (New York: Garland, 1993).

Indiana.⁴⁵ Like other industrial suburbs, East St. Louis became home to heavy polluting, noxious industries that damaged employees' health and residents' homes.⁴⁶ Most of the companies recruited to East St. Louis and adjacent towns processed raw materials into components that other companies converted into products and had no control over commodity prices of either the raw materials or the finished products. The livestock and meatpacking, iron and steel, and other labor-intensive industrial firms that comprised East St. Louis's diverse economic base constantly faced narrow profit margins, maintained low overhead and transportation costs and a high volume of production, and relied heavily on unskilled, low wage-earning laborers.⁴⁷

Livestock and meatpacking corporations numbered among East St. Louis's chief industrial employers. In 1873, the St. Louis National Stockyards Company, a corporation of railroad men, livestock operators, meatpackers, and financiers that included John B.

⁴⁵ Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916-30* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Raymond A. Mohl and Neil Betten, *Steel City: Urban and Ethnic Patterns in Gary, Indiana, 1906-1950* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986);

⁴⁶ "Craig E. Colten, "Environmental Justice on the American Bottom: The Legal Response to Pollution, 1900-1950," in Andrew Hurley, ed., *Common Fields: An Environmental History of St. Louis* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1977), 96, 163, 167, and "Environmental Development in the East St. Louis Region, 1890-1970," *Environmental History Review*, 14, 1-2 (Spring/Summer 1990): 93; *St. Louis Labor Market Survey: November 1938*, p. 15-16, RG 183, Entry 27 Though the following cited court cases occurred after 1920, the author was fortunate to find a few out of a name index without subject descriptors to thousands of trial reports of firms that damage health, private property, and the environment: "Olivett Fox v. Aluminum Ore Company, January 1923, Case no. 1825," "B.A. Mueller and Clara Mueller v. Aluminum Ore Company, May 1924, Case no. 1952," "Cling H. Whisenhunt v. Monsanto Chemical Works, May 29, 1933," and "Elmer J. Berner v. American Zinc Company of Illinois, October 26 1933-April 30, 1934, Case no. 2799," *Records of the US District Court for the Eastern District of Illinois at East St. Louis, 1905-1970, Records of the District Courts of the United States*, RG 21, National Archives—Great Lakes Region, Chicago.

⁴⁷ Theising, *Made in USA*, 95-97.

Dutcher of the New York Central Lines Railroad and meatpacker and financier Samuel Allerton of New York, purchased, for the purpose of siting a stockyard, four hundred acres from Bowman and his business partner.⁴⁸ The St. Louis National Stockyards Company held, transferred, and sold livestock and became one of the world's largest horse and mule markets.⁴⁹ Meatpackers drew upon the National Stockyards for cattle, hogs, and sheep to process into meats and other products like fertilizer. The first meatpacker to locate in the city, Kent, Hutchinson & Company, began its operations in 1873 on Stockyards property, followed by what were to become the three largest national meatpackers, Nelson Morris and Company, Swift & Company, and Armour & Company. Morris arrived in 1889 employing around twelve hundred; Swift in 1893 with 1,650 workers, and Armour in 1902 building a plant with a capacity to employ three thousand.⁵⁰

Steel and iron firms comprised another important industry that employed significant numbers of workers making products for the national market. By 1902, the oldest iron works in the city, the Republic Iron and Steel Works, formerly the Tudor Iron Works, provided jobs for twelve hundred men manufacturing primarily railroad fishplates, rails, spikes, and bolts. A producer of railroad frog switches, the Elliott Frog

⁴⁸ "Stock Yards Horse and Mule Market 25 Years Old," *ESLDJ*, 8 April 1920, 1; "National Stock Yards," *ESLDJ.*, 23 January 1923, 10; Tyson, *History of East St. Louis*, 122-125; Ellen Nore, *St. Louis National Stockyards Company: East Side Story, 125 Years* ([S.l.: the Company, 1998?]), 2.

⁴⁹ Nore, *St. Louis National Stockyards Company*, 4, 6-11, 14. An example of the Stockyards expanding capacity: in 1874 it handled 234,002 cattle, 498,840 hogs, 41,407 sheep, and 2,335 horses and mules, and in 1906 it processed 1,121,380 cattle, 1,923,209 hogs, 578,652 sheep, and 166,393 horses and mules.

⁵⁰ "East St. Louis: A Short Review of Its History," *ESLDJ*, 14 June 1902, 2-8; "Armour's East St. Louis Packing Plant Now Ready for Business," *ESLDJ*, 22 February 1903, 8; *East St. Louis Retail Merchants Association Commercial Profile, 1907* ([S.l.: s.n., 1907), 11; *1912 City Directory*, 1355-1356.

and Switch Company, which opened its East St. Louis facility in 1874 beginning with 350 laborers, employed by 1915 between seven and eight hundred workers. Missouri Malleable Iron Company had a workforce of initially eight hundred men producing railroad specialties and wagon skeins and carried on its payroll between one thousand and fifteen hundred workers. A cast steel plant, Leighton & Howard Steel Company employed fourteen hundred workers.⁵¹ Another cast steel plant, established by American Steel Foundries, had in its employ two thousand men and daily produced 150 tons of finished castings.⁵²

Miscellaneous companies of various sizes, including cotton compresses, foundries, lumberyards, food processors, bakeries, and manufacturers of office fixtures, agricultural implements, and roofing materials, further diversified the city's economy and solidified its reputation as a national industrial center.⁵³ The W.H. Hill Lime and Cement Company, founded by W.H. Hill, Sr., in 1872, employed from thirty to thirty-five men in the production of lime and cement products. In 1892, the Obear-Nester Glass Company sited a facility in East St. Louis that provided jobs for six hundred workers who produced mainly flint and green bottles. Southern Illinois Construction Company, founded by contractors C.L. Gray and William J. Edinger in 1898, planed lumber and cut

⁵¹ Paul Y. Anderson in United States, Congress, House, Special Committee To Investigate the East St. Louis Race Riots, *Transcripts of the Hearings of the House Select Committee That Investigated the Race Riots in East St. Louis, Illinois, 1917* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1918), 275.

⁵² "East St. Louis: A Short Review of Its History," *ESLDJ*, 14 June 1902, 2-8; American Steel Foundries in "Iron and Steel Industry," *ESLDJ*, 25 October 1909, 6.

⁵³ Robert P. Howard, *Illinois: A History of the Prairie State*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1972), 444; Joseph N. Fining, *Economic and Other Facts Regarding East St. Louis* (East St. Louis, IL.: Chamber of Commerce, 1920), 28-30, 32-35, 39-41, 43-45.

stone. Established in 1902 by businessmen from Iowa, Indiana, and East St. Louis, the East St. Louis Walnut Lumber Company received walnut logs from primarily Tennessee, Missouri, and Kentucky and prepared the wood for the European market.⁵⁴ An aluminum processor to gain international importance, the Pittsburgh Reduction Company, renamed Aluminum Company of America, later known as Alcoa, opened in 1903 its East St. Louis facility, the Aluminum Ore Company. The company became the sole bauxite ore refiner in North America to refine bauxite ore into alumina for other Alcoa plants to fabricate into aluminum wares.⁵⁵

African American Community Building

Black people's community building underwent changes as East St. Louis and other towns in the border region transitioned from slave to free wage labor and from an agricultural to an industrial economy. African Americans struggled to build stable families and viable communities under slavery when Illinois, still a French colony, did not depend upon slave labor to the extent that plantation societies did.⁵⁶ Still, enslaved

⁵⁴ "East St. Louis: A Short Review of Its History," *ESLDJ*, 14 June 1902, 2-8.

⁵⁵ Duncan C. Smith, "Know Your East St. Louis: Aluminum, an Interesting Story about an East St. Louis Industry," *East St. Louis Today*, 4 (April 1936): 7-8; *Aluminum Ore Co.: East St. Louis Works* ([the Company, 1948]), [4-7].

⁵⁶ Much of the literature on slavery in the Americas focuses on plantation societies. On slavery in colonial frontier societies see, for example, Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers, & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Peter H. Wood, *Black*

black Illinoisans encountered slaveholders maintaining authority by disrupting slave families and communities.⁵⁷ Slavery continued when the territory passed hands into the United States. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 banned the importation of slaves but permitted slavery north of the Ohio River.⁵⁸ Enslaved Illinoisans found their lives more tightly controlled than ever after Illinois achieved statehood in 1818 and enacted in 1819 “Black Laws,” modeled after the slave codes of the American South.⁵⁹

Black Illinoisans experienced the first major shifts in the economy and politics of the border region when commercial and later industrial capitalism reshaped antebellum northern culture. These changes occurred as their quest to attain freedom bounded forward in 1823 when the state abolished slavery and granted gradual emancipation.⁶⁰ Border region African Americans experienced racial subordination in the slave states of Missouri and Kentucky and nominal freedom Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. Manumitted and fugitive slaves and newly arriving free black settlers had confirmed for them what they already suspected, that white Illinoisans did not accept them as equals when the state

Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion (New York: Knopf, 1974).

⁵⁷ “‘Old Hog Hide’ Is Oldest Existing Civil Record in Entire Northwest, *ESLDJ*, 8 August 1926, 2-A; “Slavery in Illinois First Existed at Old Town of St. Philip,” *ESLDJ*, 8 September 1918, section two, 1.

⁵⁸ Mason McCloud Fishback, “Illinois Legislation on Slavery and Free Negroes, 1818-1865,” *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 9 (1904): 417. Black Laws in Helen Cox Tregillis, *River Roads to Freedom: Fugitive Slave Notices and Sheriff Notices Found in Illinois Sources* (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1988).

⁵⁹ Paul Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1996).

⁶⁰ “Negroes, a Political Issue in Early Southern Illinois History,” Folder 7, Box 29, *Negro in Illinois Papers*; Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders*.

passed legislation banning African Americans from residing in Illinois.⁶¹ But black people ignored such laws, knowing that they had the opportunity to build stable families and communities in free labor Illinois.⁶² Still they knew freedom was not guaranteed as long as the American republic protected slavery, denied citizenship to free African Americans, and encouraged white citizens to return fugitives to their masters.⁶³

African Americans in the East St. Louis district of Saint Clair County chose to inhabit the American Bottom across the river from the slave labor state of Missouri. In 1850, nearly half of the black population in the district indicated Missouri as their place of birth. These former Missourians were either manumitted or fugitive slaves who had enslaved friends and relatives in St. Louis. The other half of the district's black population had been born in Illinois. Many black residents earned a livelihood as farm laborers, steamboat hands, and unskilled laborers involved in activities that served the economy of St. Louis.⁶⁴ In addition, proximity to Missouri made black American Bottom settlements, indeed black border region hamlets adjacent to slave states, serve as

⁶¹ Fishback, "Illinois Legislation on Slavery and Free Negroes, 1818-1865," 417-419; Elmer Gertz, "The Black Laws of Illinois," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 56, 3 (Autumn 1963): 454-473; Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders*.

⁶² Sylvestre C. Watkins, Sr., "Some of Early Illinois' Free Negroes," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 56, 3 (Autumn 1963): 495-507; Fishback, "Illinois Legislation on Slavery and Free Negroes, 1818-1865"; Juliet E.K. Walker, *Free Frank: A Black Pioneer on the Antebellum Frontier* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983). On opposing kidnappers see, for example, "Slaves Sold to Illinois Landholders," *ESLDJ*, 6 September 1925, 2-A.

⁶³ Tregillis, *River Roads to Freedom*, 2-13.

⁶⁴ On black life and economic and political transformations in the border region see Trotter, Jr., *River Jordan*. United States, Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census, 1850, Population Schedules, Illinois*, Reel 20, "St. Clair County," and *Eighth Census, 1860, Population Schedules, Illinois*, M653, reel 224, "St. Clair County" (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O.). All tabulations are by the author.

maroon communities and Underground Railroad stations for fugitive slaves who often were kith or kin of black Bottom residents. African American Illinoisans remained vigilant against slave catchers to prevent free blacks from being kidnapped and sold as slaves down river and fugitives from being captured and returned to their masters.⁶⁵

Located a few miles northwest of East St. Louis, the all-black village of Brooklyn, Illinois, residence for many maroons emerged in the 1830s and became the first continuously all-black town in the United States. This village was the center of black life and culture on the American Bottom. Brooklynites maintained black political control of their local government. The display of black self-government showed free African Americans capable of engagement in formal politics.⁶⁶

As the Civil War began in 1861, African Americans seized the opportunity to win freedom. Fugitive slaves and free black people forced the administration of President Abraham Lincoln in 1862 to make emancipation one of its major war objectives.⁶⁷ In Illinois, African American men and women worked to transform the national conflict into a war for abolition.⁶⁸ They contributed mightily as soldiers, sailors, laborers, nurses,

⁶⁵ Benjamin G. Merkel, "The Underground Railroad and the Missouri Borders, 1840-1860," *Missouri Historical Review*, 37 (April 1943): 271-285; Robert P. Howard, *Illinois: A History of the Prairie State* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972).

⁶⁶ Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town: Brooklyn, Illinois, 1830-1915* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

⁶⁷ Ira Berlin et al., eds., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation 1861-1867*, ser. I, *Vol. I: The Destruction of Slavery* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Ira Berlin et al., *Slaves No More: Three Essays on Emancipation and the Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁶⁸ Lloyd A. Hunter, "Slavery in St. Louis, 1804-1860," *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society*, 30 (July 1974): 233-265; Edward A. Miller, Jr., *The Black Civil War*

spies, guides, teamsters, laundresses, cooks, and in other capacities to bring about Union victory. For instance, in 1864, Henry Mitchell, from a “well-to-do” black family in Centreville just south of East St. Louis, enlisted in the Federal cavalry. With Federal victory and abolition in 1865, Mitchell moved to East St. Louis where he became active in community building and a statewide movement to secure citizenship rights for black people.⁶⁹

Beginning in 1865, African Americans, especially those in the Reconstruction South, explored the freedoms that they won through warfare and reveled in the knowledge that their community institutions were free from white disruption.⁷⁰ They established churches, the traditional and most important center of black community life and culture, and other organizations such as lodges and clubs. Black people in East St. Louis sometime between 1865 and 1870 built their first community institution, a Baptist church, on Brady Avenue.⁷¹ Civil War veterans founded Pennock Post No. 749 of the Grand Army of the Republic and the St. George Lodge No. 1524 of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows (GUOF) in the decade after the war.⁷² Fifty Odd Fellows

Soldiers of Illinois: The Story of the Twenty-ninth U.S. Colored Infantry (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998).

⁶⁹ “Negro Veteran Dies,” *East St. Louis Journal*, 5 February 1934, 1.

⁷⁰ Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988).

⁷¹ Robert A. Tyson, *History of East St. Louis: Its Resources, Statistics, Railroads, Physical Features, Business and Advantages* (East St. Louis, IL.: John Haps & Co., 1875), 94.

⁷² “To stall Officers,” *ESLDJ*, 23 January 1906, 2; “Deaths and Funerals,” *ESLDJ*, 8 May 1907, 3; “Negro Veteran Dies,” *ESLJ*, 5 February 1934, 1.

conducted their first meetings in East St. Louis in 1876.⁷³ Laborers Henry L. Jones and John Woods managed St. Paul Lodge No. 42, the city's oldest black Masonic Lodge.⁷⁴ Some women chartered a branch of the International Order of Twelve, Knights and Daughters of Tabor, a militant black abolitionist organization founded in the 1840s in St. Louis.⁷⁵ Other women established clubs such as the Sunrise Council of the Daughters of Africa, the Mysterious Ten of the Court of Calanthians, the Daughters of the Tabernacle, and the Sisters of the Golden Gate.⁷⁶

Black Illinoisans also agitated for landownership and rights of citizenship after the repeal of the state's Black Laws and the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment.⁷⁷ Fifty-six African Americans convened in 1866 the Illinois State Convention of Colored Men in Galesburg, evoking the memory of black loyalty to Illinois and the federal government during the Civil War as a claim to rights of citizenship. They passed resolutions, including those for equal education, voting rights, and acquisition of farmland for economic security. Though land reform was not the issue in Illinois that it

⁷³ "The colored folks from the other side of the river," *East St. Louis Gazette*, 14 August 1869, 3; "The corner stone of the new building of the G.U.O.F. (colored)," *East St. Louis Gazette*, 15 April 1876; "City and County News," *East St. Louis Gazette*, 31 August 1878, 3, in Folder 22, "Notes on African American Social Life in East St. Louis, Illinois," Box 38, *Negro in Illinois Papers*.

⁷⁴ "Negro Prominent in Lodge Circles Taken by Death," *ESLDJ*, 27 May 1927, 5; "25 Years Ago in East St. Louis," *ESLJ*, 31 July 1934, 4. Henry Jones and John Woods's occupations in *1912 City Directory*.

⁷⁵ "Convention Closed," *ESLDJ*, 21 July 1901, 2.

⁷⁶ "Mrs. Pyron's Funeral," *ESLDJ*, 27 August 1906, 4. In *Population Schedules, 1900, Illinois*, Maggie Pyron's husband, Albert, was a machinist.

⁷⁷ Irving Dilliard, "Civil Liberties of Negroes in Illinois Since 1865," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 56, 3 (Autumn 1963): 593-594.

was in the South, convention goers' call for farms reflected black people's notion that their political liberty rested on economic security.⁷⁸

After African Americans became citizens under the Fourteenth Amendment in 1867, border region black people began exercising their rights of citizenship and sought to expand those rights into social arenas not protected by the federal government.⁷⁹

African Americans in East St. Louis, for example, voted, ran candidates for office, and commuted on integrated streetcars. But they struggled to gain equal access to employment and educational opportunities and to end anti-black violence. Black East St. Louisans often challenged white imposed social and economic limitations through participation in electoral politics in an effort to maintain their rights of citizenship and attain formal political power.

⁷⁸ Illinois State Convention of Colored Men, *Proceedings of the Illinois State Convention of Colored Men assembled at Galesburg . . .* (Chicago: Church, Goodman and Donnelley, 1867), hereafter cited as *Proceedings of the Illinois State Convention*.

⁷⁹ On the postbellum South see, for example, C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 107-395; John W. Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1982). On the antebellum North see, for example, Leon Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961). On the postbellum North see, for example, David M. Katzman, *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973); Roger Lane, *Roots of Violence in Black Philadelphia, 1860-1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986). On discriminatory laws not labeled as anti-black legislation see, for example, David Delaney, *Race, Place, and the Law, 1836-1948* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998). On decades of anti-black mass social violence that also occurred in the North see, for example, Robert L. Zangrando, *The NAACP Crusade against Lynching, 1909-1950* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980); James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: New Press, 2005).

Black people in Illinois moved toward attaining a share of local and state governmental power after 1870 when black men won the right to vote under the Fifteenth Amendment. Though the amendment extended voting rights only to men, African American women continued to engage in the political forum because black men and women held the view that they shared the vote equally. Women also influenced men's voting decisions through civic club activities and rallies.⁸⁰ In 1873, political activists in the East St. Louis chapter of the Union League, a pro-Republican Party club, called upon black people to support the candidacies of equal rights politicians.

Like its sister chapters elsewhere, the East St. Louis Union League demanded full protection of citizenship rights, including the rights to sit on juries and send children to public schools.⁸¹ Led by African American state assemblyman John W.E. Thomas of Chicago, black East St. Louisans along with other black Illinoisans successfully pressured the General Assembly to ban segregation in public schools in 1874.⁸² The

⁸⁰ On black women in politics see Elsa Barkley Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom," *Public Culture*, 7 (1994): 107-146.

⁸¹ "To the Colored Voters of St. Clair County," Folder 14, "Notes on African-Americans in East St. Louis, 1865-1916," Box 29, *Negro in Illinois Papers*. On Union League chapters elsewhere, see, for example, Michael W. Fitzgerald, *The Union League Movement in the Deep South: Politics and Agricultural Change during Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989).

⁸² Dilliard, "Civil Liberties of Negroes in Illinois Since 1865," 594; Helen Horney and William E. Keller, "The Negro's Two Hundred Forty Years in Illinois: A Chronology," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 56, 3 (Autumn 1963): 435-436.

legislature in 1885 also passed a law prohibiting racial discrimination in public accommodations.⁸³

Black people in the border region encompassing southern Illinois towns, including East St. Louis and Alton, had to maintain their rights of citizenship as they struggled to overcome racial subordination. Battles over public schooling quickly surfaced as one of many tests of equality for African Americans during Reconstruction.⁸⁴ Their fight to obtain formal public schooling for their children became part of building and maintaining a community.⁸⁵ Black East St. Louisans made access to public education a major concern.⁸⁶ First, they confronted exclusionism that denied African Americans access to public schools and other tax supported facilities.⁸⁷ In 1867, upon gaining citizenship, black parents ended exclusionism by forcing the school board to provide a school for their children. The board furnished a segregated facility.⁸⁸ Black East St. Louisans accepted segregated schools after white people, threatening violence,

⁸³ Dilliard, "Civil Liberties of Negroes in Illinois Since 1865," 594; Helen Horney and William E. Keller, "The Negro's Two Hundred Forty Years in Illinois: A Chronology," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 56, 3 (Autumn 1963): 435-436.

⁸⁴ Trotter, *The River Jordan*. On battles over public schools in Alton, Illinois, see Shirley J. Portwood, "'We Lifted Our Voices in Thunder Tones': African American Race Men and Race Women and Community Agency in Southern Illinois, 1895-1910," *Journal of Urban History* 26 (2000): 740-758.

⁸⁵ Adam Fairclough, "'Being in the Field of Education and Also Being a Negro ... Semes ... Tragic': Black Teachers in the Jim Crow South," *Journal of American History*, 87 (June 2000): 65.

⁸⁶ *Proceedings of the Illinois State Convention*, 7.

⁸⁷ On exclusionism see, for example, Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980).

⁸⁸ "Schools and Education in East St. Louis," in Folder 27, "Notes on African Americans in East St. Louis schools, 1867-1940," Box 14, *Negro in Illinois Papers*.

rejected integration.⁸⁹ They also witnessed the attempt of some white Illinoisans to reinstate de jure segregation.⁹⁰ For example, in 1875, a Mr. Plater of the Illinois General Assembly filed a bill to allow voters of a school district to authorize segregated schools. Though the bill died in committee, black residents knew that segregation can exist without being embodied in law.⁹¹

Black East St. Louisans forced the school board to improve their segregated black schools by threatening to attend white schools. In August 1875, black parents decided against sending their children to classes in a building in need of repair. At least eighteen black men and women met at the Brady Avenue Baptist Church to discuss public education. They formed an ad hoc group with the Reverend B. Saunders as president, laborer and minister Reverend Park Hutchinson as vice-president, and William Eagleson as secretary to petition the school board to provide an equal education to black children in

⁸⁹ “Captain Robinson, Most Colorful Negro Character of City,” *ESLDJ*, 28 February 1926, 3-A; “Will Erect a Memorial to Ex-Slave,” *St. Louis Argus*, 26 February 1926, 1; Tyson, *History of East St. Louis: Its Resources*, 94; Hamilton, *The Ebony Tree*, 33; Edward English, *The Good Things of East St. Louis* (Mascoutah, IL.: Top’s Books, 1992), 2.

⁹⁰ On de facto racial segregation see, for example, Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984). On de jure segregation forming before the 1890s, see, for example, Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998). C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 2nd ed. rev. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), argues that de jure segregation emerged in the 1890s. Rabinowitz, Litwack, and Williamson took issue to C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*.

⁹¹ Illinois General Assembly, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Ninth General Assembly of the State of Illinois* (Springfield: State Journal Steam Printer, 1875), 37, 119; “Schools and Education in East St. Louis.”

safe facilities.⁹² Led by ex-slave and Civil War veteran Captain John Robinson, two hundred black people demanded a new school for their children. On September 9, 1875, parents began sending their children to the all-white Douglas and Franklin schools. Five days later, twelve children and their mothers were barred from entering one of the schoolyards by white students and adults who threatened them with physical violence. The next day, Robinson led the twelve children, and presumably their mothers, into a white school, guarded them, and informed white parents that all children had a right to an education in decent schools.⁹³

Black East St. Louisans, realizing toward the end of the 1870s that school integration was a dead issue, decided to devote their efforts to improving the quality of segregated schools. Their educational facilities became community centers that offered black people divided by church affiliation and other social divisions a chance to share their recreational, cultural, and social interests. Segregated schools offered black

⁹² “Notes on African-Americans in East St. Louis Schools, 1867-1940,” Folder 27, Box 14, *Negro in Illinois Papers*. Fifty-six year old Virginia born Hutchinson was also a laborer. Other ad hoc committee members were forty-six year old Mississippi born laborer John Browning, twenty-five year old Missouri born teamster John Campbell, thirty-three year old Missouri born teamster Henry Ellington, Jack Ferguson, Edwin Hayes, forty year old Virginia born laborer Edward Henry, John Henry, James Hightower, thirty-six year old Illinois born laborer Hagan Jarrett, Alexander Johnson, thirty-one year old Mississippi born laborer Eli Morrison, Elizabeth Pittman, Jake Scott, Joseph Smith, Sarah Stevenson, Charles Wilson, and Molly Wilson. Data for Edward Henry and Hutchinson in *Population Schedules, 1870, Illinois*; for Browning, Campbell, Ellington, Jarrett, and Morrison, in *Population Schedules, 1880, Illinois*. Author unable to find in the 1880 census which of the two men named Charles Wilson, the twenty-four year old Missouri born steamboat deck hand or thirty year old Mississippi born laborer, was on the committee.

⁹³ “Schools and Education in East St. Louis,” Folder 27, “Notes on African-Americans in East St. Louis Schools, 1867-1940,” Box 14, *Negro in Illinois Papers*. According to local newspapers, Robinson’s title of Captain was an honorary one.

schoolchildren classrooms free of daily racist insults. In addition, they provided employment through the political patronage system for African American teachers. Black East Louisians understood that compared to black school educators in the South, their teachers enjoyed freedom in what they were able to teach. But black townspeople knew that ultimate control of their schools remained with the white school board.⁹⁴

The black population in East St. Louis in the 1870s was small but diverse in terms of place of origin and occupation. The decade began with one hundred African Americans living among 5,644 white inhabitants. Black townspeople lived in small clusters in predominantly white neighborhoods throughout the city. Most had been born in Illinois or Missouri, and many of the rest had migrated primarily from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. Most African American men worked as roustabouts and riverfront laborers, coal haulers, and farm workers.⁹⁵ Census manuscripts listed no occupations for most black women. But if Atlanta, Georgia, and other locales in the 1870s proved any indication, black women in East St. Louis labored as domestics, laundresses, and servants.⁹⁶

The number of black inhabitants increased slowly in the 1870s as African Americans migrated to East St. Louis. Most newcomers to the city had left the South in the waning years of Reconstruction as “redeemers,” white supremacists who abhorred the

⁹⁴ James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); quoted passage in Adam Fairclough, *Teaching Equality: Black Schools in the Age of Jim Crow* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 5-10, 14-19.

⁹⁵ *Population Schedules of the Ninth United States Census, 1870, Illinois*, M593, reel 279, “St. Clair County”; *Population Schedules . . . Tenth United States Census, 1880, Illinois*, T9, reel 246, “St. Clair County.” All tabulations are by the author.

⁹⁶ On Atlanta see, for example, Hunter, *Joy to Freedom*.

political rule of black and white Republicans, employed terrorism and other means to regain control of local and state governments. Migrants also sought a better way of life as the depression of the mid-1870s and an increasingly regressive sharecropping system severely limited their opportunities for economic advancement.⁹⁷ While many thought of migration to escape political and economic oppression, others dreamed of migration as a means to prosperity. Though some contemplated emigrating to the Caribbean or Liberia, most, possessing few resources, decided to establish all-black towns in the United States, first, primarily in Kansas, then later in Oklahoma. One migratory wave led up to the Exodus of 1879 as black southerners, the Exodusters, headed to Kansas to attain farmland.⁹⁸ An unknown number of Exodusters, for a variety of reasons, never reached their destination and settled in towns and cities on route to Kansas. For example, in 1876, a migrant agent left fifty Exodusters stranded in East St. Louis presumably because either the agent was unscrupulous or the migrants had run out of money to continue their journey.⁹⁹

Postbellum black migrants faced strong competition from white wage earners in securing industrial employment even as common laborers. Few in number they were

⁹⁷ On black Southerners' politics in Reconstruction and Populist, and other social movements see, for example, W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (reprint, New York: Vintage Books, 1995); Foner, *Reconstruction*; Hahn, *A Nation under Our Feet*, 163-313.

⁹⁸ On postbellum black migrations to Kansas, Oklahoma, small black towns in various states or overseas see, for example, Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1976). On migrations to achieve prosperity see Kenneth M. Hamilton, *Black Towns and Profit: Promotion and Development in the Trans-Appalachian West, 1877-1915* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

⁹⁹ "The colored immigrants . . .," *East St. Louis Gazette*, 1 April 1876, in Folder 43, "Notes on African-Americans in East St. Louis," Box 10, *Negro in Illinois Papers*.

overwhelmed by a tidal wave of white working people scrambling for jobs as industry destroyed the artisan work system that had formed the livelihood of countless white Americans. African Americans frequently lost in competition to white workers who claimed a racial entitlement to factory jobs and who along with employers shut them out of many occupations. Still many black men, and a few women, successfully obtained industrial employment. Some, thinking to improve their chances for economic advancement joined the white dominated trade union movement.

White workers across the nation sought to reform the industrial order by building a trade union movement. Whereas black men and women entered the urban industrial economy without a tradition of control over their work, white working men and women generally possessed such a tradition.¹⁰⁰ Large numbers of white workers, their artisan way of making a living no longer viable, streamed to large and small industrializing cities, including Chicago, Buffalo, Cleveland, Atlanta, Detroit, and East St. Louis, to obtain industrial jobs. They opposed industrialists' efforts to control the work process and transform workers, especially those with specialized skills, into tightly controlled unskilled or deskilled laborers or factory operatives.¹⁰¹ In East St. Louis, workers' efforts to improve their conditions began in 1866 when union organizers demanded collective bargaining rights and an eight-hour working day. Railroad employees, a powerful bloc of industrial workers in the city, formed the core of the local labor movement. In 1873, railroad worker Thomas Calhoun led brakemen in forming the area's first major union. Railroad engineer, real estate man, and future mayor of East St.

¹⁰⁰ Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*, xii.

¹⁰¹ Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*.

Louis, Melbern M. Stephens founded a Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen local in 1875. Soon thereafter, other railroad workers established a local of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.¹⁰²

During the nationwide Great Railroad Strike of 1877, railroad workers in East St. Louis laid the foundation for a trade union movement that became a significant political force in city affairs. Railroad employees first pressed for a resolution of their grievances during an economic depression that lasted from 1873 into 1877 when corporations eliminated jobs, slashed wages, and crushed union organizing drives. The Great Railroad Strike, initiated by Ohio and Mississippi Railroad employees in Maryland and West Virginia on July 19, 1877, quickly swept westward to Chicago, St. Louis, and Kansas City, Missouri.¹⁰³ On July 22, 1877, strikers and sympathetic non-railroad workers in St. Louis and East St. Louis established committees to coordinate a general strike with workers in both cities taking command of their respective municipal governments. In East St. Louis, strikers led by brakemen Alex Kissinger of the Wabash Railroad, Jack McCarthy of the Vandalia Railroad, and Harry Eastman of the Narrow Gauge Railroad halted all rail traffic except passenger and mail trains and took control of the Eads Bridge and telegraph lines. Strike leaders enlisted the support of East St. Louis Mayor and real estate man John Bowman, who proved a useful ally. They accepted him as their arbitrator and even consulted with him on matters of municipal governance. Unlike in

¹⁰² "A New Concept for Labor," *ESLJ*, 26 May 1940, 10-E. Mention of Stephens as a real estate man in McLaughlin, *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis*, 206, n 89.

¹⁰³ "The '77 Rail Strike," *ESLJ*, 26 May 1940, 9-D, 14-D; Williams et al., *Gateway to the Past*, 118.

Pittsburgh and other locales where strikers destroyed railroad property, those in East St. Louis, through a special police force appointed by Bowman, remained peaceful.¹⁰⁴ Refraining from militancy during the strike, organized labor gained stature with the business community and laid the foundation for labor's future participation in governing East St. Louis.

The strike in East St. Louis differed from the one in St. Louis in terms of the extent of racism employed in attempts to break the strike and the political outlook of strike leaders. In St. Louis, businessmen and their allies blatantly employed racist language to divide black and white workers. Perhaps in East St. Louis black workers numbered too few for anti-strike elements to foment a racist backlash. Strike leaders in St. Louis tended to align more with the political left than those across the river. In St. Louis, socialist-oriented Workingmen's Party strike leaders roused the anger of industrialists who feared an American version of the working people's government that briefly appeared as the Paris Commune in Paris, France, in 1871. But the non-socialist strike committee in East St. Louis directed by Eastman and other leaders shunned the politics of their radical St. Louis colleagues so as not to alienate Bowman's business constituents. Strikers in both cities ended their rule on July 28 when federal and state troops restored law and order without bloodshed and returned the reigns of government to elected officials.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ "The '77 Rail Strike," *ESLJ*, 26 May 1940, 9-D, 14-D.

¹⁰⁵ "The '77 Rail Strike," *ESLJ*, 26 May 1940, 9-D, 14-D; Williams et al., *Gateway to the Past*, 118-120; David T. Burbank, *Reign of the Rabble: The St. Louis General Strike of 1877* (New York: A.M. Kelley, 1966). The author did not locate sources that specify whether black workers had been involved as Workingmen's Party strike leaders.

Trade unionists and their supporters for a brief period of time after the Great Railroad Strike of 1877 sought to improve the political climate and working and living conditions in an atmosphere of interracial cooperation among working people in East St. Louis. White labor leaders Harry Eastman, Alex Kissinger, and others recruited black as well as white workers to found labor unions and campaign to elect labor candidates for city offices.¹⁰⁶ Labor organizers' message of equality among black and white workers resonated with black East St. Louisans. For example, black residents had voted in the municipal election of 1878 for white politician Mr. Wider who promised them city jobs and "equal privileges with the white laborers" and snubbed white politician Mr. Gustin who advocated municipal reforms and rejected patronage.¹⁰⁷ Labor activists allied with the Knights of Labor, a national trade union affiliation that appealed to many Americans who thought the wage system and industrial production ruinous to workers' sense of pride and accomplishment. The labor organization called for the abolition of the wage system and reform of working conditions. The Knights represented white and black workers in unskilled industrial and skilled craft occupations—and included small business owners—interested in building a moral society based on cooperation rather than capitalist competition.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ "The '77 Rail Strike," *ESLJ*, 26 May 1940, 9-D, 14-D. Unfortunately, sources did not reveal names of black labor activists.

¹⁰⁷ "City and County News," and "Editorial," *East St. Louis Gazette*, 30 March 1878, 3, in Folder 14, "Notes on African-Americans in East St. Louis, Illinois, 1865-1916," Box 29, *Negro in Illinois Papers*. Sources do not indicate outcome of election.

¹⁰⁸ On the Knights see Leon Fink, *Workingmen's Democracy: The Knights of Labor and American Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983). On interracial unity and the Knights, see Rachleff, *Black Labor in the New South*, 117-120, 169-176. Knights' advocacy of interracial unity did not extend to Chinese American workers, see,

The Knights, interjecting their vision of moral improvement into the city's political culture, railed against the corruption and violence that marked the municipal election of 1885. Their opponents, local Democratic Party operatives, won the election allegedly by stuffing the ballot box. Approximately 3,500 votes had been cast in a city of 1,500 registered voters.¹⁰⁹ In addition, trade unionists lost their friend Mayor John Bowman that year when gunmen, presumably political enemies, shot him to death outside his residence.¹¹⁰

Labor's drive to improve the city came to an abrupt end in 1886 when, during a nationwide railroad strike, the Knights locally and nationally suffered a major setback at the hands of an alliance of corporations and the government determined to destroy unions. In East St. Louis, strikers and their sympathizers prevented strikebreakers from reporting to work. When deputy sheriffs, sent to protect strikebreakers, shot and killed seven workers, strikers retaliated by torching railroad property. Strikers returned to work after five hundred Illinois militiamen were deployed to the city.¹¹¹ Anti-labor factions, in a continuing and often to be repeated theme, accused organized labor of promoting violence. The Knights began to experience a massive decline in membership across the

Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

¹⁰⁹ Jehu Baker, "To the Voters of the 18th Congressional District: Election Frauds That Endanger the Integrity of Elections in St. Clair county and in the 18th Congressional District: Hon. Jehu Baker's Exposure of Ballot Corruption in East St. Louis, and Appeal to the Voters of the 18th Congressional District" ([S.l.: s.n., 1886?]).

¹¹⁰ "A Cowardly Assassin," *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 21 November 1885, 7; "Semi-Centennial of East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 11 April 1915, 4-5.

¹¹¹ "A New Concept for Labor," *ESLJ*, 26 May 1940, 10-E; Williams et al., *Gateway to the Past*, 121.

country after losing the strike and being wrongly implicated in the violent Haymarket Affair in May 1886 in Chicago where police brutally attacked labor demonstrators.

Former Knights and other East St. Louis trade unionists, however, persevered in organizing unions, raising labor issues in city politics, and supporting pro-labor politicians in city elections. Some labor activists continued to stress the Knights' calls for moral betterment and a cooperative society in their agitation against a corrupt City Hall. They and their allies, including the district's United States Congressman Jehu Baker, saw the need for a new local political party to oppose political machine bosses in the election of 1887.¹¹² The anti-corruption factions established the Citizens' Party that year with the aim of conducting nonpartisan local elections and to bringing "sound business management and honest and efficient officers" to municipal government. Some of the former Knights of Labor also saw their ideas about racial and class cooperation become included in the Citizens' Party platform.¹¹³

Throughout the 1890s, the Citizens' Party promoted class harmony, industrial development, and a stable political culture. The party attracted white and black residents of all social classes.¹¹⁴ Its ranks included Republicans, Democrats, Populists, socialists, trade unionists, and others favoring progressive reform of urban life and politics.¹¹⁵

Citizens' Party politicians came to control City Hall, sponsoring public works projects

¹¹² Baker, "To the Voters of the 18th Congressional District.

¹¹³ "East St. Louis Parties," *ESLDJ*, 29 March 1900, 2.

¹¹⁴ On progressives imposing order see, for example, Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967); Zane Miller, *Boss Cox's Cincinnati: Urban Politics in the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

¹¹⁵ "The So-Called Republican Ticket," *ESLDJ*, 25 February 1901, 2; "What the Citizens' Party Has Done," *ESLDJ*, 24 March 1901, 4.

such as the installation of paved streets, sidewalks, streetlights, water supply lines, and the improvement of schools.¹¹⁶ The party modernized the police and fire departments, expanded municipal services, and improved the city's infrastructure, for example, by constructing bridges and viaducts.¹¹⁷ It attracted working people who supported corruption free city government, economic growth, more jobs, higher wages, and an eight-hour workday.¹¹⁸

Not all labor leaders and their supporters, including former members of the Knights of Labor, placed interracial working class solidarity among their highest priorities when in 1892 they formed the Central Trades and Labor Union of East St. Louis (CTLU). The new organization functioned to coordinate the activities of union locals and promote labor's cause in city affairs.¹¹⁹ CTLU advanced the interests of labor in the political arena but without the Knights' vision of a working people's cooperative society. The CTLU affiliated itself with the American Federation of Labor (AFL), an association founded in 1886 and comprised mainly of craft workers. CTLU followed the AFL's program of business unionism, which involved the winning of union recognition, higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions, ideally through arbitration rather than through strikes. Like the AFL, the CTLU concentrated its efforts on organizing skilled workers into crafts unions that retained a certain degree of control over the work process. The local affiliation included among its initial membership barrel

¹¹⁶ "Citizens Convention," *ESLDJ*, 17 March 1901, 4.

¹¹⁷ "What the Citizens' Party Has Done," *ESLDJ*, 24 March 1901, 4.

¹¹⁸ "The Friend of Organized Labor," *ESLDJ*, 24 March 1901, 4; "A New Concept for Labor," *ESLJ*, 26 May 1940, 10-E.

¹¹⁹ "Trades and Labor Union," *ESLDJ*, 12 January 1892, 1.

makers, carpenters, bricklayers, barbers, and bartenders. The CTLU, like the AFL, in emphasizing business unionism and organizing skilled craft workers, showed little interest in unionizing unskilled workers, black or white, male or female. The CTLU's position forced black working people to look for allies outside the labor movement.¹²⁰

Expanding Black East St. Louis

Black East St. Louis began experiencing accelerated population and institutional growth in the last decade of the nineteenth century after the city had launched its program of massive industrialization. The city became a magnet for black migrants because it had the largest African American population and served as a center of black political action and culture in Saint Clair County. The expanding, white dominated city attracted investors who avoided siting industry in Brooklyn, which had fallen from its position of prominence in the American Bottom for black people. Increasing numbers of black newcomers instead migrated to East St. Louis rather than Brooklyn in order to live closer to jobs. In 1890, the number of black people stood at 772 in a city of 15,169 white inhabitants. A significant number of black arrivals had migrated from Mississippi, followed by Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, and Louisiana. They, together with migrants from other southern states, comprised forty percent of the black population in East St. Louis. Black newcomers from the Deep South, like the Exodusters before them, sought

¹²⁰ "A New Concept for Labor," *ESLJ*, 26 May 1940, 10-E.

economic advancement. They also wanted freedom from the intensification of racial subordination that occurred during the last decade of the nineteenth century in the South where black people endured lynching and other forms of terrorism and the enforcement of disfranchisement and legalized segregation. By 1900, 1,799 black and 29,655 white residents comprised the city's population.¹²¹

A larger African American population began to have a noticeable spatial presence. For decades, black people lived in small clusters scattered throughout the city. Many resided in the city's oldest districts bordering or near the Mississippi River, most notably "Bloody Island" and "the Valley," both west of what is now Tenth Street, which before the 1890s formed the city's eastern boundary. During the 1890s black townspeople established new neighborhoods in areas annexed by the city, mainly in the south end sections of Denverside and Rush City and in the north end section known as Goose Hill. Most low income African Americans lived in substandard housing nestled around railroad yards, factories, and open fields in the western half of the city. Some dwellings remained under elevation in manmade valleys, their owners too poor or indifferent about raising the structures to the level of high graded streets. By 1900, Rush City and parts of Denverside were evolving into African American ghettos.¹²²

¹²¹ *Population Schedules . . . Tenth United States Census, 1880, Illinois, T9, reel 246, "St. Clair County"; Population Schedules . . . Twelfth United States Census, 1900, Illinois, T623, reels 340, 341, "St. Clair County."* All tabulations are by the author. United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census of the United States* (Washington, DC: GPO), 12th Census (1900).

¹²² Tabulation by author from *Directory of East St. Louis, Fairmont, National City, Washington Park, Illinois* (East St. Louis, IL.: J. Lethem, printer, 1924), hereafter cited as *1912 City Directory*; R.F. Rucker in *House Transcripts, 1849-1850*.

The city's increasing African American population brought with it an expanding institutional culture. Black East St. Louisans continued to establish churches, civic and fraternal clubs, lodges, societies, and other organizations where they found camaraderie, affirmed their dignity as a people, and gained skills for political leadership and agitation. Black residents made the founding of churches their first priority, adding to the number previously organized, for example, St. Luke's African Methodist Episcopal Church in the late 1880s and an African Methodist Episcopal Zion church in 1887.¹²³ In 1895, Mississippi born laborer Timothy Peacock and his Missouri born wife Charity, John and Minerva Williams, Missouri born Mary Chism, and Arkansas born Zelphia Williams organized St. Paul's Baptist Church, holding services in private homes before building a house of worship on Seventh Street in 1897.¹²⁴ Jennie Thomas and others organized the Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in 1901, conducting worship in Thomas's home before constructing a church. Mississippi born Reverend James Lampley and his followers in 1910 formed the Truelight Baptist Church.¹²⁵ Black Roman Catholics, like their Protestant brothers and sisters who withdrew from white Protestant churches in the

¹²³ "Directory of 1887," *East St. Louis Journal*, 2 January 1944, 5, hereafter cited as *ESLJ*; 1906 *City Directory*; Hamilton, *The Ebony Tree*, 52.

¹²⁴ Saint Paul Baptist Church, *1999 Annual Reports*, 91. In *Population Schedules . . . 1880, Illinois*, Timothy Peacock's first wife, Kentucky born Sarah, "keeping house"; Illinois born Mary Chism (or Chisum), "keeping house," her husband John, a laborer. In *Population Schedules . . . 1900, Illinois*, listed Peacock a teamster; Zelphia Williams's Georgia born husband, a plasterer; Peacock's second wife, Charity, and Zelphia Williams without occupations; widow Mary Chism, a washerwoman. The 1900 census listed Chism born in Missouri and spelled her name as Chiseau.

¹²⁵ Clementine R. Hamilton, *The Ebony Tree* ([East St. Louis: s.n., 1971?]), 50, 54. Lampley listed in *Population Schedules . . . Fourteenth United States Census, 1920, Illinois*, T625, reel 404, "St. Clair County."

few decades after the Civil War, finally became independent of white Catholics in 1921 when they built their own house of worship.¹²⁶

By 1890s, African Americans began gaining a foothold in the city's industrial economy, primarily in meatpacking, iron and steel founding, railroading and glass, and building materials manufacturing. Most, mainly the men, obtained industrial jobs as common laborers. A few secured skilled positions such as butchers in meatpacking plants. Black men worked in a variety of jobs, non-industrial as well as industrial, laboring as brick masons, butchers, carpenters, cooks, coopers, foundry men, gardeners, hod carriers, janitors, machinists, painters, porters in hotels and other non-industrial workplaces, railroad car repairers, railroad foremen or gang bosses, servants, stationary firemen, teamsters, wagon drivers or express men, waiters, and whitewashers.¹²⁷

African American women in East St. Louis began entering the wage-earning workforce in greater numbers than in previous decades. Some continued antebellum and postbellum patterns of making a living by selling garden produce, midwifing, lodging travelers, or laundering clothes.¹²⁸ Slowly black women increased their presence in paid employment working as cooks, glass factory workers, janitors, laundry workers, sack-makers, seamstresses, and laborers, including one as a railroad laborer and one as a

¹²⁶ "First Negro Catholic Church Recently Occupied Gets Name from African Bishop, A.D. 343," *ESLDJ*, 4 January 1925, section four, 1-C, 6-C.

¹²⁷ *Population Schedules of the Twelfth United States Census, 1900, Illinois*, T623, reels 340, 341, "St. Clair County"; and the *1912 City Directory*. All tabulations are by the author.

¹²⁸ *Population Schedules . . . 1850, Illinois; Population Schedules . . . 1860, Illinois; Population Schedules . . . 1870, Illinois; Population Schedules . . . 1880, Illinois*. All tabulations are by the author.

stockyard worker. Some labored in meatpacking and in odd factory jobs.¹²⁹ Most black East St. Louisian women in search of wages, however, had no choice but to toil as domestic service workers and laundresses. Many domestic workers preferred commuting to work rather than living in servants' quarters in their employers' homes, fulfilling an historic African American quest to achieve as much freedom as possible from white oversight of their work.¹³⁰

African Americans vigorously engaged in electoral politics in East St. Louis as their population increased during the 1890s. They realized that an expanding black voting bloc had the potential of yielding results favorable for their community. Black residents saw hopeful signs of white people's acceptance of their participation in the 1886 election when the Knights of Labor included an African American worker among its seventeen nominees for various positions in city government. A majority of white voters swept fifteen Knights' candidates into government seats but rejected the black office seeker.¹³¹ Still black residents continued their involvement in formal politics.

From the late 1880s into the early 1890s black East St. Louisians placed local concerns above national issues when casting their votes. They supported the local Democratic Party, known as the People's Party of East St. Louis even though the national Democratic Party boldly proclaimed itself the party of white supremacy. Black residents

¹²⁹ *Population Schedules . . . 1900, Illinois; 1912 City Directory*. All tabulations are by the author.

¹³⁰ On urban black women in non-industrial occupations prior to 1915 see Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*. On domestics see, for example, Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, *Living In, Living Out: African American Domesticity in Washington, D.C., 1910-1940* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994).

¹³¹ "A New Concept for Labor," *ESLJ*, 26 May 1940, 10-E.

showed an interest in the People's Party because it promised more patronage than the Republican-oriented Citizens' Party. A majority of black voters had no problem pushing aside the party of Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation for patronage. In addition, leading black politicians secured an agreement with the People's Party, guarantying them janitorial jobs in all public buildings if the party proved victorious in the 1893 municipal election.

Most African American residents, however, switched their allegiance to the Citizens' Party when the People's Party reneged on its promise of patronage after winning City Hall on the strength of the black vote. Some formed a political club in March 1894 to build support for the Citizens' Party. Club officers, president Andrew J. Morgan and secretary B.F. Goff, organized political education meetings for black voters in the city's seven wards. Morgan and Goff set about welding a black voting bloc for the 1894 presidential and the 1895 municipal elections with the objective of winning patronage from City Hall.¹³² In petitioning for patronage, club members found Citizens' Party leader Mayor Melbern Stephens agreeable to black representation on the police, fire, and street departments. In August 1894, Captain John Robinson and Daniel Jenkins, president and secretary, respectively, of the pro-Citizens' Party club, now the Murphy Republican League Club No. 1, continued to organize the black vote.¹³³ During the election of 1895, they marshaled black voters for the Citizens' Party that promised more

¹³² "At a Mass Meeting of Colored Voters," *ESLDJ*, 27 March 1894, 3.

¹³³ "Colored People Want Municipal Jobs," *ESLDJ*, 25 July 1894, 3. Evidence of black firefighters has not been found; "Republican League Club," *ESLDJ*, 25 August 1894. *Population Schedules, 1880, Illinois*, listed Tennessee born Daniel Jenkins at age nine, his Mississippi born father, a laborer, and his mother, an Alabaman.

patronage than the People's Party.¹³⁴ During a mass meeting in 1896, signaling a loss of confidence in the People's Party, Citizens' Party advocates Captain John Robinson and Morton Hawkins led the audience in denouncing a call by a Mr. King (first name not given) for a black People's Party club.¹³⁵

African American residents, working through their clubs and ward committees, increasingly supported the Citizens' Party as it met their expectations in terms of the share of resources and positions in city and county governments it awarded them. They valued patronage not only because it offered a steady income and increased social status within the black community but also because it afforded greater access to City Hall. Politicians among them used tactics such as bloc voting to win patronage from white political bosses eager for the African American vote. Black voters allied with the Citizens' Party, which, besides dispensing patronage, funded improvement projects such as the extension of streetcar lines and the paving of streets in black neighborhoods.¹³⁶ In 1897, most black residents supported Citizens' Party candidates Melbern Stephens for mayor and black resident James Reese for county Assistant Supervisor. Though Reese lost his election, black voters remained loyal to a Citizens' Party grateful to have

¹³⁴ "Colored Mass Meeting," *ESLDJ*, 18 July 1895, 3.

¹³⁵ "The Colored Vote Changed," *ESLDJ*, 5 March 1896, 2. Denouncing the People's Party were H.T. Bowman, Isaac Bryant, Reverend W.G. Colby, A. Collier, C.B. Jones, Missouri born laborer John Reese, F.M. Smith, and Thomas Wiley. *Population Schedules, 1900, Illinois*, listed Missouri born Bowman as an editor. In the schedules, C.B. Jones was either Illinois born Charles Jones, a teamster, Mississippi born Clem Jones, a barber, or Missouri born Columbus Jones, a packinghouse hog scrapper. Bowman was editor of the *Advance Citizen* in "Cook Charges Negro Padded City Payroll," *ESLDJ*, 24 September 1926, 1A, 10A.

¹³⁶ "East St. Louis Politics," *ESLDJ*, 27 March 1902, 2; "Unofficial Vote Cast in East St. Louis at Election, April 1, 1902," *ESLDJ*, 2 April 1902, 2.

regained City Hall with the black vote.¹³⁷ African American townspeople also supported the Citizens' Party because of the efforts of the Afro-American Protective League of Illinois through its East St. Louis chapter.

The Afro-American Protective League of Illinois, coming into existence in 1895 when black Illinoisans became concerned about the erosion of their citizenship rights, gained much influence in local black politics. The Illinois league affiliated with the National Afro-American League, founded in 1890 by the militant black activist and newspaper editor Timothy Thomas Fortune. Combining aspects of self-help, self-defense, political agitation, and accommodation, the Illinois league had as its goal the elimination of racial inequality.¹³⁸ According to Illinois League president John Chavis, the organization opposed rising anti-black prejudice, segregation, and racial discrimination that impeded "the rapid progress of the Negro."¹³⁹

Both the National Afro-American League and the Afro-American Protective League of Illinois formed at a time when black people, especially those in the South, opposed a virulent, multifaceted assault upon their rights and persons. These organizations publicized black Southerners' confrontation against white attempts to

¹³⁷ "The Colored Voters Return to the Citizens' Party," *ESLDJ*, 28 March 1897, 4.

¹³⁸ On local chapters of the Afro-American Protective League of Illinois see Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua, "A Warlike Demonstration": Legalism, Armed Resistance, and Black Political Mobilization in Decatur, Illinois, 1894-1898," *Journal of Negro History*, 83 no. 1 (Winter 1998): 52-72; "Notes on the Peoria local of the Afro-American Protection League, 1895," Folder 15, Box 38, *Negro in Illinois Papers*; "A Successful Convention," *Illinois Record*, 27 November 1897, 1; "A Successful Convention of the Afro-Am. League, Jas. H. Porter Elected President," *Illinois Record*, 1 October 1898, 1, 3. On the National Afro-American League see Emma Lou Thornbrough, "The National Afro-American League, 1887-1908," *Journal of Southern History*, 27 (November 1961): 494-512.

¹³⁹ "The Afro-American League," *Illinois Record*, 13 November 1897, 1.

control African American labor and social and economic advancement through legal and extralegal coercion, disfranchisement, and segregation.¹⁴⁰ By the 1890s, African Americans and a dwindling circle of white allies had failed to reverse the rise of anti-black hostility that led to violations of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments. In 1896, the United States Supreme Court legitimized this hostility in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which declared segregation constitutional under the doctrine of “separate but equal.”

African Americans debated over the strategies and tactics to employ to reverse the erosion of their civil and political rights. Journalist and militant activist Ida B. Wells-Barnett, for example, proposed a combination of self-help and assertive armed self-defense. Henry McNeal, an African Methodist Episcopal bishop and proponent of colonization, urged black emigration to Africa. Educator Booker T. Washington, founder of Tuskegee Institute, recommended accommodation as a long term tool in the face of an uncompromising, murderous anti-black aggression. Washington argued against black political involvement and agitation for fear of massive, violent white retaliation. He promoted self-help based upon the acquisition of land and the development of occupational skills and businesses to sustain black social advancement. His chief critic, W.E.B. Du Bois, who at times favored accommodation as a short-term tactic, joined with radicals like William Monroe Trotter in advocating political struggle to restore citizenship rights.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ William Cohen, *At Freedom's Edge: Black Mobility and the Southern White Quest for Racial Control, 1861-1915* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991).

¹⁴¹ Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915* (New York: Oxford University, 1985); Linda O. McMurry, *To Keep the Waters Troubled: The Life of Ida B. Wells* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); David Levering Lewis,

The founders and members of the East St. Louis chapter of the Afro-American Protective League of Illinois in 1897 did not see the strategies of Washington's accommodation and his radical opponents' political agitation as mutually exclusive. They sought patronage and political office as they accommodated to segregation.¹⁴² East St. Louisan realtor Pearl Abernathy, a member of Washington's National Negro Business League that advanced self-help through black owned businesses and a Protective Leaguer, openly participated in local politics to attain patronage and political office.¹⁴³ Other East St. Louis leaguers held meetings to denounce lynching as a barbaric "enemy of civilization" and called upon the federal government to enforce equal protection laws. In 1900, leaguers from across southern Illinois, meeting in East St. Louis, made the same demands.¹⁴⁴ They, as African Americans generally, knew Washington had an inordinate amount of power to derail individuals and groups involved in political actions. Washington and his allies, however, did not disrupt the Illinois league. Perhaps

W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919 (New York: Holt, 1993); on Du Bois using the tactic of accommodation, see William Jordan, "'The Damnable Dilemma': African American Accommodation and Protest during World War I," *Journal of American History* 81 (March 1995): 1562-1583.

¹⁴² On Washington and the radicals' perspectives see, for example, Reed, *The Chicago NAACP*, 11.

¹⁴³ National Negro Business League, *Twentieth Annual Meeting ... in Records of the National Negro Business League, Part I: Annual Conference*.

¹⁴⁴ "Notes on the Peoria local of the Afro-American Protection League, 1895," Folder 15, Box 38, *Negro in Illinois Papers*; "To President McKinley," *ESLDJ*, 7 December 1898, 3. Committee members were clergymen D.J. Donohue, William M. Collins, John DeShields, Orlando H. Banks, and G.A. Duncan and laypersons Joseph Cooksey, Sarah H. Banks, John Gibbs, and schoolteacher Minnie C. Scott. *Population Schedules, 1900, Illinois*, listed Sarah Banks as wife of Orlando Banks. Minnie Scott's job in "Board of Education Eliminates Supervisors," *ESLDJ*, 13 May 1913, 1, 4.

Abernathy and fellow Afro-American Protective Leaguers had been shielded from attacks by Washington's followers because of Fortune's friendship with Washington.¹⁴⁵

The East St. Louis chapter of the Afro-American Protective League and other black political clubs allied with the Citizens' Party to obtain political and economic benefits. The league endorsed the party in 1898, noting that within ten months of the party's retaking of City Hall in 1897, black residents, employed by the city, were collectively drawing over \$5,000 annually in salaries. It stressed that Citizens' was "the only party in East St. Louis that ha[d] ever put a colored man on the ticket and then stood by him and seen that he got his office when the Democrats [i.e. the People's Party] had counted him out."¹⁴⁶ The league calculated that African American participation in the Spanish-American War, including that of the nearly three hundred East St. Louis area men recruited into the army by Captain John Robinson had convinced white Illinoisans of the need for racial equality.¹⁴⁷ The organization sought to increase black political strength and gain patronage and representation in local and state governments. In April 1898, it worked to unite the African American vote behind black candidates running for the Illinois General Assembly. In September, the league campaigned around the issues of fair treatment for black Spanish-American War veterans, patronage proportionate to the number of black residents in Illinois, union protection for black laborers, and open access to all public schools. Though black candidates failed to win seats in the state legislature,

¹⁴⁵ On the Fortune-Washington relationship see Louis R. Harlan, ed., *The Booker T. Washington Papers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 2:327-328, 357-358.

¹⁴⁶ "Politics in East St. Louis," and "East St. Louis Politics," *Illinois Record*, 3 September 1898, 1 and 2; "East St. Louis," *Illinois Record*, 11 February 1899, 3.

¹⁴⁷ "Illinois Negroes Organize," *Illinois Record*, 9 April 1898, 1; "Colored Recruits," *ESLDJ*, 5 July 1898, 3.

the league welcomed the growing influence of the black vote in local politics. In 1899, the league urged black East St. Louisans to reelect Citizens' Party's Mayor Melbern Stephens who had "done much along the line of giving all nationalities representation in accordance with their numerical strength."¹⁴⁸

Black townspeople enjoyed the patronage the Citizens' Party bestowed. John Robinson won an appointment as Illinois State House superintendent of janitors in 1897 and Senate cloakroom superintendent in 1905; Morton Hawkins became a City Hall janitor in 1898, James Reese was appointed street commissioner in 1900, and Robinson and William Jackson served as Citizens' Party precinct representatives in 1903.¹⁴⁹ Daniel Adams and others in the Negro Council Club who had worked to solidify ties between black voters and the Citizens' Party were rewarded with ward representative appointments in 1900. Adams was also nominated for the position of Assistant Supervisor of St. Clair County.¹⁵⁰ Black voters expected Adams, one of the party's two candidates opposing Democrats for Assistant Supervisor, to win his election because white residents held the Citizens' Party in high regard. But in the April election, Adams, losing by just fifty-two votes, was the only Citizens' Party candidate to be defeated.

¹⁴⁸ "The State Convention," *Illinois Record*, 17 September 1918, 2; "East St. Louis," *Illinois Record*, 11 February 1899, 3.

¹⁴⁹ "Col. John Robinson's Reception," *ESLDJ*, 11 January 1897, 3; "Col. John Robinson Gets Job," *ESLDJ*, 15 January 1905, 8; "East St. Louis, Ill.," *Illinois Record*, 28 May 1898, 3; Hamilton, *The Ebony Tree*, 4; *Population Schedules, 1900, Illinois*; Colored Citizens," *ESLDJ*, 25 March 1903, 3.

¹⁵⁰ "East St. Louis ILL.," *Illinois Record*, 7 May 1898, 3; "Negro Council Club," *ESLDJ*, 24 February 1901, 5. Negro Council Club leading members in 1901 included Daniel Adams, T. Barefield, W.W. Buchanan, Mississippi born Madison Crosby [i.e. Cosby], Mississippi born Thomas Green, Kentucky born S.W. Hawkins, George Kyler, Arkansas born William H.H. Pitts, and James Reese. *Population Schedules, 1900, Illinois*, listed Cosby, Green, and Hawkins as self-employed teamsters and Pitts as City Hall janitor.

Black activists concluded that even with the backing of the immensely popular Citizens' Party the majority of white East St. Louis voters, following white supremacist sensibilities, had cast their ballots for Adams's white opponent.¹⁵¹

Conclusion

African Americans in East St. Louis from the Civil War to the turn of the century continually reshaped their communities in relation to Reconstruction, the expansion of the labor movement, industrialization, and legalized and customary segregation. They faced an intensification of racism as the nineteenth century came to a close. Though African Americans faced a nadir in their relations with white Americans, they experienced much ferment in terms of community building, class differentiation, and political and social actions within black America.¹⁵² But African Americans in East St. Louis did not descend into a nadir; they sustained a political vibrancy in their interactions with white people and in their community. Black East St. Louis, for example, began its rapid development in the 1890s as its churches, fraternal societies, and other institutions

¹⁵¹ "The Colored Citizens of the Second Ward," *ESLDJ*, 23 March 1900, 3; "Negro Council Club," *ESLDJ*, 30 March 1900, 3; "The Colored Voters," *ESLDJ*, 5 April 1900, 2.

¹⁵² On the nadir see Rayford W. Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901* (New York: Dial Press, 1954). On ferment see August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963).

expanded in number and size and strengthened as small but steady waves of black southerners migrated to the city.

Established black residents and migrants seized the opportunity to improve their lives in rapidly industrializing East St. Louis. Significant numbers entered the city's industrial working class, securing employment mainly in railroading, meatpacking, and iron, steel, and glass manufacturing. Black townspeople also engaged in electoral politics, some solely for personal gain and others for the benefit of their people as well. But as African Americans increased their influence in city politics, they encountered greater resistance from politician-businessmen and their allies who themselves were responding to social transformations brought about by urbanization, industrialization, and shifts in the national economy. The real estate faction that dominated East St. Louis struggled to retain control of the city as political contests over patronage and governance sharpened. By 1900, black East St. Louisans who had established a viable community that functioned as a base for political mobilization to advance their interests became more involved as powerbrokers in these contests.

Chapter Two. Black East St. Louis in the Progressive Era, 1900 to 1915

From 1900 to 1915, African American men and women in East St. Louis continued to advance their political interests, engaging in a range of actions to win among other things patronage jobs from city leaders. Black people's experience in a border region city ran counter to that of most African Americans across the nation. Those in the South particularly had been disfranchised and legally segregated. Black residents in Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1898, for example, lost commanding positions in local government to armed white insurrectionists. Black East St. Louisans still received a limited degree of protection from a white police force and some consideration from city hall while African Americans in other locales, including New Orleans in 1900, Evansville, Indiana, in 1903, Atlanta in 1906, and Springfield, Illinois, in 1908, expected or experienced indifference or even violent treatment from police and municipal officials.¹ Black people in East St. Louis, however, carved out a position that allowed

¹ On the white insurrection that overthrew a democratically elected black majority government in Wilmington, North Carolina, see David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson. *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot and Its Legacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). On anti-black race riots and other forms of mass social violence, see for example, William Ivy Hair, *Carnival of Fury: Robert Charles and the New Orleans Race Riot of 1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976); Roberta Senechal, *Sociogenesis of a Race Riot: Springfield, Illinois, in 1908* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson, *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot and Its Legacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Brian Butler, *An Undergrowth of Folly: Public Order, Race Anxiety, and the 1903 Evansville, Indiana Riot* (New York:

them to project their influence in city politics even in opposition to increasing segregation, discrimination, and anti-black assaults. They had been able to do what most African Americans elsewhere had been prevented from doing during the nadir decades of the African American quest for equality, amass political power and build a black political machine independent of white political bosses.

African Americans, however, faced white groups in East St. Louis that increasingly acted to impede or reverse their political, social, and economic gains. As black people began attaining factory jobs, electing black politicians, asserting their interests, and winning patronage and access to other resources, various white residents moved with determination to keep them at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Black laborers competed with white native-born and immigrant workers for jobs in an urban industrial economy fraught with uncertainties caused by frequent cycles of economic depression and unemployment. They opposed employers whose racism limited occupational opportunities for African Americans and intensified antagonism between black and white working people. Black East St. Louisans saw white urban machine politicians increasingly refused to meet their demands for greater, more desirable, shares of patronage. They confronted real estate politician-businessmen who viewed the expansion of black aspirations and the African American community as a threat to their economic policies and political power. Black residents also had to contend with white progressive reformers who had attained enough influence during the first two decades of

Garland, 2000); David Fort Godshalk, *Veiled Visions: The 1906 Atlanta Race Riot and the Reshaping of American Race Relations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

the twentieth century to challenge the rule of machine politicians as well as curtail black aspirations. Black East St. Louisans found themselves at the center of reformers' accusations of what went wrong when politician-businessmen pursued policies that mismanaged industrialization, urban growth, and municipal government. But black townspeople employed tactics such as using their votes to swing elections to divide white political factions in order to advance African American interests.

Real Estate Politician-Businessmen and Progressive Reformers

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, politicians among real estate men and their friends occupied positions of authority and gained greater control over the politics and direction of economic planning and growth of East St. Louis. These businessmen continued the city's decades old program of reshaping the topography and speculating in land in order to attract industry and people. Thomas L. Fekete, Sr., led a real estate association, which in 1902 renamed itself the East St. Louis Real Estate Exchange, to command local planning.² After a devastating flood in June 1903 that covered the western sections of the city under thirty-nine feet of water, exchange member Henry D. Sexton took the initiative in promoting a flood control agency to build and

² "City's Population Trebled Since Realtors Formed Board," *East St. Louis Daily Journal*, 30 January 1927, 2-E, 6-E, 10-E; the 1889 Real Estate Exchange in "High Lights," *East St. Louis Centennial Program, 1861-1961* ([East St. Louis, IL: Centennial Committee, 1961]); Andrew J. Theising, *Made in USA: East St. Louis, The Rise and Fall of an Industrial River Town* (St. Louis, MO: Virginia Publishing, 2003), generally.

direct a system of levees, dikes, and drainage canals for East St. Louis and other townships in the American Bottom area of St. Clair and Madison counties. In 1908, Sexton, real estate man George Locke Tarlton, and land speculators organized a levee board to manage flood control. They envisioned not only a city attractive to manufacturers, but also increased opportunities to obtain personal wealth through real estate transactions. In the following year, levee board members incorporated their organization as a municipality, naming it the East Side Levee and Sanitary District. Board members, though elected by citizens of bottom district towns, had succeeded in operating independently of oversight from each municipality.³ These officials proceeded to use district money to influence city and county elections and to drain swampland they owned to sell as improved acreage to developers.⁴

Real estate men, including their partners in banking, law, contracting, and allied pursuits, enhanced East St. Louis's reputation as an industrial city by enacting laws and extending tax breaks favorable to industry. For example, in 1911, Mayor Charles Lambert offered corporations bonuses and other benefits, including a five-year tax exemption for firms newly recruited to the city.⁵ East St. Louisan politician-

³ "Our Great Levee and Sanitary Project as It Was Organized and as It Stands," *ESLDJ*, 4 November 1923, 1-B, 2-B; "High Lights," *East St. Louis Centennial Program, 1861-1961* ([East St. Louis, IL: Centennial Committee, 1961]); Williams et al., *Gateway to the Past*, 113-115.

⁴ Paul Y. Anderson, and E.J. Verlie, and Robert W. Sikking in United States, Congress, House, Special Committee To Investigate the East St. Louis Race Riots, *Transcripts of the Hearings of the House Select Committee That Investigated the Race Riots in East St. Louis, Illinois, 1917* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1918), 3812-3824, and 4596-4617, and 4647-4651, hereafter cited as *House Transcripts*; Theising, *Made in USA*, 140, 184.

⁵ *1912 City Directory*, 1339; "City's Population Trebled since Realtors Formed Board," *ESLDJ*, 30 January 1927, 2-E, 6-E, 10-E.

businessmen like many city boosters, machine politicians, and urban growth advocates in other locales operated city government often in opposition to the interests of residents.⁶

Corporations that economic growth advocates had eagerly recruited had an adverse impact upon the economy and politics of the city.⁷ Their success in lobbying for lower taxes forced the city to scramble for other sources of revenue.⁸ Railroad executives, for example, had long regarded East St. Louis merely as a site for economic exploitation, a terminus for St. Louis's commercial markets. They, like their counterparts in such places as St. Louis or Atlanta, exhibited indifference toward the civic and cultural life of East St. Louis.⁹ Railroads covered extensive city acreage with rail yards, repair shops, and freight houses, limiting building sites for other constructions, including residential housing.¹⁰ Chicago-based railroad managers levied discriminatory freight

⁶ Zane L. Miller, Patricia M. Melvin, *The Urbanization of Modern America: A Brief History*, 2nd ed. (San Diego, Calif.: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1987); John R. Logan, Harvey L. Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 20, 100-110; Theising, *Made in USA*.

⁷ On nineteenth century cities and financial debts see, for example, Eric H. Monkkenon, *America Becomes Urban: The Development of U.S. Cities & Towns, 1780-1980* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

⁸ Lura Mary Gard, "East St. Louis and the Railroads to 1865," MA thesis: Washington University, 176-180.

⁹ W.R. Crompton, to T.J. Potter, Gen'l Supt., CB&Q RR, November 24, 1879, "East St. Louis Papers, 1858, 1864, 1878-79," 33 1870 5.6, *Burlington Archives*; James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri, 1764-1980*, 3rd ed. (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1998); Godshalk, *Veiled Visions*.

¹⁰ "East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 14 June 1902, 2-8; "Coming of First Railroad Brought Rapid Growth Here," *ESLDJ*, 13 July 1924, 1-C, 6-C; Gard, 2, 12, 22, 180; Harland Bartholomew, *A Comprehensive City Plan for East St. Louis: Prepared for the War Civics Committee* (East St. Louis, IL.: The Daily Journal, 1920), 1; Williams et al., *Gateway to the Past*, 127; Kenneth M. Reardon, "State and Local Revitalization Efforts in East St. Louis, Illinois," in David Wilson, ed., "Globalization and the Changing U.S. City," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 551 (May 1997): 236.

fees that slowed the economic growth of the St. Louis-East St. Louis region. Much to the ire of area businessmen like National and Union Live Stock Yards chairman W.L. Tamblyn, railroads refused to equalize shipping fees between eastbound and westbound freight traffic crossing the Mississippi River.¹¹

Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis, formed in 1889 to represent railroads in East St. Louis and St. Louis, pursued its own interests to the particular detriment of East St. Louis. Terminal had become by 1900 a major factor in the local economy. The railroad charged higher fees or “arbitrariness” for westbound than for eastbound commodities, making westbound coal expensive. Its actions convinced investors to site heavy industry on the east side of the river where coal was cheaper. Terminal profited from renting its Illinois properties to manufacturers.¹² The association monopolized interstate commerce across the Mississippi River, determining freight charges through the ownership of ferries and toll bridges and depriving East St. Louis and even St. Louis of needed revenues for decades.¹³

¹¹ National and Union Live Stock Yards, Joint Rate Committee, J.W. Midgeley, Commissioner, Southwestern Railway Association, September 13, 1886, and W.L. Tamblyn, Chairman, National and Union Live Stock Yards, Joint Rate Committee, October 12, 1886, to Charles E. Perkins, Director, CB&Q Rd, “Rates: Correspondence, Papers, Agreements, 1882-89,” 33 1880 7.3, *Burlington Archives*.

¹² Harry Dadisman Holmes, “Socio-Economic Patterns of Non-Partisan Political Behavior in the Industrial Metropolis: St. Louis, 1895-1916” (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, Columbia, 1973), 55-61.

¹³ “Guaranty Agreement,” 9 T3.2, “Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis,” *Illinois Central Archives*; W.W. Baldwin, *Corporate History of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company and Affiliated Companies* ([Chicago]: The Railroad, 1917. “C. of C. Asks Rate Equality in New Plan,” *ESLDJ*, 12 April 1928, 1, 2; “Terminal Held As Only Foe to Use of Bridge,” *ESLDJ*, 14 August 1928, 1, 2.

Manufacturers generally contributed to the financial weakness of the city, for example, by insisting on tax incentives and encouraging corruption. They secured lower taxes by donating money to election campaigns of real estate men who upon winning county and city offices helped companies save hundreds of thousands of dollars. In 1915, the St. Clair County Board of Review, whose members included the son and the friends of real estate agent and Republican Party boss Edward Miller, lowered tax assessments for a number of companies. In return for the lowered assessments, Edward Miller and other politician businessmen received gifts and donations from grateful industrialists while East St. Louis continued to experience deficits.¹⁴

City leaders compensated for lost revenues by annexing territory that included prime factory and residential sites. Their reasons for annexation—to secure more resources, principally land, and enlarge the population base for more taxes—were no different than those of city boosters in other municipalities, including Boston, St. Louis, New York City, and Atlanta.¹⁵ Real estate men led campaigns that annexed neighboring villages whose inhabitants initially welcomed the access to water and sewer systems, police and fire protection, and other city services that annexation provided. Mayor Stephens oversaw in 1902 East St. Louis's absorption of Winstanley Park, Alta Sita,

¹⁴ Paul Y. Anderson in *House Transcripts*, 3798-3800, 3803-3806. Companies with lowered taxes included Aluminum Ore Company's assessment which dropped from \$699,999 to \$200,000, Missouri Malleable's from \$465,000 to \$132,000, Republic Iron and Steel's from \$21,330 to \$16,788, Elliott Frog & Switch's from \$12,290 to \$9,000, Swift's & Company's from \$428,619 to \$54,110, Morris & Company's from \$402,927 to \$53,600, and Armour & Company's from \$420,057 to \$55,100.

¹⁵ On various cities' annexation campaigns see, for example, Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

Denverside, Rush City, and other locales hosting industrial enterprises such as Obear-Nester Glass Works and the Shickle, Harrison & Howard Iron Works.¹⁶

Real estate men, however, by 1906 ceased to consider annexation a viable option. They faced increasing opposition from residents and industrialists located in unincorporated territories they hoped to absorb.¹⁷ When, for example, city officials had secured enough votes for annexation mainly from white inhabitants of the villages of Klondyke and Tudorville, they encountered anti-annexation sentiment from many black villagers who hoped to incorporate into the village of Glendora, presumably to create a predominantly black town.¹⁸ Boosters suffered a severe setback when St. Louis National Stockyards and the three meatpacking giants: Armour, Swift, and Morris, initiated an anti-annexation movement. These companies, eager to avoid paying taxes to any town, invoked in 1907 Illinois village incorporation laws, to turn themselves into the village of National City.¹⁹ City leaders feared that the National City episode provided a model for other enterprises to establish their own towns. Their last annexations occurred in 1908 with Lansdowne and in 1909 with the village of Edgemont.²⁰

¹⁶ "Greater East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 18 March 1902, 2; "Annexation Questions," *ESLDJ*, 20 March 1902, 2; "Annexation of Winstanley Park, Alta Sita and Denverside," *ESLDJ*, 21 March 1902, 2; "Unofficial Vote Cast in East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 2 April 1902, 2.

¹⁷ "East St. Louis," [1918], [1], *Papers of the National Urban League*, Part I, Series VI, E:87, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹⁸ "Incorporation Causes Fight," *ESLDJ*, 15 August 1906, 3; "25 Years Ago in East St. Louis," *ESLJ*, 23 June 1933, [4].

¹⁹ Conway in *House Transcripts*; "National City, Population of 465," *ESLDJ*, 16 January 1921, 3.

²⁰ "25 Years Ago in East St. Louis," *ESLJ*, 24 November 1933, 6; "25 Years Ago in East St. Louis," *ESLJ*, 29 April 1934, 4.

City politicians found saloons to be a most reliable source of revenue for a debt-ridden municipal government. Their increasing reliance upon saloons proved in the short run to be a politically safe alternative to raising homeowners' property taxes. Local officials avoided raising taxes by collecting licensing fees from an expanding number of saloons. They saw the possibility of covering revenue shortfalls caused by pro-industrial growth policies as long as city expenditures remained within manageable limits and as long as people continued to build patronize saloons. City Hall had no reason to curb the proliferation of such establishments popular with many wage earners.

By the early 1910s, East St. Louis had over three hundred licensed saloons—and an undetermined number of unlicensed ones. The city doubtlessly was no different from other locales in terms of the large number of saloons and the types of people who patronized them. A few bars were racially integrated, but most were not. Black and white mixing on a regular basis mostly occurred in neighboring all-black Brooklyn with its version of Chicago's "Black and Tan" saloons, which often doubled as dance halls. Some saloons served a mixed middle and working class clientele, but most catered to mainly working class male saloon goers who enjoyed camaraderie and social drinking in what essentially were workingmen's clubs. Bars blanketed working class neighborhoods, often situated across streets from factories where laborers stopped to relax, usually after their work shifts ended. These businesses, in addition to selling alcoholic beverages, also served as headquarters for ward and machine boss politicians and their political operatives, employment "offices" for jobseekers, a "bank" to cash workers' checks, havens for trade unionists to organize workers, places to catch the latest news and gossip,

restaurants for male and female customers, and meeting halls for neighborhood residents.²¹

Saloons in East St. Louis proved to be an irresistible source of revenue for city politicians to tap even if some of the bars allowed gambling or prostitution on the premises or served as headquarters for organized crime. Each of the 376 legal taverns paid an annual licensing fee—\$500 in 1915—to City Hall. Officials considered saloons problematic and in some cases such establishment only if owners fail to pay the fee.²² In the politically charged atmosphere, the Mayor's Office at times shut down illegal saloons whose owners had supported the mayor's opponents during election campaigns. A number of drinking places contributed to a frontier-like atmosphere, especially those in the "Valley," an industrial and racially mixed residential area centered along Third Street and adjacent alleys on the western edge of the downtown district from Broadway on the south to St. Clair Avenue on the north, and "Whiskey Chute," along St. Clair Avenue across from National City. These bars often places of gambling and prostitution earned

²¹ For a social history of saloons, particularly working-class ones, see Madelon Powers, *Faces along the Bar: Lore and Order in the Workingman's Saloon, 1870-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). For saloons as working-class institutions that performed numerous functions see also James R. Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago's Packinghouse Workers, 1894-1922* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 81-86. For middle and upper class people's saloons see, for example, Mark Edward Lender, James Kirby Martin, *Drinking in America: A History*, rev. and expanded ed. (New York: Free Press, 1987). On social aspects of East St. Louis saloons see also McLaughlin, *Power, Community and Racial Killing in East St. Louis*.

²² Nulsen in *House Transcripts*, 1052.

for East St. Louis a reputation for social and criminal violence.²³ But city officials tolerated such operations as brought money into the city treasury—and their pockets.

East St. Louis was not alone among American cities where City Hall reaped revenues and private citizens earned income from saloons, gambling, and prostitution.²⁴ Authorities' failure to enforce anti-gambling and anti-prostitution laws reinforced the city's reputation as a "wide-open town."²⁵ East St. Louis—along with Brooklyn—definitely served as "sin" cities for St. Louisan fun seekers. Officials and others personally profited from the operation of gambling facilities and brothels. Some owned or rented quarters that catered to participants in the sex trade.²⁶ Landlords collected monthly rents of \$30 to \$100 dollars from prostitutes for housing that ordinarily rented for \$15.²⁷ Some policemen supplemented their meager pay through dealings with saloonkeepers, prostitutes, and gamblers.²⁸ By the early 1910s several police officers, including Assistant Chief of Detectives Frank Florence, even owned brothels.²⁹

²³ On East St. Louis saloons as incubators of criminal violence and havens for criminals see McLaughlin, *Power, Community and Racial Killing in East St. Louis*, 78-82.

²⁴ Mark Thomas Connelly, *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Philip Jenkins, "'A Wide-Open City': Prostitution in Progressive Era Lancaster," *Pennsylvania History* 65 (Autumn 1998): 509-526; Joel Best, *Controlling Vice: Regulating Brothel Prostitution in St. Paul, 1865-1883* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998).

²⁵ Elliott M. Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964), 197-216.

²⁶ Anderson in *House Transcripts*, 4421-4422.

²⁷ Alois Towers, and George W. Allison, and Robert E. Johns in *House Transcripts*, 2589, and 3548-3552, and 4320-4321; Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis*, 201; Dennis R. Judd and Robert S. Mendelson, *The Politics of Urban Planning: The East St. Louis Experience* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1973), 7.

²⁸ Towers, and W.A. Miller in *House Transcripts*, 2593, and 4064-4087.

²⁹ Allison, and W.A. Miller in *House Transcripts*, 3554-3555, and 4079-4080.

Politician-businessmen, police officers, and others often ignored or broke anti-prostitution laws. They were no different than officials in other cities in tolerating prostitution as long as it occurred outside of affluent neighborhoods. Authorities allowed white and black prostitutes to ply their trade within a block of City Hall and in the “Valley.” Most, mainly white, prostitutes conducted business with clients of their own race, though some used saloons and other establishments to serve white and black men willing to engage in interracial sex.³⁰ Officials knew that young women were sometimes coerced into sex work, but they often refused to punish those who used violence to force or keep women in prostitution. Law enforcers, for example, failed to arrest dance hall owners John Peters and his wife who impressed a fifteen-year old white woman into the sex trade or white saloonkeeper Steve Unk and his wife Lily who forced white nineteen-year old Myrtle Gardner into prostituting for Eastern European immigrant workers.³¹ More often than not, policemen, bondsmen, and court personnel through bribes or other transactions offered legal protection both to prostitutes and brothel owners and to those dance hall owners and saloonkeepers who permitted prostitution on their premises. Some police officers involved in prostitution usually counted upon friends among bailsmen, lawyers, judges, and even fellow members of the police department to extricate them from difficult situations.³² Policeman Florence, for instance, on trial for killing of police

³⁰ On interracial sex districts in other cities see, for example, Kevin J. Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

³¹ Allison, and H.H. Hunsaker in *House Transcripts*, 3502-3506, and 4587-4592; Myrtle Gardner quoted in “Exhibit G,” *House Transcripts*, microfilm copy, reel six, *The East St. Louis Riot of 1917* (University Publications of America).

³² Bevington in *House Transcripts*, 4388-4393; Chapter Four in Theising, *Made in USA*.

morality squad officer H.F. Trafton who had conducted a raid on Florence's prostitution operation had his friends arrange for his acquittal despite damaging eyewitness testimony.³³

East St. Louisans who viewed saloons, gambling, and prostitution as socially unacceptable and symptomatic of problems that threatened the social order vigorously accused officials of perpetuating immorality and overseeing a deterioration of the quality of life in the city. Those sympathetic to reform challenged the rule of politician-businessmen and other economic growth advocates. Like reformers in other cities, East St. Louis progressives positioned to enact political change were middle and upper class white men and women, mainly clergy, newspaper publishers, professionals such as social workers and lawyers, corporate managers, and businessmen active in clubs and other civic associations.³⁴ They criticized machine politicians, especially those with real estate interests, for economic growth policies that fueled municipal mismanagement. Some faulted political leaders who tolerated or personally profited from corruption, patronage, saloons, gambling, prostitution, and the criminal violence that formed a constant feature of city life.³⁵ Reformers condemned politicians, police officers, and bondsmen who protected lawbreakers or recruited "thugs, pimps, loafers," saloon "bums," and gang

³³ Allison in *House Transcripts*, 3554-3555.

³⁴ Progressives in Atlanta see, for example, Gregory Mixon, *The Atlanta Riot: Race, Class, and Violence in a New South City* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 57-58.

³⁵ W.A. Miller in *House Transcripts*, 4080-4081.

members of clubs like the Cahokia Athletic Association to employ violence against political opponents.³⁶

Progressives in East St. Louis like those around the nation hoped to impose their vision of a moral and efficient social order upon a nation undergoing social and economic transformation.³⁷ They viewed their work to establish order on an unruly city as a microcosm of what reformers hoped to accomplish nationwide, the use of the state to manage industrialization and urbanization that rendered social relationships they considered dangerously unstable to the republic. Reformers in East St. Louis also sought control of city government to solve various social problems that in their view related to white laborers, especially European immigrants, and African Americans.

The population of white residents in East St. Louis increased after the 1870s as European immigrants entered the city in significant numbers. White East St. Louis, comprised of native-born Americans, foreign-born “old” immigrants, and foreign-born “new” immigrants, expanded from 5,544 in 1870 to 52,646 in 1910. Unlike in Chicago and other northern industrial cities, the native born and old immigrants constituted a numerical majority among white residents in East St. Louis.³⁸ Most native-born and old immigrant townspeople claimed English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, French, or German

³⁶ Anderson, and Towers, and Allison, and Johns in *House Transcripts*, 280-281, 3835, and 2589, 2592-2593, and 3500, and 4320-4321. During the Chicago race riot of July 1919, the Ragen Colts, an athletic club, was a group of anti-black assailants with political connections, see Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 32-33. Miller, Melvin, *The Urbanization of Modern America*, 54-55.

³⁷ Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

³⁸ According to census figures, in 1900, white East St. Louis was 80.7% native-born, 10.0% foreign-born; in 1910, 73.9% native-born, 13.2% foreign-born.

heritage.³⁹ The old immigrants refer to those who arrived mainly from Western and Northern Europe before the Civil War as well as those who emigrated from these same places after the war. New immigrants, refer those of Eastern and Southern European origins who came after the war. Most arrived from the Russian and Austria-Hungary empires with the rest originating from Greece, Italy, and other countries. In 1900, new immigrants comprised at least forty-five percent of East St. Louis's population of 27,842 white persons. But by 1910, the number of foreign-born and children of foreign or mixed parentage had decreased to around thirty-eight percent of the city's white population.⁴⁰ Overall, new immigrants, like most white and black newcomers to East St. Louis, settled in East St. Louis because its expanding economy offered good prospects of obtaining industrial employment.

Native-born white residents and old and new immigrants found employment in all industrial categories. Occasionally native-born and old immigrant workers prevented foreign born new immigrant laborers from obtaining even unskilled positions in factories considered desirable places of employment. For example, in April 1908, native-born white workers, joined in this instance by black laborers, fought and routed Eastern and Southern Europeans waiting to be hired at an Aluminum Ore Company factory gate.⁴¹ But in time new immigrants found jobs at Aluminum Ore and other firms. Most unskilled, foreign-born white workers at Missouri Malleable Iron Works, for example,

³⁹ "East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 14 June 1902, 2-8. No published census tabulations correlating place of origin and occupation with gender and race or nationality exist.

⁴⁰ *Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910: Bulletin: Population: Illinois* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, [1913]), 30.

⁴¹ "25 Years Ago in East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 16 April 1933, 4.

were new immigrants from Turkey and Armenia. Native-born and old immigrant workers dominated the higher occupational levels in terms of wages and skills and generally shunned the less remunerative, unskilled jobs and semi-skilled positions, leaving such positions for new immigrants. In the packinghouses, for instance, many unskilled Irish American and English American workers moved into skilled jobs as new immigrants entered the ranks of common laborers.⁴²

New immigrants comprised by 1910 a significant percentage of the unskilled industrial workforce largely because they were considered racially different. They often faced the racism of native-born white Americans and old immigrants who generally regarded them as “not white.” New immigrants concentrated in certain job categories because employers thought them “racially” fit to perform best under certain working conditions.⁴³ Managers and others thought, for example, Ukrainians and other Slavic speaking people docile and capable of working most efficiently under strict supervision and dusty and smoky environments.⁴⁴ But in practical terms, native-born white Americans constructed a racism that allowed new immigrants to become white like them,

⁴² John P. Pero, and Alois Towers in *House Transcripts*, 695, 703, and 2387.

⁴³ John P. Pero, Philip Wolf, and Alois Towers in *House Transcripts*, 695, 703, and 2265, and 2387. Those who argue that certain groups of European immigrants were first seen as not white see, for example, Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigration and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

⁴⁴ James R. Grossman, “‘Amiable Peasantry’ or ‘Social Burden’: Constructing a Place for Black Southerners,” in Rick Halpern and Jonathan Morris, ed. *American Exceptionalism?: U.S. Working-Class Formation in an International Context* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 230.

an option closed, however, to people of non-European ancestry.⁴⁵ New immigrants generally took advantage of the opportunity to become “white,” for example, by enrolling in Americanization programs sponsored by progressives.

White progressive reformers for various reasons worried that new immigrants had the potential to disrupt the social order. Some expressed concern that new immigrants had no desire to shed their old world ways. Social issues-oriented reformers, for instance, sought to banish saloons and dance halls that working people, including new immigrants, patronized. That many new immigrant laborers participated in strikes and in socialist organizations moved some progressives to Americanize them away from such activities. In East St. Louis progressives became troubled as new immigrants through the labor movement became involved in local politics. As Central Trades and Labor Union of East St. Louis (CTLU) gained the allegiance from new immigrant laborers, it threw support and votes to machine politicians in exchange for patronage and other favors. Reformers advocating an honest, corruption free city hall hoped to disrupt the bonds between new immigrants and politician-businessmen whose economic growth policies brought debt burdening public works projects and social and environmental problems. Political activists among the progressives soon learned that the path toward the elimination of the political machine lay with restructuring white people’s relationship with African Americans.

⁴⁵ Barbara J. Fields, “Whiteness, Racism, and Identity,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60 (Fall 2001): 48-60, and “Of Rogues and Geldings,” *American Historical Review* 108 (December 2003): 1397-1405.

White progressives promised to solve the “Negro problem.” According to white social reformer Quincy Ewing, white Americans thought to disabuse black people from the notion that black and “white m[e]n stand on common human ground.”⁴⁶ Reformers like East St. Louis newspaper publisher James Kirk argued that African Americans, like nonwhite people in the newly acquired American colonies of Puerto Rico and the Philippines, were unfit for democratic self-rule.⁴⁷ Reformers also considered anti-black social violence and black agitation for equality equally disruptive, if not destructive, of ordered society. Most regarded black people as inferior to white people, dependent upon political machine patronage, and threatening to prosperity and social tranquility. Progressives viewed the state an appropriate tool to control African Americans. And while those in the South denied black participation in electoral politics through disfranchisement, those in the North minimized black political influence through residential segregation and elimination of ward-based representation in local government.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Quincy Ewing, “The Heart of the Race Problem,” *Atlantic Monthly* 103 (1909): 389-397. For one contemporary work advocating a progressive reform solution of time, patience, discipline and education to the “Negro problem” see Ray Stannard Baker, *Following the Color Line: An Account of Negro Citizenship in the American Democracy* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1908).

⁴⁷ Dewey W. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983); “Negroes as Voters,” *ESLDJ*, 24 April 1900, 4.

⁴⁸ J. Morgan Kousser, *The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910* (New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 1974); Philip A. Klinkner with Rogers M. Smith, *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 72-105; Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

Though a few white reformers, including Chicago's famous settlement house activist Jane Addams, addressed the social problems that black people faced, most preferred to marginalize African Americans socially and politically. Some justified segregation, arguing that black people were socially maladjusted or inferior and that slavery had damaged the black family and psyche. Even racial egalitarians among them, including Addams, generally regarded black people as predisposed to corruption, squalor, gambling, prostitution, vice, and criminal violence.⁴⁹ Most progressive reformers, like many white Americans influenced by scientific and cultural racism, thought black people greatly contributed to social disorder. They used racist imagery to build popular support for corruption-free government, the elimination of saloons and vice, and the segregation African Americans. Progressive reformers pushed to lessen, if not eliminate, black political influence, arguing that black people preferred patronage and government largesse to hard work and were incapable of good citizenship.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ On white progressives generally and Jane Addams in particular see, for example, Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 13-16; Valerie Babb, *Whiteness Visible: The Meaning of Whiteness in American Literature and Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 139-142.

⁵⁰ Robert L. Allen, *Reluctant Reformers: Racism and Social Reform Movements in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1974), 92-119; Christopher Robert Reed, *The Chicago NAACP and the Rise of Black Professional Leadership, 1910-1966* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 8-10. On racism in the first two decades of the twentieth century see, for example, George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971); I.A. Newby, *The Development of Segregationist Thought* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1968). On the cultural construction of racism see Babb, *Whiteness Visible*. On racism, hard work, and free labor see Heather Cox Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in*

Ascendancy, not Nadir, of Black East St. Louisan Political Strength

African Americans, especially those in the South, experienced a rapid reversal in the exercise of their political rights. Their day to day experience underwent aggressive anti-black assaults from white people generally and indifference, if not at times, hostility from government at all levels. Black people faced legal or customary restrictions. Rural black Southerners became increasingly tied to sharecropping, debt peonage, seasonal work patterns, a relatively dismal regional economy, and the oppressive rule of the plantation regime. African Americans commonly found white employers with the support of workers denying them factory employment. They were bombarded daily with indignities that reinforced their inferior status. For example, African Americans knew attempts to keep them at the bottom of the social hierarchy formed a key aspect of an on-going search to find a white boxer to displace heavyweight boxing champion Jack Johnson, an African American, whose intimate affairs and marriages with white women infuriated numerous white—and black—Americans. Cultural works like the movie, “Birth of a Nation,” served a similar social function of reinforcing a national commitment to white domination. African Americans regardless of social class increasingly sought ways to end the segregation, disfranchisement, discrimination, and terrorism of rapes, lynching, and mass mob violence.

Black people forged various strategies to reverse the descent into what became known as the nadir of race relations in post-Reconstruction history. They counteracted racist assaults with such strategies as accommodation, migrations, electoral politics, and social and political movements. Many locales hosted, for example, clubwomen's organizations that aimed among other things to improve the lives, status, and image of black women. Local black men and women formed political clubs that carried the message of national organizations like the Niagara Movement, established in 1905 to implement an aggressive program to achieve equality on all fronts for African Americans. Some looked to reshape national politics by working closely by either working closely with existing political parties or by establishing new ones. Others expended their energies to influence City Hall. Black people in East St. Louis like African Americans in other border region cities participated in the political arena at the local level. But black East St. Louisans made greater strides than their counterparts elsewhere toward black representation in local governance and began to build a political machine to gain independence from white politicians and to attain a share of political power.

Increasing numbers of black Southerners saw border cities like East St. Louis attractive. They moved steadily north, but in small numbers since access to industrial occupations remained limited. These migrants and other black workers encountered northern employers who preferred European immigrant laborers over them or who thought that African Americans were fit to perform the least remunerative tasks. Still a significant percentage of black workers, men more than women, secured factory

employment, albeit in mainly unskilled and menial positions.⁵¹ African Americans in East St. Louis found employment, mainly as common laborers, in iron and steel manufacturing and meatpacking companies. For example, men and women rural southern migrants with a familiarity of butchering hogs commonly obtained work in border region packinghouses.⁵² At least 215 out of 1,762 black East St. Louisans employed in 1912 toiled in packinghouses, eighty-seven at Armour & Company and ninety-nine at Swift's & Company. Two hundred and fifty-three, perhaps more, black employees worked for the fifteen railroad companies, including Mobile & Ohio, Southern, Louisville & Nashville, Illinois Central, Baltimore & Ohio, and Terminal, that had the largest operations in the city.⁵³ Black laborers composed by 1915 about forty percent of Missouri Malleable Iron Company's unskilled workforce.⁵⁴

Most African Americans also obtained common laborer jobs because they worked in a labor market where managers, structuring anti-black racism into the workplace, left the most unskilled, dangerous or least remunerative positions for black men and women.⁵⁵ At Illinois Central Railroad, for example, black workers held positions of firemen, shop laborers, and brakemen because chief manager James Clarke, a former slaveholder, thought black people biologically unfit for skilled tasks.⁵⁶ Most black men

⁵¹ Earl Lewis, *In Their Own Interests: Race, Class, and Power in Twentieth Century Norfolk, Virginia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Trotter, *River Jordan*.

⁵² Walter A. Fogel, *The Negro in the Meat Industry* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1970), 18, 24-25, 27.

⁵³ *1912 City Directory*. All tabulations are by the author.

⁵⁴ Alois Towers in *House Transcripts*, 2372.

⁵⁵ John P. Pero in *House Transcripts*, 709-710.

⁵⁶ David Lee Lightner, "Labor on the Illinois Central Railroad, 1852-1900," Ph.D. diss.: Cornell University, 1969, 227-229.

and women packinghouse workers were considered by managers Frank Hunter of Swift & Company and Robert Conway of Armour & Company as better suited for work in hog processing rather than the far more lucrative and steady work in the cattle department. Eighty percent of those assigned to hog killing at Armour & Company were black men. Black women frequently worked as low paid pork-trimmers while the men performed the most odious jobs in meatpacking fertilizer departments.⁵⁷ Some companies, for instance, Aluminum Ore Company rarely hired black workers. Gordon Crook and Elijah Smith, for example, were among the only twelve black men, all in menial positions, at Aluminum Ore between 1902, when the plant opened for production, and late 1916, when large numbers of black southerners filled job vacancies during World War I.⁵⁸

Black workers had problematic relationships with white working people and trade unionists. Some confronted white workers who sometimes attacked them, denied them union membership, or restricted their access to various industrial occupations.⁵⁹ They knew that the CTLU, as an organization within the American Federation of Labor, had no

⁵⁷ Frank A. Hunter, and Robert E. Conway in *House Transcripts*, 93-94, and 125-126, 129, 181-182; Conway, and Hunter in Illinois State Council of Defense (World War I), *Report of the Labor Committee of the State Council of Defense of Illinois Upon the Inquiry into the Recent Influx of Southern Negro Laborers into East St. Louis and Race Riot in Connection Therewith: At a Meeting . . . held at Chicago, June 2, 1917*. [Springfield]: Illinois State Council of Defense, 1917, 15-16, and 22-23, hereafter cited as *Labor Committee Report*. On racism in the meatpacking industry see Rick Halpern, *Down on the Killing Floor: Black and White Workers in Chicago's Packinghouses, 1904-54* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

⁵⁸ Charles B. Fox in *House Transcripts*, 1507, 1641, 1683-1690; "25 Years Ago in East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 16 April 1933, 4; Gordon Crook in *1912 City Directory*; Elijah Smith, a laborer in "Chamber of Commerce Plans Forum Meeting in Honor of Late Inventor of Aluminum," *ESLJ*, 24 February 1936, 2.

⁵⁹ William M. Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Atheneum, 1970).

interest in building, let alone leading, an interracial movement for worker solidarity or equality inside, let alone outside, the workplace. Lowly paid black workers often lacked the necessary funds to apply for union charters or sustain payment of union dues. Their situation gave white labor organizers a convenient excuse to rationalize their lackluster efforts in unionizing them.⁶⁰ Most importantly, African Americans realized that the CTLU refused to address racism within the labor movement and that white working people generally asserted the notion of white entitlement to industrial employment, especially to skilled, higher paying jobs. Such views had been fueled by transformations in work processes brought about by industrialization and employers' embrace of the principles of scientific management. Skilled white workers faced a protracted, losing struggle with managers aiming to deskill the work process. The unskilled confronted managerial control that blocked them from winning collective bargaining rights. Black men and women entering the industrial workforce only increased the concern of white men and women workers who feared a loss in social status and standard of living laboring alongside black people. As more black East St. Louisans obtained manufacturing jobs, they faced white workers exerting greater efforts to bolster their racial identity in an unstable urban industrial economy by restricting black people's access to industrial jobs.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Harry Kerr, and Alois Towers in *House Transcripts*, 1901, 1911, 1913, 2010-2011, and 2372, 2512-2522, and 3195.

⁶¹ On white working class Americans and "whiteness," see, for example, David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991).

African American workers formed alliances with white wage earners in certain locales, for example, in the coal mining region of Birmingham, Alabama, or occupations like meatpacking where they constituted a significant percentage of the industrial workforce. Black working people in such situations usually embraced trade unionism, either through integrated or segregated unions, to win collective bargaining rights, gain higher wages, and improve working conditions.⁶² Black men in East St. Louis joined integrated unions of teamsters, coal miners, and moulders. Others, like hod carriers and hotel and service porters barred from existing union locals formed all-black union locals.⁶³ The service porters' union within days of its founding in August 1903 boasted a membership of fifty-seven men with Tennessee born barbershop porter Edward Wilson as president and Tennessee born bootblack Ambrose Jones as treasurer. The porters' union, affiliated with the CTLU, was honored in 1903 with a place in the CTLU's annual Labor Day parade.⁶⁴ Still black industrial workers did not yet comprise a significant enough percentage among either skilled or unskilled employees to press the labor organization to include their interests in trade union affairs. Black East St. Louisan

⁶² Herbert G. Gutman, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers of America: The Career and Letters of Richard L. Davis and Something of Their Meaning, 1890-1900," in Gutman, ed., *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working-Class and Social History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 121-208. Peter Rachleff, *Black Labor in Richmond, Virginia, 1865-1890* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1984); Eric Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class, and Politics, 1863-1923* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Daniel Letwin, *The Challenge of Interracial Unionism: Alabama Coal Miners, 1878-1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Brian Kelly, *Race, Class, and Power in the Alabama Coalfields, 1908-21* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

⁶³ Towers, and Edward F. Mason in *House Transcripts*, 2515, and 3195.

⁶⁴ "Organized Porters Union," *ESLDJ*, 11 August 1903, 3; "Colored Porters Organize," *ESLDJ*, 13 August 1903, 3; "Union Labor's Big Day," *ESLDJ*, 8 September 1903, 3; Wilson and Jones's age and birthplace in *Population Schedules, 1900, Illinois*.

workers did not reject trade unionism, but they understood that white trade union disinterest in ending racism in the house of labor generally meant looking elsewhere to advance their political interests, allying with middle class black residents and white machine politicians.

The existence of a black middle class signaled the appearance of significant social divisions in African American communities. This class was not a reflection of the white middle class in terms of economic power and structure largely because of the intensification of racism in the latter third of the nineteenth century and in the first two decades of the twentieth century. African Americans of or aspiring to middle class status opposed the limitations imposed upon them by white Americans. At the same time they gained a reputation among working class black people of being arrogant, self-appointed leaders of the race. Such class antagonisms among African Americans stemmed in part from the ideology of racial uplift that middle class people generally espoused.

The black middle class like its white counterpart included salaried and self-employed professionals and owners of small businesses. Their numbers and influence expanded in black communities largely because the white middle class generally segregated or refused to service African Americans. The black middle class lacked highly placed professionals and corporate managers; it did not command any sector of the local, let alone national, economy. Barbers, dentists, grocers, hostlers, ice and coal haulers, junk dealers, lawyers, ministers, morticians, newspaper editor-publishers, physicians, poolroom owners, realtors, restaurateurs, saloonkeepers, and schoolteachers

formed the structural core of the African American middle class in East St. Louis.⁶⁵ The town's black middle class was occupationally similar to those in other border region cities.⁶⁶ Business owners, entrepreneurs, and professionals heavily relied upon a black clientele for their livelihood. But a few individuals served both white and black people.⁶⁷ For example, Leroy Bundy, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, and a dentist who owned a small automobile sales and repairs business, had African American and European immigrant patients.⁶⁸ Missouri-born Pearl Abernathy, once a day laborer, became a realtor serving black and white homebuyers.⁶⁹ Noah Parden, born a slave in Georgia and became the first black attorney to argue a case before the United States Supreme Court, settled in East St. Louis in 1906 and opened a legal practice that attracted white as well as black clients.⁷⁰ And Captain John Robinson, a onetime laborer who became a community leader and saloonkeeper held a series of patronage jobs at City Hall and the State House, forming friendships with white politicians.⁷¹ But out of 3,100 black adult residents in East St. Louis in 1912, about 120 persons, or four percent, constituted the key structural

⁶⁵ *Population Schedules . . . 1900, Illinois; 1912 City Directory.*

⁶⁶ Trotter, *River Jordan*, 38-40.

⁶⁷ Trotter, *River Jordan*, 38-41.

⁶⁸ *1912 City Directory; Labor Committee Report*, 69. All tabulations are by the author.

⁶⁹ *Population Schedules . . . 1900, Illinois; 1912 City Directory*, 1484.

⁷⁰ "Threats Fail to Halt Clarence Darrow of Negro Race," *ESLDJ*, 4 July 1926, 3-A; "N.W. Parden Gets Appointment," *ESLJ*, 6 January 1935, 3; "Champion of Negroes Dies at 80," *ESLJ*, 2 March 1944, 1, 16. Parden's mother was a slave; his father was a slaveholder. On Noah Parden and the U.S. Supreme Court see Mark Curriden and Leroy Phillips, Jr., *Contempt of Court: The Turn-of-the-Century Lynching That Launched 100 Years of Federalism* (New York: Faber and Faber, 1999).

⁷¹ "East St. Louis," *Illinois Record*, 11 February 1899, 3. Robinson listed as laborer in *Population Schedules . . . 1880, Illinois.*

elements of city's black middle class.⁷² This number was small largely because African Americans needing specialized or a greater diversity of black owned businesses and professional services simply journeyed by streetcar across the river to St. Louis.

The black middle class, however, included more than those who held commonly regarded middle class occupations. Its existence had much to do with persons expressing a class or status consciousness of respectability. Such individuals saw themselves as members of the "better classes." They advocated "middle-class ways—temperance, frugality, and hard work—as useful tools for living."⁷³ Those who labored in what the white community commonly considered working class jobs had middle class aspirations. As the self-described "better people," middle class African Americans initiated a social movement to uplift their "race." They volubly criticized, for example, black patronage of saloons and dance halls, rollicking church services, and other activities they perceived as violations of middle class sensibilities. They demonstrated that black people were capable of being good citizens. They sought to assimilate African Americans into the mainstream of white dominated America. The "respectable" people hoped to transform the less affluent among African Americans into persons capable of emulating their "betters." Their efforts at uplifting the race constructed an African American version of progressive reformism. Racial uplift advocates especially hoped that through social work and other activities to change black working people's lives white Americans would relent

⁷² *1912 City Directory*.

⁷³ Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), xix.

in their racism and remove all impediments to African American economic, political, and social advancement.⁷⁴

Black middle class women through their clubs stood in the forefront of racial uplift politics, channeling their efforts to instill morals and improve conditions among the less affluent, concentrating on the concerns of children and women. They established women's clubs to address racial and gender equality and solidarity and promote social and cultural interests. They joined national black women's organizations such as the National Association of Colored Women, an affiliation of black women's clubs that formed in 1896 from the merger of the National Federation of Afro-American Women and the National League of Colored Women.⁷⁵

The clubwomen's movement in East St. Louis in the first two decades of the twentieth century represented one facet of black progressive thought advanced by state and national African American women's associations. The local chapter of the Illinois Federation of Colored Women's Clubs led by Sarah B. Jones, who from 1910 to 1912 served as first vice-president of the federation, under the slogan, "Loyalty to Women and Justice to Children," worked to instill middle class respectability of frugality, industriousness, and sobriety among low black women and their families. Club members advocated sexual self control as one way to counteract racist imagery of black women as lewd and immoral. They also addressed working women's concerns such as

⁷⁴ Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

⁷⁵ On black clubwomen, see, for example, Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: Morrow, 1984); Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

employment, childcare, and housing in their racial uplift program.⁷⁶ In 1910, in the black progressive framework, Mary Martin as founder and president, Mary Parris as vice-president, Alberta McKenzie as secretary, Mrs. Moore as treasurer, and Ruth Freeman, Annie McCraven, Mississippi born Sarah Flood, and Alabama born Rachel Ingram as club boosters formed an ad hoc committee to care for orphans and the elderly.⁷⁷ They reorganized their committee in 1913, renaming it the Old Folks' Home and Orphans' Association that emerged as the city's preeminent black social work agency.⁷⁸

Yet, African Americans, regardless of class, saw white America unrelenting in its resolve to keep them in positions of social, political, and economic disadvantage. They often subsumed their political or ideological differences to form interclass alliances to oppose acts of white intransigence to black social advancement and anti-black violence. Black East St. Louisans increasingly faced obstacles from politician-businessmen whose pro-industry policies had turned East St. Louis into a fiscally weakened city with a reputation for political corruption, crime, and violence.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Elizabeth Lindsey Davis, *The Story of the Illinois Federation of Colored Women's Clubs* (Chicago: [s.n.], 1922; reprint, New York: G.K. Hall, 1977), xvii-xix, 2, 22, 113, 139. *1912 City Directory* listed Sarah Jones without an occupation, her husband S.B. Jones as pastor at St. Luke's A.M.E. Church.

⁷⁷ Hamilton, *The Ebony Tree*, 74-75; Davis, 24, 139. *Population Schedules, 1900, Illinois* listed Sarah Flood with no job, her husband Richard, a laborer; Rachel Ingram with no occupation lived with brother-in-law B. Gates, a laborer. *1912 City Directory* listed Mary Martin with no career, her husband Armstead, a stockyard worker; Alberta McKenzie with no job, husband Thomas, a laborer; Mary Paris with no occupation, husband Coleman, a laborer.

⁷⁸ "Colored Home to Widen Scope of Aid to Orphans," *ESLJ*, 1 November 1934; "Anniversary of Negro Old Folks Home on Sunday," *ESLJ*, 16 June 1939, 13.

⁷⁹ Allison in *House Transcripts*, 3762. Images and life of gritty wide-open industrial East St. Louis in Sherwood Anderson, "Nobody's Home," *Today: An Independent National Weekly*, 30 March 1935, 6-7, 20-21.

Black residents knew that African Americans were not safe when most white Americans had much contempt for black people. They witnessed white Illinoisan reaction to African American social, economic, and political advancement fueling an escalation of anti-black assaults. For instance, in 1902, African Americans in Eldorado, about 130 miles southeast of East St. Louis, confronted an angry white citizenry who feared that a newly opened black industrial training school in their town would attract more black people to settle there. A mob forced African American faculty, students and forty residents to leave town. Violence escalated to the point where African Methodist Episcopal pastor the Reverend Peter A. Green had to use his gun to fend off an attack upon his house. Governor Yates restored law and order by sending in the militia. Eldorado later became a sundown town, a place emptied of its black residents.⁸⁰ In the following year, in Belleville, a white mob, estimated to number in the hundreds, stormed the county jail and captured Mr. Wyatt (no first name given), a black schoolteacher, accused of shooting a county school superintendent during a dispute over a job contract. The mob performed the lynching ritual, torturing and hanging Wyatt, riddling the corpse with bullets, burning the body, and afterward rushing to collect souvenirs of the victim's remains.⁸¹ Mass violence occurred in Springfield, Illinois, in 1908 when a mob, failing to seize a black man jailed on charges of raping a white woman, killed at least two black men, burned black homes and businesses, and drove hundreds of black people out of

⁸⁰ "Notes on African American nationalist movements . . ." Folder 4, Box 44, *Negro in Illinois Papers*; Loewen, James W. *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*. New York: New Press, 2005.

⁸¹ "The Negro Lynched," *ESLDJ*, 8 June 1903, 3. On black Illinoisan response to lynchings in their state see Cha-Jua, "A Warlike Demonstration."

town.⁸² In another episode of anti-black mass violence that occurred in 1909 in Belleville, a lynch posse formed after police jailed a black man accused of murdering a popular white streetcar operator.⁸³ In this case, white county sheriff, Charles Cashel, prevented a lynching by knocking a mob leader to the ground and ordering his deputies to disperse the throng.⁸⁴ Through lynchings and mass racial violence, white Illinoisan terrorists, often with the support of the police and the white community, sent the message to black people that they had no protection under the law.⁸⁵

Black East St. Louisans responded to such anti-black terrorism through organizations dedicated to oppose the rising violence. They established, following the Wyatt lynching in 1903, the Imperial Social Club to pressure city authorities to enforce equal protection laws.⁸⁶ They also organized local chapters of existing national associations. In 1915, for instance, black East St. Louisans veterinarian Fred Halsey,

⁸² Roberta Senechel, *The Sociogenesis of a Race Riot: Springfield, Illinois, in 1908* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Anthony M. Landis, "They Refused To Stay in Their Place: African American Organized Resistance During the Springfield, Illinois, Race Riot of 1908," MA thesis: Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, 2002.

⁸³ Alois Towers in *House Transcripts*, 2376. Towers said that the murder occurred six years before 1917, but he actually meant 1909.

⁸⁴ "Twenty-Five Years Ago Today in East St. Louis," *ESLJ*, 23 December 1934, 6.

⁸⁵ See, for example, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (New York: New York Age Print, 1892); W. Fitzhugh, Brundage, *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Revolt against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign against Lynching*. Revised ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Philip Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America* (New York: Random House, 2002).

⁸⁶ "Negro Club Organized," *ESLDJ*, 11 December 1903, 3. Club officers were M.C. Johnson, president; Fred T. Morrison, vice president; saloonkeeper George Kyle, treasurer; James Richmond, secretary; Alabama born barber James Kyle and bartender William, captain and assistant secretary, respectively, and Perry Wilson, business agent. James and William Kyle listed in the 1900 *Population Schedules*, George and William Kyle in *1912 City Directory*.

physician William Baldwin, dentist H.T. Bolden, mortician Russell M.C. Green, and others formed a branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), an interracial organization founded in 1909 in response to the anti-black mass racial violence in 1908 in Springfield, Illinois, to combat lynching and racial injustice and win rights of full citizenship for African Americans.⁸⁷

Some African Americans linked their opposition to anti-black violence and disfranchisement to American colonial adventures and suppression of national sovereignty of the people of the Caribbean and the Philippines. Anti-imperialists among them, especially veterans of the recent Spanish American War who saw the imposition of American style racism on the Filipinos and others, took the lead in interjecting black concerns into local as well as national politics. East St. Louisans, including William T. Scott, a Spanish American War veteran, and several Malleable Iron Works laborers formed in 1901 the General Maceo Club, which they named after Antonio Maceo, an anti-colonial freedom fighter of African-French-Venezuelan heritage and one of the chief leaders of Cuba's movement for independence from Spain. Scott took pride that Maceo and other Cubans of African ancestry had been formidable fighters in their anti-colonial

⁸⁷ National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, *The Branch Bulletin*, February 1919; Branch officers Fred Halsey, president; William S. Baldwin, vice-president; H.T. Bolden, secretary; and Russell M.C. Green in "Negroes Organize for Advancement," *ESLDJ*, 23 May 1915, 4. Chapter officers physician W.H.A. Barrett, president; Mary V. Campbell, secretary; and executive committee persons B.F. Bowles, Pearl Abernathy, physician J.E. Ellis, and Reverend I.S. Stone in "Completing the Work of the Emancipator: Six Years of Struggle Toward Democracy in Race Relations: Being the Sixth Annual Report of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1915," in Herbert Aptheker, ed., *Pamphlets and Leaflets by W.E.B. Du Bois* (White Plains, NY: Kraus-Thomson Organization Limited, 1986), 179,. Halsey's occupation in "Negro Teacher Sues for \$12,000 Damages," *ESLDJ*, 9 March 1936, 6. Occupations of others listed in *1912 City Directory*.

war against Spain. Maceo Club members participated with members of other local black clubs in organizing voters for city elections and furthering African American concerns in the political arena.⁸⁸

Scott was one of many African Americans working to force local politicians to meet black demands. He condemned Republicans for taking black support for granted and decided that black voters must be independent of the Republican Party. He and others in an attempt to break the Republican hold on African American voters sought an alliance with the Democratic Party, hoping to entice local Democratic politicians into courting the black vote. They must have been aware that black Chicagoans had been rewarded with patronage from Democratic mayors grateful for having been elected to office in 1885 and 1899 with the assistance of African American voters.⁸⁹ In 1901, black Democrat Harvey T. Bowman formed the Third Ward Independent Club for the purpose of enlisting black political operatives to work closely with local Democrats.⁹⁰

William Scott and other black political hopefuls dismissed both the Democratic and Republican parties and decided to build a national black political party committed to equality. At a Negro National Democratic League meeting in 1900, Scott, as league vice-president, condemned the Republican Party for conducting imperialist ventures overseas

⁸⁸ “Representative Colored Meeting,” *ESLDJ*, 26 February 1901, 3; news blurbs of General Maceo meetings in *ESLDJ*, 28 February 1901, 3, and 8 March 1901, 2. On black Americans linking anti-white supremacy with anti-imperialist politics see, for example, Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., “*Smoked Yankees*” and *the Struggle for Empire: Letters from Negro Soldiers, 1898-1902* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971); Scot Ngozi-Brown, “African-American Soldiers and Filipinos: Racial Imperialism, Jim Crow and Social Relations,” *Journal of Negro History*, 82, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 42-53.

⁸⁹ Dilliard, “Civil Liberties of Negroes in Illinois since 1865,” 595.

⁹⁰ “Colored Voters Club Reorganized,” *ESLDJ*, 10 March 1901, 3.

and condoning segregation.⁹¹ In 1904, he convened with A.M.E. Zion Church bishop Alexander Walters of New Jersey and other black leaders in St. Louis to form the National Negro Liberty Party. Scott promoted the African American cause and at the same time advanced his own political fortune when the party nominated him as its candidate for President of the United States. But the National Negro Liberty Party made little headway, failing to attract a nationwide following of African American voters, in part because most African Americans already had been disfranchised.⁹²

Black participation in formal politics and increasing black influence made East St. Louis unusual at a time when African Americans in many locales had been locked out of the electoral arena. Black townspeople formed a voting bloc to mine opportunities after the local political scene had fragmented from a combination of economic downturns and continual mismanagement of the city. The economic depression that occurred from 1893 to 1897 had exacerbated the deleterious effects of the Citizens' Party's industrial growth policies. Townspeople's doubts about the party prompted newspaper owner and Citizens' Party insider James Kirk to remind voters that the Citizens' Party had worked for economic growth and prosperity for everyone.⁹³ But African Americans knew by

⁹¹ "Address to the Public by the Negro National Democratic League," *Chicago Broad-Ax*, 21 July 1900.

⁹² "Presidential Candidate Arrested," *ESLDJ*, 13 July 1904, 3. Brief biographies of Scott in "Wm. T. Scott Dies," *ESLDJ*, 25 January 1917, 5; "The Only Negro Ever a Candidate for President," *St. Louis Argus*, 16 June 1916, 1; William Newton Hartshorn, ed., *Era of Progress and Promise, 1863-1910: The Religious, Moral, and Educational Development of the American Negro Since His Emancipation* (Boston, Mass.: Priscilla Publishing Co., 1910), 471-472; and Monroe N. Work, ed., *Negro Year Book: An Annual Encyclopedia of the Negro, 1918-1919*. 5th ed. (Tuskegee, AL.: Negro Year Book Publishing Co., 1919), 427.

⁹³ "East St. Louis Parties," *ESLDJ*, 29 March 1900, 2.

1900 that the Citizens' Party ceased to be a unifying force in local politics. Black residents sought to protect their own interest as the Citizens' Party declined as competition for resources with other influential, but dissatisfied, constituencies intensified: white railroad employees, businessmen, and progressive reformers.

A substantial number of railroad workers initiated a major realignment in city politics in 1900 when they broke away from the Citizens' Party. First, organized railroad employees, as members of craft unions, lacked interest in non-unionized, unskilled laborers, whose ranks included most black working people. In addition, dissident railroad workers claimed strong ties with the Democratic Party. They denounced both the Republican and Citizens' parties as servants of capitalists and praised the Democratic Party as the friend of the wage earner. Anti-Republican railroad workers formed the East St. Louis Bryan and Stevenson Railroad Men's Club to campaign for national Democratic Party candidates William Jennings Bryan for president and Adlai E. Stevenson for vice president. Their criticism of both political organizations only alienated most African Americans who still supported the national party and who thought they had been served well by Citizens'. Pro-Republican Party railroad employees, led by Illinois Central car repairer J.N. Luckett and yard master E.J. Payne and Mobile & Ohio Railroad yard master M.M. Walsh, organized an East St. Louis McKinley and Roosevelt Railway Men's Club. They sought to prevent further worker defection from the Citizens' and Republican parties.⁹⁴ Though Republicans won in 1900 the district's congressional

⁹⁴ "Railroad Employees at East St. Louis," *Times* (Washington, D.C.), 30 October 1900, clipping attached to letter of J.T. Harahan, Second Vice-President, to Stuyvesant Fish, President [Illinois Central], November 10, 1900, "Fish, Stuyvesant, In-Letters:

seat, many white workers in East St. Louis had voted for Bryan and Stevenson. Their vote reflected a nationwide shift in white worker allegiance from the Republican to the Democratic Party.⁹⁵

These white railroad workers, like white working people across the nation, fashioned an anti-black racism as they built a labor-Democratic Party alliance nationally and locally. Railroad workers, especially skilled workers, in the brotherhoods, systematically excluded black laborers not only from certain unions, but also from various occupations. As white working people strengthened their ties with the national Democratic Party, they accepted the party's embrace of segregation and disfranchisement of African Americans in the southern states. White workers in East St. Louis through their unions became more interested in the local Democratic Party, and their leaders viewed the party as a platform for the advancement of labor concerns in city hall. The CTLU to influence municipal affairs sponsored large annual Labor Day parades, ran political education campaigns, and fielded labor candidates for city government offices. White railroad workers through the CTLU and other organizations began to lay the foundation for labor as an important, albeit junior, partner of the real estate-led faction in city government.⁹⁶

Retail business men comprised the core of the second major constituency to split from the Citizens' Party. They formed in 1901 their own Republican Party club to

President's Office, Jan. 1883-Nov. 1906," 1 F 2.2, Newberry Library. Adlai E. Stevenson was the grandfather of Adlai E. Stevenson II, the unsuccessful Democratic Party candidate for president in 1952 and 1956.

⁹⁵ *1912 City Directory*, 1526.

⁹⁶ "Labor Unions and Lodges," *ESLDJ*, 25 October 1909, 5, section 1.

oppose the Citizens' fiscal policies. Merchant J.B. Sikking of the Retail Merchants Association of East St. Louis led these businessmen in forming temporary coalition with the local Democratic Party to defeat the Citizens' Party.⁹⁷ Sikking's faction anticipated further revenue shortfalls when city and county agencies lowered the assessment on industrial property from \$5,359,000 to \$4,500,000. They understood that any successor to the Citizens' Party had to rescue the city from the twin policies of unfettered economic growth through service to corporations and dependency upon saloons and an underworld economy to cover fiscal shortfalls.⁹⁸ The business community, in making City Hall less generous with public works projects and patronage, placed itself on a collision course with the black community that relied upon such largesse.

African Americans in East St. Louis continued to support the declining Citizens' Party because of its previous offers of patronage and access to political resources. Given equal offers of patronage, black voters supported local Republican over local Democratic candidates because of the national Democratic Party's advocacy of segregation and disfranchisement of black Southerners. In 1901, Georgia born teamster J.H. Burkhalter and Arkansas born delivery wagon driver Parnell Gibbs founded the Colored Men's Progressive Club to work for the Citizens' Party by backing Republican candidates for state and congressional seats.⁹⁹ At a meeting of St. Clair County African American voters backing the Republican Party in 1902, the majority present denounced those who

⁹⁷ "The So-Called Republican Ticket," *ESLDJ*, 25 February 1901, 2. Background information on J.B. Sikking in *East St. Louis Retail Merchants Association Commercial Profile*, 2.

⁹⁸ "Important to East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 13 March 1901, 2.

⁹⁹ "Colored Voters Organized," *ESLDJ*, 7 March 1901, 3. Burkhalter and Gibbs' places of birth and occupations listed in *Population Schedules, 1900, Illinois*.

avored the Democratic Party, forcibly ejecting one Democratic supporter, William T. Scott, from the hall. Activists appointed Daniel Adams of the Citizens' Party to head an ad hoc committee to issue resolutions to condemn the Democratic Party for its disregard of black people's rights and to reaffirm black support for the Republican Party.¹⁰⁰

The municipal election campaign of 1903 saw many black East St. Louisans aligning with Democrats who had formed the Independent Municipal Party that promised African American representation in the police and fire departments.¹⁰¹ To prevent Democratic inroads into the black vote, Republicans Captain John Robinson and H.F. Bowman of the Rush City and Tudorville Citizens' Club campaigned for the Citizens' Party ticket headed by Mayor Stephens.¹⁰² A majority of black residents in the predominantly African Americans precincts in the second and third wards voted for Independent Municipal Party office seekers, including its candidate for Mayor, Silas Cook.¹⁰³ In May, black politicians who had made the Independent Municipal Party victory possible, called upon party bosses to honor their promises of patronage.¹⁰⁴

Black Republicans stepped up their organizing drive in 1906 to counter Democratic ascendancy among African Americans in East St. Louis. Saloonkeeper Richard Freeman as president and Tennessee born laborer Alex Lane as vice president of the newly formed Colored Lincoln-Roosevelt Republican League began rebuilding

¹⁰⁰ "Colored Voters All Right," *ESLDJ*, 27 October 1902, 3.

¹⁰¹ "Colored Recognition," *ESLDJ*, 14 May 1903, 2.

¹⁰² "Colored Citizens," *ESLDJ*, 25 March 1903, 3.

¹⁰³ "Unofficial Vote Cast in East St. Louis at Election April 7, 1903," *ESLDJ*, 8 April 1903, 2.

¹⁰⁴ "Colored Recognition," *ESLDJ*, 14 May 1903, 2. No evidence was found to determine if the Independent Municipal Party awarded patronage to black voters.

Republican ties with black voters.¹⁰⁵ Leaguers extracted from the Republican Party promises of patronage, an aldermanic seat for the majority black second ward, and judge and election clerk positions in an effort to prove to black East St. Louisans that the party valued their votes. But black residents received few rewards in 1908 when the party, on the strength of the black vote, won state and federal offices.¹⁰⁶

As black political operatives became more adept at managing the black vote, they earned the ire of party bosses whose sharp contests for control of the city left them with little patience for black political strategies. These operatives convinced black voters to cast their ballots for machine bosses like real estate men and city boosters Locke Tarlton and Thomas Canavan or their proxies. But black political workers often became targets for their bosses' enemies. For example, black Citizens' Party worker James Turley in 1907 received a severe beating by a police officer in the employ of one of Canavan's opponents.¹⁰⁷ In 1908, Joseph Suttles and bartender William Mosely, campaigning for white politician Mr. Tecklenburg, State's Attorney of St. Clair County and a friend of Democrats Tarlton and Canavan, were arrested for selling liquor on the day of the Illinois primaries by black deputy sheriff George Brockman, who was acting on orders from his boss C.E. Chamberlin, a Republican trying to unseat Tecklenburg.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ "Elect Officers," *ESLDJ*, 2 September 1906, 8. Other major figures in the league were Missouri born laborer Henry Clay, Georgia born steamboat hand Stephen Craft, occupations and place of birth in *Population Schedules, 1900, Illinois*; laborers George Brockman and Gran A. Duncan, glass factory worker William Freeman, and hotel cook Fred Howard, occupations from the *1912 City Directory*.

¹⁰⁶ "Colored Voters to Demand Commensurate Recognition," *ESLDJ*, 9 November 1908, 4.

¹⁰⁷ "A Diabolical Deed," *ESLDJ*, 7 April 1907, 5.

¹⁰⁸ "State's Attorney," *ESLDJ*, 2 September 1908, 3.

Members of the Citizens' Party's third major constituency, progressive reformers, slowly broke away from the party to organize by 1910 an oppositional force, the Progressive Citizens' Party, to challenge political machines bosses and win city elections.¹⁰⁹ Progressive Citizens' included former members of both the Progressive and Citizens' parties.¹¹⁰ Not all members of the Progressive Citizens' espoused the party's reform agenda. Some, like real estate man Thomas Canavan, were simply opportunists who continued their involvement in machine politics. The Progressive Citizens' Party, representing the tide of progressivism that swept across America, combined the politics of individual moral responsibility with the demand for honest government.¹¹¹ Progressive Citizens' allied in 1910 with former President Theodore Roosevelt's wing of the national Republican Party in opposition to party regulars who supported Howard Taft. They accused the Administration Party, the successor to the Citizens' Party, of rampant corruption and campaigned for controlled economic growth, sound management of city government, good citizenship, and the restoration of law and order.

¹⁰⁹ "The Progressive Citizens Party," in "News You Read in Your Journal of 25 Years Ago Today," *ESLDJ*, 1 March 1935, 6; "To-Morrow," *ESLDJ*, 4 April 1910, 4.

¹¹⁰ "News You Read in Your Journal of 25 Years Ago Today," *ESLJ*, 1 March 1935, 6. Former Progressive Party members included Charles S. Lambert, Fred Gerold, William Roach, John Kickhan, Joseph Nester, Louis Draggon, C.G. Derleth, and Eugene S. Coddington. Former Citizens' Party members were M.M. Stephens, Frank Keating, George W. Brichler, Henry J. Eckert, A.G. Schlvetter, Fred Glessing, Thomas J. Canavan, and John E. Garvey.

¹¹¹ For a general history of the progressive era in urban America see Steven J. Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); Miller, Melvin, *The Urbanization of Modern America*; Raymond A. Mohl, *The New City: Urban America in the Industrial Age, 1860-1920* (Arlington Heights, IL.: Harlan Davidson, 1985). 85-88; Monkkonen, *America Becomes Urban*. On progressives' concerns of stressing moral responsibility and changing urban environment see, for example, Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978).

African American townspeople took advantage of the sharpening divisions between machine politicians and reformers. During the municipal election of 1910, they aligned with either the machine's Administration Party, the new name of the local Democratic Party, or the reformers' Progressive Citizens' Party. Black voters received overtures from white politicians of both organizations as they fought for control of the city.¹¹² Noah Parden, for one, found Progressive Citizens' attractive, connecting the party's platform for prosperity and sound municipal government with racial uplift, sobriety, and respectability.¹¹³ But other political operatives, viewing patronage as a steppingstone to political power, backed the Administration Party. Residents had the choice of voting for two African American candidates, Progressive Citizens' Parden and Administration's Leroy Bundy, both competing for a seat on the Board of Assistant Supervisors of St. Clair County. Black East St. Louisans, however, knew that white organizations' support of African American candidates on party tickets was not a common occurrence anywhere in the nation. They hoped that a Parden or Bundy victory opened the way for greater access for African Americans to City Hall. But Progressive Citizens', winning the election, credited its success to white voters' disgust with "vice, dishonesty, crime, and corruption," and proclaimed it had delivered the most "crushing blow ever administered to boodle, graft, and vice." Black residents expected little, if any, patronage when Progressive Citizens' Parden won an Assistant Supervisor seat. In

¹¹² "Progressive Citizens Candidates," *ESLDJ*, 20 March 1910, 10. The Progressive Citizens' arose after the demise of the Citizens' Party, roughly approximating the split in the national Republican Party between the regulars who supported President William Howard Taft and the progressives who supported former President Theodore Roosevelt.

¹¹³ "To-morrow," *ESLDJ*, 4 April 1910, 4.

addition their backing of Progressive Citizens' did not end reformers' use of racist imagery to blame black people for political corruption.¹¹⁴

From 1910 to 1912, black Republicans, concluded that Progressive Citizens', like the local Democratic Party under any name, had no interest in serving black residents. They made tentative moves to claim decision-making control of their wards so as to be independent of white political machines. Their effort to win political power received much impetus after Progressive Citizens' boss and Republican Congressman William A. Rodenberg refused to award black people patronage other than janitorial positions. In 1912, saloonkeeper Addison King and hod carrier Anderson B. Woods formed the Colored Progressive Republican League of East St. Louis to oppose Rodenberg. They weakened the congressman in the eyes of black voters by criticizing his failure to assist a congressional committee investigating an altercation that had occurred in 1906 between African American soldiers and white authorities in Brownsville, Texas. Leaguers organized anti-Rodenberg political clubs to exploit the rift within the local Republican

¹¹⁴ "Progressive Citizens Candidates," *ESLDJ*, 20 March 1910, 10; "Progressive Citizens Party Makes Practical Clean Sweep," *ESLDJ*, 6 April 1910, 1, 4. The Progressive Citizens', emphasizing class harmony, fielded candidates with ties to both labor and business. Those with connections to labor came Illinois Central Railroad machinist John C. Malinee, packinghouse butcher recently turned businessman Daniel O'Brien, former Big Four Railroad clerk now fire department chief Edward F. Dowling, and former Elliot Frog and Switch Works employee now proprietor of the Soellinger Bakery Theodore Soellinger. Candidates with ties to the business community included Claus E. Tiejé of the Tiejé Grocer Company, brick contractor Andrew Rouge, Peerless Baking Company manager Michael Mackin, and proprietor of the Summers Sheet Metal Works, Neil Summers.

organization between President Howard Taft Republicans, including Rodenberg, and Theodore Roosevelt progressives.¹¹⁵

The East St. Louis chapter of the Afro American Protective League of Illinois emphasized to black townspeople that their vote illustrated the African American struggle for freedom and equality. The organization had a keen interest in promoting black political independence from white machine bosses. It used the annual commemoration of the day when Emancipation Proclamation was first announced to promote its program to support black political candidate for local and state governments. For example, the chapter sponsored in September 1912 the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation.¹¹⁶ Speakers contrasted the document's promise of freedom with the curtailment of civil rights expected if Woodrow Wilson and his segregationist supporters won the White House in November. Leading black East St. Louisans, though their oration went unrecorded, spoke how African Americans intended to reshape the city's political culture.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ "Negroes in Mass Meeting Repudiate Rodenberg," *ESLDJ*, 4 November 1910, 1, 2; "Colored Voters Organized Club," *ESLDJ*, 20 September 1912, 2.

¹¹⁶ On African American freedom festivals keeping alive the memory of milestones in African American history see, for example, Mitch Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom: Memory and Meaning in African American Emancipation Celebrations, 1808-1915* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); Thavolia Glymph, "'Liberty Dearly Bought': The Making of Civil War Memory in Afro-American Communities in the South," in *Time Longer Than Rope*, 111-139.

¹¹⁷ "Grand United Emancipation Day," *ESLDJ*, 22 September 1912, section three, 3. Local black leaders at the celebration in 1912, included John Robinson, president of the Illinois Afro-American Protective League; Clara Bates, her husband a saloonkeeper; barber James E. Bland, secretary of the Progressive Citizens' League; school administrator Benjamin Franklin Bowles; driver Henry Brown; schoolteacher J.M.D. Brown; laborer William M. Chambers; Reverend Sidney Cheers of Mt. Olive Baptist Church; cook General Cooper; Reverend John DeShields of St. Paul's Baptist Church;

Independent-minded politicians and their friends had to extricate themselves from William A. Rodenberg, whose machine exerted much control among black Republicans. They did not wait long for Rodenberg to counterattack in 1912 by manipulating the voting process and intimidating them. Anti-Rodenberg Republicans became targets when the machine assigned black operatives Terminal Railroad employee John Jefferson and driver John Green to import African Americans from southern Illinois into East St. Louis for the purpose of padding voter registration rolls for the Republican Party.¹¹⁸ Additional harassment ensued when Rodenberg's black loyalists filed affidavits questioning the qualifications of dissident black Republican voters.¹¹⁹ Independent African Americans realized that Rodenberg used such tactics to discipline them into doing his bidding on election day.¹²⁰ Lincoln High School principal Benjamin F. Bowles became the first major casualty of the Rodenberg offensive in 1913 when the machine successfully pressured the school board not to rehire him. Bowles in 1914 accused Rodenberg of recklessly taking advantage of East St. Louis for his own profit and riding roughshod over black Republicans.¹²¹ The Bowles episode did not alter the balance of

Dora Easterly, her husband grocer William M. Easterly, president of the Progressive Citizens' League; bartender William Garrett; Reverend M.L. Jackson; Illinois Central Railroad employee Henry McGill; Ella Prince, her husband a Tudor Iron Works employee; hod carrier Walter Rankins; laborer Samuel R. Wheat; and Morris & Company packinghouse laborer Robert William. Their occupations listed in *1912 City Directory*.

¹¹⁸ "Colonizing Voters," *ESLDJ*, 1 August 1912, 3.

¹¹⁹ "A Rodenberg Trick," *ESLDJ*, 8 November 1912, 6.

¹²⁰ "The Public Pulse: Rodenberg Rush Colonizing Negroes for Voting Purposes," *ESLDJ*, 18 September 1912, 2.

¹²¹ "Board of Education Eliminates Supervisors," *ESLDJ*, 13 May 1913, 1, 4. On Bowles' professional background see "Was Elected Vice-President," *ESLDJ*, 6 July 1905, 3; "B.F. Bowles Honored," *ESLDJ*, 31 July 1912, 8; Hamilton, *The Ebony Tree*,

power, but it dramatized to those seeking a strong black political presence that machine politicians intended to squelch such a possibility.

White political machines wanted to secure the black vote largely because their opponents who espoused some form of progressive reform of city government and politics had been gaining influence. From 1913 to 1915, political bosses and progressive reformers in a dizzying dance of shifting alliances clashed for control of City Hall. Some politicians, including Canavan and Tarlton, played both sides, giving token support to reform in order to retain their grip in those areas of city affairs relating to economic development. In 1913, they backed progressive mayoral candidate John Chamberlin, who after becoming mayor, suppressed prostitution, gambling, and illegal saloons. His actions alienated Canavan, Tarlton, and their allies who benefited financially and in other ways from the operation of such enterprises. Republican political bosses Fred Gerold and Charles Lambert and their followers who also opposed Chamberlin's moral cleansing program decided to take their revenge against Chamberlin in the upcoming municipal election of 1915 by backing Canavan and Tarlton's Democratic candidate, Fred Mollman, for mayor.¹²²

In election year 1915, Mayor John M. Chamberlin's Administration Party, formerly the Progressive Citizens', saw its reform agenda compromised by the actions of

34. Among the seven of the eleven board members not rehiring Bowles were S.J. Cashel, brother of county sheriff Charles Cashel who prevented a lynching in Belleville in 1909, and Canavan protégée Fred Mollman who ran for mayor in 1915. "The Public Pulse: A Plea for Statesmanship Instead of Politics," *ESLDJ*, 2 November 1914, section two, 1.

¹²² "Gerold's Office Now Mollman Headquarters," *ESLDJ*, 30 March 1915, 1; "Lambert's Self-Arraignment and Self-Condensation," *ESLDJ*, 4 April 1915, section two, 4.

some of the party's leading members who had profited from corruption and vice under his tenure. For example, when Administration Party member Fred Gerold had served as city treasurer and tax collector, he had stolen from City Hall by making duplicate payments of interest on several transactions and retaining a two per cent commission on nearly fifty thousand dollars. When Gerold later demanded payment for services rendered, Mayor Chamberlin denied the request, thinking that by taking a stand against corruption, he insured his own reelection. Instead, Chamberlin split his party into factions, sending members whom he had angered over to the Greater East St. Louis Party where they supported mayoral nominee lawyer Fred Mollman.¹²³

Progressives within the Administration Party who remained loyal to Mayor Chamberlin saw an opportunity to implement their agenda and to realign political power to favor progressive reform. They regarded the April election of 1915 for mayor and city council key in the battle against political bosses. The Chamberlin faction claimed that Canavan, Tarlton, and their allies had shamelessly exploited East St. Louis and that that Mollman tolerated "a 'wide open city,' in which 'everything goes.'"¹²⁴ Reformers opposed unrestricted economic growth advocates Fred Gerold and Charles Lambert who had joined forces with machine boss politicians Canavan and William Rodenberger. They charged that Gerold, Lambert, Rodenberger, and Canavan had bankrupted the city and controlled mayoral candidate Fred Mollman. They also accused the Canavan-dominated Levee Board of extracting more revenue annually from townspeople than did

¹²³ "Gerold's Office Now Mollman Headquarters," *ESLDJ*, 30 March 1915, 1.

¹²⁴ "Their Double-Dealing Tactics," and "The Muncipal Campaign," *ESLDJ*, 2 April 1915, 4; "Mollman Success Would Strangle Money Market," *ESLDJ*, 5 April 1915, 1.

City Hall. According to Canavan's opponents, the Levee Board had channeled tax money to pay the interest, amounting to \$370,000, on bonds issued for unnecessary construction work and funneled the payments into a local bank account for the purpose of funding Mollman's campaign.¹²⁵

As black East St. Louisans moved into a position to swing the 1915 municipal election to their benefit, they witnessed an upward spiraling in the use of racist imagery and rhetoric by machine politicians and reformers. Black political operative "Kid" Amos became the focus of a racial fear campaign initiated by progressive reformers who denounced him for working with the Canavan-Tarlton faction. Amos symbolized progressives' nightmare of African American involvement in vice, corruption, and attempts to control the political life of East St. Louis. "Kid" Amos, who had left East St. Louis during one of Chamberlin's moral cleansing campaigns, returned in 1915 to restart his brothel business in the Valley after Canavan and Tarlton promised him immunity from prosecution for running a brothel in exchange for his delivery of the black vote. African Americans knew that in going after Amos the machine signaled to white voters its ability to control both black voters and black undesirables like Amos.¹²⁶ African American demands for patronage and power-sharing did not sit well with Chamberlin and the progressives who portrayed African Americans as seasoned practitioners of government corruption.

¹²⁵ "Gerold's Office Now Mollman Headquarters," *ESLDJ*, 30 March 1915, 1; "Mollman Admits He Should Be Defeated," "A Challenge to Mollman and Managers," "Their Double-Dealing Tactics," and "Would Tax the Angels and Saints," *ESLDJ*, 2 April 1915, 4.

¹²⁶ "'Kid' Amos Will Come Back If Mollman Wins," *ESLDJ*, 2 April 1915, section one, 1; "Police Put Lid on Black Crook," *ESLDJ*, 4 April 1915, section two, 1.

Black East St. Louisans had good reason to anticipate progress for their community after the election. Their influence had dramatically increased in 1913 as African American women entered the formal political arena after Illinoisan women gained the right to vote in local elections. The issue of black women voters had to be problematic issue for reformers who hoped to rally newly enfranchised women to the progressive cause. Black clubwomen's message of racial uplift seemed to reinforce reformers' moral appeals for eliminating prostitution and other perceived as social ills. But apparently enough black women voters, seeking to increase the political strength of their community, opted for patronage, rejecting reformers' visions of honest government.¹²⁷

Black voters saw in April 1915 the progressives win a majority of aldermanic seats. Chamberlin lost the mayoral election even though a majority of women, presumably those of the white middle class, supported the ticket's moral progressive message. Chamberlin and his allies charged that the black vote had brought Mollman to victory. Chamberlin's Administration Party won five out of eight aldermanic seats, but lost to Mollman by just twenty-seven votes. Progressives thinking that their message for honest government had garnered wide appeal, began preparing for the next city election.¹²⁸ All factions now assumed that African American activists expected Mollman to respond favorably to black demands.

¹²⁷ "Women Voters Out for Chamberlin," *ESLDJ*, 5 April 1915, 1. On Illinoisan women's vote in local elections see Wanda A. Hendricks, *Gender, Race, and Politics in the Midwest: Black Club Women in Illinois* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), xvi.

¹²⁸ "Chamberlin Wins Most of Ticket," *ESLDJ*, 7 April 1915, 4.

Conclusion

In 1915, during the first year of World War I, amidst a booming wartime economy and the Great Migration, African Americans in East St. Louis were poised to become powerbrokers in city politics. Like African Americans across the United States, black East St. Louisans maintained an activist tradition that through community institutions, labor unions, and political clubs opposed segregation and anti-black violence and sought to attain electoral political power. Black East St. Louisans devised a wide array of strategies and tactics as they related to various factions of white townspeople, including union leaders and organizers, workers, progressive reformers, boss politicians, and businessmen, each group with its own political agenda. A significant number of black residents channeled their energy into electoral politics. Slowly but steadily from 1900 into the 1910s, they gained a foothold in the urban industrial economy and secured greater access to city government by shaping the black community as a voting bloc to win a share of patronage and power. By 1915, black residents had become a source of white fears that the “[N]egro held the balance of political power.”¹²⁹ The increasingly assertive black population that was reshaping the city’s political culture strengthened the resolve of political bosses and progressive reformers to reverse the expansion of black

¹²⁹ Robert A. Conway in *House Transcripts*, 170.

political strength that they viewed as a threat to white entitlements. In 1917, agents of the state opted for violence to solve their “Negro problem.”

The urban industrial economy promised a better way of life for black Americans, especially for those escaping from the poverty, disfranchisement, and racial violence of the South.¹³⁰ This economy became the milieu for the transformation of African Americans from predominantly rural to urban, mainly industrial working class, people.¹³¹ Whether or not the promise of a viable livelihood was fulfilled, black people found the social space in the urban industrial economy to build their communities and to shape relationships with organizations like trade unions and political parties. In time, urban industrial centers in the North and Midwest became a base for black Americans to gain political leverage at the national level to support their southern kin in their sustained challenge to Jim Crow.¹³²

¹³⁰ On the South, see especially Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*, 107-395.

¹³¹ Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*.

¹³² Kimberley Phillips, *Alabama North: African-American Migrants, Community, and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland, 1915-45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue. Vol. I: The Depression Decade* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1978); Joe William Trotter, Jr., ed., *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), x.

Chapter Three. The Wartime Great Migration, Political Powerbrokers,
Labor Conflicts, and Mass Anti-Black Violence of May 1917

World War I ushered in a period of major change for black Americans in northern industrial cities, including East St. Louis. It provided an unprecedented opportunity for hundreds of thousands of black Southerners to migrate north when national mobilization opened wide the urban industrial economy. Migrants obtained employment, sought social and economic advancement, and hoped to fulfill their aspirations for a better way of life. The war made race relations fluid, allowing African Americans the possibility to achieve equality and exercise their democratic rights. But it also created an environment where conflicts erupted as the arrival of black southern migrants heightened social problems in workplaces, public spaces, and neighborhoods. Black Southerners encountered hostility from white political leaders and white working and middle class people who wanted to return to rigid prewar race relations by imposing, at times through physical violence, limits on the extent of freedom that African Americans assumed was theirs to exercise.¹

Migrants arrived in East St. Louis to a mixed reception. Many black residents like physician Lyman Bluit welcomed them for their contribution to the development of

¹ On the Great Migration and its creating or contributing to social tension see, for example, Elliott M. Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964); William M. Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Atheneum, 1970).

black community institutions, their patronization of African American businesses, and their support of black politicians.² Anti-migrant sentiment, when it did exist among black townspeople was muted in East St. Louis as the majority of established African American residents were of southern origin unlike those in Chicago and other northerly cities. White East St. Louisans proved to be the chief source of vehement anti-migration sentiments.³ Former Mayor H.F. Bader and Justice of the peace Russell Townsend blamed migrants for crime, substandard housing, and other urban problems.⁴ Central Trades and Labor Union of East St. Louis (CTLU) secretary Edward Mason argued that black southern migrant laborers contributed to labor disputes as they displaced unskilled white factory workers.⁵ Others feared that the expanding number of voting age migrants increased the possibility of black politicians winning seats on the city council. As Armour & Company meatpacking manager Robert Conway noted, the “[N]egro [held] the balance of political power.”⁶ Conway voiced a fear common among white residents that the black migration had propelled the African American community into a force in city affairs. White townspeople debated how to maintain their position in the social

² Lyman B. Bluit in United States, Congress, House, Special Committee To Investigate the East St. Louis Race Riots, *Transcripts of the Hearings of the House Select Committee That Investigated the Race Riots in East St. Louis, Illinois, 1917* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1918), 1362-1366, hereafter cited as *House Transcripts*; Leroy N. Bundy in Illinois State Council of Defense (World War I), *Report of the Labor Committee of the State Council of Defense of Illinois Upon the Inquiry into the Recent Influx of Southern Negro Laborers into East St. Louis and the Race Riot in Connection Therewith . . . June 2, 1917*, 69, microfilm roll no. 30-873, RS517.020, Illinois State Archives, Springfield, hereafter cited as *Labor Committee Report*.

³ Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917*, 4-6, 174-196.

⁴ Maurice V. Joyce in *Labor Committee Report*, 19; James W. Kirk, and H.F. Bader, and Russell E. Townsend, in *House Transcripts*, 3202, and 3447, and 4470-4471.

⁵ Edward Mason in *House Transcripts*, 3122.

⁶ Robert E. Conway, and Thomas J. Canavan in *House Transcripts*, 170, and 1413-1414.

hierarchy without resorting to the legal segregation of the South. White East St. Louisans with a racist political agenda were first among white Northerners during the war years to use mass violence to preserve their power over black people.

Black Southern Migrants

Black southerners migrated north for economic advancement, opportunities for their children, political rights, and freedom from injustice and white domination.⁷ Many black people had left plantation districts, most notably the Mississippi Delta region, to escape the horrors of planter rule. In the South they had struggled to control their own institutions and cooperative movements, employing an array of strategies in face of planters' efforts to decrease black landownership and coerce black churches, schools, and organizations to serve the interests of the plantation economy.⁸ African American Southerners forged a political sensibility honed from fighting oppression that reinforced

⁷ Evidence found thus far showed that from 1915 to 1917 black migrants to East St. Louis talked solely about jobs. But what Leroy Bundy in *Labor Committee Report*, 69-72, and Lyman Bluit in *House Transcripts*, 1363, learned from migrants is similar to migrants' responses in Emmett Scott, "Documents: Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916-1918" and "Additional Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916-1916," *Journal of Negro History*, 4 (July 1919) and 4 (October 1919): 290-340, and 412-465.

⁸ Nan Elizabeth Woodruff, *American Congo: The African American Freedom Struggle in the Delta* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 21-46. 4-5, 21-46.

an imposed racial inferiority and class exploitation.⁹ Black southern migrants shaped the Great Migration into a self-directed, seemingly leaderless grassroots social movement.¹⁰

African Americans exploited the opportunities presented by World War I. They took advantage of manufacturers' need to expand industrial output for the United States to supply Great Britain and France in the war against Germany. Black migrants filled job openings created as the war halted European immigration, sent many immigrant laborers back to fight for their homelands, and greatly expanded higher paying war production jobs for large numbers of native-born white and immigrant workers. Black migrants, as Leroy Bundy, one of the leading black politicians in East St. Louis, observed, considered the two dollars a day wage in the North superior to the uncertain employment and the one dollar a day wage in the South.¹¹

Many migrants became aware of available jobs in East St. Louis from a variety of sources. They heard about employment opportunities from relatives and friends who

⁹ Steven Hahn, *A Nation under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 465-468; Milton C. Sernett, *Bound for the Promised Land: African American Religion and the Great Migration* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 11-12.

¹⁰ Migration as black agency see Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot*, 88; Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 6, 19, 38-40, 57, 161; Joe William Trotter, Jr., ed., *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), xi, 15; Robert Gregg, *Sparks from the Anvil of Oppression: Philadelphia's African Methodists and Southern Migrants, 1890-1940* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 147; Kimberley Phillips, *Alabama North: African-American Migrants, Community, and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland, 1915-45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

¹¹ Leroy Bundy in *Labor Committee Report*, 74-75.

resided in the city. Some migrants read job ads placed by managers like Missouri Malleable Iron Company superintendent John Pero in newspapers in Nashville, Tennessee, Vicksburg, Mississippi, and other southern locales. Black southerners also found out about employment from labor recruiters for companies like Obear-Nestor Glass.¹² Others received assistance in finding work in East St. Louis from their churches and other community institutions. After the initial wave of migrants established themselves in East St. Louis, they in turn became sources of information about employment opportunities for their friends and relatives.¹³

Black men and women migrants comprised a diverse group in terms of work experience. Some had previously performed, though not necessarily fulltime, industrial or non-agricultural work prior to leaving the South.¹⁴ For example, Andrew Avery, a Kemper County, Mississippi, farmer, had worked in sawmills during the winter months. Alabama-born William Kings had also held a sawmill job for seven years in Laurel, Mississippi. Warren King, from Garvetson, Alabama, had labored as a steel mill worker in nearby Birmingham.¹⁵ But many migrants, mainly sharecroppers and agriculturalists,

¹² John P. Pero, and Clarence Eugene Pope in *House Transcripts*, 692-694, and 2771.

¹³ Frank A. Hunter, and Robert E. Conway, and Frank G. Cunningham, and John P. Pero, and Clarence Eugene Pope in *House Transcripts*, 71, and 140-141, and 200-201, and 692-694, and 2771.

¹⁴ Carole Marks, *Farewell—We're Good and Gone* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); Gregg, *Sparks from the Anvil of Oppression*, 13-15. See Hahn, *A Nation under Our Feet*, 414-425, for activities of black industrial laborers in trade unions or other workers' organizations, including the Knights of Labor, in the South from the 1870s into the 1890s.

¹⁵ William Kings, and Warren King, and Andrew Avery in *Labor Committee Report*, 149-150, and 151-156, and 160-166.

had no prior urban industrial experience.¹⁶ Many women who migrated north had toiled as servants in white people's homes.¹⁷

By 1916, African American Southerners controlled and sustained the networks that facilitated the migration. Kin, friends, and neighbors mobilized through personal contacts to move information as well as people who needed to know about jobs, housing, and city life. For example, George Lewis and Sam Pettis, both from Oxford, Mississippi, and Alabaman William Kings received assistance from relatives and friends in obtaining jobs at the East St. Louis and Suburban Railroad Company. John Betts from Columbus, Mississippi, who had worked seasonally in sawmills, on farms, and for the Mobile & Ohio Railroad, got help from his wife's brother-in-law Henry Billips in securing a job at American Steel Foundries. Betts in turn sent money home to his wife, Daisy, who later followed him to East St. Louis. She obtained a job as a laborer at Obear-Nester Glass Company, one of the few industries that employed significant numbers of black women.¹⁸ Black southerners also relied upon community institutions, particularly their churches, for information about and leadership and organization of the migration. At times black

¹⁶ Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way*; Grossman, *Land of Hope*.

¹⁷ Bunch-Lyons, *Contested Terrain*; Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, *Living In, Living Out: American Domestic and the Great Migration* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1994); Darlene Clark Hine, "Black Migration to the Urban Midwest: The Gender Dimension, 1915-1945," in Trotter, *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective*, 130-142; Woodruff, *American Congo*, 29.

¹⁸ John and Daisy Betts, and William Kings, and George Lewis, and Sam Pettis in *Labor Committee Report*, 135-145, and 149-151, and 157-160, and 167-171. A contemporary account of black women industrial workers, see Emma L. Shields, *Negro Women in Industry* (Washington, DC: G.P.O., 1922). On similar networks of kin and friends see, for example, Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way*; Hahn, *A Nation under Our Feet*, 466-468.

ministers took a direct role in aiding migrants.¹⁹ The Reverend Thomas W. Wallace, pastor of St. John's A.M.E. Church in East St. Louis, for example, traveled with an annual pass from meatpackers, to southern packinghouses, encouraging black laborers to migrate north.²⁰

To Build an Independent Black Political Machine

Black politicians in various northern cities welcomed the Great Migration as it expanded the size of the African American voting population and increased opportunities for patronage and access to political power.²¹ In East St. Louis black politicians molded a voting bloc to swing elections. Lyman Bluit, for one, advised migrants when voting in local elections to vote not the party but the candidate, Republican or Democrat, promising patronage.²² Bluit and his colleagues hoped to maneuver both white Democrats and Republicans toward a dependency on black voters, thus shaping the black community as a political powerbroker.

African Americans regarded the national election of 1916 as a critical test of black political success. Black people across the urban North saw their growing political strength affecting party alignments. They knew that the national Democratic Party aimed

¹⁹ Sernett, *Bound for the Promised Land*; Gregg, *Sparks from the Anvil of Oppression*.

²⁰ Earl Jimerson in *House Transcripts*, 2090; Reverend Thomas W. Wallace's background in "East St. Louisans Want Riot Inquiry by Judge Landis," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 8 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 7:0146.

²¹ Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot*, 184-186.

²² Bluit, and Kirk in *House Transcripts*, 1364, and 3213-3214, 3380.

to diminish the African American vote in the North where black people had voted overwhelmingly in previous contests for Republicans. Many registered black voters faced the possibility of disfranchisement as local Democratic Party leaders accused city Republicans of “colonizing” and illegally registering black migrants in northern cities.²³ Generally black as well as white East St. Louisans dismissed the charge of colonization as groundless, agreeing that black southerners migrated on their own volition.²⁴ But Democratic Party stalwarts, including CTLU labor organizer Earl Jimerson, accused Republicans of fraudulently registering at least four hundred migrant voters and won a motion from the district court to examine the voter rolls. As a result of the examination, at least two hundred black residents had their names expunged from the lists of registrants.²⁵ The Democratic Party hoped to weaken not only the Republican’s traditional base of support, but also the on-going attempt by some African Americans to build a black political machine.

²³ “Democrats Object to Negro Registration,” *ESLDJ*, 8 October 1916, 1; “Prevent Registration of Imported Negroes,” *ESLDJ*, 9 October 1916, 1; “Register Today,” *ESLDJ*, 17 October 1916, 1; “Big Negro Colonization Scheme,” *ESLDJ*, 19 October 1916, 4; “Negroes Arrive Too Late to Register,” *ESLDJ*, 20 October 1916, 1; “May Make Appeal to Federal Authorities,” *ESLDJ*, 22 October 1916, 1; “Perjury Cases Are Continued,” *ESLDJ*, 31 October 1916, 1. “Government Agents Investigate Reported Colonization of Arrivals from South,” *St Louis Star*, [date unreadable], in *TINCF*, 5:0515; “Mr. Trautman’s Answer in Regard to Colonization Charge,” *ESLDJ*, 1 November 1916, [6]; “Import Negroes,” *ESLDJ*, 5 November 1916, 1.

²⁴ Roy Albertson, and Robert J. Boylan, and W. Green in *House Transcripts*, 471, and 579, and 1127.

²⁵ Jimerson, and Kane in *House Transcripts*, 2024, and 4194-4208; “Democrats Will Have Checkers on the Job at Next Registration,” *ESLDJ*, 11 October 1916, 1; “Honest Voters Are Resenting Corrupt Election Practices,” *ESLDJ*, 1 November 1916, 1; “Honest Voters Victorious in Election Board Scandal,” *ESLDJ*, 3 November 1916, 1.

Some black politicians and community organizers decided to take an independent course to oppose both Democratic leaders who disfranchised African American voters and Republican bosses who took their African American constituency for granted. In 1916, Leroy Bundy, attorney Noah Parden, Bluit, and others, took a bold step toward creating a strong independent black presence by forming the Lowden Club to reelect Republican Governor Frank O. Lowden. They planned to force local Republicans to reward loyal black voters with additional patronage. As Bundy stated, black people sought to be “independent of whites because . . . Negroes got no consideration [from Republicans] in the matter of division of office.”²⁶ Bundy had previously acted without consulting white bosses when he assisted in the local election of spring 1916 black laborer Sam Wheat in defeating a political machine candidate by three hundred votes to his opponent’s ninety-four votes in the predominantly black second ward, for the position of alderman.²⁷ In October 1916, the Lowden Club, by this time renamed the St. Clair County (Colored) Republican League, moved against the Republican Party. Bundy, Lyman Bluit, and other leading league members, such as mortician M.C. Green, a Reverend Duncan (first name not given), realtor Pearl Abernathy, newspaper editor and pastor of St. John’s A.M.E. Church Thomas W. Wallace, carpenter Tom Huddleston, John Eubanks, Mat Hayes, and attorney W.E. Lilly sent Republican bosses a list of demands that included black control of the election campaign in African American

²⁶ “Bundy Involves Mayor in Open Confession,” *ESLDJ*, 26 November 1917, 1, 5.

²⁷ “Negro Elected Alderman of East St. Louis,” *St. Louis Argus*, 7 April 1916, 1.

precincts and the awarding of the county offices of Deputy Coroner and Assistant State's Attorney to black politicians.²⁸

Leaguers turned to the Democratic Party after Republicans rejected their demands. They decided to drive a wedge between white political factions as black Southerners had done before the 1890s of massive disenfranchisement. Leaguers endorsed national and state Republican tickets but supported local Democrats Charles Webb for State's Attorney of St. Clair County, C.P. Renner for county coroner, and real estate politician-businessman George Locke Tarlton and his associates for Levee Board.²⁹

In mid-1916, African American Republican and Democratic Party operatives united in order to raise funds to finance the building of an independent black political machine. St. Clair County (Colored) Republican Leaguers, having been rebuffed by Republican Party bosses, broke from the party and approached the Colored Democratic League in October, requesting that the Democratic League mediate negotiations with Democratic Party boss Tarlton.³⁰ Black Republicans received \$300 from Tarlton to cover office expenses and campaign workers' salaries. They won additional support

²⁸ "Bundy Involves Mayor in Open Confession," *ESLDJ*, 26 November 1917, 1, 5. The newspaper failed to list Reverend Duncan's first name and misspelled Huddleston as Hutterson. See Huddleston in the *1912 City Directory*. Occupations of Eubanks, Green, Hayes [or Matt Hays], Huddleston, and Lilly in the *1912 City Directory*; Wallace's occupation in "East St. Louisans Want Riot Inquiry by Judge Landis," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 8 July 1917, in *Tuskegee Institute News Clippings File*, 7:0146, hereafter cited as *TINCF*.

²⁹ "East St. Louis Negroes to File Protest," *ESLDJ*, 12 October 1916, 1.

³⁰ "Colored Voters Meet, Form Democratic League," *ESLDJ*, 15 October 1916, section two, 2; "Negroes Hold Meeting," *ESLDJ*, 26 October 1916, 1. Officers of the Colored Democratic League in October 1916 were laborer John Clark, president; first vice-president James Dickson; second vice-president Dallas Johnson; secretary Walter Demery; treasurer Joseph Wilson; sergeant-at-arms Gus Johnson.

from the Republican-oriented Afro-American Protective League, which approved of the St. Clair County Republican league's endorsement of certain local white Democratic candidates.³¹ The Republican league had now positioned itself as a powerbroker in the November 1916 and April 1917 elections.

Black Republican and Democratic operatives during the political campaign of November 1916 decided to form a pressure group in order to deliver the black vote to local Democratic candidates.³² They assigned highest priority to increasing the black community's share of patronage and forging an independent path for African Americans in local politics. But white city Democratic and county Republican machine bosses united to insure that leading African American politicians deliver the vote without forming a black political machine. Noah Parden who had continued to work with the Republican Party, anticipating an appointment as Assistant State's Attorney for St. Clair County after the election, found himself under intense pressure to remain loyal to the party. His boss, State's Attorney for St. Clair County and leader of the county Republicans, Hubert Schaumleffel, had angered city Republicans by siding with the Democratic machine that had allied with the St. Clair County (Colored) Republican League. Parden knew that his bosses expected him to deliver the black vote.³³ Black politician Leroy Bundy endured attacks from Democratic Party bosses who alleged that he had committed voter registration fraud and colonized black migrant voters in both East

³¹ "Bundy Involves Mayor in Open Confession," *ESLDJ*, 26 November 1917, 1, 5; Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917*, 186.

³² "Democrats Are Confident of Victorious Election," *ESLDJ*, 6 November 1916, 1; "Unofficial Vote Cast at Election November 7, 1916," *ESLDJ*, 12 November 1916, 4.

³³ "Negro Lawyer Is Appointed Assistant State's Attorney," [title unavailable], 17 November 1916, in *TINCF*, 5:0712.

St. Louis and in Chicago. Bundy who had demonstrated a determination to build an independent black political machine around Sam Wheat's election seemed too risky an ally for Democratic leaders.³⁴ In addition, Bundy and black Baptist minister P.C. Parker became the center of progressive reformers' charges that African Americans sold votes and wallowed in corruption. Again, Bundy topped the list of possible embarrassments for Democratic machine bosses who knew that their progressive opponents had no qualms about connecting African Americans to a corrupt, debt-ridden city government.³⁵

Black Republican and Democratic operatives calculated that the creation of a black political machine in East St. Louis was a real possibility if they skillfully exploited the fissures among white factions. They worked for the reelection of Democratic Mayor Fred Mollman, protégé of Tarlton and Canavan, during the municipal election campaign of April 1917 against Mollman's challenger, John Domhoff. A progressive reformer, Domhoff called for honesty in government and the elimination of brothels, dance halls, gambling houses, and illegal saloons. In March 1917, under orders from Schaumleffel, Parden directed black Republican men and women ward politicians and saloonkeepers to deliver the vote for Mollman. Parden also informed his operatives, especially those who owned or operated saloons or who acted as bondsmen, that Tarlton and Canavan had promised them continued opportunities to make money after a Mollman victory. These patronage seekers now knew that Mollman, Tarlton, Canavan, and their white allies had no intention of threatening their livelihood and source of power by removing saloons and

³⁴ "Negro Dentist Is Held in Chicago," *ESLDJ*, 19 October 1916, 1; "Vote Fraud Inquiry Halts Dr. Bundy," *ESLDJ*, 20 October 1916, 1.

³⁵ "Record Vote Being Cast," *ESLDJ*, 7 November 1916, 1.

other establishments that progressives deemed destructive to a moral social order. Parden and his campaign workers understood that a Domhoff win meant not only a reform government run by progressives, but also certain end to patronage.³⁶

With Mollman's victory, the St. Clair County (Colored) Republican, Colored Democratic, and Afro-American Protective leagues had succeeded in transforming the black community into a powerbroker. They now expected political rewards for securing Mollman's reelection. Nearly four hundred black political activists, including Bundy, Bluit, Parden, Russell M.C. Green, P.C. Parker, celebrated Mollman's victory with a banquet attended by Mollman, ice and coal businessman John H. Drury, and other white politicians who had pledged to advance the interests of black residents.³⁷ But many were angered that they had received less money for selling their votes to Tarlton than black people had in 1914 for selling their votes to Eddie Miller, a Republican boss, real estate and insurance agent, and former secretary to Congressman Rodenberg.³⁸ Black women activists, including Vella Bundy, wife of Leroy Bundy, bitterly criticized Tarlton for failing to pay them anything for their votes.³⁹ But black activists never contemplated that politician businessmen planned to end black political influence altogether.⁴⁰

³⁶ Paul Y. Anderson in *House Transcripts*, 3787-3789. On progressives' obsession to rid cities of brothels, dance halls, and other adult entertainment establishments where intimate interracial exchanges frequently occurred see, for example, Kevin J. Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

³⁷ W. Green in *House Transcripts*, 1128-1132.

³⁸ Anderson in *House Transcripts*, 3801-3802.

³⁹ Allison in *House Transcripts*, 3747-3752, 3761.

⁴⁰ "The Real Cause of [East] St. Louis Riot," *Indianapolis* [second word of title unreadable], 14 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:1022-1023.

Organized Labor Building an Anti-Migration Coalition

White labor leaders attributed labor problems to the upsurge in the number of black southern migrants entering the industrial workforce in northern and Midwestern cities even though far more white than black laborers had flooded the city in search of jobs. While union officials anticipated organizing white newcomers, they held the view that most African American workers, especially black Southerners, were not only anti-union, but also strikebreakers. They shared with white trade unionists elsewhere the thought that low wage black migrants disrupted a golden opportunity to unionize workers and win wage increases during the period of war induced labor shortages. Labor organizers feared that black migrants formed a ready pool of low wage workers for numerous companies like the East St. Louis branch of the American Steel Foundries.⁴¹ But white working people in East St. Louis in 1916 like white workers in other industrial cities gave little thought to the black migration. Instead they eagerly took advantage of labor shortages, engaging in strikes to win higher wages, reduced working hours, improved workplace conditions, and union recognition. Strikes at East St. Louis and Suburban Railroad Company, the meatpacking firms, and the Aluminum Ore Company became pivotal in the local labor movement because combined they involved several thousand employees. The strike wave simply caught the CTLU unprepared since its

⁴¹ Peter Ward in *Labor Committee Report*, 183.

focus had been on the possible impact of the Great Migration on the trade union movement.

The first significant strike that the CTLU connected to the migration, thereby raising issues of race, occurred in May 1916 at East St. Louis and Suburban Railroad Company, a mass transit authority. Workers organized initially without the involvement of the CTLU. The action restricted commerce in East St. Louis and surrounding towns in St. Clair and Madison counties, affecting area residents who depended upon streetcars to commute to jobs, shop downtown, or cross the Mississippi River to St. Louis, Missouri. Track workers demanded a pay increase from 17 and 1/2 cents to 20 cents an hour, a ten hour workday, and collective bargaining rights. In response, the company fired strike organizers and told laborers either to return to work or lose their jobs. Strikers ignored managers' threats and continued the work stoppage, crippling public transportation and retail merchant operations in the region. Strikers who had affiliated their union with the AFL and the CTLU during the course of the labor dispute received support not only from CTLU leaders, but also from merchants, real estate men, and politicians from East St. Louis and other municipalities who pressured the company to agree to a settlement. In July, strikers won their demands for higher wages and collective bargaining rights. CTLU officials learned after negotiations had concluded that the company planned to destroy the new union by subletting work to contractors employing non-union black and white laborers at \$2.25 a day for work that newly unionized workers performed for \$1.75 to \$2.00 a day. Managers, including company official Mr. Meyers, also considered using black southern migrants as a club to destroy the new union, especially since, for whatever

reason, no black workers were members even though they had participated in the work action.⁴²

The brief packinghouse workers' strike in July represented the second major work stoppage in 1916 that CTLU officials quickly connected to the Great Migration. At least 1,800 black and white employees at Armour, Swift, Morris, and East Side Packing, downed their tools on July 22, demanding that management reinstate those dismissed for union organizing. In response, meatpackers, according to a CTLU estimate, most likely greatly exaggerated, brought in fifteen hundred black and white strikebreakers from packinghouses outside of East St. Louis.⁴³ White strikers, according to CTLU, focused their fears upon black strikebreakers, even though African Americans, comprising a significant percentage of the packinghouse workforce, had gone on strike and at a few other worksites had acted as strike leaders. The strike ended on July 25 when managers, eager to resume production, agreed to rehire dismissed union organizers and to allow union presence on the shop floor. Trade unionist Earl Jimerson, however, warned Mayor Mollman to expect black migrants to be killed if companies used them to break future strikes.⁴⁴

Northern labor leaders and organizers expressed the opinion that the migration spelled impending disaster for trade unions. American Federation of Labor (AFL)

⁴² Towers in *House Transcripts*, 2414-2421, 2424, 2427; Malcolm McLaughlin, *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 90.

⁴³ Hunter, and Kerr in *House Transcripts*, 75, and 1863-1864; Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917*, 20-21.

⁴⁴ Conway in *Labor Committee Report*, 9; Jimerson in *House Transcripts*, 2018, 2020, 2022, 2056, 2123; Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917*, 21-22, 147; McLaughlin, *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis*, 90-91.

president Samuel Gompers in October 1916 requested AFL district organizer Harry Kerr to investigate and report on the black migration and its impact upon the labor movement in East St. Louis. Trade unionists assumed employers were poised to crush unions by ensuring that the number of black migrant laborers had risen above the number of available jobs.⁴⁵ Earl Jimerson and other AFL and CTLU officials accused managers of flooding the labor market with migrants in order to drive down white workers' wages and living standard and destroy unions. Unskilled black workers, according to trade unionist Alois Towers, posed a direct threat to unskilled white workers' job security.⁴⁶

The Aluminum Ore Company strike in October 1916 had no connection to black migrants, but it set the stage for a second strike in April 1917 that the CTLU connected with the Great Migration. The first strike began on October 9 when employees, accusing managers of instituting an unfair payroll schedule, walked off the job. Five days later, strikers won their demands for a wage increase and an eight-hour workday.⁴⁷ Managers had quickly settled the strike to avoid the possibility of workers coordinating their strike with one occurring at Aluminum Ore's bauxite supplier, the Arkansas Works in Bauxite, Arkansas.⁴⁸ In November, sixteen hundred men, nearly the entire workforce, decided to

⁴⁵ Frank E. Nulsen in *House Transcripts*, 1043-1046.

⁴⁶ Harry Kerr, and Jimerson, and Alois Towers in *House Transcripts*, 1865, and 2068, 2089-2090, and 2414, 2432-2435.

⁴⁷ Charles B. Fox, and Philip Wolf in *House Transcripts*, 1511-1518, and 2137, 2139-2151. See also appropriate sections in Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917*; McLaughlin, *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis*.

⁴⁸ J.R. Gibbons to C.B. Fox, August 3, 1916; Rucker to Gibbons, October 21, 1916; Gibbons to R.F. Rucker, October 21, 1916; Gibbons to Rucker, December 11, 1916; *Aluminum Company of America (Pittsburgh, PA) Records, 1888-1990*, MSS no. 280, *Series IV: Employees Records, Subseries 1: General (1905-1990)*, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania Archives, Pittsburgh, PA.

protect their gains by forming the Aluminum Ore Employees Protective Association (AOEPA), unaffiliated with either the CTLU or the AFL.⁴⁹

Aluminum Ore Company immediately after the strike, in an abrupt turn around, began hiring black southern migrants to fill positions that had been either vacated by unskilled workers or opened after the company fired those active in the October strike. Since opening in 1902, Aluminum Ore had employed a total of twelve African Americans. But after the strike, depending upon production needs, the company carried on its payroll in November 280 black laborers, 410 in December, 470 in February, and 381 in April.⁵⁰ Aluminum Ore clearly sought to discipline white workers by hiring low wage, presumably anti-union, black laborers.

The second strike at Aluminum Ore that began on April 19, 1917, and ended in late June, again had no relation to black migration or racism. But CTLU leaders and elements within the city's political culture used the strike to further anti-migration rhetoric that created an atmosphere conducive to mass racial violence.⁵¹ Initially, workers demanded that managers rehire the nearly six hundred October strikers, many with years of seniority, who had been fired between October and April.⁵² Workers voted to strike when management refused to rehire former AOEPA members. The CTLU initially advised against the strike, pointing out that Aluminum Ore employees received the highest pay among industrial workers in the county—unskilled workers earned \$2.50

⁴⁹ Philip Wolf in *House Transcripts*, 2151.

⁵⁰ Fox in *House Transcripts*, 1528-1529; Fox in *Labor Committee Report*, 26 [i.e. 33].

⁵¹ Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917*, 16-20, 27-29.

⁵² Fox, and R.F. Rucker, and Wolf in *House Transcripts*, 1519-1520; and 1812-1814, 1818-1819, and 2137-2142, 2151-2154, 2181-2182.

to \$2.75 per day and mechanics, \$4.25 per day.⁵³ CTLU officials expressed grave concern about federal action against strikers, such as impressment into military service. They warned workers not to disrupt production at the only aluminum ore processing plant in North America.⁵⁴ But when 1,700 black and white men called a strike on April 18 to stop further layoffs and save the AOEPA from further destruction, the CTLU had no choice but to support them.⁵⁵

Aluminum Ore managers resolved to crush the strike. Like their counterparts at other industrial plants, company officials had hired black laborers to fill low wage, unskilled positions not only to cut costs but also to play on white workers' fears of interracial job competition and black strikebreakers. Additionally, they sought to prevent white employees from unionizing. Management understood that the key to breaking the strike involved bribery, coercion, and hostile propaganda, not white workers' racial fears. R.F. Rucker hoping to discredit strike leader Philip Wolf, offered him a bribe. When Fox purchased rifles and hired a private security force purportedly to protect strikebreakers and company property, his critics thought that his aim was to intimidate strikers.⁵⁶ In early May he secured a court injunction against strikers whom he claimed had damaged

⁵³ Fox, and R.F. Rucker in *House Transcripts*, 151, 1546, and 1831.

⁵⁴ Kerr in *House Transcripts*, 1956-1957, 1966, 1968-1969.

⁵⁵ Chancery Case File 1218, "Aluminum Ore Company vs. G. Tebeau et al., Answer of Defendants, May 2, 1917," *Law and Chancery Case Files, 1911-1922, Law and Equity Records, 1908-1939, Records of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Illinois at East St. Louis*, RG21, National Archives—Great Lakes Region, Chicago, IL.; Kerr in *House Transcripts*, 1970

⁵⁶ Chancery Case File 1218, "Aluminum Ore Company vs. George A. Lehman et al., Motion of Complainant for Issuance of Preliminary Injunction, and Affidavits, May 2, 1917," *Law and Chancery Case Files, 1911-1922, Law and Equity Records, 1908-1939, Records of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Illinois at East St. Louis*, RG21, National Archives—Great Lakes Region, Chicago, IL.

company property and injured his chauffeur and several other persons. Wolf implied that those responsible for the damages and injuries were provocateurs enlisted by management to make the strikers appear unruly.⁵⁷ Finally, Aluminum Ore managers attempted to smear strikers by labeling them unpatriotic, saying that they had been influenced by German spies seeking to sabotage American war production.⁵⁸

According to some observers, CTLU officials created the impression that migrant competition for jobs underlay the strike at Aluminum Ore.⁵⁹ Trade unionists, according to meatpacking manager Robert Conway, “manufactured a sentiment against [N]egroes because they were [N]egroes, and because they were taking the [jobs] of white men.”⁶⁰ Employees never in their official strike pronouncements referred to black migrants, the migration, or racial competition.⁶¹ CTLU, not white Aluminum Ore strikers, formulated overt racist appeals. The labor affiliation needed the issue of race as a tool to organize white workers to build unions. No one doubted that white working people generally harbored strong anti-black sentiments, often discriminated against black workers, and embedded their racial identity in their construction of class consciousness. Alois Towers, like other labor organizers, thought anti-black racism was a difficult barrier to surmount,

⁵⁷ Fox, and Rucker, and Wolf in *House Transcripts*, 1558-1585, and 1818-1819, and 2197-2198, 2212; “Strike Called at Ore Company Plant,” *ESLDJ*, 19 April 1917, 1; Chancery Case File 1218, “Aluminum Ore Company vs. G. Tebeau et al.”

⁵⁸ “Strike Called at Ore Company Plant,” *ESLDJ*, 19 April 1917, 1; “War Declared by Aluminum Ore Company on Its Employes,” *ESLDJ*, 25 May 1917, 1; “German Plot Scented in Aluminum Ore Explosions,” *ESLDJ*, 27 May 1917, section two, 1.

⁵⁹ Hunter in *House Transcripts*, 73.

⁶⁰ Conway in *House Transcripts*, 154.

⁶¹ Conway, and Fox, and Rucker, and Wolf in *House Transcripts*, 128, and 1683-1690, and 1818-1819, and 2180-2183; Chancery Case File 1218, “Aluminum Ore Company vs. G. Tebeau, A.B. Trumbull, John Aldrich, et al.”

“even if all blacks were unionized.”⁶² CTLU officials who talked incessantly about employers’ use of racism to divide workers, made no significant attempts to convince white workers to put racism aside and unite with black workers to win labor demands.

The CTLU unionize white workers around arguments that black migrants were strikebreakers and anti-union. Union leaders overlooked the fact that all of the black workers at Aluminum Ore had been hired between October and April, not as strikebreakers, but as replacements.⁶³ Trade unionists were fully aware that black laborers broke strikes mainly in those industries that discriminated against African Americans and where labor unions barred them from union membership.⁶⁴ CTLU organizers conveniently ignored the issue of white strikebreaking, preferring to dramatize black migrants as strikebreakers even though they knew of black laborers refusing to break strikes.⁶⁵ Mississippian Andrew Avery, for instance, quit after his first night on the job at American Steel Foundries upon learning that workers there were on strike.⁶⁶ CTLU also lacked interest when black and white workers united and went on strike in late April at American Steel. Neither did the organization support a predominantly black workforce at Cotton Seed Oil Company that went on strike.⁶⁷ In condemning the black

⁶² Wolf, and Towers, and Mason in *House Transcripts*, 2316, and 2512-2513, and 3133-3135, quoted passage from Towers.

⁶³ Patrick F. Gill, Conciliator, to William B. Wilson, Secretary of the Department of Labor, October 16, 1917, Case File #33-378, *Dispute Case Files, 1913-48, Records of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service*, RG 280, Entry no. 14, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Md.

⁶⁴ Bundy in *Labor Committee Report*, 82-83.

⁶⁵ Kerr, and Wolf in *House Transcripts*, 1867-1868, and 2309-2320.

⁶⁶ Andrew Avery in *Labor Committee Report*, 164.

⁶⁷ Kerr in *House Transcripts*, 1864; McLaughlin, *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis*, 37, 97-98.

migration, CTLU made economic security for white workers, not unionizing black workers, their central concern.⁶⁸

White townspeople, particularly real estate men and business allies, landlords, and homeowners, generally were not moved to take up CTLU's call for a ban on the migration until labor leaders linked the migration to issues like housing that affected white people of all social classes.⁶⁹ Some real estate men preferred selling properties to highly-paid skilled white workers or even low wage unskilled white workers capable of moving up the economic ladder rather than to black working people who had few prospects for economic advancement. In addition, land interest boosters, like their counterparts in other cities, operated in a volatile housing market characterized by high interest rates, large down payments, and short loan repayment periods. They, along with white homeowners, sought protection from the uncertainties and volatility of the real estate market by maintaining class and racial homogeneity of neighborhoods.⁷⁰ They especially blamed black southern migrants for declining property values.

Real estate men and white homeowners generally sought rigorous residential segregation but without the implementation of segregation laws, preferring instead to rely upon such devices as property rights laws, zoning, and mortgage covenants to prevent

⁶⁸ Conway, Boylan, and Canavan, and Fox, and Kerr, and Wolf, and Alois Towers in *House Transcripts*, 128-129, and 580, and 1482-1483, and 1528-1529, and 1863, 1867-1868, 1945, and 2157, 2310-2312, and 2437, 2495-2499.

⁶⁹ Jimerson, and Wolf in *House Transcripts*, 2078, and 2244-2245.

⁷⁰ Quotes from Henry Louis Taylor, Jr., and Walter Hill, eds., *Historical Roots of the Urban Crisis: African Americans in the Industrial City, 1900-1950* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 4-5.

black people from moving into white districts.⁷¹ White homeowners, like those in other cities, threatened to terrorize African American homebuyers and renters for searching for housing in white districts.⁷² Three black families in September 1916 received warning from the white Alta Sita Improvement and Protective Association to move out of the Alta Sita district of East St. Louis or face violent consequences.⁷³ White real estate man Nathaniel McLean discontinued renting or selling African Americans homes in white neighborhoods after some white residents telephoned death threats to him.⁷⁴

Many white East St. Louisans accepted segregation as a feasible solution in avoiding racial conflict and debated legalizing it.⁷⁵ They had watched as voters in St. Louis approved in a special election in 1916 two segregation ordinances modeled after regulations enacted in Baltimore, Maryland, and other northern and border region cities. A local court in St. Louis, however, invalidated election results, ruling that such ordinances violated buyers and sellers' constitutional rights.⁷⁶ (Ironically, black East St.

⁷¹ Joe William Trotter, Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

⁷² McQuillan in *House Transcripts*, 1709-1710. Evidence suggests that white East St. Louisans did not engage in bombing black residences in white neighborhoods whereas some white Chicagoans practiced such bombings. On Chicago, see Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot*. See also Stephen Grant Meyer, *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door: Segregation and Racial Conflict in American Neighborhoods* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000).

⁷³ "Citizens Would Keep Negroes from Alta Sita," *ESLDJ*, 10 September 1916, 1. The newspaper never reported what happened to the three black families in Alta Sita.

⁷⁴ Canavan, and Albert B. McQuillan, and Pope in *House Transcripts*, 1471-1478, and 1710, and 2751-2752.

⁷⁵ "400 Men Debate on Negro Segregation," *ESLDJ*, 27 February 1916, 1.

⁷⁶ Daniel T. Kelleher, "St. Louis' 1916 Residential Segregation Ordinance," *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society*, 26 (April 1970): 239-248; Elizabeth Noel Schmidt, "Civic Pride and Prejudice: St. Louis Progressive Reform, 1900-1916" (Ph.D. diss.: University of Missouri—St. Louis, 1986), 122-127, 129-133.

Louisian realtor Pearl Abernathy advertised to African Americans in St. Louis that East St. Louis welcomed them to live anywhere they chose in the city.⁷⁷) Progressive social reformer Reverend George Allison, for one, thought segregation reduced the potential of racial violence. White people who favored integrated neighborhoods, according to Allison, played into the hands of unscrupulous real estate men who profited during periods of instability in the housing market by buying houses at below market value from white homeowners and then selling these residences at above market value to black homebuyers.⁷⁸ The St. Louis court's ruling squelched any effort in East St. Louis to establish segregation through ordinances. White residents generally concluded that customary segregation held the promise of keeping black people and the perceived social problems that they brought with them out of white neighborhoods.

Black residents, opposing legal and customary forms of residential segregation, desperately sought to expand the geographical range of available housing for African Americans. Black people still lived in many neighborhoods, but increasingly found themselves limited to residency in the city's South End in Denverside and Rush City and in the North End in Goose Hill. Sections of Denverside and Rush City rapidly became predominantly black areas. African Americans found segregation beginning to take shape, placing East St. Louis in the same category as large northern cities with their expanding ghettos.⁷⁹ Reverend Edgar Pope, pastor of St. Mark's Baptist Church,

⁷⁷ "Don't Submit to Segregation," *St. Louis Argus*, 17 March 1916, in *TINCF* 5:0849.

⁷⁸ Allison in "Delivers Sermon on Race Problem," *ESLDJ*, 4 June 1917, 1, 2.

⁷⁹ Author determined black housing patterns in East St. Louis from *1912 City Directory* and 1880, 1900, and 1910 census manuscripts. On Denverside see also McLaughlin, *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis*, 23-24. On black ghettos see, for

insisted that African Americans had the right to buy homes wherever they pleased. In May 1917, Pope proposed to the Real Estate Exchange that new homes be constructed for southern migrants in black neighborhoods. But Pope's suggestion to defuse the volatile atmosphere over housing failed to elicit any response from the exchange.⁸⁰

CTLU leaders found common ground with white people who blamed the migration for the housing shortage and the increase in substandard housing. They preferred to ignore the larger number of white migrants flooding into the city and living in housing unfit for human habitation. CTLU found racism in context of housing a convenient tool to mobilize support for their anti-migration campaign. Union officials blamed industry for creating a housing shortage by recruiting black migrants without concern about where to lodge them. Some trade unionists like Harry Kerr described black laborers' housing as a breeding ground for communicable diseases.⁸¹ Kerr expressed a concern common among white urbanites that African Americans, especially the poor among them, formed a public health risk to white communities. For example, in Atlanta and other locales white homeowners worried that black domestics and laundresses brought diseases into white homes and neighborhoods.⁸² The housing problems, which had existed prior to the Great Migration, became more acute as war

example, Allan Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (University of Chicago: 1967).

⁸⁰ "Provide Settlement for Negro Influx," *ESLDJ*, 22 May 1917, 4.

⁸¹ Kerr in *House Transcripts*, 1906, 1908-1910.

⁸² On health and housing see, for example, Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997); Susan L. Smith, *Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired: Black Women's Health Activism in America, 1890-1950* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995).

production diverted construction materials to other projects.⁸³ In the meantime, CTLU urged the Chamber of Commerce of East St. Louis, City Hall, and corporate managers to resolve the housing problem.

The area's largest firms explored the possibility of providing decent housing for black laborers. Street Railway, Light and Power Company general manager D.E. Parsons, Missouri Malleable Iron Company president Frank E. Nulsen, and Aluminum Ore Company superintendent Charles Fox advocated better living conditions for African Americans. They, like their labor opponents, viewed black occupancy of substandard housing as "menac[ing] the sanitary and moral conditions" of white citizens.⁸⁴ Managers called upon local Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Industrial Secretary Irwin Raut to discuss black workers' housing conditions. Raut knew that housing problems in East St. Louis were no different than those in other large northern industrial centers like Chicago and Cincinnati and Toledo, Ohio. Raut considered hiring a Mr. Hamlin (no first name given), an official at the headquarters of the African American YMCA in Washington, D.C., to devise plans for improved housing for black migrants. But for reasons never disclosed to the public, managers tabled discussion about housing for black people.⁸⁵

CTLU officials also led white townspeople in blaming what they alleged was a sharp increase in crime on the Great Migration. When trade unionists, along with civic

⁸³ Canavan, and Albert B. McQuillan, and Pope in *House Transcripts*, 1471-1478, and 1710, and 2751-2752.

⁸⁴ D.E. Parsons in *Labor Committee Report*, 29 [i.e. 36]; Frank E. Nulsen, and Fox in *House Transcripts*, 1043-1044, and 1509.

⁸⁵ Irwin Raut in *Labor Committee Report*, 126-129, 132-133.

leaders, accused judges, policemen, bondsmen, saloonkeepers, and politicians of leniency toward black southern migrant involvement in crime and vice, they ignored the fact that white men committed most of the crime. CTLU and other social critics minimized the criminal activities of white migrants, transient workers, and habitués of the saloon culture. In actuality, East St. Louis faced no more of an increase in crime than other cities that had experienced a sharp rise in population resulting from widespread movements of migrants and immigrants.⁸⁶

White townspeople framed discussion about crime in terms of race. For some the frequent references to black criminal behavior fueled a desire to end the migration and to practice customary segregation. St. Clair County Coroner C.P. Renner, for example, claimed that the immoral proclivities of African Americans underlay the wave of burglaries and homicides that had occurred from early 1916 to mid-1917. Trade unionist Kerr exaggeratedly claimed that black rapists created a “reign of terror” that made white women afraid to visit even their neighbors at night.⁸⁷ White East St. Louisans, like their urban counterparts elsewhere, viewed black people’s saloons or “jook joints” as incubators of crime, immorality, and violence, and not institutions of the urban black working class.⁸⁸ White progressive reformer and publisher James Kirk devoted much space in his newspaper to items about black men carrying guns. These articles only served to increase racist sentiment and provide police with an excuse to disarm African Americans. When authorities complained that many young black southern men had

⁸⁶ Wolf, and Towers, and Mason, and Townsend, and Allison in *House Transcripts*, 2309, and 2376, and 3181-3182, and 3432, 3447-3449, and 3626, 3637-3638.

⁸⁷ C.P. Renner, and Kerr in *House Transcripts*, 1276-1279, and 1869.

⁸⁸ On jook joints see, for example, Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, 168-171.

purchased firearms upon arriving in East St. Louis, they showed indifference to the possibility that some obtained weapons to protect their persons and families in a city with a reputation for criminal violence.⁸⁹ At least a few white city leaders had to have known that some migrants realized that their new urban home presented its own form of social violence that along with indifference or hostility from local government forced a reliance upon self-defense.

In context of World War I creating an environment of fluid race relations and challenges to legal or customary segregation, the streetcar became a highly contested public space in many locales, including East St. Louis. Black commuters, especially newly arrived migrants, enjoyed the freedom to sit wherever they wanted on trolleys as they proceeded about their daily business. Some had to know that the simple act of sitting in a seat of their choice, even next to white passengers—a forbidden action in the Jim Crow South—reinforced their sensibilities of being free citizens in the North. Most white residents, however, viewed such occurrences through a different lens, often complaining with much exaggeration that black passengers sat “down on white women’s laps,” crowded white people out of streetcars, made “a great deal of noise,” and rarely sat together in groups. Some white critics with preconceived notions of proper public behavior for women became incensed by what they considered “abusive and uncontrollable . . . language and actions” of black women.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ “Negroes and Whites Stage Race Riot,” *ESLDJ*, 24 May 1917, 1; “Police Watch Many Threatening Negroes,” *ESLDJ*, 28, May 1917, 1.

⁹⁰ Canavan, and McQuillan in *House Transcripts*, 1476-1479, and 1710. Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy*

Black townspeople criticized white labor, political, and business leaders for blaming the crime wave and other social ills upon migrants, arguing that the vast majority of them were hard-working and law-abiding. Black police detectives W.H. Mills and W. Green, who interviewed migrants in the course of their work, reported that the new arrivals only wanted decent jobs and a better way of life. Lyman Bluitt argued that the CTLU needed to “make an effort in good faith to unionize every laboring man” rather than expend energy on preventing migrants from obtaining jobs.⁹¹

CTLU officials remained vociferous about preventing migrants from entering the city. They argued that the migration had exacerbated the housing shortage, fueled a crime wave, increased job competition, inflamed the Aluminum Ore strike, and weakened the labor movement. CTLU men suggested that black migrants be meted out the same treatment that police gave to white vagabonds who were escorted to the city line, beaten, and told not to return.⁹² Labor leaders’ main concern pivoted on the strike at the crucial Aluminum Ore, the city’s largest employer, because a worker victory there had the potential of energizing the local labor movement. Hoping to force the Mayor and aldermen into taking action, the CTLU in an open letter that appeared in various

in North Carolina, 1896-1920 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 102-105, 108; Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*.

⁹¹ W.H. Mills, and W. Green, and Bluitt in *House Transcripts*, 1118, and 1127, and 1363-1366.

⁹² M.J. Whalen in *Labor Committee Report*, 56; Kerr, and Wolf, and Jimerson, and Mason in *House Transcripts*, 1869, 1907, 1962, 1998-2000, 2136, 2569, and 2312-2317, and 3141-3142, 3148.

publications blamed black southern migrants for intensifying labor disputes, crime, and white people's race prejudice.⁹³

But certain employers busily pursued their interests in opposition to those of the CTLU. Some prepared for another round of labor unrest in a city increasingly concerned about the migration. Those engaged in interstate commerce or production of materials for the war effort took advantage of federal protection. East St. Louis and Suburban Railroad Company, anticipating another strike upon the expiration of the labor contract signed in 1916, asked for and received assistance from a federalized unit of the state militia. One Suburban manager reportedly had stated that troops were necessary to intimidate workers from striking and to guard strikebreakers if work stoppages occurred.⁹⁴ Other businessmen surreptitiously encouraged black southerners to migrate north. Chamber of Commerce members Aluminum Ore manager Charles Fox and E.M. Sorrell, the chamber's secretary, without the chamber's permission, using the organization's letterhead advertised jobs available in southern newspapers.⁹⁵

Mayor Fred Mollman and his political machine had to balance running the city as an economic growth machine, maintaining cordial relations with the CTLU and the business community, and responding to black people's demands for an increased share of city resources. The Mayor and his faction continued to implement city boosters' decades-long policy of favoring industrial development. They knew that the booming

⁹³ Facsimile of the open letter in "Negro Labor and the Unions," *American Industry in War Time*, 1, no. 1 (August 10, 1917): 7, in *The East St. Louis Riot of 1917* (Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America, 1985), reel 7.

⁹⁴ Towers in *House Transcripts*, 2454-2456.

⁹⁵ Jimerson in *House Transcripts*, 2061-2065.

war economy created additional opportunities for personal gain through recruiting more corporations to the city, buying, selling, and renting commercial and residential real estate, and collecting licensing fees from even more saloons. City Hall had to placate industrialists who welcomed black southern laborers. Mollman had indirectly encouraged black migrants to come to the city when he boasted in April 1917 about plentiful jobs in East St. Louis during a business trip to New Orleans.⁹⁶ Since the Mayor also depended on labor's vote, he signaled to the CTLU his interest in resolving the Aluminum Ore strike and the problems that the organization thought the migration had exacerbated. In addition, Mollman realized that the black community had become a powerbroker in the April election. He knew that African Americans did not support any move to halt the migration, in effect to prevent their relatives and friends from settling and working in East St. Louis. Mollman and his bosses also worried about losing control of the black vote to African American politicians, like Leroy Bundy who sought to institutionalize an independent black political machine. Mollman knew that to restrict the migration infringed upon black migrants' rights, but he understood that in refusing to stop it, he angered another voting constituency, white labor.

⁹⁶ "Mollman's Talk in South Taken Up at Riot Inquiry," *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 1 November 1917, in *TINCF*, 7:0143; and "'The Conspiracy of the East St. Louis Riots,' Speech by Marcus Garvey, [8 July 1917]," in Robert Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers. Volume 1, 1826-August 1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 214-215.

Organized Labor and the Mass Racial Violence of May 1917

CTLU officials calculated that by arranging to meet privately on Monday evening, May 28, with Mayor Mollman and city councilmen, they would pressure City Hall to resolve the Aluminum Ore strike and ban black migration to East St. Louis. On the night of the meeting, CTLU delegates, including women representatives from the laundry workers, retail clerks, and waitresses' unions, arrived at what they thought was a private meeting. The trade unionists, with the men escorting the women, sent a signal that white women feared to traverse the streets after dark because of the presence of black migrants. CTLU leaders Edward Mason and Michael Whalen wondered, however, who had opened the meeting to the public when they entered a City Hall auditorium overflowing with nearly one thousand people, including an estimated two hundred women. They noticed that a significant number of those gathered were neither union members nor even residents of East St. Louis.⁹⁷ Perhaps such individuals worked in the city or like nonunion attendee Ferdinand Schwartz, a white painter and paperhanger from Belleville, lived outside the city had come to the meeting curiously to "protest to the Mayor about the influx of the [N]egro," and demand action.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ M.J. Whalen in *Labor Committee Report*, 57; Kerr, and Jimerson, and Tower, and Mason in *House Transcripts*, 1869-1870, 1915, 1948, and 2025-2026, and 2472-2473, and 3156-3157, 3167-3168, 3174, 3182; "800 Union Men Protest Importation of Negroes," *ESLDJ*, 29 May 1917, 1.

⁹⁸ Ferdinand Schwartz in *House Transcripts*, 3885.

CTLU leaders gave the impression, observers later commented, that they had called the meeting to recruit shock troops to conduct the mass anti-black assaults of May 28 and 29. But the CTLU had actually lost control of the gathering to uninvited speakers who railed against black migrants, the companies that hired them, and other perceived problems related to the migration. While trade unionists considered peaceful solutions, some nonunion people in the audience advocated violent action. Brewery salesman Jerry Kane and others used the meeting as an organizing tool to launch an attack on African Americans. Alexander Flannigan, a popular attorney, orator, and politician from Belleville, arguing that black people had to be prevented from moving into white neighborhoods, called for vigilantism, saying, “[T]here was no law or rule or anything else to curb mob violence.”⁹⁹ During the meeting two white city police detectives spread a story that patrolmen had just arrested a black man for shooting a white man.¹⁰⁰ At about ten at night, as if on signal, people rushed from the auditorium and joined others waiting outside where the crowd swelled to twelve hundred persons. Jeering men stood in front of City Hall as policemen escorted the alleged black gunman into the jail. With shouts of “Lynch him,” some in the throng tried to seize the man, but city and CTLU leaders prevented them from doing so by blocking the entrance to the police station.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Conway, and Boylan, and Kerr, and Jimerson, and Clarence Pope, and Mason in *House Transcripts*, 156, and 584-585, and 1916, 1949, 1964, and 2028-2029, and 2599-2600, and 3161-3162, 3169-3171.

¹⁰⁰ Albertson, and Canavan, and James M. Kelly in *House Transcripts*, 473-475, and 1416, and 2861, 2875-2876.

¹⁰¹ Mason in *House Transcripts*, 3172-3173; “Union Laborers Start Race Riots,” *St. Louis Argus*, 1 June 1917, 1.

City and CTLU officials, fearing violence, tried to disperse the throng. Mayor Mollman faced the assemblage and implored hecklers to return to their homes, but people refused to leave. Many accused the Mayor of having bought the black vote during his reelection and yelled, "To Hell with Mollman; hang him."¹⁰² Meanwhile CTLU men searched the gathering for union members whom they ordered to leave. But violence began to take shape and escalated. White attackers beat labor organizers Earl Jimerson and Philip Wolf as they assisted black passers-by. Mollman, learning of assaults on black commuters at nearby streetcar stops, telephoned Governor Lowden to request the National Guard for riot duty.¹⁰³

Only a small number of white men and a smaller number of white women among the hundreds on the streets perpetrated attacks upon African Americans. The vast majority congregated as cheerleaders and opportunists ready to reap the spoils from the destruction of black people's property.¹⁰⁴ The actual assailants knew what they were doing and operated with the acquiescence or passive support of the authorities. The attackers were primarily artisans, transient laborers, self-employed professionals, non-industrial workers, businessmen, and prostitutes.¹⁰⁵ Revolver-carrying Ruby Nelson, a well known prostitute, along with several white teenage prostitutes and some furloughed

¹⁰² Boylan, and Canavan, and Jimerson in *House Transcripts*, 585-586, and 1417, and 2031.

¹⁰³ Boylan, and Jimerson, and Wolf, and Kelly in *House Transcripts*, 586, and 2030, 2032, and 2215-2216, 2219, 2302-2303, and 2852.

¹⁰⁴ Malcolm McLaughlin, in "Reconsidering the East St. Louis Race Riot of 1917," *International Review of Social History* 47 (2002): 187-212. See also Butler, *An Undergrowth of Folly*; Senechal, *The Sociogenesis of a Race Riot*.

¹⁰⁵ Allison in *House Transcripts*, 3548-3552, 3578.

soldiers from Missouri and Illinois units led a few groups of street fighters.¹⁰⁶ The authorities never determined the reason for the presence of women among the assailants. Prostitutes predominated among white women attackers perhaps because downtown brothels were adjacent to the center of the mass terrorism, because they wanted to eliminate their competition, black prostitutes, or because living in the violent world of the saloon culture, these women easily moved from one arena of violence to another.¹⁰⁷ Contrary to what commentators claimed, industrial workers, especially those from Aluminum Ore or the meatpacking plants did not constitute a plurality, let alone a majority, of the assailants.¹⁰⁸

From Monday night well into Tuesday, white people assaulted African Americans whenever the former held the numerical advantage. White attackers first descended upon black people waiting for or disembarking from streetcars in the downtown district. Around midnight attackers split into two large groups with nearly one hundred men marching toward the southern end of town, destroying along the way barbershops and saloons that they claimed served as black politicians' "headquarters." They threw bricks

¹⁰⁶ "Six Wounded in Street Demonstrations Tues. Night," *ESLDJ*, 31 May 1917, 1; Albertson, and Wolf, and Eli Chrisan, and Ruby Nelson, and Grace Yent in *House Transcripts*, 476, 2242-2244, and 4713, 4749, and 4793, and 4801-4802.

¹⁰⁷ McLaughlin, *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis*, 152-159, discusses the involvement of white women, specifically prostitutes, in racial violence, presenting hypotheses on gender identities at the workplace, patriotic appeal in context of women as moral guardians of America, and increased social status through anti-black violence and white racial identity to win recognition from white society that white prostitutes, too, were decent white people. McLaughlin did not discuss the logic of white supremacy in everyday politics placing all white people above all African Americans. This author argues that white prostitutes had nothing psychological or cultural to prove or justify vis-à-vis black people. White prostitutes' problem was not about white identity, but about other issues such as morality campaigns directed against them.

¹⁰⁸ Wolf in *House Transcripts*, 2219.

through windows, ransacked buildings, shot into deserted homes, and set at least one black dwelling ablaze.¹⁰⁹ A second group, larger in number, headed north to the meatpacking plants, beating black individuals they encountered. Ringleaders and their followers intended to attack black Valley residents but were prevented from doing so by several police officers. They instead continued on to the boundary between East St. Louis and National City where, across from the packinghouses, they engaged in fistcuffs with black workers as work shifts changed.¹¹⁰ Assailants avoided the predominantly black neighborhoods in the city's South End, fearing that "[N]egroes were arming themselves and 'hell' would be to pay if they went down in the [N]egro settlement."¹¹¹

The forty white patrolmen who comprised the East St. Louis police force prevented black people from being killed, but they also provided opportunities for white agitators to attack African Americans.¹¹² The police generally sympathetic with the white throngs, arrested and jailed more than seventy black men, and far fewer white men, for possessing firearms, conveying the impression that black townspeople were out to kill

¹⁰⁹ "Six Wounded in Street Demonstrations Tues. Night," *ESLDJ*, 31 May 1917, 1; "Union Laborers Start Race Riots," *St. Louis Argus*, 1 June 1917, 1. On black owned saloons and businesses as political headquarters see also Senechal, *The Sociogenesis of a Race Riot*.

¹¹⁰ Albertson, and Allison in *House Transcripts*, 474, 476-477, and 3629-3630; "Presence of Foreign and Lawless Negro Element Injures City," *ESLDJ*, 29 May 1917, 1, 5. Police detectives Samuel Coppedge and Frank Wadley who deterred the mobs from the Valley died facing armed black men on July 2 in an incident that sparked the murderous massacre of July 2, 1917.

¹¹¹ "Six Wounded in Street Demonstrations Tues. Night," *ESLDJ*, 31 May 1917, 1; Quote in "Union Laborers Start Race Riots," *St. Louis Argus*, 1 June 1917, 1.

¹¹² On police not acting fairly toward black people during episodes of mass racial violence, see, for example, Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot*.

white people.¹¹³ In one incident, the police stopped six black people in a red Hupmobile as they entered the city from St. Louis. The officers searched the car and arrested the six for smuggling ammunition and guns into East St. Louis. At that time the high priced Hupmobile signaled affluence as most Americans owned only the relatively inexpensive Model T Ford. A black owner of a Hupmobile or any car, and by extension, a black person exhibiting any other indicators of economic success, for example, homeownership, violated the common white view of humble and socially inferior black people. Any degree of black economic achievement signaled to white people that African Americans, by refusing to accept their ascribed place at the bottom of society, threatened the white dominated hierarchy.

The police in announcing Leroy Bundy as the owner of the Hupmobile gave credence to rumors that Bundy had been busily arming a black militia.¹¹⁴ Some white residents had talked about Leroy Bundy in command of a mysterious black militia that had been practicing military precision drills. The rumor mill exaggerated the African American St. George's Lodge of the Odd Fellows' drill practices. Lodge members since 1909 had been performing military style drills in uniforms with swords at a playground across from Bundy's house and service station. Rumor also had spread that Bundy's

¹¹³ "Presence of Foreign and Lawless Negro Element Injures City," *ESLDJ*, 29 May 1917, 1, 5.

¹¹⁴ "The People of the State of Illinois v. Leroy Bundy et al." March term, 1919, in *The East St. Louis Riot of 1917* (Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America, 1985), reel 7. Bundy also worked as an agent for a St. Louis car dealership, selling red Hupmobiles to leading black citizens in East St. Louis and Brooklyn. On car ownership among African Americans in plantation districts undermining white planters' control over black sharecroppers, see Woodruff, *American Congo*, 44.

garage was a recruiting office for the black militia, when in actuality it was just a popular place for young black men to repair and service cars and meet with friends.¹¹⁵

State and local authorities organized their forces and, with the arrival of the Illinois National Guard Fourth Regiment on Tuesday evening around 7 o'clock, began to restore law and order.¹¹⁶ Lieutenant Colonel E.P. Clayton commanded guardsmen to man key intersections leading to black neighborhoods to prevent assailants from attacking African Americans. They deterred black retaliation against white people by arresting armed black residents. Soldiers cleared the downtown district, dispersing the throngs by threatening deadly force. Authorities had effectively suppressed white troublemakers by nighttime and declared the cessation of street violence.¹¹⁷ Policemen arrested a few leading agitators, including real estate salesman Steve Proney, on charges of inciting violence.¹¹⁸ If any initial reports had been taken of arrestees, they were never found. City officials did not charge Alexander Flannigan and a number of others who encouraged or led anti-black assaults presumably either because of their prominence or their connections to people of prominence in local government or business.

¹¹⁵ "The People of the State of Illinois v. Leroy Bundy et al., March Term, 1919," 765, 796, 825-827.

¹¹⁶ "Six Wounded in Street Demonstrations Tues. Night," *ESLDJ*, 31 May 1917, 1.

¹¹⁷ "Riot Situation Is Now Under Control," *ESLDJ*, 31 May 1917, 1; Albertson in *House Transcripts*, 477; "Union Laborers Start Race Riots," *St. Louis Argus*, 1 June 1917, 1.

¹¹⁸ "Riot Situation Is Now Under Control," *ESLDJ*, 31 May 1917, 1.

June 1917, the “Calm” before the July Storm

The anti-black violence of May 1917 did not destroy the city’s black community. It appeared benign when compared to other mass upheavals of urban racial violence that occurred in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America, for example, the attempt in 1908 to cleanse black people from Springfield, Illinois. In May in East St. Louis officially, seventy-five black people and three white men were injured with no deaths reported.¹¹⁹ Authorities estimated that more than six thousand African Americans had fled East St. Louis. An unknown number of refugees, however, returned once they thought the militia had secured the city.¹²⁰ One observer commented that he thought agitators simply intended to intimidate African Americans into leaving East St. Louis.¹²¹

Industrialists and trade unionists denied charges that they had been responsible for or had in any way benefited from the mayhem.¹²² Managers noted that their companies required low-wage black southern migrants to perform work that white laborers shunned. In addition, corporate officials lamented the loss of valuable production time during and immediately after the mass violence. They also observed that they had adjusted work

¹¹⁹ Albertson, and Bluit in *House Transcripts*, 475, and 1349; “Riot Situation Is Now under Control,” *ESLDJ*, 31 May 1917, 1. James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: New Press, 2005).

¹²⁰ “Disorders Abate with Police and Militia in Full Control,” *ESLDJ*, 3 June 1917, 1.

¹²¹ Allison in *House Transcripts*, 3629-3630.

¹²² “Factories Must Close If Cannot Get Negro Help,” *St. Louis Argus*, 8 June 1917, 1; “Disorders Abate with Police and Militia in Full Control,” *ESLDJ*, 3 June 1917, 1; “Race Riot Aftermath,” *St. Louis Argus*, 8 June 1917, 4.

schedules to assure black laborers safe commute to and from their jobs.¹²³ Likewise, CTLU officials stressed that neither they nor Aluminum Ore strikers ignited the mass violence. Labor organizer Philip Wolf said that white Aluminum Ore strikers were not anti-black, pointing out that after a strike meeting on Wednesday, the night of May 30, white strikers, concerned about the safety of their black colleagues, had escorted them home.¹²⁴ CTLU leaders invited the Labor Committee of the Illinois State Council of Defense to East St. Louis to hold a hearing to determine the cause of the violence. They trusted the council, which worked with the federal Council of National Defense to insure harmonious worker-management relations for efficient war production. CTLU men expected Labor Committee chairman and president of the Illinois Federation of Labor John Walker to corroborate their contention that industrialists, and not the CTLU, were responsible for the migration and the violence.¹²⁵

In early June, the Labor Committee conducted hearings to determine if the black migration had caused the labor disputes that led to mass racial violence took testimony. The committee heard from migrants like John and Daisy Betts as well as from established black residents like Leroy Bundy. Both migrants and townspeople testified that black southerners made East St. Louis their destination because of jobs and the promise of a better way of life. The committee also listened to white people's accounts. Labor

¹²³ C.B. Fox, and Peter Ward in *Labor Committee Report*, 27 [i.e. 34], and 186; Phillip W. Coyle in *House Transcripts*, 30.

¹²⁴ Wolf in *House Transcripts*, 2216, 2218-2220, 2241.

¹²⁵ "Defense Council To Investigate Riots," *ESLDJ*, 4 June 1917, 1, 2; Towers in *House Transcripts*, 2367; Brief history and mission of the Illinois State Council of Defense and its Labor Committee in Marguerite Edith Jenison, *The War-Time Organization of Illinois* (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1923), 284-285.

organizer Harry Stanistic and CTLU president Michael Whalen argued that managers had encouraged the migration to drive down white workers' wages and disrupt the labor movement. Speaking for industrialists, Charles Fox and American Steel Foundries foreman John Roche denied that corporations had dispatched labor agents to the South to entice black laborers to migrate North. Maurice Joyce, representing white residents, connected the crime wave to the migration.¹²⁶

The labor committee released its report on June 30, and, admitting that it possessed only circumstantial evidence, charged that corporations had deliberately recruited more black laborers than they had job openings. The Labor Committee concluded that "an extensive campaign [existed] to induce [N]egroes in great numbers to come to East St. Louis . . . [that it] required considerable financing, and [that] its backers took pains to be unknown." The committee absolved the CTLU of all wrongdoing. The labor committee considered black migrants pawns of industrialists and incapable of organizing, leading, and sustaining the migration on their own. Finally, the committee failed to establish responsibility for the May violence.¹²⁷

In June, CTLU officials temporarily shifted their attention away from the migration to the unionization of black workers. They sent labor organizers to the all-black village of Brooklyn to discuss organizing black packinghouse workers. Bundy accompanied the CTLU men on these trips. CTLU thought that a strong union presence

¹²⁶ Joyce, and Fox, and Harry Stanistic, and Whalen, and Bundy, and John and Daisy Betts, and Roche in *Labor Committee Report*, 17, and 24-25, and 36 [i.e. 43], and 56-57, 60-61, and 68-83, and 135-145, and 177-178; Towers in *House Transcripts*, 2369-2370, 2391, 2504-2505.

¹²⁷ *Labor Committee Report*, 36-38 [i.e. 43-45].

in Brooklyn had the potential to spark mass unionization of black workers in surrounding towns. Trade unionists discontinued their organizing, however, when the Brooklyn police chief, for whatever reason, threatened to jail them for organizing workers in the village. Most likely village officials wanted to prevent union drives because they were beholden to meatpackers in National City for providing jobs for village residents.¹²⁸

Bundy, Bluitt, and other black community leaders involved in talks with CTLU essentially called, though not publicly, the labor organization's bluff about unionizing black workers. They knew that CTLU was playing politics in order to bolster its position in the labor movement and city affairs. Anyone familiar with the human geography of the East St. Louis district knew that the all-black village of Brooklyn lies adjacent to the meatpacking giants in National City. East St. Louisans knew black workers commuted to work just as easily from Brooklyn as from East St. Louis to the factories and stockyards in National City. Black residents must have thought that even if African Americans were driven out of East St. Louis, the labor affiliation still had to contend with Brooklyn's black workers. The chief conclusion that black East St. Louisans had to have reached was that the CTLU used anti-black migrant rhetoric in order to regain its leadership among white workers who had initiated militant strikes that the labor affiliation had no choice but to support.

Several prominent African Americans thought that an alliance with CTLU and mass unionizing of black workers held the potential for improving black people's

¹²⁸ Jimerson in *House Transcripts*, 2077. Brooklyn officials' anti-unionism was similar to that of many black clergymen and National Urban League members in Chicago in 1919 as narrated in Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot*, 148-151.

position in city politics and defusing racial animosities that white working people held toward black laborers. They needed to convince CTLU to drop its anti-migration rhetoric and focus on building a labor movement to attract large numbers of unskilled white as well as black laborers. Pro-union black community activists Lyman Bluit, Leroy Bundy, Noah Parden, Sam Wheat, and lawyer William Lillie met with Harry Kerr, Earl Jimerson, and four other CTLU officials to discuss ways to unionize African American workers. The politically astute black leaders did not hold organized labor responsible for the May violence, but they thought CTLU lacked seriousness regarding organizing black workers. They noted, for example, that Jimerson wanted, as he said, to “find out who was the mysterious influence [that brought] about [the migration and the] conditions which existed here, which caused riots.” Bluit and Bundy concluded that the CTLU blamed its failure to organize migrants particularly upon black southern migrants’ supposed anti-union attitudes and not organized labor’s general historic disinterest in accepting skilled and unskilled black workers into the labor movement.¹²⁹ In addition, the black politicians had to wonder why the CTLU had tapped them for assistance in organizing black workers rather than any of the many black laborers who had not only joined white workers in strikes in 1916 and 1917 but had also, like Morris & Company packinghouse

¹²⁹ John Eubanks, and Bluit, and Kerr, and Jimerson in *House Transcripts*, 1136-1137, and 1355-1356, 1366, and 2011-2012, and 2035-2037, 2046, 2048. On organized labor’s partial interest in unionizing black workers on the eve of an episode of mass racial violence see, for example, Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot*, 109-123, 153-154. On white trade unionists’ tendency to exaggerate black strikebreaking and ignore white workers breaking black workers’ strikes and nineteenth and early twentieth century black Southerners being more labor conscious and pro-union than white Southerners see David R. Roediger, “What If Labor Were Not White and Male?,” in Roediger, *Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002): 179-202.

worker William Bagley, led in the 1916 walkout.¹³⁰ The CTLU's actions reconfirmed for the African American community the organization's lack of interest in unionizing black workers.

CTLU leaders experienced problems in building the labor movement because of their choice of rhetoric and lack of leadership and not because of the black migration. They held fast to the idea that managers practiced racial divide and conquer tactics at the workplace. Labor officials also knew that black workers accepted unions, went on strike, and were no more prone to strikebreaking than white laborers. Yet, the affiliation, blinded by anti-black racism, remained lethargic in organizing black workers. Its business union practices, partnership in city governance, and recent anti-black migrant rhetoric hamstrung the organization into reacting—and rather poorly at that—to rapidly changing events. The CTLU failed to take a militant stance or exercise a leadership during the strike waves that swept the city in 1916 and early 1917. The heads of the CTLU lacked the vision of their counterparts in the Chicago Stockyards Labor Council who boldly initiated a campaign to unionize black workers.

Interestingly, the role and reaction of city leaders, especially real estate politician businessmen, in relation to the immediate causes of the mass racial violence of May never underwent scrutiny from the labor committee investigation. How many city leaders had close personal or business connections with core agitators and perpetrators remained at best speculative. As a group that commanded city politics, however, their actions greatly contributed to the shaping of anti-black agitation. White politicians who

¹³⁰ Mention of William Bagley in Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917*, 147; McLaughlin, *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis*, 91.

courted the black vote signaled to African Americans leaders like Bundy their intolerance of an independent black political machine that had the potential to undermine their power. The Mollman, Tarlton, and Canavan city Democratic machine had formed a partnership with county Republican Party leaders, including Alexander Flannigan, to prevent progressive minded Democratic and Republican stalwarts from winning City Hall. Reformer James Kirk, owner of the East St. Louis Daily Journal, continued to sensationalize black crime after the May episode and on several occasions predicted future race riots. His newspaper's negative accounts of black Southerners swayed white voters away from the Mollman machine.

White business, civic, and labor leaders continued to blame black southern migrants for generating white people's racial prejudice and aggression toward black people.¹³¹ These individuals echoed statements similar to those uttered by their counterparts in Springfield, Illinois, and other locales that had experienced mass racial violence in the previous two decades. They denied racism as a contributory factor in the making of anti-black assaults.¹³² Kirk did not ascribe the troubles to race because, as he said, white townspeople held no ill will "against the older, law-abiding" black residents.¹³³ Aluminum Ore manager R.F. Rucker, for one, declared that the primary

¹³¹ "Union Laborers Start Race Riots"; "Factories Must Close If Cannot Get Negro Help," *St. Louis Argus*, 8 June 1917, 1; "Delivers Sermon on Race Problem," *ESLDJ*, 4 June 1917, 1, 2.

¹³² Senechal, *The Sociogenesis of a Race Riot*, 173-178.

¹³³ "Presence of Foreign and Lawless Negro Element Injures City," *ESLDJ*, 29 May 1917, 1, 5.

reason for the violence of May 28 and 29 centered on the threat black people posed to white residents' standard of living and accustomed access to resources.¹³⁴

Black townspeople quickly realized as June progressed that the May event had whetted a thirst for more violence among certain elements in the city. Alone or in small groups, they braved physical assaults from white ruffians.¹³⁵ African Americans in one neighborhood on June 11 witnessed three drunken white soldiers curse several black women, rob a few black men, and wreck a black-owned saloon. Fifty black men readied to lynch the three when police arrived and escorted the drunken soldiers to jail.¹³⁶

African American motorists returning from St. Louis encountered police checkpoints where law officers searched their vehicles for firearms. Lyman Bluitt, for one, protested when the police stopped and searched his car, telling the officers that they "most assuredly ought to search every man regardless of his color."¹³⁷

African Americans experienced after the May violence some erosion in their formal political power and rights of equal protection under the law. Noah Parden fell victim to a white political backlash when the St. Clair County Board of Supervisors abolished his seat as county assistant state's attorney. According to white assistant state's attorney L.V. Walcott, the board expressed displeasure "with the arrangement whereby Parden handled the prosecution of all [N]egroes arrested for carrying concealed

¹³⁴ Rucker in *House Transcripts*, 1829-1830.

¹³⁵ McLaughlin, *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis*, 108-109.

¹³⁶ "Policemen Held Up By Armed Soldiers," *ESLDJ*, 11 June 1917, 1; "Serious Charges against Three Members of the Militia in E. St. Louis," *The Forum*, 16 June 1917, 1, 3.

¹³⁷ Bluitt in *House Transcripts*, 1350.

weapons.”¹³⁸ Parden’s dismissal represented a setback to black people’s access to legal redress.

City officials offered no assurances that mass racial violence had ended. Black townspeople heard rumors that white residents planned on July 4 to massacre them. White people, also hearing stories, feared that black people schemed to murder them on that same date.¹³⁹ Black townspeople also read in the June 15 issue of the city’s main newspaper, *East St. Lewis Daily Journal*, a call for another “race riot” to bring an end to the black crime wave.¹⁴⁰ Black leaders complained to city officials that police had been disarming black citizens and demanded that their firearms be returned. Mayor Mollman, still mindful of the black vote, ordered the police to return the confiscated guns. No one reported to if the police followed through on Mollman’s order.¹⁴¹

Some people saw in the actions of the Mayor’s office, the police, the newspaper editor, and tentative preparations by authorities or their allies the potential for another round of mass racial violence. Black residents redoubled their efforts to obtain weapons after Mollman refused to guarantee African Americans full protection.¹⁴² Black mortician R.M.C. Green, for instance, directed one of his employees, a very light complexioned African American, to use a hearse to smuggle guns from St. Louis. Mistaken for a white person, the employee successfully passed through police

¹³⁸ “Parden Loses Job as Prosecutor,” *ESLDJ*, 15 June 1917, 1.

¹³⁹ Kerr, and Allison in *House Transcripts*, 1971, and 3630-3631.

¹⁴⁰ “Negroes in Hold-Up,” *ESLDJ*, 15 June 1917, 1.

¹⁴¹ Blutt in *House Transcripts*, 1350.

¹⁴² “As the Journal Views It,” *ESLDJ*, 6 July 1917, 4, section two.

checkpoints.¹⁴³ Black townspeople had concluded before the end of June that armed self defense was their only viable option to protect themselves from additional anti-black violence. Members of the local unit of the Afro-American Protective League must have also remembered that, about twenty years earlier, members of their sister chapter in Decatur, Illinois, had to resort to armed self-defense under circumstances similar to those of May.¹⁴⁴ Black and white residents worried about a renewal of racial violence when the state withdrew the remaining regular National Guard units on June 25. Federalized militia units, however, remained to deter strikes at war production facilities.¹⁴⁵ On June 27, as East St. Louisans saw the last of the Aluminum Ore strikers return to work without having won their demands, they thought that simmering violence was waiting to erupt.¹⁴⁶

Conclusion

The Great Migration of African American Southerners changed power relations between black and white people across the nation. Black migrants saw the opportunity to improve their lives in seeking factory jobs, better housing, and full access to political

¹⁴³ On R.M.C. Green smuggling weapons in Mrs. Frances Nash Terrell and Mrs. Claudia Nash Thomas, interviewed by the author, 24 September 1999, tape recording, East St. Louis. "Union Laborers Start Race Riots," *St. Louis Argus*, 1 June 1917, 1.

¹⁴⁴ Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua, "'A Warlike Demonstration': Legalism, Armed Resistance, and Black Political Mobilization in Decatur, Illinois, 1894-1898," *Journal of Negro History*, 83, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 52-72.

¹⁴⁵ "Negroes in Hold-Up," *ESLDJ*, 15 June 1917, 1.

¹⁴⁶ Kerr in *House Transcripts*, 1971.

resources in the northern urban industrial economy. Some established black residents, especially businessmen and politicians, along with white employers welcomed migrants. Migrants also encountered white Northerners who accused them of creating or exacerbating social and economic tension. No doubt an increased population of black people, just as an increased population of white people in industrial cities, contributed to a lack of desirable jobs, even though the nation in 1917 was in the midst of a booming wartime economy. White as well as black migrants also flooded the housing market, straining a severe housing shortage that already had existed in part because the war demanded material that otherwise would have gone into home construction. But black migrants also had an impact on municipal politics for two reasons. First, the black community had more incentives to operate as a pressure group, and second, white East St. Louis was divided into factions. With additional black votes African American politicians saw their community on the threshold of having its own independent political machine. Most migrants and established black residents did not consciously understand the full political ramifications of the migration and the fluid social relations brought about by the First World War. But the wartime migration, occurring after two decades of political battles between progressive reformers and political machine bosses, upset the balance of power.

East St. Louis became a microcosm of white hostility toward migrants in particular and African Americans generally. White residents accused migrants of creating tension in the areas of employment, housing, and public spaces. They also accused them of buying and selling their votes to swing local elections in their favor and

to obtain more patronage. They feared the migration that gave black politicians the impetus to build an African American political machine independent from white political bosses. Labor leaders of the CTLU, and presumably most white workers, ignoring evidence to the contrary, feared that the arrival black southern laborers meant fewer jobs for white workers, more difficulties in organizing trade unions, and a lower standard of living for white working people. White homeowners and renters of all social classes did not want African Americans in their neighborhoods, if for no other reason than the belief that black people depressed property values. White political and business leaders worried about the possibility of black rule as more migrants settled in the city. They had to prevent the rising strength of the black community whose very presence supported the African American drive to acquire political resources and power.

The outbreak of mass racial violence on May 28, 1917, in East St. Louis signaled white intolerance of a strong, viable African American presence in city affairs. Though the CTLU, a most vociferous opponent of the migration, gained the lion's share of the blame for causing the mayhem, a state investigation absolved the labor organization of all responsibility. Industrialists welcomed black southern migrants, but denied a role in both recruiting African American laborers and making the violence possible. But residents knew that racial conflict had been brewing. Various individuals with ties to certain elements among white real estate politician-businessmen sparked the street fighting, but for reasons not publicized these troublemakers remained unpunished. The May disturbance pointed to problems deeply embedded in the social, economic, and political structures of East St. Louis. The violence was neither unplanned nor spontaneous. It also

hinted that certain political elements were measured in their use of violence. Those who agitated for anti-black violence failed to achieve the desired result: the expulsion of all African Americans from the city. Agitators tried throughout June to spark another round of mass violence with random attacks on black people. The opportunity to launch a second massive anti-black attack presented itself in the early hours of Monday, July 2, when an incident occurred that led to an explosion of horrific physical violence far surpassing that of May.

Chapter Four. To Make East St. Louis a “White Man’s Town”:

Mass Anti-Black Violence of July 1917

The mass racial violence in East St. Louis in July 1917 occurred at the confluence of several historical factors: an expanding national economy within a global context, a continued intensification of racism, the First World War, mobilization for the nation’s war effort, and the wartime Great Migration. The July violence was the first of the major World War I era “race riots” involving mass destruction of property and numerous deaths.¹ This outbreak of mass racial violence signaled a white American reaction to black American competition for jobs, housing, and access to resources through the political arena. White people considered the large numbers of black Southerners entering northern industrial cities the primary source of increased social problems.² They refused to accept the African American proposition that black people’s role in national war mobilization, including work in war production, had connections to the restoration of their democratic rights. The July riot marked the opening salvo on the part of many white Northerners to maintain a rigid racial hierarchy, if necessary through violence.

¹ The July riot was the only major race riot during the First World War. Other major racial conflicts, occurred after the war from 1919 to 1922 in cities like Chicago and Washington, D.C. and rural locales like Elaine, Arkansas, and Rosewood, Florida.

² Discussion of social tension abound in the literature pertaining World War I era and World War II race riots, see, for example, William M. Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Atheneum, 1970); Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., and Martha Wilkerson, *Layered Violence: The Detroit Rioters of 1943* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1991).

The July massacre shared with the May riot in East St. Louis the same causes, social strain, and participants—definitely the same black politicians and white business, civic, labor, and political leaders. According to numerous contemporaries and scholars, the July outrage had a direct relationship mainly to labor issues such as white workers' fears of black strikebreakers and to factors like black involvement in crime, political corruption, and saloon culture. The argument has been that though deeply embedded social, political, and economic problems in the city coupled with an aggressive anti-black racism had provided the fuel, war mobilization and the Great Migration created or exacerbated social tensions that sparked the horrific mass beating and killing. Scholars focus on the social tensions that had developed in the few years preceding the mass racial violence of July 1917 and detail the participants in the mayhem.³ The main consideration herein is that the July massacre was a profoundly political event. By centering black Americans in the history of East St. Louis, the political dynamics cracking a rigid racial hierarchy emerge as the key cause for the July violence.

The mass racial violence of July completed what the May event had left unfinished: the elimination of the black community's powerbroker status in local electoral politics. What is marginalized or ignored in arguments about social tensions and riot participants is that black East St. Louis had arrived at the threshold of creating its own independent political machine, an organization that white political bosses and progressive reformers deemed intolerable. The race riot represented a political solution

³ Elliott M. Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964); Malcolm McLaughlin, *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

implemented by certain white real estate men and other politician-businessmen and their shock troops and carried to completion by reformers who instituted a commission form of municipal government with one of its main objectives the end of black influence independent of white control in city electoral politics and governance. The July massacre revealed white citizens eager to maintain their dominance in the racial hierarchy through the use of violence.

To Create a Sundown Town

Those who planned and led anti-black assaults on July 2 and 3 acted not on behalf of labor unions or out of concern about interracial competition for jobs and housing.⁴ They furthered the political agenda of machine boss politicians who wanted to rid the city of black people. White gunmen, including a few city policemen, involved in random anti-black terrorist attacks in June had connections to politician-businessmen, including real estate men Thomas Canavan and Locke Tarlton.⁵ Instigators carried out a series of ambushes against black residents while the police worked to disarm black residents. White assailants had no fear of being either arrested or convicted because police,

⁴ Patrick F. Gill, Conciliator, to William B. Wilson, Secretary of the Department of Labor, 16 October 1917, Case File #33-378, *Dispute Case Files, 1913-48, Records of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service*, Record Group 280, Entry no. 14, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland; Anderson, and Charles B. Fox in *House Transcripts*, 281-284, 351, and 1652.

⁵ W.A. Miller in *House Transcripts*, 4089, 4101; "Town a Living Hell for Three Days," *Chicago Defender*, 14 July 1917, in *Tuskegee Institute Newspaper Clipping File*, 6:1024, hereafter cited as *TINCF*.

bondsmen, and politicians protected them.⁶ On Sunday night, July 1, agitators escalated their terrorism, driving through black neighborhoods and firing shots at the homes of black inhabitants.⁷ Patrolman Harry L. Walker, former patrolman Gus Masserang, and “citizen” John Long were among those carrying out these terrorist attacks.⁸ At about the time these attacks occurred, a small group of white men killed two black laborers returning home from work.⁹ Another gang of white men, joined by a few uniformed army recruiters on furlough, broke into the downtown office of black dentist Leroy Bundy, intending to kill the community activist who had angered white politicians with his program for an independent black political machine.¹⁰ But Bundy was not in his office. He had been warned of impending trouble by a white business friend and had fled town before sunrise.¹¹

Within the first hour of Monday, July 2, the police received a phone call from a white grocer in the city’s South End district of Denverside who had observed black

⁶ George W. Allison in United States, Congress, House, Special Committee To Investigate the East St. Louis Riots, *Transcripts of the Hearings of the House Select Committee That Investigated the Race Riots in East St. Louis, Illinois, 1917* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1918), 3532, hereafter cited as *House Transcripts*.

⁷ Calvin Cotton, and Thomas G. Hunter in *House Transcripts*, 673-676, and 1066-1067.

⁸ “Soldiers Arrive to Preserve Order,” *East St. Louis Daily Journal*, 2 July 1917, 1, hereafter cited as *ESLDJ*. State prosecutors charged Masserang, Long, Walker, and another white man as the gun carrying joy riders in “The People of the State of Illinois v. Leroy Bundy et al. March Term, 1919,” in “The East St. Louis Riot of 1917,” reel no. 7 (University Publications of America, 1985).

⁹ James Taylor in Ida B. Wells-Barnett, “The East St. Louis Massacre,” 15. Taylor’s occupation in *City Directory of East St. Louis, Illinois . . . 1912* (East St. Louis, IL: East St. Louis Publishing Company, 1912).

¹⁰ Roy Albertson in *House Transcripts*, 482-485; “Soldiers Arrive To Preserve Order, *ESLDJ*, 2 July 1917, 1. On politicians’ hatred of Bundy see “Bundy Involves Mayor in Open Confession,” *ESLDJ*, 26 November 1917, 1, 5.

¹¹ On Bundy’s whereabouts on Monday morning see “The People of the State of Illinois v. Leroy Bundy et al.”

residents with guns gathering in front of an African Methodist Episcopal Church. Black Denversiders had decided to defend themselves in the event of further terrorist attacks. Night Chief of Police Cornelius Hickey ordered plain clothes detectives, sergeant Samuel Coppedge and Frank Wadley, police chauffeur William Hutter, and two uniformed patrolmen to investigate. The five policemen, joined by reporter Roy Albertson, a frequent visitor to the police station, left in an unmarked Ford Model T police car for Denverside. Turning the corner east from Tenth Street onto Bond Avenue, Hutter, coming face to face with approximately 150 armed black men, abruptly stopped the vehicle. The men had been heading west toward the Free Bridge where they hoped to exact revenge upon several white men who had assaulted two black women earlier that night. Coppedge shouted, "What is doing here, boys?" The black men hollered, "None of your damned business." Coppedge then said, "We are down here to protect you fellows as well as the whites." The armed black men, perhaps thinking the six white men were trigger-happy joy riders masquerading as policemen, replied, "We don't need any of your damned protection," and told them to leave.¹² When Coppedge ordered Hutter to drive forward, some of the black men reacted and fired shots, wounding the two uniformed patrolmen, fatally wounding Wadley, who later died on the night of July 3, and killing Coppedge outright. (Ironically, Coppedge and Wadley had protected black

¹² Albertson in *House Transcripts*, 478-483, 498, 501-502. Albertson's story is the only published eyewitness account. One dispute of his account appeared in "Riot a National Disgrace," *St. Louis Argus*, 6 July 1917, reporting that Albertson simply added Coppedge's verbal exchange that occurred a month earlier. Congressional investigators also questioned Albertson's investigative skills after establishing that he had not interviewed black residents for their version of the confrontation in Albertson in *House Transcripts*, 499-503, 542-567.

residents in the Valley from white mobs during the May violence.¹³) Hutter and Albertson, escaping unharmed, sped the wounded and dying to nearby Deaconess Hospital.¹⁴

The news that armed black people had killed white police officers provided the perfect excuse for agitators to unleash the violence that they had planned.¹⁵ The most aggressive white racist punishments, like lynchings, rapes, and attacks on black neighborhoods, often occurred after individual African Americans in self-defense had killed aggressive white police officers or other agents of the state. Anti-black schemers in East St. Louis now could draw upon the tradition of white communal violence to carry out their plans to destroy the city's black community and in the process remind African Americans of the price to be paid for refusing to accept their status as social inferiors.¹⁶ Instigators, intent on making a dramatic impact, parked Coppedge's blood-soaked, bullet riddled car before sunrise in front of police headquarters. The spectacle attracted onlookers who learned about the recent events and planned their retaliation against

¹³ "Presence of Foreign and Lawless Negro Element Injures City," *ESLDJ*, 29 May 1917, 1, 5. See also Chapter Three.

¹⁴ "Soldiers Arrive To Preserve Order," *ESLDJ*, 2 July 1917, 1; "The People of the State of Illinois, Defendant in Error, vs. Leroy N. Bundy, Plaintiff in Error," no. 13366, *1920 Ill. LEXIS 1231*, 3-5; "Detective Shot by Negro Dies," *St. Louis Republic*, 4 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 7:0098.

¹⁵ Albert B. McQuillan, and Allison in *House Transcripts*, 1712-1713, and 3629-3630.

¹⁶ For an example of a white reaction to a black man killing a white police officer see William Ivy Hair, *Carnival of Fury: Robert Charles and the New Orleans Race Riot of 1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976). Literature on the systematic, communal nature of lynching and other acts of mass anti-black violence see, for example, W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Philip Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America* (New York: Random House, 2002).

African Americans.¹⁷ Those gathered counted on little, if any, official interference upon hearing policemen demanding vengeance and lawyers condoning anti-black violence.

Schemers used the morning hours to prepare for the cleansing of African Americans from East St. Louis.¹⁸ Some warned black townspeople “to get their women and children away as it was going to be bad in the city.”¹⁹ Lincoln High School director of music and drawing, Daisy Westbrook, receiving such a warning, sent her baby and mother to St. Louis.²⁰ White strangers advised teaming businessmen Calvin Cotton and Mack Hearst, physician Thomas Hunter, and other black people to leave downtown before trouble began.²¹ A group of white men gathered by mid-morning at the Labor Temple and listened as former railway claims agent Richard Brockway and others directed them to get guns and “return at 3 p.m. to drive the [N]egroes out of town.” An unnamed man with a “pronounced Southern accent” instructed the crowd as to how white southerners “handled [N]egroes” and called upon the throng to “bring their guns.”²²

City authorities acted in ways that suggested either gross incompetence or an anticipation of another outbreak of mass racial violence similar in scale to the one that

¹⁷ Frank G. Cunningham, and G.E. Popkess in *House Transcripts*, 223, and 402-404; “As the Journal Views It,” *ESLDJ*, 6 July 1917, 4, section two.

¹⁸ “Grand Jury Returns Indictments for 103,” *ESLDJ*, 15 August 1917, 1.

¹⁹ Hallie E. Queen, “East St. Louis as I Saw It,” *Lawrence Y. Sherman Papers*, Illinois State Historical Society Library, Springfield, Illinois hereafter cited as *Sherman Papers*.

²⁰ Daisy [Westbrook] to Louise [Westbrook?], [n.d.], Folders 6, 7, Box 133, *Sherman Papers*.

²¹ Cotton in *House Transcripts*, 682-683.

²² Paul Y. Anderson in *House Transcripts*, 284; “Brockway Delivered Speeches,” *ESLDJ*, 14 November 1917, 1. The real estate firm Smith Brothers owned the Labor Temple and rented the hall to union locals and other groups to hold meetings. Why the newspaper did not identify the man with the southern accent, assuming that he was from the South, remains a mystery. The census manuscripts show that East St. Louis also attracted white southern migrants.

had occurred in May. Whatever their thoughts, their response left them inadequately prepared and encouraged those eager to mete out anti-black violence.²³ Chief of Police Ransom Payne, for example, instead of ordering white patrolmen to round up suspected white vigilantes in the early morning hours sent his men home to rest.²⁴ Payne told W.H. Mills and the department's four other black police detectives not to report for duty, saying that they stood no chance in a confrontation with angry white men.²⁵ Reporter Albertson had warned Mayor Mollman within two hours after the shooting of Coppedge and Wadley to prepare for the shedding of innocent black people's blood, but the Mayor failed to take preemptive measures such as countermanding the police chief's order to send policemen home. Mollman knew that police response had proved inadequate during the May violence and that the National Guard had been needed to suppress the civil disorder. The Mayor first contacted Major Kavanaugh, commander of the federalized Illinois National Guard units encamped in the city since April 1917, and requested the use of his units. When Kavanaugh, saying that his troops had been assigned only to protect war production industry from strikers, refused to oblige, Mollman called the National Guard.²⁶ F.S. Dickson, Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard in Springfield, Illinois, sent the requested guardsmen to East. St. Louis.²⁷

²³ Cunningham, and Albertson in *House Transcripts*, 220, and 482, 485-486; "Mayor Mollman Indicted by Race Riot Grand Jury," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 9 September 1917, in *TINCF*, 8:1043.

²⁴ Popkess in *House Transcripts*, 405-406.

²⁵ W.H. Mills, and W. Green, and Otto Nelson in *House Transcripts*, 1109-1110, and 1122, and 1298.

²⁶ Robert J. Boylan in *House Transcripts*, 590.

²⁷ "Soldiers Arrive To Preserve Order, *ESLDJ*, 2 July 1917, 1; "Military Authorities Are in Full Control," *ESLDJ*, 3 July 1917, 1, 2, 5.

The Fourth Infantry of the Illinois National Guard entered the city Monday morning of July 2 over the course of several hours. Troops arrived inexplicably unprepared with a number of them not in uniform and without ammunition. Many of the guardsmen, hailing from southern Illinois sundown towns, needed a strong command to carry out their mission. Their officers did not enforce discipline, at least initially. They failed to take initiative to prevent disorder by dispersing crowds that gathered during the morning hours.²⁸ On scene, Lieutenant Colonel E.P. Clayton who had provided resolute leadership during the May violence requested additional troops, but his superior, Colonel S.O. Tripp, Assistant Quartermaster General, overruled him. Tripp who had neither crowd control nor battlefield experience had taken command at 10 a.m., but delayed troop deployment for a few hours. Commenting on Tripp's actions, newspaper owner and progressive reformer James Kirk, said that well led soldiers "could have stopped [the violence] in ten minutes."²⁹ Tripp, as the Governor's representative, had a different set of priorities. He opposed, for example, Mollman's demand to impose martial law, considering such an action an admission of a loss of control.³⁰ Meanwhile, some of the soldiers fraternized with civilians, confiding to them that they carried little or no

²⁸ "Proceedings before Board of Inquiry, East St. Louis, Illinois," in "The East St. Louis Riot of 1917," reel no. 6, 2-3. For example, on Monday, July 2, thirty troops arrived at 8:30 a.m., thirty-four at 10:20 a.m., forty-seven at 12:50 p.m., sixty-three at 4:00 p.m., sixty-nine at 7:00 p.m., and forty-four at 8:00 p.m.; on Tuesday, seventy troops entered the city at 1:45 a.m., sixty-three at 2:00 a.m., fifty-three at 2:30 a.m., fifty-six at 3:00 a.m., and 113 at 4:15. Three additional units appeared on Tuesday, and two more, one numbering 573 troops on Wednesday.

²⁹ Kirk in *House Transcripts*, 3386-3387.

³⁰ Anderson, and Albertson, and Boylan, and S.O. Tripp, and Jimerson, and Dan McGlynn, and H.F. Bader in *House Transcripts*, 258-259, 264, and 486-487, 505, and 590-592, 598, and 758, 761, and 2049-2050, and 3059-3060, and 4449; "Military Authorities Are in Full Control," *ESLDJ*, 3 July 1917, 1, 2, 5.

ammunition and had orders not to shoot or charge with fixed bayonets. A few militiamen willingly handed their guns to men organizing to assault black people. Over all, the National Guard's unmilitary like behavior emboldened agitators to proceed with their attack against African Americans.³¹

Midday on Monday, July 2, 1917, according to plan, white assailants launched a second episode of mass racial violence in East St. Louis, brutally attacking black residents and nonresidents alike. The key difference between the May and July outbreaks of mass racial violence was that the July assailants were prepared for action, knowing they could literally get away with murder. The gathering multitudes clustered, especially at intersections of major thoroughfares, into various throngs. Within each grouping, most people watched as black people were beaten or killed, sometimes cheering on those conducting the attacks. A much small number within each group conducted the actual assaults. Sometimes those perpetrating the violence stepped back with the spectators only to resume their murderous deeds perhaps after a needed rest. Spectators and killers emotionally needed each to build and reinforce a sense of community that turned the violence into a bloodthirsty orgy that gave the East St. Louis massacre its reputation of unspeakable savagery.³²

³¹ "Race Mobs Kill 15 to 75 Negroes," *New York City Sun*, 3 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:1036-1037; "Murder and Arson in High Carnival at East St. Louis for Day and Night," [title unreadable] in *TINCF*, 1006-1007; "Town Living Hell for Three Days," *Chicago Defender*, 14 July 1917, *TINCF*, 6:1024; Lindsey Cooper, "The Congressional Investigation of East St. Louis," *The Crisis*, 15 (January 1818): 116-121, in Foner and Lewis, *The Black Worker*, 305-306.

³² On discussion of differences between mobs and crowds see Malcolm McLaughlin, "Reconsidering the East St. Louis Race Riot of 1917," *International Review of Social History* 47 (August 2002): 187-212, and his *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in*

The thousands of white people who took to the streets represented a wide cross-section of the population. Those conducting the actual assaults included wage-earning and self-employed working people, professionals, small business owners, prostitutes, and the so-called riffraff or “rough element” of “loafers,” “saloon bums,” “saloon loungers.” Knowledgeable reporters and observers noted that union and non-union workers from Aluminum Ore, steel, meatpacking, and other large industrial firms—the ones considered most threatened by the black migration—were rarely seen, let alone involved in, meting out the violence. Many of those who led the assaults had occupations such as railroading known for either systematic discrimination or exclusion of black laborers.³³ Witnesses identified among the ringleaders railroad claims agents Richard Brockway, railroad switchman Herbert Wood, and seventeen-year old messenger boy Leo Keane.³⁴ Individuals associated with saloons and the violence that marked the city’s saloon culture

East St. Louis, 137-152. See also relevant sections in George Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848* (New York: Wiley, 1964); Brundage, *Lynching in the New South*; Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown*.

³³ Cunningham, and Anderson, and Popkess, and Albertson, and Robert J. Boylan, and McGlynn, and Kirk, and Allison in *House Transcripts*, 223, and 280-284, 307, 350-352, 359, and 417-418, and 492, 507, and 604, 619, and 3099, and 3385, and 3657; Hurd in Wells-Barnett, “The East St. Louis Massacre,” 11; “Race Rioters Fire East St. Louis,” *The New York Times*, 3 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:0989. Reporters who used terms like saloon bums already negative views toward saloon customers who were mainly workers spending much of their spare time at saloons. See also McLaughlin, “Reconsidering the East St. Louis Race Riot of 1917.”

³⁴ Anderson in *House Transcripts*, 284; “Brockway Delivered Speeches,” *ESLDJ*, 14 November 1917, 1; “Described and Analyzed by a . . . Reliable [sic] Journalist,” *ESLDJ*, 5 July 1917, 4; “Authorities To Keep Bundy Return Quiet,” *ESLDJ*, 14 October 1917, 1.

figured prominently in the brutal, and at times sadistic, attacks.³⁵ Whether the police either failed to record the names of arrestees or later destroyed arrest records, information about those who had participated in the violence had to be cobbled together from court testimony or government hearings.³⁶ In addition, Mollman's secretary Maurice Ahearn who ordered police and guardsmen to arrest photographers and destroy their cameras insured many assailants' anonymity.³⁷

The men and women who engaged in the orgy of beatings and killings from the afternoon to well into the night of Monday, July 2, assaulted as many black people as possible.³⁸ According to white newspaper reporter Jack Lait of the *St. Louis Republic*, attackers acted upon a virulent form of racism that viewed "black skin a death warrant."³⁹ "Boys of 13, 14, 15 and 16," according to Lait, appeared "in the forefront of every felonious butchery, [and] girls and women, wielding bloody knives and clawing at the eyes of dying victims, sprang from the ranks of the mad thousands [announcing that they

³⁵ McLaughlin, *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis*, 147-152, argues that men and women of the saloon culture formed a crucial element among the mass murderers.

³⁶ Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis*, 88. Like Rudwick and McLaughlin, this author had no success in locating police records.

³⁷ Albertson in *House Transcripts*, 496-496; "Photographers Threatened," *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 3 July 1917 in *TINCF*, 6:0984; "Grand Jury Holds Him Responsible for Riot," *Chicago Defender*, 15 September 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:1029. Newsreels and photographs of the July violence were shown elsewhere but not in East St. Louis, see "Belleville Bars Riot Pictures," *ESLDJ*, 10 July 1917, 3; "Moving Pictures of Race Riot," *St. Louis Argus*, 27 July 1917, 1.

³⁸ Anderson, and Kirk in *House Transcripts*, 253, 255-256, and 3384-3385; "Military Authorities Are in Full Control," *ESLDJ*, 3 July 1917, 1, 2, 5; "Authorities To Keep Bundy Return Quiet," *ESLDJ*, 14 October 1917, 1; "Mollman Summoned to Rioters' Defense," *ESLDJ*, 18 October 1917, 1, 5.

³⁹ Jack Lait's article reprinted in "Described and Analyzed by a . . . Reliable [sic] Journalist," *East St. Louis Daily Journal*, 5 July 1917, 4, section two, hereafter cited as *ESLDJ*; "As the Journal Views It," *ESLDJ*, 6 July 1917, 4.

did] not tolerate a black man.”⁴⁰ Journalist Carlos Hurd observed that white rampagers displayed “a horribly cool deliberateness and a spirit of fun.”⁴¹ Male assailants attacked not only black men, but also black women, and children mainly in “the Valley,” a district of primarily low income black and white working class dwellers.⁴² Ambushers waited near the meatpacking plants and stockyards to chase after and shoot at isolated black workers.⁴³ In one incident several white men dragged two black men to an alley, shot them, returned to the street with both victims, and proceeded to hang them. When the rope broke as they hanged one of the helpless men, sending them falling on their backs, the hangmen laughed as several policemen and guardsmen watched.⁴⁴ In another incident assailants caught Scott Clark, a fifty-two year old black teamster, in his house and “was about to lynch him, when someone said, ‘Let’s drag him around a little.’” Leo Keane and Herbert Wood led at least twelve men in pulling Clark through the streets while others stoned him. They were about to hang Clark from a telephone pole when Colonel Tripp and several guardsmen intervened and rushed Clark to a hospital where he

⁴⁰ “Described and Analyzed by a . . . Reliable [sic] Journalist,” *ESLDJ*, 5 July 1917, 4.

⁴¹ Carlos F. Hurd in Ida B. Wells-Barnett, “The East St. Louis Massacre: The Greatest Outrage of the Century,” 11, *Correspondence of the Military Intelligence Division*, United States War Department, Record Group 165, Entry no. 65 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1440, roll 1, no. 10218-60), National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

⁴² Anderson, and Dan McGlynn, and George W. Allison in *House Transcripts*, 306, and 3099, and 3657-3658.

⁴³ “Complete Probe of Riot Begun,” *ESLDJ*, 5 July 1917, 1, 2; “Race Rioters Fire East St. Louis,” *The New York Times*, 3 July 1917, in *Tuskegee Institute Newspaper Clipping File*, 6:0989, hereafter cited as *TINCF*; “Mollman Summoned to Rioters’ Defense,” *ESLDJ*, 18 October 1917, 1, 5.

⁴⁴ “Race Rioters Fire East St. Louis and Shoot or Hang Many Negroes,” *New York Times*, 3 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:0989.

later died from his wounds.⁴⁵ Black resident Josie Nixon witnessed another horrible scene of white men shooting a black woman's tongue off and killing her son before entering a house and murdering a mother and her newborn baby.⁴⁶

White women, mostly teenage and adult prostitutes, also assaulted black men, but more frequently targeted black women and children.⁴⁷ Survivors told Howard University Red Cross official Hallie Queen that the women "were far more vile . . . than were the men and far more inventive of cruelty." Some informed Queen that they witnessed women killing their victims "with hatpins, sometimes picking out their eyes with them before they were quite dead."⁴⁸ In one episode two white teenage women after severely pummeling a black woman and staining themselves with her blood, walked away from the scene bragging about their deed.⁴⁹ Women rioters often tore clothes off black women and beat them with fists, shoes, or beer faucets.⁵⁰ Reverend George Allison tried to protect a black woman who was being chased by seven or eight white prostitutes and three or four drunken pimps. She escaped, but not before her pursuers had ripped her clothes off to her waist except for her corset.⁵¹ One refugee told Hallie Queen of a particularly heartbreaking incident where a black mother had wrapped her infant in a

⁴⁵ Rudwick, 99-101.

⁴⁶ Wells Barnett, "The East St. Louis Massacre," 6.

⁴⁷ Mrs. Howard, and Carlos F. Hurd in Ida B. Wells-Barnett, "The East St. Louis Massacre," 6, and 12; Hallie E. Queen, "East St. Louis As I Saw It," *Sherman Papers*.

⁴⁸ Queen, "East St. Louis As I Saw It." In the 1927 issue of *Who's Who In Colored America: A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Living Persons of Negro Descent in America*, Hallie Elvera Queen served as chairperson of the Howard University chapter of the American Red Cross and was Holder of Service Cross for War Service.

⁴⁹ "Race Rioters Fire East St. Louis," *TINCF*, 6:0989.

⁵⁰ Wells Barnett, 6.

⁵¹ Allison in *House Transcripts*, 3657.

towel and after fighting with several white women managed to break away, “[c]rossing the Bridge of Mercy [the Free Bridge] . . . crying ‘Thank God, I saved my baby.’ When she opened the towel, it was empty. In the fight the women had taken the baby and [upon realizing what had happened,] the mother lost her reason.”⁵²

White women participated in the July massacre in greater numbers and more conspicuously than they had during the May violence. The key difference between the two episodes in regards to the behavior of white women assailants was that in July white women assaulted black people. Observers were at a loss even to attempt an explanation as to why white women, including prostitutes, stepped outside of their gender role as cheerleaders or observers to take on murderous behavior ascribed to men. One is reasonable to presume that the reasons for attacking black people were same in July as they were in May.⁵³ But prostitutes predominated among woman attackers and had no problem crossing the line to follow the men in committing violence because they had close connections to male killers associated with criminal violence that accompanied saloon culture.⁵⁴

Some local government officials, guardsmen, and policemen acquiesced to or participated in anti-black assaults. They refused either to protect African Americans or arrest rioters.⁵⁵ State’s Attorney for St. Clair County Herbert Schaumleffel, for example, did nothing to prevent attackers from beating and killing black people. Schaumleffel

⁵² Queen, “East St. Louis as I Saw It.”

⁵³ See discussion of prostitutes in particular, and white women, generally in Chapter Three herein, and presentation of hypotheses in McLaughlin, *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis*, 152-159.

⁵⁴ See discussion of saloon culture and criminal violence in Chapter Two.

⁵⁵ Jimerson, and Stewart Campbell in House Transcripts 2049-2051, and 3978.

even released eighty-nine jailed assailants before police had a chance to book them.⁵⁶ Some militiamen looted and then torched black dwellings and businesses and shot at fleeing black occupants, sometimes forcing them back into the flames.⁵⁷ Several troops and policemen disarmed black men and handed them over to the mobs to be beaten or killed, or in some cases perpetuated the attacks themselves. Soldiers, escorting badly beaten black men, women, and children to the police station, often provided them with little protection from missile throwing crowds.⁵⁸

African Americans faced assailants whose seemingly pathological racism moved them to be sadistic in the manner of participants in lynching parties who showed no mercy or remorse. Black residents in the Valley and on downtown streets generally became not only hunted prey, but also a source of entertainment as white people fulfilled their sense of social superiority. Black people's lives had no value in the eyes of their attackers. Mattie House's "husband was shot and hacked to pieces before her eyes." A black man concealed himself in a box, but ruffians, upon discovering him, nailed the box shut and "threw it into the flames, remaining until it was burned to ashes."⁵⁹ Black clergyman James Taylor observed as one group of white men who after shooting and wounding a black shopkeeper and his family in their store, torched the shop and incinerated them. According to Josie Nixon, attackers eagerly killed black infants and

⁵⁶ Allison in *House Transcripts*, 3693.

⁵⁷ "As the Journal Views It," *ESLDJ*, 6 July 1917, 4, section two; "Race Rioters Fire East St. Louis," *The New York Times*, 3 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:0989; "Town a Living Hell for Three Days," *Chicago Defender*, 14 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:1024.

⁵⁸ Clarrissa Lockett, and Mr. Buchanan in Wells-Barnett, "The East St. Louis Massacre," 6, and 16.

⁵⁹ Queen, "East St. Louis As I Saw It."

young children, sometimes throwing them alive into burning structures.⁶⁰ Nixon told about one mother who with her baby in her arms ran from her burning house. The murders, she said, shot “the baby . . . through the head and threw the infant into the fire.”⁶¹ In another instance, a black woman and a child, while running from a burning building “were either killed or knocked unconscious . . . and the child was thrown back into the” fire.⁶² And in yet another act of cruelty, rioters stood around talking and joking until a black man appeared and someone screamed, “There’s a nigger.” Then they all ran after the man, killed him, left the corpse in the street, and resumed their conversation.⁶³

Attacks on African American nonresidents revealed perpetrators’ lack of concern about such issues as racial competition over jobs and housing. In one particularly outrageous incident, assailants surrounded a streetcar carrying the Cook family home to St. Louis from a fishing trip and dragged the parents and their two children from the vehicle. One of their children, a daughter, somehow escaped, eventually making her way safely across the river, but thugs proceeded to torture her parents and brother. As the mother, Lena Cook, shouted, “We’re not from East St. Louis and haven’t harmed anyone,” men tore off her clothes and pulled out her hair. While she pleaded for the lives of her husband and seventeen year old son, ringleader Charles Hanna shot and killed Mr. Cook (no first name given) while John Dow killed the couple’s son. Hanna then punched Lena Cook and threatened to kill her. She managed to crawl to a nearby drug store where

⁶⁰ Josie Nixon in Wells-Barnett, “The East St. Louis Massacre,” 7, Nixon and her husband Samuel, a carpenter and contractor, and daughter Pearl, a packinghouse worker, lived in East St. Louis since 1904.

⁶¹ Wells-Barnett, 7.

⁶² *House Transcripts*, 384;

⁶³ Kirk in *House Transcripts*, 3385.

“a white man interceded for her, telling the mob to ‘leave the woman alone.’” Enraged that a white man intervened to help a black woman, a few men clubbed her protector. Ambulance attendants rescued Cook, taking her and the corpses of her husband and son to a hospital.⁶⁴

Ringleaders, for a variety of reasons, allowed some black individuals to pass unharmed. They did not, for example, molest barber Mose Lockett who enjoyed cordial relations with boss politicians.⁶⁵ Assailants permitted long-time black Republican and ward politician Captain John Robinson, held in high esteem by white residents, to walk through the downtown district undisturbed.⁶⁶ One group of killers spared a Mr. Williamson (no first name given), whom they mistook for his brother, a highly regarded janitor.⁶⁷ Similarly, leaders of one group of attackers left the popular black saloonkeeper Will “Buddy” Bell untouched, perhaps because of his known connections with boss politicians.⁶⁸ In another illustration a group of white men broke into a black family’s house intent upon killing its occupants. They did not locate the parents who had hidden in a closet but left their children in the front room of their home, “thinking that no one would harm a child.” The ice dealer leading the group demanded that the children reveal

⁶⁴ “Mollman Summoned to Rioters’ Defense,” *ESLDJ*, 18 October 1917, 1, 5.

⁶⁵ “2 More Identified As Race Rioters,” *ESLDJ*, 15 November 1917, 1.

⁶⁶ “Captain Robinson Most Colorful Negro Character of City,” *ESLDJ*, 28 February 1926, 3-A.

⁶⁷ Joe D. Williamson in *House Transcripts*, 1861-1862.

⁶⁸ “Widely Known Negro Buried with All Pomp,” *ESLDJ*, 25 March 1924, 1, 8, stated in a laudatory manner that William Bell “became associated with the liquor industry, and for many years was in the saloon business. . . . One of the outstanding figures in the race riots in 1917 . . . Bell wielded an almost unbelievable power to calm the troubled waters. . . . Those who know say that he was more influential than any other man and did more to end the ruthless killing, than any other one man in East St. Louis.”

their parents' whereabouts though the children repeatedly stated that their parents were not at home. When someone said, "Let's kill the kids," one of the children, a little girl, who recognized the ice dealer, "cried out 'Mr. Ice-man, don't kill me—please don't.'" In an act of mercy, the iceman, moved by the child's plea, led the attackers away.⁶⁹

White assailants ransacked and destroyed black owned or occupied homes and owned businesses and other properties. Some vandals, resentful of African American material advancement, after looting black people's homes, carried away furniture, clothing, and other household contents before setting the houses ablaze.⁷⁰ Others targeted businesses unprotected by the federalized militia and torched or otherwise damaged firms that employed African Americans.⁷¹ Rampagers set afire railroad cars that happened to be filled with war munitions, railroad freight houses, the Bon-Ton Baking Company, Hill Thomas Lime and Cement Company, and other small firms. Arsonists torched the Broadway Theatre, incinerating several black people who had taken refuge inside.⁷² Assailants did not attack Armour, Swift, and other large employers of black workers because these companies either were protected by federalized Illinois

⁶⁹ Untitled, signed by "K. Causer, Major, 4th Regt., July 3—12."

⁷⁰ Anderson in *House Transcripts*, 362; Daisy Westbrook to Louise Westbrook, *Sherman Papers*. In numerous anti-black clashes, many white assailants looted black people's homes for valuables and other household contents.

⁷¹ "The Following Report Was Made by George Austin," *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 3 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:0985; "Race Rioters Fire East St. Louis," *New York Times*, 3 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:0989; "Blacks Shot Down Like Rabbits," *St. Louis Republic*, 3 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:0998-0999;

⁷² "Town a Living Hell for Three Days," *Chicago Defender*, 14 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:1024; "Military Authorities Are in Full Control," *ESLDJ*, 3 July 1917, 1-3; Gould in Wells-Barnett, "The East St. Louis Massacre," 15; Queen, "East St. Louis As I Saw It."

National Guard units or employed their own security guards.⁷³ Aluminum Ore, for example, had both a hired defense force and a rifle club that supplied guns to loyal white and black employees; the latter who along with their families had sought safety on company property.⁷⁴

Most African Americans untouched by assailants lived in black districts in the city's South End where residents had resorted to armed self defense. Black people in those neighborhoods relied upon the tradition of using firearms to protect their persons and property.⁷⁵ They must have heard about earlier anti-black clashes, for example, those in Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1898 and in Atlanta in 1906 where African Americans had engaged in gun battles to keep white intruders from entering their neighborhoods.⁷⁶ White attackers in East St. Louis either had the impression or remembered how during the May violence black people in the South End had used their weapons. On July 2, armed African Americans wounded or killed an unknown number

⁷³ E.M. Sorrells in *House Transcripts*, 3905-3971.

⁷⁴ Black employees at Aluminum Ore in Mrs. Olga Wayne, interviewed by the author, 21 September 1999, tape recording, East St. Louis.

⁷⁵ Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis*, 53-57, thought that black East St. Louisans use of firearms was at best sporadic. Malcolm McLaughlin, *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis*, 163-176, argues that in the South End black townspeople made widespread, effective use of armed self-defense. This author concurs with McLaughlin. This author also agrees with McLaughlin's assessment of Rudwick's minimizing armed self-defense was influenced "perhaps, in light of the effective use of nonviolent direct action being made in the Southern states in his own day, Rudwick sought to emphasize the moral supremacy of African Americans in the East St. Louis race riot," see McLaughlin, 164.

⁷⁶ See relevant passages in David S. Cecelski, Timothy B. Tyson, eds., *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); David Fort Godshalk, *Veiled Visions: The 1906 Atlanta Race Riot and the Reshaping of American Race Relations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Gregory Mixon, *The Atlanta Riot: Race, Class, and Violence in a New South City* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005).

of white people who ventured into black districts.⁷⁷ At one location, according to Major K. Causer of the Fourth Company, Illinois National Guard, black homeowners, who observed a gang readying to attack their homes, fired “a fearful volley and [left] many white men . . . dead.” Survivors retrieved their dead comrades and “either buried them secretly or threw them into the Mississippi.”⁷⁸ Some attackers clearly did not want news to spread that African Americans had organized an effective defense against white invaders, if for no other reason than white people would have a more difficult time in mounting future assaults against black communities. Black shooters, however, refrained from attacking white persons whom they knew to be friendly. One group of black gunmen, for example, spared Aluminum Ore Company staff physician Albert McQuillan and his wife from certain death when one of the gunmen recognized McQuillan as the company doctor who had been kind to him.⁷⁹

By late Monday afternoon, East St. Louis businessmen as well as Illinois and federal authorities concluded that the situation in the city had spiraled out of control. They expressed various concerns mostly having to do with restoring interstate commerce, resuming war production, reestablishing the legitimacy of City Hall, and protecting black workers who formed a crucial element in industries supporting federal war efforts. Assistant Attorney General of Illinois Sherman C.W. Middlekauff announced that

⁷⁷ Thomas Canavan, McQuillan, and Frank Weckermeyer in *House Transcripts*, 1424-1426, and 1691-1696, and 1785-1787.

⁷⁸ K. Causer, Major, 4th Regt., July 3-12, Folders 6-7, Box 133, *Sherman Papers*.

⁷⁹ McQuillan in *House Transcripts*, 1693.

lawlessness reigned in East St. Louis.⁸⁰ According to white reporter Paul Anderson of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the “complete break-down of every [city] agency that preserve[d] order” had given people “a free and unrestricted opportunity to kill.”⁸¹ Hill-Thomas Lime and Cement Company secretary Robert Thomas described a police department in a state of mutiny.⁸² Kehlor Four Mills Company president Peyton Karr and other businessmen, fearing destruction of their property and a loss of black workers, contacted officials at the War Department in Washington, D.C., requesting armed federal intervention.⁸³

Local and state officials and those guardsmen and law enforcement officers, performing their duties, faced the daunting tasks of imposing law and order, disarming black and white street fighters, and protecting African Americans from mass murderers.⁸⁴ Mayor Mollman finally convinced Governor Lowden, over Colonel Tripp’s objections, to declare martial law.⁸⁵ Tripp, refusing to operate under martial law, handed over command late Monday afternoon to Lieutenant Colonel Clayton who deployed troops as the murderous orgy reached its height of intensity Monday evening. Clayton molded his

⁸⁰ C.W. Middlekauff, State of Illinois Office of the Attorney General, to L.Y. Sherman, July 24, 1917, Folder 1, Box 133, *Sherman Papers*.

⁸¹ Anderson in *House Transcripts*, 299, 322-323, 362, 447-448.

⁸² Robert R. Thomas in *House Transcripts*, 1402-1403.

⁸³ Peyton T. Karr, President, Kehlor Flour Mills Co., East St. Louis, to Adjutant General, War Department, Washington, DC, 3 July 1917; J.R. Mathews, President, Corno Mills Co., East St. Louis, to Adjutant General, 3 July 1917, *Glasser File, ca. 1938, Internal Disturbance (geographical file), Records of the Department of Justice*, Record Group 60, Entry no. 126, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Md.

⁸⁴ Anderson in *House Transcripts*, 322-323.

⁸⁵ Robert J. Boylan, and Frank E. Nulsen in *House Transcripts*, 609-610, 1033-1034; “Soldiers Arrive To Preserve Order,” *ESLDJ*, 2 July 1917, 1; “Complete Probe of Riot Begun,” *ESLDJ*, 5 July 1917, 1, 2.

men into a disciplined force that dispersed the throngs, by firing shots into the air, charging with fixed bayonets, and arresting and jailing at least five hundred men and women assailants.⁸⁶

The mass violence greatly subsided on Tuesday, July 3, as guardsmen regained control of the city, allowing East St. Louisans, many who had been on the streets on Monday either as observers or participants in mass anti-black violence, to tour the scenes of destruction and death. Some remarked that the charred cityscape reminded them of battle-ruined cities in war torn Europe. Others noted similarities between the places where killers had hanged black people from telephone poles or trees or incinerated the victims and lynching scenes. But even on Tuesday a few agitators, vengeful policemen, and rogue guardsmen continued their attacks, assaulting isolated groups of black people. In one outrageous incident in the city's Bloody Island district, three police officers and six soldiers without provocation attacked John Avant and twenty-five black railroad workers as they broke for lunch at a restaurant, wounding several men, including Avant, and killing two others. One of the soldiers shot off the right arm of black bystander Mineola Magee.⁸⁷ But for all practical purposes, by late Tuesday, Clayton had suppressed the riot.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Anderson, and Boylan, and Colonel S.O. Tripp in *House Transcripts*, 263, 272, and 592-593, 599-610, and 824-825, 843-844, 852-854; "Race Rioters Fire East St. Louis," *New York Times*, 3 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:0989.

⁸⁷ Avant in Wells-Barnett, "The East St. Louis Massacre," 14-15; Mineola Magee in *House Transcripts*, 1373-1379.

⁸⁸ "Military Authorities Are in Full Control," *ESLDJ*, 3 July 1917, 1, 2, 5; "Mayor Mollman Issues Statement," *ESLDJ*, 8 July 1917, 1, 2.

Immediate Aftermath of the Massacre

In the aftermath of the July massacre officials and civilians assessed the effects of the mass violence. As they observed the destruction, tended to survivors, and buried the dead, they could only compare the July massacre to events that had occurred outside the North. Black, and many white people, thought such mass anti-black violence particular to the urban South, unthinkable in industrial city in the North. White invasions of urban black neighborhoods where significant numbers of African Americans had been displaced, wounded, and killed had occurred in the South, most notably in 1898 in Wilmington, North Carolina, and in 1906 in Atlanta. Observers searching for similar occurrences in the North had to reach back to the racist violence of 1908 in Springfield, Illinois, but thought that East St. Louis outdid even this mass anti-black assault. (Some scholars considered the East St. Louis massacre the worst episode of urban mass racial violence to occur in twentieth century America until the urban “race riots” of the 1960s. Recent scholarship shows that the racial violence in 1921 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, surpassed that of East St. Louis.) Assailants had terrorized at least seven thousand African Americans, many with only the clothes on their backs and small bundles in their arms, into seeking sanctuary in St. Louis.⁸⁹ Nobody knew how many had fled to neighboring

⁸⁹ “7,000 Blacks Flee East St. Louis as Troops Stop Riot,” *New York City Call*, 6 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 7:0014; “Military Authorities Are in Full Control,” *ESLDJ*, 3 July 1917, 1, 2, 5; “Several Hundred Negroes Brought Across the River,” *TINCF*, 6:1018; “Fear-

towns north, east, and south of East St. Louis. White attackers had wounded hundreds of African Americans, officially killing thirty-nine, but unofficially many more. Some observers said that as many as five hundred, black men, women, and children had been massacred.⁹⁰ News of nine white men killed unsettled white people, especially as some reports hinted that black people in majority black neighborhoods had retaliated with firearms.⁹¹ Contradicting the official account of only nine white deaths, one black policeman told *Chicago Defender* reporter J.M. Batchman that he personally had seen thirty-eight slain white people laying in one morgue.⁹² African Americans would have killed more white people if the police had not disarmed a number of black residents in June. But enough black townspeople did engage in armed self defense to have prevented agitators from turning East St. Louis into an all white, or sundown, town.

Stricken Negroes Leaving East St. Louis,” *TINCF*, 6:0990; “Thousands Leave East St. Louis Cared for Here,” *St. Louis Argus*, 6 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:1001; “3,000 Refugees Cared for Here,” *St. Louis Republic*, 4 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:1002; Wells-Barnett, “The East St. Louis Massacre,” 8, 18; “St. Louis,” [1918?], Box E:87, Part I, Series VI, *National Urban League Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. On ratio of black refugees to estimated black population see “Grand Jury Returns Indictments for 103,” *ESLDJ*, 15 August 1917, 1; Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis*, 162-166, 269-270.

⁹⁰ For official toll of thirty-nine deaths see Simon Stickgold, *Illinois Race Riots*, “Research Memorandum no. 5” (Springfield: Illinois Interracial Commission, 1943). For unofficial reports of a low of fifteen to a high of a few hundred deaths see “Race Mobs Kill 15 to 75 Negroes,” *TINCF*, 6:1036-1037; “Two More White Men Die,” *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 18 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 7:0011; “Rioters Kill 350 Negroes in E. St. Louis,” *New York City Call*, 3 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 7:0085; “Complete Probe of Riot Begun,” *ESLDJ*, 5 July 1917, 1, 2. For a high estimate of five hundred killed see Leonidas C. Dyer in *Riot at East St. Louis, Illinois: Hearings before the Committee on Rules . . . August 3, 1917* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1917), 5.

⁹¹ Allison in *House Transcripts*, 3635-3636.

⁹² “Town a Living Hell for Three Days,” *Chicago Defender*, 14 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:1024-1025.

Some African Americans around the nation drew lessons about the value of armed self defense in holding down death tolls during mass assaults on black people, especially when government at all levels failed to protect them. Socialist and President of the Liberty League of Negro Americans Hubert H. Harrison, for one, urged black people to “supply themselves with rifles and fight, if necessary, to defend their property and lives.” Harrison argued that as long as white vigilantes murdered defenseless African Americans and authorities stood by indifferently, then black people must be ready to “kill rather than submit to be killed.”⁹³

Authorities and most news reports labeled the July massacre a race riot, preferring to minimize or ignore the political dimension of the event. Others described the July violence as a pogrom, a planned event that targeted a specific population with the intent of disrupting, if not destroying, a community. For instance, Superintendent of the Jewish Educational and Charitable Association of St. Louis, Oscar Leonard, for instance, called the July riot “a ‘pogrom,’ the name by which Russian massacres of Jews ha[d] become known.” Leonard quoted a Russian Jewish immigrant who said that “the Russian ‘Black Hundreds’ could take lessons in pogrom-making from the whites of East St. Louis.”⁹⁴ Such critics saw official involvement in the massacre and politics its chief cause. Later even some civic and business leaders openly agreed that “the source of the trouble was

⁹³ “Urged Negroes to Get Arms,” *New York* [rest of title unreadable], 5 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 7:0098. See also Jeffrey B. Perry, ed., *A Hubert Harrison Reader* (Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 94-95.

⁹⁴ Oscar Leonard, “The East St. Louis Pogrom,” *The Survey*, 38 (July 14, 1917): 331-333, in Philip S. Foner and Ronald L. Lewis, eds., *The Black Worker: A Documentary History from Colonial Times to the Present* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 309-312.

political.”⁹⁵ They noted how local authorities had quickly apprehended leading black politicians on charges of initiating the mass racial violence and used the massacre as an excuse to remove black elected and appointed officials from various political positions.⁹⁶ Dentist Leroy N. Bundy, physician Thomas Hunter, American Steel Foundries laborer Fayette Parker, and three others, for example, were dismissed from their seats on the St. Clair County Board of Supervisors.⁹⁷ In addition, the board abolished the office of Negro county physician occupied by Bluitt at an annual salary of \$1,100.⁹⁸ African

⁹⁵ “E. St. Louis Wipes Out Disgrace of Race Riots and Plans Better City,” *New York Tribune*, 3 February 1918, in *TINCF*, 8:1008; “Lawyer Says Riots Awakened Employers,” *St. Louis* [rest of title unreadable], 17 January 1918, in *TINCF*, 8:1014.

⁹⁶ “Complete Probe of Riot Begun,” *East St. Louis Daily Journal* 5 July 1917, 1, 2, hereafter the *East St. Louis Daily Journal* cited as *ESLDJ*; “Riot Promises To Bring Reorganization,” *ESLDJ*, July 6, 1917, 1; “12 Negroes on Trial for Riot Murders,” *ESLDJ*, 1 October 1917, 1. Black leaders included city detective James Vardiman, Illinois Assistant State’s Attorney for St. Clair County Noah Parden, laborers Marshall Alexander and Sam Wheat, mortician R.M.C. Green, physician Lyman B. Bluitt, Negro Businessmen Association member and realtor Pearl Abernathy, saloonkeepers “Buddy” Bell and George Kyle. Sources did not name women among the arrestees. Sam Wheat as alderman in “Negro Elected Alderman of East St. Louis,” *St. Louis Argus*, 7 April 1916, 1. Pearl Abernathy in National Negro Business League, *Twentieth Annual Meeting: Held at St. Louis, Missouri, August 13, 14, 15, 1919*, in *Records of the National Negro Business League, Part I: Annual Conference Proceedings and Organizational Records, 1900-1919*, microfilm, 3:00669-00670. Abernathy, Alexander, Bell, Bluitt, Kyle, Parden, and Wheat’s occupations in *City Directory of East St. Louis . . . 1912* (East St. Louis, IL: East St. Louis Publishing Company, 1912), hereafter cited as *1912 City Directory*.

⁹⁷ “Supervisors Hold Lily White Meeting,” *ESLDJ*, 9 July 1917, 2; “Four Negroes Attend Supervisors’ Meeting,” *ESLDJ*, 6 August 1917, 1; Ida B. Wells-Barnett, “The East St. Louis Massacre: The Greatest Outrage of the Century,” 17-18, *Correspondence of the Military Intelligence Division*, United States War Department, Record Group 165, Entry no. 65 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1440, roll 1, no. 10218-60), National Archives Building, Washington, D.C. Parker’s occupation listed in *McCoy’s East St. Louis City Directory, 1916* (East St. Louis, IL: McCoy, 1916). Parker’s membership on the Board of Supervisors in “2 Whites on Trial for Negro’s Murder,” *ESLDJ*, 8 October 1917, 1.

⁹⁸ “Negro Members of County Board Fail to Attend,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 8 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:1021.

American journalist and activist Ida B. Wells-Barnett said that the killers had the support “of the civil authorities, the police and the state militia, in . . . murdering over two hundred Negroes and destroying three million dollars worth of property.”⁹⁹

In the meantime black East St. Louisans had to care for survivors, bury the dead, and rebuild their shattered lives. Some black townspeople concerned about future outbreaks of mass racial violence left the city permanently, but many remained to restore their communities.¹⁰⁰ A local newspaper lamented the flight of “respectable” property-owning black families. But some long-time black residents stayed. They included Afro American League activist and Republican politician Captain John Robinson, Democratic Party politician Harvey T. Bowman, sisters Lucy Mae and Fannie Turner, schoolteachers and descendants of Virginian slave revolt leader Nat Turner, rolling mill laborer Ephiriam Thomas and his spouse Jennie Thomas, both founders of Mount Zion Baptist Church, and the community activist Hawkins, Eubanks, and De Shields families.¹⁰¹ Residents turned to the task of restoring their community. Mary Martin and her Old Folks’ Home Association supplied clothing and other items to those who had been

⁹⁹ Wells-Barnett, “The East St. Louis Massacre,” 23.

¹⁰⁰ “Negroes Leaving East Saint Louis,” *St. Louis Argus*, 20 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:0992; “Red Cross Aid Will Be Given,” *ESLDJ*, 9 July 1917, 1; “St. Louis Gets 10,000 Negroes As Riot Result,” *ESLDJ*, 10 July 1917, 3;

¹⁰¹ “‘Cap’n’ Robinson, Most Colorful Negro Character of City,” *ESLDJ*, 28 February 1926, 3-A; Bowman in “Cook Charges Negro Padded City Payroll,” *ESLDJ*, 24 September 1926, 1, 10-A; Clementine R. Hamilton, *The Ebony Tree* ([East St. Louis: s.n., 1971?]), 9; Lucy Mae Turner, “The Family of Nat Turner, 1831 to 1954: Part II—Conclusion,” *Negro History Bulletin*, 18 (April 1955): 4, 15, 17, 156-157. Occupations listed in *1912 City Directory*.

rendered homeless.¹⁰² Black townspeople supplemented their meager resources with aid that came from individuals and private groups across the nation. They received immediate assistance from two Chicago-based organizations: the Negro Fellowship League and the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. Ida B. Wells-Barnett led Chicagoans in successfully lobbying Governor Lowden to have Illinois relieve St. Louis of the burden of caring for refugees and provide for community and refugee aid.¹⁰³

Several hundred black people gathered in September to show that mass racial violence had not destroyed their community or dimmed the meaning of the fifty-fourth annual observance of the Emancipation Proclamation in commemoration of abolition and freedom.¹⁰⁴ Emancipation Day ceremony attendees listened as Captain John Robinson and Fannie Jones, president and secretary, respectively, of the East St. Louis chapter of the Afro-American Protective League of Illinois, educators Martin V. Lucas and J.W. Hughes, and other black speakers linked the proclamation and African American patriotism to demands that the federal government make America safe for democracy. Black East St. Louisans expected the federal government to respond to their loyalty to the nation by bringing the leaders of the July violence to justice.¹⁰⁵ But African Americans

¹⁰² Elizabeth Lindsay Davis, *The Story of the Illinois Federation of Colored Women's Clubs* (Chicago: [s.n.], 1922; reprint, New York: G.K. Hall, 1977), 24.

¹⁰³ Wells-Barnett, "The East St. Louis Massacre," 18; "Citizens Committee Report" attached to letter, Ida B. Wells-Barnett to Senator Lawrence Y. Sherman, 20 July 1917, Folder 1, Box 133, *Sherman Papers*.

¹⁰⁴ "Negroes Will Observe Their Freedom's Day," *East St. Louis Daily Journal*, 18 September 1917, 1, hereafter the *East St. Louis Daily Journal* is cited as *ESLDJ*.

¹⁰⁵ "Negroes Celebrate Their Freedom," *ESLDJ* 23 September 1917, 7. The latter issue stated the fifty-first anniversary, but this author chose to count from the fifty-first anniversary as stated in "Negroes to Celebrate Emancipation Proclamation," *ESLDJ*, 20 September 1914, 3, section 2. Unfortunately, the speeches were not recorded.

generally lent patriotic support to the President and enlisted in military service hoping for a fulfillment of their constitutional rights by a grateful government.¹⁰⁶

Some white East St. Louisans knew that the July massacre had an adverse effect on their lives. More than one hundred white housewives besieged the local state employment office demanding replacements when their black domestics and washerwomen stopped working during and immediately after the massacre. Business leaders painfully realized both their dependency upon black labor and the need to protect African American workers by maintaining an atmosphere free from racist violence.¹⁰⁷ Corporate managers whose operations required low wage labor sought assistance from Illinois and federal agencies to entice black workers back to their jobs. Terminal Railroad Association and other local business associations cooperated with the federal National War Board to adopt measures to assure the safety of black workers, but they dropped their plans as African American laborers, oftentimes at the urging of black ministers like Reverend J.R. Tunstell, pastor of Beth-Eden Church, began returning to

¹⁰⁶ On black East St. Louisan response to the draft see “10,000 Negroes in East St. Louis Neglect Registration Duties,” *East St. Louis Daily Journal*, 25 May 1917, 1; “Anti-Negro Riots Due to Labor Causes,” *New York Times*, 8 July 1917, in *Hampton University Newspaper Clipping File*, 459:37-38; “War Department Will Call First of East St. Louis Drafted Negroes Oct. 3,” *ESLDJ*, 26 September 1917, 1; “Many Negroes Left E. St. Louis,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 9 October 1917, in *Tuskegee Institute News Clipping File*, 7:0010, hereafter the File cited as *TINCF*; “11 Negroes Arrested for Evading Draft,” *ESLDJ*, 15 October 1917, 1; “East St. Louis Is Expected to Furnish 1,500 Negroes for Crack Eighth Infantry,” *ESLDJ*, 18 November 1917, 1, section 2; “Several Hundred Included in Draft Men To Leave in August Calls From This City,” *ESLDJ*, 28 July 1918, 10; “108 East St. Louis Youths Registered for Military Duty Aug. 24—Drawing This Week,” *ESLDJ*, 1 September 1918, 9.

¹⁰⁷ “Complete Probe of Riot Begun,” *ESLDJ*, 5 July 1917, 1, 2.

work.¹⁰⁸ City politician-businessmen soon learned, however, that federal government war mobilization took precedence over local concerns.¹⁰⁹ For the sake of profits and wartime economic production, industrialists and state and federal agencies were prepared to make the city safe for African Americans.

Nationwide, black and many white Americans, expressing shock, anger, and outrage upon learning about the July atrocities, labeled white East St. Louisans bloodthirsty and barbaric. Some had not thought such occurrences possible in a northern industrial culture.¹¹⁰ Others argued that the killings mocked notions of American democracy and citizenship rights.¹¹¹ Black Howard University professor Kelly Miller denounced President Woodrow Wilson's failure to condemn the massacre as he conducted a war to make the world safe for democracy.¹¹² But not everyone condemned

¹⁰⁸ "Government Inquiry on in E. St. Louis Riots," *TINCF*, 7:0013; Phillip W. Coyle, and Frank A. Hunter, and Robert E. Conway in *House Transcripts*, 6, 20-21, 29, 31-32, and 61, and 125; "Negro Pastor Urges Colored To Return," *ESLDJ*, 31 October 1917, 1.

¹⁰⁹ For similar changes involving local white leaders, even southern planters with powerful connections to the federal government, having to place "patriotism before economic gain," see, for example, Woodruff, *American Congo*, 39-40.

¹¹⁰ "The East St. Louis Carnage," in *New York City Telegram*, 5 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:1009; "A Negro's Protest Against the White Man's Appalling Savagery," *New York Sun* [n.d.], in *TINCF*, 6:1037; "Negroes of U.S. Stirred by Riot," *St. Louis Republic*, 4 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:1040-1041; "State, Nation Disgraced by East St. Louis Riots," [s.n., n.d.], in *TINCF*, 7:0028-0029.

¹¹¹ J. Silas Harris to . . . Sherman, July 16, 1937; L. Amasa Knox to . . . Sherman, July 16, 1917; C.S. Dodson to Lawrence Y. Sherman, July 16, 1917, W.K. Kavanaugh to . . . Sherman, July 16, 1917, J.N. Rarick to . . . Sherman, July 17, 1917, J.R. Ranson [and] E.P. Blakemore, Civic League of Wichita, Kansas, to the President . . . Wilson, [n.d.], Nannie H. Burroughs to . . . Sherman, July 25, 1917, Folder 1; Peyton M. Lewis to . . . Sherman, 7-20-1917, Folder 2, Box 133, *Sherman Papers*. On white supremacists betraying notions of American democracy, see Cecelski, Tyson, eds., *Democracy Betrayed*.

¹¹² "The President and the Negro," *New York Evening Post*, 14 August 1917, *TINCF*, 6:1040; Kelly Miller, "The Disgrace of Democracy," *Correspondence of the Military*

the violence. United States Senators Benjamin Tillman of South Carolina and James Kimble Vardaman of Mississippi, for example, praised white Northerners for taking a lesson from white Southerners in instructing black people to know their place.¹¹³

Many Americans, protesting the lack of concern of East St. Louis political and business leaders in bringing to justice mob leaders and participants, demanded that the federal government intervene. The National Association of Colored Women's Department for Suppression of Lynching and Mob Violence, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and other organizations pressured Congress and the White House to investigate the massacre.¹¹⁴ The NAACP publicized the horrors of the July massacre nationwide through its magazine, *The Crisis*, held the "Silent March" demonstration in New York City to protest racial violence, and joined with black civic groups in raising funds for the relief of black refugees. The association also assisted investigators, submitting to them its findings on the causes of the July massacre.¹¹⁵

Intelligence Division, United States War Department, Record Group 165, Entry no. 65 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1440, roll 6, no. 10218-), National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

¹¹³ 65th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record*, (16 July 1917), vol. 55, pt. 5, 5151, and, (16 August 1917), vol. 55, pt. 6, 6061-6067.

¹¹⁴ Letters from NAACP chapters between July 22 and August 5 to Senator Sherman, and Nannie H. Burroughs, National Association of Colored Women, to Lawrence Y. Sherman, July 25 and July 28, 1917, Folder 1, Box 133, *Sherman Papers*.

¹¹⁵ Gruening and Du Bois, "The Massacre of East St. Louis," in Foner and Lewis, eds. *The Black Worker*, 318-332 ; "Dr. DuBois Here to Assist the N.A.A.C.P. Branch," *St. Louis Argus*, 13 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 7:0065; "N.A.A.C.P. Riot Fund Growing," *St. Louis Argus*, 17 July 1917, 1; "N.A.A.C.P. Makes Riot Report," *St. Louis Argus*, 10 August 1917, 1; "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, September 17, 1917," *Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, NAACP Papers*, 1:0557.

Federal and state officials, deluged with letters from private citizens demanding that lawbreakers be brought to justice, moved to investigate the mass violence.¹¹⁶

Officials quickly disproved rumors that German war saboteurs or political leftists of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) had instigated the July violence. They also debunked the story that unnamed white agitators had funded Leroy Bundy and other black leaders to build a black militia.¹¹⁷

Power Struggle for City Hall

Politician-businessmen, especially progressive reformers among them, concluded that if African Americans had to remain in the city to perform labor shunned by white workers, then they needed to impose a rigorous segregation in order to minimize black voting strength. City officials considered punishing anti-black assailants too risky politically because of the dense networks connecting participants in the violence to political and business leaders. Instead they argued that African Americans, especially

¹¹⁶ Chas. M. Thomas, to Lawrence Y. Sherman, January [i.e. July] 11, 1917, Folder 1, Box 133, *Sherman Papers*; W.C. Thrasher to Lawrence Y. Sherman, July 14, 1917, Fred Hotes to Sherman, July 16, 1917, A.C. King, Manager, Heller and Livingston Clothing Co., to Sherman, July 17, 1917, and F.J. Klapp, Klapp's Shoe and Hosiery House, to Sherman, July 17, 1917, Folder 6-7, Box 133, *Sherman Papers*; "Compete Probe of Riot Begun," *ESLDJ*, 5 July 1917, 1, 2; "Riot Promises To Bring Reorganization," *ESLDJ*, 6 July 1917, 1; "Federal Probe, Re-Organization Urged for Police," *ESLDJ*, 8 July 1917, 1, 6.

¹¹⁷ "Brundage Here," and "Negroes Wait on Lowden," *ESLDJ*, 11 July 1917, 1; "Wants U.S. To Probe East St. Louis Riots," *ESLDJ*, 17 July 1917, 1; "Grand Jury Returns Indictments for 103," *ESLDJ*, 15 August 1917, 1.

black southern migrants, provoked white anger and retaliation and had brought the mass violence upon themselves.¹¹⁸ County coroner C.P. Renner of Belleville, carrying the argument further, called for absolving the city of financial responsibility for the destruction of homes and businesses.¹¹⁹ Renner and his six man coroner's jury, comprised mainly of real estate interests, lowered their estimates as to the amount of property damage and number of people killed.

Real estate men resumed their economic growth policies after Renner's pronouncement signaled to industrialists and financiers that East St. Louis was again safe for capital investment.¹²⁰ Thomas Canavan, Leo Scherrer, Fred Harding, Stephen D. Sexton, John Renshaw, and other members of the Real Estate Exchange of East St. Louis called upon employers to give preferential treatment to white workers in the hiring process. They took steps to attain racial peace by asking white landlords to make tenements available for white newcomers and ensure that white neighborhoods remained white.¹²¹ But the real estate politician-businessmen who ran City Hall knew they had to wage a political struggle against progressive reformers.

¹¹⁸ "Wants U.S. To Probe East St. Louis Riots," *ESLDJ*, 17 July 1917, 1; "Negroes Started, but White Men Finished It," *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 4 July 1917, in TINCF 6:0988.

¹¹⁹ "Blacks Organized," *ESLDJ*, 8 July 1917, 1.

¹²⁰ C.P. Renner in *House Transcripts*, 1256-1257, 1280. Members of the coroner's jury included Mr. Keys, school board secretary and real estate; Joseph Keys, real estate; Theodore Smith, insurance and real estate; Charles House, hardware businessman; Alonzo Brichler, mortician; Charles Scherer, [office?] clerk and former member of the county board of supervisors; and C.R. Hisrich, building and loan association and real estate.

¹²¹ "Real Estate Exchange in Rousing Meet," *ESLDJ*, 18 July 1917, 7.

White faction leaders intensified their decades-long political battle for control of City Hall now that the nascent black political machine as a powerbroker had been removed from city politics. Broadly speaking, the political dynamics in the city before, during, and after the July mayhem paralleled, albeit on a much smaller scale, the power struggles of black and white populists against white Democratic Party leaders in the South during the late 1880s and 1890s. Similar to how southern white political factions eliminated African Americans from the democratic process, white city leaders in the East St. Louis stripped black residents of a decision making role in local government.¹²²

White businessmen, city officials, and their allies grouped around two poles, machine boss politicians at one end and a loose coalition of progressive reformers at the other. Boss politicians occupied a weaker position relative to reformers because most East St. Louisans now had come to associate the bosses with both the mass anti-black conflicts and the decades-long criminal violence.¹²³ Reformers convinced many white townspeople that the July violence had resulted from years of rule by boss politicians who coddled black people, drove the city deeper into debt, and relied upon saloons and vice for city revenues.¹²⁴ Progressives, especially those in the Chamber of Commerce of East St. Louis, blasted Mayor Mollman and his political bosses for lax law enforcement and social problems that for years had beset the city. They announced that the chamber

¹²² On the South see Hahn, *A Nation under Our Feet*, 431-451.

¹²³ "Post-Dispatch Is Source of Many Riot Report Facts," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 8 July 1918, in *TINCF*, 8:1031-1032.

¹²⁴ Conway, and Anderson, and Boylan, and Canavan, and Miller in *House Transcripts*, 188, and 368-372, and 630-632, and 1446-1449, and 4065-4080.

was ready “to assist the mayor in handling the reins of the government.”¹²⁵ Chamber members gained support for their plans to reorganize municipal government from various anti-saloon individuals and organizations, including Assistant Illinois Attorney General C.W. Middlekauff, and the Women’s Christian Temperance Association. These supporters considered saloons the foundation of machine politicians’ power and denounced saloon owners and liquor companies along with county and city administrators and the police for allowing the massacre to occur.¹²⁶

Progressives in the Chamber of Commerce embarked upon reconstructing city government.¹²⁷ They made the reorganization of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners their top priority, planning to staff the board with loyalists. On July 6, chamber vice-president, attorney Maurice Joyce criticized the police for incompetence, and on the next day Reverend George Allison led more than three hundred white businessmen and professionals in demanding a reorganization of the police department. Chamber president and Director of Southern Illinois National Bank Conrad Reeb called

¹²⁵ Philip W. Coyle, and quote by J.W. Paton in *House Transcripts*, 25-26, 447.

¹²⁶ C.W. Middlekauff, State of Illinois Office of the Attorney General, to L.Y. Sherman, July 24, 1917, Folder 1, Box 133, *Sherman Papers*; Reverend E.T. Soper, WCTU, Gillett, Wisc., July 1917, Mary B. Birkicht, St. Louis, Missouri, August 20, 1917, Folder 1; Olof Z. Cervin, Architect, Rock Island, Ill., July 6, 1917, C.C. Warren, Insurance Agent, Freeport, Ill., July 6, A.H. Owens, Chairman of Christian County Division of Antisaloon League, July 6, 1917, Dr. Cleaves Bennett, Champaign, Illinois, July 7, 1917, Leslie J. Owen, Attorney, LeRoy, Illinois, July 7, 1917; J. Fred Ammann to L.Y. Sherman, [n.d.], Folder 2, Box 133, *Sherman Papers*.

¹²⁷ “As the Journal Views It,” *ESLDJ*, 6 July 1917, 4, section two.

upon interested, reform minded white citizens to form a Committee of One Hundred to guide the practical work of reorganizing the police.¹²⁸

The Committee of One Hundred, formed three or four days after the July massacre, had to improve conditions if for no other reason than to restore the confidence of insurance and industrial firms that the city was safe for their investment.¹²⁹ Reeb had consulted with lawyers Clarence Eugene Pope, Daniel McGlynn, Maurice Joyce, and a few others about selecting potential members of the committee. They agreed to select white men from a wide range of occupations and interest. Reeb initially appointed seventy-five white men representing real estate, industry, small business, and organized labor to the committee that was to work under the guidance of the Chamber of Commerce. Its first task involved finding ways to prevent future outbreaks of mass racial violence. Its second was to ferret out those responsible for beating and killing people.¹³⁰

Progressives representing industry, civic organizations, and the local retail business community mainly through the Chamber of Commerce and the Committee of One Hundred called upon state and federal authorities to reconstruct the city. They required the power of the state to diminish the influence of their opponents who held the reigns of local government. Reformers and state and federal authorities realized that their best interests lie in cooperating with one another and assigning the blame for the mass

¹²⁸ “Riot Promises To Bring Reorganization,” *ESLDJ*, 6 July 1917, 1, 2; “Federal Probe, Re-organization Urged for Police,” *ESLDJ*, 8 July 1917, 1, 6; “100-Committee Plans Lasting Organization,” *ESLDJ*, 9 July 1917, 1. All white men on the Committee of One Hundred referenced by Clarence Eugene Pope in *House Transcripts*, 2617.

¹²⁹ “See Bright Future for East St. Louis,” *ESLDJ*, 15 July 1917, 4, section four; “Committee of 100 Meet and Discuss Commission Gov’nt,” *ESLDJ*, 28 August 1917, 1; “E. St. Louis Closes Its Greatest Year,” *ESLDJ*, 30 December 1917, 1.

¹³⁰ Pope in *House Transcripts*, 2606-2607, 2610-2616.

violence onto boss politicians. The anti-political machine contingent sought the restoration of law and order. The state had spent precious time and money in suppressing two outbreaks of mayhem and wanted to break the will of entrenched anti-black elements keen on furthering a cycle of racist violence. The federal government made it clear that it was not about to tolerate further disruption of its industrial war production or another cessation of interstate commerce.¹³¹ Federal and state officials encouraged the support of reformers and their allies to assist in enforcing national priorities at the local level and bringing perpetrators of the July violence to justice. On July 11, forty-five individual and corporate members of the chamber received reimbursements from the Illinois General Assembly totaling \$27,500 to cover expenses incurred in gathering data that state officials needed to bring mob participants to justice. The largest award recipients were Aluminum Ore Company receiving \$2,500, Armour, Morris, Swift, and St. Louis National Stock Yards, each given \$1,875, and Missouri Malleable Iron Company awarded \$1,500.¹³² The chamber raised at least \$100,000 and deposited the money in Conrad Reeb's Southern Illinois National Bank in preparation for the campaign to reorganize the police department.¹³³

From mid-July into August, the Chamber of Commerce and the Committee of One Hundred and their allies battled with Mayor Mollman over the restructuring of the

¹³¹ See, for example, "Further Inquiry to Be Held into East St. Louis Riots," *New York Age*, [20 July?] 1918, in *TINCF*, 8:1027-1028.

¹³² Marguerite Edith Jenison, *War Documents and Addresses* (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1923), 347-350.

¹³³ Frank E. Nulsen, and Pope in *House Transcripts*, 1024, and 2625.

Board of Fire and Police Commissioners and other issues.¹³⁴ They demanded that he dismiss his friends, real estate man Nelson Schein, Swift & Company employee and city school board president Wallace Watkins, and Heim Brewery manager William Schmidt from the board. The chamber further insisted that Mollman install its choices for new commissioners, horse dealer J.F. Reed, Southern Railway freight agent E.J. Coffey, and hardware businessman and Southern Illinois National Bank director Fred Giesing. Mollman, after consulting with Thomas Canavan and Locke Tarlton, agreed to the chamber's choices for fire and police commissioners, but rejected the chamber's demand to accept Watkins's resignation.¹³⁵ Mollman also refused to accept other chamber's demands, including the one for his own resignation. He instead instructed Watkins to suspend Chief of Police Ransom Payne and Night Chief of Police Cornelius Hickey and promote two police sergeants to the chiefs' positions.¹³⁶ In August, the Ministerial Alliance of East St. Louis, a civic group comprised of leading white Protestant clergymen, exercising its moral authority and acting on the chamber's behalf, criticized Mollman for failing to purge the city of corruption, vice, and crime and called for his resignation.¹³⁷ Mollman under pressure, relented and installed the chamber's choice,

¹³⁴ Anderson in *House Transcripts*, 375.

¹³⁵ Pope in *House Transcripts*, 2617-2619, 2624.

¹³⁶ "Mollman Refuses Watkins Resignation," *ESLDJ*, 13 July 1917, 1; "Payne and Hickey Are Suspended by Board," *ESLDJ*, 16 July 1917; "Police Board Members Resignations Refused," *ESLDJ*, 17 July 1917, 1.

¹³⁷ "Riot Views of Pastors' Alliance," *ESLDJ*, 16 August 1917, 6, 8; "Will Ignore Pastors' Resolution—Mollman," *ESLDJ*, 11 September 1917, 1.

granitoid contractor Frank Keating, as the new Chief of Police, and agreed to wage an anti-prostitution campaign as well.¹³⁸

The progressive coalition began unraveling from mid July into September as class interests split the Committee of One Hundred into labor and business factions. The committee agreed with the suggestion of one labor leader that it fund an East St. Louis United Labor Defense League, a home guard, to operate until a new police department began functioning, but disagreed as to the home guard's duties. Businessmen in the chamber, arguing that the league should defend employers who hired strikebreakers, met with bitter objection from trade unionists on the committee. In response, the committee's business faction, the majority of the assembly, voted to dissolve the committee. One union member noted that in dissolving the committee, businessmen had severely weakened organized labor's forty year partnership with reformist elements in the business community.¹³⁹ In the act of dissolving the committee, businessmen in effect assigned to labor primary responsibility for the mass violence because it had placed its own interests before that of the city.

Many in the Chamber of Commerce and the Committee of One Hundred refused to take action against fellow members of either organization or friends charged with involvement in the July violence for fear of unraveling their political culture of dense and overlapping networks.¹⁴⁰ Chamber member Attorney Dan McGlynn, for example,

¹³⁸ "Keating To Enforce the City Ordinances for Sunday Closing," and "Police Backed by Uncle Sam; Begins War on Prostitutes," *ESLDJ*, 19 August 1917, 1.

¹³⁹ John P. Pero, and Robert E. Johns in *House Transcripts*, 735-737, and 4333-4338.

¹⁴⁰ "George B. Vashon," *Annual Conference Proceedings, 1910-1950, NAACP Papers*, 8:0441-0446.

represented two friends, policemen Meehan and O'Brien, who on July 3 shot and killed two black railroad workers and wounded Mineola Magee.¹⁴¹ McGlynn welcomed the police raising funds to defray Meehan and O'Brien's legal expenses.¹⁴² President of the State Bar Association of Illinois, E.C. Kramer, and other legal professionals ignored calls for the disbarment of Alexander Flannigan and other attorneys who had played a role in the violence. Corporation Counsel for the City of East St. Louis, Jerry Sullivan, typified local lawyers in his lack of interest in impeaching or disbaring St. Clair County State's Attorney Herbert Schaumleffel who had allowed for the release of eighty-nine assailants before police had the opportunity to record their names.¹⁴³ Maurice Ahearn retained his position as clerk of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners until the state grand jury indicted him for ordering the police to arrest anyone taking photographs during the anti-black violence.¹⁴⁴ One example particularly illustrative of the dense networks involved Ahearn and county Republicans Flannigan and Schaumleffel, all having strong ties to Mollman's political machine headed by the Director of the East Side Levee and Sanitary District Locke Tarlton and political boss Thomas Canavan. In turn, Tarlton and Canavan controlled the district and its interests in the Southern Illinois National Bank managed by

¹⁴¹ McGlynn in *House Transcripts*, 2986.

¹⁴² "Police Would Raise \$500 for Indicted Members Defense," *ESLDJ*, 21 August 1917, 1; "Chief Keating Prohibits Solicitation of Funds for Relief of Indicted Police," *ESLDJ*, 28 August 1917, 1.

¹⁴³ Allison in *House Transcripts*, 3690-3693; "Coroner Will Resume Hearing Wednesday," *ESLDJ*, 10 July 1917, 1.

¹⁴⁴ Pope in *House Transcripts*, 2619-2620.

Chamber of Commerce president Conrad Reeb who had called for the reorganization of the police department.¹⁴⁵

In August, the state grand jury, investigating the July violence, took testimony from 540 black and white residents and nonresidents. Thirty-three black men, twenty-five white women, and 482 white men presented their accounts. Black witnesses giving testimony included Lyman Bluitt, druggist Mat Hayes, and Othaniel (or O’Faniel) Peoples, and others who had been arrested on charges ranging from organizing armed black resistance to murdering police officers Samuel Coppedge and Frank Wadley. Twenty-one of the black men who gave statements were laborers. The grand jury summoned white machine politicians Thomas Canavan, Locke Tarlton, Fred Mollman, and Maurice Aherns. Philip Wolf was the only prominent trade unionist called to take the stand.¹⁴⁶ Other white testifiers included thirteen railroad workers, eleven National Stock Yards employees, ten laborers, eight policemen, seven carpenters, six clerks, six saloonkeepers, five lawyers, four meatpacking, four Aluminum Ore Company and three brewery employees, three streetcar motormen, two bartenders, two boilermakers, two drivers, two painters, two prostitutes, and two railroad switchmen.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ McGlynn in House Transcripts, 3067-3068, 3070-3071, 3077-3080. See chapter three herein for details on political alliances between Democrats and Republicans.

¹⁴⁶ “Participants in East St. Louis Race Riot,” in “The East St. Louis Riot of 1917,” reel no. 7.

¹⁴⁷ The author used “Participants in East St. Louis Race Riot”; “Grand Jury Returns Indictments for 103,” *ESLDJ*, 15 August 1917, 1; and *McCoy’s East St. Louis City Directory, 1916* (East St. Louis, IL: McCoy, 1916), to determine race and occupation of the summoned and the indicted. With these sources, of the 540 summoned to the grand jury, 318, for whatever reason, were not listed in the directory; 111 white and thirty-three black persons were positively identified while seventy-eight individuals had common names that made exact matches problematic.

The state grand jury reported that the mass racial violence of July 2 had been “deliberately plotted” with encouragement or feigned indifference from city and county officials.¹⁴⁸ Those white persons initially brought before the grand jury on accusations of involvement with the massacre did not include any leading city or county politicians or businessmen. On August 16, the grand jury indicted for inciting “strife and ill feeling” 143 white persons, including eight policemen, two switchmen, a baker, blacksmith, coal dealer, stationary fireman, mechanic, saloonkeeper, timekeeper, newsboy, and a nonresident whose father was a wealthy Indiana farmer.¹⁴⁹ In September, the grand jury indicted Mollman, Ahearn, and, according to the *East St. Louis Daily Journal*, “thirty-seven East St. Louisans, including many prominent business men” for their role in the July violence. But for reasons never made public, authorities dropped all charges that had been brought against these city leaders. No eminent white businessmen, managers, or politicians even faced trial or got convicted. Class bias in favor of city political and economic leaders became even more evident when the state took to trial 112 white men, fifteen black men, and five white women who were mainly working class people.¹⁵⁰

By October, Illinois prosecutors had formulated “the doctrine that all persons, black and white, who participated in the race riots in any way [were] responsible for all

¹⁴⁸ [“Grand Jury of St. Clair County, Report] Belleville, Illinois, August 14, 1917,” in “The East St. Louis Riot of 1917,” reel no. 7 (University Publications of America, 1985); “Grand Jury Returns Indictments for 103,” *ESLDJ*, 15 August 1917, 1.

¹⁴⁹ “36 Now Under Arrest on Various Rioting Grand Jury Charges,” *ESLDJ*, 17 August 1917, 1.

¹⁵⁰ “Mollman and Secretary Are Indicted,” *ESLDJ*, 9 September 1917, 1; “Political Intriguing Responsible for My Indictment, Mollman,” *ESLDJ*, 11 September 1917, 1.

things that occurred in the outbreak.”¹⁵¹ They officially obfuscated the blame for the violence, erased the boundaries between black targets and white perpetrators, and absolved the state and its agents of complicity in the mass racial violence. Officials knew that white people were reluctant to sit in judgment of accused white assailants, especially those with connections in state or federal government, fearing retribution from defendants or their friends and relatives. Prosecutors secured the cooperation of white residents by bringing to trial a greater proportion of black than white defendants. Government lawyers succeeded in selecting a jury comprised mainly of white non-residents to try the white accused.¹⁵² Defense attorneys did permit Edward Sims, an African American resident of Belleville, to sit on the jury because they thought the very light complexioned Sims would not upset white people.¹⁵³

The state clearly reinforced its argument that black people had sparked the violence by bringing to trial defendants like Noah Parden who had sought an independent political role for the black community.¹⁵⁴ It had no difficulty winning the cooperation of local officials in arresting and indicting black men. Authorities sought to decapitate the leadership of the black community and to reinforce the impression that black laborers, not all of them recent migrants, provoked the massacre. State prosecutors charged Parden, Bundy, Pearl Abernathy, R.M.C. Green, Matt Hayes, Sam Wheat, politician-

¹⁵¹ “Riot Jurors Chosen from out in County,” *ESLDJ*, 16 October 1917, 1.

¹⁵² Anderson in *House Transcripts*, 358-359; “Hard to Get Jurors to Try Two Whites,” *ESLDJ*, 9 October 1917, 1.

¹⁵³ “Riot Jurors Chosen from out in County,” *ESLDJ*, 16 October 1917, 1; “Riot Jury May Get Case Early To-Night,” *ESLDJ*, 21 November 1917, 1.

¹⁵⁴ “State Case Against Negroes Weak,” *St. Louis Argus*, 5 October 1917, 1; Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis*, 111-120.

saloonkeepers “Buddy” Bell and George Kyle, and physician I.H. King with organizing a black militia.¹⁵⁵ Prosecutors charged Lester Fowler, Othaniel Peoples, Harry Robertson, Bud Townsend, Herbert S. Wood; laborers Marshall Alexander, Charles Foster, William Palmer, “Slim” Tackett; Missouri Malleable Iron Works laborer Albert Hughes; Kehlor Flour Mills laborer Dee Smotherman; and American Steel Foundries laborers Guy Moore, Fayette Parker, George Roberts, and Horace Thomas with the murder of policemen Coppedge and Wadley. Later, Robertson and Wood were cleared of all charges.¹⁵⁶ On October 7, the state acquitted Fowler, Moore, and Tackett but convicted the others of the murder of detective Wadley. On October 30, for reasons not made public, Judge George Crow denied all of the convicted any appeals trials and sentenced each to fourteen years at Southern Illinois Penitentiary in Menard.¹⁵⁷ With this action Judge Crow not only placated white townspeople, but also sent the message that black people who engaged in armed self defense against white policemen and citizens had no right to equal treatment before the law.¹⁵⁸ Nationally famous black journalist and

¹⁵⁵ “Complete Probe of Riot Begun,” *ESLDJ*, 5 July 1917, 1, 2.

¹⁵⁶ “12 Negroes on Trial for Riot Murders,” *ESLDJ*, 1 October 1917, 1; “Negroes Offer Alibis for Accused Blacks,” *ESLDJ*, 5 October 1917. Occupations of Albert Hughes, Guy Moore, George Roberts, Dee Smotherman, Slim Tackett, and Horace Thomas listed in *McCoy’s East St. Louis City Directory, 1916* (East St. Louis, IL: McCoy, 1916). Occupations of Marshall Alexander, Charles Foster, and William Palmer noted in *1912 City Directory*. Othaniel [O’Faniel] Peoples not listed in either city directory. Parker’s membership on the Board of Supervisors in “2 Whites on Trial for Negro’s Murder,” *ESLDJ*, 8 October 1917, 1.

¹⁵⁷ “Jurors Finally Get First Riot Case,” *ESLDJ*, 7 October 1917, 1; “2 Whites on Trial for Negro’s Murder,” 8 October 1917, 1; “Crow Gives Negroes 14 Years Each,” *ESLDJ*, 31 October 1917, 1.

¹⁵⁸ On history of white people denying black people the right to self defense while African Americans had built a tradition of armed self-defense, see, for example,

activist Ida B. Wells-Barnett succinctly described the situation, charging that state and federal officials had defined black armed self-defense as criminal and proceeded to punish black people accordingly.¹⁵⁹

Prosecutors worked desperately to bring Bundy to trial not only to punish him for allegedly provoking mass violence, but also to discredit him as a political leader.¹⁶⁰ The state charged him with ordering the attack that killed white policemen Coppedge and Wadley. The state wanted Bundy in its custody because, according to Reverend Allison, as practically everyone knew city officials had an overriding political reason for apprehending Bundy before bringing him to trial. The black activist had much inside knowledge of the city's white political machine culture and political bosses feared he was more than willing to share what he knew with state and federal investigators. As Allison explained to congressional investigators, other leading black politicians, along with Bundy, risked revealing their own involvement in dense political networks if they exposed the machine. The Reverend stressed that any of these leaders would have testified against white politicians but for the fear of machine retribution.¹⁶¹ When authorities learned in August that Bundy had left the city for his parents' home in

Christopher B. Strain, *Pure Fire: Self-defense as Activism in the Civil Rights Era* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 1-32.

¹⁵⁹ Patricia A. Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 149.

¹⁶⁰ Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett*, 152.

¹⁶¹ Allison in *House Transcripts*, 3761, 3761-3765; "As the Journal Views It," *ESLDJ*, 6 July 1917, 4, section two; "Witnesses Declare Bundy Was Leader," *ESLDJ*, 4 October 1917, 1, 5.

Cleveland, Ohio, they convinced Ohio Governor J.M. Cox to extradite him back to East St. Louis to stand trial.¹⁶²

The NAACP conducted a vigorous defense of Bundy from 1917 until 1918 when its relations with him deteriorated.¹⁶³ NAACP legal counsel, conducting his affairs, rose in anger when Bundy, against its advice, talked with state prosecutors about his previous dealings with boss politicians.¹⁶⁴ In 1918, financial issues and personality differences reached a crescendo between the two parties. The dentist argued in a letter that he made public that he was not obligated to report his expenditures to the organization. Charging the NAACP with making false statements about him, Bundy declared that the association had failed him during his crisis and promised a full exposé when he settled his case.¹⁶⁵ When Bundy refused to be held accountable for his receipt of NAACP funds, the association parted company with him.¹⁶⁶

African Americans raising funds for Bundy's defense independently of the NAACP immediately criticized the organization for severing its ties with the community

¹⁶² "Attorneys File Habeas Corpus for Release of Dr. Bundy," *ESLDJ*, 14 August 1917, 1; "Bundy Fights Return," *ESLDJ*, 19 August 1917, 1; "Bundy Habeas Corpus Proceedings Up Today," *ESLDJ*, 21 August 1917, 1; "Bundy Extradition Hearing Is Up Today with Ohio Officials," *ESLDJ*, 29 August 1917, 1.

¹⁶³ "Dr. Bundy Declares It's 'Persecution'," *ESLDJ*, 15 October 1917, 1; "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, December 10, 1917," "East St. Louis," *The Crisis*, 15, 2 (December 1917): 62.

¹⁶⁴ "Dr. Bundy Disclosing Fall Election Frauds," *ESLDJ*, 19 November 1917, 1; "Bundy Involves Mayor in Open Confession," *ESLDJ*, 26 November 1917, 1, 5; "Bundy Exposes Political Fraud in East St. Louis," *St. Louis Argus*, 30 November 1917, 1; *Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, NAACP Papers*, 1:0578.

¹⁶⁵ "East St. Louis Hero Near[s] Trial for Life Ans. NAACP," *New York News*, 18 August 1918, in *TINCF*, 8:1011.

¹⁶⁶ "Bundy Deserted by Association Which Helped in Defense," *ESLDJ*, 27 July 1918, 1, 6; "Twelve Attorneys To Clash in Fight to Secure Justice for L.N. Bundy," *ESLDJ*, 14 November 1918, 1.

leader. The *Chicago Defender* stated that the NAACP blundered in not placing the “interests of the Race before personal views.” The *St. Louis Argus* said that the association “was not justified in dropping the interest of the people because of a personal difference as to methods in reaching the desired end.”¹⁶⁷ The organization lost prestige with black residents who disapproved of its treatment of Bundy. The city’s NAACP chapter folded in early 1919, leaving the St. Louis branch to cover its neighbor.¹⁶⁸

The circuit court gave Bundy a life sentence for the killing of Coppedge and Wadley. But Bundy’s private lawyers secured a review from the Illinois Supreme Court of his trial’s proceedings and found a technicality that led to a declaration of a mistrial.¹⁶⁹ The former community leader, now a persona non grata among white townspeople, returned to Cleveland to rebuild his political life. Bundy became involved in Marcus Garvey’s mass organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), which advocated a separatist black nationalism and black owned capitalist enterprises. In 1922, Bundy served as president of the Cleveland UNIA chapter, but quit the

¹⁶⁷ “Dr. Leroy Bundy’s Trial Postponed,” *Chicago Defender*, 14 September 1918, in *TINCF*, 8:1010; “Review of the Dr. Bundy Case,” *St. Louis Argus*, 27 September 1918, in *TINCF*, 8:1025; “The Case of Dr. Bundy,” *The Crisis*, 16, 5 (September 1918): 224-225.

¹⁶⁸ The last news of the East St. Louis chapter found in the March 1919 issue of the NAACP *The Branch Bulletin*.

¹⁶⁹ “Raise \$1507 Bundy Fund for Defense,” *ESLDJ*, 16 May 1920, 1; “Jury Gives Bundy Life Sentence,” *ESLDJ*, 28 March 1919, 1; “Review of the Dr. Bundy Case,” *St. Louis Argus*, 27 September 1918, 1; “Bundy Takes Stand,” *St. Louis Argus*, 28 March 1919, 1; “The Bundy Verdict Is Said To Be Unjust,” *ESLDJ*, 4 April 1919, 1 W.E.B. Du Bois, “Leroy Bundy,” *The Crisis*, 25, 1 (November 22, 1922): 16-21.

organization over a salary dispute in the late 1920s. Bundy later joined the Republican Party and was elected several times to the Cleveland city council.¹⁷⁰

Reconstruction of City Government

Progressive reformers directly benefited in the aftermath of the July mass violence. For over several decades, they held the notion that African Americans were responsible for patronage, inefficient government, political machines, corruption, lawlessness, and vice. Progressives now seized the opportunity to establish their version of honest government by stripping the black community of its powerbroker status and ousting machine boss politicians from City Hall.¹⁷¹ Reformers campaigned for a commission form of municipal government as the key to achieving their objectives of greater accountability and efficiency. The commission with its citywide election scheme removed voting influence based on election wards where African Americans had concentrated their strength to vote for black candidates for city council.¹⁷² In addition,

¹⁷⁰ Robert Hill, ed. *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 4:700-701; "Dr. Leroy N. Bundy Attempts Suicide," *Chicago Defender*, 22 September 1923, 1; *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, 1031; "Dr. Le Roy Bundy, Negro Political Leader Is Dead," *Cleveland Press*, 28 May 1943; *Dictionary of Cleveland Biography*, 72.

¹⁷¹ Albertson in *House Transcripts*, 520-525

¹⁷² "Chamber Endorses Commission Form," *ESLDJ*, 30 October 1917, 3; Pero in *House Transcripts*, 723; Andrew J. Theising, *Made In USA: East St. Louis, The Rise and Fall of an Industrial River Town* (St. Louis, MO: Virginia Publishing, 2003), 184. The commission plan called for electing the mayor, as commissioner of public relations, and

they charged that the machine had created the political conditions that made possible the anti-black violence of May and July.¹⁷³ That reformers decided to reconstruct city government indicated that they had to address local political policy and structures that made mass racial violence possible.¹⁷⁴ Progressives' ballot initiative for a commission form of government won approval from voters in the election of November 1917.¹⁷⁵

Reform-oriented business and political leaders, with wide support from white residents and private organizations, advocated housing segregation as a method to further their vision of racial harmony. Some real estate men claimed that segregation safeguarded the value of white homeowners' property from black renters and homebuyers, stimulated the housing market, and guaranteed a prosperous future for the city.¹⁷⁶ They stressed that because of Illinois civil rights laws white homeowners had to rely upon customary residential segregation. Real estate Exchange insisted that white owners renting out any houses abandoned by black tenants during the July massacre lease

four commissioners, each with an area of responsibility for police, streets, finance, and buildings and fire protection.

¹⁷³ "Maurice V. Joyce Asserts Lax Rule Caused Race Riot," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 6 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:1002-1003; "Politics Caused Race Riot Mayor Mollman Is Told," *ESLDJ*, 14 September 1917, 1; "Rev. Allison Tells of Conditions Here," *ESLDJ*, 9 November 1917, 1, 5; "Rev. Allison Tells About Politicians," *ESLDJ*, 11 November 1917, 1, 9, 10; "Mollman Warned Blood Would Flow," *ESLDJ*, 13 November 1917, 1; "Congressmen Learn of Political Ring," *ESLDJ*, 14 November 1917, 1, 5; "Dr. Bundy Disclosing Fall Election Fraud," *ESLDJ*, 19 November 1917, 1; "Bundy Involves Many in Open Confession," *ESLDJ*, 26 November 1917, 1, 5; Boylan, and McQuillan in *House Transcripts*, 626, 634-635, and 1707-1708.

¹⁷⁴ Similar claim made for the 1919 Chicago race riot in Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot*, 64-66.

¹⁷⁵ "Commission Form for East St. Louis Receives Impetus," *ESLDJ*, 11 September 1917, 1; "Commission Carries by Majority of 2,330," *ESLDJ*, 7 November 1917, 1.

¹⁷⁶ [Advertisement], *ESLDJ*, 8 July 1917, [8]; "See Bright Future for East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 15 July 1917, 4, section two; "Factories on Way to East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 15 July 1917, 1, section two; "Nothing Can Stop the Growth of Our City," *ESLDJ*, 15 July 1917, 1, section three.

only to white tenants. They also demanded that black people residing in predominantly white neighborhoods move to black districts.¹⁷⁷ The Central Park Improvement Association of East St. Louis and similar white residents' organizations warned African Americans not to buy or rent homes in white areas.¹⁷⁸ Fire insurance agents boosted the likelihood of segregated districts when they canceled coverage on property occupied by black people in primarily white or integrated neighborhoods.¹⁷⁹ Armour & Company manager Robert Conway, for one, saw the containment of black people to segregated neighborhoods as a way to lessen the migration's impact on white people. He viewed black districts as reservoirs of low wage black labor to tap during times of labor shortages.¹⁸⁰ Missouri Malleable manager John Pero thought that segregation provided black people, clustered in their own wards, the opportunity to elect their own to city council. But his argument angered black listeners who saw citywide elections backed by residential segregation as a ploy to render them voiceless at City Hall.¹⁸¹

Reformers gained in popularity with white residents as Mayor Mollman's machine lost its political effectiveness. Their criticism of the Mayor's inept and corrupt rule gained credence when the grand jury indicted him for his role in the July violence and congressional investigation revealed the extent of boss corruption, criminal activities,

¹⁷⁷ "Real Estate Exchange in Rousing Meet," *ESLDJ*, 18 July 1917, 7.

¹⁷⁸ "Black Hand Warnings," *ESLDJ*, 15 July 1917, 1.

¹⁷⁹ "E. St. Louis Is Quiet After the Race Massacre," *St. Louis Argus*, 13 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:0990; "Negroes Leaving East Saint Louis," *St. Louis Star*, 20 July 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:0992; "East St. Louis," *St. Louis Argus*, 27 July 1917, 4; "Troops Remain in East St. Louis," *St. Louis Argus*, 27 July 1917, 1.

¹⁸⁰ Conway in *House Transcripts*, 165-166, 177; "Zones for Negro Homes Proposed in East St. Louis," *St. Louis Star*, 10 January 1918, in *TINCF*, 8:1015.

¹⁸¹ Pero in *House Transcripts*, 722-723. Unfortunately Pero neither provided names of his African Americans conversationalists nor quoted them verbatim.

and social violence. The progressive claim that certain politician-businessmen had rendered East St. Louis insolvent resounded with townspeople when the already indebted city had to issue a bond in order to pay claims for damages resulting from the July violence. In January 1918, officials expected outstanding liabilities to climb to \$1,000,000. Progressives' objections to revenues derived mainly from licensing fees from saloons resonated more forcibly with residents when Mayor Mollman laid off city employees as the number of licensed saloons fell from 378 in mid-1917 to 251 in January 1918.¹⁸² Reformers savored victory when Mollman lost in the primary in 1919. Voters overwhelmingly rejected the Mayor whom they associated with rampant corruption and the mass racial violence of 1917.¹⁸³ They also saw the new commission form of municipal government begin its first year of operation, bringing an end to the mayor-council form that had begun under Mayor John Bowman. But purists among the reformers had to wonder if newly elected commissioners Melbern Stephens as mayor and Maurice Joyce, John McLean, Richard McCarty, and Dan McGlynn were capable of achieving the progressive dream of clean, honest government because, these men, when they had presided over the city during the mayor-council years, tolerated, if not encouraged, the very problems that progressives railed against.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² "East St. Louis Is Sued for \$700,000," *Chicago Defender*, 12 January 1918, in *TINCF*, 8:1015.

¹⁸³ "E. St. Louis Riot Mayor Defeated for Reelection," *St. Louis Argus*, 27 February 1919, in *TINCF* 10:1034.

¹⁸⁴ Theising, *Made in USA*, 184, 186.

Conclusion

The East St. Louis race riot of July 1917 has been considered the first major race riot of the World War I era. It far overshadowed the smaller race riot that occurred without any reported deaths in the city in May and the ones that followed during the war in August in Houston, Texas, and in July 1918 in Philadelphia, where few individuals were killed. The riots in Houston and Philadelphia had little, if anything to do with the Great Migration itself, but much to do with East St. Louis terms of fluid race relations where African Americans refused to remain in their lowly position in the racial hierarchy.¹⁸⁵ The next major outbreaks of World War I mass racial violence occurred after the war in 1919 in Chicago and other locales. The July event was the only race riot between Reconstruction and the 1943 race riot in Detroit during World War II to become the subject of a federal investigation. The July massacre simply riveted Americans' attention with news reports of horrific mayhem and sadistic killings and its disruption of interstate commerce and war production. Until recent reconsiderations of other World

¹⁸⁵ The "riot" in Houston on August 23, 1917, resulted when black soldiers retaliated against city police for habitually abusing black civilians and military personnel. See Robert V. Haynes, *A Night of Violence: The Houston Riot of 1917* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976); Garna L. Christian, *Black Soldiers in Jim Crow Texas, 1899-1917* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1995). The few days of violence in Philadelphia in July 1918 began when a "respectable" black woman who moved into a white neighborhood shot at a white mob intent on forcing her to move away. See Vincent P. Franklin, "The Philadelphia Race Riot of 1918," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 99, 3 (1975): 336-350.

War I era race riots, the official death toll of thirty-nine black and nine white people made the East St. Louis July race riot the bloodiest of racial conflicts to have occurred in the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁸⁶

The July “race riot” arose from the confluence of three historical phenomena that intersected with factors peculiar to East St. Louis. The phenomena consisted of fluid social relationships brought about by World War I, wartime production that triggered migrations of workers in search of available jobs, and African Americans’ effort to restore and extend their civil rights. Local political relations and structures provide the context for understanding the causes of the July massacre. African Americans were especially active as patronage seekers and powerbrokers in electoral politics.¹⁸⁷

As the immediate aftermath of the May riot made clear, black residents’ chief antagonists were not white workers and trade union leaders, but certain elements among real estate machine boss politicians and progressive reformers within business and civic organizations. Leading white citizens decided that black townspeople had to be disciplined or else driven out of town. The riot’s shock troops included white police officers and other individuals, mainly non-industrial workers, some associated with the world of crime and violence that characterized the saloon culture. But as the grand jury

¹⁸⁶ The death toll for the mass killing of African Americans in 1919 in Phillips County, Arkansas, and in 1921 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, ranked higher than the one for East St. Louis. For Arkansas see, for example, Nan Elizabeth Woodruff, *American Congo: The African American Freedom Struggle in the Delta* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 86-103. For Tulsa see, for example, Scott Ellsworth, *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982); Alfred L. Brophy, *Reconstructing the Dreamland: The Tulsa Riot of 1921, Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹⁸⁷ “George B. Vashon,” 8:0446.

reported, though the names of prominent people involved with the violence were suppressed, city and county officials bore responsibility for planning, encouraging, and executing the riot. One common thread uniting the two East St. Louis riots with the ones that occurred in Houston and Philadelphia, both in 1917, and the numerous violent outbreaks in 1919 was that local black social and economic advancement in context of black people's national demands for making American democracy safe for African Americans threatened white entitlement to resources and social dominance.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ W.E.B. Du Bois, "Returning Soldiers," *Crisis* 13 (May 1919); Mark Robert Schneider, *"We Return Fighting": The Civil Rights Movement in the Jazz Age* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002), 7-13.

Chapter Five. To Restore Black Political Power, 1917-1929

African Americans maintained a presence in East St. Louis after the racial massacre of July 1917, rebuilding, and then, throughout the 1920s, expanding their community institutions. They adjusted to life in a city where perpetrators of murderous violence, including people in prominent positions, had not been brought to justice or ever punished. Black residents realized that their enemies—and even their white friends—used the memory of the July violence as a cautionary lesson that African Americans had nothing to fear as long as they remained dependent upon white political factions and adhered to residential segregation.¹ Black people, especially those from the South, continued to migrate to the city and obtain factory jobs in significant numbers after the First World War without facing another outbreak of mass racial violence.² African Americans, mindful of the legacy of July 1917, pushed ahead with life but in a city more

¹ On black people under control of white political factions or machine bosses, see, for example, Martin Kilson, “Political Change in the Negro Ghetto, 1900-1940s,” in Nathan I. Huggins, Martin Kilson, Daniel M. Fox, eds., *Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 2:171-172. On widening segregation in northern cities after the First World War see, for example, Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

² No worries of another racial conflict, see Mayor Fred H. Mollman to Adjutant General F.S. Dickson, September 5, 1918, no. 10218-60/10, Memorandum, Brigadier General Frank P. Wells, Illinois Reserve Militia to Adjutant General, Chief of Staff, Illinois, “Possible Race Riots in East St. Louis, Illinois,” September 9, 1918, no. 10218-60/11, *Correspondence of the Military Intelligence Division*, Microfilm M1440 (“Negro Subversion”) roll 4, Military Intelligence Division, War Department, RG165, Entry 65, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

segregated after the war. They contended with white politicians who sought to control their vote and had to maneuver carefully around civic reformers who had marginalized black political influence. Like black urbanites in border region and northern cities, African Americans in East St. Louis focused on molding their segregated districts into a city within a city, developing a vibrant community culture in the process.³ Black East St. Louisans used segregation and the precinct system created by the commission form of government and modified their relations with white politician-businessmen to reassert their interests into city affairs.⁴

African Americans in East St. Louis made a dramatic political rebirth in the decade after the mass racial violence of July in part because of the continuing migration of black Southerners to the city and in part by developing new tactics as they pressed for access to City Hall. Black East St. Louisans like, for example, black Chicagoans remained involved with electoral politics after the mass racial violence of the World War I era. They never achieved what Chicagoans did during the 1920s: black representation at City Hall, the State House, and Congress. But many in black East St. Louis were recent migrants from the South where the lack of political rights stood in stark contrast to

³ Joe William Trotter, Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), and *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 95-121. Idea of city within a city in St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (1944; reprint, University of Chicago Press, 1993).

⁴ On tactics elsewhere to effect a return to the formal political arena see, for example, Paul Ortiz, “‘Eat Your Bread without Butter, but Pay Your Poll Tax!’: Roots of African American Voter Registration Movement in Florida, 1919-1920,” in Charles M. Payne and Adam Green, eds., *Time Longer Than Rope: A Century of African American Activism, 1850-1950* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 196-229.

the rights they had gained. In addition, Southern migrants constituted the peacetime waves of the Great Migration that continued until the eve of the Great Depression. Southern migrants, arriving with experience honed from struggles to restore their political rights, greatly boosted the influence of the black vote. Migrants and established residents resumed their collective status as a powerbroker in city elections, even running candidates for local office. They used the ballot box and actions such as protests to resurrect black influence in local politics and government. Like white machine politicians and their supporters, African Americans reentered electoral politics working in conjunction with major political parties marking a shift in East St. Louis away from nonpartisan governance of the prewar years to partisan politics after the First World War. But the black community in East St. Louis never returned to the pre-July 1917 level of influence that had put it on the threshold of having its own independent political machine.

Black East St. Louisans, mindful of the cautionary lesson of the July massacre, engaged in the ideological ferment that characterized African American intellectual and political thought during the postwar years. Some of this welter of ideas came with returning black World War I veterans who along with African American civilians connected the war to save the world for democracy to their own struggle to make American democracy work for them.⁵ The breadth and depth of such agitation rose as urban black enclaves expanded in population and became more diverse in terms of

⁵ Articles appeared in 1917 and 1918 in East St. Louis newspapers reporting about black men not signing up for military service because of disruptions caused by mass racial violence of May and July 1917 or listing names of black (and white) men who were drafted. Though no sources had been found of returning black veterans in East St. Louis engaging in political actions, the author assumed that they did.

occupation and class. Those involved in various social actions sought ways to achieve independent control of their community institutions without incurring a violent response from white politician-businessmen and their allies. Most black residents gave short shrift to socialists and communists who proved incapable of delivering practical results to improve their lives.⁶ They acknowledged the presence of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in the city, but had little involvement with the organization as it remained aloof from the local political culture. Many townspeople rejected the message of separatism advanced by the UNIA and similar organizations. Some worked within white dominated or interracial organizations, including labor unions, but they found that cooperation with white people often blunted black people's collective interests in overcoming racial discrimination. Black workers made little progress, for example, when trade union leaders showed much reluctance to fight anti-black racism. In addition, unions suffered a massive decline in membership during the immediate postwar years of economic recession and strike waves that left most black working people searching for other avenues to social betterment. By the mid-1920s,

⁶ Federal agents concluded that socialist and communist activities involved mainly white Americans of Eastern European descent and had no influence with black East St. Louisans. "Memorandum, July 8, 1919, Director of Negro Economics to Secretary of Dept. of Labor," Folder: "8/102-C," Box 18, *Field Reports of the Division of Negro Economics, 1918-1919, General Records, 1907-1942*, Dept. of Labor, RG174, Entry 1, National Archives, College Park, Maryland; "18 Arrested in Raid on Reds Are Held by U.S. Authorities," *ESLDJ*, 4 January 1920, 1, 3; "Members of Slovak Association No. 55 Surrenders," *ESLDJ*, 8 January 1920, 1; "May Day Circulars Litter Down Town Sections," *ESLDJ*, 2 May 1921, 1; Report by Emil A. Solanka, St. Louis, MO., "Radical Activities in the St. Louis District," 28 February 1920, 10 April 1920, and 10 July 1920, no. OG229849, Microfilm M1085, *General Investigative Records, Records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, RG65, Entry 29, National Archives, College Park, Maryland; "Nine Foreigners Refused Citizen Papers; Two Were As Communists," *ESLDJ*, 13 May 1921, 1.

African Americans in East St. Louis settled on a course of action that involved promoting community protests and reentering formal politics. Those committed to advancing their community's interests had to work around black political operatives who used the patronage system solely for their own personal gain as well as white politician-businessmen, some as political machine bosses, who put their own interests above those of residents. Toward the end of the 1920s, a small group of African American activists won the allegiance of black East St. Louisans when they forged a new black organization that operated as a pressure group and a black Democratic political machine that restored to some degree the influence and powerbroker status that the black community had attained before July 1917.

Economic Reshaping of Post-WWI East St. Louis

White progressive reform businessmen emerged after the mass racial violence of July 1917 and the First World War years in control of East St. Louis. They reconstructed the city by installing a commission form of municipal government after defeating various political factions. Reformers successfully diminished—at least for several years—the political influence of boss machine politicians and blocked the Central Trades and Labor Union's attempt to strengthen its hand in managing city affairs. They also put an end to the black community's status as a powerbroker, segregating African Americans to specific residential enclaves. Businessmen progressives expected City Hall to be freed

from its decades-long dependency on revenues from saloon licensing fees starting in 1920 when Prohibition abolished drinking establishments. They thought the elimination of taverns also meant the eagerly awaited demise of gambling dens, dance halls, brothels, and the corruption and violence that accompanied such establishments. Progressive members of the business community anticipated governing with fiscal responsibility and managerial efficiency.

Real estate men continued directing economic development and recruiting industry to, as they liked to call East St. Louis, “The Central Industrial Center” of America. Business leaders, thinking that the new form of municipal government made the city politically stable, expected economic expansion to resume upon the end of the war.⁷ They directed the Chamber of Commerce to hire in 1918 nationally acclaimed urban planner Harland Bartholomew of St. Louis to develop a blueprint to transform East St. Louis into a “beautiful city, with model factories and . . . a live, strong community spirit.”⁸ In 1921, real estate man Nathaniel McLean and other economic growth advocates publicly acknowledged what Bartholomew had stated in his plan, namely that the railroads, especially Terminal Railroad Association, had adversely affected the local economy.⁹ City boosters’ problem became how to maintain the town’s reputation as

⁷ “East St. Louis Shows Most Remarkable Growth of Any American Municipality,” *ESLDJ*, 8 September 1918, section three, 1, 4; “City Approaches Expanding Period,” *ESLDJ*, 15 October 1919, 2.

⁸ “Bartholomew To Supervise City Plan Commission in Program Here,” *ESLDJ*, 31 December 1918, 1; Harland Bartholomew, *A Comprehensive City Plan. . . 1920* ().

⁹ “The Status of the Railroads,” *ESLDJ*, 6 April 1921, 4; “How Suggested Terminal’s Plan Affects East St. Louis,” *ESLDJ*, 2 July 1922, 1-A, 2-A;

“the foremost industrial center of the world,” when the mainstays of the local economy, railroads and manufacturers, ceased to expand.¹⁰

Boosters noticed, as the 1920s progressed, that the city’s rate of economic growth had failed to reach pre-World War I levels, but they were unaware that the city had begun its long-term decline.¹¹ They slowly understood that the First World War I had ushered in a new economic order of mass consumerism and bureaucratic corporations tied to national and international markets vulnerable to fluctuating business cycles.¹² Those involved in real estate, housing construction, retail merchandizing, and other businesses fell upon hard times in a postwar recession as their customers, thousands of industrial workers, lost their jobs.¹³ Business owners’ outlook returned to one of optimism by mid-1922, however, when the postwar recession ended.¹⁴

Business leaders thought the city’s diversified economy provided the means to greater levels of prosperity.¹⁵ They gave little thought to abandoning generous tax breaks to industrial corporations and other pro-industry policies that over several decades had catapulted their small town into an industrial city of national importance. For

¹⁰ “Our City’s Industrial Progress,” *ESLDJ*, 13 March 1921, 4.

¹¹ Andrew J. Theising, *Made in USA: East St. Louis, The Rise and Fall of an Industrial River Town* (St. Louis, MO.: Virginia Publishing, 2003), 7-12.

¹² Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

¹³ “Industries Reduce Working Force,” *ESLDJ* 29 July 1920, 1; “Plants Slow Up,” *ESLDJ*, 9 January 1921, 2.

¹⁴ “Industry and Real Estate Healthy,” *ESLDJ*, 24 September 1922, 1-C, 3-C; “More Employed in the East Side District Than in St. Louis,” *ESLDJ*, 23 August 1923; “East St. Louis Has Passed Through One of the Best Years in Its History,” *ESLDJ*, 30 December 1923, 2-B.

¹⁵ “Business Depression Vanishing,” *ESLDJ*, 2 January 1921, 1, 7; “No ‘Lop-Sideness’ Here,” *ESLDJ*, 24 January 1922, 4.

example, in 1922, R. Vernon Clark of Clark Realty Company directed City Hall to give a five year tax exemption to Missouri Car Company, an electric street car manufacturer that planned to employ five hundred men within five years.¹⁶ The business community, unconcerned about the city's increasing debt, continued to enjoy the booming economy that marked the rest of the 1920s.¹⁷

Politician-businessmen knew that their economic growth policies had contributed to the deepening of the city's systemic problems and limited its ability to achieve fiscal responsibility.¹⁸ City boosters, however, considered industrial output the true indicator of prosperity.¹⁹ They celebrated the low per capita cost of municipal government and continued to attract industry allowing it to avoid paying its fair share of municipal taxes.²⁰ For decades local officials had relied upon revenue sources such as bonds to

¹⁶ "City Exempts Manufacturer from City Tax," *ESLDJ*, 4 April 1922, 2.

¹⁷ "Prosperity in Employment Is Report Theme," *ESLDJ*, 15 June 1923, 1-A, 6-A; "Unemployment Is Noticeable," *ESLDJ*, 10 December 1923, 9; "Employment Is Better for July," *ESLDJ*, 24 August 1924, 1-C, 2-C; "East St. Louis in Infancy as Factory Center," *ESLDJ*, 25 October 1925, 1-C, 2-C; "Business Leaders See City As Future Steel Center," *ESLDJ*, 13 December 1925, 1-D, 2-D; "City Prosperous," *ESLDJ*, 24 January 1926, section three, 1; "East St. Louis on Threshold of Expansion," *ESLDJ*, 7 March 1926, 1-C; "C. of C. Opens Drive for Greater City," *ESLDJ* 21 February 1928, 1, 2, "Come to East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 3 February 1929, 4-A; "Industries Owe a Moral Debt," *ESLDJ*, 14 November 1929, 4.

¹⁸ Theising, *Made in USA*, 183-187. See also Chapter One in this study.

¹⁹ "Running Cost in E. St. Louis Shows Gains," *ESLDJ*, 6 January 1928, 1, 2; "Factory Output of Territory Is \$400,000,000," *ESLDJ*, 11 January 1928, 5.

²⁰ "East St. Louis Expenses Below Other Illinois Cities," *ESLDJ*, 27 November 1925, 1-A, 3-A; "Per Capita Cost of Government Here Second Lowest in Nation," *ESLDJ*, 31 October 1926, 1-C; "East St. Louis Has Favorable Rank in Governmental Cost," *ESLDJ*, 12 November 1926, 1-A; "East St. Louis Has Low Living Cost," *ESLDJ*, 15 January 1928, 1-C.

cover city expenses, driving the city deeper into debt.²¹ In 1926, they hoped to reallocate financial resources to furthering economic growth after city comptroller Walter Flannigen announced that the bonds which the city had procured to pay for damages resulting from the July violence had matured.²²

Business leaders disagreed on how to showcase East St. Louis as the industrial center with an attractive future.²³ Wholesale produce merchant and landlord E.E. Jett and physician Conrad Vonnahane proposed enhancing East St. Louis's reputation by changing the city's name.²⁴ Some local businessmen saw regional planning as a way to increase the rate of economic growth or at the very least manage disputes with St. Louis over issues such as the distribution of revenues collected from Free (or Municipal) and Eads bridge tolls and railroad freight fees.²⁵ Leading members of the Chamber of Commerce and the Real Estate Exchange, including exchange president William H.

²¹ East St. Louis, Illinois, "Proceedings of the City Council, Regular Meeting, April 35, 1921," and "Proceedings of the City Council, Adjourned Meeting, April 30, 1921," microfilm, Illinois State Archives, Springfield, Illinois.

²² "City under Debt Limit," *ESLDJ*, 30 June 1926, 1.

²³ "People Who Think City Is Suburb of St. Louis Are Wrong," *ESLDJ*, 23 May 1928, 5.

²⁴ "Launches Move To Change Name of East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 30 November 1924, 1-C, 2-C; "Dr. Vonnahane Recites His 16 Reasons Favoring Move for Changing Name of City," *ESLDJ*, 12 April 1928, 14; "Two Sides Heard on East St. Louis Change of Name," *ESLDJ*, 20 April 1928, 2. Vonnahane listed as Vonnahme in the 1924 and 1926 city directories.

²⁵ "St Louisans Balk Swap of Eads and Free Bridges," *ESLDJ*, 17 May 1926, 1; "Bridge Exchange Again Confronts City," *ESLDJ*, 2 June 1926, 1, 2; "Miller Submits New Bridge Plan," and "Miller's Plan to Break Terminal R.R. Monopoly," *ESLDJ*, 15 July 1926, 1, 2; "City Council Indorses St. Louis Bridge Plan," *ESLDJ*, 20 July 1926, 1, 2; "Organization Formed To Protect City in Bridge 'Change Issue,'" *ESLDJ*, 12 December 1926, 1, 2; "C of C Has No Funds to Fight RR Rate Case," *ESLDJ*, 16 February 1928, 1, 2; "Terminal Held As Only Foe To Use of Bridge," *ESLDJ*, 14 August 1928, 1, 2; "Railroad To Use Municipal Bridge," *ESLDJ*, 20 November 1928, 1, 2; "East St. Louis Suffers from Unfair Tariff," *ESLDJ*, 13 January 1929, 1-C.

Horner, advocated careful planning to solve interurban problems, direct future industrial development, and bring prosperity to East St. Louis.²⁶ Other members of the Real Estate Exchange, fearful that the city might lose its competitiveness with St. Louis, opposed regional planning. Downtown Business Men's Association president Frank J. Klapp and Louis Riechmann of the Retail Merchants' Association, for example, balked at too close a relationship with St. Louis, fearing that a proposed incorporation into a Saint Louis Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area opened opportunities for the Missourian metropolis to gain the lion's share of industrial growth.²⁷ But by the end of the 1920s, political and business leaders simply tabled initiatives for regional planning.²⁸

During the 1920s, civic-minded land interest politician-businessmen considered how to improve the quality of life of city inhabitants, realizing that corporate managers living outside of town had no interest in the lives of residents.²⁹ Real estate men and decided to encourage civic pride by improving residential dwellings. They bemoaned that the high cost of building materials and labor during the war years had led to a significant shortage and deterioration of housing stock. They decried the building trades'

²⁶ "Local C. of C. to Decide on Industry Plan," *ESLDJ*, 26 January 1927, 1; "C. of C. Reconsiders 'Metropolitan Area' Stand," *ESLDJ*, 7 December 1928, 1, 2.

²⁷ "Realtors Would Exploit Industrial Advantages," *ESLDJ*, 6 March 1927, 1-C, 2-C; "C. of C. Denies Part to Enter 'Metropolitan Area'," *ESLDJ*, 11 November 1928, 2; "Trying to Annex East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 11 November 1928, 4-A; "B.M.A. Opposes 'Metropolitan Area'," *ESLDJ*, 25 November 1928, 1, 4; "Metropolitan Area Idea May Jeopardize Prospects," *ESLDJ*, 30 November 1928, 4-A; "Business Men Renew Fight on Area Plan," *ESLDJ*, 16 December 1928, 1-C; "St Louis Admits Its Mistakes," *ESLDJ*, 29 January 1929, 6.

²⁸ "First Necessity of Attractive City," *ESLDJ*, 25 January 1921, 4; "More Vision Needed," *ESLDJ*, 29 July 1929, 4.

²⁹ Emmett J. Scott, *Negro Migration during the War* (reprint 1969, New York: Arno Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1920), 98-99.

resistance to adjusting wages down in order to stimulate a home construction boom.³⁰

The Real Estate Exchange and the construction industry worked closely to keep the construction of new houses in pace with population growth.³¹ But city building commissioner Charles E. Guenther admitted in 1929 that the supply of new houses actually continued to lag behind homebuyers' demands.³²

Real estate interests took a consumerist approach to remedy the housing problem, arguing that East St. Louis had the potential to become a model city of homes attractive to both middle class and working class white families.³³ Knowing that housing was a contested terrain, developers worried about the possibility of racial conflict as the city continued to attract both white Southerners, mainly from western Tennessee, Mississippi, Kentucky, and Georgia, and black Southerners primarily from Mississippi, Tennessee, and the Deep South.³⁴ Though accommodating industry's need for black labor, city leaders saw no need to construct housing for black people. They regarded residential segregation as a cornerstone of urban growth policy, a device to minimize racial violence and stabilize social relations in order to recruit industry.

³⁰ "Building Costs Must Come Down," *ESLDJ*, 18 September 1921, 4-A.

³¹ "Building in East St. Louis Keeps Pace with People," *ESLDJ*, 27 September 1925, 1-D, 2-D.

³² "381 Residences Built Here in Eleven Months," *ESLDJ*, 8 December 1929, 1-C.

³³ "East St. Louis Fast Transforming Itself into Model City of Homes with Growing Residence Sections," *ESLDJ*, 24 September 1922, 2-C.

³⁴ "East St. Louis," [1918-1920?], *National Urban League Papers*, Part I, Series VI, Box E:87, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

Some black residents took initiative regarding the lack of adequate housing.³⁵ A few black entrepreneurs built single family housing tracts, like the Kenwood subdivision. But not enough of these developments were built to satisfy black townspeople's demand.³⁶ Some African Americans, like the father of long-term black resident Jeanne Faulkner, had the means to construct their own homes, but most, lacking such means, continued to live in dilapidated houses.³⁷

The Structure of Post July 1917 Black East St. Louis

The July massacre, as horrendous as it was, did not totally destroy black East St. Louis. Residents in predominantly black neighborhoods in the city's South End escaped unscathed. Even the small black enclave in the North End district known as Goose Hill emerged in tact from the mayhem. Perhaps the hundreds of black laborers entering or leaving the meatpacking plants and stockyards of nearby National City during shift changes proved a more tempting target than the Goose Hill settlement. Untouched areas formed the nucleus of the post July massacre African American community. Like black urbanites elsewhere, black East St. Louisans seeing their population increasing and

³⁵ Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*, 66-71, and *River Jordan*, 106-109. See also Spear, *Black Chicago*.

³⁶ "\$500,000 Subdivision Being Opened Here for Negro Dwellers," *ESLDJ*, 4 November 1928, 1-C; "Negroes to Have Modern Conveniences in Kenwood Development Subdivision," *ESLDJ*, 11 November 1928, 1-C.

³⁷ "Real Estate Deal Marks Negro Growth," *ESLDJ*, 9 September 1923, 2; Jeanne A. Faulkner, interviewed by author, 24 September 1999, East St. Louis.

becoming more diverse occupationally, more skillfully positioned their community as a base for social and political action.³⁸

The number of African Americans living in the city on the eve of and in the years immediately following the July violence remained uncertain. The last reliable count, the 1910 federal census, enumerated 5,882 black townspeople out of a total population of 58,547 inhabitants. City boosters issued between the decennial censuses population figures, which they inflated as a ploy to attract business investments. No doubt the population of black East St. Louis dramatically increased during the wartime Great Migration. Local banker Conrad Reeb estimated the number of black residents around fifteen thousand on the eve of the massacre.³⁹ Newspapers quoted St. Louis relief agencies' statements that at least seven thousand African American refugees had streamed into the Missouriian city, leaving observers to assume that East St. Louis's black population had plummeted to about eight thousand individuals.⁴⁰ But the July outrage did not deter new waves of black southern migrants from making East St. Louis with its still booming wartime economy a place to live and work. According to one report, the black community in 1919 had increased to an estimated eighteen thousand in a city of 100,000.⁴¹ But this figure supplied by city boosters represented not much better than a

³⁸ On black residents facing sharpening segregation and using their communities as a base for political action see, for example, Trotter, *River Jordan*, 103-104, 109-111.

³⁹ Conrad Reed [sic] in "The East St. Louis Riot of 1917," reel no. 6 (University Publications of America, 1985), 38.

⁴⁰ "7,000 Blacks Flee East St. Louis as Troops Stop Riot," *New York City Call*, 6 July 1917, in *Tuskegee Institute Newspaper Clipping File*, 7:0014.

⁴¹ 1919 population estimate in V.P. Randall, "Report on East Saint Louis, Illinois, September 24, 1919," in James R. Grossman, ed., *Black Workers in the Era of the Great Migration, 1916-1929* (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1985).

wild guess. That the population dropped in 1919 with cessation of war-related work and the start of a postwar recession was to be expected. The 1920 federal census listed 7,437 African Americans out of a total of 66,767 residents.⁴² The number of black townspeople would have been higher if the mass racial violence of 1917 had not taken place. But the legacy of the wartime migration, which the July violence did not reverse, was that the proportion of African Americans from former slave states had increased in black East St. Louis. At least fifty percent of black residents in the early 1920s had migrated principally from Mississippi, Tennessee, Missouri, Alabama, and Kentucky.⁴³

African American Southerners continued to find employment in the North, but had difficulties retaining industrial jobs when massive demobilization of military personnel occurred in 1919, and from 1919 to 1922 as a postwar recession gripped the nation. Significant numbers of black employees lost jobs during the economic slump in small industrial cities like East St. Louis as well as in large ones like Chicago.⁴⁴ Black workers in East St. Louis generally toiled in railroading, meatpacking, iron and steel milling, and glass manufacturing, industries that contracted dramatically after a

⁴² United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1920); "7433 Negroes in City," *ESLDJ* 1 December 1920, 1; "Negro Population of E. St. Louis 7433," *St. Louis Argus* 3 December 1920, 1.

⁴³ Emmett J. Scott, *Negro Migration during the War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1920; reprint, New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), 99. *Fourteenth Census of the United States*, 1920, tabulations by the author found in a sample of 5,391 black people that 1,823 came from Mississippi, 745 from Tennessee, 357 from Alabama, 320 from Kentucky, and 254 from Kentucky, while 1,275 were native-born black Illinoisans. In "Statistics Show Increase in Native Born Here," *ESLDJ*, 22 February 1925, 1-C, Missouri and Mississippi took first and second place respectively as points of origin for white and black migrants.

⁴⁴ Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot*, 130-132.

dizzily rapid wartime expansion.⁴⁵ Industrialists responded to the deepening recession by laying-off workers and cutting wages.⁴⁶ Of the 17,435 white and black men and 1,869 white and black women employed in East St. Louis area industrial firms near the end of the war, only 7,895 white and black men and 1,106 black and white women remained on the payroll by June 1921.⁴⁷

But black workers did retain a presence in the urban industrial economy and after the recession increased their numbers in the workforce, securing mainly low paying unskilled factory jobs. Of the 1551 employed black East St. Louisan men in 1920, at least sixty-six percent were laborers.⁴⁸ Apparently, African American workers held on to their jobs as employers did not sack them in large numbers as they had in the pre-war decades.⁴⁹ African Americans constituted a crucial element in the postwar workforce.

⁴⁵ Scott, *Negro Migration during the War*, 100.

⁴⁶ "Aluminum Ore Cuts Off 600 Men in Local Plant," *ESLDJ*, 1 October 1920, 1; "Aluminum Ore Cuts Wages of All Employees," *ESLDJ*, December 1920, 9; "Big Plants Report Slight Decreases in Employment as Reaction Sets In," *ESLDJ*, 16 December 1920, 1; "Employment Officials Says 5,000 Are Idle in This Industrial Zone," *ESLDJ*, 29 December 1920, 1; "Central Trades Hears Report on Jobless in City," *ESLDJ*, 13 January 1921, 1; "Plants Slow Up," *ESLDJ*, 9 January 1921, 2; "Five Men for Every Place Available Now," *ESLDJ*, 11 July 1921, 2.

⁴⁷ "9,001 Employees in 52 Industries as Against 19,304 in Normal Periods," *ESLDJ*, 23 June 1921, 1.

⁴⁸ *Fourteenth Census of the United States*, 1920. All tabulations are by the author.

⁴⁹ Examples of contemporary articles favorably reporting on the Great Migration, black migrants' adjustment to urban life, and black worker-employer relations: John B. Abell, "The Negro in Industry," *Trade Winds* (March 1924): 17-20; John W. Barton, "Negro Migration," *Methodist Quarterly Review* 74 (January 1925): 84-101; P.O. Davis, "The Negro Exodus and Southern Agriculture," *American Review of Reviews* 68 (October 1923): 401-407; Dwight Thompson Farnham, "Negroes, a Source of Industrial Labor," *Factory and Industrial Management* (August 1918): 123-129; George Edmund Haynes, "Effect of War Conditions on Negro Labor," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 8 (February 1919): 299-312; Haynes, "The Negro at Work: A Development of the War and a Problem of Reconstruction," *American Review of Reviews* 59 (April 1919):

But employers continued to divide workers by race and sought to establish a permanent pool of low wage black laborers before immigration quotas scheduled to go into effect in 1924, drastically reduced the supply of European immigrants. By that year, of the 2,014 employed black male residents, 1,581 or seventy-eight percent classed themselves as laborers. The remaining twenty-two percent included thirty butchers, twenty porters, nineteen ironworkers, seventeen carpenters, and janitors, sixteen barbers and teamsters, fifteen chauffeurs, and eleven chippers.⁵⁰

African American women had less success in obtaining factory employment than black men, but their numbers as industrial wage earners, nevertheless, increased. They secured jobs primarily in meatpacking and glass manufacturing plants.⁵¹ In 1919, according to the Colored Work Committee of the Young Women's Christian Association, fifty-four black East St. Louis women worked in packinghouses, most likely in unskilled positions.⁵² Of the 398 black women listed as employed in the 1920 census,

389-393; Haynes, "Negro Migration—Its Effect on Family and Community Life in the North," *Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work* (1924): 62-75; Haynes, "Negroes Move North," *Survey* 40 (August 9, 1919): 697-699; Joseph A. Hill, "Recent Northward Migration of the Negro," *Monthly Labor Review* 18 (March 1924): 475-489; Charles S. Johnson, "Black Workers and the City," *Survey* 53 (March 1925): 641-643; Johnson, "How Much Is the Migration a Flight from Persecution," *Opportunity* 1 (September 1923): 272-274; Johnson, "How the Negro Fits in Northern Industries," *Industrial Psychology* 1 (June 1926): 399-412; Johnson, "The Negro Migration," *Modern Quarterly* 2 (July 1925): 314-326.

⁵⁰ *Directory of East St. Louis, Fairmont, National City, Washington Park, Illinois* ([S.l.]: J. Lethem, printer, 1924), hereafter cited as *1924 City Directory*, all tabulations by the author.

⁵¹ Emma L. Shields, *Negro Women in Industry* (Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, *Bulletin of the Women's Bureau*, no. 20) (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1922).

⁵² "Jane Olcott, *The Work of Colored Women* (New York: Colored Work Committee, War Work Council, National Board, Young Women's Christian Associations, [1919]).

seventy-two worked as laborers.⁵³ By 1924, black women had gained a firm foothold in laundering, glass manufacturing, and meatpacking.⁵⁴

African American women preferred industrial employment that offered higher wages and a greater sense of freedom over the more oppressive domestic labor that many wage earning black women had no choice but to accept. They abhorred not only the low wages, but also the long days, constant supervision, and vulnerability to sexual abuse from male employers that they endured in white people's homes.⁵⁵ Black women generally washed and ironed clients' clothes in their own homes or at laundries, toiled as servants in white people's houses, or worked as dishwashers, cooks, and waitresses in restaurants. A few found jobs as farm laborers on the outskirts of the city. Of the 398 wage earning black women in 1920, 147 or thirty-seven percent worked as laundresses or washerwomen for white families, and fifty-three or thirteen percent labored as servants in white homes.⁵⁶

The number of African American business owners and professionals remained static for several years in post-July 1917 East St. Louis, never climbing above the 120

⁵³ *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920*, all tabulations by the author.

⁵⁴ [Aluminum Ore Co., Swift & Co., East Side Packing Co., Certain-Teed Products Co., Model Laundry Co.] in *Black Workers in the Era of the Great Migration, 1916-1929*, 18:00715, 18:00658, 18:00693, 18:00719, 18:00864.

⁵⁵ Trotter, *River Jordan*, 101. On domestic labor see, for example, Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997). On domestic work that remained an important occupation for black women in the North see Elizabeth Ross Haynes, "Negroes in Domestic Service in the United States," *Journal of Negro History*, VIII (October 1923): 384-442.

⁵⁶ *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920*, all tabulations are by the author; "Colored Girls Want Farm Work," *ESLDJ*, 2 July 1920, 8.

listed in the 1912 city directory.⁵⁷ No one knew how many entrepreneurs had left town after the July massacre destroyed their businesses or dispersed their clients. Those remaining, like Charles Nash, whose mortuary had been reduced to ashes, rebuilt their establishments and customer base.⁵⁸ In 1920, ministers, physicians, schoolteachers, retailers, restaurateurs, and hairdressers were among the city's 111 self-employed professionals and businessmen.⁵⁹ The number of such individuals stood at 110 in 1924, but their ranks included grocers and drink shop owners, a euphemism for saloonkeepers during Prohibition.⁶⁰ Black business owners and service providers in East St. Louis relied more than ever on an African American clientele that faced an uncertain welcome from white establishments as segregation tightened its grip.

By the early 1920s black urban dwellers across the North increasingly lived in segregated environments that white people rigorously maintained through zoning laws, ordinances, and custom. Long term black townspeople in East St. Louis like their counterparts in other border region cities had tolerated a haphazard pattern of segregation.⁶¹ Residents who had been sending their children to segregated public schools since the 1870s began to experience widespread segregation after the mass racial

⁵⁷ *City Directory of East St. Louis . . . 1912* (East St. Louis, IL: East St. Louis Publishing Company, 1912), all tabulations by the author.

⁵⁸ Charles Nash in "In the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Illinois: Transcript of Testimony and Proceedings Before the Grand Jury, September 22, 1942 to and including September 29, 1942," p. 441, Folder: "146-10-2 Sec. 22, Class no. 146-10," *Classified Subject Files, Records of the Department of Justice*, Record Group 60, Entry no. 114BD, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Md.; Mrs. Frances Nash Terrell and Mrs. Claudia Nash Thomas, interviewed by author, September 24, 1999, East St. Louis, Illinois.

⁵⁹ *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920*, all tabulations by the author.

⁶⁰ *1924 City Directory*, all tabulations by the author.

⁶¹ Trotter, *River Jordan*, 73-74, 77-78, 82.

violence of July 1917 when white people extended the practice to include housing, theaters, and public accommodations. Black Southern migrants had lived under systematic, legalized segregation from the 1890s to the eve of the wartime Great Migration. But after arriving in the North, they had to adjust to the northern version of segregation with its zoning laws, for example, that in some ways operated as effectively as that of the South.⁶²

African Americans nurtured an institutional culture that lessened the adverse impact of residential segregation that turned their neighborhoods into ghettos. Black townspeople utilized their resources to aid one another and newly arriving rural black Southerners adjusting to the rigors of life in an industrial city. They continued to make segregated public schools serve their children's needs and provide employment for black teachers, administrators, and nonprofessional staff.⁶³ Members of the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association redirected their respective segregated local branches to run training programs to inform black southern migrants about healthcare practices and the rhythms of factory work.⁶⁴ Residents made use of their segregated institutions to celebrate themes and events in their history without

⁶² On racial segregation covertly enforced through laws see David Delaney, *Race, Place, and the Law, 1836-1948* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998).

⁶³ "Two Colored Schools Point With Pride to Good Records," *ESLDJ*, 19 October 1924, 10; "Board Defers Move in School Redistricting Dispute in North End," *ESLDJ*, 15 June 1928, 1; "First of New Schools," *ESLDJ*, 1 September 1929, 1-C.

⁶⁴ "Colored Leader of Note Leads Local 'Y' Work," *ESLDJ*, 13 April 1919, 12; "Establish A Center for Colored 'Y,'" *ESLDJ*, 16 May 1919, 3; "Dedication of East St. Louis YMCA Sunday," *St. Louis Argus*, 25 July 1919, 8; "Y.W.C.A. Recreation Center," *ESLDJ*, 13 February 1920, 1; "Colored Class To Observe Health Work," *ESLDJ*, 3 April 1921, 8; "Large Numbers of Negroes Are Arriving Daily," *ESLDJ*, 7 August 1923, 1, 2; "Shows Importance of Bond 'Y' Drive," *ESLDJ*, 2 April 1925, 5.

undo interference from white people. They continued, for example, to observe Emancipation Proclamation Day, a celebration of the abolition of slavery.⁶⁵ Newspapers did not reveal participants' interpretations of such events, but black celebrants' thoughts had to include the hope of making American democracy serve African Americans.

African Americans connected black involvement in the First World War to the meaning of freedom and democracy to make the ideas raised by the Emancipation Proclamation commemorations a daily reality. For example, fifteen hundred black East St. Louisans gathered in April 1919 to celebrate the return African American army veterans from the battlefields in France. Local black educators Martin Lucas and Benjamin Bowles praised black veterans and civilians for their unwavering trust and service to the nation to be repaid by government concessions to the demand for equality.⁶⁶ As the demand remained unanswered, African Americans increased their political agitation for social and economic advancement. For black East St. Louisans, their community became more than just a city within a city; it became a springboard that residents used to mobilize for various actions to reassert their interests.

⁶⁵ Unfortunately the newspaper did not state what speakers had said. See, for example, "Emancipation Day Picnic in Lincoln Park," *ESLDJ*, 21 September 1922, 2; "Emancipation Day Picnic in New Park," *ESLDJ*, 22 September 1922, 2; "Emancipation Day Marked Double Event," *ESLDJ*, 24 September 1922, 5; "Negroes Plan Emancipation Day Convention Here," *ESLDJ*, 30 August 1925, 2-C; "Emancipation Day To See Launching of Ten-Day Event," *ESLDJ*, 20 September 1925, 8; "Negroes Plan To Celebrate Emancipation," *ESLDJ*, 12 August 1928, 6; "Negroes Plan 15-Day Fair in September," *ESLDJ*, 21 August 1928, 10; "Political Days Set Aside for Big Negro Fair," *ESLDJ*, 29 August 1928, 10.

⁶⁶ On welcoming returning veterans see "1,500 Colored Citizens Hear Stories of War," *ESLDJ*, 6 April 1919, 10.

Actions Outside of Electoral Politics

In the few years following the July massacre that crushed the independent black political machine, African Americans gave voice to their concerns by working with black political movements, white organizations, and their own community institutions. As they strove to regain a position of influence in city politics, they continued to rely upon the support of the black community. Those advocating paths to black social and economic advancement that did not rely upon electoral politics had little competition within the black community largely because the July violence and subsequent trials of alleged black assailants had either removed from office, discredited, imprisoned, or driven from town community leaders and activists who sought to establish an independent black presence.

One way that black people tried to regain their voice after July 1917 was through participation in black political movements, primarily the multifaceted “New Negro” movement. The “New Negro” dominated intellectual thought among African Americans after the war and throughout the 1920s. The movement came into prominence as African Americans underwent complex shifts, for example, migration and urbanization, during the postwar repression that slowed their advancement toward democratic rights. It emphasized militant self-defense, racial pride and solidarity, and celebration of African American cultural expressions. New Negro advocates, however, divided over strategies

and tactics in the fight against segregation and injustice.⁶⁷ Political orientation of the New Negro ethos ran the gamut from conservative organizations like the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) to the revolutionary Marxist African Blood Brotherhood. Those within the movement who called upon African Americans to look outside of, if not overthrow, the American political system became targets of federal repression.⁶⁸

Black separatist notions dominated the New Negro movement. Of all the separatist expressions, the UNIA was the most controversial and most massive in terms of adherents. The organization, founded in 1916 and led by Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican, called for black separatism and stronger ties between Africans and people of African descent in the Americas. Its strident anti-colonialism irritated Great Britain and France, both with colonial possessions in Africa and staunch allies of the United States, prompting increased federal surveillance of the organization. Garvey became a victim of

⁶⁷ African American philosopher Alain Locke articulated the “New Negro” as a member of “the race,” who emerged with the demise of the Old Negro during World War I, the Great Migration, and the “Red Summer” of 1919 militantly ready to fight for full citizenship rights through political activism and economic self-help, racial solidarity and pride, and new cultural and aesthetic expressions. The New Negro manifested in many forms, for example, the Harlem Renaissance and the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Alain Locke, ed., *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (New York: Macmillan, 1925); Stanley B. Norvell, William M. Tuttle, Jr., “Views of a Negro During ‘The Red Summer’ of 1919,” *Journal of Negro History* 51 (July 1966): 210-211.

⁶⁸ Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., *“Seeing Red”: Federal Campaigns against Black Militancy, 1919-1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America* (London: Verso, 1998).

federal harassment and was convicted and imprisoned on charges of mail fraud, and later deported. In the late 1920s, the UNIA rapidly declined.⁶⁹

The UNIA chapter in East St. Louis maintained a low profile and did not attract the mass following as did its sister chapters elsewhere, for example, New York City, the headquarters of the UNIA. The East St. Louis chapter may have recruited its members from among black southern migrants, especially those from the Mississippi Delta, who already had some familiarity with the UNIA before migrating north.⁷⁰ The chapter expended its energy primarily on fundraising for the national UNIA and sponsoring lectures about potential opportunities in Africa for entrepreneurial black Americans.⁷¹ Perhaps the lackluster nature of the East St. Louis chapter had something to do with a determined anti-UNIA coalition of anti-separatist black people and local and federal government.

Anti-separatist black factions, at times with the assistance of white authorities, marginalized or suppressed separatists in East St. Louis. For example, the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, an organization of black East St. Louisian clergymen, opposed Dr. M.M. Madden, a separatist who came to town in 1920 in hopes of raising funds for a proposed independent black nation-state to straddle the Rio Grande River between Mexico and the United States. Alliance leaders Reverends A.F. Avant, C.W. Thompson, and Arthur Randall accused Madden of being an agitator and confidence man or huckster soliciting money from unsuspecting black people. In 1921,

⁶⁹ Judith Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986).

⁷⁰ Hahn, *A Nation under Our Feet*, 471-472; Woodruff, *American Congo*, 116-117.

⁷¹ "Lecturer Would Populate Liberia," *ESLDJ*, 12 May 1920, 7.

clergymen told Madden to leave town before they had the police arrest him. Madden, heeding the warning, left town.⁷² In another example of separatist suppression in the city, black residents did not protest in 1925 when police, for reasons not publicized, disrupted a meeting of the APA (its initials not identified in the local newspaper), a local separatist organization that reportedly planned pilgrimages to Africa, and arrested thirty-five APA members on charges of disturbing the peace.⁷³ The reception given organizations like the APA and UNIA showed that separatists made little headway among African Americans in East St. Louis.

Other New Negro activists gravitated to the NAACP with its program for integration and equality. The organization operated without much harassment, except in some locations in the South where white supremacists banned NAACP chapters. After a hiatus of several years, the NAACP revived its East St. Louis chapter in 1924. The chapter reflecting the anti-Garveyism of the national NAACP, along with the National Urban League and other black organizations assisted local and federal government in suppressing the UNIA and other separatist groups.⁷⁴

Another way that African Americans asserted their political voice to achieve social and economic advancement was by working under the direction of or in conjunction with white organizations. Some black people in East St. Louis chose this

⁷² "Work of Agitator Traced by Local Colored Ministers," *ESLDJ*, 20 January 1920, 1; "Colored 'Moses' Tells of Scheme to Lead Fellows to Promised Land," *ESLDJ*, 1 February 1920, 10; "Lecturer Would Populate Liberia," *ESLDJ*, 12 May 1920, 7; "Negro Colonizer To Speak at City Hall," *ESLDJ*, 1 July 1921, section two, 3. Author unable to establish if Reverent Avant was related to railroad worker John Avant who was wounded in a police attack on July 3, 1917, (see Chapter Four).

⁷³ "Negro Meeting Raided by Cops," *ESLDJ*, 16 January 1925, 1.

⁷⁴ Trotter, *River Jordan*, 119-120.

route when African American politics was in disarray in the immediate aftermath of the July massacre. They had to work with white or white directed organizations like the War Civics Committee that seized the opportunity to impose their program of reorienting African Americans to life in a majority white city during the hiatus of independent black political action.

African American workers often with support the black community participated in the labor movement in yet another way to agitate for economic advancement outside the electoral political arena. They were aware that their increase in numbers had forced some white trade unionists to recognize the urgency to unionize black workers.⁷⁵ Leaders of the packinghouse workers' union in East St. Louis and Chicago, for example, had announced a nondiscrimination policy toward black laborers in hopes of organizing them.⁷⁶ In 1919, three hundred black packinghouse, laborers pledged to unionize. In sharp contrast to black Chicagoan packinghouse workers whose interest in unions met stiff opposition from other members of their community, including clergymen, black East St. Louisian meatpacking laborers received encouragement from their community. Black East St. Louisian ministers, for example, exhorted African American packinghouse workers to "cooperate with their white working brethren" and join unions.⁷⁷ This

⁷⁵ "Unions Are Beginning to Take Friendly Interest in Negro Workers," *New York City Call*, 28 September 1917, in *TINCF*, 6:0447. For contemporary accounts on black workers' importance to industry and the labor movement see Abram L. Harris, "Negro Labor's Quarrel with White Workingmen," *Current History Magazine of the New York Times*, 24 (September 1926): 903-908; Arnold T. Hill, "The Negro in Industry," *American Federationist* 32 (October 1925): 915-920; Hill, "Negro Labor," *American Federationist* 35 (December 1928): 1452-1456.

⁷⁶ Olcott, *The Work of Colored Women*, 113; Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot*, 108-128.

⁷⁷ "Live Better By Joining Labor Unions," *ESLDJ*, 4 April 1919, 5.

display of union interest among black East St. Louisans showed that the memories of the July massacre had not caused them to reject trade unions. One black packinghouse worker favoring unionization, Philip Weightman, who had learned the butchering trade in his native Vicksburg, Mississippi, arrived in East St. Louis in 1917 after the July massacre and found work as a butcher in the hog-killing department at Armour where he thought black and white workers enjoyed some degree of camaraderie.⁷⁸

Black workers' increasing interest in trade unions, however, met up against two major factors that stalled their mass unionization: organized labor's reluctance to attack racism within the labor movement and corporations' determination to destroy unions. The massive strike wave of 1919 that shut down steel, meatpacking, coal mining, and other industries ended in defeat partly because of industrialist and government repression and partly because of divisions between black and white workers. The packinghouse workers' strike in summer 1919 in Chicago, for example, represented the confluence of organized labor's haphazard efforts in addressing racism and employers' union busting activities that occurred around the time of the worst mass racial violence in that city's

⁷⁸ Philip Weightman interview, 7 October 1986, tape 284, Illinois Labor History Society, *United Packinghouse Workers of America Interviews, 1979-1983* (SC 452), State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin. The local labor movement lost a valuable activist in 1920 when Weightman moved to Chicago. Weightman soured on unionism after the defeat of the packinghouse workers' strike in 1921-1922 and became a company man during the 1920s. He rekindled his interest in union organizing during the Great Depression, becoming a member of the Communist Party and a union organizer for the Congress of Industrial Organizations. See also Rick Halpern, *Down on the Killing Floor: Black and White Workers in Chicago's Packinghouses, 1904-54* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

history. The animosities that the “race riot” generated spilled over into the strike, further dividing workers, and hastening the defeat of the labor movement.⁷⁹

Central Trades and Labor Union of East St. Louis accepted discriminatory practices at the workplace, failing to condemn, for example, segregated locker rooms, lunchrooms, and restrooms at the Aluminum Ore Company and other factories.⁸⁰ Labor leaders lacked interest in resolving racial disputes among workers such as the one that occurred in 1920 in neighboring Fairmont City at the Granby Mining and Milling Company where Mexican and Mexican American strikers shot at five black laborers who they claimed were strikebreakers.⁸¹ Mexican and Mexican American workers had migrated during the war and postwar years to the Midwest and other regions where industrialists wanted additional sources of low wage labor. The CTLU failed to mediate in another racial incident in 1921 when three white custodians, a man and two women, quit their positions rather than work under the supervision of a new boss, head janitor Lawrence Edward, a black man.⁸²

Some trade unionists pursued racist policies at the workplace as well as in the community. When CTLU raised the issue of equal pay for equal work among black and white workers, they did so not in the name of racial equality, but as a ploy to decrease the number of black industrial workers. They thought that if managers were forced to

⁷⁹ Tuttle, *Race Riot*.

⁸⁰ V.P. Randall, “Report on East Saint Louis, Illinois, September 24, 1919,” *Black Workers in the Era of the Great Migration, 1916-1929*, 21:00318, 21:00320; “Aluminum Ore Company ‘Jim Crows’ the Race Men,” *Chicago Defender*, 23 March 1918, in *TINCF*, 8:0191.

⁸¹ “Mexicans Being Questioned after Attempt to Beat Negro Laborers,” *ESLDJ*, 9 August 1920, 1.

⁸² “Quit Jobs under Negro,” *St. Louis Star*, [3] August 1921, in *TINCF*, 14:0131.

hire black people at the same wages they paid white employees, then managers would stop hiring and begin firing black laborers. In 1918, in a display of promoting segregation in the community, CTLU president and city commissioner of public safety, Michael J. Whalen, joined with the city parks department to install a segregated neighborhood park for black working people living in Denverside.⁸³

The CTLU did not address racial disparities during the post-World War I recession when black laborers faced a higher rate of unemployment than white workers. In 1921, CTLU joined with United Charities and the East St. Louis Overseer of the Poor in calling upon employers to hire local white help.⁸⁴ The labor affiliation did little to dispel the fear of racial discord that the July violence had engendered when they urged black migrants to avoid East St. Louis or risk attacks by jobless, presumably white, townspeople.⁸⁵ In July 1924, the CTLU, through the Mayor's Office, once again raised the issue of more migrants than jobs available. In language reminiscent to that of spring 1917, union leaders accused labor agents of enticing black Southerners to the city. CTLU claimed that the presence of unemployed black southern laborers held the potential of causing great suffering in the coming winter months. With labor's backing, Mayor Melbern Stephens in a terse communiqué urged the East St. Louis NAACP chapter to

⁸³ "Labor Men Plan Purchase of Park Site for Negroes," *ESLDJ*, 13 September 1918, 1. Whalen's position as city commissioner listed in 1924 and 1926 city directories.

⁸⁴ "Labor Union Heads Say Many Facing Want Minus Jobs," *ESLDJ*, 16 August 1921, 4; "Figures on Unemployment Believed High," *ESLDJ*, 9 September 1921, 1; "C. of C. Asked for Support of Jobless Plans," *ESLDJ*, 9 October 1921, 2; "Unemployment Decreased in Last 30 Days," *ESLDJ*, 14 October 1921, 1, 7; "Industry Here Over Fifty Per Cent Normal," *ESLDJ*, 13 November 1921, 1, 7;

⁸⁵ "Urged Jobless To Avoid City," *ESLDJ*, 30 January 1921, 2; "County Overseer Would Give Work to People Living in East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 11 May 1921, 1, 2.

announce in black southern newspapers that East St. Louis did not want migrants. The chapter at the mayor's behest urged migrants, perhaps those without kith or kin in the city, to continue to other destinations but not before providing unemployed migrants some form of assistance.⁸⁶

Labor leaders' poor relationship with black workers became evident during the 1921-1922 packinghouse workers' strike that occurred in Chicago, East St. Louis, Kansas City, Missouri, and other cities. The Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen union, hoping to reverse wage cuts, had entered into intense negotiations with meatpackers that lasted several months.⁸⁷ In December 1921, workers went on strike after employers withdrew from arbitration. In East St. Louis, at least two thousand black and white packinghouse employees downed their tools.⁸⁸ Managers H.W. Waddell of Armour and Frank A. Hunter of Swift hired black and white men and women strikebreakers. The police maintained a presence around the factories to protect strikebreakers and prevent fistcuffs between strikers and strikebreakers from disrupting industrial production. Either some white strikers or their supporters shot at black

⁸⁶ "Resolution, Mayor's Office, East St. Louis, July 14, 1924," M.M. Stephens, Mayor, to C.J. McLinn, President, and Bessie King, Secretary, East St. Louis NAACP, July 16, 1924, East St. Louis Branch to Mayor, July 21, 1924, East St. Louis Branch to J. Weldon Johnson, July 21, 1924, Folder: East St. Louis, Box G-56, *Branch Files, Group I, 1909-1939, NAACP Papers*.

⁸⁷ Halpern, *Down on the Killing Floor*, 70-71.

⁸⁸ "Strike Vote on New Wage Scale Called," *ESLDJ* 15 March 1921, 1, 2; "Packing House Employes Will Strike," *ESLDJ*, 11 October 1921, 1; "Plant Boards Meet to Talk Wage Decrease," *ESLDJ*, 10 November 1921, 1; "Over 2,000 Packer Employes Strike in Local Yards," *ESLDJ*, 5 December 1921, 1, 2.

strikebreakers, killing a woman and a man.⁸⁹ During the 1921-1922 strike, in contrast to 1917, the police remained disciplined, preventing further trouble from erupting, suggesting that actions of agents of the state are key in determining whether violence occurs. Employers held firm and broke the strike nationwide in February 1922 in part because trade unionists had failed to build a viable interracial strike campaign.⁹⁰ With the meatpacking industry centered in Chicago, the strike collapsed there because workers in that city had not overcome the legacy of the Chicago 1919 race riot that led to the demise of the workers' Stockyards Labor Council and a racially torn labor movement.⁹¹ In October, CTLU officials admitted that their inability to develop and maintain interracial unity proved to be the chief reason for losing the strike.⁹² In the absence of viable trade unions, black workers concerned about improving their conditions had to look for other avenues for economic and social advancement.

Another way that African Americans sought to reassert their voice in city affairs was through working under the direction of or in conjunction with white led or white dominated organizations. For example, in 1918, the federal government instituted the War Civics Committee program to improve living conditions of defense industry workers

⁸⁹ "Packers Hiring Men," *ESLDJ*, 6 December 1921, 1, 2; "Packers Pay Off Men on Strike," *ESLDJ*, 8 December 1921, 1, 2; "11 Held After Negro Is Shot at Stock Yards," *ESLDJ*, 14 December 1921, 1, 2; "Striker Held for Assault on Sol. Tartt.," *ESLDJ*, 16 December 1921, 10; "Bullet Fired From a Group Strikes Negro," *ESLDJ*, 4 January 1922, 1, 2; "2 Negro Women Shot in Fight in Strike Zone," *ESLDJ*, 6 January 1922, 1, 2. One cannot discount either managers or third party provocateurs intent on sparking racial violence.

⁹⁰ "Strikers to Vote on Return to Work," *ESLDJ*, 25 January 1922, 1, 2; "Strikers Want Old Jobs Back," *ESLDJ*, 1 February 1922, 1, 2. For Chicago, see Halpern, *Down on the Killing Floor*, 72.

⁹¹ Halpern, *Down on the Killing Floor*, 72.

⁹² "New Attempt to Form Union in Packing Houses," *ESLDJ*, 15 October 1922, 1, 2.

and their families in selected industrial cities, including East St. Louis. Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, tasked with administering the committee, reasoned that higher worker morale translated into increased industrial productivity for the war effort.⁹³ Upon the abrupt end of the war, Baker redirected the committee to integrate veterans into civilian life and peacetime employment and to render limited assistance to African Americans. The East St. Louis committee worked with J.W. Hughes and other “respectable” black citizens who served as committee liaisons to an estimated eighteen thousand black residents. The organization founded the War Camp Community Service of East St. Louis, enabling black residents to establish a club that functioned as a social work agency, employment office, and recreational facility for black veterans.⁹⁴

Some African American organizations reoriented black interests to fit within a white dominated framework. For example, the National Urban League, working closely with the War Civics Committee, sought to assimilate black southern migrants into an urban industrial culture, bringing to fulfillment local progressives and employers’ dream of shaping black people into responsible citizens and workers.⁹⁵ Founded in 1910, the league emphasized the expansion of job opportunities, the improvement of living

⁹³ Arlyn Wilbur Coffin, *Building East St. Louis for Tomorrow: First Annual Report of the War Civics Committee* (East St. Louis, Ill.: War Civics Committee, 1919), 1, 3, 5, 7, 11, 22; *The Survey*, 44 (16 August 1920): 630; Harland Bartholomew, *A Comprehensive City Plan for East St. Louis, Illinois: Prepared for the War Civics Committee* (East St. Louis, Ill.: The Daily Journal, 1920), xiii; “War Civics Audit To Disclose Funds Spent During Two Years’ Work Here,” *ESLDJ*, 12 December 1920, 1; William F. McDermott, “The Rebirth of East St. Louis,” *Survey* 42 (May 17, 1919): 274-275.

⁹⁴ V.P. Randall, “Report on East Saint Louis, Illinois, September 24, 1919,” *Black Workers in the Era of the Great Migration, 1916-1929*, 21:00318, 00320; “Urban League E. St. Louis,” *St. Louis Argus*, 25 April 1919, 1.

⁹⁵ “League on Urban Conditions among Negroes Founded,” *ESLDJ*, 27 July 1918, 9.

conditions for low income African Americans, and the provision of professional social work services to migrants. The organization cultivated cordial relations with industrialists in order that black workers identify their interests with those of managers.⁹⁶ The league's efforts in East St. Louis represented a response not only to the July massacre and its aftermath, but also to recent trends in industrial relations that valued cordial relations between employees and paternalistic employers.

The National Urban League formed in 1918 a chapter in East St. Louis with the aim of fostering a working partnership between the black community and industrialists.⁹⁷ It emphasized job training, job mediation between black workers and white employers, and healthcare, housing, and education for black residents.⁹⁸ Reverend G.H. Haines, who had arrived from California in mid-1917 to serve as pastor at St. John's African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, became an enthusiastic organizer for the league.⁹⁹ Black Executive Secretary Eugene Hinckle Jones visited East St. Louis in March 1918 to seek support for the league from white businessmen willing to assist black professionals in organizing a chapter.¹⁰⁰ In July 1918, black and white civic members elected as chairman a white Baptist minister and as vice-chairman a white Missouri Malleable Iron

⁹⁶ Nancy J. Weiss, *The National Urban League, 1910-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); Jesse Thomas Moore, Jr., *A Search for Equality: The National Urban League, 1910-1961* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1981).

⁹⁷ William J. Harrison, *The First 75 Years, 1918-1993* (St. Louis: Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, 1993), 10-11.

⁹⁸ "East St. Louis Urban League," 1, no. 2 (February 1919), 1-6, Folder: "Chicago Commission on Race Relations, 1919-1920, Press Notices, Pamphlets, Miscellaneous," *Frank Orren Lowden Correspondence, 1917-1921*, RG 101.027, Illinois State Archives, Springfield, Illinois.

⁹⁹ "Negroes to Plan Their Betterment," *ESLDJ*, 9 November 1917, 3.

¹⁰⁰ "Urban League for St. Louis, Mo. and E. St. Louis," *St. Louis Argus*, 22 March 1918, 1.

Company official.¹⁰¹ African Americans staffing other positions in the league chapter included J.W. Hughes as second vice-chairman, Minnie G. Scott as secretary, and St. Louisan league member George W. Buckner as executive secretary. Black women chapter members, Louise White, Maggie Freeman, Maude Haynes, social worker Mary Martin, and schoolteachers Fanny and Lucy Turner and Gertrude Creath, directed membership campaigns.¹⁰²

The East St. Louis Urban League ran programs that encouraged, not integration, but black accommodation to segregation. It sponsored a Women's Department to work to ameliorate living conditions in low income neighborhoods and conduct noonday meetings for black workers where they learned the virtues of "regularity, sobriety, punctuality, and thrift."¹⁰³ With assistance from the War Civics Committee, the league

¹⁰¹ "Committee Named for Urban League, *ESLDJ*, 4 July 1918, 8; "Urban League Branch in East St. Louis," *St. Louis Argus*, 26 July 1918, 1.

¹⁰² "The East St. Louis Urban League," *St. Louis Argus*, 19 March 1920, 3. African American officers included J.W. Hughes as second vice-chairman, Minnie G. Scott as secretary, and St. Louisan league member George W. Buckner as executive secretary. Louise White, Maggie Freeman, Maude Haynes, social worker Mary Martin, and schoolteachers Fanny and Lucy Turner and Gertrude Creath, directed membership campaigns. From the *1924 City Directory* Lucy Turner's husband, Charles, was listed as a laborer; Maude Haynes's husband, William, a druggist. Creath's occupation in Clementine Hamilton, *The Ebony Tree* ([privately published], East St. Louis, Ill.: Publication Committee, 1971 or 1972), 23.

¹⁰³ "League on Urban Conditions among Negroes Founded," *ESLDJ*, 27 July 1918, 9; "Needy Colored People To Have Xmas Dinners," *ESLDJ*, 23 December 1918, 1; "Urban League Report Shows Lot of Things Accomplished," *ESLDJ*, 17 August 1919, 7; "Urban League To Make Gifts," *ESLDJ*, 24 December 1919, 1; "Urban League Was Benefitted [sic]," *ESLDJ*, 2 January 1920, 3; "Urban League Notes," *ESLDJ*, 2 March 1920.

aided black people by forming a food canning center for women, offering free adult night schools, and organizing other community oriented activities.¹⁰⁴

In 1920, black East St. Louisans disbanded their Urban League chapter, transferring its work to the Urban League chapter in St. Louis. The reasons for the chapter's demise remained unclear, but perhaps the chapter's black members saw no possibility of striking a path independent from white progressive members who wanted to assist them, but within a segregated context.¹⁰⁵ Some black East St. Louisans sought the league's direct engagement in electoral politics, perhaps even an endorsement of Illinois Governor Len Small and other politicians who pledged support for black economic and social advancement.¹⁰⁶ Perhaps these former members wanted the league more involved in politics than it wanted to be.

Some African Americans in an attempt to give voice to black concerns preferred working through their own clubs, churches, and other community-based institutions that allowed them to exercise high levels of control and independence of action. Black people in East St. Louis, like their counterparts in other cities, at times, and, depending upon the issue, acted as a community in advancing their interests. In East St. Louis some black people expressed New Negro sensibilities when they extricated themselves from

¹⁰⁴ "Community Leadership," *The Survey*, 63 (February 14, 1920): 588; Coffin, 21-24; "Physical Aid To Be Given City, Says War Civics Report," *ESLDJ*, 15 February 1920, 12; "Propose Night School for Negroes," *ESLDJ*, 28 December 1920, 2; "War Civics Expenses Totalled [sic] \$124,412," *ESLDJ*, 30 December 1920, 1, 2; "Open Night Class for Negro Students," *ESLDJ*, 12 January 1921, 2.

¹⁰⁵ William J. Harrison, *The First 75 Years, 1918-1993* (St. Louis: Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, 1993), 11; "Would Revive Urban League for Negroes," *ESLDJ*, 20 September 1920, 7.

¹⁰⁶ "Small Ticket Lauded at Meet," *ESLDJ*, 23 August 1920, 4.

organizations like the War Civics Committee and the local chapter of the National Urban League that sought to make the black community responsive to various groups of white people, for example, employers.

African American townspeople greatly increased the likelihood of achieving their objectives by working through their community institutions rather than under the direction of white or biracial organizations. Residents mobilized their clubs, churches, and other establishments to gain access to goods and services otherwise denied them because of segregation. One such community group, the Colored Welfare Association, founded in 1920, did social work among less affluent black families. Reverend John DeShields, pastor of St. Paul's Baptist Church, and former members of the disbanded East St. Louis chapter of the National Urban League, tasked the association to continue the work of the chapter.¹⁰⁷ Matt Hayes and other African American businessmen and businesswomen formed the Gold Bank Boosters' Club, a black equivalent of the East St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, to assist black businesses and provide charity to needy residents.¹⁰⁸ Black residents set up facilities and conducted programs for entertainment and cultural events when the city or white organizations prohibited them from accessing those offered to white citizens. For example, some black townspeople became involved in the local black YWCA and worked with the meatpacking companies to offer recreational services for African American women packinghouse employees in the

¹⁰⁷ "Small Ticket Lauded at Meet," *ESLDJ*, 23 August 1920, 4.

¹⁰⁸ "Colored Boosters Donate To Home," *ESLDJ*, 17 May 1920, 3; "\$140 Collected for Colored Relief," *ESLDJ*, 8 August 1920, 5; "City News in Brief," *ESLDJ*, 31 December 1920, 1; "Colored Club Is Searching for Man with New Game," *ESLDJ*, 3 March 1921, 2. The *1924 City Directory* listed Matt Hayes as foreman.

Progressive Girls Club of Morris and Company, the Wohelo Club of Swift and Company, and the O.T.C. of Armour and Company. Black women employees made use of the very corporate welfare programs that large businesses had originally implemented to thwart workers' efforts at unionizing and collective bargaining.¹⁰⁹ Other black East St. Louisans, knowing that black girls and mothers had been denied city social services, created the Girls' Reserves in 1924 and the Colored Mothers' Craft club in 1928 that sponsored social events for children and women.¹¹⁰

Black women continued the clubwomen tradition as key grassroots organizers and leaders in community activism. They, as black women elsewhere, used their segregated institutions to improve conditions for African Americans.¹¹¹ Women predominated in their community's affairs largely because social problems such as those relating to public health had a direct impact on the well-being of women and their families, and children, and by extension neighborhoods. They used their clubs and other organizations as pressure groups to obtain resources from white citizens who preferred to assist black people without integrating them into citywide institutions and services. Mary Martin and other women officers at the Colored Old Folks' Home and Orphans' Association turned that institution into the most important African American social work agency servicing

¹⁰⁹ "Colored 'Y' Notes," *ESLDJ*, 11 April 1920, 12; "YWCA, East St. Louis," *St. Louis Argus*, 27 February 1920, 3. Details on the Progressive Girls, Wohelo, and O.T.C. clubs remain unknown.

¹¹⁰ "80 Colored Girls Taken in Reserves," *ESLDJ*, 7 December 1924, 3-B; "Negro Court of Honor Organized," *ESLDJ*, 3 April 1927, 2-A; "Negro Mothers' Club Holds April Meet," *ESLDJ*, 23 April 1928, 2.

¹¹¹ Trotter, *River Jordan*, 117-118.

black orphans and the elderly.¹¹² Martin and her colleagues consistently received funding for their work from black organizations and, more significantly, from City Hall and the Community Chest, a coordinating body for mainly white community groups.¹¹³

African American women frequently organized and led campaigns to improve the health and living conditions mainly of low income black East St. Louisans.¹¹⁴ They argued that overcrowded substandard housing, improperly enforced housing codes, and lack of proper sewerage disposal exacerbated public health problems in certain districts. The women won material assistance from City Hall, the Real Estate Exchange, and other white organizations hoping to contain, if not eliminate, public health problems in black areas before they affected white residents.¹¹⁵

Like urban black women elsewhere, those in East St. Louis pushed public healthcare to the forefront of community concerns.¹¹⁶ Black people had access to professional healthcare in a segregated ward at St. Mary's Hospital, situated between the

¹¹² "Many Baskets Given To Poor Colored People," *ESLDJ*, 6 January 1920, 5; "Plans Made for a New Nursey," *ESLDJ*, 15 February 1920, 6; "Soliciting Fund To Build Home for Colored Old Folks," *ESLDJ*, 27 November 1921, 10-A; "Distributing Xmas Baskets," *ESLDJ*, 24 December 1924, 3; "Building for Day Nursery Is Bought by Negro Society," *ESLDJ*, 27 March 1927, 3; "Suffering Looms for 4 Percent in East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 11 December 1927, 1-A; "85 Children Cared for by Negro Home," *ESLDJ*, 11 March 1928, 5; "Colored Day Nursery Is Formally Opened," *ESLDJ*, 17 October 1937, 7.

¹¹³ East St. Louis, Illinois, "Proceedings of the City Council, Regular Meeting, August 18, 1919," microfilm, Illinois State Archives, Springfield, Illinois; "Colored Old Folks Home Is Defended," *ESLDJ*, 2 August 1925, 5; "Colored Relief Body Shows a Successful Year," *ESLDJ*, 17 January 1926, 7; "300 at Banquet of Negro G.O.P. Club," *ESLDJ*, 16 February 1927, 2; "Year Success for Negro Old Peoples Home," *ESLDJ*, 25 December 1927, 2-C; Clementine Hamilton, *The Ebony Tree* ([privately published], East St. Louis, Ill.: Publication Committee, 1971 or 1972), 74-75.

¹¹⁴ Susan L. Smith, *Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired: Black Women's Health Activism in America, 1890-1950* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995).

¹¹⁵ Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, 187-218.

¹¹⁶ Smith, *Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired*.

downtown district and the black ghetto in Denverside.¹¹⁷ But some chose to be treated at a segregated hospital that employed black healthcare providers in St. Louis.¹¹⁸ Black women led protests to demand African American control of medical services in their districts. Social worker Annette Officer and other women organized the Colored Citizens' Community Committee of the Bond Avenue YMCA and black Parent-Teacher Association clubs to promote public healthcare.¹¹⁹ They also assisted health practitioners in distributing smallpox vaccinations to children, sometimes administering the medicine.¹²⁰ In 1928, during an annual Health Day program, black townspeople debated the need for black control of health care services. Annette Officer's husband, mortician William Officer, demanded that the Visiting Nurses Association replace departing black nurse Minnie Yieges with another black nurse, rather than the white nurse who had taken Yieges's place. The assembly also called for improved care for black people at St. Mary's Hospital.¹²¹

Black protesters also mobilized the community around non-healthcare issues to extract concessions from the authorities. They had the independence to assert their

¹¹⁷ "Hospital Serves, Regardless of Patient's Creed or Color," and "26 Nationalities Are Admitted to Hospital in Year," *ESLDJ*, 19 September 1926, 3-D and 9-D.

¹¹⁸ Jeanne A. Faulkner.

¹¹⁹ "Dunbar School Is Unhealthful, Negroes Infer," *ESLDJ*, 5 February 1925, 2; "Negro P.T.A. Obtains Help for Children," *ESLDJ*, 20 February 1927, 2; "Negro Infant Mortality Rate Here Is High," *ESLDJ*, 9 September 1926, 3; "Negro School P.T.A. Helps Health Work," *ESLDJ*, 13 March 1927, 4; "Dunbar Parent-Teachers Association Begins Drive to Combat Diphtheria," *ESLDJ*, 21 November 1927, 10.

¹²⁰ "Colored Children Being Vaccinated," *ESLDJ*, 11 February 1921, 2; "Large Numbers of Negroes Are Arriving Daily," *ESLDJ*, 7 August 1923, 1, 2; "Children Jam into City Hall in Drove," *ESLDJ*, 26 January 1925, 1, 2; "4 New Smallpox Cases Reported," *ESLDJ*, 1 February 1925, 1.

¹²¹ "Officer Speaks at Negro Health Day Affair Here," *ESLDJ*, 6 February 1928, 10.

demands without offending white sensibilities as long as they pursued their activities through all-black organizations. In 1924, political activists Harvey T. Bowman, Harry Dunlap, and Robert Miller led six hundred residents to form the East St. Louis Welfare League to raise funds to cover the legal expenses of Arnold Rupert, whom they thought had been wrongfully convicted and sentenced to hang for the murder of a white man. Rupert's supporters celebrated the success of their protests when Governor Len Small granted Rupert a reprieve.¹²² In the same year, fifty African American men and women revived the East St. Louis chapter of the NAACP.¹²³ Black people solely comprised chapter membership since the goals of integration and equality appeared too radical for white individuals in the segregated city. NAACP officers and rank and filers in East St. Louis like their counterparts in Chicago mobilized around New Negro sentiment that made the association at the chapter level appear to be a "moderately 'nationalist' institution."¹²⁴ They utilized protests and rallies, though the NAACP had a reputation for its use of court litigation and legislative lobbying. In 1925, Reverend Farley Fisher and Bessie King, both officers of the newly created East St. Louis chapter of the NAACP,

¹²² "Raising \$350 Fund To Save Negro Slayer," *ESLDJ*, 18 May 1924, 1.

¹²³ "Application for Charter, February 3, 1924," "Membership Reports, Illinois, Danville-Evanston," Box C252, Group II, *NAACP Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Occupations of the first fifty members: Barbers, 2; Butchers, 1; Contractors, 1; Editors, 1; Engineers, 1; Housekeepers, 1; Housewives, 6; Insurance agents, 2; Insurance collector, 1; Janitors, 5; Laborers, 7; Ministers, 2; Physicians 1; Policemen, 3; Porters, 1; Professors (i.e. schoolteachers), 3; Proprietors, 1; Realty agents, 1; Secretaries, 1; Salesmen, 1; Shipping clerks, 1; Teachers, 2; Upholsters, 1; Undertakers, 3; YWCA Secretaries, 1.

¹²⁴ Quoted passage in Schneider, "*We Return Fighting*," 5; Christopher Robert Reed, *The Chicago NAACP and the Rise of Black Professional Leadership, 1910-1966* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 45-46. .

scored a victory when it pressured City Hall to reinstate a black police officer who had been dismissed for slapping a white man who had resisted arrest.¹²⁵

Black organizations also agitated around issues such as neighborhood improvement and patronage. In 1926 and 1928, the Denverside Improvement Association, an African American neighborhood group, convinced white city councilmen to improve streets in black areas.¹²⁶ In 1927, the black Home Protective Association of East St. Louis organized to obtain city jobs for black residents. Home Protective Association chairman A.S. Moore and secretary Leroy King, demanding that black patronage appointees serve the community and not themselves, informed city councilmen that City Hall must consult the association before awarding patronage to black politicians.¹²⁷ In 1928, neighborhood people successfully pressured Mayor Frank Doyle to construct a fire station to be staffed solely by black firefighters.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Reverend Farley Fisher and Mrs. Bessie King to Mr. Robert W. Bagnall, Director of Branches, Folder: "East St. Louis, Ill., March 10, 1925," Box G:56, Group I, 1909-1939, Branch Files, *NAACP Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. East St. Louis Branch of the NAACP, *Perseverance and Progress: A History of the East St. Louis Branch of the NAACP* (East St. Louis, IL: [s.n.], 1995).

¹²⁶ "Negroes Object When Street Is Not Improved," *ESLDJ*, 4 May 1926, 1; "Negro Section Asks for Water Supply," *ESLDJ*, 29 June 1927, 2; "Negroes To Hold Street Dance," *ESLDJ*, 19 July 1928, 10.

¹²⁷ "Negroes Seek Parley with City Council," *ESLDJ*, 21 April 1927, 12.

¹²⁸ "Improvements Are Planned in Negro Sections," *ESLDJ*, 28 March 1928, 1, 12. Evidence does not show whether the fire station was not built because Mayor Doyle either failed to keep his promise or the Great Depression forced the debt ridden city to reallocate its funds.

The Return to Powerbroker Status in Electoral Politics

African American residents entered electoral politics to reestablish formal political influence upon, if not black representation in, city government. They shaped themselves into a voting bloc since residential segregation had concentrated the black vote in a few precincts. They used the precinct system as a springboard to influence machine boss politicians and win patronage and political office. The precinct system depended upon committeemen and committeewomen, as election and party organizers, workers, and captains, to control their precincts for their political bosses.¹²⁹ African American committee workers projected their political influence largely because a significant proportion of black voters had recently arrived from the South of disfranchisement eager to exercise the right to vote.¹³⁰

When women won the right to vote under the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, black women as well projected political strength as they entered the electoral political arena. They formed political clubs that served women and the black community generally. Their organizations, separate from the Republican and the Democratic parties, educated women in the art of political organizing and leadership, encouraged women to

¹²⁹ “‘Lowest Office’ Runs Politics,” and “‘Indifference Makes Politics,’” *East St. Louis Journal*, 11 February 1934, 4, hereafter cited as *ESLJ*.

¹³⁰ “City’s Voting Strength To Be Near 28,000,” *ESLDJ*, 24 August 1924, 1, 3.

seek political office, and provided campaign workers for political candidates.¹³¹ Laura Thomas, Ida Thornton, and Pinkie Reeves organized the influential Colored Women's Republican Club in 1922.¹³² Melissa Basfield, Pinkie Reeves, Mary Martin, and others expanded the club in 1924 to include non-East St. Louisans and renamed it the Colored Women's Republican Club of St. Clair County.¹³³ Clubwomen, including Pinkie Reeves and Pearl Chatters, educated and mobilized black voters through the Central Colored Women's Republican Club, the Hoover-Curtis Club, and other organizations.¹³⁴ As a result of their efforts in 1928, Democrat Eliza Hart and Republican Nevada Hamilton became the first two black East St. Louisan women to be elected precinct committee leaders.¹³⁵

¹³¹ The following citations are a representative sample of news blurbs, none with quotes, of Black women's political activities. "GOP Colored Women of Eighth Precinct Elected," *ESLDJ*, 20 January 1926, 10; "Colored Women of G.O.P. Club Name Campaign Heads," *ESLDJ*, 24 January 1926, 4; "County Colored G.O.P. Women To Have Convention," *ESLDJ*, 31 January 1926, section two, 4; "Colored G.O.P. Ladies Meet," *ESLDJ*, 7 February 1926, 6-C; "Mrs. Chatters Heads County's Colored G.O.P. Women," *ESLDJ*, 30 May 1926, 3; "Colored G.O.P. Women Meet," *ESLDJ*, 1 February 1927, 2; "Negro Women's G.O.P. Club To Meet Saturday," *ESLDJ*, 2 June 1927, 12; "Negro Republican Women Attend Fair," *ESLDJ*, 28 August 1927, 3; "Colored Women of G.O.P. Plan Affair Thursday," *ESLDJ*, 7 February 1928, 10; "Republican Negro Women Elect Heads," *ESLDJ*, 29 May 1928, 2; "Pearl Chatters Is Elected President of Political Club," *ESLDJ*, 9 June 1929, 4. The *1924 City Directory* listed Pinkie ("Pinksey") Reeves and Ida Thornton's husbands as laborers.

¹³² "Colored Women to Organize Clubs," *ESLDJ*, 27 April 1922, 2.

¹³³ "Colored G.O.P. Women Meet," *ESLDJ*, 18 September 1924, 5. The *1924 City Directory* listed Melissa Basfield's husband as a minister.

¹³⁴ "Colored Women's Club Will Meet Wednesday," *ESLDJ*, 22 January 1928, 2-C; "Hoover-Curtis Club Formed by Negroes," *ESLDJ*, 30 September 1928, 2-C. The *1924 City Directory* listed Pearl Chatters' husband as a laborer.

¹³⁵ Unfortunately the only sources are news blurbs that do not have quotes. "Negro Woman, a Democrat, Says She Was 'First,'" *ESLDJ*, 12 April 1928, 14; "Negress Nominated in Precinct over Five Opponents," *ESLDJ*, 15 April 1928, 3; "Republican

A dramatic postwar upswing in black voting began when African Americans once again started running for various city, county, and state government seats. In 1920, members of the Colored Welfare Association and other black civic and political organizations encouraged African Americans to vote.¹³⁶ In September, soft drink parlor operator Charles Henderson ran in the Republican Party primary as the only black politician among six candidates for representative to the Illinois General Assembly. Henderson lost the election.¹³⁷ In April 1922, Republicans William Hayes, Walter Nichols, and Douglas Howard campaigned for the positions of assistant county supervisor, and mortician Charles T. Nash ran for representative to the General Assembly. None of these men, however, won their elections.¹³⁸ In 1924, black precinct committeepersons and civic and political club members, led by Matt Hayes, mortician William E. Officer, Jr., Noah Parden, and others, mobilized to reelect Republican Governor Len Small who had appointed African Americans to state offices and had supported civil rights legislation.¹³⁹ Governor Small, mindful of the massive black vote

Negro Women Elect Heads,” *ESLDJ*, 29, May 1928, 2. The 1926 City Directory listed Nevada Hamilton’s occupation as rooming house owner.

¹³⁶ “Small Ticket Lauded at Meeting,” *ESLDJ*, 23 August 1920, 4; “Colored Man Enters Race for Assembly,” *ESLDJ*, 4 August 1920, 1.

¹³⁷ [Election results], *ESLDJ*, 16 September 1920, 1. The 1924 City Directory listed Henderson’s occupation a janitor.

¹³⁸ “Three Tickets in Field For Tuesday Voters,” *ESLDJ*, 2 April 1922, 4; “Three Negroes Lose in Attack by Democrats,” *ESLDJ*, 5 April 1922, 1, 2; “Rapid Voting in South End Making Record,” *ESLDJ*, 11 April 1922, 1, 2; “Schnipper, Messick, Miller Winners,” *ESLDJ*, 12 April 1922, 1, 2; “Prominent Negro Politician Is Buried with Honors,” *ESLDJ*, 26 April 1926, 2. The 1924 City Directory listed Douglas Howard as a tailor and Walter Nichols as a laborer.

¹³⁹ “Colored Speaker Addresses Big Crowd,” *ESLDJ*, 16 March 1924, 4-B; “Small Has Aided Colored People,” *ESLDJ*, 7 April 1924, 2; “City’s Voting Strength To Be Near 28,000,” *ESLDJ*, 24 August 1924, 1, 3.

in Chicago and the vote in East St. Louis that had aided his reelection, granted clemency to seven black East St. Louisan men who had been convicted for their role in the July violence.¹⁴⁰ Black East St. Louisans regarded Small's gesture as a demonstration that their vote had gained significance.

African American candidates sometimes failed to win office in the early 1920s because of anti-black agitation by white racist groups, including the Ku Klux Klan. In 1925, African Americans Matt Hayes, C. Cotton, and Thomas Huddleston, Republican candidates for county assistant supervisors, and S. Smith, Republican candidate for constable protested, when the white racist Citizens' Welfare Committee, race-baiting them, accused black people of controlling city politics. The candidates lost the election, but they successfully pressured city officials to arrest a Citizens' Welfare Committee member for distributing anti-black handbills.¹⁴¹ Black people worried more about the East St. Louis klavern of the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan that had announced its establishment within two weeks of the July massacre.¹⁴² The chapter was

¹⁴⁰ "Dinner Given To Pardoned Negroes," *ESLDJ*, 7 November 1924, 1-A. The men were Albert Hughes, William Palmer, Fayette Parker, Othaniel Peoples, George Roberts, Dee Smotherland, and Horace Thomas.

¹⁴¹ "Anti-Negro Circulars Bring Election Arrest at Polls," *ESLDJ*, 7 April 1925, 1; "East St. Louis Unofficial Vote by Precincts at Yesterday's Election," *ESLDJ*, 8 April 1925, 3. Matching the street address in the newspaper to the *1924 City Directory*, the directory listed S. Smith as Cortec Smith, a laborer. The 1926 City Directory listed C. Cotton as a minister.

¹⁴² "Ku Klux Klan Being Formed on East Side," *St. Louis Times*, 11 July 1917, in *TINCF* 6:0626; "Says Klan Has 4,000 Members in E. St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 20 August 1922, 2; "Editor of Klux Paper Speaks at Meeting Here," *ESLDJ*, 11 September 1922, 1; "Secrets of Klan May Be Bared in Legal Action," *ESLDJ*, 17 September 1922, 4-A; "Ku Klux Klan Koncilium on Monk's Mound," *ESLDJ*, 21 September 1922, 1; "Charges Violation of Election Laws," *Montgomery Advertiser*, 27 February 1923, in *TINCF* 18:0203;

part of a national manifestation of the Klan that emerged in Georgia in 1915. The Klan participated in the postwar repression against immigrants, Catholics, Jews, left-wing political activists, and African Americans. The Ku Klux Klan became an influential mass movement nationwide by the mid-1920s when it reached its height of popularity. The organization, drawing its members mainly from the business and professional classes, pledged to protect white Protestant middle class native born American men and women. The Klan promoted segregation, Protestant Christianity, Prohibition, and anti-vice and ran its own, or supported pro-Klan, candidates for political office.¹⁴³ The Klan in the East St. Louis district estimated in 1922 a total membership of four thousand and in 1925, at its peak of strength, nearly eight thousand.¹⁴⁴

Black townspeople allied with white residents who detested the Klan to defeat that organization's candidates in municipal elections.¹⁴⁵ They opposed the Ku Klux Klan's attempt to capture the reigns of government as had Klan chapters elsewhere,

"Protection for Klantaugua Is Asked of Mayor," *ESLDJ*, 3 June 1924, 1, 2; "Klan Closes Show Blaming Police," *ESLDJ*, 4 June 1924, 1.

¹⁴³ "Negro Warned in 'Klux Klan' Note To Move," *ESLDJ*, 15 September 1922, 1; "Local Ku Klux Chapter Posts Reward Offer," *ESLDJ*, 18 September 1922, 1; "Supposed Klan Candidates Get Names on Ticket," *Atlanta Constitution*, 1 March 1923, in TINCF 18:0200; "Local Klansmen Help Initiate 100 Near Herrin," *ESLDJ*, 2 May 1924, 2. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930*; Blee, *Women of the Klan*; Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

¹⁴⁴ "Says Klan Has 4,000 Members in E. St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 20 August 1922, 2; "Kounty Klan Gets Charter from Dragon," *ESLDJ*, 16 January 1925, 1.

¹⁴⁵ "Primary Vote Will Be Record," *ESLDJ*, 27 February 1923, 1, 2; "City Campaign To Open at Once," *ESLDJ*, 28 February 1923, 1, 2; "Negroes Attend Wake and Hear Mayor in Talk," *ESLDJ*, 30 March 1923, 1, 2; "Veach Repudiates Klan," *ESLDJ*, 1 April 1923, 1, 2; "Clouds Fail To Check Heavy Voting," *ESLDJ*, 3 April 1923, 1, 2.

North and South.¹⁴⁶ The biracial alliance defeated Klan and pro-Klan candidates in municipal elections, hastening the demise of Klan influence in East St. Louis.¹⁴⁷ But the alliance did not mean that white residents were ready to vote black politicians into office. For example, in 1926, Republican African American mortician Julius L. Marshall, on the strength of the black vote, ran second among six G.O.P. candidates for state legislative representative. Marshall would have been on his way to the state legislature but for a handful of white votes.¹⁴⁸

African Americans who sought for their community its own political machine had to contend with two oppositional groups, the first consisting of white Democratic and Republican bosses who controlled much of the black vote through loyal black operatives, and the second, from within the black community, of the bosses' African American loyalists who placed their own personal power above the needs of black townspeople. Politician saloonkeeper William 'Buddy' Bell represented this coterie of pro-white machine black politicians who kept control over black residents by acting as a philanthropist for the needy and bondsman for those who ran afoul of the law. Democratic Party operatives and street inspectors Joe Chunn and Harvey T. Bowman kept the fruits of patronage to themselves rather than distribute them when the two

¹⁴⁶ Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930*; Blee, *Women of the Klan*; MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry*.

¹⁴⁷ "Ku Klux Klan Defeated in E. St. Louis Election," *St. Louis Argus*, 10 September 1926, 1.

¹⁴⁸ "Negro Voters Organize for Coming Election," *ESLDJ*, 18 February 1926, 2; "Colored Ministers' Alliance Endorses Julius L. Marshall," *ESLDJ*, 18 March 1926, 8; "Clean Politics Goal of Negro Body Formed," *ESLDJ*, 10 March 1926, 1; "Negro Body To Fight Political Dictatorship," *ESLDJ*, 24 March 1926, 2; "Tuesday's Unofficial Vote of Republican Primary in East St. Louis," *ESLDJ*, 14 April 1926, 4.

padded the city payroll with the names of fictitious black laborers and shunted money allocated for hiring black residents into their own pockets.¹⁴⁹

Some black Republican and Democratic Party members realized the need to take steps to free their community from the hold of white machine boss politicians. They galvanized into action in 1925 when Commissioner of Health and Public Buildings John Connors fired Robert J. Miller, an African American janitor and Democratic ward boss since 1915, for improperly issuing a city license to a white carnival proprietor.¹⁵⁰ Upon learning of the Miller incident, black Republicans mobilized against party bosses, beginning with Fred Gerold who had boasted of having the black vote in his pocket. In 1926, William E. Officer, Jr., and other black Republicans founded political clubs, including the Republican Central Organization of St. Clair County, to counteract Gerold's power. With assistance from the Methodist Minister's Alliance and other black groups, the Republican Central Organization worked to elect friendly white precinct candidates, increase black representation in local and state offices, and bring an end to

¹⁴⁹ "City's Voting Strength to Be Near 28,000," *ESLDJ* 24 August 1924, 1, 3. Examples of local activism see "Widely Known Negro Buried With All Pomp at Command," *ESLDJ* 25 March 1924, 1, 8; "Kills Negress As Revenge for Turning Him Up," *ESLDJ*, 17 April 1924, 1; "Joe Hunt To Face Trial for Murder," *ESLDJ*, 18 April 1924, 1; "Negro Carnival Going Full," *ESLDJ*, 28 June 1923, 1; "Wife of Negro Politician," *ESLDJ*, 6 January 1925, 1; "Cook Charges Negro Padded City Payroll," *ESLDJ*, 24 September 1926, 1, 10-A.

¹⁵⁰ Newspaper did not quote black politician. "City Discharges Democratic Negro Boss," *ESLDJ*, 9 July 1925, 1; "Dismissal of Negro Boss Is Not Acted On," *ESLDJ*, 14 July 1925, 1; "Janitor Problem Unsolved as Connors Waits 2 Days Before Seeking Pay for Ousted Pair," *ESLDJ*, 4 August 1925, 1.

Gerold's reign. In 1928, after a two year long battle, black Republicans scored a victory when they and their allies dethroned Gerold.¹⁵¹

Black Democratic activists, operating from a weaker position than their Republican colleagues, learned from the municipal election of April 1926 the trouncing they had suffered at the hands of black Republicans. They had failed to win the African American vote when black Republicans had extolled their party as a friend of black people and attacked local Democrats, connecting them to national Democratic Party's support of the disfranchisement of black Southerners.¹⁵² Black Democratic politicians saw their bargaining position strengthen after their party bosses had been weakened in the April election.¹⁵³ In 1928, black Democratic Party workers increased their party's presence in their community by informing voters that a Ku Klux Klan member held a prominent campaign position at the city's Republican headquarters. Black Democratic candidates used the news of Klan-Republican Party relationship as a club over black Republicans and succeeded in making inroads into the traditionally Republican black vote in the 1928 election.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ "Gerold Is Routed from Payroll," *ESLDJ*, 15 April 1928, 1, 4.

¹⁵² "Candidates Are Invited Before Negro Club," *ESLDJ*, 1 April 1926, 2; "Negroes of 60th Precinct Form Campaign Club," *ESLDJ*, 5 April 1926, 3; "Candidates Are Present at Rally of G.O.P. Negroes," *ESLDJ*, 6 April 1926, 2; "Democratic Move Initiated To Ban City Hall Control of Party after G.O.P. Win," *ESLDJ*, 8 April 1926, 1, 2.

¹⁵³ "Negro Democrats To Hear Orator," *ESLDJ*, 30 August 1926, 2; "Democrats To Get Out Vote for Election," *ESLDJ*, 14 September 1926, 10; "Negro G.O.P. Rally Tonight," *ESLDJ*, 27 October 1926, 2; "Negroes Urged To Vote G.O.P. Ticket Nov. 2," *ESLDJ*, 29 October 1926, 1, 2; "Brennan Money Fails To Sway Local Negroes," *ESLDJ*, 1 November 1926, 2.

¹⁵⁴ "Results in Vote Here for Precinct Committee Posts," *ESLDJ*, 11 April 1928, 1, 2; "400 Negroes at Thompson Meet They Sponsor," *ESLDJ*, 9 September 1928, 1, 3; "Republicans To Get Going Full Blast at Once," *ESLDJ*, 18 September 1928, 1; "Negro

Black Democratic success in increasing the black vote for the Party between 1926 and 1928 also had much to do with the Paramount Democratic Organization, an all-black political machine organizationally independent of Democratic Party bosses. Paramount Democratic Organization (PDO) proved pivotal in tilting the dynamics of black East St. Louis's political culture toward the Democratic Party. The organization represented an African American political machine that combined party loyalty with independent operations within the black community. Horace Adams, founder and leader of the PDO, had migrated in 1920 from Corinth, Mississippi, to East St. Louis, switched his allegiance from the Republican to the Democratic Party, and embarked upon building a black Democratic organization. Adams criticized the local Republican Party for ignoring its black constituency and failing to fulfill its promises to black partisans. Adams saw an opening, perhaps when the Democratic Party took a trouncing in 1926, to increase black political strength by working with local Democratic bosses willing to exchange patronage for black votes. Adams, a staunch advocate of racial equality, working with friends shaped the PDO into a black political machine that retained its organizational independence even as it allied with the Democratic Party to end Republican Party dominance among black voters. The PDO also expanded its terrain of operation from its

Orator Is Speaker Here for Hoover and G.O.P.," *ESLDJ*, 18 September 1928, 12; "3,000 Attend Emancipation Day Ceremony," *ESLDJ*, 23 September 1928, 1, 3; "G.O.P. in City and County To Work Together," *ESLDJ*, 21 October 1928, 1, 2; "Negroes Won to G.O.P. at Night Rally," *ESLDJ*, 25 October 1928, 1, 7; "Robinson Appeals To Negroes," *ESLDJ*, 31 October 1928, 1, 2.

base in East St. Louis to across southern Illinois welding black people into a voting bloc in statewide elections.¹⁵⁵

In the national election of 1928, African Americans in several northern cities, including East St. Louis, moved noticeably in the direction of the Democratic Party, laying the foundation for what became in 1936 a “farewell to the party of Lincoln” on the part of black voters.¹⁵⁶ The PDO facilitated in this change, proving instrumental in directing the black vote toward the Democratic Party.¹⁵⁷ The organization received an unexpected boost when the detested Republican boss Fred Gerold strode through black precincts, demanding that residents vote Republican. Black Republicans voted Democratic as a rebuke to Gerold, bringing his political career to an abrupt end in 1929.¹⁵⁸

The PDO faced retribution from Republican bosses who saw an opportunity to disrupt the organization by ensnaring its founder Horace Adams in scandals that hinted of illegal activities. Adams, found guilty of perjury, was sentenced to a year at the federal penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas. Convinced that the Republicans had framed him,

¹⁵⁵ Lee Annie Bonner, and Lillian Parks, interviewed by author, 22 September 1999, East St. Louis. Bonner and Parks are daughters of Horace Adams.

¹⁵⁶ On African American voters deserting the Republican Party in 1936 see Nancy J. Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln: Black Politics in the Age of Lincoln* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983).

¹⁵⁷ On the political realignment of African Americans see Rita Werner Gordon, “The Change in the Political Alignment of Chicago’s Negroes during the New Deal,” *Journal of American History* 56 (December 1969): 584-603.

¹⁵⁸ “G.O.P. Leaders Point Out Need for Party Reorganization Here,” *ESLDJ*, 8 November 1928, 1, 2; “Gerold Deserted by 75 of 77 Members of G.O.P. Committee,” *ESLDJ*, 4 April 1929, 1, 2.

Adams, upon early release from prison, returned to East St. Louis in 1930, determined to reduce the Republican Party to insignificance among black voters.¹⁵⁹

Conclusion

African Americans in East St. Louis and indeed in numerous locales where outbreaks of mass racial violence had occurred between 1917 and 1922 struggled to overcome a fear that was the legacy of murderous anti-black assaults. They responded to such repression through various manifestations of the New Negro movement, including the conservative Universal Negro Improvement Association with its separatist vision, the racial egalitarian National Association for the Advancement of Colored People with its aggressive program of integration, and the black Marxist groups with their call for militant action and armed self-defense of black people against mass anti-black attacks. African Americans formed civic and political organizations and engaged in numerous projects that reflected differences of class, gender, and other social identities within their communities. In the political realm, black Americans stressed New Negro movement ideals such as control and a degree of independence in their relationships with

¹⁵⁹ “U.S. Indicts 4 Local Negroes in Bail Perjury,” *ESLDJ*, 17 May 1929, 1, the article claimed Adams worked not an insurance and real estate agent but as an embalmer for Charles T. Nash, also one of the accused; “Bondsmen to Serve 2 Years in U.S. Prison,” *ESLDJ*, 24 June 1929, 1; “Democrats Win 9 of 13 Posts in Board Election,” *ESLJ*, 2 April 1930, 1, 2; “Adams Funeral Date Not Set,” *ESLJ*, 19 April 1935, 2.

sympathetic organizations that were dominated or directed by white people or operated in a framework that do not solely emphasize black people's special interests.

African Americans in East St. Louis engaged in various forms of New Negro political expressions, for example, the UNIA, NAACP, and community groups. They showed a determination after the July massacre to rebuild their organizations. Black East St. Louisans had limited options. Workers were unable to advance after the collapse of the labor movement by 1922, and residents, cut off by segregation, remained isolated from white townspeople who shared similar interests in improving community life. Black people had to use protests, political clubs, and the precinct committee system to extract concessions and patronage from city leaders. They minimized, if not rejected, white attempts directly or through loyal African American operatives to dominate or channel black actions while taking care not to provide white townspeople an excuse to renew mass anti-black social violence. Black East St. Louisans succeeded in overcoming the fear and repression brought about by the mass racial violence of July 1917 by using New Negro notions of militant independence in reasserting black interests in electoral politics and through a new black political machine, the Paramount Democratic Organization, reorienting the black community from supporting the Republican Party to the Democratic Party. As the 1920s drew to a close, black residents realized that further social and political advancement and avoidance of possible outbreaks of racial violence depended upon forming interracial coalitions with labor unions and sympathetic white townspeople.

Chapter Six. To Break the Deadlock, 1930-1945

African American politics in East St. Louis fragmented during the national crises of the Great Depression and World War II. Black townspeople during the 1920s had undergone further social differentiation and had engaged in a range of political actions. Nevertheless, they maintained a degree of unity in the face of segregation by using their community institutions and the local Republican and Democratic parties as vehicles to obtain a share of city resources. Black townspeople through adroit use of the precinct committee system broke the restraints that the commission form of municipal government had imposed upon the scope of their activities. African American Democratic operatives significantly advanced black interests in city affairs after establishing the Paramount Democratic Organization (PDO), a black political machine that maintained a high level of institutional freedom within black precincts by adhering to the objectives set by the Democratic Party. Black East St. Louisans remained, however, aware of the legacy of the massacre of July 1917 that reminded them to avoid any semblance of political independence, a restriction that, with the notable exception of Chicago, was common in black urban areas around the nation.¹ But African Americans in East St. Louis, regardless of political perspective, reached an impasse in local politics;

¹ On black political machines, especially in Chicago, see Martin Kilson, "Political Change in the Negro Ghetto, 1900-1940s," in Nathan I. Huggins, Martin Kilson, Daniel M. Fox, eds., *Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 182-189.

they could be active in city affairs to improve their living conditions within the confines of segregation and white dominance.

The Great Depression, an unprecedented national, indeed international, economic catastrophe, that brought untold misery to millions of Americans paradoxically created the conditions that allowed African Americans to break the impasse in urban settings, including East St. Louis. The depression forced many Americans to look beyond the local and even the state level to the federal government for resources to end the depression. Black East St. Louisans turned to the federal government not only for their economic survival, but also to lessen the influence of local white politician-businessmen, especially those in the real estate faction, who used segregation to control the city.

Black East St. Louisans, like African Americans elsewhere, engaged in a wide range of social and political actions around issues such as employment and housing, in an effort to mitigate the harshness of segregation. African Americans more than ever before connected their protests to notions of equality. They formed alliances with regional and national organizations that offered at least the possibility of restoring economic prosperity. Some worked with the political left. Workers allied with unions, particularly those in the Congress of Industrial Organizations, to establish new integrated locals. Many participated in federal New Deal programs. Whatever the outcome of their various actions, black residents realized that by allying with forces outside the city, like the Democratic New Deal coalition and national labor unions, they sometimes succeeded in winning concessions they had been unable to secure from local officials.

Black East St. Louisans, however, were not alone among African Americans in knowing that their alliances with white dominated institutions and the federal government brought mixed results. Black people across the country, while expressing gratitude that the New Deal had saved them from total deprivation, simultaneously protested against the same New Deal programs that reinforced patterns of segregation and discrimination. Black workers found inclusion in labor unions, but they still confronted workplace segregation and discrimination and organized labor's general reluctance to challenge racism aggressively.

African Americans, backed by white allies, entered the Second World War years determined in the name of equality and democracy to dismantle the white dominated racial hierarchy. They connected grassroots struggles against segregation and discrimination to the national agenda of protecting democracy worldwide from fascism. But black East St. Louisans' battles to circumvent segregation or efforts to mount direct challenges to local white power during World War II were not met with mass racial violence that African Americans experienced in other cities, most notably Detroit in 1943.² Like other industrial cities East St. Louis absorbed the crush of black and white migrants, many coming from the South. Black civilians and military personnel chafed at the injustices they experienced in East St. Louis.³ The city's black workers tenaciously

² Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., and Martha Wilkerson, *Layered Violence: The Detroit Rioters of 1943* (Oxford, Miss.: University of Mississippi Press, 1991).

³ Black military men and women served in segregated units at Scott Field, located twenty miles east of East St. Louis. See, for example, "First Negro Squadron at Scott Field," *ESLJ*, 11 August 1942, 5; "Negroes Training at Scott Field," *ESLJ*, 25 January 1943, 3; "Negro WACs Assist in Recruiting Drive," *ESLJ*, 12 November 1944, 3. Though the author assumed otherwise, the evidence is silent about black military personnel fighting

pressed forth with anti-racist grievances. By all indications people expected East St. Louis to explode in racial violence, but that did not happen.

East St. Louis, well known for one of the most horrific racial massacres during the World War I era, did not descend into violence largely because of changes, ongoing since the July massacre, in the outlook of black and white leaders in political, business, labor, and civic organizations. They knew that their city totally depended upon outside entities like the federal government that were intolerant of mass racial violence. City officials realized that their town would not survive as a functioning municipality if racial conflict occurred. Black and white citizens hammered out an accord, an unintended blueprint for East St. Louis as had other cities in similar circumstances, for example, border region cities along the Ohio River, which maintained white domination and allowed white-guided black participation in city management.⁴ Some African American citizens benefited from this accord, but most, knowing that the bargain did not bring about equality, proceeded to build what was to become known as the postwar civil rights movement.

discrimination in East St. Louis during the war. C.L.R. James . . . et al., *Fighting Racism in World War II* (New York: Monad Press, 1980); Phillip McGuire, ed. *Taps for a Jim Crow Army: Letters from Black Soldiers in World War II* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-Clio, 1983); Martha S. Putney, *When the Nation Was in Need: Blacks in the Women's Army Corps during World War II* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1992); Neil A. Wynn, *The Afro-American and the Second World War*, 2nd ed. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1993).

⁴ Joe William Trotter, Jr., *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 141-143.

Hard Times and Government Relief

Millions of wage earners and their families sought ways to survive after losing their jobs as industrial production plummeted during the Great Depression.⁵ Many workers whose livelihoods depended upon railroads and industry endured economic hard times.⁶ As the Great Depression worsened in 1931, working people in Illinois turned to state agencies for economic assistance after city, county, and private agencies had depleted their resources for the unemployed and the destitute. Laid-off workers increasingly relied upon the Illinois Relief Commission's work programs for the unemployed. At least 700,000 Illinoisans on state food assistance in September 1932 hoping to avoid starvation looked to the General Assembly for new sources of relief.⁷

African Americans, some having lived under depression like conditions before the Great Depression, saw their already limited chances of earning a livelihood under systemic discrimination and segregation made even bleaker by the economic calamity.

⁵ Unfortunately, research through several subgroups of the Works Progress Administration papers at the National Archives, did not yield letters by black and white East St. Louisans describing their hardships during the Great Depression.

⁶ Duncan C. Smith, Aluminum Ore Company, to Colonel Horatio B. Hackett, Public Works Administration, Housing Division, December 6, 1934, Folder: "Project File H-4800," boxes 311-312, *Project Files (1933-1937), Records of the Public Housing Administration*, RG 196, Entry 2, National Archives at College Park, Md.

⁷ "City Must Raise About \$18,000 for Relief of Paupers," *East St. Louis Journal*, 12 July 1931, 1, 2, hereafter cited as *ESLJ*; "\$20,000,000 Bond Issue Drive on as Part of Emergency Relief Program," *ESLJ*, June 23, 1932, 1, 10; "1,000 to Work for 'Dole' to Help Beautify Parks," *ESLJ*, September 1, 1932, 1; "Governor Fears Fate of 700,000 Illinoisans," *ESLJ*, 6 September 1932, 1.

African Americans, who formed sixteen percent of East St. Louis's population in 1930, suffered disproportionately more than did white residents.⁸ Black city dwellers saw job opportunities diminish in the face of worsening employment discrimination that privileged white wage earners. Their efforts to secure jobs dwindled as African American Southerners, escaping from rural areas in hopes of finding employment, continued to move into the city. In 1932, eleven thousand out of sixteen thousand black residents, comprising twenty percent of the city's population, sought state relief.⁹ A high school graduate, black East St. Louisan Mattie Malone tersely described the depression as an extremely difficult, precarious time when her family's ability to survive depended solely upon public relief.¹⁰ An African American teenager, William Nash, who became a packinghouse worker upon leaving high school, recalled that black workers had greater difficulty finding jobs than did white residents, even in the iron, steel, and meatpacking industries that had traditionally hired African Americans.¹¹ The jobless continued to expand the city's relief rolls in 1933 even though the federal government, under the newly installed administration of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, provided massive economic assistance.¹²

⁸ Total population was 74,347. United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1930).

⁹ "7,909 St. Clair County Families Receiving Aid from State Fund," *ESLJ*, October 2, 1932, 4.

¹⁰ Mattie Malone, interviewed by author, September 21, 1999, East St. Louis.

¹¹ William Nash interview, 14 July 1986, tape 209, Illinois Labor History Society, *United Packinghouse Workers of America Interviews, 1979-1983* (SC 452), State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

¹² Illinois Emergency Relief Commission, *Annual Report, 1933-1934; Horner Papers*; Illinois State Historical Society Library, Springfield, Illinois; Elizabeth A. Hughes,

As the Great Depression deepened, people across the nation tapped into new sources of relief when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt committed the federal government to an active role in solving the economic crisis. Working people, preferring jobs to the dole, welcomed Roosevelt's New Deal programs. In 1933, a few thousand unemployed black and white people of East St. Louis and St. Clair County obtained public works jobs sponsored by the Civil Works Administration (CWA), one of the first of Roosevelt's New Deal relief agencies. In November, 2,205 men gained full-time employment with the CWA in the city and county, performing mostly road and levee maintenance. In 1934, jobless black men and women formed at least thirty percent of the area's public welfare cases.¹³ The anticipated number of unemployed workers seeking CWA jobs increased to four thousand even after eligibility requirements restricted applicants to those who qualified as "relief cases" based upon the needs of their families.¹⁴ In April, the number of city and county men on work relief increased to seven thousand persons who supported their families on the average CWA wage of \$23 a month.¹⁵ In January 1935, nearly thirty-five percent of the city's population required

Illinois Persons on Relief in 1935 (Chicago: Illinois Emergency Relief Commission, 1937), Tables 47 and 49.

¹³ "A Report on the Availability of the Services of the United States Employment Office to Negro Applicants in Chicago and East St. Louis, Illinois: August 1, 1936," part three, 5, Folder: "Survey—Illinois State Employment Service," *Reports of Investigators of Negro Unemployment and Public Placement Facilities for Negroes, 1937-39, Records of the Bureau of Employment Security*, RG 183, Entry 7, National Archives at College Park.

¹⁴ "Army of 2,205 Starts Work Here as Nation Opens Big Job Drive," *ESLJ*, November 20, 1933, 1; "Jobs for 5,585 Are Provided in New CWA Quota," *ESLJ*, December 10, 1933, 1; "Only Actually Needy to Be Given Jobs on New Work Relief Projects," *ESLJ*, March 14, 1934, 1.

¹⁵ "Work Relief Plan Will Furnish Jobs for 7,000 Men from List of Needy," *ESLJ*, April 8, 1934, 1.

economic assistance.¹⁶ The unemployed rushed to secure positions in work projects administered directly by the Works Projects Administration (WPA), established in 1935, to continue the work of the CWA.¹⁷

WPA proved to be a beacon of hope for African Americans on the edge of starvation and desperate for work. Black men formed part of the initial seven thousand-man workforce in the local WPA district who obtained jobs, digging ditches, grading and paving streets, improving sidewalks and parks, and maintaining levees and drainage canals.¹⁸ In 1936, eight hundred black women sewing comforters and remodeling old clothes constituted the East St. Louis WPA project as the nation's second largest program for black women after the one in New Orleans that involved one thousand black women workers.¹⁹ The WPA remained a major source of relief for black people in the East St. Louis district. In 1936, for example, 852 out of a total of 1,992 families on public relief were African American.²⁰ The number of unemployed men and women who found work through the WPA in the East St. Louis district increased to a new high in 1938, the year known as the Roosevelt recession, with 11,575 persons laboring in a variety of projects in

¹⁶ Duncan C. Smith, Aluminum Ore Company, to Governor Horner, January 14, 1935, Folder: "Housing," *Henry Horner Correspondence, 1933-1940*, RG 101.030, Illinois State Archives, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁷ "235 Families Are Rejected," *ESLJ*, 9 October 1936, 1.

¹⁸ "City Asking Five WPA Projects To Furnish Jobs for 7,000 Men," *ESLJ*, 6 September 1935, 1; "Two-Thirds of Employables [sic] To Get Work Soon," *ESLJ*, 25 October 1935, 2; "WPA Put 184 Persons To Work in St. Clair County," *ESLJ*, 10 November 1935, 1.

¹⁹ "City Asking Five WPA Projects To Furnish Jobs for 7,000 Men," *ESLJ*, 6 September 1935, 1; "Sewing Project To Employ 696," *ESLJ*, 7 January 1936, 1; "City Has Second Largest Project for Negro Women," *ESLJ*, 9 February 1936, 3. The East St. Louis WPA included black people from Brooklyn and Fireworks Station, an unincorporated suburban village of East St. Louis.

²⁰ "235 Families Are Rejected," *ESLJ*, 9 October 1936, 1.

the WPA district, which encompassed the counties of St. Clair, Madison, and Macoupin.²¹

The nation's youth also had been hit hard by the depression, and many feared that their future careers had been jeopardized by the economic catastrophe. Tens of thousands of American youth, especially young black people, found in the federal National Youth Administration (NYA), established in 1935, their only opportunity for obtaining jobs. NYA trained women and men in "traditional" gender jobs, such as needlework and sewing for the women, and woodcarving and handicrafts for the men.²² Black teenagers, however, experienced a higher rate of unemployment than their white counterparts largely because of discrimination and segregation. At times more black youth than white were enrolled in NYA programs. For example, in August 1937, 150 of the 294 NYA workers were African Americans.²³ In 1941, in anticipation of America's entry into the Second World War, the NYA expanded its program for black high school students to include more skills training, for example, power sewing for women and cabinet making, sheet metal work, machine shop practice, welding, and forging for men.²⁴

²¹ "WPA to Put 600 to Work," *ESLJ*, 17 January 1938, 1; Illinois State Commission on the Condition of the Urban Colored Population, "Transcripts: East St. Louis Proceedings, November 29, 1940," 146, microfilm 30-873, Illinois State Archives, Springfield, Illinois, hereafter cited as ISCCUCP, "Transcripts: East St. Louis Proceedings"; "Labor Market Report for East St. Louis, Illinois: October 7, 1941," p. 36, Folder: "Problem Areas: East St. Louis, Illinois, Survey," *Area Labor Market Reports, 1940-49: Illinois; Records of the Bureau of Employment Security*, RG 183, Entry 89.

²² "Negro Boys, Girls Are Enrolling in Classes," *ESLJ*, 22 March 1936, 6; "56-Hour Month for NYA Group," *ESLJ*, 9 August 1937, 4;

²³ "56-Hour Month for NYA Group," *ESLJ*, 9 August 1937, 4.

²⁴ "Labor Market Report for East St. Louis, Illinois, October 7, 1941," Folder: "Problem Areas: East St. Louis, Illinois, Survey," Box 99, *Area Labor Market Reports, 1940-49*,

The New Deal gave millions a chance to survive and retain a sense of dignity. Black resident Mattie Malone said that many families expressed gratitude after receiving federal relief in the form of jobs and welfare assistance.²⁵ Black East St. Louisan, Lee Annie (Adams) Bonner, daughter of Horace Adams, the founder and leader of the mass-based Paramount Democratic Organization, remembered how families saw New Deal programs as offering hope for ordinary working people, restoring their faith in the possibility of making an honest living.²⁶ WPA bricklayer Joe Ragland, for example, expressed renewed dignity in his work in 1937 when he set a new one day record, laying nearly 3,500 bricks an hour as he repaved a section of a street nine feet wide and seven hundred feet long.²⁷

African Americans, however, disapproved of the New Deal's reinforcing patterns of discrimination and segregation, often organizing protests against local administrators. In 1936, black people criticized the WPA and NYA for maintaining segregated programs such as the one that employed 565 black and 131 white women, working on the same sewing projects, but in separate facilities.²⁸ In 1938, black WPA workers protested when a local white WPA official proposed that they take private sector jobs that paid less than WPA jobs, considering the implementation of such a proposal the end of African

Illinois; Records of the Bureau of Employment Security, RG 183, Entry 89, National Archives Building.

²⁵ Mattie Malone, interviewed by author, 21 September 1999, East St. Louis.

²⁶ Lee Annie Bonner, interviewed by author, 22 September 1999, East St. Louis.

²⁷ "Negro WPA Worker sets 27,778 Bricks in a Day for Record," *ESLJ*, 14 March 1937, 1.

²⁸ "New Classes To Be Practical," *ESLJ*, 21 January 1934, 5; "Sewing Project To Employ 696," *ESLJ*, 7 January 1936, 1.

American economic advancement.²⁹ In 1939, black WPA laborers demanded that an administrator protect their jobs from white politicians who saw a chance to place their friends in WPA positions.³⁰ Black youth protested segregation within the NYA.³¹ From 1937 to 1941, they also made charges that their white counterparts received better training and job placement opportunities. They pressured the agency to convince employers to hire them for skilled industrial and clerical work and not the unskilled jobs that were offered to them.³² Black youth continued protesting against NYA segregated facilities in 1942.³³

²⁹ “WPA Director Would Abolish Relief Set-up,” *ESLJ*, 20 January 1938, 1, 2.

³⁰ Will Turner to Roosevelt, Jan. 24, 1939, Folder: “Illinois—Political Coercion, M-Z,” Box 1181, *Correspondence with State Administrators, Records of the Works Project Administration*, RG 69, Entry 610; D. Perry, President, East St. Louis NAACP to Harry L. Hopkins, September 1, 1936, Folder: “ILL—J-O,” Box 1279, Sherman Love to Col. F.C. Harrington, April 29, 1939, Folder: “ILL—A-,” Box 1184; James Gee to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 1, 1939, Folder: “ILL—A-Z, Jan-JE 1939,” Box 1280, *Correspondence with State Administrators, Records of the Works Projects Administration*, RG 69, Entry 693, National Archives at College Park.

³¹ “Ask Materials for NYA Class,” *ESLJ*, 2 June 1937, 12; “55 at Opening of NYA Meeting,” *ESLJ*, 9 June 1938, 1; “Prepare Negro NYA Center,” *ESLJ*, 17 October 1940, 5.

³² “Shortage of Skilled Labor Opens Training Chances for Young Men,” *ESLJ*, 7 March 1937, 1, 8; “Youth Advised to Organize, Demand Work,” *ESLJ*, October 1, 1940, 1, 2; “Prepared Negro NYA Center,” *ESLJ*, 17 October 1940, 5; “Report of Negro Activities, July 1, 1936-December 31, 1936,” Folder: “Illinois, 1936-1937,” *Records of the Director. Final Report of the Division Director’s File of Reports of State Directors of Negro Affairs, 1936-1939, Records of the National Youth Administration*, RG 119; ISCCUCP, “Transcripts: East St. Louis Proceedings,” 147, 169-170, 173; *Labor Market Report for East St. Louis, Illinois: October 7, 1941*, [36], Folder: “Problem Areas: East St. Louis, Illinois, Survey,” *Area Labor Market Reports, 1940-49: Illinois, Records of the Bureau of Employment Security*, RG 183, Entry 89.

³³ *Progress of Campaign against Race Discrimination: September 21, 1942*, p. 4, Folder: “533.21-533.225, 1942, Illinois,” *Classified State Files {1939-42}; Records of the Bureau of Employment Security*, RG 183, Entry 72.

Upsurge in Community Protests

African Americans knew that they had to mobilize community protests against seemingly intractable issues, including unemployment, substandard housing, inadequate education, and discriminatory healthcare. They agitated for a variety of reasons, mostly for the chance to make life better in their communities, but sometimes to build political awareness and hone leadership skills to challenge segregation. Black people involved in community protests in East St. Louis rarely found common ground with white residents either as individuals or members of sympathetic organizations. Those who used community institutions as a vehicle for change contemplated black independence from white control.

Community actions included “Don’t buy where you can’t work or shop in dignity” campaigns to force small business owners, particularly white entrepreneurs who operated within black communities, to hire unemployed African Americans. In September 1932, black East St. Louisans launched a boycott similar to those conducted in Baltimore, Harlem, and other cities. One of the actions they engaged in involved picketing white storekeeper Harry Soffer who had beaten a black man who allegedly had stolen green butter beans. Soffer ignored the pressure to hire black people.³⁴ Such

³⁴ “Negro Boycott Closes Store,” *ESLJ*, 19 September 1932, 2; “Grocer Says He Used Fists,” *ESLJ*, 20 September 1932, 10. On “Don’t Buy” campaigns elsewhere, see, for example, Andor Skotnes, “‘Buy Where You Can Work’: Boycotting for Jobs in African-

campaigns continued sporadically. For example, in 1940, social worker Annette Officer and other NAACP members led black residents in a “Don’t buy where you can’t work” boycott, picketing white storeowners who refused to hire black people.³⁵ Weldon Phillips, founder and leader of the Young Men’s Civic Club, joined the NAACP in demanding that white store owners hire black youth, boycotting one establishment that rejected protesters’ demands. Activists did succeed in getting employers to hire qualified black job seekers in five white owned stores. But according to long-term black resident Olga Wayne, most “don’t buy” boycotts failed.³⁶

Many African Americans in the politically charged 1930s connected their protests to improve life in black neighborhoods to notions of making American democracy work for black people. In 1933 some black Illinoisan women founded the Original Illinois Housewives Association, a non-profit entity headquartered in Chicago, to equip black housewives of all social classes with better household skills to “serve as power for an increased economic independence that makes for better living.” They declared their faith “in the democratic form of society” and regarded “equality of opportunity as the sacred guarantee of the democratic society to each and all of its members.”³⁷ Pinkie B. Reeves, state central committeewoman for black Republicans in the Twenty-second

American Baltimore, 1933-1934,” *Journal of Social History*, 27, 4 (Summer 1994), 735-761; Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, “*Or Does It Explode?*”: *Black Harlem in the Great Depression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 114-139.

³⁵ ISCCUCP, “Transcripts: East St. Louis Proceedings,” 129-131.

³⁶ ISCCUCP, “Transcripts: East St. Louis Proceedings,” 96-103; Olga Wayne, interviewed by author, 21 September 1999, East St. Louis.

³⁷ “The Original Illinois Housewives Association,” Box 038, *Negro in Illinois Papers*, Illinois Writers’ Project, Chicago Public Library, Chicago, Illinois. Statewide, the association had a peak membership of 50,000 in 1942.

Congressional District, in 1934, led a group of women in establishing an East St. Louis chapter of the Original Illinois Housewives.³⁸ The association pursued primarily social work and philanthropic activities, sponsoring, for example, lectures by representatives of the YWCA, the Red Cross, and other groups. The Original Illinois Housewives Association effected little social change in the economic arena as the Great Depression forced many members into unemployment but the organization provided the means for women to become political activists and community leaders.³⁹

East St. Louisan black women allied with black healthcare professionals and others to reverse the rapid decline in the quality of healthcare as the depression depleted city funds for public health programs.⁴⁰ Women activists made “their struggle for improved health conditions . . . part of a political agenda for black rights, especially the right to equal access to government resources.”⁴¹ They related health concerns to issues of housing, education, and employment and worked to secure moral, and ideally

³⁸ Using city directories and the list of East St. Louis chapter officers for 1940 and 1942, the author identified the occupations of either the women or their husbands: Pinkie (“Pinksey”) Reeves’s husband a laborer; president Maude Logan, husband an Illinois Central Railroad employee; assistant secretary Lillie Hunter, husband a packinghouse laborer; treasurer Carrie Brown, husband a carpenter; parliamentarian Irene Yancey, husband a factory fireman; member committee chair Katie McGinis, husband a porter; adult education committee chair Rose Hoard, husband a public school attendance officer; youth and environment committee chair Luaco Gladden, husband a teacher; community welfare committee chair Cora Hughes, husband Lincoln High School principal; courtesy committee chair Iota (J.R.) Connard [i.e. Conard], husband school janitor; music committee chair Altha Caldwell, a teacher; finance committee chair Lavader (Joseph A.) Marley, a teacher; national and international relations committee chair Maggie Woods, husband grocery and meats storekeeper.

³⁹ “The Original Illinois Housewives Association.”

⁴⁰ “Lack of Funds Holding Back Adequate Health Work in East St. Louis,” *ESLJ*, 22 January 1935, 1.

⁴¹ Susan L. Smith, *Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired: Black Women’s Health Activism in America, 1890-1950* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995).

financial, commitments from local, state, and federal officials.⁴² Concerned black women assisted the East St. Louis health department to contain outbreaks of smallpox and meningitis that closed schools and that threatened white residents.⁴³ They concentrated on lowering mortality and morbidity rates in those black neighborhoods where a CWA survey revealed a high correlation between contagious diseases and substandard, unsanitary housing.⁴⁴ In 1934, Elizabeth T. Nash, spouse of mortician Charles Nash, and others in the Colored Women's Welfare League started a free medical examination campaign for black children.⁴⁵ Leaguers sponsored their first "Better Babies" conference, similar to those held in other locales across the nation, to promote improved healthcare for infants and young children. In addition, the Colored Women's Welfare League along with the Visiting Nurse Association administered on-going vaccination programs for black children.⁴⁶ In 1935, African Americans in the Visiting Nurse Association organized weekly clinics dispensing nutritional advice to black mothers and children.⁴⁷ In September 1936, women activists convinced the school board to appoint an African American physician to serve black schools.⁴⁸ Mary Martin and her Old Folks Home Association began in 1937 providing educational programs on health,

⁴² See generally Smith, *Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired*.

⁴³ "Smallpox at Negro Center," *ESLJ*, 24 February 1935, 10; "Report 8 Cases of Smallpox in Negro District," *ESLJ*, 30 March 1939, 2; "Second Negro School Is Order Closed in Fear of Meningitis Spread," *ESLJ*, 23 March 1936, 1, 2.

⁴⁴ "Death Rate in Slum District Higher Than in Better Areas," *ESLJ*, 14 March 1934, 1.

⁴⁵ "Negro Health Drive Opened," *ESLJ*, 14 August 1934, 2.

⁴⁶ "Negro Better Babies Chosen," *ESLJ*, 26 September 1934, 3.

⁴⁷ "Negro Children Get Attention at VNA Clinic," *ESLJ*, 30 January 1935, 3.

⁴⁸ "Negro Doctor To Be Named by School Board," *ESLJ*, 4 September 1936, 3.

communicable diseases, and sanitation to parents and children.⁴⁹ In 1938, educator Maude Haynes and dietitian Annie Mae DeShields and others from various black civic and church groups, with the assistance of the WPA, offered free health clinics for children.⁵⁰

While women worked to bring healthcare to neighborhoods, local African American physicians, all men, pushed to improve access for black residents to medical services in white hospitals. Doctors knew of the indignities that expectant black mothers faced in having to travel to St. Louis for prenatal and postnatal care when the two East St. Louis hospitals, St. Mary's and Christian Welfare, refused to serve black maternity patients.⁵¹ In 1937, black physician Robert H. Beverly, a Governor Horner appointee for St. Clair County, reported that black residents of St. Clair County suffered from a "prevalence of tuberculosis . . . [and a] lack of hospitalization and even adequate medical care." Beverly noted that an estimated two-thirds of the county's African Americans were on relief while political and medical officials remained "in the financial throes of extreme stringency," making "ordinary hospitalization . . . a luxury to the St. Clair County Negro."⁵² Beverly's candid assessment galvanized black physicians to pressure local hospitals to provide comprehensive healthcare for African Americans.

Black physicians decided to position better health services as a political issue by pushing for nondiscrimination in providing quality healthcare. The doctors, however,

⁴⁹ Robert H. Beverley, *Negro Health in the State of Illinois* ([State Department of Public Health, 1937]), 32.

⁵⁰ "350 Children Vaccinated As New Clinic Is Opened," *ESLJ*, 18 January 1938, 4; "Free Clinics Next Week for Negro Children," *ESLJ*, 1 April 1938, 5.

⁵¹ Jeanne A. Faulkner, interviewed by author, 24 September 1999, East St. Louis.

⁵² Beverley, *Negro Health in the State of Illinois*, 2, 15-17.

suffered a setback in 1939 when the St. Clair County Medical Society denied membership to Nathaniel G. Hagler, W.H.A. Barrett, H.H. Weathers, Silas S. Woods, Edgar F. Woodson, and three other African American physicians. The society based its decision on its constitution, which restricted membership to “persons of the white race residing in St. Clair County.”⁵³ The eight doctors wanted the society to amend its constitution to eliminate race as a membership requirement. They sought membership because, as physicians unaffiliated with the county medical society, they had been barred from “state or national societies of physicians” and from obtaining “many state and Federal jobs.”⁵⁴

In 1940 some African American medical professionals, including Nathaniel Hagler, responding to inadequate healthcare services that marked a common feature of segregation, formed an association “to support construction and maintenance of a hospital” for African Americans.⁵⁵ In 1941, previously supportive city councilmen withdrew their backing of the hospital. Apparently physicians Barrett, Weathers, Wood, and Woodson had convinced councilmen and the mayor that the black hospital was unnecessary and did not meet “the standards maintained by St. Mary’s and Christian Welfare hospitals.”⁵⁶ Hagler persevered with his plans and in 1944 opened within his home a fifteen-bed hospital to provide maternity care for African American women.⁵⁷

⁵³ “Medics Ponder Negro Question,” *ESLJ*, 29 March 1939, 5.

⁵⁴ “Medics Fail to Admit Negroes,” *ESLJ*, 5 May 1939, 8.

⁵⁵ “Negro Hospital Day Is Set Next Saturday,” *ESLJ*, 17 September 1940, 5.

⁵⁶ “Negro Hospital Plan Rejected by City Council,” *ESLJ*, 14 February 1941, 3.

⁵⁷ “Dr. Hagler to Open New Hospital,” *ESLJ*, 2 April 1944, 28; “Here Is a Man Who Refuses to Admit He Is Defeated,” *ESLJ*, 9 April 1944, 7; “Negro Hospital to Open,” *ESLJ*, 3 May 1944, 5.

The Hagler and Barrett feud over the feasibility of a black hospital reflected local and national debates in the 1930s about whether African Americans needed to carve separate institutions to serve their interests within a segregated system or fight for inclusion in mainstream American life.⁵⁸ Hagler, in proposing a black owned hospital, advanced a separatist notion that black people needed to rely upon their own initiative in opposition to Barrett who took the integrationist view that African Americans received better care in white medical facilities. These healthcare debates represented the wider themes of politicized black medical care activism nationwide as black citizens struggled for their fair share of medical resources in face of segregation and scarce funding.⁵⁹

African Americans continued to agitate to improve living conditions within their segregated ghettos. Black East St. Louisans, said white Township Relief Officer John Rogers, connected their need for medical care to their dilapidated residences. Black social worker John Clark of the St. Louis branch of the National Urban League in a common refrain said that a lack of adequate housing was a major issue for black East St. Louisans. According to white registered electrician and building inspector C.E. McCarns, black tenants lived in the city's worst housing that happened to be owned by absentee landlords in St. Louis, Chicago, and Texas.⁶⁰ A group of visiting European housing experts saw in East St. Louis "the worst living conditions . . . in [the United States] or abroad."⁶¹

⁵⁸ An example of national level debates, much to the embarrassment and anger of the NAACP leadership, about using segregation to strengthen black institutions and communities is in a series of articles by W.E.B. Du Bois in *The Crisis* in 1934.

⁵⁹ Smith, *Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired*.

⁶⁰ John Clark, and John Rogers, and E.E. McCarns in ISCCUCP, "Transcripts: East St. Louis Proceedings," 6, and 19, and 165, 167.

⁶¹ "Housing Here Called 'Worst'," *ESLJ*, 14 September 1934, 1.

During the 1930s very few families had the means to make improvements to their dwellings, let alone construct new ones. In 1931, Cora Hughes, spouse of Lincoln High School principal John W. Hughes, led a local campaign of the Better Homes in America, a predominantly white national organization based in Washington, D.C., to beautify residences. As chairperson of the Better Homes department of the state association of clubs, Hughes enlisted civic minded black townspeople in beautifying their neighborhoods.⁶² Home improvement projects stalled as the Great Depression deepened.

Housing became a major political issue in 1934, when the East St. Louis Housing Board, the United States Public Housing Administration (PHA), and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), clearly intending to maintain residential segregation unveiled a proposal for the construction of two low rise housing projects, one for black and the other for white people.⁶³ These agencies labeled many districts where many black residents resided as slums, planning to replace existing housing units, but not build additional residences.⁶⁴ Their plan had the potential to reduce further already severely limited housing options for African Americans as long as segregation restricted them to certain areas. In October 1934, chairman of the East St. Louis Housing Board C.E. Jenks informed Director of Housing of FEA Colonel Horatio B. Hackett that the board opposed the black housing project. Jenks tried to persuade Hackett to drop plans

⁶² “Negroes Work for Better Conditions in Local Homes,” *ESLJ*, 12 March 1931, 2.

⁶³ On segregated housing during the Great Depression see, for example, Joe William Trotter, Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 175-184; Trotter, *River Jordan*, 140.

⁶⁴ H.B. Hackett to Col. C.E. Jenks, August 1, 1934, Oliver C. Winston to Robert B. Mitchell, September 21, 1934, Winston to Mitchell, September 21, 1934, Folder: “Project File H-4800,” *Project Files (1933-1937), Records of the Public Housing Administration*, RG 196, Entry 47, National Archives at College Park.

for the black project, arguing that such housing attracted more black southern migrants to the city, rapidly boosted the black population, drained city and county relief funds, and increased black political strength. Perhaps not wanting to alienate African Americans in the New Deal coalition, Hackett rejected the board's arguments.⁶⁵

In 1935, East St. Louis NAACP chapter mobilized to pressure federal agencies to continue with plans for constructing two housing projects.⁶⁶ Though the NAACP stood for integration, the organization thought new segregated housing preferable to no housing for black people. Local black attorney for the chapter Louis Orr informed Director of the Public Works Administration's Housing Department Angelo R. Class that African Americans faced special hardships in a racially segregated housing market. Orr had heard that local planners, under the guise of slum clearance, wanted to build the white housing project in a black district, displacing black homeowners without providing alternative housing for them.⁶⁷ The association persisted over five years in reminding federal officials that they had a responsibility to provide housing for African Americans.

⁶⁵ Jenks to Hackett, "Personal," October 5, 1934, Jenks to Hackett, Federal Emergency Administration, October 17, 1934, Folder: "Project File H-4800," *Project Files (1933-1937)*, *Records of the Public Housing Administration*, RG 196, Entry 47.

⁶⁶ Duncan Smith to Hackett, December 6, 1934, Hackett to Smith, December 13, 1934, Smith to Hackett, January 10, 1935, G.E. Fischer to B.M. Pettit, May 4, 1935, Folder: "Project File H-4800," Boxes 311-312, *Project Files (1933-1937)*, *Records of the Public Housing Administration*, *Records of the Public Housing Administration*, RG 196, Entry 47.

⁶⁷ Louie F. Orr of East St. Louis NAACP to A.R. Clas, PWA Housing Dept., September 20, 1935, Folder: "Project File H-4800," boxes 312, *Project Files (1933-1937)*, *Records of the Public Housing Administration*, *Records of the Public Housing Administration*, RG 196, Entry 47.

Fortunately for black townspeople, the United States Housing Authority announced in 1940 that funding was available for the construction of both housing projects.⁶⁸

Federally sponsored housing emerged as a racially contested affair, not only in East St. Louis, but also in other locales like Milwaukee, as black and white people bitterly debated the locations of the housing projects in segregated cities.⁶⁹ Though politician-businessmen in the East St. Louis Real Estate Exchange must have known, residents did not realize the extent that the federal Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) reinforced segregation in the housing market. HOLC had written off large sections of the East St. Louis comprised mainly of low income black and white working class residences. The corporation refused to extend loans to improve homes in such districts.⁷⁰ Since the agency rated housing in low income white districts slightly higher than that in black areas, white people became more vigilant in maintaining segregated neighborhoods. White residents feared lower property values and reacted negatively to possible plans for a black housing project in a white district. In early 1941, a committee comprised of white homeowners living next to the site of the proposed black housing project protested.⁷¹ City leaders rushed to calm committee members and white

⁶⁸ “USHA Approved of Housing Sites Recorded,” *ESLJ*, 30 September 1940, 1.

⁶⁹ Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*, 183-184.

⁷⁰ “Security Ar[e]a Map Folder of Metropolitan St. Louis in Illinois: October 15, 1940,” Folder: “Metropolitan St. Louis in Illinois: Security Area Descriptions,” and “Map,” Folder: “Metropolitan St. Louis in Illinois: Security Map and Area Descriptions,” *Records Relating to the City Survey File, 1935-40, Records of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, Home Owners’ Loan Corporation*, Record Group 195, Entry #39, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. For discussion of the impact of HOLC ratings on municipalities see Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

⁷¹ “Negro Housing Site Draws Protests,” *ESLJ*, 5 March 1941, 1.

townspeople generally. Unlike officials in Detroit and elsewhere, East St. Louis planners avoided racial violence by demanding that the government locate each housing project deep within its appropriate segregated zone.⁷² In 1943, after eight years of controversy and protests, 153 black and 264 white families moved into the John Robinson Homes and Samuel Gompers Homes for black and white residents respectively.⁷³ But the federal government never committed itself to provide housing to all who needed it and assigned housing a low priority during the Second World War. For most black East St. Louisians and a significant number of white townspeople, segregated, overcrowded substandard housing remained the norm.⁷⁴

In another form of community action black East St. Louisians continued their long tradition of agitation around the issue of public schools, segregated since the 1870's when black children were first permitted to attend public schools. Most did not challenge the segregated school system, considering black public schools community institutions that they used to celebrate African American culture and history and secure jobs for black people.⁷⁵ Residents mobilized to force the school board to allocate resources and

⁷² Thomas J. Sugrue, "Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940-1964," *Journal of American History*, 82 (September 1995): 551-578.

⁷³ "Housing Units Completed," *ESLJ*, 11 March 1943, 1, 2.

⁷⁴ "Permanent Public Housing Projects Accommodating . . . Negro Families (As of August 31, 1943)," Folder: "Special Lists, Racial, 1938-57," *Intergroup Relations Branch, 1936-63, Records of the Public Housing Administration*, RG 196, Entry 47; Simon Stickgold and Rubin Cohn, "Negro Housing Problems," *Research Memorandum no. 4* (Springfield: Illinois Interracial Commission, 1943), 14.

⁷⁵ "Negroes Observe History Week at Dunbar School," *ESLJ*, 21 February 1932, 2; "Lincoln School Is Rated High," *ESLJ*, 17 December 1933, 25; "Negro Schools To Stage Field, Literary Meet," *ESLJ*, 21 May 1936, 10.

funding equally between black and white schools and to correct problems such as overcrowding.⁷⁶

In 1931, parents and education professionals used an outside agency, the Illinois State Committee of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, as leverage in their protests to pressure the school board to address the inadequacies of the physical plant at the black Lincoln High School, in particular its library, laboratory, and instructional equipment. The committee had criticized the Board of Education for perpetuating substandard conditions at the high school and for threatening to revoke accreditation for Lincoln High that raised the possibility of leaving black students without a high school.⁷⁷ In September, at least two hundred African American parents besieged the board during one of its meetings and denounced school officials' proposal to save Lincoln by sending students to Lincoln School Annex that the board had established to circumvent state penalties. Protestors, calling the annex a firetrap, demanded physical improvements in all the city's black schools.⁷⁸ In 1936, black parents decided that even further action was needed to rectify the problems when they—and white townspeople—learned that the accrediting association in its April 1936 re-evaluation rated both black

⁷⁶ "School Enrollment Here Increases 435 in Year," *ESLJ*, 8 May 1931, 1, 2; "Public School Enrollment Shows Gain Over Year Ago," *ESLJ*, 5 March 1933, 16; "260 Negro High Pupils Without Place to Attend," *ESLJ*, 9 August 1935, 8; "Potts Reports Lincoln School Is Overcrowded," *ESLJ*, 8 January 1937, 3; "More Negroes Going to School," *ESLJ*, 11 October 1937, 5; "Hold Caucus on Negro Enrollment," *ESLJ*, 17 May 1939, 5.

⁷⁷ "Local Lincoln (Negro) High Under Suspension as College Credit School After a Probe," *ESLJ*, 12 February 1931, 1, 6; "Inspector's Report Caused School Action," *ESLJ*, 13 February 1931, 1, 2; "Unsatisfactory Conditions at Lincoln High School Divulged by Two Local Board Members," *ESLJ*, 22 February 1931, 2.

⁷⁸ "200 Negroes at Board Meet Issue Ultimatum, They'll Not Sent Tots to Annex Building," *ESLJ*, September 4, 1931, 1, 3.

and white high schools dirty, crowded, and deficient.⁷⁹ African American residents again demanded action, knowing the school board's history of first serving the needs of its white constituency. In August, black parents rejected the board's plans to send at least seventy-eight students to high school in neighboring Brooklyn because of the distance that schoolchildren had to travel and because Brooklyn High School lacked state accreditation.⁸⁰

Black residents by 1940 began debating the value of maintaining segregated schools where black students lacked access to vocational and technical training programs that led to job opportunities in industrial firms retooling for war production. Their assessment that the school board treated black people as second class citizens was confirmed when white school superintendent D. Walter Potts admitted that segregation prevented black students from enrolling in special courses offered only at the white schools. In addition, local administrators' prioritization of National Defense Program funding to white schools offered proof that city officials maintained unequal education for black students through segregation, with federal acquiescence. Black townspeople decided that if they wanted better schools, they needed to agitate for educational equality through desegregation.⁸¹

⁷⁹ "High Schools Here Are Called 'Dirty, Crowded' by State Education Men," *ESLJ*, 26 April 1936, 1, 2.

⁸⁰ "State Takes Up School Problem in District 182," *ESLJ*, 2 August 1936, 2.

⁸¹ ISCCUCP, "Transcripts: East St. Louis Proceedings," 6, 77, 84-86, 158.

Forging Alliances with the Political Left and Organized Labor

The national crisis created by the Great Depression opened up new possibilities to challenge the inequities brought about by segregation, if not segregation itself. African Americans knew that community protests alone did not ameliorate economic hard times and often simultaneously engaged in other forms of action. Some, for example, worked with the political left either because they thought that the Great Depression indicated a failed capitalist economy or because they agreed with Communists and socialists that economic relief, full employment, improved working and living conditions, and an end to racism were attainable. Perhaps some African Americans thought that the political left offered the possibility of independent black political action.⁸² Others, black workers, used the trade union movement not only to win job security, but also to advance their interests in the political arena, given labor's historical voice in city affairs.

African Americans took notice of the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA), a predominantly white organization which viewed them, given their status as the most exploited and oppressed people within the American working class, most capable of advancing workers' interests.⁸³ Black people noted the CPUSA's militant

⁸² Nell Irvin Painter, *The Narrative of Hosea Hudson: His Life as a Communist* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979; Naison, *Communists in Harlem during the Depression*.

⁸³ Various issues of the Communist Party's newspaper, *The Daily Worker*, from 1930 to 1934.

anti-racist stance, particularly evident in its successful legal defense of the Scottsboro Boys, nine black Alabaman teenagers, accused of raping a white woman.⁸⁴ African Americans saw the party's zeal for racial equality when the organization placed black members in the leadership of interracial unemployment councils. In 1934, for example, black laborer Walidad Wilson became a leader of unemployed councils in the industrial Tri-Cities area, comprising the small towns of Granite City, a sundown town where black people had been forbidden to remain overnight, Madison, and Venice, all located several miles north of East St. Louis.⁸⁵

Politician-businessmen and city authorities made clear their repugnance of the Communist Party, which they regarded as an enemy of industrial capitalism. City officials harassed Communists for distributing literature, holding rallies, and demanding that City Hall increase its relief program for laid-off workers.⁸⁶ Local leaders, worried by the Communist Party's frequent calls for interracial working class solidarity and equality, seized every opportunity to disrupt Communist rallies and meetings where black and white people assembled. For example, in February 1931, police and park officials broke up an unemployment rally that had attracted a "large crowd of Negroes,

⁸⁴ Dan T. Carter, *Scottsboro: A Tragedy of the American South*, rev. ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979).

⁸⁵ "Communists Confer," *ESLJ*, 26 June 1934, 1. Granite City in "East St. Louis, Illinois, Area Report: September 30, 1944," 53, Folder: "Serial Letter, Region VI," *Field Operations Division Community Reports, 1941-1945: Region VI, Illinois-Wisconsin, Records of the Office of Community War Services*, Record Group 215, Entry 55, National Archives at College Park. On sundown towns in Illinois and other states see James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: New Press, 2005).

⁸⁶ "Communists Put Out Literature," *ESLDJ*, 25 March 1930, 2; "Recognize Communism and Destroy It," *ESLDJ*, 26 March 1930, 4.

interspersed with whites” at Lincoln Park located deep within the city’s main black district. The police continued to arrest white Communists who delivered speeches in black neighborhoods through November.⁸⁷

City Hall’s harassment of Communists reached a crescendo in December 1931 when police arrestees included for the first time local black Communists. A police raid on a private residence netted sixteen persons, including five black men and four black women. The police, using tear gas for the first time in East St. Louis, received much notoriety when several officers required medical attention after inhaling the gas and one died from a heart attack during the raid.⁸⁸ The event caught the attention of one national publication, the *Nation*, which condemned the police for violating “the constitutional right of . . . fellow-citizens peaceably to assemble.”⁸⁹ Undeterred, Mayor Frank Doyle, Police Chief James Leahy, and other officials vowed to end Communist agitation, with violence if necessary. Policemen in a show of force armed with riot guns patrolled the street in front of the courthouse where the sixteen arrestees stood trial. Authorities failed to intimidate a crowd of primarily black people from holding rallies and packing the courtroom in support of Communist Party members and supporters. Clearly city officials

⁸⁷ “Police Prevent Communist Meet,” *ESLJ*, 26 February 1931, 1, 2; “Police Disperse Communists Here at Evening Raid,” *ESLJ*, 8 November 1931, 1; “Four Communists Seized As Police Break Up Meeting,” *ESLJ*, 29 November 1931, 4-C; “East Saint Louis, Ill., Workers Are Released,” *The Daily Worker*, December 3, 1931, 2.

⁸⁸ “Artery Ailment Cause of Detective Combs’ Fatal Collapse During ‘Red’ Raid,” *ESLJ*, 13 December 1931, 1; “East St. Louis Police Kill Own Man in Raid on Jobless,” *The Daily Worker*, December 17, 1931, 1, 3; “Police Used Poison Gas in Raid Friday,” *The Daily Worker*, 19 December 1931, 5.

⁸⁹ C.R.F. Smith, “East St. Louis Studies Americanism,” *Nation*, 9 March 1932, 283-284.

and the police wanted to prevent any “attempt to organize Communism among the Negro residents.”⁹⁰

African American laborers worked with Communists, accepting their support in labor disputes.⁹¹ For example, in May 1933, black women workers, who comprised the majority of the two hundred nut pickers at the East St. Louis branch of the Funsten Nut Company, welcomed Communist endorsement when they struck for higher wages. Twenty individuals, including nine Communists, marched outside the factory in support of the women strikers, calling upon the nut pickers to “strike against starvation wages.” The workers won a sixty per cent pay increase from two dollars to three dollars a week. Authorities worried about the possibility of a strong black worker-Communist alliance, which had developed at the Funsten factories in St. Louis, Missouri, taking root in East St. Louis, arrested nine demonstrators, including African American domestics Rose Palmer and Addie Carum and black laborer Mack Sheppard.⁹² In 1934, a black worker-Communist alliance emerged at the East St. Louis Funsten factory. Two hundred nut pickers, now members of the Trade Union Unity League (TUUL), a Communist organized labor union, struck over the issue of open shop versus union shop when

⁹⁰ “City Officials Determined To Curb Reds Here,” *ESLJ*, 13 December 1931, 1; “Communists in Mass Meet Threat at the City Hall,” *ESLJ*, 30 December 1931, 1; “15 Communists on Trial,” *ESLJ*, 22 December 1931, 1, 2; “14 Alleged Communist To Be Tried,” *ESLJ*, 23 December 1931, 2. Unfortunately, the sources did not name the black Communists.

⁹¹ For example, see Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*.

⁹² “Police Halt ‘Parade’ at Nut Factory,” *ESLJ*, 24 May 1933, 1; “Strike Appeal Marching Case To Be on June 8,” *ESLJ*, 1 June 1933, 10. For the black worker-Communist alliance at the Funsten Nut Company factory in St. Louis, see Paul Dennis Brunn, “Black Workers and Social Movements of the 1930s in St. Louis,” Ph.D. diss., Washington University, 1975.

managers refused to collect money from several black TUUL members who for unknown reasons had not paid their union dues.⁹³ The nut pickers remained on strike for two weeks before returning to work without a settlement.⁹⁴ The workers lost their jobs when Funsten decided to close its East St. Louis operations in 1935.⁹⁵ African Americans drew from the Funsten incident the lesson that a black worker-Communist Party alliance yielded few gains and concluded that they had better opportunities for success working with mainstream trade unions.⁹⁶

Black workers, at least to a certain extent in East St. Louis, had long regarded labor unions as a vehicle for improving their working conditions and, given labor's participation in local government, for bolstering their political voice. They became interested, more than ever, in joining the labor movement under the impact of the Great Depression, the pro-union administration of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and militantly aggressive unionizing campaigns. Black and white workers began unionizing in earnest in 1933 when the Roosevelt administration implemented the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), which through its Section 7(a) acknowledged workers' right to bargain collectively to gain higher wages and improve working conditions. The administration calculated that a unionized workforce with the means of obtaining higher wages had the potential of reviving a lagging consumer based national economy. Union

⁹³ "Women Strike at Nut Factory," *ESLJ*, 15 March 1934, 1; "See Settlement in Nut Strike," *ESLJ*, 16 March 1934, 1.

⁹⁴ "Strike of Nut Pickers Ended," *ESLJ*, 29 March 1934, 1.

⁹⁵ "Nut Factory Drops Corporation Papers," *ESLJ*, 1 December 1935, 7.

⁹⁶ Brunn, "Black Workers and Social Movements of the 1930s in St. Louis"; Keith P. Griffler, *What Price Alliance?: Black Radicals Confront White Labor, 1918-1938* (New York: Garland, 1995).

organizers in the East St. Louis district hoped to increase the number of unionized workers from five percent of the wage earning population to a much higher level.⁹⁷ Employees remained undeterred that the NIRA lacked the provisions to enforce the right to collective bargaining. They realized that managers at Aluminum Ore (Aluminum Company of America or Alcoa), East St. Louis Casting Company, Southern Malleable Iron Company, Lewin Metals Company and other factories refused to recognize unions and fired employees who agitated for unions.⁹⁸ Workers responded to managers' intransigence in 1934 with waves of strikes that rocked Obear-Nestor Glass Company, Aluminum Ore Company, and other East St. Louis area industrial firms.⁹⁹ In 1936, working people lost Section 7(a) as a support when the United States Supreme Court ruled the NIRA and NRA unconstitutional in that they delegated legislative power to the executive branch. But by then workers were committed to forming labor unions.

American workers in the mid to late 1930s unionized in large numbers, especially in the mass production industries. They received encouragement when President Roosevelt and his congressional allies passed the National Labor Relations Act of 1935

⁹⁷ "Labor Unions Move To Organize Plants Under Industrial Bill," *ESLJ*, 25 June, 1933, 1; "Alcoa Employees Discuss Union," *ESLJ*, 9 July 1933, 2; "Nesbit Urges Alcoa Employees to Form Union," *ESLJ*, 13 July 1933, 1; "Packing House Workers Meet," *ESLJ*, 23 July 1933, 1.

⁹⁸ "Factories Have Probed by U.S.," *ESLJ*, 25 July 1933, 1; "Federal Agent Will Probe Labor Trouble in East St. Louis," *ESLJ*, 20 August 1933, 1, 7; "Labor Agreements to Follow Conferences with U.S. Agent in East St. Louis Industries," *ESLJ*, 23 August 1933, 1, 2.

⁹⁹ "Workers Rap Rules in Code," *ESLJ*, 22 May 1934, 2; "Seek to Settle Bottle Blowers Union," *ESLJ*, 12 August 1934, 1; "Workers at Aluminum Ore Plant Here Join Nation-Wide Walk Out," *ESLJ*, 12 August 1934, 1, 2; "Malleable Iron To Close Plant," *ESLJ*, 7 September 1934, 18; "\$625,000 Pay Increase to Stockyards Workers in East St. Louis Area," *ESLJ*, 25 September 1934, 1.

that established the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and provided for the protection of workers' rights to unionize. From 1936 into 1940, East St. Louis area black and white workers struck for union recognition among other demands.¹⁰⁰ The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) led unionizing drives in a number of occupations, most notably in steel manufacturing and meatpacking. Even the American Federation of Labor (AFL), which preferred organizing skilled craft workers, threw its energy into unionizing mass production industries. By 1941, trade unionists representing the AFL, CIO, and a few independent unions had organized at least forty-nine of the fifty-five major East St. Louis area industrial firms, including the Aluminum Ore Company, Armour and Company, Morris and Company, Obeare-Nester Glass Company, and St. Louis National Stock Yards Company. The AFL unionized thirty-six of these companies and split jurisdiction with the CIO at three others. CIO unions became exclusive bargaining agents at seven plants, including the major meatpackers, except for Swift and Company, where the majority of workers had voted in the AFL.¹⁰¹ By 1944, the AFL through its local

¹⁰⁰ ISCCUC, "Transcripts: East St. Louis Proceedings," 116-117; "Mephram Paint Workers Strike for Higher Pay," *ESLJ*, 6 September 1936, 1; "A.F.L., C.I.O. Test at Polls Here Tomorrow," *ESLJ*, 1 August 1937, 1, 4; "American Steel Plant Closed When 600 C.I.O. Members Walk Out," *ESLJ*, 13 September 1937, 1, 2; "Ask Aluminum Ore Election," *ESLJ*, 13 February 1938, 1; "30 Employees at 8 Lumber Yards Out on Strike," *ESLJ*, 26 April 1938, 1; "Certain-teed Strike Enters Second Month," *ESLJ*, 8 May 1938, 2; "1,400 Armour Workers Strike," *ESLJ*, 30 November 1938, 1; "Terms Reached, Laundry Strike Is Called Off," *ESLJ*, 18 June 1939, 2; "Workers Strike Monsanto Plant," *ESLJ*, 2 October 1939, 1; "Armour Union Pact Announced for Plant Here," *ESLJ*, 21 February 1940, 1; "Aluminum Ore Plant Strike Is Settled," *ESLJ*, 1 December 1940, 1, 2.

¹⁰¹ "Labor Market Report for East St. Louis, Illinois, October 7, 1941," Folder: "Problem Areas: East St. Louis, Illinois, Survey," *Area Labor Market Reports, 1940-49: Illinois, Records of the Bureau of Employment Security*, RG 183, Entry 89, National Archives at College Park, Md. Brief discussion on CIO dominating among packinghouse workers

affiliation, the Central Trades and Labor Union of East St. Louis, had 18,000 members in seventy-one locals. The CIO represented 6,000 workers organized through its local affiliate, the Industrial Union Council.¹⁰²

Black wage earners proved instrumental in organizing CIO and AFL unions, participating in strikes as leaders as well as rank and filers. They favored the CIO over the AFL because the former practiced industrial unionism, organizing all workers at a worksite, and called upon workers to overcome racial divisions.¹⁰³ African American workers applauded the CIO's special efforts to win their confidence.¹⁰⁴ Black workers often succeeded in organizing under the CIO where they formed a significant percentage of the workforce, for example, the United Packing House Workers union at Armour and Company and the International Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers union at Lewin-Mathes Company, a manufacturer of metal products and copper ingots and tubing. According to black packinghouse worker Rusha Durr, union representative of Local 42 of the CIO packinghouse workers union, African Americans comprised sixty percent of the Packinghouse Workers' Organizing Committee membership. Black workers joined AFL unions in plants where they did not constitute a critical mass, for instance, the United

except in East St. Louis and Kansas City, Missouri, in Rick Halpern, *Down on the Killing Floor*, 183.

¹⁰² "East St. Louis, Illinois, Area Report: September 30, 1944," 53, Folder: "Serial Letter, Region VI," *Field Operations Division Community Reports, 1941-1945: Region VI, Illinois-Wisconsin, Records of the Office of Community War Services*, Record Group 215, Entry 55, National Archives at College Park.

¹⁰³ Nash interview.

¹⁰⁴ "C.I.O. Begins Organization of Packing Plants," *ESLJ*, 18 May 1937, 1, 2; "C.I.O. Plans New Drive in Packing Plants," *ESLJ*, October 26, 1937, 2; William Davinroy interview, 15 July 1986, tape 214, John Condellone and John Matikitis interview, 17 July 1986, tape 220, Illinois Labor History Society, *United Packinghouse Workers of America Interviews, 1979-1983* (SC 452).

Brick and Clay Workers of America at the Hill Brick Company of East St. Louis and Chemical Workers Union at Monsanto Chemical.¹⁰⁵

Black wage earners realized, however, that their involvement with the labor movement delivered limited results. They gained opportunities for material advancement, won union protection, held leadership positions at interracial locals, increased their numbers within the mass production industries, and received strong commitments for civil rights from militant, particularly socialist and Communist, trade union organizers and officials. But in some union locals black workers faced antagonistic white workers who regarded their move toward racial equality at the workplace as a threat to white entitlement to better jobs and higher pay. Besides, some unions, especially AFL affiliates, still barred black workers from membership.¹⁰⁶ Carpenters Joseph B. Preston and Ben Halpert, for example, had attempted several times to join an AFL union only to be rebuffed. In response, Preston, Halpert, and others founded the Illinois Craftsmen's Association to protect their interests as skilled black workers.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ "Labor Market Report for East St. Louis, Illinois, October 7, 1941," Folder: "Problem Areas: East St. Louis, Illinois, Survey," *Area Labor Market Reports, 1940-49: Illinois, Records of the Bureau of Employment Security*, RG 183, Entry 89; Rusha Durr, ISCCUCP, "Transcripts: East St. Louis Proceedings," 116.

¹⁰⁶ *Progress of Campaign Against Race Discrimination: September 21, 1942*, 5, Folder: "533.21—533.225: 1942: Illinois," *Classified State Files {1939-42}*, *Records of the Bureau of Employment Security*, RG 183, Entry 72, National Archives at College Park.

¹⁰⁷ ISCCUCP, "Transcripts: East St. Louis Proceedings," 13, 50-55, 61, 64, 67, 105-115, 121-126, 148-149; Wayne interview.

Joining the National Democratic Party Coalition

African Americans in the North through electoral politics forced both the Republican and Democratic parties to court their vote. Most black voters for historical reasons backed the Republican Party, especially in national elections. But urban black support for the Democratic Party slowly, but steadily increased, becoming significantly apparent by the late 1920s when African American voted Democratic in a number of cities, including New York City. African Americans showed greater interest in the Democratic alternative as the Republican Party proved incapable of ending the Great Depression. Both black Republican and Democratic politicians in East St. Louis saw the need to turn out the black vote in the contested presidential election of 1932 as President Herbert Hoover and Democratic challenger Franklin Roosevelt debated the extent of federal involvement in managing the national economy and providing work relief.

African Americans allied with the Republican Party reminded black voters that any support for the Democratic Party, which had a significant base among white southern segregationists, meant an endorsement of continued oppression of African Americans in the Jim Crow South.¹⁰⁸ Black Republicans often raised the specter of white southern Democrats, who had disproportionate influence in their party, to deflect African

¹⁰⁸ “Negroes Organize Political Group,” *ESLJ*, 24 February 1932, 10; “Negro Democrats Open Headquarters,” *ESLJ*, 28 February 1932, 3; “Mrs. Perry Named District Leader of G.O.P. Negro Body,” *ESLJ*, 7 September 1932, 8.

American criticism of President Herbert Hoover's dismal economic policy that impeded working people's efforts to survive the depression.

But black Democratic operatives reminded potential voters that Hoover's strategy to win white Southerners away from the Democratic Party meant that he did not have black people's interests at heart. They cited the President's glaring political insults toward African Americans in two symbolic incidents. The first involved Hoover's insensitivity to black Gold Star Mothers who were segregated from white Gold Star Mothers when both groups traveled together on an ocean liner to France for commemorative events for their sons who had died in World War I battles. The second Hoover insult occurred when the President's spouse, fearing to upset wives of white Southern congressional senators and representatives, did not invite the wife of Oscar De Priest, a black congressman from Chicago, to a White House function. Black Democrats used the events to claim that President Hoover took the traditionally Republican black vote for granted. They were confident of a majority of black East St. Louisans voting Democratic, especially as the black political machine, the Paramount Democratic Organization (PDO), had been patiently building a base for the Democratic Party since the mid-1920s.¹⁰⁹ The PDO saw its efforts come to fruition when black people pushed Democrats to victory in all contested offices. The black organization won accolades from

¹⁰⁹ "Chicagoan to Address Negroes," *ESLJ*, 3 November 1932, 2; On the "DePriest incident" see David S. Day, "Herbert Hoover and Racial Politics: The DePriest Incident," *Journal of Negro History* 65 (Winter 1980): 6-17.

party bosses who rewarded the PDO by appointing an African American, attorney Frank E. Summers, Assistant State's Attorney.¹¹⁰

The Paramount Democratic Organization's expansion and solidification of its power in black precincts did not sit well with white politicians.¹¹¹ The PDO showed its independence from Democratic Party bosses in the primary election in April 1934 by placing Aubrey H. Smith, an African American dentist and former member of the St. Clair County Board of Supervisors, on the ballot as one of the Democratic nominees for representative in the Illinois General Assembly. Smith won by a slim margin mostly because of a large black turnout.¹¹² Smith's victory upset some white politicians who sent a "message" to PDO leader Horace Adams through the city's byzantine political network. Adams was arrested, beaten, and briefly jailed for his involvement with a black gambling den operator. In July, the police board dropped all charges against Adams but warned him to stay out of trouble.¹¹³ Undeterred, Adams's PDO scored a political triumph in the election of November 1934 when Smith became the first black politician and the first

¹¹⁰ "Illinois Attorney Appointed," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 17 December 1932, in *Tuskegee Institute News Clippings File*, 41:0718; Summers identified as assistant state's attorney in "City Will Have Three Probes in 'Beating' Case," *ESLJ*, 27 June 1934, 1.

¹¹¹ "Negro Democrats Hear Kline and Other Speakers," *ESLJ*, 21 September 1933, 6; "Paramount Demos to Initiate 200 at Monday Meet," *ESLJ*, 19 November 1933, 3.

¹¹² "Negro Dentist Is Winner by Narrow Margin," *ESLJ*, 12 April 1934, 1, 3; "Dr. A.H. Smith Is Nominated," *ESLJ*, 17 April 1934, 1. Born in Virginia in 1901, earned a dental degree from Northwestern University in 1926, Aubrey Smith came to East St. Louis in 1927. See Smith's terse biography in "Record Breaking Entry List Confronts Voter in Primary," *ESLJ*, 8 April 1934, 15, and Clementine Hamilton, *The Ebony Tree* ([Privately published, East St. Louis, Ill.: Publication Committee, 1971 or 1972?], 126.

¹¹³ "Negro Politician Says He Was 'Beaten Up,'" *ESLJ*, 26 June 1934, 1; "City Will Have Three Probes in 'Beating' Case," *ESLJ*, 27 June 1934, 1; "Answer Charges within 5 Days, Policemen Told," *ESLJ*, 28 June 1934, 1; "Two Policemen Are Suspended in Beating Case," *ESLJ*, 5 July 1934, 1.

black Democrat to represent East St. Louis—a majority white city—in the Illinois General Assembly.¹¹⁴ But Smith served only one term because white political leaders united to defeat him in his bid for reelection in 1936. Perhaps had the energetic wheeler-dealer PDO leader Horace Adams not been killed in an auto accident, Smith might have seen a second term.¹¹⁵

The PDO and its sister organization, the Paramount Negro Women's Democratic Organization continued to strengthen their political positions within the black community while supporting the Democratic Party.¹¹⁶ Through the efforts of these two groups black East St. Louisans entered the national Democratic Party coalition several years before 1936 when African Americans nationwide made their historic swing to the Democratic Party. The African American-Democratic Party alliance made possible black influence on the national level through electoral politics. African Americans used the Democratic New Deal coalition to press for the restoration of civil rights, especially for black Southerners, and for the attainment of equality.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ "Victory of Negro Dentist Is Surprise of Assembly Race," *ESLJ*, 7 November 1934, 4; "Checker Reveal Too Many Votes Cast in Brooklyn," *ESLJ*, 9 November 1934, 1.

¹¹⁵ "Adams Funeral Date Not Set," *ESLJ*, 19 April 1935, 2; Richard and Wyvetter Younge, interviewed by author, 27 September 1999, East St. Louis.

¹¹⁶ To date, the only information on the Paramount Negro Women's Democratic Organization is a membership list, Eliza Hart Thomas, Probation Officer, East St. Louis, to Crystal Bird Fauset, Democratic National Campaign Committee, October 14, 1936, Edna Adams, President, Paramount Negro Women's Democratic Organization, to Eleanor Roosevelt [Mrs. Thomas F. McAllister, Director, Women's Division], January 5, 1938, Folder: "Organizations, Colored Workers (cont'd), Box 315-Correspondence, 1937-44, Democratic National Committee, Women's Division, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N.Y.

¹¹⁷ On the historical switch from Republican to Democrat see Nancy J. Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln: Black Politics in the Age of FDR* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).

Beginning Challenges to Segregation and Inequality during World War II

By 1940, increasing numbers of black people realized that organized labor and the New Deal reinforced segregation in employment, housing, healthcare, education, and other areas. At the same time they had not recovered from the Great Depression as had many white Americans who had access to industry retooling for the war production. For example, African Americans comprised at least sixteen percent of East St. Louis's population, but constituted sixty percent of the total caseload of federal and state government relief programs.¹¹⁸ Since the 1930s, black residents had engaged in a wide range of activities, including community protests, union-organizing drives, and other forms of grassroots politics to end racial discrimination.¹¹⁹ But they found equality elusive even with President Roosevelt's rhetoric of saving democracy from fascism.¹²⁰ Black people, more than ever, made a concerted effort to win state and federal commitment to racial equality as the nation prepared to enter the Second World War to

¹¹⁸ Bolen J. Carter, Assistant Principal, East St. Louis High School, to National Youth Administration, October 22, 1940, *Letters and Reports Received by the Director from State Directors of Student Work, 1940-1941, Records of the Division of Student Work-Records of the Director, Records of the National Youth Administration*, RG 119, Entry 176.

¹¹⁹ Illinois State Commission on the Condition of the Urban Colored Population, "Report, March 1941," Folder: "1942, 62nd General Assembly Report of the Illinois State commission on the Condition of the Urban Colored Population," 24, *Bills, Resolutions, and Related General Assembly Records, 1st-88th Biennium, 1819-1994*, RG 600.001, Illinois State Archives, hereafter cited as *ISCCUCP Report*.

¹²⁰ Annette Officer, Louie F. Orr in ISCCUCP, "Transcripts: East St. Louis Proceedings," 127, 129, 131, 135, 140.

fight fascism. One community leader, the Reverend G.T. Allen, an employee in a machine operators' training program, wrote to the National Labor Relations Board in 1944, asking, "How can we as leaders encourage our people to . . . go all out for victory while these [racist] practices . . . exist[ed]? . . . After all, winning Victory on the battle-fronts [and losing] it [at] home, we ha[d] accomplish[ed] nothing."¹²¹

Black East St. Louisans endured after the racial massacre of July 1917 an expanded, rigorous adherence to customary segregation that violated long standing Illinois civil rights laws. Social worker Annette Officer, a city resident since 1917, assisting people in finding jobs in 1932 and 1934, said that "Sears, Roebuck . . . told [her] outright that they didn't hire [N]egroes." Officer also recalled that in 1938 when she "tried once or twice to go to the Majestic [Theatre] . . . the young lady at the window frankly told [her] she was sorry but could not sell [her] a ticket." Officer and other black people could not eat purchased meals at lunch counters in many white owned establishments. Black attorney Louie Orr, aware of only six civil rights cases filed during his seven years of practicing law in the county, attributed black people's reluctance to file complaints to the legacy of fear created by the July mass racial violence. Orr said that "if a [N]egro attempt[ed] to raise a question about his rights or . . . [was] sponsoring some progressive movement to tear down some prejudice . . . white people . . . [then accused] "[t]he young man [of] trying to start a race riot."

¹²¹ G.T. Allen to NLRB, Nov. 13, 1944, [Boilermakers Union file]; Box 63, [United States Employment Service, East St. Louis file], Box 70, *Active Case Records, 1941-1846, Region VI, Records of the Committee of Fair Employment Practice*, RG 228, Entry 68, National Archives—Great Lakes Region.

By the end of the 1930s, African Americans hoped to enlist the state government in their fight against segregation. In 1940, the Illinois General Assembly created the Commission on the Condition of the Urban Colored Population to investigate the impact of segregation and discrimination on African Americans and to recommend legislation to correct social problems found in areas such as employment.¹²² State government planners, most likely remembering how World War I era migrations, labor disputes, and racial violence disrupted industrial production, hoped through the commission's findings to prevent similar occurrences as the United States anticipated its entry into the Second World War. The commission held hearings in Chicago, Springfield, and East St. Louis to learn about the persistence of racial disparities.¹²³

Several white managers testifying before the commission denied that their companies had policies against hiring black people. They blamed trade unions, which the managers inferred had control over who applied for jobs, for keeping workplaces white. Illinois-Iowa Power Company District Manager F.R. Noack said that his enterprise had closed shop contracts with three AFL unions, the International Union of Operating Engineers, Gas Fitters and Helpers Union, and Hod Carriers and Common Laborers Union, whose business agents sent him only white job applicants. Manager at Union Electric Company G.W. Welsh claimed that his company had only one black employee, a

¹²² ISCCUCP, "Transcripts: East St. Louis Proceedings," [15]; Illinois State Commission on the Condition of the Urban Colored Population, "Preliminary Report on Findings," [1], Folder: "1941, 62nd General Assembly Report of the Illinois State Commission on the Condition of the Urban Colored Population, March 1941," *Bills, Resolutions, and Related General Assembly Records, 1st-88th Biennium, 1819-1994*, Record Group 600.001, Illinois State Archives.

¹²³ "State Hearing for Negroes Begun in City," *ESLJ.*, 29 November 1940, 1; "Equality for Negroes Aim of Commission," *ESLJ.*, 1 December 1940, 4.

janitor-watchman, because it secured its employees through the business agent of the AFL International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Union that also only sent white job seekers. Noack and Welsh when asked why their companies did not hire black workers for positions not covered by union contracts simply reiterated that their companies did not have policies of discrimination. They agreed, however, with the commission that hiring African Americans had the potential of decreasing the number of black people on government relief rolls.¹²⁴

African Americans testified before the commission about the nature of the segregation and discrimination. Unity Mutual Insurance Company District Manager W.K. Allen, a resident of East St. Louis for twenty-one years, said that, “Negroes . . . scarcely get any service at . . . white places, such as restaurants, cafeterias, lunch counters, theatres, and what not.” Allen informed the commissioners that white employers denied black people their civil rights “in the economic field.” He cited in particular Hormel Packing Company and Lubrite Refining Company for their blatant refusal to hire black workers. Industrial secretary of the National Urban League St. Louis chapter Sidney Williams thought that inclusion of black workers into the industrial workforce “had not increased in the past five years.” Williams blamed industry’s lack of progress on managers applying technological innovations that resulted in “[b]lack workers get[ting] hit harder than white workers ‘because of their unskilled ability.’” He also said that Hunter Packing Company, in reaction to packinghouse workers’ unionization, had begun to fire black employees and replace them with white workers. In

¹²⁴ F.R. Noack, and G.W. Welsh in ISCCUCP, “Transcripts: East St. Louis Proceedings,” and 59-61, and 63-64.

addition, Williams reported that several labor unions, mainly AFL affiliates in the building trades, impeded integration.¹²⁵

African Americans informed the commissioners that they wanted jobs, not relief, and they wanted equality not discrimination from the WPA. Some said that they had been forced to go on relief to become eligible to obtain WPA jobs. Pauline Lewis of the Original Illinois Housewives Association had worked for the city recreational department for several years before the WPA became the sole source of funding for that department in 1940. Lewis had to “declare [herself] a pauper to go through the Relief channel if [she] want[ed] to work for the department.” She also found that the WPA practiced wage discrimination. When the department “was tax-supported” by the city, said Lewis, “all [instructors] made an equal salary except the supervisor [but] now [as WPA funded employees, N]egro instructors [were] paid at the lowest white rate. They were paid,” said Lewis, “on average \$68.00 a month and the white workers who [did] identically the same work . . . had the same experience and training in similar positions . . . ma[d]e as much as \$20.00 more per month.”¹²⁶

Black people had no intention of setting aside their grievances on the eve of America’s entry into the Second World War as they had put them on hold during World War I.¹²⁷ They planned campaigns to bring the fight for equality into the workplace as

¹²⁵ John T. Clark, and Sidney Williams, and W.K. Allen in ISCCUCP, “Transcripts: East St. Louis Proceedings,” 6-7, and 48-55, and 150-151.

¹²⁶ Pauline K. Lewis in ISCCUCP, “Transcripts: East St. Louis Proceedings,” 169-170, 173.

¹²⁷ On the World War I generation setting aside their grievances see Mark Ellis, “W.E.B. Du Bois and the Formation of Black Opinion in World War I: A Commentary on ‘The Damnable Dilemma,’” *Journal of American History* 81 (March 1995): 1584-1590.

well as into the political arena. In 1941, African Americans gained a federal commitment to civil rights after black trade union leader Philip A. Randolph's proposed March on Washington convinced President Roosevelt to issue Executive Order 8802, establishing the Committee on Fair Employment Practice (FEPC) to end discrimination at companies holding federal defense contracts. Black people supported the "Double V" campaign, victory for democracy overseas and victory for democracy at home. "Double V" dramatized the irony that the government wanted African Americans to fight for democracy in Europe and Asia, but not in the United States.

Arguing for the notion of equal rights of citizenship, African Americans expected employers with defense contracts from the federal government to hire them for technical, skilled, managerial, and clerical positions. Black workers in East St. Louis saw job prospects improve slightly in 1941 at ten of the area's fifty-five largest corporations involved in defense work where 2,850 out of a total of 3,199 black men and women in all fifty-five of the companies.¹²⁸ But in 1942, African Americans reported cases of exclusion and underemployment at area corporations awarded defense contracts.¹²⁹ They remained overwhelmingly restricted to unskilled jobs or excluded from defense jobs altogether, even though significant reserves of qualified black workers were

¹²⁸ *Labor Market Report for East St. Louis, Illinois: October 7, 1941*, 1, 4, 6, Folder: "Problem Areas: East St. Louis, Illinois, Survey," *Area Labor Market Reports, 1940-49: Illinois, Records of the Bureau of Employment Security*, RG 183, Entry 89.

¹²⁹ "Labor Supply," *Serial Letter*, no. 50 (March 4, 1942), 321, Folder: "Newsletters – Region VI, 1941-1943," *Field Operations Division Newsletters, 1941-1945, Region V 1941-1943, 1944-1945, Region VI 1941-1943, Records of the Office of the Community War Services*, RG 215, Entry 54, National Archives at College Park.

available.¹³⁰ Black workers were well aware that some firms, ignoring the executive order, flatly refused to employ African Americans.¹³¹

A few black Americans concluded that they had no reason to support the government in a time of war when African Americans remained at best second class citizens in a nation hostile to their aspirations for equality. Many of these anti-war resisters—perhaps a few tens of thousands nationwide—belonged to pro-Japanese black organizations that advocated separatism. One such group, which gained notoriety for East St. Louis, the Pacific Movement of the Eastern World (PMEW), had several thousand members in chapters scattered mainly in the Mississippi River states from Illinois and Missouri to Mississippi and Louisiana. The PMEW, founded in 1933, drew most of its members and took many of its ideas from the defunct Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Pacific Movement advocated among other things, black pride, black owned enterprises, and a black nation-state, ideally to be carved from the United States. In addition, PMEW leaders advised African Americans to avoid military service. The organization looked to Japan, the sole nonwhite world power, to challenge global white supremacy, defeat the United States, Great Britain, and France through warfare, and reward black people by establishing an African American nation-

¹³⁰ Sidney Hillman, Associate Director General, Office of Production Management, to All Holders of Defense Contracts, April 11, 1941, Folder: "1941, 62nd General Assembly, House, Miscellaneous Reports to Report of Committee Appointed Pursuant to House Res. 37," *Bills, Resolutions and Related General Assembly Records, 1st-88th Bienniums* [sic], 1819-1992, Record Group 600.001, Illinois State Archives.

¹³¹ "Progress of Campaign against Race Discrimination: September 21, 1942," 2-3, Folder: "533.21-533.225. 1942. Illinois," *Classified State Files {1939-42}, Records of the Bureau of Employment Security*, RG 183, Entry 72.

state.¹³² PMEWS, and apparently some white Americans, including novelist Pearl S. Buck and Secretary of War Henry Stimson, thought that the next conflict would be a race war between Japan and the Western powers. The organization's fervent hope for an African American-Japanese alliance to defeat white supremacy blinded it to Japanese racism against Asians whom Japan had conquered. Such was the depth of desire among many PMEWS members who hoped for Japanese victory over the United States.¹³³

Pacific Movement of the Eastern World, with its pro-Japanese stance and contacts with Japanese agents fell under surveillance of police departments and the Federal Bureau of Investigation that regarded the PMEWS capable of igniting a race war or engaging in subversion across the nation in a future war against Japan.¹³⁴ The organization moved its national headquarters from St. Louis to East St. Louis in 1940 largely because by that time most of its national leaders were East St. Louisans.

¹³² Ernest Allen, Jr., "When Japan Was 'Champion of the Darker Races: Satokata Takahashi and the Flowering of Black Messianic Nationalism,'" *Black Scholar*, 24, no. 1 (Winter 1994), 23-46; and, "Waiting for Tojo: The Pro-Japan Vigil of Black Missourians, 1932-1942," *Gateway Heritage*, Fall 1995, 38-55; Reginald Kearney, *African American Views of the Japanese: Solidarity or Sedition?* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998). More famous and enduring than the PMEWS, the Nation of Islam, led by Elijah Muhammad, was stridently antiwar and anti-white.

¹³³ John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986), 160-161, 173-181.

¹³⁴ "Police Watch Negro Group," *ESLJ*, January 22, 1934, 2; Report #10110-2666/70, and Report #10110-2666/79, J. Edgar Hoover to Lieut. Colonel C.K. Nulsen, MID, April 10, 1934, and Report #10218-261/92, Lieut. Col. O.A. Dickinson to A.C. of S. G-2, War Department, *Correspondence, 1917-41 Military Intelligence Division, Records of the War Department*, RG 165, Entry 65; United States Bureau of Investigation report made by H.G. Maynor, at St. Louis, Mo., November 1, 1933, "The Pacific Movement of the Eastern World," Folder: "File #235408," *Straight Numerical Files, Records of the Department of Justice*, RG 60, Entry 112B. On FBI's concern of black people's loyalty to the federal government see, for example, Robert A. Hill, ed., *The FBI's RACON: Racial Conditions in the United States during World War II* (Boston, Mass.: Northeastern University Press, 1995).

Originally comprised of former members of the local chapter of the UNIA, the East St. Louis chapter of the PMEW, which had as many as of 950 members sometime during the 1930s, only counted in 1941 a few dozen activists as members.¹³⁵ PMEW abruptly ceased to exist after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor when federal agents, deciding that the pro-Japanese organization was a serious threat to national security, raided PMEW headquarters and arrested leaders David Erwin and General Lee Butler (“General” was Butler’s first name), both laborers, and others, later convicting them on charges of sedition.¹³⁶ According to the authorities, Erwin’s former association with Marcus Garvey marked him as a dangerous man who hated white people and opposed the United States.¹³⁷

The significance of the Pacific Movement of the Eastern World and other antiwar black organizations such as the Nation of Islam rested with their potential to mobilize African Americans to protest the federal government’s slow pace in resolving issues of racial inequality and white American intransigence to treat black citizens as equals. The

¹³⁵ “Pacific Movement of the Eastern World: [1942],” Folder: “File #146-10-2, sec. 2, 6-5-42-7-31-42,” FBI Report File #65-305, “Press release, Wednesday, January 27, 1943,” Folder: “146-10-2, FBI Reports and Memos,” “In the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Illinois: Transcript of Testimony and Proceedings before the Grand Jury, September 22, 1942 to and including September 29, 1942,” 2 vols., Folder: “146-10-2, Series 22 & 23,” and “In the United States Circuit Court of Appeals . . . Statement, Brief and Argument of Appellee: 1943,” Folder: “146-10-2, Series 24,” *Classified Subject Files, (Security Classified Files), Class 146-10, Records of the Department of Justice, RG 60, Entry 114BD*; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, *Papers of the NAACP, Part 18, Series A-Legal Department Files, Special Subjects, 1940-1955*, microfilm, 8:00866-00968.

¹³⁶ “Jap Agent Testifies Here,” *ESLDJ*, 29 September 1942, 1; “Indict Three in Federal Sedition Probe,” *ESLJ*, 28 January 1943, 3; [Photograph & caption of PMEW leader General Butler], *ESLJ*, 29 January 1943, 3.

¹³⁷ Hill, ed., *The FBI’s RACON*, 520.

Pacific Movement had sought to expand its presence as African Americans nationwide furiously debated the extent of black involvement with a federal government that showed more concern about America as an “arsenal for democracy” than about democracy for nonwhite Americans, particularly black Southerners. But across the nation, the PMEW and similar organizations faced strenuous opposition from most black people, even from those in accord with its view of the United States as a white supremacist nation.

According to residents Lee Annie (Adams) Bonner and Lillian (Adams) Parks, daughters of PDO leader Horace Adams, most black East St. Louisans viewed the PMEW as detrimental to the “Double V” campaign.¹³⁸ Some black Americans, including the national leaders of the NAACP, actively assisted the government in suppressing the Pacific Movement of the Eastern World and other pro-Japanese black organizations in exchange for stronger federal support for civil rights.¹³⁹

The federal government was keenly aware of African American criticism about the nation’s lack of will to acknowledge black demands for equality. Some officials sought to blunt black criticism of America’s shortcomings by harassing African American newspaper editors, activists, and others whom they thought capable of turning

¹³⁸ Lee Annie Bonner; Lillian Parks.

¹³⁹ “Memorandum for Chief of Branch, Subject: Negro Press Trend,” 28 September 1942, 5 October 1942, 12 October 1942, Folder: “1941-1942.” and “Subversive, [January 28, 1943],” 4-5, Folder: “1943,” *Office of Public Information Analysis Branch, Press Items, RE: Negro Newspapers, 1944-46, Records of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Legislative and Public Affairs)*, RG 330, Entry 135F, National Archives at College Park; “Report on Japanese Propaganda in the United States, November 1939,” Folder: “#146-10, section 1/10-6-40-4-15-41,” *Classified Subject Files, (Classified Security File Files), Class 146-10, Records of the Department of Justice*, RG 60, Entry 114BD, National Archives at College Park.

black people against the war effort.¹⁴⁰ But others, favoring civil rights, urged the Roosevelt administration to quiet African American criticism by promoting black social and economic advancement. United States Employment Service (USES) field director George A. Scott, for one, encouraged employers to hire more black workers so as to avoid mass racial violence capable of disrupting industrial war production. Scott informed USES Director for Illinois Chester Hepler that the most serious race problem in Illinois existed in East St. Louis. Noting that black Southerners and white “hillbillies” mainly from Tennessee and Arkansas were streaming into the city in search of jobs, Scott worried that mass racial violence loomed large if black and white migrants failed to obtain jobs. Scott praised corporations such as American Steel Foundries, Sterling Steel Castings Company, Armour & Company, and Aluminum Ore Company for hiring black workers. He faulted, however, companies like Socony Vacuum Oil Company, which refused to hire black laborers, and Hunter Packing Company, which specifically refused to hire black women, for contributing to racial tension.¹⁴¹

African Americans neither waited for the federal government to resolve civil rights issues at the workplace nor slowed down their grassroots campaigns for employment equality after the March on Washington Movement in 1941. They turned the FEPC and other government agencies into useful tools to advance their “Double V” campaign, claiming that their contributions to the war effort entitled them to full

¹⁴⁰ Lee Finkle, *Forum for Protest : The Black Press during World War II* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1975); Hill, ed., *The FBI's RACON*.

¹⁴¹ “Progress of Campaign against Race Discrimination: September 21, 1942,” 2-3; Folder: “533.21-533.225. 1942. Illinois”; *Classified State Files {1939-42}, Records of the Bureau of Employment Security*, RG 183, Entry 72.

citizenship rights and freedom from segregation and discrimination.¹⁴² Black workers insisted upon equality of treatment and an end to discrimination at the workplace and used the FEPC as a battering ram against recalcitrant employers and local union officials.¹⁴³ They demanded access to job training programs and war production jobs. Black laborers urged A.H.R. Atwood, East St. Louis district director of the Committee on Industrial Relations of the Illinois State Employment Service, to place additional trained field workers in “employer relations” to encourage managers to hire from an expanding pool of black workers who had completed job training programs.¹⁴⁴ In 1942, the black Citizens Defense and Urban League Organizing Committee, an unofficial branch of the National Urban League in East St. Louis, led by its president, mortician William Officer,

¹⁴² On an early assessment of the FEPC see Louis C. Kesselman, “The Fair Employment Practice Commission Movement in Perspective,” *Journal of Negro History* 31 (January 1946): 30-46.

¹⁴³ Selected examples of FEPC cases: “Strike at Dixie Mills Company, June 24-28, 1943,” Folder: “Dixie Mills Company, East St. Louis, Illinois,” Box 1830, “Memorandum from J.E. Kuczma, March 29, 1944,” Folder: Monsanto Chemical Company,” Box 1826, *Records Relating to Strikes, 1944-1945, Region VI, Records of the National War Labor Board*, RG 202, Entry 210, National Archives—Great Lakes Region, Chicago, Illinois; [Community War Service file], Box 106, *General Correspondence, 1943-1946, Records of the Committee on Fair Employment Practice*, RG 228, Entry 82; [Aluminum Ore Company file], Box 72, [American Steel Foundries, East St. Louis file], Box 73, [Cargill, Inc. file], Box 75, [Monsanto Chemical Company file], Box 85, *Closed Cases, 1941-1946, Region VI, Records of the Committee of Fair Employment Practice*, RG 228, Entry 70.

¹⁴⁴ George B. Nesbitt, East St. Louis Citizens’ Defense and Urban League Organizing Committee to A.H.R. Atwood, Director, Illinois State Employment Service, November 17, 1941, Folder: “Historical Information, East St. Louis,” National Urban League, *Papers of the National Urban League*, Series 5, Public Relations Department, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

with assistance from government agencies and a local CIO union tiredly worked to convince managers to hire black workers.¹⁴⁵

Black workers in war production industries forced the federal government to address their grievances, if for no other reason than to keep production running. In 1944, African Americans filed with the FEPC numerous grievances regarding employment discrimination.¹⁴⁶ Black Monsanto Chemical Company employees complained over a period of several months about wage discrimination and mistreatment from managers and white co-workers. For example, James Overton stated that he received 85 and 1/4 cents an hour while a white worker earned 91 and 1/4 cents an hour for performing the same work. In another instance, Carey Jones, a skilled rigger, said that he had been paid common laborer wages.¹⁴⁷ Three hundred and eighty out of 386 black Monsanto workers struck in March 1944 in protest over a company ruling made in consultation with an officer of the AFL union local to revoke a twenty year customary right of black

¹⁴⁵ Leo R. Werts, Acting Director, Illinois State Employment Service, to William E. Officer, January 14, 1942; "Urban League to Stage Benefit," *St. Louis Call*, February 6, 1942, 6; Officer to John J. Corson, Director, United States Employment Service, February 11, 1942; Nesbitt to Lester Granger, February 14, 1942; Granger to Nesbitt, March 4, 1942; Folder: "Historical Information, East St. Louis," National Urban League, *Papers of the National Urban League*, Series 5, Public Relations Department, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹⁴⁶ "East St. Louis, Illinois, Area Report: September 30, 1944," 15, 37, "Federal Security Agency, Office of Community War Services: Conference on Community Race Relations Problems, November 11, 1944," 7, Folder: "Serial Letter, Region VI," *Field Operations Division Community Reports, 1941-1945: Region VI, Illinois-Wisconsin, Records of the Office of Community War Services*, Record Group 215, Entry 55.

¹⁴⁷ Elmer W. Henderson, FEPC Regional Director, to P.M. Tompkins, General Manager, Monsanto, January 21, 1944, "Monsanto Chemical Company [file], Exhibit B, Elmer W. Henderson to P.M. Tompkins, April 10, 1944," Box 91, *Closed Cases, 1941-1946, Records of the Region VI Office (Chicago), Records of the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice*, RG 228, Entry 70, National Archives and Records Administration—Great Lakes Region, Chicago.

helpers to ride in the cab of trucks with white drivers. Their work stoppage suspended vital operations at the plant until the FEPC negotiated terms of agreement, and strikers returned to work on March 21.¹⁴⁸ According to FEPC worker Harry H.C. Gibson, strikers had based their grievances on “the desire . . . to receive equal opportunities for upgrading along with the white employees.” Black workers won a moral victory when FEPC Regional director Elmer Henderson and other government and military officials directed the company and the union to resolve black workers’ grievances.¹⁴⁹

Many black women in East St. Louis made the transition from non-industrial to industrial employment though a number continued to labor as domestic service workers.¹⁵⁰ While war mobilization demanded full utilization of able-bodied workers, African American women continued encountering discrimination in 1942 as employers hired only white and black men and white women.¹⁵¹ By 1944, black women, working with the FEPC and other federal agencies, saw their job prospects improve, particularly at the feed mills, railroad freight depots, and newly established worksites like the Indian

¹⁴⁸ Illinois War Manpower Commission, “Monthly Field Operating Report: For Southwestern Illinois, March 1944,” Folder: “VI, Illinois—(Southwestern),” *Records of the Reports Processing Section of the Reports Division, Monthly Field Operating Reports, Dec. 1943-July, 1945, VI (Ill.)*, *Records of the War Manpower Commission*, RG 211, Entry 108.

¹⁴⁹ Memorandum, Harry H.C. Gibson to Elmer W. Henderson, April 10, 1944, “Monsanto Chemical Company [file], Exhibit B, Elmer W. Henderson to P.M. Tompkins, April 10, 1944,” Box 91, *Closed Cases, 1941-1946, Records of the Region VI Office (Chicago)*, *Records of the President’s Committee on Fair Employment Practice*, RG 228, Entry 70, National Archives and Records Administration—Great Lakes Region, Chicago.

¹⁵⁰ “Negro Advancement,” *ESLJ, Jubilee Edition*, May 26, 1940, 16, section F.

¹⁵¹ “Progress of Campaign against Race Discrimination: September 21, 1942,” Folder: “533.21-533.225. 1942. Illinois,” *Classified State Files {1932-42}*, *Records of the Bureau of Employment Security*; Lee Annie Bonner.

Lake Egg Company.¹⁵² But black women remained underrepresented among industrial workers. They still relied upon black community organizations and the government to urge reluctant employers to hire and promote them.¹⁵³

Black working women and men realized that the FEPC and other state and federal agencies, lacking the means to enforce anti-discrimination rulings, were largely ineffective in resolving grievances of workplace segregation and discrimination. They saw the FEPC in particular dismissing many of their cases on grounds of insufficient evidence. For example, in 1943, the FEPC rejected a complaint filed by fifteen black women who charged that Walworth Company had refused to hire them. The company claimed that it preferred to hire women who lived close to the plant, and since the company was located in a white area, it hired only white women. The company also noted that it did not have separate restrooms for black women.¹⁵⁴ Black workers flooded the regional FEPC office with grievances pertaining to issues of discrimination far surpassing the number of complaints filed by Jewish American and Mexican American workers, or even Japanese Americans who had been released from War Relocation

¹⁵² *Serial Letter*, no. 68 (March 6, 1944), 8, and no. 72 (July 15, 1944), 3, Folder: "Serial Letter, 1944," "East St. Louis, Illinois, Area Report: September 30, 1944," 38, "Federal Security Agency, Office of Community War Services: Conference on Community Race Relations Problems, November 11, 1944," 5, *Serial Letter*, no. 76 (March 1945), Folder: "Serial Letter: Region VI," *Field Operations Division Community Reports, 1941-1945, Records Office of Community War Services*, RG 215, Entry 55.

¹⁵³ "Demand-Supply Supplement: Illinois WMC Administrative Area #7, East St. Louis Labor Market Area, November 1944," 6-7, "Monthly Field Operating Report: February 1945," 46-47, Folder: "VI, Illinois – East St. Louis," *Records of the Reports Processing Section of the Reports Division: Monthly Field Operating Reports, Dec. 1943-July 1945, Records of the War Manpower Commission*, RG 211, Entry 108.

¹⁵⁴ [Walworth Company file], Box 91, *Closed Cases, 1941-1946, Region VI, Records of the Committee of Fair Employment Practice*, RG 228, Entry 70.

Centers. But African Americans did see favorable results by 1944 as the office focused more on the problems of hiring black women and job upgrading of black men and women workers. They also recognized that the office agreed with them when it blamed employers, especially Western Cartridge Company, a munitions maker, in East Alton, Illinois, that refused to hire a single black worker in its workforce of fifteen thousand men, and certain labor unions, like the railroad brotherhoods, for perpetuating racial discrimination.¹⁵⁵

Conclusion

African Americans engaged in a range of grassroots and electoral politics in East St. Louis that paralleled and was foundational to black people's actions on the national level. They agitated not only to increase their chances of surviving and remaining employed during the Great Depression, but also to gain a level of security and greater access to industrial jobs through membership in labor unions and participation in the New Deal coalition led by the Democratic Party. But black Americans acknowledged on the eve of America's entry into World War I that their engagements in community actions, social movements, and political parties yielded mixed results. They earned a place as decision makers in local and national affairs but not as equal partners. As long as white

¹⁵⁵ Memorandum, Elmer W. Henderson to Will Maslow, September 1, 1944, *General Records, 1941-1946, Records of the Region VI Office (Chicago), Records of the Committee of Fair Employment Practice*, RG 228, Entry 81.

Americans maintained segregation, black people had to continue to push to attain their goal of equality.

A racial accord manifested itself in East St. Louis with a realization among white officials that they had to include African Americans in their plans for postwar modernization of the area's industry, recruitment of more jobs, and improvement of housing stock.¹⁵⁶ As early as 1943, economic boosters realized that East St. Louis's expansion as an industrial city had ended during the interwar years. They learned the value of and became dependent upon federal economic assistance during the Great Depression and the war. White political and economic leaders looked forward to the continuance of federal support into the postwar years.¹⁵⁷ They knew that any efforts, including mass racial violence, by white townspeople to prevent black residents' social and economic advancement risked destroying the city's economic future. East St. Louis was not an industrial giant like Chicago or Detroit that had the ability to absorb the shock of racial violence. The accord allowed the city to avoid the racial violence that marred segregated Detroit. East St. Louis Mayor John T. Connors, knowing his city's vulnerability, praised residents for remaining united, regardless of race, in winning the war. Local officials hoped that peaceful race relations, within context of segregation, would pave the way for a prosperous postwar future.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ "An Important Question to Consider," *ESLJ*, 17 October 1943, 7; "'Job Heaven' To Be Thing of the Past after the War," *ESLJ*, 31 October 1943, 7, 8.

¹⁵⁷ "City Post-War Program Described as Five Points," *ESLJ*, 21 November 1943, 7, 8; "East St. Louis Post-War Planning Appears Stagnant," *ESLJ*, 22 April 1945, 7; "What Is Future of Housing in East St. Louis?," *ESLJ*, 22 July 1945, 7, 8; "Realistic Approach to Area Planning," *ESLJ*, 29 July 1945, 7.

¹⁵⁸ "The Case of the City of East St. Louis," *ESLJ*, 2 May 1945, 6.

African American residents, however, demanded that they have an equal voice in the postwar era. Lincoln High School principal O.V. Quinn in describing black political assertiveness stated that black workers in particular had forged “a good strategic position” to demand inclusion in the city’s postwar planning. Quinn held high hopes for further cooperation between black labor and the CIO that had “given Negro workers greater opportunity.” According to Quinn, “[i]f Negro labor [was] ignored in post-war planning, [then] Negro labor can be expected to protest.”¹⁵⁹

Black East St. Louisans’ optimism for the postwar future was tempered, however, by the legacy of the mass violence of July 1917 that had demonstrated white intolerance of African American insistence to pursue their special interests and independence in city affairs. They had been curtly told by local AFL white representative Fred Olds to “[l]eave things alone, as they now are, and . . . [not] ask for trouble.”¹⁶⁰ Black residents knew that Olds by his statement referred to the July massacre. But after fighting for twelve years for economic survival during the Great Depression and four years for democracy’s survival during the Second World War, black women and men decided to mobilize their institutions and interracial alliances to end segregation and discrimination in postwar East St. Louis.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ “Available Labor Pool to Be Determining Factor in Post-War Jobs Here,” *ESLJ*, 7 November 1943, 7.

¹⁶⁰ “Available Labor Pool to Be Determining Factor in Post-War Jobs Here,” *ESLJ*, 7 November 1943, 7.

¹⁶¹ For discussion of early years of the post-World War II civil rights movement, see, for example, August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942-1968* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 84, 92, 121; Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: Free Press, 1984); John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for*

Postscript

African Americans in East St. Louis launched campaigns to gain civil rights and dismantle segregated institutions immediately after the Second World War. Their determination had been fortified by federal wartime propaganda of democracy to defeat fascism, “Double V” rhetoric, battles won against workplace discrimination, World War II veterans’ resolve to fight for democracy at home, Illinois civil rights laws, and the support of organizations like the NAACP and the Illinois Human Rights Commission and white allies within labor unions and the federal government. Black residents first employed mass civil disobedience in 1949 to desegregate the public school system. East St. Louis became the harbinger of mass civil rights protests that occurred from the mid-1950s into the 1960s in Montgomery, Alabama, and other locations. By late 1949, black residents, ignoring segregationists’ threats of mass anti-black assaults, overcame the legacy of fear engendered by the July massacre and integrated the public school system.¹⁶²

Civil Rights in Mississippi (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Charles M. Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

¹⁶² For a scholarly article, which includes a brief account on the school desegregation campaign, narrating the post-World War II struggle for equality, see Elliott Rudwick, “Fifty Years of Race Relations in East St. Louis: The Breaking Down of White Supremacy,” *Midcontinent American Studies Journal*, 6, no. 1 (Spring 1965): 3-15.

Black people anticipated a bright future in East St. Louis as the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s desegregated parks and recreational facilities, places of public accommodation, and other public spaces. Like the black population in cities such as Chicago and Detroit, the one in East St. Louis expanded significantly from a post-World War II migration of black Southerners larger than that of the Great Migration. Most migrants came from across the rural South to East St. Louis and other cities in the North, Midwest, and the Pacific West in search of employment and a better way of life. African Americans often repeated the saying, “if you cannot get a job in East St. Louis, then you cannot get one anywhere.” Black townspeople saw increasing numbers of African Americans, with approval of white political machine bosses, appointed and elected to political office. Black residents furthered their opportunities for patronage and power during the late 1960s when East St. Louis became a majority black city through black migration and white flight to the suburbs. In 1971, James Williams became the city’s first black major.¹⁶³

By the time black political machines gained control in the early 1970s of a nearly all black city, East St. Louis had undergone massive deindustrialization that wrecked havoc on its economy. Machine politicians and reformers and their respective supporters, the men and women who ran the precinct committee system, divided over how to govern the municipality and respond to constituencies that expected services from a city that lacked a viable economy. East St. Louis found itself in the same situation as Gary,

¹⁶³ Some of the discussion of post-1960 East St. Louis based on Andrew J. Theising, *Made in USA: East St. Louis, The Rise and Fall of an Industrial River Town* (St. Louis, MO: Virginia Publishing, 2003).

Indiana, and other deindustrialized cities experiencing a continual decline in population and per capita wealth and income. While some cities in such circumstances, Pittsburgh, for example, recovered from the loss of their major industries, East St. Louis, despite financial assistance from the state, never did.

Black East St. Louisan struggles for social advancement and political power must be seen within context of historical transformations such as urbanization, industrialization, progressive era reforms, black migrations, the Great Depression and the world wars. Further, their efforts have to be viewed in relation to the local white business community that ran this border region industrial city for many decades. Black East St. Louisan economic and social problems have their roots in the latter third of the nineteenth century when real estate politician businessmen fashioned a town designed to create profits for themselves and industrialists, not to provide a quality of life for residents. Municipal mismanagement became entrenched during the interwar years after several generations of economic boosters locked the city to the fate of railroads and other intermediary industries that impaired the ability of post-World War I politician-businessmen to apply regional planning or recruit industries based on new technologies. City leaders ignored the signs of economic decline that had been noticed as early as 1920 when an urban planner of national renown stated that railroads strangled East St. Louis and its chance for future economic growth. White politicians and businessmen, including those in the real estate faction, knew before the end of the Second World War that the economy of East St. Louis had ceased to expand. But post-World War II city boosters, wedded to a political machine culture did not see the need to change decades old

economic policies. Politician-businessmen failed to pull the city out of an economic decline that became brutally apparent by the 1960s. Black city leaders inherited most of the city's problems from white politician-businessmen who had developed the economy and commanded politics in East St. Louis for nearly a century. But they also inherited from these white politician-businessmen a machine mentality and mode of operation. In East St. Louis both white and black machine and reformist political leaders lacked the vision, will, and leadership to recruit new industries and institute economic and political innovations.

Bibliography

Primary Materials

Manuscript Collections

- Chicago Public Library. Illinois Writers' Project, "*Negro in Illinois*" Papers.
Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania Archives, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
Aluminum Company of America (Pittsburgh, PA) Records, 1888-1990.
- Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois. *Henry Horner Papers. Lawrence Y. Sherman Papers.*
- Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Washington, D.C. *Papers of the NAACP. National Urban League Papers. Records of the U.S. Work Projects Administration, Federal Writers' Project Records.*
- Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois. *Burlington Archives. Illinois Central Railroad Archives.*
- University of Missouri at St. Louis. *Urban League of St. Louis (1926-) Collection.*
- Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri. Harland Bartholomew and Associates Records. *Urban League of St. Louis Records.*

Official Archives

- Illinois State Archives, Springfield, Illinois.
Bills, Resolutions, and Related General Assembly Records. 1st-88th Bienniums, 1819-1994. RG600.001.
- East St. Louis. Office of City Clerk. *City Council Proceedings. Frank Orren Lowden Correspondence, 1917-1921.* RG101.027.
Henry Horner Correspondence, 1933-1940. RG101.030.
- Illinois State Commission of Human Relations. *Minutes of Commission Meeting, October 1, 1943-June 30, 1961.* Springfield: Illinois State Commission of Human Relations.
- Illinois State Commission on the Living Conditions of the Urban Colored Population, *Transcripts of Commission: Hearing by the Illinois State Commission on the Living Conditions of the Urban Colored Population at East St. Louis, Illinois, November 29, 1940: Proceedings.* Springfield: Illinois State Commission on the Living Conditions of the Urban Colored Population, 1940.
- Illinois State Council of Defense (World War I). Labor Committee. *Labor Committee Report [and Testimony] on East St. Louis Race Riots, June 1917.* RS #517.020, Roll 30-873. Springfield: Illinois State Archives.

Illinois State Council of Defense (World War I), *Report of the Labor Committee of the State Council of Defense of Illinois Upon the Inquiry into the Recent Influx of Southern Negro Laborers into East St. Louis and Race Riot in Connection Therewith: At a Meeting . . . held at Chicago, June 2, 1917*. [Springfield]: Illinois State Council of Defense, 1917.

National Archives—Great Lakes Region, Chicago, Illinois.

Committee on Fair Employment Practice, Region IV. *Active Cases, September 1941-April 1946*, RG228, Entry 68. *Administrative Records. General Records, October 1941-1946*, RG228, Entry 81. *Case Records. Closed Cases, August 1941-March 1946*. RG228, Entry 70. *General Correspondence, September 1943-March 1946*, RG228, Entry 82.

District Courts of the United States. *Records of the United States Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Illinois, East St. Louis, 1905-1914*. RG21.

District Courts of the United States. *Records of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Illinois at East St. Louis, 1905-1970*. RG21.

National War Labor Board. Region VI. *Dispute Case Files, 1943-1945*. RG202, Entry 165. *Historical and Policy Documentation Files, 1943-1945*. RG202, Entry 177. *Records Relating to Strikes, 1944-1945*. RG202, Entry 210.

War Department. *Records of the War Dept., General and Special Staffs*. Military Intelligence Division. Plant Protection Section, Chicago District Office (No. 11). *Correspondence, 1918-1919*. RG 165, Entry 132.

War Manpower Commission. Region VI. *Progress Reports, 1942-1945*. RG211, Entry 272. *Reports on Local USES Office Operations, 1942-1945*, RG211, Entry 281.

National Archives, Washington, DC and College Park, Maryland.

Bureau of Employment Security. U.S. Employment Service. *Area Labor Market Reports, 1940-49*. RG183, Entry 89. *Classified General Files, 1942-43*. RG183, Entry 74A. *Classified State Files {1939-42}*. RG183, Entry 72. *Reports of Investigations of Negro Unemployment and Public Placement Facilities for Negroes, 1937-39*. RG183, Entry 7.

Council of National Defense. *General Correspondence*. RG62, Entry 140. *General Correspondence, Ap-Dec 1917. State Councils Section*. RG62, Entry 338.

Department of Defense. *Records of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Legislative and Public Affairs)*. Office of Public Information Analysis Branch. *Press Items, RE: Negro Newspapers, 1944-46*. RG330, Entry 135F.

Department of Justice. *Records of the Department of Justice. Classified Subject Files (Security Classified Records)*. RG60, Entry 114BD. *Glasser File, ca. 1938. Internal Disturbance (Geographical File)*. RG60, Entry 126. *Straight Numerical Files*. RG60, Entry 112B.

Department of Labor. *General Records of the Department of Labor. General Records, 1907-1942*. RG174, Entry 1. *General Records of the Department of Labor. Office of the Secretary. Secretary William B. Wilson. General Subject Files, 1913-1921*. RG174, Entry 18.

- Federal Bureau of Investigation. Records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. General Investigative Records. RG65, Entry 29. Microfilm M1085.
- Federal Home Loan Bank Board. Records of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board. Home Owners' Loan Corporation. Records Relating to the City Survey File, 1935-40. RG195, Entry 39.
- Federal Housing Administration. *Records of the Federal Housing Administration*. Research and Statistics Division. *Housing Market Data, 1938-52*. RG31, Entry 2. *Reports of Housing Market Analysts, 1937-63*. RG31, Entry 10. *State and City Data Re: Economic Conditions, ca. 1934-42*. RG31, Entry 3.
- Housing and Home Finance Agency. *Records Relating to Defense Housing (Geographical Dockets), 1941-42*. Division of Defense Housing Coordination (Office of Emergency Management). RG207, Entry 23. *Housing Monographs, 1939-1942*. *Records of the Division of Research and Statistics (Federal Housing Administration)*. RG207, Entry 34. *Records of the National Housing Agency. Subject File of the War Housing Program, May 1, 1943-December 31, 1946*. RG207, Entry 27.
- National Youth Administration. RG119.
- Office of the Community War Services. Field Operations Division Community Reports, 1941-1945. Region VI, Illinois-Wisconsin. RG215, Entry 55. Public Housing Administration. Records of the Public Housing Administration. Project Files (1933-1937). RG196, Entry 2. Records of the Intergroup Relations Branch, 1936-63. RG196, Entry 47.
- War Department, Military Intelligence Division. *Correspondence of the Military Intelligence Division*. RG165, Entry 65, Microfilm M1194 (General Correspondence), Microfilm M1440 ("Negro Subversion").
- War Manpower Commission. *Records of the War Manpower Commission. Records of the Reports and Analysis Service. Records of the Reports Processing Section of the Reports Division. Monthly Field Operating Reports, Dec., 1943-July, 1945*. RG211, Entry 108.
- Work Projects Administration. Records of the Work Projects Administration, Civil Works Administration Central Files, 1933-1934, "State" Series, 1933-1934. RG69, Entry 1. WPA Central Files. State Series, 1935-44, Correspondence with State Administrators. RG69, Entry 610.

Federal and State Government Publications

- Beverly, Robert H., *Negro Health in the State of Illinois*. Springfield, Illinois Dept. of Public Health, 1937.
- Jenison, Marguerite Edith, ed. *War Documents and Addresses. (Illinois in the World War. Volume VI.)*. Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1923.
- , *The War-Time Organization of Illinois. (Illinois in the World War. Volume V.)*. Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1923.

- Price, Daniel O. *Changing Characteristics of the Negro Population*. (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. *A 1960 Census Monograph*). Washington, DC: GPO, 1969.
- Shields, Emma L. *Negro Women in Industry*. (United States, Dept. of Labor, Women's Bureau. *Bulletin of the Women's Bureau*, no. 20). Washington, DC: GPO, 1922.
- Stickgold, Simon, *Illinois Race Riots*. Springfield: Illinois Interracial Commission, 1943.
- United States. Congress. House. Committee on Rules, *Riot at East St. Louis: Hearings. Supplement*. Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1917.
- United States. Congress. House. Special Committee To Investigate the East St. Louis Riots, *Report of the Special Committee Authorized by Congress To Investigate the East St. Louis Riots*. Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1918.
- United States. Congress. House. Special Committee To Investigate the East St. Louis Riots, *Transcripts of the Hearings of the House Select Committee That Investigated the Race Riots in East St. Louis, Illinois, 1917*. Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1918, microfiche and microfilm editions.
- United States. Department of Labor. *Monthly Labor Review*.
- United States. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Survey of Negro World War II Veterans and Vacancy and Occupancy of Dwelling Units Available to Negroes in St. Louis Area, Missouri and Illinois, November-December 1946*. Washington, DC: GPO, 1947.
- United States. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau. *Negro Women and Their Jobs*. (Women's Bureau Leaflet, no. 19). Washington, DC: GPO, 1954.
- United States. National Resources Committee. *Regional Planning: Part II—St. Louis Region*. Washington, DC: GPO, 1936.

Books, Articles, Microform Collections, Reports of Nongovernment Organizations, Miscellanea

- Bartholomew, Harland, *A Comprehensive City Plan for East St. Louis, Illinois*. Prepared for the War Civics Committee [of East St. Louis]. East St. Louis, IL.: Daily Journal, 1920.
- ., *Guide Plan, Missouri-Illinois Metropolitan Area*. St. Louis, MO.: Harland Bartholomew and Associates, 1948.
- Black Workers in the Era of the Great Migration, 1916-1927*. (microfilm collection)
- City directories (various publishers).
- Coffin, Arlyn Wilbur, *Building East St. Louis for Tomorrow. First Annual Report of the War Civics Committee, East St. Louis, Illinois, October 1, 1918-September 30, 1919*. [East St. Louis, IL.: The Committee, 1919].
- Comprehensive Plan, East St. Louis, Illinois*. Newark, N.J.: Candeub, Fleissig, [1958?]
- East St. Louis Branch of the N.A.A.C.P., *Perseverance and Progress: A History of the East St. Louis Branch of the N.A.A.C.P.* East St. Louis, IL: The Branch, 1995.
- East St. Louis Centennial Program, 1861-1961*. East St. Louis, IL: s.n., 1961.

- Fining, Joseph N. *Economic and Other Facts Regarding East St. Louis*. East St. Louis, IL: Chamber of Commerce, 1920.
- Foner, Philip S., and Ronald L. Lewis. *The Black Worker: A Documentary History from Colonial Times to the Present*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980.
- Hamilton, Clementine. *The Ebony Tree*. [Privately published, East St. Louis, Ill.: Publication Committee, 1971 or 1972?]
- Hampton University Newspaper Clipping File*. (microfilm collection)
- Hill, Robert A., ed. *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*. Berkeley: University of California, 1983-1986.
- Work, Monroe N. ed. *Negro Year Book: An Annual Encyclopedia of the Negro, 1918-1919*. 5th ed. Tuskegee, AL.: Negro Year Book Publishing Co., 1919.
- Olcott, Jane. *The Work of Colored Women*. New York: Young Womens Christian Associations, National Board, Colored Work Committee War Work Council, 1919 or 1920?
- Standard Atlas of St. Clair County, Illinois, Including a Plat Book*. Chicago: Geo. A. Ogle & Co., 1901.
- Tuskegee Institute News Clippings File*. (microfilm collection)
- Young Womens Christian Associations, War Work Council, Committee on Work Among Colored Girls and Women. *Colored American Women in War Work*. New York: YWCA, 1918.

Newspapers and Periodicals

- Chicago Defender*
- City Directory of East St. Louis*
- Congressional Record*
- The Crisis*
- Current History Magazine of the New York Times*
- Daily Worker*
- East St. Louis Daily Journal*, after 1929: *East St. Louis Journal*
- East St. Louis Today*
- Illinois Record* (Springfield: Afro-American Protective League)
- The Negro World*
- Opportunity* (National Urban League)
- St. Louis Argus*
- St. Louis Post-Dispatch
- Survey (National Social Workers Association)

Interviews – State Historical Society of Wisconsin

- United Packinghouse Workers of America Interviews, 1979-1983 (SC 452. Tape 1117A)
- Tape #209, 210 – William Nash.
- Tape #212 – William Randle.

Tape #214, 215, 216 – William Davinroy.
Tape #217 – Clyde Peoples.
Tape #219 – Curtis Miller.
Tape #220, 221, 222 – Condellone and Matikitis.
Tape #284, 285 – Philip Weightman.

Interviews by author in East St. Louis in 1999. Tapes deposited at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville Library Archives, Edwardsville, IL.

Lee Annie Bonner, 22 September.

Marion Dunn, 30 September.

Jeanne A. Faulkner, accompanied by Mr. Phillip L. Beck, Sr., and William Thomas, 24 September.

Mattie Malone, 21 September.

Lillian Parks, 22 September.

Frances Nash Terrell and Claudia Nash Thomas, 24 September.

Olga Wayne, 21 September.

Lena Weathers, 29 September.

Katie Wright, 23 September.

Richard Younge and Wyvetter Hoover Younge, 27 September.

Secondary Literature

Monographs

- Adler, Jeffrey S. *Yankee Merchants and the Making of the Urban West: The Rise and Fall of Antebellum St. Louis*. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Allen, Robert L. *Reluctant Reformers: Racism and Social Reform Movements in the United States*. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1974.
- Allen, Theodore W. *The Invention of the White Race*. London: Verso, 1994.
- Anderson, James D. *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.
- Aptheker, Herbert, ed. *Pamphlets and Leaflets by W.E.B. Du Bois*. White Plains, NY: Kraus-Thomson Organization Limited, 1986.
- Arneson, Eric. *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class and Politics, 1863-1923*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Babb, Valerie. *Whiteness Visible: The Meaning of Whiteness in American Literature and Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.
- Baker, Ray Stannard. *Following the Color Line: An Account of Negro Citizenship in the American Democracy*. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1908.
- Barbeau, Arthur E. and Florette Henri. *The Unknown Soldiers: Black American Troops in World War I*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974.
- Barrett, James R. *Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago's Packinghouse Workers, 1894-1922*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987.
- Belcher, Wyatt Winton. *The Economic Rivalry Between St. Louis and Chicago, 1850-1880*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1947.
- Berlin, Ira. *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Berlin, Ira, and Ronald Hoffman, eds. *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983.
- Best, Joel. *Controlling Vice: Regulating Brothel Prostitution in St. Paul, 1865-1883*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998.
- Blackburn, Robin. *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848*. London: Verso, 1988.
- Blee, Kathleen M. *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Bodnar, John, Roger Simon, and Michael P. Weber. *Lives of Their Own: Blacks, Italians, and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900-1960*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982.
- Boyer, Paul. *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978.
- Boylan, Rose Josephine. *East St. Louis—Queen City of Egypt*. [S.l.]: Illinois State Bar Association, 1954.
- Brass, Paul R., ed., *Riots and Pogroms*. New York: New York University Press, 1996.

- Brooks, Jennifer E. *Defining the Peace: World War II Veterans, Race, and the Remaking of Southern Political Tradition*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- Brophy, Alfred L. *Reconstructing the Dreamland: The Tulsa Riot of 1921, Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Bruce, Robert V. *1877: Year of Violence*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1989.
- Brundage, W. Fitzhugh. *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993.
- Bunch-Lyons, Beverly A. *Contested Terrain: African-American Women Migrate from the South to Cincinnati, Ohio, 1900-1950*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Burbank, David T. *Reign of the Rabble: The St. Louis General Strike of 1877*. New York: A.M. Kelley, 1966.
- Burkett, Randall K. *Black Redemption: Churchmen Speak for the Garvey Movement*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978.
- Butler, Brian. *An Undergrowth of Folly: Public Order, Race Anxiety, and the 1903 Evansville, Indiana Riot*. New York: Garland, 2000.
- Capeci, Dominic J., Jr. and Martha Wilkerson. *Layered Violence: The Detroit Rioters of 1943*. Oxford, Miss.: University of Mississippi Press, 1991.
- Carter, Dan T. *Scottsboro: A Tragedy of the American South*. Rev. ed. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979.
- Cayton, Horace R. and George S. Mitchell. *Black Workers and the New Unions*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939.
- Cell, John W. *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Cha-Jua, Sundiata Keita. *America's First Black Town: Brooklyn, Illinois, 1830-1915*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000.
- Chudacoff, Howard P. and Judith E. Smith. *The Evolution of American Urban Society*, 4th ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1994.
- Clark-Lewis, Elizabeth. *Living In, Living Out: African American Domesticity in Washington, D.C., 1910-1940*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994.
- Cecelski, David S. and Timothy B. Tyson. *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot and Its Legacy*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.
- Christian, Garna L. *Black Soldiers in Jim Crow Texas, 1899-1917*. College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1995.
- Clark-Lewis, Elizabeth. *Living In, Living Out: American Domesticity and the Great Migration*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1994.
- Clayton, Sheryl. *Black Men Role Models of Greater St. Louis*. East St. Louis: Essai Seay Publications, 1984.
- . *Black Women Role Models of Greater St. Louis*. East St. Louis: Essai Seay Publications 1983.
- Cohen, Lizabeth. *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

- Cohen, William. *At Freedom's Edge: Black Mobility and the Southern White Quest for Racial Control, 1861-1915*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991.
- Connelly, Mark Thomas. *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980.
- Cox, Oliver C. *Capitalism as a System*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964.
- Crew, Spencer R., *Black Life in Secondary Cities: A Comparative Analysis of the Black Communities of Camden and Elizabeth, N.J., 1860-1920*. New York: Garland, 1993.
- Cumbler, John T. *A Social History of Economic Decline: Business, Politics, and Work in Trenton*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989.
- Curriden, Mark, and Leroy Phillips, Jr. *Contempt of Court: The Turn-of-the-Century Lynching That Launched 100 Years of Federalism*. New York: Faber and Faber, 1999.
- Curtin, Philip D. *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969.
- Daniel, Pete. *Breaking the Land: The Transformation of Cotton, Tobacco, and Rice Cultures since 1880*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985.
- Davis, David Brion. *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975.
- . *Slavery and Human Progress*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Davis, Elizabeth Lindsay. *The Story of the Illinois Federation of Colored Women's Clubs*. Chicago: [s.n., 1922], reprint, New York: G.K. Hall, 1977.
- Dawley, Alan. *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- De Jong, Greta. *A Different Day: African American Struggles for Justice in Rural Louisiana, 1900-1970*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- De Vries, James E. *Race and Kinship in a Midwestern Town: The Black Experience in Monroe, Michigan, 1900-1915*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984.
- Delaney, David. *Race, Place, and the Law, 1836-1948*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998.
- Derber, Milton. *Labor in Illinois: The Affluent Years, 1945-80*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989.
- . *Union-Management Relations in East St. Louis*. Urbana: University of Illinois, Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, 1958.
- Diner, Steven J. *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1998.
- Dittmer, John. *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994.
- Dower, John W. *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*. New York: Pantheon, 1986.
- Drake, St. Clair, and Horace Cayton. *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*. 1944; reprint, University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- Dray, Philip. *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America*. New York: Random House, 2002.

- Du Bois, W.E.B. *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*. 1935; reprint, New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
- , *The Philadelphia Negro*. 1899; reprint, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1996.
- Dutcher, Dean. *The Negro in Modern Industrial Society: An Analysis of Changes in the Occupations of Negro Workers, 1910-1920*. Lancaster, Pa.: [s.n.], 1930.
- Egerton, John. *Speak Now Against the Day: The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement in the South*. New York: Knopf, 1994.
- Ellsworth, Scott. *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*. Louisiana State University, 1982.
- English, Edward. *The Good Things of East St. Louis*. Mascoutah, IL: Top's Books, 1992.
- Epstein, Abraham. *The Negro Migrant in Pittsburgh*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 1918.
- Feagin, Joe R., ed. *The Capitalist City: Global Restructuring and Community Politics*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1987.
- Finkle, Lee. *Forum for Protest: The Black Press during World War II*. Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 1975.
- Fogel, Walter A. *The Negro in the Meat Industry*. Philadelphia: Industrial Research Unit, Department of Industry, Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, University of Pennsylvania, 1970.
- Foley, Barbara. *Spectres of 1919: Class and Nation in the Making of the New Negro*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003.
- Foner, Eric. *Nothing but Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983.
- , *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. New York: Harper and Row, 1988.
- Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth, and Eugene D. Genovese, *Fruits of Merchant Capital: Slavery and Bourgeois Property in the Rise and Expansion of Capitalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Franklin, V.P. *Black Self-Determination: A Cultural History of African-American Resistance*. New York: Lawrence Hill Books, 1992.
- Fredrickson, George M. *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914*. New York: Harper Row, 1971.
- Gaines, Kevin K. *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Gates, Paul W. *Landlords and Tenants on the Prairie Frontier*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1973.
- Gatewood, Willard B., Jr. "Smoked Yankees" and the Struggle for Empire: Letters from Negro Soldiers, 1898-1902. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971.
- Genovese, Eugene D. *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979.
- Giddings, Paula. *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*. New York: Morrow, 1984.

- Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth. *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Godshalk, David Fort. *Veiled Visions: The 1906 Atlanta Race Riot and the Reshaping of American Race Relations*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.
- Goings, Kenneth W. and Raymond A. Mohl, eds. *The New African American Urban History*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1991.
- Gordon, David M. and Richard Michael Reich. *Segmented Work, Divided Workers: The Historical Transformation of Labor in the United States*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Gottlieb, Peter. *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916-30*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1987.
- Grantham, Dewey W. *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983).
- Greenberg, Cheryl Lynn. *Or Does It Explode?: Black Harlem in the Great Depression*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Greenwald, Maurine Weiner. *Women, War, and Work: The Impact of World War I on Women Workers in the United States*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980.
- Greer, Edward. *Big Steel: Black Politics and Corporate Power in Gary, Indiana*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979.
- Gregg, Robert. *Sparks from the Anvil of Oppression: Philadelphia's African Methodists and Southern Migrants, 1890-1940*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.
- Griffler, Keith P. *What Price Alliance?: Black Radicals Confront White Labor, 1918-1938*. New York: Garland, 1995.
- Grimshaw, Allen D. ed. *Racial Violence in the United States*. Chicago: Aldine, 1969.
- Grossman, James R. *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Grover, Kathryn. *Make a Way Somehow: African-American Life in a Northern Community, 1790-1965*. (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1994.
- Grubbs, Donald. *Cry from the Cotton: The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and the New Deal*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971.
- Gutman, Herbert G. *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working Class and Social History*. New York: Vintage, 1977.
- Hahn, Steven. *A Nation under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003.
- . *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Hair, William Ivy. *Carnival of Fury: Robert Charles and the New Orleans Race Riot of 1900*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976.
- Hale, Grace Elizabeth. *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940*. New York: Pantheon, 1998.

- Hall, Jacquelyn Dowd. *Revolt against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign against Lynching*. Revised ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
- Halpern, Rick. *Down on the Killing Floor: Black and White Workers in Chicago's Packinghouses, 1904-54*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997.
- Halpern, Rick and Jonathan Morris, ed. *American Exceptionalism?: U.S. Working-Class Formation in an International Context*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.
- Harlan, Louis R., ed. *The Booker T. Washington Papers*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972.
- Harper, Robert A. *Metro East: Heavy Industry in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, Dept. of Geography, 1965.
- Harris, William H. *The Harder We Run: Black Workers since the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- Harrison, William J. *The First 75 Years, 1918-1993: The Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis*. St. Louis, MO: Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, 1993.
- Hartshorn, William Newton, ed. *Era of Progress and Promise, 1863-1910: The Religious, Moral, and Educational Development of the American Negro since His Emancipation*. Boston, Mass.: Priscilla Publishing Co., 1910.
- Harvey, David. *The Limits to Capital*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- Haynes, Robert V. *A Night of Violence: The Houston Riot of 1917*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976.
- Hendricks, Wanda A. *Gender, Race, and Politics in the Midwest: Black Club Women in Illinois*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.
- Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Hill, Robert A. Hill, ed. *The FBI's RACON: Racial Conditions in the United States during World War II*. Boston, Mass.: Northeastern University Press, 1995.
- Hirsch, Arnold. *Making of the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Honey, Michael Keith. *Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights: Organizing Memphis Workers*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993.
- Howard, Robert P. *Illinois: A History of the Prairie State*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1972.
- Hunter, Tera W. *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Ignatiev, Noel. *How the Irish Became White*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Jackson, Kenneth T. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Jackson, Walter A. *Gunnar Myrdal and America's Conscience: Social Engineering and Racial Liberation, 1938-1987*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.
- Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigration and the Alchemy of Race*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998.

- James, C.L.R. *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. 2nd ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.
- James, C.L.R., et al. *Fighting Racism in World War II*. New York: Monad Press, 1980.
- Jaynes, Gerald David. *Branches without Roots: Genesis of the Black Working Class in the American South*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Jones, Jacqueline. *American Work: Four Centuries of Black and White Labor*. New York: Norton, 1998.
- . *The Dispossessed: America's Underclasses from the Civil War to the Present*. New York: Basic Books, 1992.
- . *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to Present*. New York: Basic Books, 1985.
- Judd, Dennis R. and Robert S. Mendelson. *The Politics of Urban Planning: The East St. Louis Experience*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1973.
- Kachun, Mitch. *Festivals of Freedom: Memory and Meaning in African American Emancipation Celebrations, 1808-1915*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003.
- Katzman, David M. *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973.
- Kearney, Reginald. *African American Views of the Japanese: Solidarity or Sedition?* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998.
- Kelley, Robin D.G. *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.
- Kelly, Brian. *Race, Class, and Power in the Alabama Coalfields, 1908-21*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001.
- Keyssar, Alexander. *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States*. New York: Basic Books, 2000.
- Kirby, Jack Templ. *Rural Worlds Lost: The American South, 1920-1960*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987.
- Kirby, John B. *Black Americans in the Roosevelt Era: Liberalism and Race*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980.
- Klier, John D. and Shlomo Lambroza, eds., *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Klinkner, Philip with Roger M. Smith. *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- Kornweibel, Theodore, Jr. *Investigate Everything: Federal Efforts to Compel Black Loyalty during World War I*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.
- . *"Seeing Red": Federal Campaigns against Black Militancy, 1919-1925*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.
- Kousser, J. Morgan. *The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910*. New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 1974).
- Kusmer, Kenneth L. *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870-1930*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976.

- Lender, Mark Edward, James Kirby Martin. *Drinking in America: A History*. Rev. and expanded ed. New York: Free Press, 1987.
- Letwin, Daniel. *The Challenge of Interracial Unionism: Alabama Coal Miners, 1878-1921*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.
- Lewis, David Levering, W.E.B. Du Bois: *Biography of a Race, 1868-1919*. New York: Holt, 1993.
- Lewis, Earl. *In Their Own Interests: Race, Class, and Power in Twentieth-Century Norfolk, Virginia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Lichtenstein, Nelson. *Labor's War at Home: The CIO in World War II*. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Litwack, Leon F. *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery*. New York: Knopf, 1979.
- , *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow*. New York: Knopf, 1998.
- Locke, Alain, ed. *The New Negro: An Interpretation*. New York, Macmillan, 1925.
- Loewen, James W. *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*. New York: New Press, 2005.
- Logan, John R., Harvey L. Molotch. *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- Logan, Rayford. *Betrayal of the Negro: From Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson*. 1954; reprint, New York: Macmillan, 1972.
- MacLean, Nancy. *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Marks, Carole. *Farewell—We're Good and Gone: The Great Black Migration*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- Martin, Tony. *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association*. Dover, Mass.: Majority Press, 1976.
- Massey, Douglas S., and Nancy A. Denton. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- McAdam, Doug. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- McLaughlin, Malcolm. *Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005.
- McMurry, Linda O. *To Keep the Waters Troubled: The Life of Ida B. Wells*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Meier, August. *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963.
- Meier, August, and Elliott Rudwick. *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942-1968*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- Meyer, Stephen Grant. *As Long As They Don't Move Next Door: Segregation and Racial Conflict in American Neighborhoods*. Lanham, MD.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000.

- Miller, Zane L., Patricia M. Melvin. *The Urbanization of Modern America: A Brief History*. 2nd ed. San Diego, Calif.: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1987.
- Mixon, Gregory. *The Atlanta Riot: Race, Class, and Violence in a New South City*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005.
- Mohl, Raymond A. *The New City: Urban America in the Industrial Age, 1860-1920*. Arlington Heights, IL.: Harlan Davidson, 1985.
- , and Neil Betten. *Steel City: Urban and Ethnic Patterns in Gary, Indiana, 1906-1950*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986.
- Mollenkopf, John H. *The Contested City*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- Monkkonen, Eric H. *America Becomes Urban: The Development of U.S. Cities and Towns, 1780-1980*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
- Montgomery, David. *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Moore, Jesse Thomas, Jr. *A Search for Equality: The National Urban League, 1910-1961*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1981.
- Morris, Aldon D. *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*. New York: Free Press, 1984.
- Mumford, Kevin J. *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
- Myrdal, Gunnar. *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. New York: Harper, 1944.
- Naison, Mark. *Communists in Harlem during the Depression*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983.
- Newby, I.A. Newby. *The Development of Segregationist Thought*. Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1968.
- Nore, Ellen. *St. Louis National Stockyards Company: East Side Story, 125 Years*. [S.l.]: St. Louis National Stockyards Company, 1998.
- Northrup, Herbert R. *Organized Labor and the Negro*. New York: Harper, 1944.
- Nunes, Bill. *Coming of Age in '40s and '50s East St. Louis*. Glen Carbon, IL: Nunes, 1995.
- Osofsky, Gilbert. *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto, 1890-1903*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.
- Painter, Nell Irvin. *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction*. New York: Knopf, 1977.
- , *The Narrative of Hosea Hudson: His Life as a Communist*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Payne, Charles M. *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Payne, Charles M. and Adam Green, eds. *Time Longer Than Rope: A Century of African American Activism, 1850-1950*. New York: New York University Press, 2003.
- Perry, Jeffrey B., ed., *A Hubert Harrison Reader*. Middletown, CT.: Wesleyan University Press, 2001.

- Phillips, Kimberley L. *Alabama North: African-American Migrants, Community, and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland, 1915-45*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999.
- Philpott, Thomas. *The Slum and the Ghetto: Neighborhood Deterioration and Middle Class Reform, Chicago, 1880-1930*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Powers, Madelon. *Faces Along the Bar: Lore and Order in the Workingman's Saloon, 1870-1920*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Prather, H. Leon, Sr. *We Have Taken a City: Wilmington Racial Massacre and Coup of 1898*. [Canbury, N.J.] Associated University Presses, 1984.
- Primm, James Neal. *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri, 1764-1980*. 3rd ed. St. Louis, MO.: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1998.
- Putney, Martha S. *When the Nation Was in Need: Blacks in the Women's Army Corps during World War II*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1992.
- Rabinowitz, Howard N. *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980.
- Rawley, James A. *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History*. New York: Norton, 1981.
- Record, Wilson. *Race and Radicalism: The NAACP and the Communist Party in Conflict*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1964.
- Reed, Christopher. *The Chicago NAACP and the Rise of Black Professional Leadership, 1910-1966*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Richardson, Heather Cox. *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Roediger, David R. *Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- . *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. London: Verso, 1991.
- . *Working toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White, the Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs*. New York: Basic Books, 2005.
- Rudé, George. *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848*. New York: Wiley, 1964.
- Rudwick, Elliott M. *Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917*. Carbonadale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964.
- Saxton, Alexander. *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.
- Schechter, Patricia A. *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880-1930*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.
- Schiesl, Martin J. *The Politics of Efficiency: Municipal Administration and Reform in America, 1800-1920*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.
- Schneider, Mark Robert. *"We Return Fighting": The Civil Rights Movement in the Jazz Age*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002.
- Scott, Daryl Michael. *Contempt and Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880-1996*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.

- Scott, Emmett J. *Negro Migration during the War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1920; reprint, New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969.
- Senechal, Roberta. *The Sociogenesis of a Race Riot: Springfield, Illinois, in 1908*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990.
- Sernett, Milton C. *Bound for the Promised Land: African American Religion and the Great Migration*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.
- Shapiro, Herbert. *White Violence and Black Response: From Reconstruction to Montgomery*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988.
- Singh, Nikhil Pal. *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Sitkoff, Harvard. *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue: The Depression Decade*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Smith, Susan L. *Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired: Black Women's Health Activism in America, 1890-1950*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995.
- Southern, David. *Gunnar Myrdal and Black-White Relations: The Use and Abuse of "An American Dilemma," 1944-1969*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987.
- Spear, Allan H. *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.
- Stein, Judith. *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986.
- Strain, Christopher B. *Pure Fire: Self-defense as Activism in the Civil Rights Era*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005.
- Sugrue, Thomas J. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Sullivan, Patricia. *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Taylor, Graham Romeyn. *Satellite Cities: A Study of Industrial Suburbs*. New York: Appleton, 1915; reprint, New York: Arno Press, The New York Times, 1970.
- Taylor, Henry Louis, Jr., ed. *Race and the City: Work, Community, and Protest in Cincinnati, 1820-1970*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993.
- , and Walter Hill, eds. *Historical Roots of the Urban Crisis: African Americans in the Industrial City, 1900-1950*. New York: Garland, 2000.
- Taylor, Quintard. *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994.
- Teaford, Jon C. *Cities of the Heartland: The Rise and Fall of the Industrial Midwest*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Theising, Andrew J. *Made in USA: East St. Louis, The Rise and Fall of an Industrial River Town*. St. Louis, MO.: Virginia Publishing, 2003.
- Theoharis, Jeanne and Komozi Woodard, eds. *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
- Thomas, June Manning, and Marsha Ritzdorf, eds. *Urban Planing and the African American Community: In the Shadows*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage, 1997.

- Thomas, Lewis F. *The Localization of Business Activities in Metropolitan St. Louis*. St. Louis, MO.: [Washington University], 1927.
- Thomas, Richard W. *Life for Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- Thornton, John. *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680*. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Tingley, Donald F. *The Structuring of a State: The History of Illinois, 1899 to 1928*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1980.
- Tregillis, Helen Cox. *River Roads to Freedom: Fugitive Slave Notices and Sheriff Notices Found in Illinois Sources*. Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1988.
- Trotter, Joe William, Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-45*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985.
- , *Coal, Class, and Color: Blacks in Southern West Virginia, 1915-32*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990.
- , ed. *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- , *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998.
- , and Earl Lewis, eds. *African Americans in the Industrial Age: A Documentary History, 1915-1945*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996.
- Tuttle, William M., Jr. *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919*. New York: Atheneum, 1970.
- Tyson, Robert A. *History of East St. Louis: Its Resources, Statistics, Railroads, Physical Features, Business and Advantages*. East St. Louis, Ill.: John Haps & Co., 1875.
- Van Deburg, William, ed., *Modern Black Nationalism: From Marcus Garvey to Louis Farrakhan*. New York: New York University Press, 1997.
- Vaz, Kim Marie, ed. *Black Women in America*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage, 1995.
- Wade, Richard. *The Urban Frontier: Pioneer Life in Early Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Lexington, Louisville, and St. Louis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959.
- Wallace, Phyllis A. *Black Women in the Labor Force*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1980.
- Weinstein, James. *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State, 1900-1918*. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1968.
- Weiss, Nancy J. *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln: Black Politics in the Age of Lincoln*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- , *The National Urban League, 1910-1940*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Wells-Barnett, Ida B. *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*. New York: New York Age Print, 1892.
- Williams, Eric. *Capitalism & Slavery*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944.
- Williams, Lillian Serece. *Strangers in the Land of Paradise: The Creation of an African American Community, Buffalo, New York, 1900-1940*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.

- Williamson, Joel. *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Wilson, William Julius. *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- , *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Woodman, Harold D. *New South—New Law: The Legal Foundations of Credit and Labor Relations in the Postbellum Agricultural South*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995.
- Woodruff, Nan Elizabeth. *American Congo: The African American Freedom Struggle in the Delta*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Woodward, C. Vann. *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951.
- Wright, George C. *Life Behind a Veil: Blacks in Louisville, Kentucky, 1865-1930*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985.
- Wynn, Neil A. *The Afro-American and the Second World War*. 2nd ed. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1993.
- Yelvington, Ruben L. *East St. Louis: The Way It Is*. Mascoutah, IL: Top's Books, 1990.
- Zangrando, Robert L., *The NAACP Crusade against Lynching, 1909-1950*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980.

Dissertations

- Boxerman, Lawrence Harvey. "St. Louis Urban League: History and Activities." Ph.D. diss., St. Louis University, 1968.
- Brunn, Paul Dennis. "Black Workers and Social Movements of the 1930s in St. Louis." Ph.D. diss., Washington University, 1975.
- Cha-Jua, Sundiata Keita. "Founded by Chance/Sustained by Courage: Black, Power, Class, and Dependency in Brooklyn, Illinois, 1830-1915." Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1993.
- Christensen, Lawrence Oland. "Black St. Louis: A Study in Race Relations, 1865-1916," Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, 1972.
- Day, Richard Lorey. "East St. Louis: A Transportation and Freight Traffic Center." Ph.D., diss., University of Illinois, 1959.
- Duncan, Hannibal Gerald. "The Changing Race Relationship in the Border and Northern States." Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1922.
- Forsythe, Edwin James. "The St. Louis Central Trades and Labor Union, 1887-1945." Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, Columbia, 1956.
- Gard, Lura Mary, "East St. Louis and the Railroads to 1875," MA, thesis: Washington University, 1947.
- Green, Laurie Beth. "Battling the Plantation Mentality: Consciousness, Culture, and the Politics of Race, Class and Gender in Memphis, 1940-1968." Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1999.

- Hadac, Thomas Frank. "Bi-State St. Louis: Factors Significant to the Emergence of a Governing Leadership for the Missouri-Illinois Metropolitan Area, 1949-1965." Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1975.
- Holmes, Harry Dadisman. "Socio-Economic Patterns of Non-Partisan Political Behavior in the Industrial Metropolis: St. Louis, 1895 to 1916." Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, Columbia, 1973.
- Johnson, A. Alfred Alexander. "A Culturological Survey of Racial Migrations in Southern Illinois and Their Effects on the Emergence of Black United Methodism in the City of East Saint Louis." Th.M. thesis, Boston University, 1974.
- Landis, Anthony M. "They Refused To Stay in Their Place: African American Organized Resistance During the Springfield, Illinois, Race Riot of 1908." MA thesis: Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, 2002.
- Lightner, David Lee. "Labor on the Illinois Central Railroad, 1852-1900." Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1969.
- Long, Suzanna Maupin. "'I Made It Mine Tho the Queen Waz Always Fair': The St. Louis Black Clubwoman Movement, 1931-1946." MA thesis: University of Missouri, St. Louis, 1988.
- Schmidt, Elizabeth Noel. "Civic Pride and Prejudice: St. Louis Progressive Reform, 1900-1916." MA Thesis: University of Missouri, St. Louis, 1986.
- Theising, Andrew J. "Profitable Boundaries: Incorporating the Industrial Suburb." Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri at St. Louis, 1997.

Articles and Essays

- Abell, John B., "The Negro in Industry," *Trade Winds* (March 1924): 17-20.
- Allen, Ernest, Jr., "Waiting for Tojo: The Pro-Japan Vigil of Black Missourians, 1932-1943," *Gateway Heritage* (Fall 1995): 38-55.
- , "When Japan Was 'Champion of the Darker Races': Satokata Takahashi and the Flowering of Black Messianic Nationalism," *Black Scholar* 24, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 23-46.
- Altes, Jane A., "East St. Louis: A Persevering Community," in Daniel Milo Johnson, Rebecca Monroe Veach, eds., *The Middle-Size Cities of Illinois: Their People, Politics, and Quality of Life*. Springfield, IL: Sangamon State University, 1980. 89-101.
- Anderson, Sherwood, "Nobody's Home," *Today: An Independent National Weekly*, 30 March 1935.
- Asher, Robert, "Documents of the Race Riot at East St. Louis," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 65 (1972): 327-336.
- Baker, Ray Stannard, "The Negro Goes North," *World's Work*, (July 1917): 314-319.
- Baldwin, Carl R., "East St. Louis," *St. Louis Commerce* (November & December 1982): 68-71, 74, 76, 78, & 42-46, 48.
- Baldwin, Carl R., "The East St. Louis That Was," in *Celebrating the One Hundred and Tenth Anniversary of the First Presbyterian Church of East St. Louis, Illinois*, July 14, 1977. East St. Louis, IL: s.n., 1977.

- Barrett, James R. and David Roediger, "Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality and the New Immigrant Working Class," in Rick Halpern & Jonathan Morris, eds., *American Exceptionalism?: US Working-Class Formation in an International Context*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. 181-220.
- Bartholomew, Harland, "Decadence in the Cities," *East St. Louis Today* 7, no. 4 (October 1938): 17-18.
- Barton, John W., "Negro Migration," *Methodist Quarterly Review* 74 (January 1925): 84-101.
- Budenz, Louis F., "The East St. Louis Riots," *National Municipal Review* 6 (September 1917): 622.
- Carlson, Shirley J., "Black Migration to Pulaski County, Illinois, 1860-1900," *Journal of the Illinois Historical Society* 80, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 37-46.
- Cha-Jua, Sundiata Keita, "A Warlike Demonstration": Legalism, Armed Resistance, and Black Political Mobilization in Decatur, Illinois, 1894-1898," *Journal of Negro History*, 83 no. 1 (Winter 1998): 52-72
- Colten, Craig E., "Environmental Development in the East St. Louis Region, 1890-1970," *Environmental History Review* 14, no. 1-2 (Spring/Summer 1990): 93-114.
- , "Environmental Justice on the American Bottom: The Legal Response to Pollution, 1900-1950," in Andrew Hurley, ed., *Common Fields: An Environmental History of St. Louis*. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1977. 165-175.
- Dalfiume, Richard M., "The 'Forgotten Years' of the Negro Revolution," *Journal of American History* 55 (1968): 90-106.
- Davis, P.O., "The Negro Exodus and Southern Agriculture," *American Review of Reviews* 68 (October 1923): 401-407.
- Day, David S., "Herbert Hoover and Racial Politics: The DePriest Incident," *Journal of Negro History* 65 (Winter 1980): 6-17.
- Dilliard, Irving, "Civil Liberties of Negroes in Illinois since 1865," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 56, no. 3 (Autumn 1963): 592-624.
- Ellis, Mark, "W.E.B. Du Bois and the Formation of Black Opinion in World War I: A Commentary on 'The Damnable Dilemma,'" *Journal of American History* 81 (March 1995): 1584-1590.
- Fairclough, Adam, "'Being in the Field of Education and Also Being a Negro ... Semes ... Tragic': Black Teachers in the Jim Crow South," *Journal of American History*, 87 (June 2000): 65.
- Farnham, Dwight Thompson, "Negroes, a Source of Industrial Labor," *Factory and Industrial Management* (August 1918): 123-129.
- Fehn, Bruce, "African-American Women and the Struggle for Equality in the Meatpacking Industry, 1940-1960," *Journal of Women's History* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1968): 45-69.
- Fields, Barbara J., "Of Rogues and Geldings," *American Historical Review* 108 (December 2003): 1397-1405.
- , "Origins of the New South and the Negro Question," *Journal of Southern History* 67 (November 2001): 811-826.

- ., "Whiteness, Racism, and Identity," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60 (Fall 2001): 48-56.
- Fishback, Mason McCloud, "Illinois Legislation on Slavery and Free Negroes, 1818-1865," *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society* 9 (1904): 414-432.
- Fletcher, Ralph and Mildred Fletcher, "Some Data on Occupations among Negroes in St. Louis from 1866 to 1877," *Journal of Negro History* 20, no. 2 (April 1935): 338-341
- Franklin, Vincent P. "The Philadelphia Race Riot of 1918," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 99, 3 (1975): 336-350.
- Fry, Charles Luther, "The Negro in the United States—A Statistical Statement," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 140 (November 1928): 26-35.
- Gertz, Elmer. "The Black Laws of Illinois," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 56, no. 3 (Autumn 1963): 454-473.
- Glymph, Thavolia. "'Liberty Dearly Bought': The Making of Civil War Memory in Afro-American Communities in the South," in *Time Longer Than Rope*, 111-139.
- Goings, Kenneth W. and Raymond A. Mohl, "Toward a New African American Urban History," in Goings and Mohl, eds., *The New African American Urban History*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1991. 8-9.
- Gompers, Samuel, "East St. Louis Riots—Their Causes," *American Federationist* 24, no. 8 (August 1917): 621-626.
- Gordon, David M., "Capitalist Development and the History of American Cities," in William K. Tabb and Larry Sawers, eds., *Marxism and the Metropolis: New Perspectives in Urban History in Urban Political Economy*. 2nd. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984. 25-63.
- Gruening, Martha, "Democratic Massacres in East St. Louis," *Pearson's Magazine* (September 1917): 106-108.
- Hain, A.J., "Our Immigrant, the Negro," *Iron Trade Review* (September 13, 1923): 730-736.
- Haynes, Elizabeth Ross, "Negroes in Domestic Service in the United States," *Journal of Negro History* viii, 4 (October 1923): 384-442; reprint, in Elizabeth Ross Haynes, [Selected Works] New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1997): 537-596.
- Haynes, George Edmund, "Conditions Among Negroes in the Cities," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 49 (1913): 105-119.
- ., "Effect of War Conditions on Negro Labor," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 8 (February 1919): 299-312.
- ., "The Negro at Work: A Development of the War and a Problem of Reconstruction," *American Review of Reviews* 59 (April 1919): 389-393.
- ., "Negro Migration – Its Effect on Family and Community Life in the North," *Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work* (1924): 62-75.
- Hill, Joseph A., "Recent Northward Migration of the Negro," *Monthly Labor Review* 18, 3 (March 1924): 475-489.
- Hill, T. Arnold, "The Negro in Industry," *American Federationist* 32 (October 1925): 915-920.

- Hine, Darlene Clark, "Black Migration to the Urban Midwest: The Gender Dimension, 1915-1945," in Kenneth W. Goings and Raymond A. Mohl, eds., *The New African American Urban History*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1991. 240-265.
- Horney, Helen and William E. Keller, "The Negro's Two Hundred Forty Years in Illinois: A Chronology," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 56, 3 (Autumn 1963): 435-436.
- Gordon, Rita Werner, "The Change in the Political Alignment of Chicago's Negroes during the New Deal," *Journal of American History* 56 (December 1969): 584-603.
- Jackson, Kenneth T., "Race, Ethnicity, and Real Estate Appraisal: The Home Owners Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration," *Journal of Urban History* 6, 4 (August 1980): 419-452.
- Jenkins, Philip, "'A Wide-Open City': Prostitution in Progressive Era Lancaster," *Pennsylvania History* 65 (Autumn 1998): 509-526.
- Johnson, Charles S., "How the Negro Fits in Northern Industries," *Industrial Psychology* 1 (June 1926): 399-412.
- , "The Negro Migration," *Modern Quarterly* 2 (July 1925): 314-326.
- Jones, Jacqueline, "Southern Diaspora: Origins of the Northern 'Underclass,'" in Michael B. Katz, ed., *The "Underclass" Debate: Views from History*. Princeton University Press, 1983. 27-54.
- Jordan, William, "'The Damnable Dilemma': African American Accommodation and Protest during World War I," *Journal of American History* 81 (March 1995): 1562-1583.
- Judd, Dennis R. and Robert S. Mendelson, "The Context for Planning in East St. Louis," in Dennis R. Judd and Robert S. Mendelson. *The Politics of Urban Planning: The East St. Louis Experience*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1973. 3-40.
- Keiser, John H., "Black Strikebreakers and Racism in Illinois, 1865-1900," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 65, no. 3 (Autumn 1972): 313-326.
- Kelley, Robin D.G., "'We Are Not What We Seem': Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South," *Journal of American History* 80 (June 1993): 75-112.
- Kesselman, Louis C., "The Fair Employment Practice Commission Movement in Perspective," *Journal of Negro History* 31 (January 1946): 30-46.
- Kilson, Martin, "Political Change in the Negro Ghetto, 1900-1940s," in Nathan I. Huggins, Martin Kilson, Daniel M. Fox, eds., *Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 2:167-192.
- Kusmer, Kenneth L., "The Black Urban Experience in American History," in Darlene Clark Hine, *The State of Afro-American History: Past, Present, and Future*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986. 91-135.
- McLaughlin, Malcolm, "Reconsidering the East St. Louis Race Riot of 1917," *International Review of Social History* 47 (2002): 187-212.
- McWhirter, Felix M., "Alien Agitators Active," *East St. Louis Today* 3, 11 (May 1935): 9, 10, 18.

- Meier, August and Elliott M. Rudwick, "Early Boycotts of Segregated Schools: The Alton, Illinois, Case, 1897-1908," *Journal of Negro Education* 36, no. 4 (Fall 1967): 394-402.
- Ngozi-Brown, Scot, "African-American Soldiers and Filipinos: Racial Imperialism, Jim Crow and Social Relations," *Journal of Negro History*, 82, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 42-53.
- Norvell, Stanley B., William M. Tuttle, Jr., "Views of a Negro During 'The Red Summer' of 1919," *Journal of Negro History* 51 (July 1966): 209-218.
- Portwood, Shirley J., "'We Lifted Our Voices in Thunder Tones': African American Race Men and Race Women and Community Agency in Southern Illinois, 1895-1910," *Journal of Urban History* 26 (2000): 740-758.
- Reardon, Kenneth M., "State and Local Revitalization Efforts in East St. Louis, Illinois," in David Wilson, eds., "Globalization and the Changing U.S. City," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 551 (May 1997): 235-247.
- Reich, Steven A. Reich, "Soldiers of Democracy: Black Texans and the Fight for Citizenship, 1917-1921," *Journal of American History* 82 (March 1996): 1478-1504.
- Rudwick, Elliott M., "East St. Louis and the 'Colonization Conspiracy' of 1916," *Journal of Negro Education* 33, no. 1 (Winter 1964): 35-42.
- , "Fifty Years of Race Relations in East St. Louis: The Breaking Down of White Supremacy," *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1965): 3-15.
- Sitkoff, Harvard, "The New Deal and Race Relations," in Harvard Sitkoff, ed., *Fifty Years Later: The New Deal Evaluated*. New York: Knopf, 1985. 93-112.
- Sitkoff, Harvard, "Racial Militancy and Interracial Violence in the Second World War," *Journal of American History* 58 (December 1971): 661-681.
- Skotnes, Andor, "'Buy Where You Can Work': Boycotting for Jobs in African-American Baltimore, 1933-1934," *Journal of Social History*, 27, 4 (Summer 1994), 735-761.
- Smith, C.R.F., "East St. Louis Studies Americanism," *Nation* (March 9, 1932): 283-284.
- Smith, Duncan C., "Know Your East St. Louis: Aluminum, an Interesting Story about an East St. Louis Industry," *East St. Louis Today: Official Publication of the East St. Louis Chamber of Commerce* 4, no. 10 (April 1936): 7-8.
- Sugrue, Thomas J., "Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940-1964," *Journal of American History*, 82 (September 1995): 551-578.
- Swan, L. Alex, "When Whites Riot—The East St. Louis Massacre," *International Socialist Review* 34, no. 9 (October 1973): 12-24.
- Thornbrough, Emma Lou, "The National Afro-American League, 1887-1908," *Journal of Southern History*, 27 (November 1961): 494-512.
- Tingley, Donald F. "Blacks in Illinois: Contributions and Problems," in Donald F. Tingley, *The Structuring of a State: The History of Illinois, 1899 to 1928*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1980. 280-319.

- Trotter, Joe W[illiam], Jr., "African Americans in the City: The Industrial Era, 1900-1950," *Journal of Urban History* 21, no. 4 (May 1995): 438-457.
- ., "Blacks in the Urban North: The 'Underclass Question' in Historical Perspective," in Michael B. Katz, ed., *The "Underclass" Debate: Views from History*. Princeton University Press, 1993. 55-81.
- Watkins, Sylvestre C., Sr., "Some of Early Illinois' Free Negroes," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 56, no. 3 (Autumn 1963): 495-507.
- Wheeler, Joanne, "Together in Egypt: A Pattern of Race Relations in Cairo, Illinois, 1865-1915," in Orville Vernon Burton and Robert C. McMath, Jr., *Toward a New South?: Studies in Post-Civil War Southern Communities*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982.
- Wye, Christopher, "The New Deal and the Negro Community: Toward a Broader Conceptualization," *Journal of American History* 59 (December 1972): 621-639.

Vita

Charles L. Lumpkins

Charles L Lumpkins earned a Bachelor of Science in History and Sociology from Boston State College (records absorbed by the University of Massachusetts Boston), a Master of Library Science from Simmons College in Boston, and a Master of Arts in History from the University of Maine, Orono. He worked for twenty years as a professional librarian mainly in academic libraries in Massachusetts, Maine, and most recently on the faculty at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania until 1997 when he began fulltime study in the doctoral program in history at The Pennsylvania State University. He will be conferred in May 2006 the Ph.D. in History with research areas in African American, labor, and twentieth century United States history.