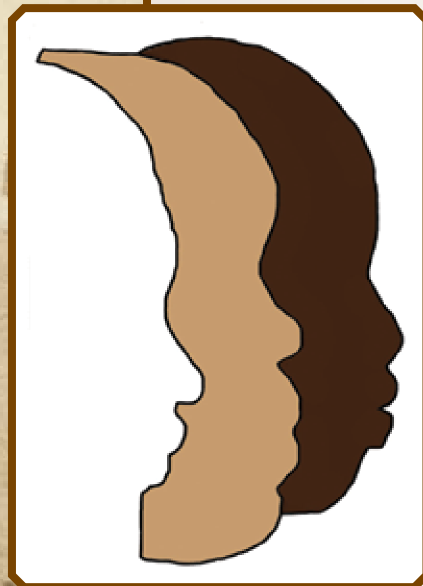
The AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE in TEMPE



The AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE in TEMPE

by Jared Smith

A publication of the Tempe History Museum and its African American Advisory Committee

Published with a grant from the Arizona Humanities Council

Photos courtesy of the Tempe History Museum, unless otherwise noted

Cover artwork by Aaron Forney

Acknowledgements

Like the old saying, “it takes a village to raise a child,” so it went with this booklet to document the African American history of Tempe, Arizona. At the center of this project is the Tempe History Museum’s African American Advisory Group, formed in 2008. The late Edward Smith founded the Advisory Group that year and served as Chair until February 2010. Members of the Advisory Group worked with the staff of the Tempe History Museum to apply for a grant from the Arizona Humanities Council that would pay for the printing costs of the booklet. Advisory Group members Mary Bishop, Dr. Betty Greathouse, Maurice Ward, Earl Oats, Dr. Frederick Warren, and Museum Administrator Dr. Amy Douglass all served on the Review Committee and provided suggestions, feedback, and encouragement for the booklet.

Volunteers, interns, staff, and other interested parties provided a large amount of research, editing, formatting, and other help. Dr. Robert Stahl, Chris Mathis, Shelly Dudley, John Tenney, Sally Cole, Michelle Reid, Sonji Muhammad, Sandra Apsey, Nathan Hallam, Joe Nucci, Bryant Monteihl, Cynthia Yanez, Jennifer Sweeney, Bettina Rosenberg, Robert Spindler, Christine Marin, Zack Tomory, Patricia A. Bonn, Andrea Erickson, Erika Holbein, Joshua Roffler, Dan Miller, Aaron Adams, Aaron Monson, Dr. James Burns, and Susan Jensen all made significant contributions to the booklet.

I have tried to include everyone, and apologize to anyone whose name I did not mention. Even with many eyes checking on the author’s work, a few errors and missteps may have still slipped through. For any and all errors, omissions, and the like, I bear full responsibility.

Dedication

This volume is dedicated in memory of Edward Smith and Larry Wilson. Both of these gentlemen passed away before the project was completed. Edward’s spirit was at the heart of both the African American Advisory Group and this booklet project – without his dedication and determination, this history might yet remain untold. Larry brought creativity, artistic skill, and passion to the Advisory Group. Both of these men are missed, but their dedication to community, family, history, and Tempe will endure for a long time to come.

Chapter 1: The Early Years of the African American Experience in Tempe

They came from Louisiana and Mississippi, and the reasons they came were for more jobs, higher salary, and, they thought, less racism and discrimination. **Dr. Betty Greathouse speaking about what drew her family to Arizona in the 1920s, from an oral history interview conducted April 9, 2009**

1

Introduction

The story of African American pioneer settlement in Tempe begins like those of most of the people who came to the Arizona Territory in the early years. They came to Arizona for new opportunities, a fresh start, and even as an escape from the places that they had lived before. Of course, a unique aspect of pioneering westward for African Americans was to escape the violence and extreme racism of the Jim Crow South. Arriving in Arizona, black pioneers realized quickly that prejudice, racism, and segregation preceded them.

John Barber, who arrived in Phoenix in 1918 recalls, "When I first came here, it wasn't much different than in the South. The only difference here was that they didn't lynch you. And they weren't too crazy about letting Colored people in colleges at Tucson or Phoenix (Tempe)."[1]

African American pioneers saw new opportunities and possibilities in Arizona despite the drawbacks of their new home. Whether they were soldiers, cowboys, freighters, doctors, miners, cooks, blacksmiths, general laborers, or

This Pullman Porter is one of the black pioneers who came to Arizona with the railroad.

health seekers, black pioneers staked their claim in the new territory with the aim to make a better life for themselves and their children.

In 1870, the census for the Territory counted just twenty-eight African American residents. A decade later, that number was just 155. However,

with the coming of the railroad in the 1880s, the number of black settlers jumped along with those of all other groups. The 1890 census counted 1,357 black residents in Arizona.

2

Buffalo Soldiers – The Military Experience

Prior to the mid-1880s, "Buffalo Soldiers" – as black troops in the regular army came to be known – campaigned against Apache warriors in New Mexico in lengthy campaigns that often spilled over into Arizona. Beginning in the 1880s, black soldiers were posted to long-term stations in Arizona. In 1885, the 10th Cavalry Regiment came to Arizona to participate in the pursuit of Geronimo and to put down the latest outbreaks

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Buffalo Soldiers, like this sergeant from the 10th Cavalry, were among the earliest black settlers in the Salt River Valley.

of guerilla warfare with Chiricahua Apache tribes. In November 1886, Troop M of the 10th Cavalry joined the garrison of Fort McDowell.[2] The Buffalo Soldiers of Troop M remained at this post until September 1887.[3]

Also in 1887, the Southern Pacific Railroad arrived in Tempe. Soldiers and supplies would pass through the Tempe depot on a regular basis.

Among the earliest African American settlers of Tempe, only one man has so far been identified as a likely veteran of Buffalo Soldier service. Theodore Charles Thomas, who came to Tempe in 1906 and owned a barber shop on Mill for the next two decades, was likely one of the 10th Cavalrymen who came to Arizona in 1885. In all likelihood, other early African American settlers in Tempe were also military veterans, whether as Buffalo Soldiers, sailors, or national guardsmen.

3

Tempe: Historical Context and Racial Climate in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries

Until the late 20th Century, Tempe was a place that not only did not welcome black residents, but discouraged them. The question is, how was such an atmosphere created? It is important to consider some of the factors that contributed to Tempe's unique climate of racial intolerance.

The Arizona Territory of the late 19th Century was a racially diverse place. Native Americans and Hispanic pioneers were joined by settlers of Anglo-European descent. After the Civil War

Tempe'sMethodistChurchremaineddividedbetween North and South (pictured) until 1912.

ended in 1865, veterans from both the North and South migrated to the Territory. No doubt there were some differences in attitudes between white veterans when it came to race.

One of the few instances in Tempe that could be found of a legal statute directed at a specific race of people was a law that discriminated against Native Americans. On January 6, 1895, the Tempe Town Council passed an ordinance which prohibited "Indians appearing in Tempe without sufficient clothing to cover the person, or remaining in Tempe during the period from sunset to sunrise."[4]

Tempe also was known as a "sundown" town with regards to African Americans for many years. At least until the 1960s, Tempe had an unwritten code that African Americans were not welcome. In 2011, Dr. Betty Greathouse, an Arizona State University professor emeritus with deep family roots in Arizona noted "African Americans were not allowed to be in the city after sun down or they would be harassed."[5]

Attitudes about race were often subtle and complex in Tempe and it's neighboring communities. This is not to lessen the fact of racism and its tangible effects. The following quote, written by the grandson of William Kirkland, one of the men who helped build Tempe's first irrigation ditch, helps to illustrate this point:

> *In territorial days, there was a genuine community spirit which taught that help should be given to those in need. Such aid was considered not charity but mutual support. The individual belonged to the community, but knew everyone in it irrespective of his economic group, race or social class. There was racial prejudice aplenty, but in hard times, settlers submerged their differences and truly worked together.*[6]

The nuance indicated by the above statement is supported by some of the facts related to the treatment of racial and ethnic groups in territorial Tempe. Town founder Charles Hayden befriended Native American farmers and welcomed their business at his flour mill. Hayden also processed the wheat of Mexican farmers and employed them as mill workers, blacksmiths, and freight operators. Intermarriage, friendships, and working relationships between Euro-American and Mexican settlers, well-illustrated by the integrated families of such early settlers as Dr. W. W. Jones and Winchester Miller, help to underline the complexity of race relations in the early 20th Century and before.

While we cannot say for certain how black residents were received prior to the turn-of-the-century, the fact remains that a handful of African Americans settled in or near Tempe in the 1890s. If the warm sentiments directed toward some of these pioneers in the early 20th Century are any indicator – specifically Theodore Thomas and John Wesley Boggs (who arrived soon after Thomas) – we can assume that there was at least a small measure of tolerance extended to black settlers, despite the ever-present prejudices of the day. If nothing else, in the frontier towns of the American West there were still occasions to "submerge… their differences" in order to survive.

One development in the 1880s that would have a profound impact on the future of Tempe and its racial dynamic was the coming of the railroad. Although the following quote from a historic property survey of Phoenix focuses on residents of Mexican ancestry in that city, the dynamic that it discusses has a relevance to all local residents of racial and ethnic groups who were considered minorities by the turn-of-the-century:

> *[Once the railroad was established] Promoters wanted to "boost" Phoenix as a good city for new*

residents — a campaign that focused on white residents only. As a result, the economic ties which linked Mexican and Anglo settlers began to deteriorate. … Mixed marriages and inter-ethnic business partnerships decreased and discrimination frequented the Mexican community forcing upon them a second-class status.[7]

While the coming of the railroad facilitated the possibility of prosperity previously unheard of for most Arizonans, its arrival would be a mixed blessing for settlers outside of the Euro-American community.

Oby Family, Bryan Monteilh (documentary film "A Legacy in the Valley")

Ada (Green) Lewis, born in Phoenix in 1874, lived in Tempe in the 1890s with her family.

4

Mary Green's Family in Tempe

Ms. Mary Green of Phoenix is the first African American settler known to have purchased land in what is now Tempe. Up to the 1880s, Mary and her family lived in the Phoenix area at the home of Mary and Columbus Gray where she was employed as a cook. Mary homesteaded 160 acres in 1888 near the modern intersection of Rural and Warner Roads. Between 1888 and 1891, she made improvements to the property amounting to $250.00, including having a modest red brick house built. Mary shared ownership of the property with Moses G. Green, her oldest son.

Members of the Green Family may have been the first African Americans to settle in Tempe on a long term basis. Perhaps the earliest mention of the Green Family in Tempe beyond homestead documents is a reference to Moses Green as a "colored barber in Tempe" in the *Arizona Republican* on August 9, 1893. Ada, the younger of Mary's two daughters, had moved to Tempe by 1894. Her son Archie is the first African American child known to be born in Tempe. In 1895, she gave birth to her second child, Susie. It is not known what became of Ada's first husband, Edward D. Jones. On September 2, 1896, Ada married Joseph Alexander Lewis in Tempe. Exactly how long they remained in Tempe is not clear, nor is it known where they lived during their residence.

In May 1896, Mary sold the last 75 acres of her original Tempe homestead to James Kasson. Mary returned to Phoenix by 1900. Sons Jack and Jerry moved with her. By 1910, Mary was living with Ada and her family. Joseph was not listed as a member of the household at this time and his situation is unknown. It appears that most

of the Green Family returned to the Phoenix area by 1900. The territorial population of Arizona tended to move around a lot, looking for a better life.

Unlike most of his family, Moses Green put down deeper roots in Tempe. As owner of portions of his mother's homestead, Moses was directly invested in Tempe and may have farmed on the family's land. The land had irrigation rights and received water via the Tempe irrigation system. If nothing else, Moses was probably involved in the long, difficult process of clearing, leveling and grading the land, and digging ditches to prepare it for irrigation farming. As already mentioned, Moses was cutting hair in Tempe by 1893, although it is not known if this was a long term career.

Oby Family, Bryan Monteilh (documentary film "A Legacy in the Valley")

The children of Ada & Joseph Lewis: Archie, Millie, Eddie and Susie. Archie & Susie are the first known African Americans born in Tempe.

Moses married Ms. Callie Williams on August 7, 1893. The following year, on Feb. 11, their daughter Daisy Ray was born. Whether or not Moses, Callie, and Daisy Ray lived in Tempe is unknown, although considering Moses' Tempe connections in the 1890s, this seems likely. For whatever reason, Moses and Callie parted ways as she was listed as "widowed" in the 1900 census, despite the fact that her ex-husband was very much alive and counted in Tempe by the same census. Sadly, Daisy Ray passed away on June 25, 1902, a victim of acute nephritis, which probably led to kidney failure.

Moses ran into a number of legal troubles during the 1890s. In October 1893, he was required to pay over $380 in restitution to W. A. Bolton over a complaint filed with the County Recorder's office. The following month, Moses turned over all or part of his portion of the Section 15 property in Tempe to his mother, possibly in an effort to cover the payment to Mr. Bolton.

In May of the following year, Moses was charged with forging a $100 note to Wildman, Peters, and Goldman of Tempe. (One of the forged names was that of Columbus Gray. Columbus and his wife, Mary, had close ties to the Greens going back to Arkansas, well before both families settled together in Phoenix in 1868.) Moses was acquitted of the forgery charge shortly thereafter. However, in August Moses ran into trouble again when he was arrested by Tempe's constable for the "misappropriation" of a horse. Exactly what was the outcome of this situation is unknown.

The 1900 census showed Moses making his home in Tempe. Around 1903, he married his second wife with whom he had three children. His new wife, Eunice, was Native American. Their three sons were J. Chris (born ca. 1904), Julius (born ca. 1906), and C. Andres (born February 1908).[8] That things seem to have been settling down for Moses is suggested by the birth announcement for Andres in the *Arizona Republican*, "Mr. and Mrs. Mose Green are the proud parents of a nine pound baby boy."[9] Exactly where the Greens lived in Tempe is unclear, although Moses was listed as living in the Rural Free Delivery No. 1 district by the

The unidentified black man in this Tempe Cotton Exchange photo may be one of Tempe's African American pioneers.

1905 city directory, part of the agricultural area around Tempe.

Moses is generally listed as a laborer during these years, although he had a variety of jobs, including work as a barber, porter, and probably also driving freight wagons. It was not unusual for people in the territorial period to hop back and forth between different vocations. Such was the case for Moses Green. Recorded as residing in Tempe for most of the period from the 1890s to 1930s, Moses is the most long-term African American resident known to have called Tempe home prior to the latter half of the 20th Century.

Fred Green, the third of Mary Green's children, moved to Tempe from Cananea, Sonora, with his wife, Christina, and their son, Frederick Jr. By 1914 they moved into a house on Creamery Road (an old name for the portion of 8th Street that runs east from Rural Road to the Tempe Creamery). Fred's occupation was listed as "huckster" in the 1914 city directory, period slang for a door-to-door salesman or street vendor. However, Fred was also a farmer. In October 1917, Fred died while in Phoenix when his cerebral artery ruptured. His brother, Jack (Green) Gray, attended to the particulars of Fred's death certificate. (Jack Green was adopted by Mary & Columbus Gray in the early 1900s) Fred's remains were removed to the Double Butte Cemetery in Tempe, and he is the first known member of the Green Family to be buried there. Unfortunately, Tempe's Double Butte Cemetery today has no record of Fred's burial.

5

African American Settlers in Tempe through the Early Decades of the 20th Century

The 1900 census is the first census to record African American residents in Tempe.[10] In all, three black residents were counted and all were men in their thirties. They were Moses Green, Frank Fortson and Samuel Noble. Fortson, originally from Texas, worked as cook and servant at the homestead of a German immigrant named Albert J. Hansen and his family, located south of the Baseline and west of present-day Price Road.

The other black resident recorded at that time is Samuel Noble. A Virginian by birth, Noble was employed as a servant by the Hayden Family at their ranch home east of Tempe. Exactly how long he worked for the Haydens is unknown, but Sallie Hayden may have hired the young man to help with her family in the late 1890s when her husband's health was declining and their son, Carl, was away at school.

Before long, other African Americans began to settle in Tempe. While some were recorded by the census, many were not. Again, the transient nature of the territorial population and inconsistencies of recording the census led to the appearance that African Americans were practically absent from early Tempe. The fact is

This ca. 1898 photo of Tempe's Crimson Rims baseball team shows an unknown black player next to E.P. Carr (seated), founder of Carr's Mortuary.

that the small but steadily increasing numbers of African Americans moving to Tempe were beginning to create a black community. Perhaps the core of this fledgling community was a remarkable African American couple, Maggie and Theodore Thomas. The first known mention of Theodore C. Thomas with regards to Tempe is from the "Southside Section" of a local paper on August 28, 1900:

> *Many people in Tempe will be interested in knowing how Theodore Thomas, the colored horse-breaker and trainer of Tempe, who met with a serious accident on the Tempe road last spring, which broke open his skull, is getting along. Under the circumstances, he is getting along nicely, through [sic] of late he has not been so well and it is intended to perform another operation on his head the tenth of September. His right side is paralyzed. The hospital physicians, however, do not despair of his life.*[11]

Thomas, who survived these serious injuries, was a well-known barber and shop owner in Phoenix, having opened his business there sometime in the 1890s. While barbering was apparently his primary career path, Theodore Thomas was noted for a number of other specialized skills. The Thomas family moved to Tempe around 1906, although Theodore may have lived there before then.

Theodore was born in Texas in 1857 and Maggie was born during the war years in Mississippi around 1863. They married in Ellis, Texas in November 1877. In September the following year, Maggie gave birth to their son, Eugene A. Thomas, their only child. The 1880 census found the Thomas family living in Dallas. Theodore was already practicing his trade as a barber at this time. The census takers in 1880 noted that neither Maggie nor Theodore could write, although apparently they were able to read. Such a circumstance was not that unusual for many African Americans in the first decades

following emancipation, although Maggie and Theodore both learned how to write over the course of the following decades.

In April 1882, a new recruit named Theodore Thomas joined Troop I, 10th Cavalry at Fort Davis in west Texas. The 10th Cavalry, one of the U.S. Army's storied Buffalo Soldier regiments composed of black enlisted men and white officers, served in Texas for many years. Although it remains to be confirmed that this Theodore Thomas is the same man, there is a good chance that service with the 10th Cavalry is what brought the Thomas Family to Arizona. It might also help explain how Maggie and Theodore learned how to write. Many African American servicemen advanced their education in the military and no doubt this also opened doors to spouses as well.

During the summer of 1898, when enthusiasm ran high for the war with Spain and volunteers continued to enlist, Thomas was eager to join the effort:

> *Theodore C. Thomas the best natured colored man of his age in the world says he is going to the front as Colonel's valet when the new regiment leaves. He must have something to base the statement on for he joined the parade of volunteers last night and says he will leave for Whipple on Thursday…*[12]

The following year, Theodore made the papers on a number of occasions, once as the pitcher for a baseball team of "colored" barbers (who put out a challenge to white barbers with two beer kegs at stake) and a number of times as a champion dancer at charitable cake walk galas that were the rage at the time, some as far away as Texas. A newspaper story in November 1901 mentioned that, "There will be a high-toned colored ball in Padget hall next Monday night at which some new and fancy steps will be introduced by Prof. Theodore Thomas."[14]

Both Maggie and Theodore were active in the community in Phoenix, and they continued to be so after they moved to Tempe. Theodore joined the McKinley and Roosevelt Republican Club as a charter member, along with other local notable black residents, Frank Shirley, William Crump, and Joseph A. Lewis (Ada Green Lewis' husband).[15] For Maggie, even some years after the couple left Phoenix, she would come from Tempe to help run the Sunday school classes and preach on occasion at the African Methodist Episcopal Church.[16]

On January 7, 1906, the *Arizona Republican* reported that "Theo. Thomas of Phoenix, has opened a barber shop in the room north of the Casa Loma formerly occupied by Chris Borazzo."[17] The shop, on the west side of the street at 312 S. Mill, was well situated between the Casa Loma Hotel and the Hayden Family's Casa Vieja. They made a home at 108 S. Maple Avenue, a short distance from Theodore's shop.

In May 1908, the *Arizona Republican* reported:

> *Theodore Thomas of Tempe was in town yesterday trying to awaken enthusiasm in a celebration of the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies to*

The white rectangle marks Theodore Thomas' barber shop at 312 S. Mill Avenue, ca. 1907

be held near Tucson June 19. It is proposed that it shall take the form of a picnic in a grove along the railroad about six miles east of Tucson. There is to be the old fashioned Texas style of cooking. The vicinity of Tucson has been selected as the place for the celebration on account of its locality as the center of the colored population of the territory…[18]

Another article from early June states:

Hurray for Emancipation

Everybody who is glad he is emancipated, whatever his color or age or sex, is invited to come along and enjoy the excursion to Tucson… This excursion has been worked up by "Old Man Tom," better known as Theodore Thomas, the youngest old man on earth, and the best natured colored barber who ever tickled a white man's throat with the keen edge of a knife and knew just how deep he could cut without violating the law. This big show has been arranged in celebration of the emancipation of the negro race, but there is nothing to keep a white man from being glad also if he wants to…[19]

courtesy of Robert L. Mullen Photographs, AZ Collection, ASU Libraries

The two African American men in this photo are unidentified, although one could be Eugene Thomas, a known musician.

The excursion that "Old Man Tom" was putting together was headed for a major Juneteenth celebration of emancipation. He himself, along with his parents, were probably among the large population of African Americans in Texas officially set free by General Order No. 3 after Union troops arrived in Galveston in June 1865.

The Thomas' only child, their son Eugene, lived with them on Maple Avenue for at least a brief time during the decade. Although listed as a laborer in the local directory in 1912, Eugene was a musician. In the spring of 1897 Eugene embarked on a 450 mile bicycle trip from El Paso to Phoenix following the bed of the Southern Pacific Railroad.[20] The following year Eugene married Ms. Daisy Brewer in El Paso. Before long the couple had a child, Geraldine, who was born around 1900. The young family eventually made their way to Phoenix, but their marriage would not last and Daisy cited "desertion and failure to support" during divorce proceedings. As it turned out, Daisy remarried not long thereafter to a barber named Simon P. Clark.[21]

The 1910 census shows the Clarks living on Maple Avenue, not far from the Thomas'. Maggie and Theodore's granddaughter, Geraldine, lived with her mother and Simon. Before long, the Clarks apparently left Tempe. It doesn't appear that Eugene stayed very long in Tempe, although he may have been back periodically to stay with his parents for visits. Eventually, Eugene made his way to Bisbee. Sadly, the road would end for the young man in a room in Upper Brewery Gulch in January 1917. It was there that Eugene died of pneumonia, one of three victims to die from the ailment in a single day in Bisbee.[22]

Another of Tempe's overlooked early black residents was John Wesley Boggs. Usually referred to as Wesley, Mr. Boggs lived for some time in Phoenix before moving to Tempe with his wife and daughter. He had a well-established boot-blacking, or shoeshine, business that he brought with him to Tempe. Boggs was among the incorporators of the African American Club in 1908, an organization which had a capital stock of $5,000.[23] He also played left field with the Phoenix Colored Cubs baseball team. The Colored Cubs played Tempe teams as part of their regular circuit.

The *Tempe News* had this to say about Bogg's death in January 1912:

> *Wesley Boggs of this place died suddenly at his home about six o'clock last evening. He was stricken with a hemorrhage and died before the physician who was summoned immediately could reach his bedside. Mr. Boggs was a highly respectable colored man, who with his wife and little daughter came here from Los Angeles about a year ago, suffering with lung troubles…*[24]

It appears that Wesley Boggs was an early health seeker to Arizona, quite likely moving to the Salt River Valley for reasons related to tuberculosis or some similar ailment. Colonel Wesley Boggs is the first known African American to be buried at Tempe Double Butte Cemetery.[25] Whether "colonel" was an honorary title or of military origin is unknown. Some other African American residents are known to have lived in Tempe at this time as well. Emanuel H. Brown, who was a porter at the Casa Loma Hotel, lived for some time at 108 S. Maple Avenue with the Thomas', who were also known to have leased cottages to African American students at the Arizona State Teachers College in Tempe (Arizona State University).

Thomas Irvin was counted by the 1910 census,

The advertisement on this Tempe blacksmith shop is for the Alabama Minstrels, an early blues act of black musicians and vaudeville stars.

but nothing is currently known about him or where he lived in Tempe. By 1918 Eugene Thomas' daughter, Geraldine, had taken the last name of her father and grandparents and was employed at the Shirley & Shirley Salon in Tempe. It is not known how long she remained in Tempe, as by the late 1920s she had moved to Santa Barbara, California. No doubt there were other African Americans in and around the Tempe area at this time as well.

6

Other Trends Impacting African Americans in Tempe: Schools

The territorial laws that came out of the 20th Legislative Assembly included *An Act to Provide for a Compulsory School Law.* It "provided that no child shall be refused admission to any public school on account of race or color."[26] This measure would not prevent segregation or other acts of discrimination, but it made the outright denial of access to education illegal in the territory.

In 1909, the Twenty-Second Legislative Assembly took the next step in the wrong

direction however. The territorial legislature amended Subdivision 11 of Paragraph 2179 of the *Revised Statutes of Arizona, 1901, Civil Code,* to include the following:

> *...and when they deem it advisable, they may segregate pupils of the African from pupils of the White races, and to that end are empowered to provide all accommodations made necessary by such segregation, Provided, That [sic] the power to segregate pupils of the African from the pupils of the White races shall only be exercised where the number of pupils of the African race shall exceed eight in number in any school district.*[27]

Prepared as House Bill 101 and sent to the Governor's Office in March 1909, the document awaited a signature or veto before it could move on. Governor Joseph H. Kibbey was unequivocal in his veto:

> *It would be unfair that pupils of the African race should be given accommodations and facilities for a common education, less effective, less complete, less convenient or less pleasant so far as the accessories of the school, and its operation are concerned than those accorded pupils of the white race in the same school district: and the bill in terms contemplates no less.*

Governor Kibbey was unfortunately alone in his thinking among the leaders of Arizona government at that time. An unrepentant Legislature passed the law over Kibbey's veto by a two-thirds vote in both houses. This law obviously was directed at African American students specifically, and black leaders in Arizona let their feelings be known before the ink dried on the new law. Unfortunately, the damage had been done and it would be decades before the racially-motivated, short-sightedness of this territorial assembly would be undone. African American students were, for the most part, denied a desk in Tempe schools or were otherwise marginalized until the 1950s. As a case in point, the *Tempe News* reported on June 24, 1910 that in the total student rolls of Tempe's School District No. 3, there was "...but one colored child on the list."

Public Works Projects

Little has been mentioned in published histories on the role of African Americans on public works projects in territorial period Arizona. Central Arizona saw a series of major public works projects related to water and transportation. The construction of Roosevelt Dam was one of the largest. In Tempe, the construction of the state highway bridge was a major event that would help solidify Tempe's importance regionally. Both projects involved significant numbers of black workers.

Although it is not known if there is a connection between workers at the Roosevelt Dam project and Tempe African Americans specifically, the fact is that thousands of workers from a variety of backgrounds were brought in during the course of construction. Two years into the project, officials bemoaned the fact that progress was "...greatly retarded by the scarcity of labor..." which made it necessary to recruit workers "from Galveston to San Francisco."[28] Although rarely talked about, from the earliest days of construction, black workers made up a significant part of the labor force. Dr. Ralph Palmer, chief surgeon for the construction project, recalls that the contractor "imported several hundred colored laborers from Texas" in the fall of 1905.[29] The following July, the *Arizona Republican* reported:

> *G. F. Steinmetz of the firm J. M. O'Rourke and company, left the first of the week for Galveston, Texas. Mr. Steinmetz is expected to return in a few days with about one hundred and twenty colored laborers to be used in the construction of the dam.*[30]

Near the end of July 1906 a *Republican* correspondent noted, "O'Rourke & Co. have about 240 men at work. The heavier labor is mostly done by negroes, Mexicans, and Italians…"[31] The same day that paper also covered a story that highlighted labor tensions at the dam site:

> *Recently a lot of Texas negroes were imported, but a number of them have quit and it is said that nearly all of them will return to their homes as soon as they get a payday. They find the conditions different at Roosevelt from what they expected: the work is hard, the hours long, and the men are not used to the kind of labor required of them. Many Italians are also employed, and the negroes do not mix well with the children of Southern Europe.*[32]

Perhaps it is no surprise that the tone of this article soft-pedals the concerns of the black workers and plays them off against the Italian labor force. The fact is that the work was not simply hard, it was exceptionally so in a rugged, often hostile environment that was unforgiving in summer months. Despite the grievances of many black workers, and doubtless other groups as well, many African American men stayed on the job, as indicated by the fact that in August, "About thirty negro women, wives of some of Contractor O'Rourke's men came in from Globe the early part of the week, and were domiciled in the camp especially prepared for them, just across the river."[33]

Closer to home, work on the Tempe Highway Bridge, alternately known as the wagon bridge or the Ash Avenue Bridge, began in 1911. On May 31, the superintendent of the prison in Florence received instructions to send twenty-five convicts to Tempe. Prison labor provided the bulk of the labor force on the construction of the Tempe bridge. Hand-picked from among the best men in the prison system, the convicts assigned to the bridge work in Tempe were lightly guarded and moved about primarily based on the honor-system that they would not escape. The men actually had prison time deducted from their sentences based on their participation in this program. They were required to return to a specially built stockade at the south end of the bridge every night. Otherwise, the men interacted more-or-less freely with local residents. The prisoners even organized a baseball team and played many games with local baseball clubs. Sometimes the interactions became a little too friendly, as reported in the following article:

> *Claim Barber Gave Liquor to Convict*
>
> *Tempe. Jan. 3.—"Red" Neil, a barber in the Thomas shop, was arrested about noon Tuesday, charged with violating a provision of the prohibition statue. As a matter of fact, Neil's crime, if proved against him, may be of a far more serious nature for it is suspected that he passed a bottle of whiskey to Claude Williams, a negro convict, during the ball game Sunday afternoon…*[34]

Although this incident may have proved some embarrassment to Theodore Thomas due to the implication of one of his barbers, it is most notable for the fact that it identifies a black convict-laborer by name. The African American workers on this project have received no recognition – even in detailed references to these workers, they remain practically invisible. However, it is very likely that African Americans made up a portion of this labor force, and one that bears recognition for its contribution to the construction of Tempe's first highway bridge.

7
Conclusion

The story of African Americans in the early years of Tempe is unique and multi-dimensional. Although just a small number of individuals are known, from their stories we can begin to get an understanding of their lives in this small, agricultural frontier town. From the historical record, we can see that most black Tempe residents had ties to Phoenix (and even the small African American community in Mesa). Sadly it is quite likely that these black pioneers held out little hope that certain of the racist tendencies of the Euro-American population of their Arizona home would improve anytime soon. But these early black residents did not simply wait around and hope that things would get better. They did something about it. Whether joining community organizations, leasing housing to students who found it challenging to live and go to school in Tempe, or by farming, cutting hair, and otherwise making a living, these residents worked to improve their lives and those of their neighbors.

Library of Congress photo

The Tempe Highway Bridge (also known as the Ash Avenue Bridge) ca. 1913.

Chapter 2: The African American Experience in Tempe, 1920s – early 1950s

No, strictly ASU was the attraction. There was no need, because there was an understanding, really, among the Black community, that we weren't welcome here [Tempe]. We weren't welcome north of Van Buren. So I never had an interest, not even a curiosity, of going into those areas, or Scottsdale, any of those areas, because we were not wanted, so that wasn't part of my world. I don't know if you can understand that. **Edward Smith regarding Tempe prior to his enrollment at ASU in 1959, from an oral history interview conducted February 5, 2009**

1
Introduction

After the Great War ended in November 1918, it seemed as though a new era might await the African American citizens of the United States, as well as the tiny community beginning to grow in Tempe. America's black soldiers proved that they were not only willing and eager to fight, but that they were among the best troops that the United States sent to France. These men and the rest of the American Expeditionary Force came home to a hero's welcome. Perhaps the goodwill shown

Sergeant Lee Preston, a career soldier with the 25th Infantry Regiment (Buffalo Soldiers) is one of the black World War I veterans buried at Tempe Double Butte Cemetery.

these men would be extended to a black America that had shown great patriotism and a willingness to share in the sacrifice in the "War to end all Wars."

But it was not to be. The insecurity of the postwar period would do nothing to benefit African Americans in Arizona, let alone other parts of the country. Even before the guns fell silent in November, the world was hit by the Great Influenza Epidemic. From October 1918 until January 1919, Tempe itself weathered the dread disease which practically shut down the town. Before long, the Red Scare raised its ugly head. Fearful of the spread of Communism that swallowed Russia in a tremendously violent civil war, white Americans began to view immigrants and ethnic communities as susceptible to Communist influence.

In addition, there was a downturn in the world economy, particularly agricultural production. During the war agricultural products were in high

demand due to shortages caused by disruptions in trade and production as well as the massive demands of the military. With the war over trade resumed in earnest in parts of the world directly impacted by warfare, causing prices of goods such as cotton to plummet. This led to the Cotton Crash in the Salt River Valley during the 1920 – 1921 growing season.

2

Intolerance and the Ku Klux Klan in the Salt River Valley

One of the most dramatic responses to the insecurity of the post-war world was the rise of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in the United States. Originally confined to the post-Civil War South, the new KKK rose on the heels of World War I and became a nation-wide movement. The Klan of the 1920s had a strong appeal and enormous following with white Americans in the North as well as the West. It played on the upset and fear of the white, native born population, both in the urban and rural centers of America. The organization appealed greatly to the Euro-American middle class, even though it invoked the values of the white Protestant rural farm family. The KKK of the 1920s was not just intolerant of African Americans, but also Mormons, Catholics, Jews, immigrants, and anyone else deemed to be outside the narrow community of white, native-born Anglo-Saxon Protestants.

By June 1922, Arizona newspapers reported that the "Headquarters of these organizations [KKK] are in Phoenix, Tempe, Mesa, and Glendale."[1] The resurgent KKK was responsible for a number of incidents of violence in Salt River Valley communities. The victims of several clan assaults were African Americans, as well as a Greek immigrant, a Catholic, and a Mormon. Tempe's Butte Klan No. 3, Realm of Arizona, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan was formed in June 1922.[2] No incidents of intimidation were recorded in Tempe. However, it is likely that such behavior was occasionally directed toward local black, Hispanic, Jewish, and other residents not deemed one-hundred percent American (meaning white) by Klan standards.

An important question to ask is just why the KKK was able to take root in Tempe. The North and South divide, personified in Tempe by the split between the Methodist churches, was likely an outward sign of a divide over the question of race. A *Tempe News* article from May 1901 may hint at some of the attitudes regarding race issues:

> *At 11:30 the pastor, Rev. Marion A. Meagher, will preach on the work of the church in the south. All who are interested in the negro question are earnestly requested to come and hear an impartial statement of the facts.*[3]

With the widespread racial attitudes of the day, the settling of many Confederate veterans in Tempe, along with a significant population of white Protestant Southerners, one can see why Tempe was among the four Salt River Valley cities that was home to a headquarters of the Ku Klux Klan. The rise of the KKK in Tempe could have done nothing to reassure black residents of how life in Tempe would be for them.

The scrutiny of the Arizona KKK and its membership rolls increased during the course of 1922. The violent incidents perpetrated against African Americans, immigrants, and religious "undesirables" led to a swift reaction by state and local authorities. Governor Thomas E. Campbell, who claimed to have a list of nearly 900 KKK members in Arizona, said with regards to the Klan:

> *I very deeply regret…that membership includes some very prominet [sic] citizens in several communities. I cannot understand how or why they*

joined such an organization unless they allowed their minds to become poisoned with un-American practices and intolerances.[4]

Legal proceedings were already underway in at least one assault case, and upset toward the Klan was bubbling to the surface all over the state. A grand jury was convened to determine the identity of the individuals who participated in four whipping, branding, and tarring and feathering incidents in and near Phoenix.[5]

Tempe residents were among those called to testify before the grand jury, whose foreman was none other than state historian and former Tempean James McClintock. Arizona newspapers reported that on June 17, "Subpoenas for 19 more witnesses, most of whom are understood to live in or near Tempe, were issued today."[6] After much testimony, indictments were handed down that would lead to the trial of two local Klan members for the kidnapping and assault of Ira Haywood, a black Phoenix resident.[7]

It does not appear that any Tempe residents were named in these indictments. Some of those called to testify, possibly including some of these Tempe residents, claimed to have been duped into becoming Klan members. As weak as such an admission may seem, much of the Klan's recruiting efforts often hid the organization's identity until the close of the meeting.[8] Some "outed" Klan members withdrew from the organization out of embarrassment or concern over repercussions.

Despite the embarrassment of official scrutiny and the connection of the Klan to violent acts in 1922, Butte Klan No. 3 persisted. As late as 1924, over eighty Tempe residents maintained membership in the white supremacist organization.[9] Aside from racially-loaded attitudes, the fear and uncertainty of the time period encouraged these men to remain with this organization for several years. The Butte Klan's membership finally lapsed into history as the national organization became discredited and as post-war anxieties subsided. By the late 1920s, Tempe's Butte Klan No. 3 was no more.

3

African American Residents of Tempe: 1920s and Beyond

In the 1920 census, the number of confirmed African American residents of Tempe had dropped to seven people. This number included Moses Green and his three sons, Maggie and Theodore Thomas, and Delia Robinson, a widow living with the Thomas'. This census count does not reflect the true number of black Tempe residents because most of them were counted as part of the county population, rather than as residents of Tempe. However, it may be that Tempe's small African American population had indeed shrunk during the 1910s.

The significant KKK presence in Tempe for the first half of the 1920s did nothing to make black, Mexican American, Jewish, or other minority residents feel more welcome in their community. What makes the continued presence of even a small, core population of African Americans in Tempe all the more remarkable in these circumstances is the fact that two of the families, the family of Moses Green and the Thomas', remained in Tempe for as long as two or three decades. The resilience and longevity of these families alone suggests that there was something, or things, about Tempe that would keep them there even after some of their neighbors donned the cloaks and hoods of the KKK.

4
The Greens: Deep Roots in Tempe

The Green Family, specifically Moses, was a part of Tempe since the late 1880s. We know little about Moses' life during the 20th Century, except that he raised three sons with his wife, Eunice. At some point in the 1910s, it appears that Eunice passed away because in the 1920 census Moses is listed as a widower. His boys, aged 11 to 15, still lived at home with their dad. One of the rare times that we hear of Moses outside of the Tempe-Phoenix area comes from a brief mention in the *Bisbee Daily Review* on November 12, 1916, "Mose Green, secretary of the Cooks and Waiters Union, who presided at Ward One on election day and who also was quite in evidence on Main Street some weeks ago, has left for Phoenix, on business. Green is not certain whether he will return to Bisbee or not."

Moses spent some time in other Arizona locations during his life, having worked as a porter at the Orndorff House Hotel in Tucson as far back as the mid-1890s. He owned a small property just west of downtown Chandler in the late 1910s. It is unknown if Moses or his family ever lived on this property. He sold the acreage to Arthur E. Price in September 1919 for $2,000. By 1930, the only son who still lived at home was Charlie, his youngest boy, along with Jacinta, Charlie's wife.

Moses practically disappears from the historical record after the 1930 census. It is possible that he moved to California. His sister, Ada, and brother, Jerry, both relocated there. Nothing is known about what became of this pioneer, one of Tempe's first black residents and a well-travelled working man who always seemed to come back to Tempe. For the better part of four decades Moses made a home in Tempe. Although his first child, Daisy Ray, likely was born in Phoenix, the rest of Moses' children were born and raised in Tempe. Often credited as being the first African American born in the Salt River Valley after the Civil War, the fact that Moses is not better known is a rather poor commentary on the state of the early history of central Arizona. This fact is even more unsettling in that the first known African American settler to the region, Moses' mother Mary, died in historical obscurity from tuberculosis late in the same year that Arizona became a state.

The Green Family has yet to receive the acknowledgement and credit that they deserve in Arizona. This pioneer family and its remarkable matriarch, Mary, did their part to build a life in this harsh region and many descendants continued to thrive in Arizona, making contributions to communities for many years to come. Mary's great-granddaughter, Helen Oby Mason, established a theater troupe and did a great deal to inspire the African American youth of Phoenix. Coincidentally Helen's mother, Susie Lewis Oby, was one of the first black children born in Tempe and today she rests at the Tempe Double Butte Cemetery alongside her husband, Scotty. Susie was part of the third generation of the Green Family associated with Tempe.

Susie Lewis Oby and her uncle Frederick are the only known members of pioneer Mary Green's family buried at Tempe Double Butte Cemetery.

5

"Mother" Thomas and Her Husband

The Thomas' continued to deepen their connection to Tempe in the 1920s. Maggie and Theodore had lived at a house at 108 S. Maple Ave since around 1906. At some point they purchased property in the area, consisting of the south half of Lots 1, 2, and 3 in Block 65 of the Tempe town site. This site may have included their home at 108 S. Maple. It might also have been the location of the Thomas' ranch near the Tempe Highway Bridge, better known in later years as the Ash Avenue Bridge. Years later, Mrs. Lola B. Warren recalled:

> *Speaking of students and schools, there was a "Mother" Thomas and husband who had a ranch in Tempe in, near the bridge. They rented cottages to colored students who went to College at Tempe, because they couldn't stay in the dormitories there.*[10]

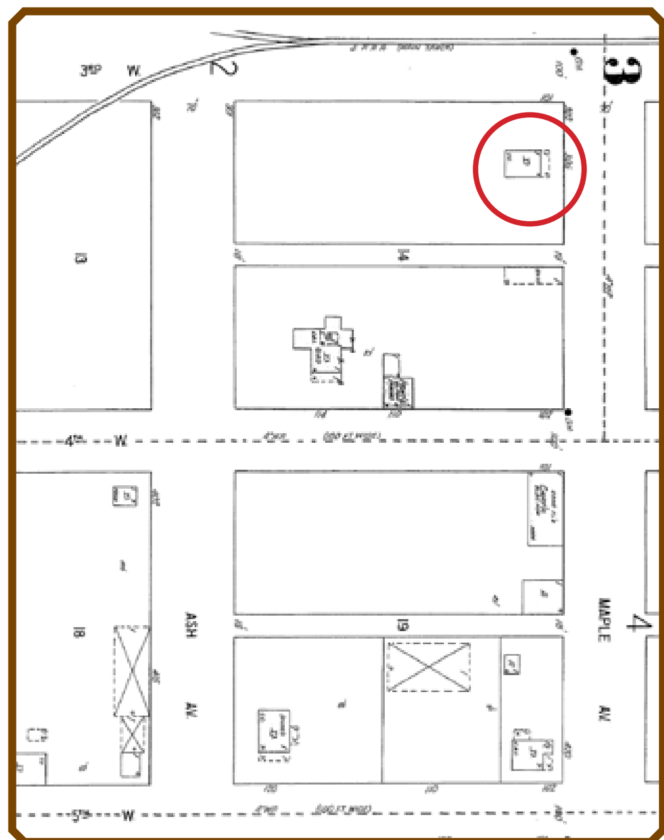
Among the students who leased cottages from the Thomas' was Stella McHenry of Clifton, Arizona. Reportedly the first African American woman to graduate from the Arizona State Teachers College in Tempe, Ms. McHenry graduated from the teachers' program with honors in the Class of 1926. The young lady went on to teach at the all African American Booker T. Washington Elementary School in Phoenix. (Until 1921, the institution was known as the Frederick Douglass Elementary School.) "Mother" Thomas developed close ties with Ms. McHenry. In February 1928, Maggie Thomas was called to Phoenix when she learned that the young teacher had passed away.

Considering that African American students from all over Arizona were in attendance at the Teachers College by the 1920s, it is likely that many of those same students took the opportunity to rent a place in town with the Thomas'. As late as the 1960s, the effort to find housing was a real hardship for most African American students. Denied housing on campus by exclusionary policies that were only accommodating to whites, black students were left to fend for themselves. Often, African American students looked to their local black communities as friendly places where they could find housing while in school. Due to Tempe's tiny black population, the alternatives were to lease from families in Phoenix or Mesa. This made for a long daily commute. The ability of black students to rent cottages from the Thomas' must have felt like a godsend. It is easy to understand why they called Maggie "Mother" and no surprise that they would feel close to this couple who offered a safe-haven within walking distance of their school.

The Thomas' might be the exception to the prohibition against black people buying land in Tempe. As noted already, the Thomas' purchased property around 1906. They sold this property in 1921, which may have included parts of their ranch and their house at 108 S. Maple. In August 1920, Maggie and Theo took out a mortgage on two lots in the Tempe town site. Not long after, the couple relocated from 108 to 306 S. Maple. The new house was on the land they purchased in 1920.

By the mid-1920s, Theo had moved his barbershop business off Mill Avenue to a location next to their home at 304 S. Maple Avenue.[11] The change in location may have had something to do with ill health. Perhaps Theodore's devastating injuries sustained on the old Tempe-Phoenix Road in 1900 were catching up with him.

1928 was a year of bad news for the Thomas' of Tempe. It began in early February with the death of Stella McHenry, the young teacher who



The circle at 306 S. Maple indicates the home of Maggie and Theo Thomas. (from a Sanborn Map Co. fire insurance map of Tempe, 1927)

had boarded with the Thomas' while attending the Teachers College just a few years before. Just a week later, the weekly edition of the Tempe News reported, "Mrs. Theodore Thomas Sunday received word of the death of her sister, Mrs. Anna Hardee, at the latter's home at Corsicana, Texas, yesterday. Mrs. Hardee paid several visits to her sister in Tempe."[12] In March, Theodore came down with the flu. It seemed as though he was turning the corner on his illness when the *Tempe Daily News* reported that he was gravely ill on April 3rd. Late the following day, "Tempe's veteran barber" died at home from cerebral meningitis.[13] On April 5, the paper paid tribute to this Tempe pioneer:

Theodore Thomas Passes Away

At 6:30 last evening Theodore Thomas, whose illness has been mentioned in these columns, passed away at his home on north Maple Avenue. For more than a third of a century Mr. Thomas plied his barber's trade in this valley and his general personality made him a well known figure. First "Tom" and in later years "Old Tom," had a large circle of friends in all walks of life, and his death is regretted by many.

On Friday, the *Arizona Republican* had this to say in their "News from Southside" section:

Pioneer Resident Dies

Theodore Thomas, colored, passed away at his home Wednesday evening. Funeral services will be held in the Carr mortuary Friday afternoon at 3:30. "Tom" had been one of Tempe's pioneer citizens. He was honest and upright and always ready with a smile to do a favor for his friends.

For a long time he operated a barber shop on Mill Avenue, but in later years moved to his little place down near his home in the west part of town. He is survived by his wife and a granddaughter. The latter arrived here Thursday morning from Santa Barbara, where she lives.

In the same edition of the *Republican*, the paper reported, "Following a funeral service at Carr Mortuary and Chapel, 25 East Fifth Street, downtown Tempe, Theodore Charles Thomas is buried in the Double Butte Cemetery in west Tempe, AZ."[14]

A week later, the *Tempe News* published a letter of appreciation from Maggie:

Card of Thanks

I desire to extend my heartfelt thanks to my good friends and neighbors for kindness and sympathy extended to me during illness and death of my husband.

Mrs. Theodore Thomas

Despite Theo's passing, "Mother" Thomas remained in Tempe for some years into the next decade. By June 1928, Maggie had leased her late husband's shop at 3rd and Maple to a white barber. She paid off their mortgage in May 1937. Maggie sold her house at 306 S. Maple, consisting of Lots 1 and 2 in Block 58, in November 1938

for $1,000. A month later, Theo's estate was settled and Maggie took full ownership of all of their remaining shared assets, which included their home and Theo's old barber shop, furniture, Theo's barber chair and additional tools, and Certificate No. 32 of the Interstate Mutual Building and Loan Association.

By the time of the 1940 census, Mrs. Thomas had relocated to East Jefferson Street in Phoenix. Maggie and Ms. Susie Rivers, listed as a lodger at the home, were both listed as "old age" pensioners. At 79 years of age, Maggie Thomas was drawing a pension either as a beneficiary of New Deal programs or perhaps as the widow of Theodore Thomas (based on possible service as a Buffalo Soldier in the U.S. Army). We don't know what came of Maggie after this census.

"Mother" Thomas and her husband, Theo or "Old Tom," are remarkable historical figures in Tempe's past. They carved out a home and businesses in downtown Tempe at a time when it might be expected that African Americans were being pushed out of town, testimony to their character and standing in the community. The kindness and forethought displayed by taking in black students from the Teachers College shows that they made a conscious, sustained effort to accommodate these future educators with a home away from home. Maggie and Theodore Thomas made their community a better place by having been a part of it.

6

Tempe's Black Residents and Public Education before 1940

By the 1930 census, Tempe's African American residents numbered thirteen, of which we know very little.[15] Based on their ages, some of these residents may have been students at Arizona State. However, young Lucy Lott (age 20) and Alfred Lott (age 23) were either married or otherwise related. The same goes for 23 year old Alberta Lewis and Robert L. Lewis (age 29). Another of these youthful residents was Terry Harry (age 26). Moses Green's son Charlie was also in his 20s (as was the young man's Mexican American wife, Jacinta). Several other residents were in their late 20s or age 30, including William Brown, Leford Harry, and Henry Willis. The remaining residents were in their 50s or over, including Dempsey Hodge, C.D. Dowdy, Moses Green, and Maggie Thomas. Two of these men – William Brown and Dempsey Hodge – worked at the Casa Loma Hotel. William Brown was a cook and Mr. Hodge washed dishes.

The total population of Tempe and its agricultural districts was 4,464 in 1930. The fact that only 13 of those residents were African American is rather telling, although the census did not pick up the student population, particularly those who had permanent residences outside of Tempe. With better cars and improved transportation routes by the 1930s, it may be that more and more black students at the Teachers College made commutes to Mesa, Phoenix, or other local communities where African Americans could obtain housing. Even so, "Mother" Thomas (and possibly other residents) provided a local alternative to the long commute in these early years. So it is likely that at least a small number of African American students at Arizona State in

the 1930s and 1940s were able to lease housing in town during the school year.

More unsettling, however, is the fact that children are conspicuously absent from the census count. That does not mean that no African American children lived in Tempe in the 1920s and 1930s. However, it is likely that a policy of near-exclusion in the public school system may explain this fact. The word "near" is used because state law made it illegal to deny a child education based on race or ethnicity. However, as long as an alternative was offered, apparently exclusionary districts could comply with the letter, although not the spirit, of the law.

A story about one African American mother's efforts to enroll her children in the Tempe school district serves to give a sense of the climate in the town in the 1920 and 1930s. In September 1926, the following account was recorded in the minutes of the board of Tempe School District No. 3:

...the Board proceeded with the business in hand regarding, the providing of school accommodations for the children of Mrs...(a black woman). A motion authorizing Mr. C. B. Wivel to arrange for transportation for (the) children to Mesa and for their instruction in Mesa Colored School was made, seconded and carried.

Although her identity is unknown, the girl to the teacher's right could be a descendant of one of Tempe's African American pioneers.

The school in question was the Booker T. Washington School in Mesa, which opened in 1920 to educate the African American children in the predominately black neighborhood of Washington Park in Mesa. The Tempe school board's decision was akin to solving a "problem" by busing children to another district. This appears to be an effort to deny an education to black children in Tempe. The board apparently met the letter of the law by underwriting the costs of busing and compensation to Mesa's elementary school district for taking on additional pupils. Sadly, even this was undone the following year, in October 1927, when the Tempe school board reversed its decision on a technicality:

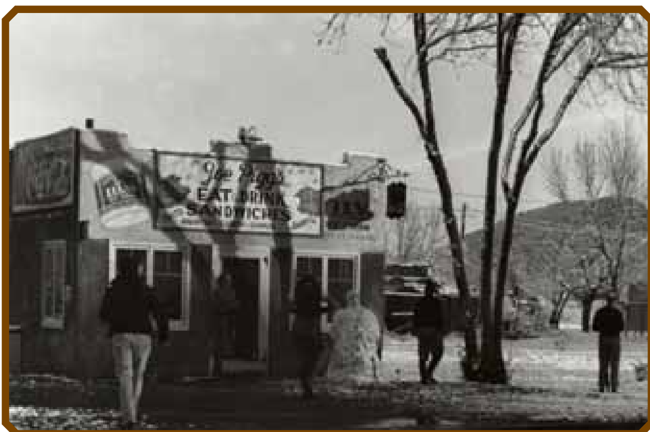
...all agrees that (the parent) was not a taxpayer in Tempe District 3 but of Prescott, Yavapai, and that we had no right to appropriate funds to pay for the transportation of her children to the Colored School at Mesa. Instructed Mr. Wivel to advise with our County Attorney in this matter.

An additional follow-up note written by the Clerk of the Board, sheds light on the final outcome of this shameful episode:

The Clerk received a correspondence from (the parent) claiming that she was a voter in Tempe and asking that her children be provided for – public school instruction. Same was handed to Mr. Wivel to take to County Attorney. Mr. Wivel reported later that the County Attorney stated the Board was correct in our interpretation of the law and that she had no claim upon us.[16]

So we can see at least one tactic used to deny African American children a seat in Tempe's schools. The board deflected responsibility for educating these children – first by sending them to another district and then by denying responsibility for their education altogether on a technicality – is quite striking as a blatant act of racism and exclusion. Even the simple fact of not recording the name of the children's mother shows an effort to leave her nameless, faceless, and anonymous.

It should be noted that the practice of segregation in the Tempe school district had not gone unchallenged. In 1925, Tempe rancher Adolfo Romo did not accept the separate and unequal education of the Mexican American children of the Eighth Street School who received their education from unaccredited student teachers. Romo filed a lawsuit against members of the board and the superintendent of the district in Arizona's Superior Court on behalf of his four children. Judge Jenckes sided with Adolfo Romo and required that Tempe Public School District No. 3 comply with the ruling and allow the Romo children into the Tenth Street School. This case set a precedent that would ultimately help to benefit children of all races outside of the Euro-American majority. For African American children, integration would not truly begin until the early 1950s.[17]



Joe Pigg's restaurant, on the edge of the San Pablo neighborhood, was one of the few places that would serve African Americans in Tempe.

7
The Early Years of African Americans at Arizona State

The first known African American students to attend the Arizona State Teachers College came to Tempe sometime shortly after the First World War. Official records seem to be murky at best before the 1930s. Elizabeth Crump of Phoenix has been identified as a student whose attendance at the Teachers College is the:

> *...earliest evidence of African Americans studying at what is now Arizona State University. Corroborating oral history shared by alumni and published materials from the period confirm that African-Americans were enrolled at Normal as early as 1920, but official records fail to acknowledge many of these students.*[18]

We know today that the first black graduate of the teaching program was likely Phoenix resident Benton James who finished in 1923 or the following year. The identity of the first African American woman to graduate is less clear. Stella McHenry, who stayed at the Thomas' ranch in the mid-1920s, graduated in 1926. However, it may well be that Elizabeth Crump was actually the first black female graduate of the Teachers College at least two years prior to Ms. HcHenry. Ms. Crump would go on to complete a Master's Degree from Arizona State in the early 1950s, and had made a career of teaching prior to that time.[19] This confusion regarding Arizona State's earliest graduates highlights, at best, their careless record keeping and, at worst, their neglecting a portion of the student body due to prejudice. Such troubling trends seem to be part of a pattern of racial bias that permeated Tempe as the 20th Century went on.

Despite a climate of intolerance, African American students continued to attend Arizona

University Archives Photographs
Arizona State University Libraries

Benton James, the first known African American graduate of Arizona State Teachers College, completed his program in the early 1920s.

State and their presence there steadily increased toward the end of the decade. Most of these new students were women, and they came from around the state. Madelina Cook and Mozelle Mack came from north of the river in Phoenix. Sarah and Catherine Garrett were residents of Douglas and apparently sisters. Love Jordan made the journey south from Prescott. Priscilla Franklin came all the way from Los Angeles to attend school in Tempe – the first known African American student at the school from out-of-state. All of these young ladies completed their studies in 1928 and 1929.

On March 15, 1930, the enthusiastic staff of *The Arizona Gleam*, an African American newspaper based in Phoenix, pointed out in their "Tempe College News" section that:

> *…There are now 7 Negroes attending the State Teachers' College at Tempe. They are the Misses Consuelo McHenry; Erma Coe; Vivian Bell; Edna Young and Valerie Taylor; Mrs. Cora Edmonds and Rev. Mansell Thompson. Young and Thompson expect to finish in June. Bell, next Fall. The other four are Freshmen…*

Despite the everyday challenges faced by black students at a predominantly white school, the numbers of African American students at the Teachers College was going up. Black student enrollment increased dramatically in the 1930s. Part of the reason was due to the fact that Arizona State's primary mission was still to train teachers. With a segregated school system,

University Archives Photographs, Arizona State University Libraries

Arizona State Teachers College students founded the Dunbar Social and Literary Club in the 1930s.

African American teachers were hired to teach black children. Those up-and-coming educators needed a place to learn their trade and the Teachers College was one of the places where they could get that training and accreditation. While this may explain part of the trend, black students had a variety of motivations, just like all of their other classmates in college.[20] Family pressure, the individual desire to attain a higher education, and the drive to help improve the condition for the African American community were factors for many who went to college. Such aspects, combined with a growing African American population in Arizona, meant that more and more black students would enroll at the school as time went on.

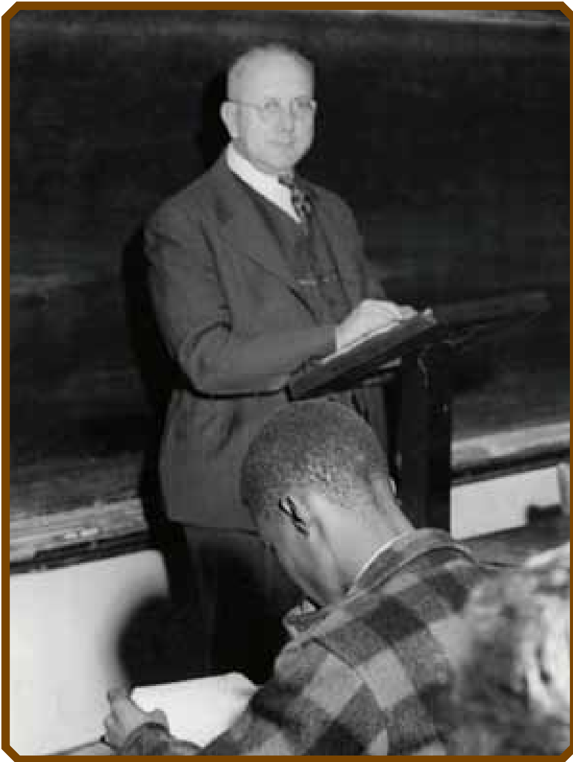
While their numbers increased at Arizona State, going to school created challenges that went far beyond the academic demands of being a student. Charlsetta Favors Banks, who graduated from Arizona State in 1937, recalled:

> *If we brought our lunches, we had a hard time trying to get a vacant room to eat in during rainy days. Teachers would just run us out, even though the room wasn't being used. If we didn't bring lunches, there was only one place we could buy from – a crummy place across from the college.*[21]

Even if black students could enroll at Arizona State, they found themselves frozen out of many of the basic services and experiences that were part of the everyday lives of other students at that time. African American students could not live in college dormitories, could not eat in the school's cafeterias, and had to deal with all sorts of restrictions.[22] They were even denied the use of restrooms on campus.[23] Dr. Warren, who graduated from ASU in 1958 recalls, "…during my aunt's time, in the '30s, African American students were characterized as 'foreign students born in the U.S.' And I don't remember too many African Americans living in the dorm until the 1950s."[24] Black students clearly faced a bizarre situation of second class citizenship, and they were reminded of this every time they stepped foot on campus.

In addition, black students faced unique challenges in the classroom. Lack of fairness in grading was a common challenge faced by these students. Mary Bishop, who graduated from Arizona State in 1953, recalls, "No, it was not pleasant because as I look back now, I knew there was a lot of prejudice among the teaching staff. I knew that I was a good student because I was on the National Honors Society, from high school. I could not get an A."[25] Edward Smith, who transferred to ASU from Phoenix College in 1959, remembered, "…in one of my English classes, the professor telling me that 'You can only get a C; don't try to get anything higher than that, because you're Colored, and we can't award you any higher grade than that.' I can remember that so vividly…"[26] Looking back at his time at Arizona State, Dr. Warren had this to say about the challenges faced by African American students in the classroom:

> *I think, psychologically, there was still a segregation of students. And that doesn't mean that people were necessarily treating you mean, but they weren't real accepting either, and there wasn't a lot of interaction during my day. And I did have a couple of classes where I felt like I was not treated fairly. And a couple of classes, I went to the professors and indicated that, and in one case, agreed to take the exam again on the spot, and did get a better grade out of it. But I'm not sure that some of the grading was necessarily because we were African American, but some of it probably was because we had to work and didn't have time to do as much studying. I think I'm being inconsistent*



Despite many challenges, African American students benefited greatly from the high caliber of faculty, like Dr. Rufus Kay Wyllys, professor of Southwestern history.

in this statement, because I don't think a lot of the professors warmly welcomed African American students.[27]

Although the statements above came from alumni who were students in the late 1940s and 1950s, it seems unlikely that their predecessors from the 1940s and before would have painted a different picture. But these circumstances did not stop African American students from enrolling and pursuing advanced degrees. For example, The Dunbar Club, a social and literary club for black students, had 29 members in 1940. Doubtless there were other African American students at this time as well. From just seven students enrolled in 1930, the 1940 black student body at Arizona State was now at least thirty.

8

African Americans on the Playing Field at Arizona State

Arizona State was becoming known as more than a teacher's college by the 1930s. Athletics, which had been around since the school's earliest days, were a very visible part of college life. Black athletes had been excluded until the 1930s. That decade however brought a star football player from California. ASU Historian Dean Smith relates that:

> *[Emerson] Harvey was working at a Walgreen's Drug Store in San Francisco when Tom Lillico, Arizona State's graduate assistant, paid him a visit early in the summer of 1937. He interceded for Harvey and steered him toward Tempe becoming Arizona State's first Black varsity football player....*[28]

Although Emerson Harvey was the best known of the African American athletes who attended Arizona State in the 1930s, there had been two men before him in the sports program. Joe Island was the first of these players to earn his varsity letter. He played baseball as an Arizona State Bulldog for two years, 1936 and 1937, and later played for a decade with the semi-pro Phoenix Broncos. (After graduating, Island joined the Phoenix Police Department and was trained by Jack Gray, the fifth child of pioneer Mary Green and one of the first African American officers to serve with the Phoenix Police Department.)

With regards to the young man from Sacramento, Dean Smith states "Harvey's acceptance on the Tempe squad was a breath-taking leap into the unknown." A great deal was riding on this talented out-of-state athlete. Emerson Harvey had a great many challenges ahead of him. Not the least of these were the facts that he "grew up in Sacramento, California, where

Emerson Harvey and his Arizona State Bulldog teammates practically leap off the page of this 1937 football program.

attitudes about Blacks were considerably ahead of those in Arizona” and “Except in the Negro colleges, there were little more than a dozen Black football players on American collegiate teams that year, and none played for schools in states as racially discriminating as Arizona.”

Coach Rudy Lavik wasted no time in getting Harvey going as a starter, both as blocking back and defensive end and “Harvey’s abilities took care of the rest.” Being a star athlete did not mean that the young man was exempt from racial barbs and the exclusionary practices that all other African American students faced. Harvey did not take this treatment sitting down however. He recalled years later that:

> *Dr. Sam Burkhard talked me into making a talk in some of his classes. I told them how we all drank out of the same bucket on the football field and nobody had gotten sick yet. And maybe, with the dishes being sterilized, it wouldn’t hurt for Negro people to eat in the dining hall, either.*

Harvey excelled as well in the classroom as he did on the football field. Professors Lewis Nebb and E.J. Hilkert both encouraged him in the direction of their programs, technology and accounting respectively.

There would be plenty of hurdles to cross on the football field. Arizona State’s November 11, 1937 game against the Texas Mines team would prove especially challenging. A black athlete was not particularly welcome on the ball field in El Paso. One of those Texas players recalled years afterwards:

> *Some of us had been giving Harvey hell for three quarters. We gave him knees, fists, insults – everything. Then he said to me, Hey, when you white fellows going to stop beating up on this poor n....r boy?’ It got to me so much that I could hardly bring myself to block him after that!*

At the annual football banquet of 1947, Morrison Warren shakes hands with Art Burgher of the Sun Angel Foundation. He, Coach Doherty and Jim Montgomery all received awards that year.

At the beginning of the 1938 season, Emerson Harvey worried about the team's new head coach. Dixie Howell was from the deep South, and Harvey was told, "That Alabama man won't want you around." Thinking his days of playing football with the Arizona State Bulldogs were over, the young man decided not to go to Howell's first team meeting. Historian Dean Smith recounts that Howell approached Harvey on campus the next day and asked him why he had missed practice. When Harvey responded that he didn't think he was wanted, Coach Howell answered, "Look mister. My football team is my bread and butter, and I want the best players I can get. You come out and you won't be treated any worse – or any better – than anybody else. But you be out there today." Harvey said, "Dixie Howell was completely fair with me. He was a great football coach and a good friend ."

Emerson Harvey was truly a pioneer who helped push open doors for African American athletes in years to come. William Warren and Ira O'Neal were two of those players who followed soon after. The Second World War interrupted Arizona State football from 1943 to 1945, but when play resumed black athletes were among those welcomed back. However, some of Arizona State's opponents in the old Border Conference had a problem with black players. Morrison "Dit" Warren, Joe Batiste, and George Diggs had to navigate the arcane laws and social landscape of towns in the former Confederate state of Texas. Dean Smith describes how:

> *In 1947, matters came to a head. When Texas Mines refused to let Warren and George Diggs play at El Paso, the Arizona State student body rose in protest. The ASC athletic department issued a declaration that the Sun Devils never again would schedule a college team which refused to let ALL Arizona State athletes compete.*

The challenges that these young athletes endured were beginning to pay some dividends. When it came to their football team, Arizona State drew a line against teams that refused to allow the Sun Devil's black players onto their football fields. The struggles on the gridiron would not end here, but there was no longer any question as to whether African Americans would play football in Tempe. The extremely talented young men who blazed trails across Arizona State's Goodwin Stadium made major strides for African Americans at their school. This by no means meant that everything had changed. Black students still had to deal with second-class status, an un-even playing field in the classroom, and numerous everyday challenges. But now there were at least some cracks in the racial bias and a little more hope that things might be better down the road.

Cleveland Oden joins in carrying Coach Siemering off the field after the 1951 victory over the Arizona Wildcats. Teammate Duane Morrison was one of four backs to run for over 100 yards that game.

9
Housing Restrictions

As the population of African American students at Arizona State slowly increased into the 1940s, it does not appear that the same trend took place in Tempe. The 1940 census count for Tempe was 2,906 residents. Only two African Americans were listed in that count. This near absence of black residents is likely deceptive, because the count does not include the rural districts around Tempe where most African Americans lived. Even so, this population was clearly such a tiny minority that it gave rise to the perception that black people simply did not live in Tempe. The African American student population doesn't generally seem to have been much recognized either, although they represented the most conspicuous group of black people in the community overall.

Tempe resident Josie Sanchez, who grew up in the San Pablo Barrio of Tempe, recalls when one of those students came looking for a room around 1940:

> *One day a lady was seen walking in our neighborhood. Of course we stared for she was a black lady amongst all us Mexicans. I'm sure she felt just as uncomfortable in our barrio.*
>
> *Mrs. Jordan had been referred to my father. She was searching for a place to live while she attended Arizona State Teachers College. She was a teacher at George Washington Carver Grade School and needed to update her degree in order to continue with her vocation…*
>
> *… As it happened Dad had one apartment left. Mrs. Jordan was so happy she moved in with her two children…She was delighted for she was so close to the college.*
>
> *My father in turn was confronted by the city manager. You see father worked for the city. His boss was very prejudiced and he was angry and very unhappy because a black family was living in Tempe. He felt it would bring down property values and other would follow. My father responded very politely that her money was just as green as his. Besides she was a nice school teacher.*[29]

Mrs. Sanchez's recollections help to point out the climate prevailing in Tempe by the early 1940s. African Americans had been so much excluded that even the sight of a black person in a Tempe neighborhood was an unusual event.

10
Not in My Backyard: Race Restrictive Covenants

Race restriction covenants on housing deeds were one of the ways in which African Americans were excluded from communities. In Tempe, the earliest known examples of such restrictions are attributed to the Park Tract Subdivision (known as the Maple-Ash District today). At least twenty-eight of these restrictions were identified by the research for this study. These date between September 1924 and October 1930. The typical language used in these documents was:

> *The grantors grant, sell and convey said property subject to the following express conditions as to the use and enjoyment thereof by the grantee his heirs and assigns…that said premises, nor any part thereof, shall ever be conveyed, transferred, let or demised to any person or persons of African, Japanese, Chinese, Indian, or Mexican descent.*[30]

Exactly how many other subdivisions this occurred in is unknown. Tempe was not alone in the use of racial restriction covenants. The same language is seen on deeds in Phoenix, Mesa, and

other Arizona cities. Such practices had been in place nationally since the late 19th century. In the early 1910s, the National Association of Real Estate Boards began working aggressively against "fair and equal" practices in housing. Even after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled racially restrictive zoning ordinances unconstitutional in the case of *Buckley v. Warley* in 1917, states resisted the decision. Use of housing covenants, like these in Tempe's Park Tract, increased throughout the United States during the 20th Century. In 1926, the Supreme Court upheld the legality of these covenants in *Corrigan v. Buckley*. The decision set back the effort to maintain fairness and equality in housing by decades.[31]

In 1948, the use of racially restrictive covenants was finally ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in decisions on two cases. The Supreme Court made it clear to states that such practices were a direct violation of the 14th Amendment. The City of Tempe finally created a zoning ordinance in August 1948. Ordinance No. 193 made housing covenants null-and-void because the city code trumped the covenants of individual properties. Combined with the Supreme Court decision, such practices were now on their way out.

11
The American Dream in Tempe?

It might seem that the era of restrictions against home-buying for African Americans in Tempe was at an end. However, this was not to be…just yet. Race restrictive covenants were only part of the picture. The prohibition against African Americans buying property was an example of "soft" racism – unwritten practices carried out by social custom or pressure. The city manager attempted to use pressure on Jose Ortega to discourage him from leasing a room to Mrs. Jordan. Mr. Ortega stood his ground. As a result, Mrs. Jordan and her children stayed with the Ortega Family until her course of study was complete.

Although there were exceptions to the restrictions faced by African Americans with housing in Tempe, black home buyers faced significant challenges when they attempted to buy a property in the city into the 1970s. Even so, it is remarkable that thirty-two African Americans were counted by the 1950 census in Tempe. While this number barely registered in Tempe's population of 7,684 that year, it meant that there were at least a few small cracks in the practice of total exclusion.

12
Okemah

I went to Okemah school … and that's right where I lived at and that was like a little community of its own where the blacks stayed down on the east end before we came into Tempe.

Robert Brooks[32]

An often overlooked, but very important, part of the history of Tempe's African American story is the community of Okemah. Okemah was an historically black neighborhood bounded by University Drive to the north, Broadway Road to the south, 32nd Street on the west, and 40th Street on the east side. Okemah had a great many ties to Tempe. The direct physical connections

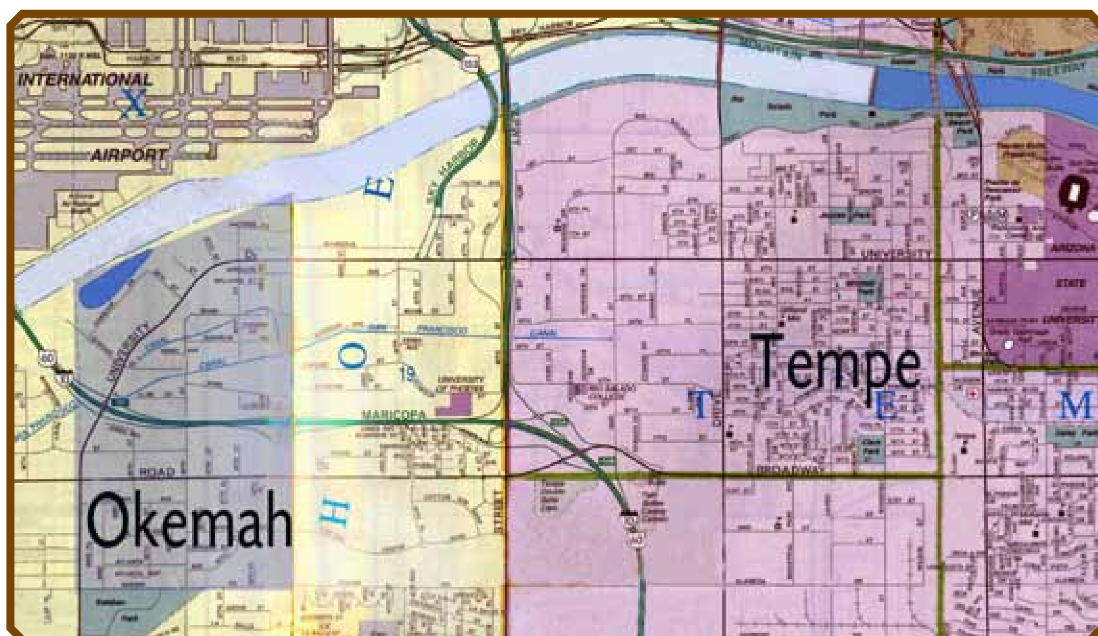
were University Drive (originally known as Transmission Road) and Broadway Road. Situated on the old "Southside" of the river, Okemah was the closest African American community to Tempe. Okemah residents would be some of the first to begin the real integration of Tempe and its schools in the post-World War II era. In many ways, Okemah was as close as Tempe would get to having a black community before African American families began moving to Tempe in the 1950s and 1960s.

The origins of Okemah go back to the late 1800s. Mexican farmers settled the area at the time that the San Francisco Ditch was completed. This irrigation canal was fed by the water that powered Charles Hayden's flour mill in Tempe. By 1901, Dwight B. Heard and Adolphus Bartlett had acquired most of the land in the area. They established the Bartlett-Heard Land and Cattle Company, which became a well-known ranching empire in the Salt River Valley.

African American settlement in the area began when Dwight Heard hired the Colored American Realty Company to encourage black workers to relocate there from Texas, Oklahoma, and a number of other states. Coming from agricultural backgrounds, these transplanted farm workers tended the fields and livestock on the Bartlett-Heard Ranch. They were part of a larger workforce of Mexican and Yaqui laborers that settled south of the Salt River to work at the big ranch and the farms of other Euro-American settlers who purchased portions of the Bartlett-Heard properties.[33]

In the late 1920s, the Okemah community began to take shape. Named after a chief of the Kickapoo tribe in Oklahoma, where many of these migrants came from, the area transitioned from a farm workers camp into a residential subdivision. The Marshall Mortgage Company sold individual lots to black families, and a home-building boom began. Even as Okemah became more settled and structured it retained a very rural character. Resident James Boozer, Jr. recalls:

> *The area was very rural. They had chickens, cows, hogs, rabbits, and horses. It wasn't a violation of anything because it was out in the county. [There were] dirt roads. The mail was a rural route. You talk about rural USA—that was it. Open canals*



The old agricultural neighborhood of Okemah was long associated with the black community in Phoenix and was also connected to Tempe in many ways.

ran through the community. No city water, no sewer, no city collections. It was a private water company. We didn't have natural gas; in fact, we had to have butane tanks, and the butane guy would come every so often to deliver the gas to this big steel tank that you had in your back yard. [There were] cotton fields. And because of the cotton fields, the airplanes used to come over and periodically spray insecticide.[34]

Resident Mary Boozer recalls the tight-knit community, "We were raised up in this area. We met a lot of beautiful families. We were all together and we came up together, through all the hardships."[35]

By the late 1940s, the *Arizona Sun*, a local African American newspaper, optimistically referred to Okemah as "the Harlem of Arizona."[36] In 1947, the newspaper proclaimed:

> *Negroes are buying land, building homes, real homes, homes that anyone would be proud to own and live in…At the present trend, in 5 years there will be a population of 20,000 Negroes in Okemah and Broadway districts alone.*[37]

The *Arizona Sun's* enthusiastic predictions of the African American population boom were a bit premature. The census count for all of the black residents of Phoenix did not pass the 20,000 mark until 1960. Even so, Okemah was not exempt from the enthusiasm of the post-war economic and population boom that hit urban Arizona like wildfire. Although still rural, the community saw its basic amenities improve by the 1940s as water, electricity, gas, and phone service came in. By the World War II era, most of Okemah's residents made a living in the agricultural or construction industries and the community benefitted from the growth of small businesses that provided a variety of services.[38]

13

Okemah and Tempe School District No. 3

In the early years of the community, local children were bused to a one-room schoolhouse at 27th Avenue and Southern. In 1938, the old schoolhouse on 40th Street, which had excluded black children, became the neighborhood school.

Many African Americans who settled in Okemah and nearby came from agricultural backgrounds, like the seated member of this Tempe threshing crew. (ca. 1920)

Known at first as Roosevelt No. 2, Okemah School, it later became known simply as the 40th Street School. For their high school education, students rode the bus across the river to the Phoenix Union Colored High School, which later became known as the George Washington Carver High School.[39]

Near the end of 1947, Tempe School District No. 3 began to consider a relationship with Roosevelt School District No. 6. More specifically, the focus would be on Okemah's 40th Street School. At the district's Board of Trustees meeting in December discussion turned to:

> *…the necessity of providing school facilities for the colored children living in the Tempe district. It was decided that the Board members and the Superintendent would visit the area along 40th Street where these people live and try and arrive at some conclusion…*[40]

The school district's Board of Trustees was looking to avoid the responsibility of educating the small number of black children who lived in Tempe. This attitude is clearly reminiscent of the Board's efforts to bus the black children of one family to Mesa in the 1926 to 1927 school year. The outcome two decades before was that the Board of Trustees managed to avoid the responsibility of educating these students on a technicality. This time the Board initiated the effort itself.

Local school districts remained segregated until the early 1950s, unlike this integrated sewing class at a Tempe school in the 1920s.

It was not until 1951 that an agreement was worked out with the Roosevelt School District. In November, Tempe's District Superintendent informed the Board of Trustees "that the Roosevelt School District has agreed to allow the colored children from the Tempe District to attend school in [the] Roosevelt District for the rest of this year at a cost of $218 per pupil."[41] It appears that those in charge of the Tempe School District were intent on freezing African American students out of schools within city limits.

The situation might have gone on for a number of years, at least until the issue was addressed in the court system. As it turned out, the Roosevelt School District was over-extended and was no longer able to accommodate additional students in its schools. As a result, the boundary of the Tempe School District was extended westward to 40th Street. African American students from Okemah were now being bused to schools in Tempe. Michael Wady, whose parents had come from Texas to Okemah in the 1940s, recalled:

> *My brothers and sisters, Pearlie Jean, Charles, Charlen, Linda, Gary and Larry all attended Tempe schools all our lives from Kindergarten to Tempe Union High School. As Afro-American students it was mandated to go to Tempe Schools because of where we lived, so we were the first Afro-American students that [were] bused into the Tempe Schools in 1952.*
>
> *We started out at Mitchell Elementary School and some of us went to Ritter Elementary School. I went to McKemy Jr. High School from 1963 to 1965 then I transferred to Tempe High School.*[42]

And so the integration of Tempe public schools began. Slowly at first, African American students

could be seen in elementary schools and at Tempe High School. Although the desegregation of Tempe schools had not come about under ideal circumstances, the door was opened and African American students became a regular part of the student body. The road to integration was not an easy process. Eventually the attendance of African American students in Tempe public schools would also help push open the door of home ownership in the community. But that process would take time and simple persistence over the course of years.

14
Conclusion

The decades from the 1920s to the early 1950s saw continued struggle for African Americans to simply keep a window open into Tempe. The efforts of African Americans to attend Arizona State began on a modest scale, but by the late 1930s there was a small, but substantial presence of black students at the Tempe campus. Facing restrictions and racial prejudice at many turns, these academic pioneers worked hard to blaze trails that would pay dividends in the decades to come for the students that followed. In the public schools of Tempe, real change would not come about until the early 1950s. However, African American students would benefit from the efforts of Tempeans like Adolfo Romo, whose battle against the segregation practices of the school district would set a precedent that would eventually open enrollment at all Tempe schools to a diverse student body. While all of these changes were painfully slow, none were quite as slow as the battle to open housing to African Americans in Tempe. Despite some notable early exceptions to the exclusion of African Americans from leasing or buying homes in Tempe, black home buyers were excluded until the doors of Tempe homes began to open to them in the 1960s and 1970s.

Chapter 3: Toward a More Inclusive Tempe, 1950s – Present Day

"Maybe you shouldn't run here, because you're Black, and Black people don't win here. . . . Maybe you should run in a place where there's a heavier African American concentration, so you can actually have a built-in constituency.". . . So they told me that, I think, for my own good. But at the end of the day, my thought process became, Look, this is my home, I live in the city of Tempe, and I'm gonna live here for a long, long time.

Tempe Councilmember Corey Woods, from an oral history interview conducted June 18, 2009

1 Introduction

By the early 1950s, the social landscape was beginning to shift and African Americans pushed harder than ever for an end of the bigoted practices to which they were subjected. In the communities of the Salt River Valley, many of these early changes took place in the education system. Arizona State College provided one of the few wedges into Tempe for African Americans. Although Tempe had seen a small number of black residents over the years, few had been able to live in the incorporated parts of town or in the new subdivisions beginning to pop up since the 1920s.

2 Integrating Tempe Schools

As we saw in the last chapter, the integration of Tempe public schools began when an effort by the district's Board of Trustees to send the few black children in town to a South Phoenix school backfired. Before long, the Superior Court of Arizona added legal teeth to end segregation in all schools in the state. Attorney Hayzel B. Daniels, son of a Buffalo Soldier of the 10th Cavalry, recalls the case of *Phillips v. Phoenix Union High Schools and Junior College District* in 1952-1953:

> *As president of the NAACP branch, I felt it was time to file action against school segregation. . . . Along with Herb Fenn, a liberal white lawyer, we put our case before the State Superior Court on behalf of three Negro children, seeking their admission to Phoenix Union High School, naming its governing School Board as defendants. Judge Struckmeyer of the Superior Court heard the case and ruled that*

The Ritter Elementary School was one of the schools attended by black students after integration began in 1952.

the segregation laws were invalid."A half century of intolerance is enough," he said in his ruling.

... This was in 1953. Afterwards we filed suit against Wilson Elementary School District, and Judge Bernstein ruled that segregation in elementary schools was unconstitutional. The U.S. Supreme Court used this case in reaching the momentous decision in 1954.[1]

That 1954 decision was *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (No. 1)* which captured the entire nation's attention in the mid-1950s. The efforts of Daniels and the rest of his legal team not only became a precedent cited in the most famous civil rights case of the 20th Century, but profoundly impacted the civil rights landscape of Arizona. Judge Struckmeyer's decision struck at the heart of the matter of school segregation by addressing the power of school boards:

It is fundamental to our system of government that the rights of men are to be determined by laws and not by administrative officers or bureaus... If the legislature can confer upon the school board the arbitrary power to segregate pupils of African ancestry from pupils of Caucasian ancestry, then the same right must exist to segregate pupils of French, German, Chinese, Spanish, or other ancestry...or for any reason as pure fancy might dictate.[2]

The combined decisions of these cases began the end of legally sanctioned segregation in public schools. By no means did this insure a smooth transition away from school segregation. School boards in Arizona were now on notice that any of their past practices and efforts to exclude children of various racial or ethnic backgrounds would no longer be tolerated.

The early days of integrating the Tempe public schools were trying times for the children involved. Michael Wady, one of the Okemah children bused to Tempe, recalls:

During the whole time of attending Tempe Schools [it] was very difficult in the 50's, 60's, and 70's because we had to deal with so much prejudice and hatred from ... racists who did not want to interact with Black people.[3]

Dr. Fred Warren recalls these challenges from a parent's perspective:

There were people that were discouraging that, saying, "You're taking your children into a hostile environment, and they won't be treated well." And the kids had some experiences in school, which they handled, nothing major.[4]

Earl Oats was one of the few African American students at Tempe High School who attended

The three African American students in this photo were probably among those bused from the Okemah neighborhood.

the old schoolhouse on Mill south of University (then 8th Street) during the transition to the new school at Broadway. Regarding his overall experience, Earl remembers:

> *Tempe High was positive, when I came there in '53, it, you know, Tempe was being integrated at that time, high school was, and so you know, I participated in sports. And to this day there are people that I had started high school with and we talk to each other periodically. And so yea, the experience was…kind of semi-short, because I ended up going into the service. But… it was, it was a memorable experience. I have no complaints about the school.*

Although their numbers were very small in the 1950s and 1960s, these academic pioneers paved the way for those who followed. That the integration process began even before the decisions at the state and national level owed something to the willingness of Adolfo Romo to demand a better education for his children in the 1920s. The process of making public schools more inclusive was slow, but clearly every step mattered.

Despite the difficulties that these students faced, they found ways to adapt and many became involved in extracurricular activities, athletics, and other student organizations. Some students even created organizations when they felt no other group addressed certain concerns. Michael Wady and a friend saw such a need in the late 1960s:

> *In the year of 1968 myself and Joe Terrell started the first Black Student Union at Tempe High School (which was the same year Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated). We wanted to create more awareness of the Black culture, because there were no Afro-American studies at Tempe Schools. [Our] – Joe and myself – objective was to give the other ethnic groups an opportunity to be exposed to Afro-American culture.*[5]

At the end of their time in Tempe schools, many of these former students could look back at much that was positive about their experiences. For integration pioneer Michael Wady:

> *The thing that I am mostly happy about growing up in Tempe is that it taught me how to get along with other ethnic groups. Attending Tempe High School as a African American student gave me the exposure to a high school with one of the best curriculums in the valley at the time!*[6]

The quality of Tempe schools was a big draw for African American parents to move their families to the community in the years after integration began. When Ernie and Arthur Reeves brought their family to Tempe in 1971, quality of education was a key factor:

> *…we were looking for a place where we could raise our kids and get a good education. Talk[ed] to a lot of educators about it. …We got into the university town of Tempe and found out about it. We found that everyone … said well this is a good educational system they have good schools there. …my wife and I went [and] saw and found a house…and the main reason was because of the school system.*[7]

Considering the difficulties that many African Americans ran into as they attempted to lease or buy homes in Tempe as late as the 1960s and 1970s, it says a lot about the quality of the school system that people were willing to put up with the inevitable hassles they faced in locating a residence within city limits.

The integration of students into Tempe's schools wasn't the only challenge faced by African Americans in the public education system. For black educators, the road to becoming a member of the faculty or staff at Tempe's schools was another challenge. One of the few to break in during the early decades after integration was Dr. LaVern M. Swain Tarkington. She completed her bachelor's degree in education at Arizona

State University in 1963 and was hired to teach at Tempe High School in 1968. Two years later, she began teaching at McClintock High School. In 1972, LaVern became a counselor at Marcos de Niza High School. In 1974, she became the Director of Special Services for the Tempe Union High School District, a position that she held until

African American educator Jim Blose with other recipients of the Tempe Elementary School District's first Impact Awards in April, 1986.

1992. Next came a job as principal at McClintock High. In 1994, this remarkable educator took over as the Assistant Superintendent of Personnel for the High School District. After returning to ASU for a third time (she completed a Doctorate in Educational Administration in 2000) Dr. Tarkington served as the Interim Superintendent for Tempe Union High School District in 2004.

During Dr. Tarkington's phenomenal career, she accomplished many firsts as an African American and as a woman. While her career may in some ways be the exception in terms of the hiring of African American faculty, her hard work, skills, education, and personal determination are the qualities that carried her so far. As has so often been the case, the strong determination of individuals has helped to move things forward for the African American community. Indeed, Dr. Tarkington's long resume does not end with the education system. She has been involved with numerous community and professional organizations, including the Arizona Board of Regents.

Around the time that LaVern Tarkington began her first job at Tempe High School, another African American lady began working for Tempe Elementary School District No. 3. Michael Wady describes the community outreach job that his mother, Pearlie Mae Wady, had with the school district:

> *When we moved to Tempe in 1967, we lived on Vista del Cerro, four blocks north of Broadway off Rural Rd. My mother then started working at Tempe Elementary School District as a Community Worker, going out to under-privilege families' homes to see if [the] Tempe School District could be of any help to assist them with food boxes, clothes, shoes, or transportation needs. My mother did this type of work until 1980. While she was working as a Community Worker, my mother was awarded an Outstanding Community Worker [award] and then retired in 1980.*

Although African Americans remain relatively small in numbers among the students, faculty, and staff in Tempe schools, the city's black community got its proverbial foot in the door when Tempe's schools were integrated in the early 1950s. It may have been a small start in terms of numbers, but the implications of the integration of African Americans in Tempe's public schools would have far reaching effects that are still with us today.

3
Overcoming Segregation and Exclusion

The beginning of school integration for African Americans did not automatically mean the end of exclusionary practices in the community. As the saying goes, "old habits die hard" and this was true for Tempe with regards to African Americans and the old days of overt racism and segregation.

One of the most visible public facilities to practice exclusion was Tempe Beach Pool, which opened in the 1920s. As Edward Espinosa Gracia – aka "Mickey" Gracia – remembers, the policy of exclusion at Tempe Beach until the late 1940s was simply, "None whatsoever--no Blacks, no Mexicans, period."[8] Not long after World War II ended, Edward Gracia and other Mexican American veterans decided that they had had enough. In 1946, the pool's exclusive policy was overturned for Hispanic residents. For Tempe's few black residents or those from Okemah or anywhere else around the Valley, the pool was still off limits. Even for Mexican American residents, it wasn't until the early 1950s that they began to feel welcome at the pool due to the climate of exclusion.[9]

Long an oasis from the summer heat, Tempe Beach was off-limits to African Americans for three decades after it opened in the 1920s.

In 1957, pool manager Joseph P. Spracale hired a young black Arizona State athlete to serve as one of the life guards at Tempe Beach. Joe Spracale recalls the racially-charged attitudes that still remained at the pool in the 1950s:

> *You never saw it written down. It was just the attitude of some people, whether they would accept either Hispanics or blacks in our swimming pool.We had problems at that time. We had ASU kids who were black who never came to visit the pool. Leon Burton was the first black. I hired Leon Burton at Tempe Beach. He was a football player.*[10]

Of course, Leon Burton was not just another player. The young man from Flint Michigan was a bona fide Sun Devil star of the old gridiron. Burton claimed Arizona State's single game rushing record during the 1955 Homecoming game – 243 yards (only surpassed by Ben Malone in 1973). This sort of star-power probably did not hurt when it came to Leon being accepted at Tempe Beach. By the early 1960s, Tempe resident Sally Cole recalls buses pulling up to the pool with young African Americans and "moments later, the shallow end was a checkerboard of black and white."[11] Sally notes that despite the history of intolerance that characterized Tempe Beach prior to its initial desegregation in 1946, by the 1960s it was becoming diversified in a way that the rest of the city still was not.

Tempe Beach was not the only facility in Tempe that was exclusive when it came to race. One of the things that stuck out in Michael Wady's mind was that, "I can remember colored and white bathrooms [in] downtown Tempe."[12] Practices such as separate bathrooms and drinking fountains lingered at least into the 1950s.

Plenty of local businesses also refused service to black customers well into the 1960s. Alex Wright ran into this situation when he and his wife were out for an evening dinner:

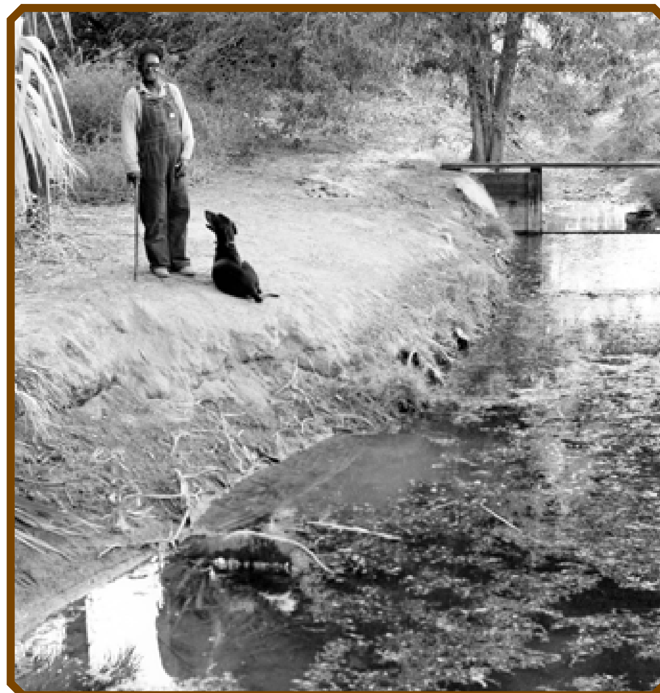
> *…the only discrimination that I can recall, we went to a restaurant one night, and they refused to serve us. I had a suit and tie on, my wife, she always dressed nice, and they turned us down. And we went to . . . a couple other places, they refused us service.*[13]

Dealing with this sort of racism took a toll and African American residents found different ways to deal with it. Wright recalls that simply avoiding these situations was preferable:

> *And I'm pretty sure that maybe in Tempe, there was a lot of places I would have been discriminated against, but I didn't go there. … I didn't want to be discriminated against, turned down. Those little things hurt my feelings, 'cause I been through so much.*[14]

Many businesses maintained such practices for fear of losing customers. At least that is how such a policy was often rationalized. Dr. Betty Greathouse recalls an experience in Tempe with one such bigoted customer:

> *I walk into a restaurant, they served Hispanic food, or let's say Mexican American food, and it was on Broadway, and Mill. And I walk in with some others, and there was a gentleman in a wheelchair and he looked at me and he looked at the person who was the waiter that was serving him. He said, "If this is the kind of people you are going to start serving, I'm going to stop coming here to eat." And he said that loud enough for me to hear.*[15]



This older gentleman and his dog strolling along an irrigation ditch near Guadalupe Road, reminds us of Tempe's agricultural roots. (late 1960s)

Similar situations occurred at other businesses. Shortly after Wilma and Cecil Patterson moved to Tempe in 1969, Wilma went looking for a convenient childcare facility:

> *…we had a child that needed to go to daycare, she was three… And I don't know the name of the daycare center, there … on Broadway near ASU. Very convenient, you know I'm going down Rural Road every day to go to work and Cecil and I are in the car together, going to law school, and I'm going to my job… So I went in to get her signed up and they don't take black kids, they don't take African American kids. Nobody said that, but again, the welcoming, you know when you are welcome in a way when people are trying to avoid you. You know, this can't be happening, it was true. And I could not understand why I was being treated with such coldness. So [I told] my girlfriend, and her husband, who had been in Tempe a little bit longer… and she said, "they don't take black kids there." She said, "'cause I went there too, I took my daughter."*[16]

Even veterans' organizations displayed such attitudes. World War II veteran Edward Gracia helped to integrate Tempe's American Legion hall in the early 1960s:

I was Junior Vice Commander two years and then the third year I became Vice Commander, which is in charge of membership. So, I had some blacks that wanted to come in and some of the guys right there from the Legion Board said we can't bring in any blacks. And I says, "Why not?" I said they're American. They said no they're too much problem. So, I says, "Okay we'll see about that" so I called the District Commander from Phoenix, which was Clate North, and he said "Mickey, you are the Commander, the Vice Commander, you can bring anybody you want in there. I say you cannot segregate the American Legion, don't segregate." So that's when they took in the blacks.[17]

Overall, the exclusion of African Americans and other groups outside of the white, Euro-American community took on a more subtle form in Tempe and the rest of Arizona. Judge Cecil Patterson describes this phenomenon against the background of his native Virginia:

Coming from Virginia to Arizona was circumstances having to deal with the same kinds of things, but in a different fashion. Because that is, you had segregation. You had separation in both places. In Virginia it was overt. In the south, period, it was overt. In Arizona, it was soft. And it was there, and you recognized it when you would think about common decencies and courtesies extended. And you know, you didn't get when you see the other people getting them and you weren't getting them. So, it was a matter of shifting gears and dealing with segregation on the macro-level.[18]

Occasionally, such practices were more out in the open. Edward Gracia remembers signs at Tempe Beach and other locations:

No Mexicans. Just like they had right there in all these bars. No Blacks. You know, they had on bars right there in Chandler, in Mesa, lot of those places right there, no Blacks allowed.[19]

This doctor at the Tempe Hospital was among the growing class of African American professionals moving into Tempe by the late 1970s.

4

Housing – The Struggle to Live in Tempe

Stan Kyle began looking for a home in Tempe not long after he was stationed at Williams Air Force Base in 1968. Although for the most part Tempe looked like any other town, Stan noticed:

The only other time I could see some things in Tempe that may have been unusual, was there was no African Americans basically living in housing in the area. When I came, of course, the Civil Rights and the Fair Housing Acts had been passed. But it was very obvious, until the growth of Tempe started and homebuilders came in – they were pressured by the government – then all of a sudden African Americans were buying homes. But a family had moved in, over in south Tempe, about the early '60s – I happened to know the family – and they had to go through at least five or six court orders to get

their home. So the first official family, I'd say, that was allowed to live in Tempe – not the university dormitories, which were okay – but off campus and into regular housing where they can have ownership was around the early '60s, my understanding around '64, '65, and they went through numerous lawsuits to get there. And after that got cleared, then a few families started moving in, with no problems.

...it was the Bursh family, Josh and Eula Bursh... ...they went through a lot of court orders to move into Tempe.[20]

As black families began to move into Tempe in years following the integration of Tempe schools, buying a home was no simple matter. Until key decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court and Tempe's zoning laws came into effect by the late 1940s, race restrictions had been a common part of housing covenants on many property deeds. Phoenix resident Dee Dee Woods talks about the astonishing fact that remnants of these restrictions remain on property deeds today:

...the house that I live in now, the deed says – it was built in 1948 – and it says whoever buys this house agrees or promises not to sell to basically anybody other than somebody white. On the deed, it says that I will not sell to a Jew, an Indian, a Mexican, a Negro. That's on the deed to my house.[21]

Written restrictions of this sort, in Phoenix, Tempe, and elsewhere, were on their way out when Dee Dee Woods' home was built in 1948. However, the social and business pressures to maintain restrictions against renters and buyers from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds remained for decades to come.

By the 1960s, African American home buyers were generally not subjected to such overt acts of bigotry. In some ways this sort of situation was easier to deal with. Open racism could generally be confronted in one way or another. However, the race attitudes that most African American home buyers confronted in Tempe in the 1950s and 1960s was much more subtle. Eula and Josh Bursh faced some of these challenges while shopping for a home in Tempe:

Eventually, several places we would call and ask them if the house was still for sale, and they would say yes, then we'd tell them we want to come over. And a lot of times, they couldn't tell our race by the voice. Most people, at the time, expected blacks to have a certain dialect, as such. And my ex-husband, and growing up, my brother, sister and I, we never talked with a strong dialect, black-talk or whatever. And so, consequently, a lot of them would tell us, "No, it's not sold," and we would set up a time to go over to look at the house. Then, having been told to come over, they would go ahead and then tell you that at the time, somebody had been interested and they called before, or "I will get back with you"; they gave themselves a way out.[22]

Frustrated with being ignored, put-off, and otherwise denied the opportunity to buy a home in Tempe so many times, Eula Bursh put in a call to the mayor's office:

...I explained to him what had happened. And he said, "Oh, yeah, we sell to anyone that has the money to purchase. But," he said, "what happens, with blacks, the NAACP, they pay for their houses, so we don't want somebody to just put someone in and they can't take care of the property." And so, of course, I gave him a few of my thoughts concerning it, that that wasn't the issue. And I also told him that I would love for someone to purchase a house for me, but no one in the NAACP was purchasing houses for anyone.[23]

The Burshs' were not the only ones who found themselves deflected from home-buying. Several years later, in 1972, Eloise McCreary and her husband began looking for a home in Tempe. After getting the run-around, they tried a different tactic with the help of a white friend:

Tempe ladies assemble care packages for people in need. Service to community has long been part of the African American experience at the local level and beyond.

So when we got there [Tempe], when we started looking around for homes, the first one that we stopped at was Suggs Homes. And they just told us so many tales about, "Oh, the house is sold," blah, blah. And then my husband would send his friend to the same house two weeks later, and that's how we found that they was not selling to blacks, because his friend didn't have no problem, they just wrote him up right away. So we went and started looking for homes that the people were selling them, by owner. And they said, "Oh, they're sold, they're sold." Well, we knew, after 15 houses, we knew what was going on then.[24]

Despite the fact that there were no written laws supporting such exclusionary practices, white Tempe resident Conrad Powell recalls that:

[In] Tempe, you had so-called "rules." Now, the big thing was… in relation to the real estate people, they would not talk to a black person about selling them a house or renting them a house or anything like that. Now, to say whether that was on the books or not as a law, I can't verify that; but I know what the practice was.[25]

Although they had to deal with a lot of bad behavior, racially charged attitudes, and other roadblocks, more and more African American families saw their piece of the American dream in Tempe and they refused to take no for an answer.

5

"H-A-L-L-C-R-A-F-T – Hallcraft Homes"

Persistence paid off for many African American home buyers. Government regulations, lawsuits (or the threat thereof), and one home building company, in particular, helped to turn things around. Stan Kyle, a commissioned officer in the U.S. Air Force, recalls how military authorities handled discrimination issues for service members:

…the military identified places for us to stay – if we stayed off base – that were approved for military. The advantage I think I had was that if I reported any discrimination, if I sensed that, the military would … – at least Williams [Air Base] would – … contact those places and really let the owners know that that was unacceptable and that they would be placed on a list. So most businesses wanted to respect the military; it was Vietnam time.[26]

After being turned away by various home builders in Tempe, Wilma and Cecil Patterson were out for a drive:

…and we were on Camelback Road and we saw

Hallcraft Realty, with offices on south Mill Avenue and east Baseline Roads, became a welcome ally for black home buyers in the early 1970s.

some model homes and they were Hallcraft Homes. And we went in to look at those model homes to look, not knowing ... they were building homes in Tempe. And the gentlemen there we had met at a party and his name was Tony, I'll never forget it, he was so friendly. And he said, "You know we're building homes in Tempe, why don't you take a look, I love the models." And it was that, those were Hallcraft homes, and it was that introduction I think to him and to those models that opened up the doors for us to get a home in Tempe. So, we, working through him ... bought a Hallcraft Home.[27]

Other families, like the McCrearys, the Bishops, and the Oats', all echoed the same sentiment about Hallcraft Homes. After getting the runaround and being denied by so many builders, these homebuyers were relieved to find a company that embraced them and welcomed their business. Tempe was finally opening up to black residents in a way that it never had before.

These victories did not mean that things were perfect. Carol Livingston shared the experience that she and her husband, Warren, had when they finally bought a home in Tempe:

This house happened to be government FHA repossess at that time we got this. Otherwise we probably wouldn't have gotten this. They couldn't discriminate. But they did. We had friends down the street, the Caldwells. They sued to get their house. They were here before we were. It was bad back then. That was life I guess. That was during the Martin Luther King era when he had the march.[28]

ArizonaMuseumofNaturalHistory

Willie Peete (third from left) and Warren Livingston (far right) grew up in Mesa's Washington Park neighborhood. Both had professional football careers and eventually relocated to Tempe with their families.

It might seem as though Warren Livingston – a star defensive back for the Dallas Cowboys from 1961 to 1966 – would be a shoe-in for a Tempe home. The fact is that star-power could be a major factor as Dr. Wilma Patterson recalls:

...we knew about the housing issue and that eventually opened up to all other people because when the Phoenix Suns started their team and Paul Silas came here and wanted to move into a Bradley Home, they sold him a house. And that was important and then Bradley opened up to black people and the black people started moving in. Bradley was the, that was the most expensive development around.[29]

As more and more African American families began to move to Tempe, they began to settle into their new homes. There were stills bumps in the road along the way, as new neighborhoods did not always welcome them with open arms. George Greene relates a strange situation in his Tempe neighborhood:

I was the first African American to live in that section. And according to the lady next door, whom I met and befriended much later, she told us that they had a block meeting, trying to determine if they were gonna let us live there. But we never had any trouble, any problems, living in that particular area.[30]

Other early Black residents in Tempe recall more overt acts of defiance. Michael Wady describes some of the backlash that greeted his family:

I can remember the first year, one morning after moving to Tempe my mother was getting ready to go to work. And when she got ready to get into her car, she found all kinds of racial slurs written on her car window (like "n....... go home" and "you're not wanted in this neighborhood"). Plus they poured sugar in her gas tank. We never found out who did this to us, but it did not stop or change anything in our lifestyle.[31]

Graffiti, shouted epithets, and various other acts of harassment were something that most black residents would put up with in these early years to one degree or another. Judge Patterson recalls the treatment aimed at his family's home:

These kids came by and threw eggs out of our house. That was a year or two after we moved in. We used to get eggs thrown up against the wall of the house nearly every day. We didn't know if those were kids or adults or whatever.[32]

Teacher Mary Bishop had egg-throwers in her neighborhood too. They learned a lesson they would not soon forget:

But once we had some little boys that lived on our cul-de-sac, two little boys. ...and next door was a little bad boy, so I went down, they had egged the side of my house, a garage, in the back fence, so you know nobody did it from the front. I went down to that house and I said, "you and your two boys need to come down to my house." Then I went next door and got the little boy, Ervin. And I put them all in the backyard. I said, "Who egged this house?" And I've never had any more trouble. I told them, "Now you go clean all these eggs off my house." The parents were sitting right there, and they did. And there wasn't any more trouble.[33]

Despite all the trials and tribulations of their new Tempe homes, these 20th Century African American pioneers steadily carved out a place in their new community. Over time, black home-buyers saw less and less evidence of the "old" days when buying a house was an unwelcome adventure. Tempe's African American residents, who came in to town the hard way, are invested in their community. Their children and grandchildren have been Tempeans since birth. For residents like Augustus Shaw IV, this community means more than home:

...I've seen Tempe grow. I've planted roots in this town. Hopefully, my kids will want to stay here. And that's important in any community, being stable, being a member of your community, and wanting to give back to your community. ...I've invested myself in this city. So what's the biggest thing I can say? My investment in Tempe – I'll never leave Tempe. I may move around, I may go north Tempe, south Tempe, but I will always be in this city. I'll never leave Tempe.[34]

An African American lady and her co-worker at Ambassador Leather Goods factory in the 1970s. The variety of opportunities and Tempe's diversity increased in the post-farming economy.

6
Being Sun Devils at Arizona State

As with the integration of public schools and housing, challenges involving race-relations still remained a serious hurdle for African American students at Arizona State. More and more young black people were enrolling as time went on, thanks in part to the GI Bill and the associated benefits earned by years of military service during World War II and the Korean War. Some of the teachers who left the school with training and credentials in previous decades were now coming back to get their Master's degrees and Ph.D.'s. Even so, for many African American students, going to college in Tempe could leave them feeling unwelcome compared to many of their white counterparts. With regards to these feelings and the experience for black Americans in general, Fred Warren confides, "Certainly as an undergraduate I did, on the campus of ASU and everywhere else. But that was characteristic of the society we lived in, so you always felt marginalized."[35]

Clearly times were changing for the better in Tempe, when Carolyn Griez and Curley Culp posed for this photo as the newly-crowned Queen and King of ASU's Homecoming in 1967.

It was not as if all experiences that black students had were negative. Everyone found ways to make the best of their situation. The classroom dynamic had a major impact on students, and the central figure there was the professor. Eula Bursh recalls that there was a keen awareness of where black students fit in and how they were perceived:

> *But there were good experiences, and yes, you know when you are wanted and when you're not. And it's hard to describe to someone else, but you have a sense that some of them believed that you were just a token, they had to bring you in. And there were some that really would talk more to the White students, and you're just there. There were a lot subtle things, but overall, no one would be able to say, "Oh, he doesn't like Blacks," or whatever, but it was there. It was their expectations. But it was a transition for everyone, because a lot of instructors believed that, hey, they brought these folks in and they shouldn't be here. But that was the norm at that time. And, yes, it has an effect on you.*[36]

Edward Smith, who recalls the experience of feeling like a "dead man walking" in the earliest days of the integration of Phoenix Union High School, had a particularly blunt experience that stuck with him. He recalls that:

> *...in one of my English classes, the professor telling me that "You can only get a C; don't try to get*

anything higher than that, because you're Colored, and we can't award you any higher grade than that." I can remember that so vividly, because I'm saying, "What did I do? I didn't say nothing wrong to you, to get that." So I had a struggle with, what did Colored people do to be hated so? I struggled with that. And I remember going home crying because he had made that statement.[37]

The challenges on campus did not just impact students. African American faculty encountered the same racism as the student body. Dr. John L. Edwards recalls students walking out of his class on the first day because he was black. Two later returned and apologized because the students who remained were impressed by Edwards' knowledge and experience. Dr. Jefferson Eugene Grigsby, Jr. had fonder memories; he and fellow art professor Roosevelt "Rip" Woods achieved international renown for their artwork.

Dr. Betty Greathouse became an ASU professor in 1972. In fact, she recalls being "the first African American female to be hired on a tenure-track position in the College of Education at ASU." Dr. Greathouse recalls the good, the not-so-good, and the challenges for black professors:

Some of the biggest changes I have seen at Arizona State University have been the hiring of more African Americans, Mexican Americans, and the great Native American programs that they have there. And I must say that…working as a professor there, was very challenging at that time. Because at that time, African Americans, as well as whites, held the first African Americans to the highest, they held them up there, and they were evaluated more.[38]

Housing remained a major pain for black students and faculty for years. Most African Americans continued to make long commutes back to Phoenix, Mesa, or the few other black communities in the Salt River Valley. Alex Wright remembers:

My wife was a teacher. She was going to ASU, but she couldn't stay there, back in those days. …I can name five or six blacks, they was getting their teaching certificate at ASU, but none of the blacks could stay in the dormitory. So you had to get up in the morning and drive down there to the ASU parking lot and then go to class, but they couldn't stay in the dormitories. That was Tempe, but there's drastic change now. But she kept on, she got a Master's degree and everything, but she wasn't able to stay there.[39]

In the 1950s and 1960s, pressure for change increased along with enrollment. Eula and Josh Bursh were among the first African Americans to benefit from these changes, although housing on the main campus remained exclusive toward black students:

We had difficulty trying to find a place to stay, because when my ex-husband came…they didn't have a place on campus where the blacks lived. They were on campus, but it was not on campus. It was beyond the railroad track, and they had housing there – and that's where my ex-husband was housed in '62.

7

Better Times for ASU Grads

Slowly, inevitably, change picked up its pace. As the Civil Rights era moved forward in the 1960s, African Americans demanded change in their schools, their jobs, their communities, and for the country overall. Many of the community leaders pushing for changes were World War II veterans, like Tuskegee Airman Lincoln J. Ragsdale. Like their Mexican American counterparts at Phoenix's Thunderbird Post 41 of the American Legion, black veterans had sacrificed too much and lost too many of their comrades-in-arms to accept the racist status-quo.

Steadily, more and more African Americans saw the benefit of change as they continued to work hard, whether at school or in the workforce. In these early decades of change, many black graduates continued the long tradition of educators. As Mary Bishop recalls, "most of the blacks, during our time, were in education, because that's where we could get a job. Then they ventured off into nursing, but most of us were educators." Many of these teachers would find work at two local school districts because, "we could only teach in Phoenix Elementary School District, and Roosevelt School District."[40]

However, this was beginning to change. A few educators, like LaVern Tarkington, pushed into other school districts. These ASU graduates also began to fill positions higher up the educational ladder, as principals and administrators, positions that would have been practically unattainable for African Americans not many years before. These changes did not often come smoothly. Fred Warren remembers, "I was the first African American associate principal after desegregation [Phoenix Union High School District] – one of the school board members voted against me because he said I was a militant."[41] Despite such hitches things were improving more and more for these Sun Devil Alumni.

Among the success stories were student athletes like Morrison Warren. A much beloved Sun Devil on the gridiron at Arizona State's old Goodwin Stadium, "Dit" Warren enjoyed a brief stint in professional football after graduating with academic honors in 1948. He returned to school before long, eventually earning a doctorate. Later, Dr. Warren became the first African American to be elected to the Phoenix City Council before becoming the Vice Mayor of Phoenix. He served concurrently as a professor at ASU and as a principal at South Mountain High School. Warren also achieved more African American "firsts," as president of the Fiesta Bowl in 1981-82 and as a member of the Board of Directors of Arizona Public Service.

Other African American ASU graduates went on to great achievement, like Jesse Wilmer Jones, the first Ph.D recipient (Chemistry, 1963) and educators like Dr. Herma H. Hightower, who served as the Associate Superintendent of the Arizona State Department of Education. Cecil B. Patterson, Jr. (JD, 1971) became the first African American Superior Court Judge from Arizona (1980) and later served on the Appellate Court.

Other prominent graduates include Cloves Campbell, Sr. who served as a state legislator and the first black state senator in Arizona. Cloves owned the weekly newspaper the *Arizona Informant* with his brother Dr. Charles Campbell, who also graduated from ASU. A third brother,

Like other World War II veterans of color, Morrison Warren's career of educational and public service was born out of a determination to ensure that freedoms won on far away battlefields would mean something back home.

Dr. Donald Campbell, served as chairman of the Maricopa Community Colleges governing board. Dr. Matthew C. Whitaker, Associate Professor of History at ASU, author of *Race Work: The Rise of Civil Rights in the Urban West*, and past president of the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center, is an ASU graduate and native Phoenician.

Dr. Betty Greathouse was the first African American female to serve ASU in many capacities, including program coordinator, Assistant Chair of the Department of Elementary Education, Assistant Dean of Minority Affairs and Admissions in the Graduate College and director of the Division of Curriculum and Instruction. In recognition of her contributions to ASU and the community she was inducted into the Phoenix College (2003) and the ASU College of Education Hall of Fame (2008).

By overcoming countless obstacles, African American university graduates of earlier generations helped pave the way for today's African Americans to attend ASU with the same rights and privileges as students of other races and cultures.[42]

The accomplishments of African American students and alumni were not just in the classroom, the workplace, and the community. In the realm of athletics, black Bulldogs and Sun Devils excelled. Black athletes wearing school colors became not just accepted, but a point of pride for Arizona State. Why it took so long for the accomplishments of these young men – and before long, women – to translate into an appreciation of African American students in the classroom is an unresolved question. In fact, Leon Burton ran for close to 250 yards in a football game in 1955, and yet the intelligence and abilities of black Sun Devils in the classroom was still treated as an open question among much of the Euro-American student body and faculty.

Dr. Betty Greathouse and Dr. Joan Moyer (in back) plan an education conference at ASU in September, 1973. (from the Tempe Daily News)

Many of those same athletes proved themselves tremendously capable in the classroom as well, and no small number would go on to advanced degrees and major accomplishments in life after school and sports. The talented black athletes at Arizona State played in a variety of sports, including baseball, football, basketball and track and field. Names such as Herman Frazier, Joe Caldwell, Prentice Williams, Reggie Jackson, Barry Bonds, and scores more have taken the field as Sun Devils. Inevitably, among the pioneers of Bulldog and Sun Devil athletics were football players, in no small part because so much of the school's spirit and identity are tied to that team sport. ASU historian Dean Smith recorded in his book on Sun Devil football:

> *Arizona State University, with courageous pioneers such as Emerson Harvey, Morrison Warren, George Diggs, Ira O'Neal and Jim Bilton to lead the way, helped to break the formidable barrier [of racism in athletics]. In recent years such Black stars as Curley Culp, Art Malone, J. D. Hill, Windlan Hall,*

A pioneer in breaking the color-line for Arizona State in the 1930s, Emerson Harvey receives an Alumni Athletic Service Award for a lifetime of community service. (April, 1977)

Woody Green, Steve Holden, Mike Haynes, Larry Gordon, John Jefferson, John Harris, and Al Harris have won All-America honors and professional acclaim.

By the time star Sun Devil fullback Art Malone took to the field in the late 1960s, black players had been wearing school colors for three decades.

ASU may forever be proud of the role it played in breaking the color line in American collegiate athletics.[43]

8

Dr. Martin Luther King, the Struggle for Civil Rights, and Beyond

On a typically hot Arizona summer night, June 3, 1964, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. addressed a crowd of 8,000 people in the old Goodwin Stadium at Arizona State University. Sitting next to ASU President G. Homer Durham, Ralph Abernathy, Rev. Louis Eaton, Msgr. Robert Donahoe and other dignitaries before his talk, Dr. King sat patiently in the evening heat until he spoke on “Religious Witness for Human Dignity.” Tempe residents Mary Bishop, Eula Bursh, Carol Livingston and many others were there that night. All of these ladies were involved in civil rights activities, and they recall that Dr. King’s visit had

a major impact. Carol Livingston particularly remembers the impact of that night:

We didn't have equal rights. We couldn't go into restaurants. We couldn't get jobs. So that's why we marched. Dr. King came out here and we had a big rally out at ASU. After that ministers and stuff got together and we started marching on the capital. That's when things started to change.[44]

Mary Bishop, a teacher in the Phoenix Elementary School District, remembered the civil rights work that she was involved with:

And I followed Martin Luther King… As a matter of fact I marched around here, in Phoenix, to open up counters, 'cause the rules were blacks could not sit at the counter. I was with a group with Lincoln Ragsdale and George Brooks and Opal Ellis… We all marched around that area until that counter was opened up to blacks. I've been a little in the civil rights but not as much as others, because I had a job I had to protect.[45]

As big as Dr. King's visit was for the civil rights movement, the impact was not the same around the Valley, as Mary recalls, "I don't think it had much impact on Tempe because Tempe has always been, until recently, a lily-white city. I think our first black city councilman was Mr. Woods [in 2008]."

Eula Bursh, who had just moved to Tempe to join her husband and attend ASU in 1963, remembers her particular feelings from that June evening in 1964:

So it was, I think, in terms of his speech, I listened, but I did not focus. He really knew how to capture an audience, and I look at Obama, he has the same sort of charisma, and all of that. And yet, what he was saying was great, it was motivational, but still, it didn't have the impact that it would have had on me at the time had I known the role that he really played. But what he did, I enjoyed it, I thought he was wonderful… But I didn't realize what, I'd say, a privilege it was. It was just like you're going to something, because in Louisiana, we'd go into churches and stuff and people would be setting up

University Archives Photographs, Arizona State University Libraries

Dr. Martin Luther King, at Goodwin Stadium, gave a speech before 8,000 people in June, 1964.

Civil rights activist and ASU alumnus Lincoln Ragsdale hands University President John Schwada a check for over $125,000 for the 1971 Annual Alumni Fund.

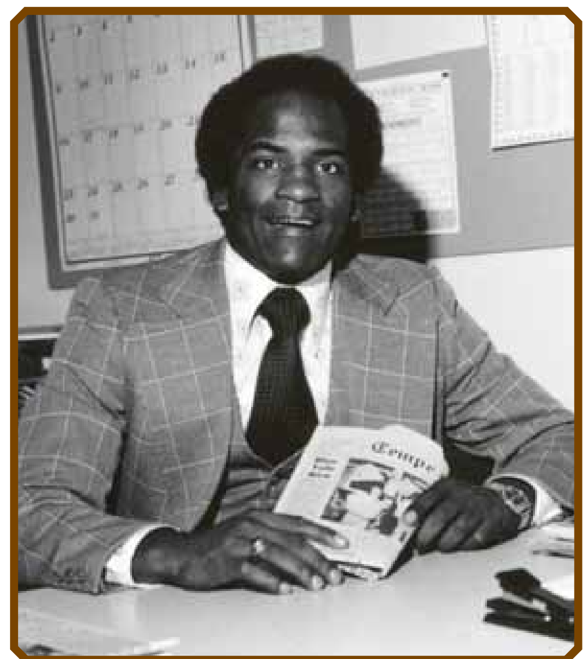
marches or sit-ins or whatever. But, yes, I went to it, and it was something that you look back and you say, "That was a great time,"... But now, I look at it and say, "Well, gosh, that was a wonderful moment, to witness that."[46]

As important as that historical moment was for so many African American residents, it did not change things quickly in Tempe as Mary Bishop pointed out. Black home buyers were still at the beginning of their struggle simply to have an equal chance to buy a place to live in town. It may come as no surprise that Tempe was not ready to elect its first African American council member in the late 1970s. The *Tempe Daily News* boldly announced on October 20, 1977, "Sun Devil Kicks off On New Kind of Campaign:"

A former Arizona State University football player was involved in a kick-off of a campaign of a different sort today. Tossing his hat into the ring early as a prospective candidate for a seat on Tempe's City Council in next spring's city elections with a formal announcement of his plans here this morning was Prentice Williams, 29, a Tempe resident for the past 11 years - since he came here on a football scholarship to attend ASU.

Although Williams' bid to be the first black councilman of Tempe did not meet with success during the April 1978 election, his effort set a precedent. A quarter century later, Tempe resident and attorney Augustus Shaw, IV ran for city council in a city that was much more ready to accept leadership from an African American. Although Shaw lost, it was by just 300 votes. Looking back just five years later, he had this to say about his 2004 race for a council seat:

I was young, and I didn't know anything about politics, I absolutely knew nothing. I thought I did. But I had always loved Tempe, I knew there was a seat opening up, and I said to myself, very naively, "Yeah, I'll go run for that seat!" And so I just decided that I wanted to give back to the city. Being on Tempe City Council I thought would be fun, I'd get to make decisions. And that time, 2004, was a critical time for the City of Tempe.... We were at the beginning, in 2004, of seeing Tempe being passed. We were a pass-through city to Chandler and Gilbert and Mesa .... And so 2004 was a very challenging time, and I got swept up in "this is the ground floor, we need to keep Tempe relevant,



As a four-year football letterman, Prentice Williams was no doubt hoping for some star-power to help him take a seat on city council in 1978.

because Tempe's always been one of the voices in the Valley." ... But that's why I decided to run for City Council, because I saw changes, and I wanted to make sure I was part of those changes.[47]

In 2008, a young transplant from New Rochelle, New York became the next African American to run for city council in Tempe. Corey Woods was working on a Master's degree at ASU when he decided to run for office in his newly adopted home. Having an active interest in politics from an early age, Woods felt drawn toward public office so he decided to run in Tempe. He recalls the challenges that presented themselves from the beginning:

It was just sort of a natural extension of my interest in public service and of serving. I think it's funny, because, looking back on it now, it was a tad bit crazy, because I was probably a little bit naïve, obviously, about what some of the realities were. I was running in a city where I didn't have . . . I'd been there for barely two years, didn't have any family here, I had no roots. Most of the folks on the Council, actually five out of the seven, are life-long Tempe residents...

But me, it was a complete blank slate. It was just, "Who is this guy?" Didn't have any money, I was 26 years old, I was a fulltime graduate student, and I was probably somewhat naïve about a lot of it. But I just thought to myself . . . . I thought of it in kind of a two-election, two-cycle process. I kind of thought to myself, "Even if I don't win, I can establish myself, and it will set me up for race number two."[48]

Realizing that winning an election as a newcomer to town would be difficult, Woods sought out respected members of the local community for ideas, support, and assistance. He recalls that support and the implications of his election to council in 2008:

The single biggest influence on that side would be Judge Cecil Patterson, who was co-chair for my campaign, in terms of support coming from the African American community. He and his wife Wilma were incredibly supportive. ... I called him, very much up front, and just said, "I want to run again, and I want to get more involved, I want to do this one more time," and I said, "Would you do me the honor of serving as my co-chair for the campaign, because I really could use your support and your guidance moving forward?" And he accepted, without any hesitation. He was really, for me, incredible – I should say is – incredibly important to me, on a personal level and in terms of my own development. ... But I think for me, the night that I won, he was standing there, and I saw him, and I could see something in his face that felt like something major had happened, and I had played some major role in helping to break through a glass ceiling.

...I just think that obviously—this may be presumptuous of me—but I think for people like my parents especially, it kind of gives them some sense that all the work that we did to advance the cause of civil rights and to make sure that you and your younger brother had the opportunity to go to school wherever we wanted to, to get a good education, and I think to them it shows that all that work and all that effort has been validated. And that's, I think, pretty powerful. I think it's a very, very powerful thing, and I'm honestly just very personally moved and proud that I was able on my end to play some role in that.[49]

The election of council member Corey Woods in 2008 is a good sign that things have changed a great deal from the days when Tempe was a "sundown" town for African Americans.

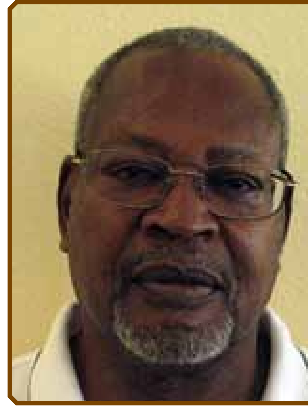
9
Conclusion

The road traveled by African Americans for acceptance in Tempe has been long, challenging, and rewarding. Tempe has come a long way from a community that marginalized its small population of black residents and college students through the middle of the 20th Century, to one that has embraced an African American resident on its City Council. Today, Tempe's black residents feel a great deal of pride in a city in which so many of them, their parents, and previous generations struggled to make a home and a life. Here are some thoughts from those residents about their town:

I am proud of Tempe, and I don't want to leave Tempe. I like the developments, the organizations and everything they have. Like I said, I feel comfortable. I feel more comfortable here than I did when I lived in Phoenix, 'cause there was always something. But I haven't tasted any

discrimination or anything derogative since I've been here. Alex Wright

And I am proud to say that I live in Tempe and I am proud of the neighborhood that I live in. Earl Oats


Earl Oats

Yes, very proud. And I'm happy to be living here. And I don't mind saying I live in Tempe, Arizona, home of Arizona State University. Where is that home of Arizona State University? And when they're winning I can really say it! Mary Bishop

Mary Bishop

... I think Tempe is a great community. I am proud of Tempe in terms of what I've been, I have been served. There are some, I think there are some things that Tempe needs to work on, and it's not 100%. ... Tempe is a product of its citizens. Any town is a product of its citizens. So I hope to say that people will be proud of the citizens of Tempe. Arthur Reeves

Arthur Reeves

Yeah, quite proud. It's a livable city, it's a comfortable city, It offers amenities that you look for in a place to live and raise kids and quiet and nice, comfortable, safe, for all intents and purposes... So yeah, I'm very proud. And you know, we do good work... Cecil Patterson

Cecil Patterson

Yeah, I really am! I think it's a great place to live, I'm pleased with the services, I feel safe, I'm proud of public schools, and I have access to higher education if I choose to, and my kids have access because of the University... I am proud of Tempe. And the more services they bring to the city, the better it is. So I am very, very pleased. Wilma Patterson

Wilma Patterson

Chapter 1 Footnotes:

[1] Richard E. Harris, *The First 100 Years: A History of Arizona Blacks* (Apache Junction, Arizona: Relmo Publishers, 1998), 125.
[2] Troop M was stationed at Fort Verde with Troop I during the campaign against Geronimo and his Chiricahua Apache bands. Early Tempe resident Theodore C. Thomas may have begun service as a Buffalo Soldier with Troop I in 1882.
[3] Bill Reed, *The Last Bugle Call: A History of Fort McDowell*, Arizona Territory, 1865-1890 (Parsons, West Virginia: McClain Printing Company, 1977), 153.
[4] Ordinance No. 6 "Penal", Section 14, p.35-36 of original ordinance book for the town of Tempe (archival collection, Tempe History Museum).
[5] Floyd Alvin Galloway, "Tempe Honors Diversity Advocates," *Arizona Informant* (January 26, 2011).
[6] Vance Wampler, *Arizona, Years of Courage, 1832-1910: Based on the life and times of William H. Kirkland* (Phoenix, Arizona: Quail Run Publications, Inc., 1984), 146.
[7] David Dean, Jean Reynolds, et. al., *City of Phoenix Hispanic Historic Property Survey*, (Phoenix: Historic Preservation Office, 2006), 25-16.
[8] The 1910 census lists Moses as either Native American or Mexican (depending on information from www.familysearch.org or www.censusrecords.com). Moses' wife and their three children were counted as Native American that year.
[9] *Arizona Republican*, February 6, 1908.
[10] Census takers in 1890 may have recorded African American residents too, but most of the records for that census were destroyed.
[11] *Arizona Republican*, August 28, 1900 (6/1).
[12] *Phoenix Weekly Herald* (afternoon edition), July 7, 1898
[13] *Arizona Republican*, December 8, 1899; El Paso Daily Herald, January 23, 1900; *Republican Herald: Weekly Edition*, February 22, 1900.
[14] *Arizona Republican*, November 14, 1901.
[15] *Arizona Republican*, August 30, 1900.
[16] *Arizona Republican*, May 12, 1911; November 11, 1911; and November 25, 1911.
[17] The proper spelling of the last name of the previous tenant of Thomas' Tempe barber shop is Barrazo.
[18] *Arizona Republican*, May 26, 1908.
[19] *Arizona Republican*, June 6, 1908.
[20] *El Paso Daily Herald*, April 29, 1897. Eugene informed the *Daily Herald* that he intended to cover the distance in three and a half days.
[21] Simon Clark appears as S. P. Clark in the 1910 census.
[22] *Bisbee Daily Review*, January 23, 1917.
[23] *Arizona Republican*, May 24, 1908.
[24] *Tempe News*, January 19, 1912.
[25] Col. Boggs rests in Section C of the Double Butte Cemetery. He probably rests in Lot 11, Grave 3 but gaps in cemetery records mean that his precise location is not confirmed.
[26] *Session Laws of the Twentieth Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Arizona, 1899*, p. 14.
[27] *Acts, Resolutions, and Memorials of the Twenty-Second Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Arizona; Session Begun on the Nineteenth Day of January, A. D. 1903; Phoenix, Arizona*, p. 171, Chapter 67 (An Act).
[28] *Arizona Silver Belt*, June 28, 1907
[29] Ralph F. Palmer, M.D., *Doctor on Horseback: A Collection of Anecdotes Largely but not Exclusively Medically Oriented* (Mesa, Arizona: Mesa Historical and Archaeological Society, 1979), 124.
[30] *Arizona Republican*, July 5, 1906.
[31] *Arizona Republican*, July 22, 1906.
[32] *Arizona Republican*, July 22, 1906.
[33] *Arizona Republican*, August 25, 1906.
[34] *Tucson Daily Citizen*, January 4, 1912.

Chapter 2 Footnotes:

[1] *Bisbee Daily Review*, June 23, 1922
[2] Patricia A. Bonn, "Kactus Klan: Ku Klux Klan in Arizona, 1921-1925," Paper presented at the annual Arizona History Conference (Yuma), April 29, 2011, 1; *Arizona Republican*, June 20, 1922.
[3] *Tempe News*, May 17, 1901.
[4] *Bisbee Daily Review*, May 27, 1922.
[5] *Bisbee Daily Review*, June 1, 1922.
[6] *Bisbee Daily Review*, June 18, 1922.
[7] Abbey, Sue Wilson. "The Ku Klux Klan in Arizona: Yuma and the Salt River Valley, 1921-1925," *The Journal of Arizona History* (Spring 1973), 16.
[8] McClintock Papers, KKK File, Arizona Room, Phoenix Public Library-Burton Barr Branch.
[9] Bonn, "Kactus Klan," 11; KKK Collection, Arizona Historical Foundation, Tempe, Arizona.
[10] Harris, *The First 100 Years*, 135.
[11] *Phoenix City and Salt River Valley Directory 1928*
[12] *Tempe News: Weekly Edition*, February 18, 1928
[13] *Tempe Daily News*, April 4, 1928; *Tempe News: Weekly Edition*, April 7, 1928
[14] *Arizona Republican*, April 6, 1928; Theodore Charles Thomas is buried in Section H, Block I, Lot J, Space K at Tempe's Double Butte Cemetery. Sadly, the grave of this Tempe pioneer bears no marker as of May 2013.
[15] The census source consulted for this project provides basic census information, including race, age, and location of birth, but to get additional information a subscription fee is required (site is www.censusrecords.com).
[16] Rosetta Farley McMillion-DeForest, *A History of Tempe School District No. 3, 1874-1991* (Tempe, Arizona: Tempe School District No. 3, 1991), 24.
[17] Jenckes, Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County, *Romo v. Laird*, (Phoenix, 1925); Geordan Williams, "A Need To Know the Lingo: Language Education in the Assimilation and Civil Rights of Mexican Americans & Immigrants since 1925," Paper written for undergraduate coursework at Johns Hopkins University, Maryland (2012), 8.
[18] Bob Jacobsen, "ASU Held Hope, Anguish for African Americans," *ASU Vision: the Magazine of the Alumni Association*, Vol. 6:1 (Fall 2002), page number not known at time of current publication.
[19] Jacobsen, "ASU Held Hope, Anguish," page number not known at time of current publication.
[20] Oral History interview conducted with Dr. Fred Warren on February 25, 2009, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-312).
[21] Harris, *The First 100 Years*, 75-76.
[22] Harris, *The First 100 Years*, 75.
[23] Informational brochure, "African American History in Tempe," African American Advisory Group, Tempe History Museum.
[24] Oral History interview with Dr. Fred Warren, Tempe History Museum.
[25] Oral History interview conducted with Mary Bishop on January 22, 2009, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-307).
[26] Oral History interview conducted with Edward Smith on February 5, 2009, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-310).
[27] Oral History interview with Dr. Fred Warren, Tempe History Museum.
[28] Dean Smith, *The Sun Devils: Eight Decades of Arizona State Football* (Tempe: The Arizona State Alumni Association, 1979), 99-101. The following information and quotes on Emerson Harvey and ASU Bulldog/Sun Devil football all come from this book.
[29] "Los Barrios De Tempe, 1930-1955," Josie O. Sanchez, bound copy on file in the Research Library, Tempe History Museum; Mrs. Jordan was likely teaching at one of the African American grade schools locally, although which one is not clear because the school

Chapter 2 Footnotes continued:

in Phoenix was the Booker T. Washington Elementary School.

[30] Warranty Deed for Lots Eight and Nine of Block One of Park Tract, a subdivision of Tempe, Arizona; dated September 20, 1924 (Office of Maricopa County Recorder, Arizona).

[31] Information from www.howardfairhousing.org/case_law/34/.

[32] Oral History interview conducted with Robert Brooks on January 26, 2009, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-308).

[33] William Burt, *Arizona History: The Okemah Community*, unpublished manuscript, 12-13, 16; David Dean and Jean Reynolds, *African American Historic Property Survey*, (Phoenix: Historic Preservation Office, 2004), 15.

[34] From a 2004 interview with James Boozer, Jr. in Dean and Reynolds, *African American Historic Property Survey*, 39.

[35] From a 2004 interview with Mary Boozer in Dean and Reynolds, *African American Historic Property Survey*, 8.

[36] *Arizona Sun*, May 7, 1948.

[37] *Arizona Sun*, November 14, 1947.

[38] Dean and Reynolds, *African American Historic Property Survey*, 16; Burt, *Arizona History: The Okemah Community*, 59, 63, 67.

[39] Burt, *Arizona History: The Okemah Community*, 15, 20, 29.

[40] McMillion-DeForest, *A History of Tempe School District No. 3*, 52.

[41] McMillion-DeForest, *A History of Tempe School District No. 3*, 54.

[42] Michael Wady, *My Life in Tempe AZ*, autobiographical and Wady Family history information provided to the Tempe History Museum, October 2011.

Chapter 3 Footnotes:

[1] Harris, *The First 100 Years,* 140-141.

[2] *Phillips v. Phoenix Union High Schools and Junior College District,* No. 72909, Opinion and Order (Arizona Superior Court, Feb. 9, 1953); Attorney General Terry Goddard, "The Promise of Brown v. Board of Education: A Monograph, In Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education" (Office of Arizona Attorney General, March 2005), 3-4 .

[3] Wady, *My Life in Tempe AZ.*

[4] Oral History interview with Dr. Fred Warren, Tempe History Museum.

[5] Wady, *My Life in Tempe AZ.*

[6] Wady, *My Life in Tempe AZ.*

[7] Oral History interview conducted with Arthur Reeves on January 9, 2009, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-305).

[8] Oral History interview conducted with Edward Espinosa Gracia on October 13, 2001, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-252).

[9] Oral History interview with Edward Espinosa Gracia, Tempe History Museum.

[10] Oral History interview conducted with Joseph P. Spracale on August 11, 2003, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-224).

[11] Sally Cole, manuscript for an upcoming book on Tempe Beach, 2013 (portion of manuscript shared by e-mail May 23, 2013).

[12] Wady, *My Life in Tempe AZ.*

[13] Oral History interview conducted with Alex Wright on January 21, 2009, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-306).

[14] Oral History interview with Alex Wright, Tempe History Museum.

[15] Oral History interview conducted with Dr. Betty Greathouse on April 9, 2008, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-319).

[16] Oral History interview conducted with Dr. Wilma Patterson on February 25, 2009, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-315).

[17] Oral History interview with Edward Espinosa Gracia, Tempe History Museum.

[18] Oral History interview conducted with Judge Cecil Patterson on August 19, 2008, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-314).

[19] Oral History interview with Edward Espinosa Gracia, Tempe History Museum.

[20] Oral History interview conducted with Stan Kyle on April 6, 2009, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-317).

[21] Oral History interview conducted with Wanda and Dee Dee Woods on September 5, 2009, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-344).

[22] Oral History interview conducted with Eula Bursh on June 5, 2009, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-322).

[23] Oral History interview with Eula Bursh, Tempe History Museum.

[24] Oral History interview conducted with Eloise McCreary on January 26, 2009, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-309).

[25] Oral History interview conducted with Conrad Powell on February 21, 2009, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-313).

[26] Oral History interview with Stan Kyle, Tempe History Museum.

[27] Oral History interview with Dr. Wilma Patterson, Tempe History Museum.

[28] Oral History interview conducted with Warren and Carol Livingston on July 1, 2008, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-302).

[29] Oral History interview with Dr. Wilma Patterson, Tempe History Museum.

[30] Oral History interview conducted with George Greene on June 16, 2009, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-323).

[31] Wady, *My Life in Tempe AZ.*

[32] Oral History interview with Judge Cecil Patterson, Tempe History Museum.

[33] Oral History interview with Mary Bishop, Tempe History Museum.

[34] Oral History interview conducted with Augustus Shaw, IV on July 13, 2009, Tempe History Museum (Catalog No. OH-338).

[35] Oral History interview with Dr. Fred Warren, Tempe History Museum.

[36] Oral History interview with Eula Bursh, Tempe History Museum.

[37] Oral History interview with Edward Smith, Tempe History Museum.

[38] Oral History interview with Dr. Betty Greathouse, Tempe History Museum.

[39] Oral History interview with Alex Wright, Tempe History Museum.

[40] Oral History interview with Mary Bishop, Tempe History Museum.

[41] Oral History interview with Dr. Fred Warren, Tempe History Museum.

[42] Most of the information in this section was taken directly from "African American History in Tempe," an informational brochure authorized by the African American Advisory Group, Tempe History Museum.

[43] Smith, *The Sun Devils*, 101.

[44] Oral History interview with Warren and Carol Livingston, Tempe History Museum.

[45] Oral History interview with Mary Bishop, Tempe History Museum.

[46] Oral History interview with Eula Bursh, Tempe History Museum.

[47] Oral History interview with Augustus Shaw, IV, Tempe History Museum.

[48] Oral History interview with Corey Woods, Tempe History Museum.

[49] Oral History interview with Corey Woods, Tempe History Museum.

CourtesyofASUPhotos:TomStory

PresidentBarackObamaatArizonaStateUniversity'sSpring2009Commencement.

African American Advisory Group

The Tempe History Museum formed an African American Advisory Group in the fall of 2008 to create a forum, to collect and preserve the African American history of Tempe, and to promote those stories for the benefit of the community of Tempe. The group's first goal was to complete an oral history project documenting the stories of African Americans in Tempe. The second goal was to publish this booklet.

Some of the African American Advisory Group pose for a photo.
Back row: Windle Pompey, Robert Brooks, Art Reeves, Maurice Ward, Fred Warren, Betty Greathouse, Charles Cobbs, Pastor Brenda Valdez
Front row: Pastor Anita Bullock, Kim Dartez, Edward Smith, JoAn Cooks, Michelle Brooks Totress