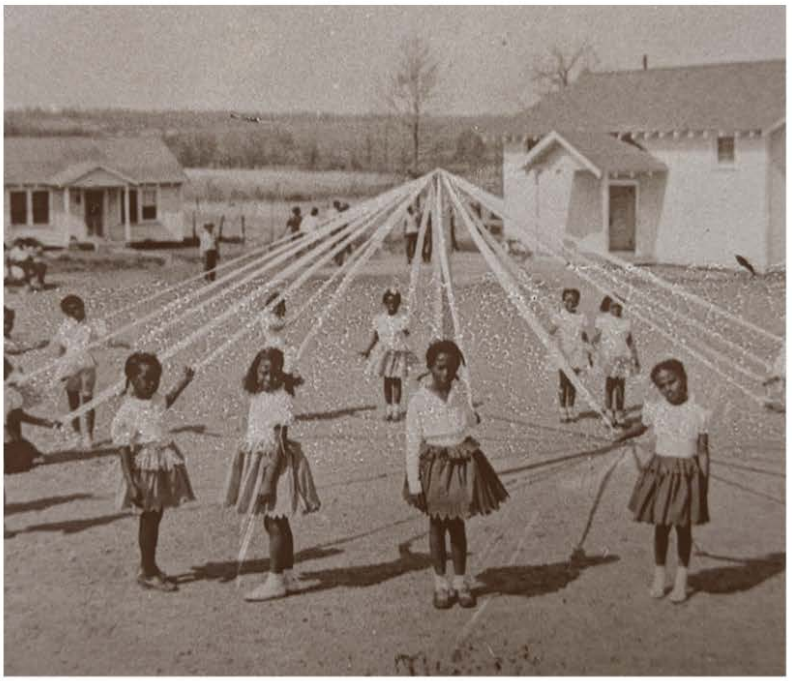

CITY OF CONWAY, ARKANSAS AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC CONTEXT STUDY

McDOUX PRESERVATION LLC

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Cover photos (clockwise from upper left): Jones Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church (McDoux Preservation LLC), Pine Street School and students (UCA archives), the former Deluxe Diner building (McDoux Preservation LLC), and William Mattison (courtesy of Winton Mattison)

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this historic context study is to provide a basis for evaluating the historical significance of buildings, structures, sites, districts, and objects related to the African American experience in Conway. African Americans have been an integral part of this Central Arkansas community since well before Conway incorporated in 1875, but the significance of the historic resources associated with that history has not been thoroughly documented or understood. Conway's Black community is currently underrepresented in terms of historic preservation; few properties associated with African American history have been targeted for preservation efforts and/or listed in the Arkansas or National Registers of Historic Places. We hope that this historic context study will inform and guide the City's next efforts to preserve the legacy of Conway's African American community.

The City of Conway was awarded a grant by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program and the National Park Service in 2020 to conduct this historic context study. The project was intended to help City staff understand where preservation efforts should be focused and to provide contextual information for the creation of wayside exhibits to honor notable individuals and resources associated with Conway's historic African American community. This study builds on the strategies laid out in the 2020 *Conway Citywide Historic Preservation Plan*, which recommended that the City develop a context for historic resources that are significant for their association with the African American community and develop materials highlighting Conway's African American heritage.

A historic context examines how, when, and why the built environment developed through a particular time period by examining the political, social, cultural, and economic setting. A context is the first step toward identifying historic resources and determining which should be preserved. This document provides a foundation for evaluating properties related to the African American experience in Conway. It is not meant to be an exhaustive history, but an overview of Conway's African American history and a framework for evaluating historic resources associated with that history for historic designation. The list of potential resources and notable individuals identified in this report is neither comprehensive nor prescriptive; that is to say that there are likely additional historic resources and individuals associated with Conway's Black community that are not identified in this summary.

The report is presented in five parts:

1. **Introduction** establishes the purpose and use of this report, describes the study area, and defines terms used within the main body of text.
2. **Methodology** outlines how the project team researched and established the historic context.
3. **Historic Context** outlines the historic development of Conway's African American community and identifies national and statewide trends, notable individuals, and developments within the built environment associated with that history.
4. **Guidelines for Evaluating Historic Resources** establishes a methodology for evaluating historic resources associated with the context. It lists property types associated with Conway's African American community, giving a brief summary of each type and identifying how they relate to the themes established in the historic context. It also describes methods for evaluating each property type's significance and integrity.
5. **Recommendations** identifies how the research team believes the City might prioritize future preservation efforts for resources identified during this project. It also identifies areas that McDoux believes warrant further research.[1]

The historic time period considered in this context is 1720–1971. The beginning point reflects when Africans first came to Arkansas, as laborers enslaved by French colonists. The period of significance concludes with the year 1970, which marked the ending of the Civil Rights Movement and is within the 50-year cut-off period.[2] Some information related to post-1971 historical events has been included to lay the groundwork for future research efforts as this time period becomes historic. The study also identifies gaps in the knowledge gathered and identifies future information needs.

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[1] Additional reports were completed as part of this project. Interpretative methods are further explored in the Wayfinding and Interpretation Opportunities Report. The Potential Historic Cultural Landscapes Summary Report explores ways to preserve important historic resources where tangible resources may have been lost or individual architectural resources lack integrity.

[2] The National Register of Historic Places guidelines established by the National Park Service generally consider properties less than 50 years of age to be ineligible for listing unless they possess exceptional significance.

The Study Area

This context study largely focuses on two areas identified by the City as historically tied to the African American community: the Pine/Markham Street Neighborhood north and east of downtown and Lollie Bottoms (sometimes called the Little Farm), a former farming community in extreme southwest Conway.

The Pine/Markham Street neighborhood[3] (Figure 1) is an approximately 110-acre neighborhood roughly bounded by Spencer Street to the west, Garland Street to the south, Ingram Street to the east, and the Hendrix College campus to the north. Pine Street and Markham Street formed the heart of Conway's African American community, with Markham Street being home to businesses owned by and serving the African American community, and Pine Street being home to the Pine Street School. The City identified four known extant historic resources in the study area: the Deluxe Diner at 1151 Markham Street, Mattison's Shop at 1213 Markham Street, the Pine Street School Gym at 601 Spruce Street, and Union Baptist Church at 1257 Lincoln Street.

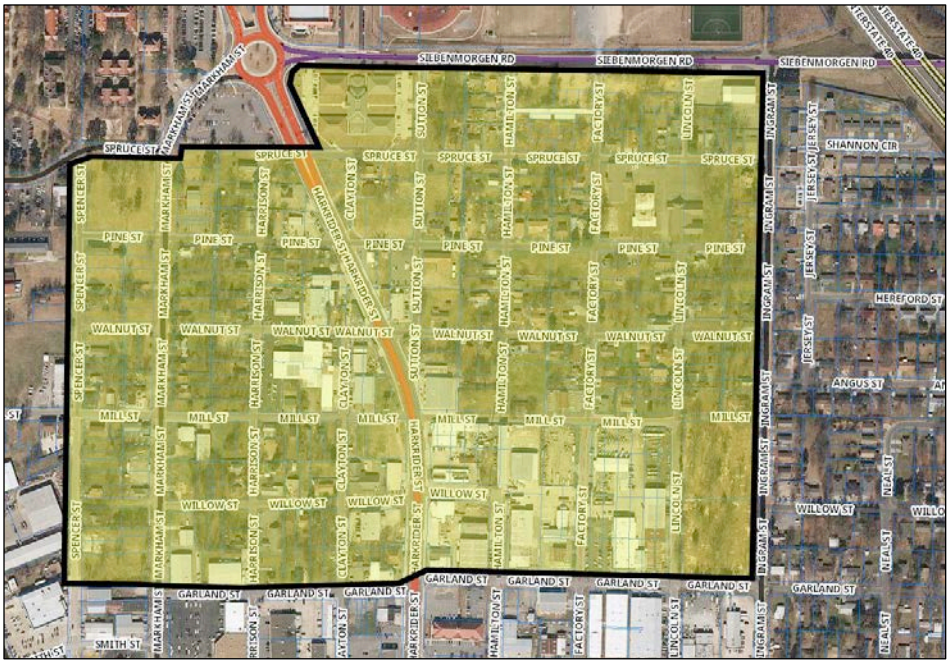

Figure 1. Map of the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood (City of Conway)

[3] In our stakeholder interviews, community members referred to the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood as the East Side, Pine Street, and noted that it was called the Hill in the 1980s. Pine/Markham includes a portion of Argenta as well, an older African American neighborhood immediately southwest.

The Pine/Markham Street neighborhood is within the Old Conway Design Overlay District, adopted in 2006. That zoning overlay requires review by the Historic District Commission if a building permit is required for new structures, additions, partial demolitions, and/or exterior work beyond routine maintenance. The Markham area is subject to the Markham Street Neighborhood Specific Plan, which requires review for new structures, additions, or exterior remodeling beyond routine maintenance, or for changes in occupancy type or use.

The Lollie Bottoms area[4] (Figure 2) is located about 10 miles southwest of downtown Conway and was a focal point for the local cotton farming industry, an early staple of Conway's economy. Developed in association with John Elijah Little's plantation, Lollie Bottoms was originally outside of city limits. In 2007, about 4,500 acres of land were annexed into Conway.[5]

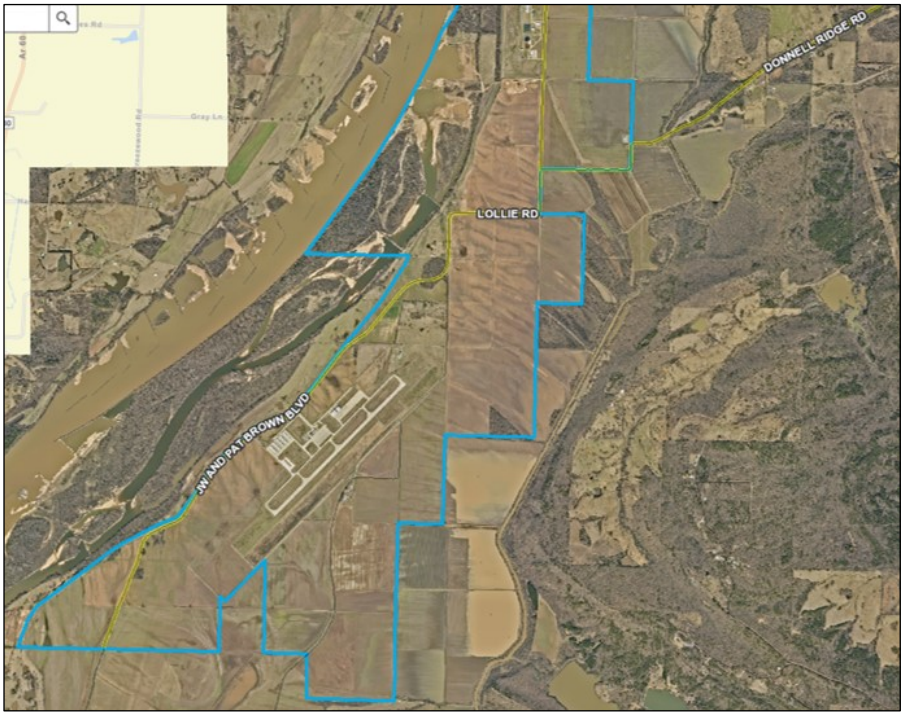

Figure 2. Map of the Lollie Bottoms area, with the portion that has been annexed into Conway, outlined in blue (City of Conway)

[4] The area referred to as Lollie Bottoms in this report was historically called the Lollie Plantation, named by John Elijah Little for his first wife, Lollie Trundle. The Lollie Plantation is also referred to as the Little Plantation. It is primarily called the Little Farm by Conway's Black community, many of whom are descendants of Little Farm tenant farmers who moved to Conway after the farm ceased operations.

[5] Further research is required to determine how much, if any, of the 4,500-acre annexation was formerly part of Little's plantation.

Context Themes

This context study identifies a series of themes associated with the Black community in Conway and describes how these themes shaped the built environment. It also describes how significant historical themes associated with the larger Faulkner County, the state of Arkansas, and/or the nation as a whole applied to development of the African American community in Conway.

The context study considers the development of the Black community as related to the following time periods:

- Pre-Emancipation (through 1865)
- Post-Emancipation/Reconstruction (1865–1876)
- Post-Reconstruction (1876–1900)
- Jim Crow (1900–1950)
- Civil Rights Movement (1950–1970)
- Post-Civil Rights (1970–now)

The context study outlines important historical themes related to the Black experience within each time period, including:

- Trends in Migration and Settlement
- Development of Residential Enclaves
- Religious Organizations
- Commercial Development
- Employment Trends
- Educational Opportunities
- Fraternal, Professional, Political, and Social Organizations
- Notable Community Members

This context study report will identify how potential historic resources relate to these time periods and themes.

Terminology

Language defining race and ethnicity has changed over the years. Throughout this document, the term *African American* or *Black* is used to describe Americans of African or Afro-Caribbean descent. *White* is used to describe Americans of European descent. This context study may include older synonyms now considered derogatory in direct quotations citing historical sources or when the work is part of an organization's name. Instead of the reductive term *slave,* this report instead uses *enslaved person*. *Freedman, freedwoman*, or *freedpeople* refers to formerly enslaved people.

METHODOLOGY

Overview

Following a project kick-off call between City of Conway Director of Planning and Development James Walden and McDoux staff in January 2021, McDoux undertook remote research to assemble existing and available historical information. This research included information from the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program such as survey data, historic contexts, inventories, etc. Important primary sources consulted included the U.S. Census, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps, and historical newspapers (particularly the *Conway Log Cabin Democrat* and the *Daily Arkansas Gazette*). Secondary resources included relevant National Register nominations, books, and graduate student theses. All sources of data were evaluated for historical biases.

McDoux team members visited Conway in March 2021 and visited archive repositories at the Pine Street CommUnity Museum, Ozark Foothills African-American History Museum, Arkansas State Archives, and University of Central Arkansas Archives. Team members also contacted the Faulkner County History Museum and the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center and Museum but were unable to schedule a research visit; due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these repositories were either closed to the public or scheduling visits by appointment.

Community Engagement and Input

In addition to archival research, team members met with several members of the African American community and conducted personal interviews about their recollections of the area's history. The area's African American history has not been thoroughly documented, and many of the buildings, structures, and other historic resources associated with African American history have been lost. To learn about resources, people, and experiences significant to the African American community, McDoux conducted oral history interviews with Robert Bland, Dr. Lloyd Hervey, Theodis Manley, Winton Mattison, and Albessie Thompson.

Interviews were conducted in person at the Pine Street CommUnity Museum and at the Ozark Foothills African American History Museum and followed appropriate protocols for participant and interviewer safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. Audio recordings of the interviews have been transcribed, and both the recordings and transcripts will be provided to the City with the understanding that they will be publicly available and filed in a public history repository. Each participant gave their written permission for the use of the information.

Additional stakeholder interviews, conducted by telephone and in person, captured community members' knowledge of the area's African American history.

The City of Conway hosted a virtual community engagement meeting on May 27, 2021. The McDoux team summarized the project and its status and welcomed input from the community. Participants provided team members with recommendations of a few resources in surrounding communities to consider for further research. An in-person meeting was held in Conway on July 1, 2021.

Development of the Context

Based on the initial research and community engagement, McDoux examined the history and development of some areas that were outside the study area in order to fully develop the historic context. This included researching African American enclaves within Conway that predated the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood. Primary research through historic newspapers and Sanborn maps showed us that Conway's African American community always resided on the east side of the railroad tracks historically, but was more centrally-located in the late nineteenth century but migrated northeast until almost all of the city's Black residents resided in the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood by 1930. The story of how communities became more segregated is a significant component to telling the African American community's story.

McDoux also researched African American history in rural Faulkner County. Conway was the agricultural hub for the rural county for much of its early history; the experience of African American farmers is an important component of Faulkner County's historic development. Black farmers visited Conway to buy and sell goods and, as farm workers transitioned away from agricultural labor, many moved to Conway in search of work. Moreover, it was common after the Civil War for freedmen and -women to establish new communities just outside the boundaries of cities. Termed *freedom colonies* or *freedom communities*, these were "dispersed communities, places unplatted, unincorporated, individually unified by only a church, school, and residents' collective belief that a community existed."[6] The team looked for evidence of these freedom communities in the immediate area around Conway. Although this research did not locate any pre-existing documentation of Arkansas freedom communities, some historic newspaper articles and local histories referred to "negro settlements." To establish the possible locations, McDoux also looked at the development of rural schools. Arkansas prohibited African American students

[6] Thad Sitton and James H. Conrad, *Freedom Colonies: Independent Black Texans in the Time of Jim Crow,* Texas: University of Texas Press.

from attending school with White children during the Reconstruction era; the location of Black schools during that time period could identify where freedom communities may have been located. The city has grown significantly in the past 150 years and likely now encompasses the locations of some of those communities, which historically would have been outside the City's boundaries.

Compliance with Federal and State Guidelines

The historic context study was prepared by McDoux Preservation LLC consultants who meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications* for Architectural History and/or History. James Walden, Director of Planning and Development at the City of Conway, oversaw the project and provided contacts within the African American community.

The document was prepared in compliance with federal and state guidelines. All project work met the applicable Secretary of the Interior's Standards, including:

- Standards and Guidelines for Preservation Planning
- Standards and Guidelines for Identification
- Standards and Guidelines for Evaluation
- Standards and Guidelines for Registration
- Standards and Guidelines for Historical Documentation
- Standards and Guidelines for Architectural and Engineering Documentation
- Standards and Guidelines for Archeological Documentation
- Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties
- Standards and Guidelines for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings
- Historic Preservation Professional Qualification Standards

The historic context narrative follows the format and guidance in *National Register Bulletin 16B: How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form* and guidelines for documenting a historic context. Previous work which influenced this project included the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* prepared for the City and County of San Francisco in January 2016, as well as *The African American Civil Rights Experience in Nevada, 1900–1979* prepared for the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office in August 2020.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The historic context starts with a brief overview of Conway's overall historical development, followed by a more in-depth examination of Conway's African American history and development. The history of Conway's African American community is organized into sections defined by the following time periods:

- Pre-Emancipation (through 1865)
- Post-Emancipation/Reconstruction (1865–1876)
- Post-Reconstruction (1876–1900)
- Jim Crow (1900–1950)
- Civil Rights Movement (1950–1970)
- Post-Civil Rights (1970–now)

Within each time period, the context looks at the history and development of Conway's African American community, including trends in migration and settlement, development of residential enclaves, religious organizations, commercial developments, employment, educational opportunities, social organizations, and notable community members.

Overview of Conway's Historical Development

Conway stands in the southwest portion of Faulkner County in Central Arkansas, about 25 miles northwest of Little Rock. The city is located near the confluence of the Arkansas River and Cadron Creek in the Arkansas River Valley physiographic region of the state, between the Ozark and Ouachita mountains. The river valley is approximately 40 miles wide and characterized by isolated mesas surrounded by rolling uplands, formed by the erosion of the Arkansas River and its tributaries. Conway developed within the Arkansas Valley Plains subregion, an area of broad, gently undulating bottomlands. Natural vegetation groupings likely included areas of prairie, savanna, and woodland. Both Native American groups and early European settlers found the ecoregion to be a practical travel route and a suitable habitation environment due to its relatively level topography, proximity to the Arkansas River, and fertile floodplain soils.

The Caddo, Osage, and Quapaw tribes originally lived in the section of Central Arkansas where Conway is located. The Spanish expedition led by Hernando de Soto through the Mississippi Valley in 1542 spread diseases that decimated these tribes, and over the next few centuries, the tribes were under Spanish and French influences. By the late 18th century, tribe members moved west and members of the Cherokee Nation moved into Arkansas as they were displaced from their lands to the east.[7]

Arkansas became a United States territory following the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. In the early 19th century, Anglo-European settlers began moving into the Arkansas River Valley area. The first settlement in what is now Faulkner County was made at the mouth of Cadron Creek in 1814, approximately five miles west of present-day Conway, the settlement was abandoned as other towns in the region grew to prominence. Arkansas became a separate territory in 1819 and a state in 1836.[8]

This area where Conway is now located remained sparsely settled until the mid-1800s. Originally part of Conway and Pulaski Counties, Faulkner County's economy was largely based on agriculture. During the Civil War there was some guerilla activity in the region, but no major engagements occurred in the area.[9]

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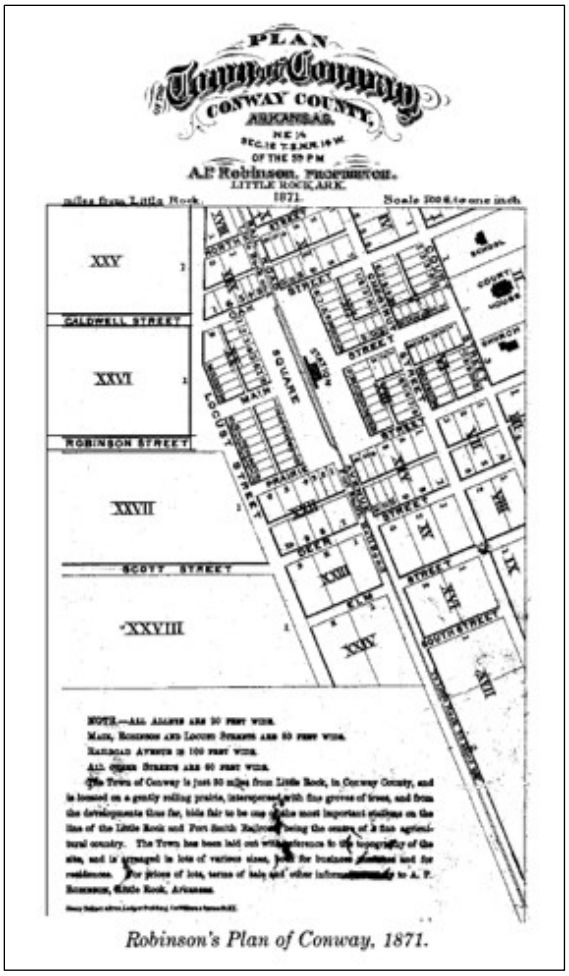
[7] Faulkner County Historical Society. *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*. Conway, AR: Faulkner County Historical Society, 1986, 244.

[8] Charles S. Bolton. "Louisiana Purchase through Early Statehood, 1803 through 1860." Encyclopedia of Arkansas Online, May 10, 2018, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/louisiana-purchase-through-early-statehood-1803-through-1860-398/.

[9] Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 244.



Robinson's Plan of Conway, 1871.

In 1870, the Little Rock and Fort Smith railroad laid its first 24 miles of track, starting at Argenta and following the north bank of the Arkansas River westward toward Fort Smith. A.P. Robinson, the railroad's chief engineer in charge of construction, had accepted 640 acres of land from the railroad in lieu of a paycheck. He platted Conway Station in 1871 along a westward bend in the railroad. Faulkner County was subsequently formed in 1873, with Conway Station designated as the temporary seat of justice.[10] Robinson had originally platted the town and railroad depot on the same northwest angle with the railroad, as seen in Figure 2 to the left. Robinson later replatted Conway to include more territory and streets of the additional land were platted to run at cardinal directions (east/west and north/south), rather than bearing several degrees west of north like the city's first plat.[11]

Figure 3 A.P. Robinson's Plan of Conway from 1871, laid at the same northwest angle as the Little Rock and Fort Smith railroad. Additional territory platted later ran at cardinal directions.

The City of Conway incorporated in 1875 and remained the only organized municipality in Faulkner County until 1916. As a railroad town and the county seat, Conway became a hub for area farmers where they could sell or gin crops and buy supplies. A general store and saloon, both catering to the agricultural trade, were among the earliest business establishments. Livery stables, blacksmiths, cobblers, and cabinet makers developed, all depending chiefly on the patronage of farmers. Realtors opened offices, their activities relating chiefly to rural lands.[12]

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[10] Ibid.

[11] *Biographical and Historical Memoir of Pulaski, Jefferson, Lonoke, Faulkner, Grant, Saline, Perry, Garland and Hot Springs Counties, Arkansas*, Chicago, Nashville, and St. Louis: The Goodspeed Publishing Col, 1889, reprinted in 1978, 711.

[12] Hubert Lee Minton. "The Evolution of Conway Arkansas" (PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 1937), 3.

Cotton was the primary crop in Faulkner County. Farmers from all over Faulkner County brought their cotton bales to market in Conway. Wagon yards across town provided a place to park wagons with stalls for horses, mules, and oxen, as well as bunkhouses for the women and men. Cotton shipments out of Conway ran as high as 25,000 bales per year. In the 1880s, Methodist minister Edward Tabor and William W. Martin led a temperance movement that resulted in closing Conway's saloons and bars in 1888. The anti-saloon drive was influential in Hendrix College relocating to Conway in 1890. In 1892, Central College for Women was established in Conway. By 1890, Conway's population had grown to 1,207.[13]

The city's commercial district grew both to the north and south of the railroad line. By the early 1900s, several downtown blocks were lined with one- to three-story brick commercial buildings containing general stores, hardware stores, groceries, clothing stores, etc. Conway contained three banks, three large wholesale houses, a cotton compress, and a cotton-seed oil mill. The city added another institute of higher learning in 1908, when the Arkansas State Normal School opened. The population of Conway had grown to 4,564 by 1920.[14]

The Great Depression resulted in several bank failures and the slowing of business growth. New Deal programs like the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps helped the city recover through construction projects on Conway's college campuses and downtown, as well as soil conservation efforts in Faulkner County.[15]

After World War II, Conway benefitted from the establishment of new industries as well as the growth of nearby Little Rock. The International Shoe Company opened a factory in Conway in 1947 and the Allied Telephone Company established an office in the city. Lake Conway, the largest man-made Game and Fish Commission lake in the country, opened in the late 1950s. [16]

The 1961 USGS map of Conway shows that, at the time, the city still remained within much of its original boundaries, and very few suburban subdivisions had developed. Construction of Interstate 40 directly to the east and north of the town changed the city significantly, bringing new commerce to Conway and providing improved access to Little Rock. Between 1960 and 1970, Conway's population increased from 9,791 to

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[13] City of Conway Planning & Development. "Conway Citywide Historic Preservation Plan: Conway, Arkansas." Unpublished report, October 13, 2020, Appendix A, 2.

[14] Preservation Plan, Appendix A, 2.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

15,510 residents.[17] The growth has continued with Conway's population reaching 58,908 in 2010.

African American Background History and Development

African Americans have been an important part of this Central Arkansas community since well before Conway incorporated in 1875. African Americans first settled in the area that became Faulkner County as enslaved laborers working on the area's farms and Arkansas River valley cotton plantations; their population was relatively small (as was the area's population overall) because transportation across the rocky, hilly terrain made navigation to regional trading posts on the rivers difficult.

After the Civil War, an influx of freedmen and women immigrated to Arkansas from other Southern states due to the state's cheap land, need for labor, high wages, and relatively progressive Reconstruction-era policies. African American freedom communities developed throughout rural Faulkner County. Black farming families sought financial independence and autonomy in these rural settlements, working as independent farmers on their own land, sharecroppers, or tenant farmers. The communities came together around a church and school.

Conway Station was platted in 1871 along the St. Louis, Iron Mountain, and Southern Railroad, jumpstarting a pioneer farm village. Conway was organized soon thereafter in 1875 and rapidly developed as an agricultural hub with wagon yards, hotels, stores, cotton processing facilities, and blacksmiths catering to the agricultural trade. African American farmers throughout Faulkner County regularly traveled to Conway; the city was a trading hub for the area's freedmen and women farmers who trekked to town by wagon train to buy supplies, sell goods, and socialize. Railroad work and other employment opportunities within the burgeoning town drew African Americans to live within Conway; the 1880 census shows the population of Faulkner County as 12,786, which included 1,418 African Americans. By 1888 the city had a thriving Black community with "four churches and one good school, with an average attendance of 120 scholars."[18] African Americans primarily lived on the "East Side," or east of the railroad tracks, close to Conway Station along Front, Prairie, Chestnut, and Court Streets just south of Main. Common occupations for the city's African American men included carpenter, laborer, wood chopper, servant, railroad worker, cook, mill worker, porter, retail grocer, and shoemaker, while African American women at the

[17] Ibid.

[18] "Faulkner County: Resources and Attractions of One of the Best Communities In Arkansas," *Daily Arkansas Gazette*, March 21, 1888, 5.

time were typically employed in keeping house or as cooks.

During the segregated "Jim Crow" era of the early 20th century, Conway's African American community consolidated in the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood enclave. The area encompassed Robinson Cemetery, an early African American cemetery. Pine/Markham Street became a thriving, tight-knit community with a small commercial district on Markham Street, a segregated school, numerous churches, and an African American residential neighborhood. Area residents built new houses and started Black-owned, operated, and patronized businesses including cafes, barber shops, clubs, small grocery stores and confectionaries, and blacksmiths. The African American community was small, as was Conway, but constituted 20% of the City's population in 1910. The Black population grew steadily, in part due to African American farming families who were let go from their farming situations and moved to the city seeking employment.

The Pine/Markham Street neighborhood declined during the mid-20th century, fueled by numerous factors. Closure of the Pine Street School – the heart of the community – during desegregation destroyed one of the neighborhood's major unifying forces. Original residents passed away and their homes were left vacant as the buildings were lost to taxes and/or younger generations left Conway in search of better opportunities. The expansion of Highway 64/65, which bisects the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood along Harkrider Street, resulted in houses being moved, buildings demolished, and split the neighborhood down the middle. The area attracted gang activity in the 1980s and a number of long-time residents moved out of the neighborhood to other parts of Conway. Most of the area's Black-owned businesses closed during this time.

Conway's African American population has rebounded in the 21st century as the city has grown. The city currently has a thriving African American community with a number of former Pine/Markham Street residents moving back into and working to rekindle their old neighborhood.

Pre-Emancipation (through 1865)

History and Development during the Pre-Emancipation Era

African Americans have been present in the state since its earliest days of European colonization. The 1723 census of a French colonial outpost near the banks of the Arkansas River showed 47 colonists, including six Black enslaved persons and an unknown number of children. African Americans, both enslaved and free, continued to appear in censuses during the French and Spanish colonial eras. By 1820, Arkansas' population included 1,617 enslaved and 59 free African Americans. During the 1820s and 1830s, Arkansan slave owners feared possible insurrections spurred by the rise of abolitionism in the Northern part of the country and revolts by enslaved African Americans in other states, such as Nat Turner's Rebellion in Virginia. Arkansas instituted "slave patrols" to prevent enslaved men and women from traveling without a pass.[19]

A small number of free Black persons resided in Arkansas before the Civil War, reached a maximum of 608 in 1850. The General Assembly adopted a law in 1842 prohibiting the immigration of free Black men or women into the state and, in 1859, a measure expelled all free Black men and women over the age of 21 from Arkansas and stated that any remaining would be subject to enslavement. However, the 1860 Federal Census showed 144 free African Americans remaining in the state after the measure was enacted. In 1861, the General Assembly adopted a measure suspending the law's operation until 1863.[20]

In 1840, enslaved people comprised 20 percent of the state's population; this grew to 26 percent of the by 1860. The map in Figure 4 shows that Arkansas' enslaved population was largely concentrated along the Mississippi River Delta and the Arkansas River Valley, where the rich bottom land and relatively long growing season allowed for cotton production.[21]

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[19] John William Graves. "African Americans." Encyclopedia of Arkansas Online, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/african-americans-407/.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Bolton, "Slavery and the Defining of Arkansas," 4-5.

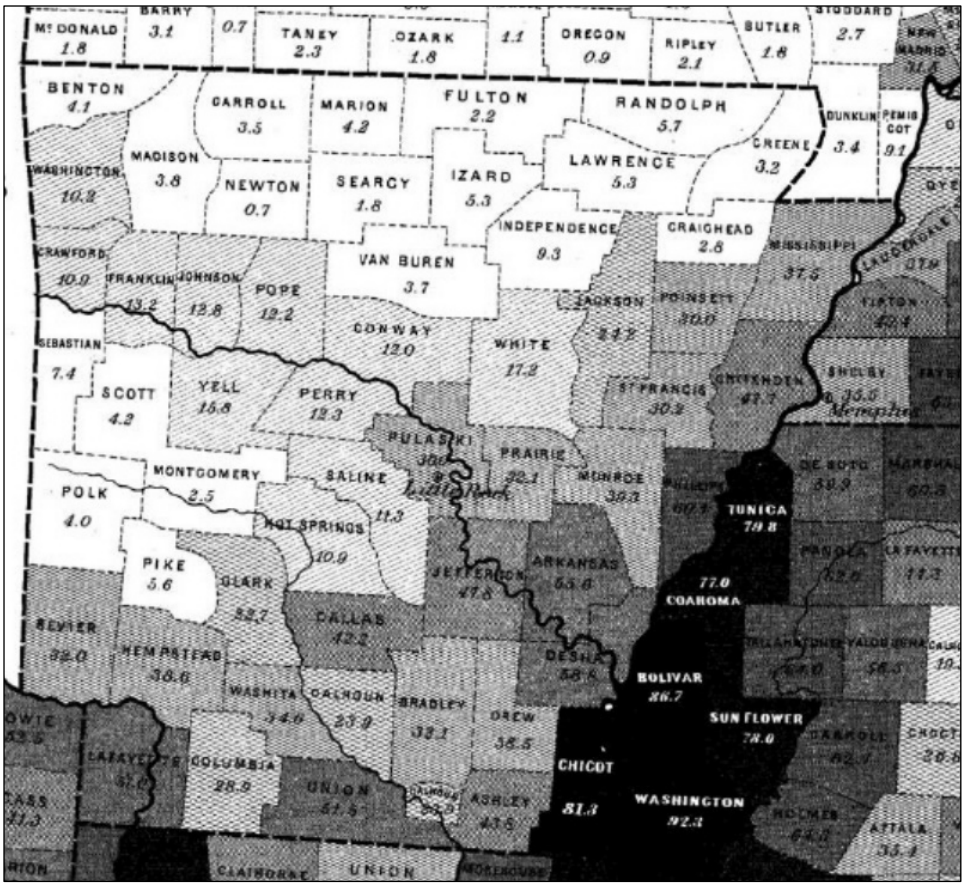


Figure 4. This 1860 map taken from the 1860 U.S. Census uses shading to show the density of enslaved populations. The darker shades show that Arkansas' enslaved residents were primarily concentrated along the Mississippi River Delta and extended upward along the Arkansas River Valley.

While Arkansas's enslaved population was a lower proportion of the overall population than in most other Confederate states, the institution of slavery profoundly influenced the state's social structure. "The influence of slavery was pervasive. It established prerequisites for wealth and structured the law to meet its own imperatives, and shaped the relationship between Arkansas and the Union. Slavery was not the only definer of Arkansas, but it was a crucial one."[22]. Enslaved people could not legally marry, and the immediate family could be shattered at any moment by sales or estate distributions.[23]

Few sources detail the experiences of those who suffered enslavement in the area that later became Conway. In the 1930s, the Works Progress Administration's (WPA) Federal Writers Project interviewed men and women who had been subjected to enslavement. These narratives are considered unreliable by scholars. The interviews

[22] Bolton, "Slavery and the Defining of Arkansas," 3-4.

[23] Graves, John William. "African Americans." Encyclopedia of Arkansas Online.

took place seventy years after Emancipation (the subjects were children or adolescents at the time of enslavement), and the interviewers' biases often resulted in leading questions that resulted in distorted views of planation life. We found two Federal Writers Project interviews that related to life in the Faulkner County area: Katie Rye and Lizzie Barnett. Katie Rye, interviewed at age 82, was a formerly-enslaved woman who was raised in the Greenbrier area. Lizzie Barnett was born into slavery in Tennessee and moved to Conway in 1867after Emancipation.[24]

Summary of Significant Themes

The primary theme of the Pre-Emancipation Era related is related to migration and settlement, with European American settlement of Arkansas bringing enslaved African Americans in relatively small numbers to the area that later became Conway.

[24] Federal Writers' Project. Slave narratives: a folk history of slavery in the United States from interviews with former slaves. Type-written records prepared by the Federal Writer's Project, -1938, assembled by the Library of Congress Project, Work Projects Administration, for the District of Columbia. Sponsored by the Library of Congress. Illustrated with photographs. Washington, 1941. Web. https://lccn.loc.gov/41021619.

Post-Emancipation/Reconstruction Era (1865–1876)

History and Development during the Post-Emancipation/Reconstruction Era

The Reconstruction Era in American history followed the Civil War and the emancipation of enslaved people. It was a period during which the country attempted to address the political, social, and economic injustices of slavery and manage readmission to the Union of the 11 states that had seceded.

Figure 5. The State actively promoted Arkansas as a destination for Black migrants to fill the need for laborers in the decades after the Civil War. State and labor agents sought workers in Georgia, Missouri, and the Carolinas. This photograph from a 1904 publication, "Get a Home in Arkansas," touted land for sale along the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern Railway and the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad. (The Arkansas Historical Quarterly Vol. LXXII, no. 1 (2013), p 30)

Arkansas' overall population had fallen to as little as half of pre-war levels by 1865 due to death and outward migration. To fill the need for laborers, the state actively promoted Arkansas as a destination for Black migrants and labor agents sought workers in Georgia, Missouri, and the Carolinas. Emancipated African Americans in the South were on the move during the period; between 1870 and 1910, roughly one in every ten Black southerners migrated to another Southern state. These migrants often moved based on information and encouragement from a network of family members, African American newspapers, ministers and missionaries, political activists, government agencies, and labor agents. Arkansas was an attractive destination due to inexpensive land, high wages, and state authorities' suppression of Ku Klux Klan violence during Reconstruction. Over the course of the 1870s, over 36,000 African Americans moved to Arkansas.[25]

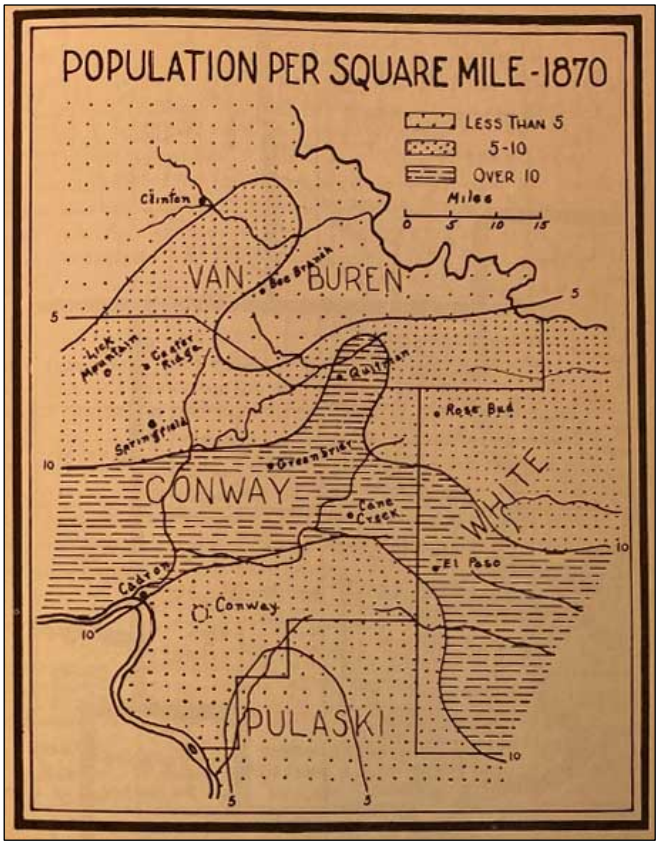
[25] Story Matkin-Rawn. "The Great Negro State of the Country": Arkansas's Reconstruction and the Other Great Migration." *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* Vol. LXXII, no. 1 (2013), pp. 1-2, 5, 21.

Figure 6. After the end of the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation, formerly enslaved African Americans from Tennessee, Mississippi, and other southern states migrated to Central Arkansas in search of autonomy and opportunity. The Ozark Foothills African-American History Museum has documented that Mary Jones Thompson migrated in with other freedmen and women in 1879, crossing the Mississippi Rover to Arkansas on a barge. (Ozark Foothills African-American History Museum)

Nineteenth-century journalists presumed that Black migrants to western South states had been coerced or deceived, asserting that they had been lured west by false promises of guns, ponies, and easily living with cotton that picked itself.[26] A 1937 dissertation by Hubert Lee Minton demonstrates that perspective and implies that the migration had a deleterious effect on the area economy: "Many of these negroes were brought into the area in the late '80's by credit merchants of Conway who had been forced to take over some of the worn-out farms to satisfy mortgages, farms which had become so run down as to be unable to provide a living for a white family and liquidate the mortgage at the same time. Accordingly, several hundred negroes were imported from South Carolina and Georgia and placed as tenants on worn-out farms. Settlements or communities of them sprang up in various parts of the county. The presence of these negroes, since they accepted a much lower standard of living than the average white farmer, and since they were placed on low production lands, certainly was not conducive to further expansion in trade. In fact, their restricted contribution to trade was based upon their use of marginal lands which, for the most part, would otherwise have remained idle. In brief, the growth in negro population

[26] Ibid, 4.

tended to nullify the effect of growth in white population by the close of the period."[27] In reality, Arkansas offered better opportunities for freedmen and women than other Southern states. In the late 1860s, farm wages averaged a dollar a day in Arkansas, compared to 50 cents in Virginia, Georgia, and the Carolinas. The rich soil along Arkansas' many rivers meant that fertilizer use was rarely necessary and thus profits were higher. Fencing laws were also late to develop in Arkansas, so farmers of limited means could find common pasture for livestock and let their hogs run in the river bottoms.[28]



Neither Conway nor Faulkner County had been formed at the beginning of Reconstruction and the area was sparsely populated with less than five people per square mile living on small agricultural settlements. "The Evolution of Conway Arkansas" noted that 630 African Americans resided in all of Conway County in 1870, 470 of whom lived in townships not included in Faulkner County when it was formed. Minton estimated that the Black population of Conway was not more than 100 at the time.[29]

Figure 7. During the early Reconstruction Era, the area that became Conway was sparsely populated with 5-10 residents per mile (Minton)

[27] Minton, "The Evolution of Conway Arkansas," 35-36.

[28] Matkin-Rawn, "The Great Negro State of the Country," 10.

[29] Minton, "The Evolution of Conway Arkansas," 8, 35-36.

In 1865, the U.S. Congress established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands to help newly freed African Americans transition from slavery and to aid destitute White people. The Freedmen's Bureau, as it came to be known, negotiated contracts between planters and freedmen and women, negotiated sharecropping deals with planters that gave freedmen a more equitable share of the harvested crop, supervised working conditions, and threatened to sue planters who violated contracts with the freedmen. Some agents helped freedmen to settle on land made available by the Southern Homestead Act of 1866. Freedmen's Bureaus in other states actively promoted migration to Arkansas; frustrated with planters who insisted on paying as little as 15 cents per day, bureau officials in Georgia paid the cost of transportation for destitute freedmen and women willing to migrate to Arkansas and other higher-wage areas.[30] The Freedmen's Bureau ended its services in Arkansas in 1869.[31] The closest Freedmen's Bureau offices to the area that became Conway were in Little Rock (Pulaski County), Jacksonville (Pulaski County) and Lewisburg (Conway County). Records of the Freedmen's Bureau are available online[32] and could provide additional information about the history of individual African American farmers and landowners during Reconstruction.

The Freedmen's Bureau worked to further the right of African Americans to be educated. In the antebellum South, African Americans were generally prevented from receiving a formal education and, in many places, teaching a Black person to read and write was illegal. After Emancipation, freedpeople sought education. Dr. Gordon Morgan, a sociologist from Conway who wrote extensively about the area's African American history, noted that "Education had become a major issue among blacks who saw it as a chief distinction between their former slave status and that of emerging citizens."[33] Freedmen's Bureau agents established new schools in Arkansas from monies donated by religious associations, Congress, the Arkansas legislature, and by Black citizens. In 1868, Black Arkansans contributed over one-third of the funds for building school facilities.

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[30] Ibid, 12-13.

[31] Finley, Randy. "Freedmen's Bureau." Encyclopedia of Arkansas Online, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/freedmens-bureau-3031/.

[32] "Arkansas, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1864-1872," images, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9LD-CCMB?cc=2328125&wc=9VR9-Y47%3A1076660706%2C1076660705: June 4, 2014), Lewisburg (Conway County) > Roll 7, Letters sent, vol 1-3, Aug 1866-Mar 1868 > image 10 of 156; citing NARA microfilm publication M1901 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

[33] Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 244.

In 1868, a new Arkansas state constitution was ratified guaranteeing universal suffrage for men and Republicans, who had supported the Union, swept the statewide offices. Frustration grew among the majority of the population who supported the Confederacy. A series of conflicts were fought across the state – the Militia Wars – after the adoption of the Constitution of 1868. The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) began to operate across the state in April 1868 in an effort to push the Republicans from office and regain Democratic control of the state government.[34] The KKK was "a reorganization of the Confederate Army"[35] and carried out assassinations against Union supporters/Republicans as much as they targeted Black people.[36] The Lewisburg Freedmen's Bureau agent, William Morgan, wrote that "Attacks upon and murders of freedmen are of frequent occurrence and the peaceably disposed citizens both white and colored are in a constant state of alarm for their lives and property."[37] Martial law decrees were imposed upon counties where much of the violence against freedmen occurred.[38]

Freedom Colonies and African American Schools

Freedom colonies were historically significant communities founded across the South from 1865 to 1930. African Americans obtained the land upon which these settlements were founded via cash purchase or adverse possession, often in flood-prone bottomlands on the edges of plantations and city boundaries.[39] Freedmen and women viewed land ownership as the avenue to their most cherished ambitions since emancipation: the ability to live outside of White control, provide for their families, and enjoy the private and public authority that came with owning land. Arkansas had one of the highest rates of Black land ownership in the South in 1870, with roughly one in 17 Black Arkansans owning land.[40] As with many other states, Arkansas'

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[34] David Sesser. "Militia Wars of 1868–1869," Encyclopedia of Arkansas Online, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/militia-wars-of-1868-1869-7904/.

[35] Powell Clayton. *The Aftermath of the Civil War in Arkansas*. New York: Neale Publishing Co., 1915, 78.

[36] Ibid 68-70.

[37] Grif Stockley. Ruled by Race: Black/White Relations in Arkansas from Slavery to the Present. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2008, 66.

[38] Sesser, "Militia Wars of 1868–1869."

[39] Thad Sitton, revised by Andrea Roberts, Grace Kelly, and Schuyler Carter, "Freedmen's Settlements," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed May 03, 2021, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/freedmens-settlements.

[40] Stockley, *Ruled by Race,* 66.

freedom colonies do not appear to have been have not been inventoried and we did not find much research; however, "Black settlements" are mentioned in several historical articles. A stakeholder interview with Conway resident Elvira Jones indicated that many rural families migrated to Conway from Saltillo, Gold Lake, Friendship after the communities were damaged by flooding in the 1930s.[41] One confirmed example of a freedom colony in Faulkner County is the community of Solomon Grove, a settlement homesteaded circa 1890 by former enslaved families.[42]

Arkansas did not pass highly restrictive laws like the onerous Black Codes of other Southern states, which were designed to limit the freedom of African Americans. Black Arkansans could make contracts and own real or personal property, and there was no vagrant law. However, Arkansas did pass laws prohibiting African Americans from voting and from attending school with White students.[43] The State first began to assume some responsibility for financing public education after the common school law of 1866-1867 was enacted, setting aside 20 cents for every $100 of taxable property. Black communities in rural Faulkner County were not incorporated meaning that teacher salaries were mostly paid from the county treasury.[44] An act approved February 6, 1867, dictated that "no negro or mulatto shall be admitted to attend any public school in this state, except such schools as may be established exclusively for colored persons."[45]

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[41] Elvira Jones and James Brownley, stakeholder interview with the author, March 2021.

[42] Holly Hope. "A Storm Couldn't Tear Them Down: The Mixed Masonry Buildings of Silas Owens Sr. 1938-1955." Historic context report. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program: 2004, 6.

[43] William P. Kladky, "Post-bellum Black Codes," Encyclopedia of Arkansas Online, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/post-bellum-black-codes-5997/. The Encyclopedia notes that Arkansas passed laws with employment restrictions that would be classified as Black Codes such as Act 122 of 1867, which required written labor contracts and prohibited laborers from breaking contracts. This was significant in Arkansas due to the prevalence of the sharecropping system and continued the exploitation of plantation laborers.

[44] Hassebrock, Susan. "Before desegregation: Woman researches history of rural black schools," *Log Cabin Weekender*, April 29, 1990, 2, accessed at the University of Central Arkansas Archives.

[45] Annie Campbell. "Arkansas Black Codes. (February 1867). U.S. History Scene. Accessed May 10, 2021, https://ushistoryscene.com/article/arkansas-black-codes-february-1867/.

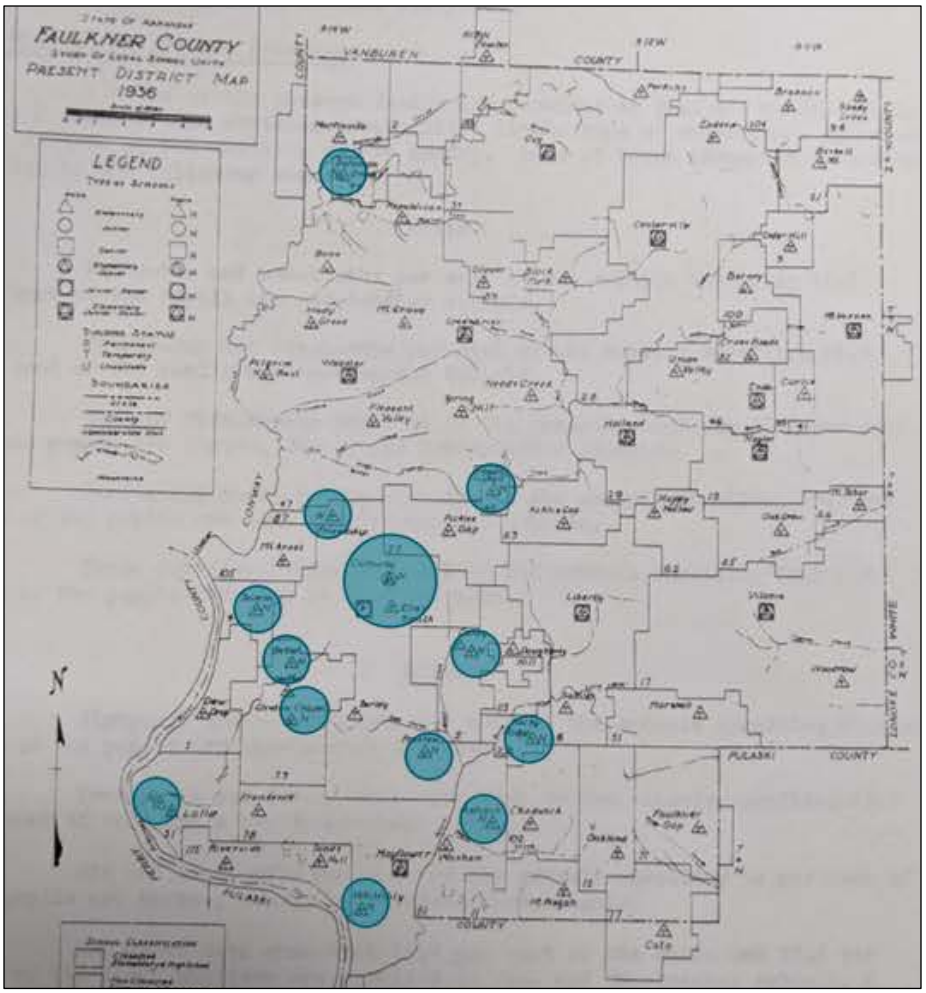

Figure 8. Since African American children were not permitted to attend school with White students, we looked at school records to determine the historic locations of Black communities. This map from An Educational Survey Present and Proposed Schools Faulkner County shows the location of segregated Black schools as of 1936 (highlighted in blue by McDoux). At least two of these formed during the Reconstruction era: the Salem and Caney schools. (UCA Archives)

The area's African American history from the Reconstruction Era has not been extensively documented and the City of Conway had not yet been formed. Given the paucity of information about African Americans during this time period, we looked at where African American schools formed during this time period to uncover where Black families were concentrated. This also indicated the location of possible freedmen communities. The above map indicates African American schools that were extant as of 1936; we identified that at least two of schools formed during the Reconstruction era – the that were likely associated with Freedom communities, Caney and Salem.

The Beginning of Conway

The City of Conway was formed toward the end of the Reconstruction Era. A.P. Robinson platted Conway Station along the newly-laid Little Rock and Fort Smith railroad in 1871. Faulkner County formed in 1873[46] and the City of Conway incorporated in 1875.[47] Thousands of African-American settlers found work and established farms along Arkansas's rapidly advancing rail lines. Black homesteaders tended to concentrate in a few counties and communities on each railroad line, so demographic shifts were often dramatic. In St. Francis County, one of the first areas settled along the Memphis & Little Rock Railroad, the African-American population tripled between 1870 and 1890, increasing from 30 to 59 percent of the population. A significant number settled along the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad as well. In the late 1870s, more than 1,000 Black Tennesseans and South Carolinians moved to Conway County, lifting African Americans from 8 to 25 percent of the county's population between 1870 and 1880.[48]

As a railroad town and the county seat, Conway became a hub for farmers from the surrounding area, where they could sell or gin their crops and buy supplies.[49] Cotton was the primary crop in Faulkner County and county farmers brought their cotton bales to market in Conway. Wagon yards across town provided a place to park wagons with stalls for horses, mules, and oxen, and bunkhouses for the women and men.[50]

The Black population of Faulkner County and Conway increased during this time period. The population more than doubled from 1870, when the census noted 630 residents, to 1,418 in 1880.[51] Black residents were overwhelmingly migrants from other Southern states; the 1870 census shows that most African Americans in the area were born in Mississippi and Tennessee.

Summary of Significant Themes

The primary theme of Post-Emancipation/Reconstruction Era time period is the migration of freedmen to the Conway area from other southern states and the

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[46] Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 244.

[47] Minton, "The Evolution of Conway Arkansas," p. 3.

[48] Matkin-Rawn, "The Great Negro State of the Country," 29-30.

[49] Minton, "The Evolution of Conway Arkansas," 3.

[50] Ann Newman, *Images of America: Conway*. Arcadia Publishing, 1999.

[51] Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 244.

development of rural freedom colonies. African Americans in the area largely worked as farmers or farm laborers during the period. Construction of the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad, the creation of Conway Station, and formation of the City of Conway occurred toward the end of the Post-Emancipation/Reconstruction Era and drew African American laborers to work on the railroad and in jobs and businesses in the new city.

Post-Reconstruction (1876–1900)

History and Development during the Post-Reconstruction Era

During the Post-Reconstruction period, inexpensive land, high wages, and jobs in farming and railroad continued to draw African Americans to Arkansas. Arkansas attracted more African-American migrants than any other state between the end of the Civil War and World War I. Black Arkansans increased as a proportion of the state's population from 25 percent in 1870 to 28 percent in 1900. In the 1880s, over 59,000 African Americans emigrated to Arkansas. Black immigration to Arkansas slowed at the end of the Post-Reconstruction period, likely due to Jim Crow laws such as the Separate Coach Law of 1891 requiring separate coaches on railway trains for White and Black passengers, the state's new separate coach law, a new poll tax, and the skyrocketing lynching rate.[52]

Following the statewide trend, the African American population of Faulkner County and Conway increased during the Post-Reconstruction Era. The 1880 census noted an African American population in Conway of 1,418, more than double 630 African Americans residing in Conway in 1870.[53] The census shows that Conway's Black residents were overwhelmingly migrants from other Southern states, with most born in Mississippi and Tennessee. A number were born in Arkansas; however, over ¾ of these were children born after their parents immigrated. African American migrants hailed in lesser numbers from Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, Virginia, South Caroline, Kentucky, Texas, Louisiana, Maryland.

Conway was still a rural, agriculture-based town and the 1880 census[54] noted most frequent employment categories for African American men was farm related and laborer. Occupations that appeared but with less frequency included carpenter, wood chopper, servant, railroad worker, cook, mill worker, porter, retail grocer, and shoemaker.[55] Black women were typically employed keeping house and occasionally as cooks. The children attended school. The census taker did not indicate streets or

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[52] Matkin-Rawn, "The Great Negro State of the Country," 3-4, 34, 38.

[53] Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 244.

[54] The U.S. Census, designed to count every resident in the United States, takes place every 10 years. The 1880 census was the first census to document the citizens of Conway after the incorporated in 1875.

[55] African American blacksmiths at the time included Samuel Clifton and Charles Taylor. Retail grocers were James A. Sanders, Arnold Roberts, and Frank McNeal, although all were noted unemployed for a matter of months. Carpenters were Louis Romus, Alexandria Hughes, and Jesse Hicks. Benjamin Patrick was a shoe maker.

house numbers but the order of names shows that some Black families were living adjacent to White neighbors. There were some clusters of five to seven Black households in an area; sometimes one African American was living in the household of a White family and listed as a servant.

Violence against African Americans was widespread throughout Arkansas during this time, although not as prevalent in Faulkner County. The worst violence occurred in Little River and Crittenden Counties of southern Arkansas, where lynching and Klan violence terrorized local African Americans communities. Neighboring Conway County was in turmoil during the late 1880s – with Black voter suppression, violent political riots, and even the murders of African American legislator Reverend G.E. Trower and White Republican Congressional candidate John Clayton.[56] Conway was not without race-related violence during this time period, however. In February 1884, Tom Wilson, an African-American man, was arrested for allegedly attempting to assault a woman. While enroute to the Conway jail, the party was intercepted by a group of masked men. Wilson was lynched by hanging from a tree limb.[57]

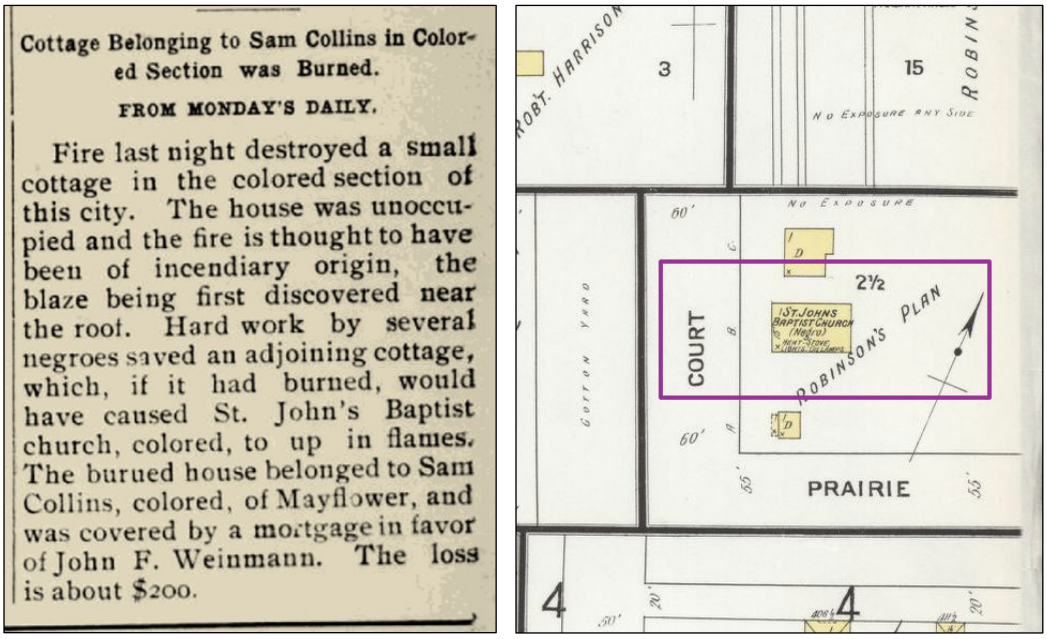
Figure 9. Early Sanborn Fire Insurance maps documented a limited portion of the city, but the 1892 maps show a wood-frame "Negro" dwelling on Front Street just north of what is now Van Ronkle (outlined in purple by McDoux).

[56] Brent E. Riffel, "Lynching," CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/lynching-346/ and Larry Taylor, "Plumerville Conflict of 1886–1892," https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/plumerville-conflict-of-1886-1892-6859/.

[57] Nancy Snell Griffith, "Tom Wilson (Lynching of)." CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas, accessed April 06, 2021, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/tom-wilson-14009/.

Little physical evidence remains of Conway's earliest buildings, including those associated with its African American history. Some articles by local historians suggest that African Americans in early Conway lived in a few houses on the outskirts of town. However, primary sources show that this was not the case. Through the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps and U.S. census records, we can see that while Conway's Black residents were always concentrated on the "East Side" (i.e., east of the railroad tracks), early Black residents lived very close to downtown and Conway Station.

This area was referred to as the city's "colored section" as shown in an article about a fire that took place several years later in 1908:



Cottage Belonging to Sam Collins in Colored Section was Burned.

FROM MONDAY'S DAILY.

Fire last night destroyed a small cottage in the colored section of this city. The house was unoccupied and the fire is thought to have been of incendiary origin, the blaze being first discovered near the roof. Hard work by several negroes saved an adjoining cottage, which, if it had burned, would have caused St. John's Baptist church, colored, to up in flames. The burued house belonged to Sam Collins, colored, of Mayflower, and was covered by a mortgage in favor of John F. Weinmann. The loss is about $200.

Figure 10: The Conway Log Cabin Democrat, December 17, 1908, 1, reported on a fire in Conway's "colored section." The article cites St. John's Baptist Church, which the 1909 Sanborn map shows was located at Court and Prairie.

We can infer the location of the "colored section" of town since the article refers to St. John's Baptist Church, which Sanborn maps from that time show as located at the intersection of Court and Prairie (above right).

Figure 11. Conway's first school for African American children was located on Lots Three, Four, and Six of Block Two, Robinson's Plan of the Town of Conway. The map at left shows the site (shaded blue by McDoux) in the plat maps of Conway, while the satellite view at right shows the block as it appears today. (City of Conway and Google Maps, respectively)

Conway's first school for African American students was established during the Post-Reconstruction period. Local histories indicate that a two-room building opened in approximately 1887. While several articles indicate that the location of the original school was not known, the *Faulkner County School History Project* files in the UCA repository document that the first school for Black children in Conway was located on Lot 6, Block 2 of the Robinson Plan, facing south onto Main.[58] A 1909 newspaper notice in the *Conway Log Cabin Democrat* corroborates this location.[59] This sale would have been around the time that Conway's school board purchased the Pine Street School location for the construction of a new Black school.

The African American community also founded several churches within the Post-Reconstruction period. Local histories indicate that A.P. Robinson, founder of

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[58] "Pine Street School (Black), Conway District." University of Central Arkansas Archives, Special Collections, Faulkner County School History Project. Col. M96-5, Box 2, File 103. In 1989, the Faulkner County Historical Society and the Faulkner County Retired Teachers Association began the Faulkner County school history project dealing with the history of the original 100-plus school districts in Faulkner County. Their "School Sites" report indicates that the first school for Black children was located on Lot 6 Block 2 Robinson Plan, facing Main (south). The report notes that although this school was not located on Pine Street, the title Pine Street was used to help identify it as the first school for Black children in Conway.

[59] "Notice," *Conway Log Cabin Democrat,* June 17, 1909, 1 indicated that "Number Three, Four, and Six of Block Number Two, Robinson's Plan of the Town of Conway, Arkansas, known as the colored school property" were for sale at the time.

Conway, donated ground for a "colored church." By 1888, Conway boasted four African American churches, as touted in an 1888 article in the *Daily Arkansas Gazette* that promoted the city's resources and attractions to potential residents. The article noted Conway's thriving Black community with "four churches and one good school, with an average attendance of 120 scholars." [60] Our research did not yield much information about these churches, but local histories specify that the churches were two Baptist and two Methodist.[61]

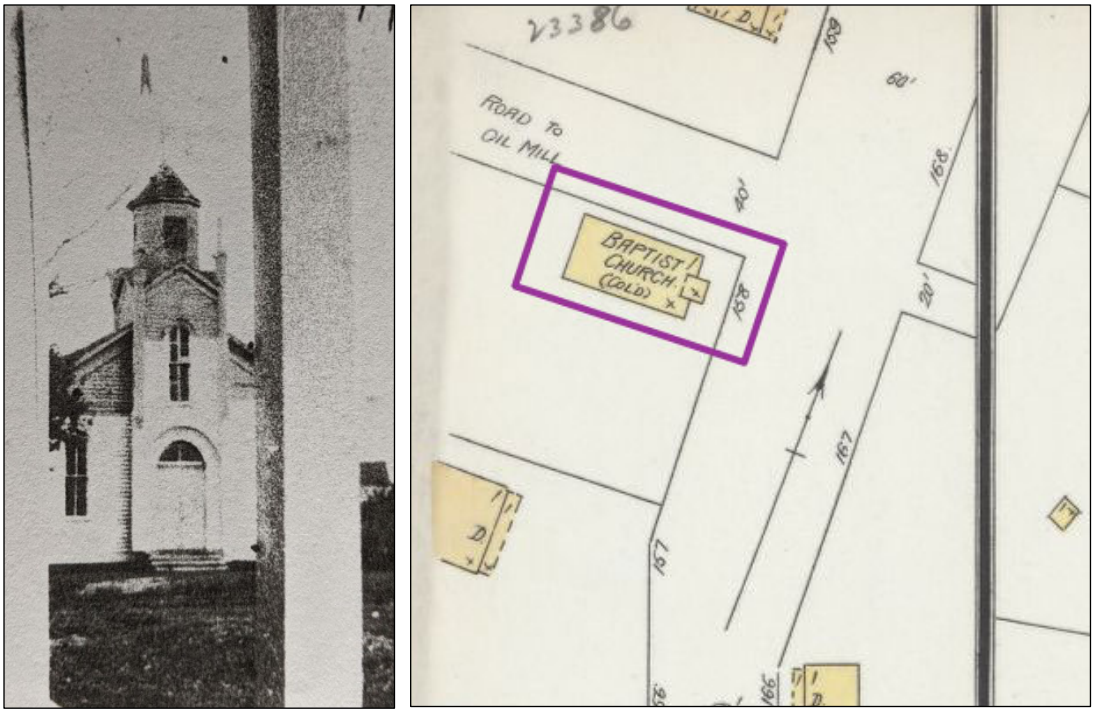

Figure 12. Captioned "An unidentified church on Court Street, 1916. The black community established this church on Court Street. The name of the church is unknown." The photo at above left likely shows St. John's Baptist Church. One of Conway's earliest African American, St. John's was located at Court and Prairie. St. John's and White's Chapel Baptist Church later consolidated to form Union Baptist Church. At right, the 1897 Sanborn map shows another African American church at the current what is now Front and Mill. The church was still there as of 1904 Sanborn map but is no longer extant. (Images of America, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps)

[60] "Faulkner County: Resources and Attractions of One of the Best Communities In Arkansas," *Daily Arkansas Gazette*, March 21, 1888, 5.

[61] "Faulkner County: Resources and Attractions of One of the Best Communities In Arkansas," *Daily Arkansas Gazette*, March 21, 1888, 5, "The Methodist Church." Faulkner County Church History, from the *Log Cabin Democrat Centennial Edition,* accessed May 10, 2021, http://www.argenweb.net/faulkner/church.html and *Biographical and Historical Memoir of Pulaski, Jefferson, Lonoke, Faulkner, Grant, Saline, Perry, Garland and Hot Springs Counties, Arkansas,* 715.

The 1897 Sanborn map of Conway show that a wood-frame "Baptist Church (Col'd)" was located at 158 Front Street (at the "Road to Oil Mill," current the southwest corner of Front and Mill). The church, which is no longer extant was still there as of 1904. It may indicate that a portion of the Black community resided in this area as well.

Conway's Black community buried their deceased community members in Conway's first African American city cemetery. Located at the southeast corner of the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood, the four-acre Robinson Cemetery was established in 1889 as a burial ground for Conway's African American residents and is still active.[62]

Newspaper articles and headstones in Robinson Cemetery show that the Black community organized fraternal and social organization during the Post-Reconstruction Era; however, the research team did not find much information about these groups. Further focused research could yield additional information.

African American Rural Life/Agriculture

Conway's African American community during the post-Reconstruction era was small but active; however, the experience of African Americans in Faulkner County during this time was largely rural and agricultural. Through the 1880s and into the 1890s, pay still ran 33–50% higher in Arkansas and Texas than in Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Sharecropping emerged during that era, and the rich soil along Arkansas's many rivers meant that fertilizer use was rarely necessary and, therefore, profits were higher. Fencing laws were also late to develop in Arkansas (and were ignored even longer), so farmers of limited means could find common pasture for livestock and let their hogs run in the river bottoms.[63] Cotton was the area's primary crop, and its cultivation followed a cyclical schedule: "New land was cleared in January, plowing began in February, planting was done in April and May, the plants were hoed in June and then 'laid by' sometime in July. Cotton picking began in September, and the ginning process took place in October."[64]

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[62] "Robinson Cemetery," *Find a Grave*, accessed March 2021, https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/1964951/robinson-cemetery.

[63] Matkin-Rawn, "The Great Negro State of the Country," 10.

[64] Bolton, "Slavery and the Defining of Arkansas," 9.

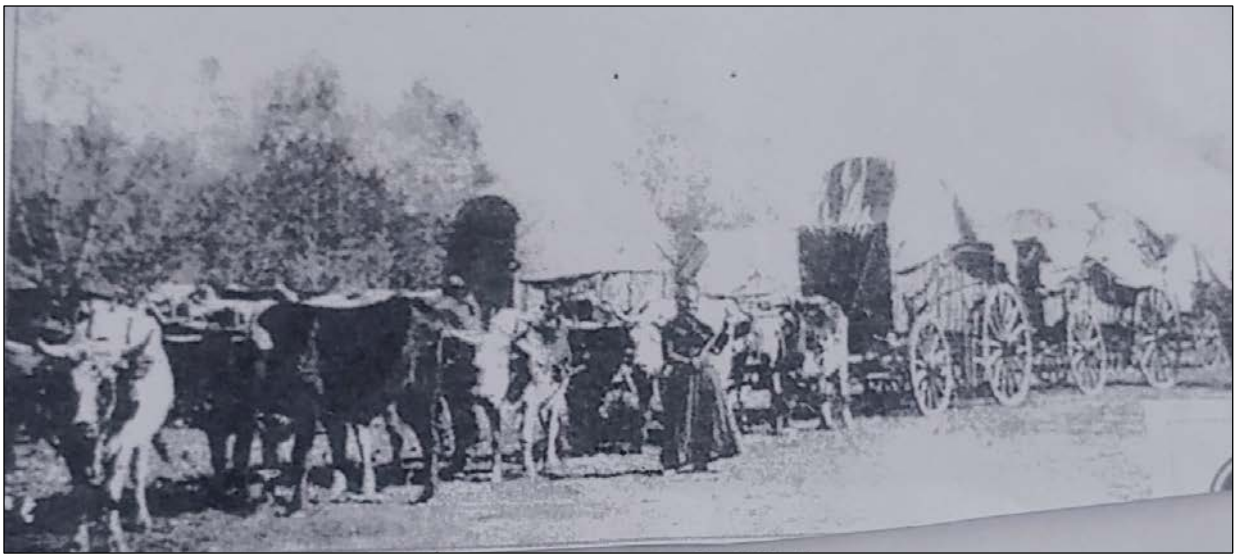

Figure 13. Photograph of African American travelers forming a wagon train for safety (Ozark Foothills African-American History Museum)

Conway continued to be a business and social meeting place for area farmers. Albessie Thompson, resident of Greenbrier, gave an oral history as part of this project and described Conway as "really the go-to place for people in this community." Thompson relayed her father's stories about formerly enslaved people forming a wagon train to travel from freedom colonies Solomon Grove and Zion Grove to Conway twice a year: in the spring to buy seeds and in the fall, after picking the crops, to purchase food, fabric for clothes, and other necessities to carry them through the winter.

The 1880 census indicates that African American farming households tended to be larger than those within the city. Typically, the head of household was listed as "farmer" or "work on farm," with the wife "keeping house." While children in Conway were noted as being "at school," rural African American children either worked on the farm or did not have an occupation listed. The census showed an occasional African American person living with a White family and working on the farm. The census taker did not note streets or house numbers; however, clusters of Black families might represent freedom communities. Freedom colonies during this time period were often unplatted, unincorporated farming communities where clusters of landowners came together around a church and school.

In spite of restrictions and racism, African Americans managed to provide an education for their children before they were accepted into an integrated public school system. Education was very important to the African American community, and rural schools were an important part of community life during this era. Baseball games, school programs, square dances, and 'box' suppers all were planned around

the community school.[65] McDoux identified two rural African American schools that were formed in the Conway area during the post-Reconstruction era: the Preston School (which was associated with a freedom colony called the Gold Lake Community or the Gold Creek Community) and Rocky Ridge.

Jones Chapel was an active and well-established African American community that research indicates developed during the Post-Reconstruction Era.[66] News from this community was regularly covered by the regional section of the *Conway Log Cabin Democrat* in the early 20th century, listed as "Jones Chapel. (Colored)". Jones Chapel was located six miles southeast of Conway.[67] Florence Mattison, whose husband was the principal at Pine Street School in Conway, taught school here.[68]

Another freedom colony that developed during the Post-Reconstruction Era was the Providence settlement. Providence was located in the area of John Elijah Little's Lollie Plantation and is sometimes referred to as Lollie. Pleasant Branch Baptist Church, which has been identified as Faulkner County's oldest African American congregation, formed in the Providence settlement in 1880. Oral history accounts indicate that Rev. Lawrence Cornelius was the church's organizer and first pastor. The congregation was made up of freedmen and women who migrated to Arkansas from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. The church was a one-room, rectangular building with vertical planking surrounded by a fence with two gates, one for wagons and teams to enter and another for the congregation.[69] Pleasant Branch was destroyed by a fire in 1930, believed to have been caused by arsonists.[70] Congregation member Mrs. Burgess, then a small child, gave an account of the event:

> I remember that my mother went to prayer meeting and they were out in the

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[65] Susan Hassebrock. "Before desegregation: Woman researches history of rural black schools," *Log Cabin Weekender*, April 29 1990, 2.

[66] Untitled article, *Arkansas Democrat*, August 20, 1887, 4, shows that a fourth-class postmaster was appointed in Jones' Chapel in 1887.

[67] "Negro Work Progresses," *Daily Arkansas Gazette*, September 22, 1914, 2.

[68] "Jones Chapel. (Colored.)" *Conway Log Cabin Democrat,* August 12, 1920, 2.

[69] "History of the Greater Pleasant Branch Missionary Baptist Church 1880-2016." *Greater Pleasant Branch Missionary Baptist Church*, accessed April 1, 2021, https://greaterpleasantbranch.org/index.php/about-us/history/. It is likely that the Providence settlement predated the Lollie Plantation. Church records indicate that the Pleasant Branch Church formed in 1880; J.E. Little began acquiring farm lands along the Arkansas River in 1887. The church records say that many of the congregants were farmers on Little's plantation.

[70] Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 160.

> yard looking back in the direction of the church and saw the fire. After the fire, we started having church on the back that was part of the Littles' farm. The farm was named in sections. The front section was where we lived. The Burgess family lived in the back section and that is where we went to church until some man came down there and built the Rosewall [Rosenwald] School. After that everybody had church there. The Baptists had church on the first and second Sundays and the Church of God In Christ had church on the third and fourth Sundays.[71]

Congregants met in the nearby Rosenwald school until the Little Farm disbanded and area farmers moved away.[72] The congregation eventually founded a new church in Conway, described later in this report. Pleasant Branch Baptist Church Cemetery is associated with the original location of the Pleasant Branch Baptist Church.

Notable Community Members

Notable members of the African American community could include prominent business men and women, farmers or landowners, religious leaders, educational leaders (such as teachers or principals), builders, etc. Identifying all the notable community members is outside the scope of this project; however, during the course of this research, McDoux identified the individuals listed below, who were active members of the African American community during the Post-Reconstruction Era.

- *Dr. Columbus A. Mattison* was Conway's first African American doctor. He was born 1863 in Honea Path, South Carolina, the son of William Mattison, a farmer, and wife Laura.[73] Mattison moved to Conway in 1892 and entered the practice of medicine shortly after arriving, practicing until retirement in 1915. Dr. Mattison was a member of White Chapel Baptist Church and belonged to five fraternities at his time of death.[74] The 1910 census shows him living on Spencer Street with wife Henriett and children Ruben, Glover, and Laura, as well as his brother Ellie. Ellie Mattison graduated from Meharry Medical College in 1908 and served the Morrilton community. Additional members of Dr. Mattison's family came to Conway in the early twentieth century, and the Mattisons became one of Conway's most prominent African American families.

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[71] "History of the Greater Pleasant Branch Missionary Baptist Church 1880-2016, https://greaterpleasantbranch.org/index.php/about-us/history/.

[72] Ibid.

[73] 1870 census for South Carolina

[74] "Obituary," *Conway Log Cabin Democrat,* September 12, 1916, 2.

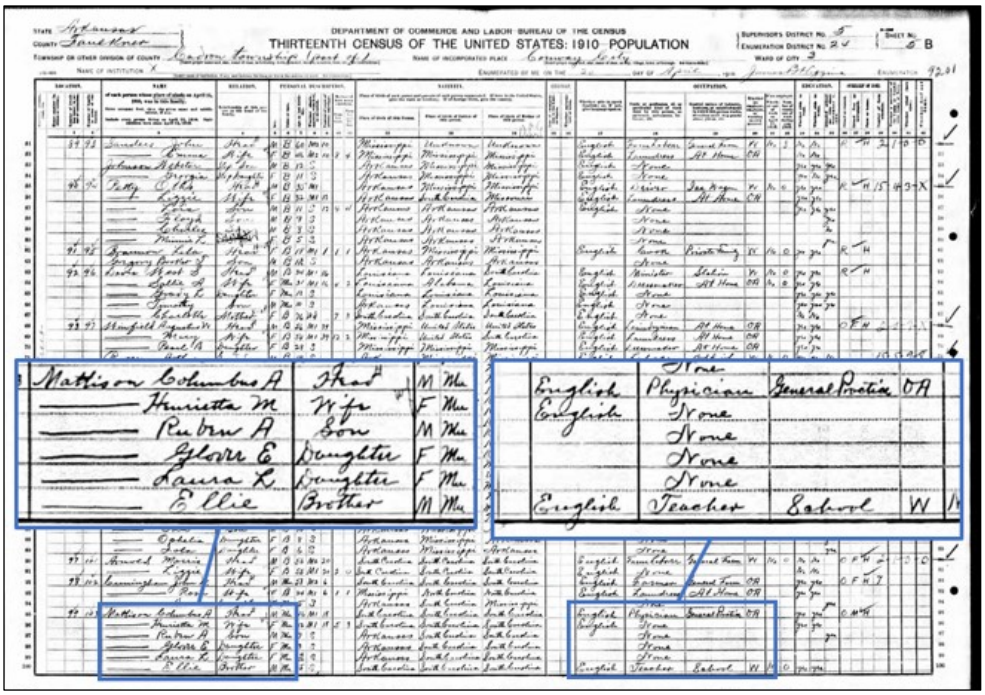

Figure 14. The 1910 U.S. Census record for Dr. Columbus A. Mattison, Conway's first African American doctor, and his family

Very few African American individuals were given obituaries upon death during this period, and those who were written about likely were significant to the community. The obituaries for two African American women who lived in Conway during this time period were discovered during research for this project.

- *Eliza Fowler* was born 1850 in Fayette County, Tennessee[75] and moved to Conway in 1883. Her obituary noted that Eliza, Bettie, or 'Aunt Liza' was "a loved and respected colored citizen" who was trained in Memphis to do the highest grade of laundry work. Fowler sheltered and cared for several orphaned children and was a member of St. John's Baptist Church.[76]
- *Hannah Haley's* obituary notes: "Hannah Haley, aged 80 years, a "fo de war" negro mammy, died of old age at her home in the eastern part of the city yesterday afternoon. She was one of the best known and respected negroes of this city, and has lived here about 35 years. Her remains were laid to rest in the negro cemetery."[77] No other information could be found on Haley.

[75] U.S. Census, Conway Town, Faulkner County, Arkansas; p. 11; Enumeration District: 0024; FHL microfilm: 1240058, via ancestry.com.

[76] "Obituary" *Conway Log Cabin Democrat*, June 2, 1909, 2, and May 26, 1909, 1.

[77] "Hannah Haley Dead," *Conway Log Cabin Democrat,* July 16, 1914, 7.

Summary of Significant Themes

Significant themes from Post-Reconstruction era include the continued migration of freedmen and women to Arkansas from other southern states. African Americans in rural Faulkner County farmed or were employed as farm laborers, coming together in freedom colonies centered around a church and school. Conway became a social and economic hub for area farmers. In Conway, the Black community lived in "East Side" neighborhoods just south of Conway station and to its north.

The Jim Crow Era (1900–1950)

History and Development during the Jim Crow Era

"Jim Crow" refers to state and local statutes passed across the South during the early twentieth century that legalized racial segregation. Named for a minstrel show character, Jim Crow laws intentionally denied African Americans the right to vote, hold jobs, pursue education, or freely seek other opportunities. Those who defied these laws often faced arrest, fines, jail sentences, violence and death.

African-American migration to Arkansas continued into the twentieth century; between 1900–1920, 132,000 African Americans settled in the state. Most were tenant farmers from neighboring deep South states seeking relief from high land rents and boll weevil infestations.[78]

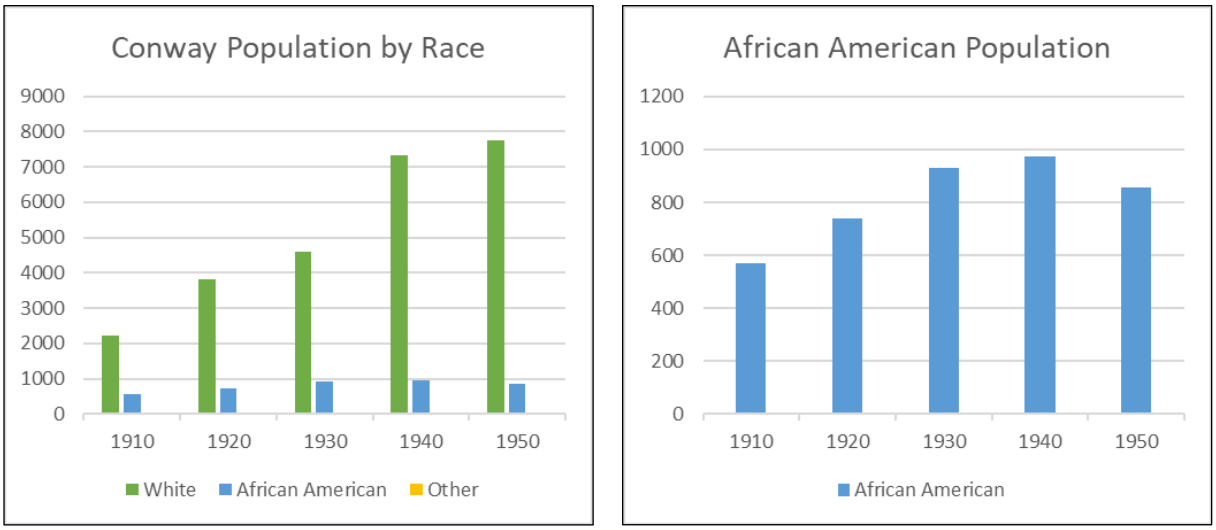

Figure 15. Growth of Conway's White community outpaced the Black community: while the Black population grew in absolute numbers, its percentage of the population decreased from 20% of Conway's population in 1910 to 10% in 1950. (McDoux Preservation)

[78] Matkin-Rawn, "The Great Negro State of the Country," 39.

Conway's African American population grew steadily during the Jim Crow era, from 568 in 1910 to a high of 973 in 1940. Several causes were attributed to this growth. Rural farming families sought work in the city after the mechanization of farming in the 1930s resulted in the need for fewer farmhands; in addition, a devastating flood in 1927 destroyed many farm homes in the Lollie Bottoms area, and the Little Farm closed.[79] Stakeholder interviewees, including Elvira Jones, Charlene Bland, and Leona Walton, said that many families moved to Conway when the Little Farm ceased operations. Albessie Thompson indicated in her oral history that Black families came to Conway seeking jobs in factories and the colleges. In 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt opened national defense jobs to all Americans, regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin. The city's Black population began to decline at the end of this period, reducing to 858 in 1950, although it is not clear why this happened. It is possible that the success of the Pine Street School might have led to some outmigration. Teacher Florence Mattison, whose husband was principal at the school, said in a newspaper article that she and her husband advised their students to "go to college, or North to get a better-paying job. And most of our graduates went to Detroit or Los Angeles. That's what they had to do. In those days, the only work for Negroes here was at the cotton bale compress, the cotton seed oil mill or in domestic work."[80] World War II also gave many young men the opportunity to travel and gain new experiences.

[79] Gordon D. Morgan, *The Conway East Side Community*. Bound article at the Faulkner County Museum.

[80] "Florence Mattison Still Speaks Out." *Log Cabin Democrat*, May 24, 1981, p. unknown. From the Pine Street CommUnity Museum.

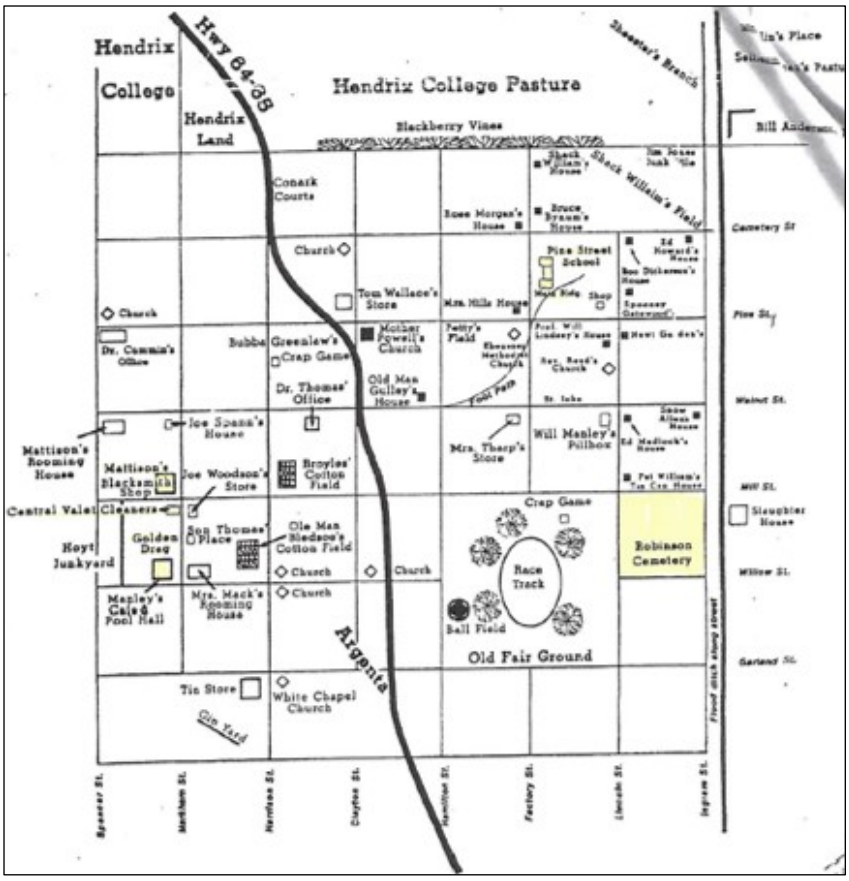

Figure 16. A map of the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood map as it was 1935–1950, created by Gordon D. Morgan in 1986 (Pine Street CommUnity Museum)

Decline of the Original East Side Neighborhood

At the beginning of the Jim Crow era, Conway's African American population was still anchored in the original East Side neighborhood around Main Street. The community was relatively integrated; the 1900 census shows small clusters of Black families interspersed with White households in that area. However, over the next two decades, Conway became increasingly segregated as the Black community moved northeast and consolidated in the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood.[81]

Why the Black community relocated to the Pine/Markham Street area is not documented. Minton's 1937 dissertation posited that "a segregated district for negroes developed more or less unconsciously," which seems unlikely.[82] Development of the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood is consistent with

[81] The 1910 census shows a number of African American families living on Deer, Main, and Court Streets; but by the 1920 census, those areas were almost exclusively White.

[82] Minton, "The Evolution of Conway Arkansas," 41.

segregated communities that developed throughout the South during the Jim Crow Era. Cities enforced segregation through means such as redlining, restrictive covenants, zoning laws, and business licensing/permitting practices. Segregation resulted in Black residents developing ethnic "enclaves," self-contained communities characterized by minority-owned businesses that relied on other minority businesses within the enclave for their supplies and sold most of their products to customers within the enclave.[83]

Several events were documented in Conway during the Jim Crow era which indicate that racism and racial tensions likely led to the deliberate development of a segregated Black neighborhood. In 1905, Conway resident Frank Brown was lynched by a mob after being accused of an attack upon a White woman.[84] Another incident in 1913 resulted in the destruction of several buildings in the Black community. Seven African Americans in Conway were arrested for violating the White-Slave Traffic Act, or the Mann Act. This federal law, passed in 1910, made it a felony to engage in interstate or foreign commerce transport of any woman or girl for the purpose of prostitution, debauchery, or any other immoral purpose. In practice, the Mann Act was used to criminalize even consensual sexual behavior between adults. In this case, the seven individuals were accused of White slavery and assaults on a 14-year-old White girl. Newspaper accounts indicate that the prisoners were brought to the state penitentiary in Little Rock due to fear of mob violence:

> Officers who brought the blacks to Little Rock declared sentiment against the negroes at Conway is intense, but that feeling against the relatives of the young white girl for permitting her to associate with negroes, is equally strong.[85]

The seven were convicted a month later. At that time, a White mob terrorized the Black community:

> A party of persons "unknown to the jury" early last night demolished a small shack on Harkrider street, in which was located a blacksmith shop belonging to Alfred Handford, father of Louvida Sims, the negro woman recently convicted in circuit court on white slavery charges. The sounds of hammers and axes almost caused a panic in a nearby negro church, where prayermeeting services

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[83] Plater, Michael A. 1993. "R. C. Scott: A History of African American Entrepreneurship in Richmond, 1890–1940." PhD diss., College of William and Mary. ProQuest 304083823, 7–8.

[84] "Lynching at Conway", *Journal Advance*, September 29, 1905, p. 2. The sheriff was reported as saying that he thought the mob had lynched the wrong man.

[85] "Negroes Hurried to Pen," *Daily Arkansas Gazette,* May 20, 1913, 3.

> were being held, the church being emptied in a few seconds. The blacksmith shop was completely razed. Probably fearing another visit, the negroes owning a lodge hall and restaurant on East Main street are today tearing down and removing the building. City authorities recently declined to issue a permit to repair the hall.[86]

The article documents an act of violence stemming from racial tensions that likely led to segregation within the city, but it also mentions that City authorities would not issue a permit to repair the African American lodge hall. Segregation was often imposed through such business licensing/permitting practices. In 1912, two of the early Black churches (St. James Methodist and White Chapel Baptist) were placed for sale at public auction to satisfy delinquent assessments levied by Waterworks District.[87]

Development of the Pine/Markham Street Neighborhood

In 1910, the City purchased land for a new African American school at Pine and Factory Streets, around the time that Blacks were leaving the East Side area on Main Street. The school may have acted as a catalyst to development of the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood, which became Conway's Black enclave during the Jim Crow Era. The Pine/Markham Street neighborhood became a tight-knit, thriving Black community that, reflective of the era's Jim Crow policies, kept to the east side of the tracks and did not mix much with the White community.[88] The neighborhood included housing, the Pine Street School, a small commercial/entertainment district, Robinson Cemetery, churches, and several neighborhood stores/confectionaries. Many of the buildings were constructed by African American builders. Bruce Bynum was a local builder who lived and worked in the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood. Bynum's work included the Deluxe Diner building. Silas Owens, Sr. was a mason who became known for his exemplary rockwork throughout Faulkner County during this time period.

The built environment in the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood consisted mostly of residential buildings. Houses were almost exclusively one-story, vernacular, wood-frame, single-family homes with gabled or hipped roofs, wood lap siding, and Traditional styles such as the National Folk or Craftsman styles. A small number of duplexes/multifamily homes were present in the neighborhood as well. Based on

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[86] "Destroy Negro's Blacksmith Shop," *Conway Log Cabin Democrat,* June 19, 1913, 4.

[87] "Will Sell Negro Churches for Tax," *Conway Log Cabin Democrat*, June 13, 1912, 5.

[88] Morgan, Gordon. "Growing up in Conway's Black Community." *Log Cabin Weekender*, April 7, 1985, 2, at the Pine Street CommUnity Museum.

Sanborn Maps, it appears that houses were added to the neighborhood as needed, rather than by developers or speculative construction.[89]

Conway native and sociologist Dr. Gordon Morgan wrote that the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood encompassed portions of an older African American neighborhood called Argenta. Comprised of about nine square blocks, Argenta extended from Willow Street on the north, Oak and Van Ronkle on the south, the old fairgrounds to the east, and Harrison Street on the west. It was comprised of small frame houses and included White Chapel Baptist Church. Our research did not reveal when Argenta was established, but newspaper articles from the 1980s indicate that it continued as an active neighborhood even after the Pine/Markham Street developed.[90]

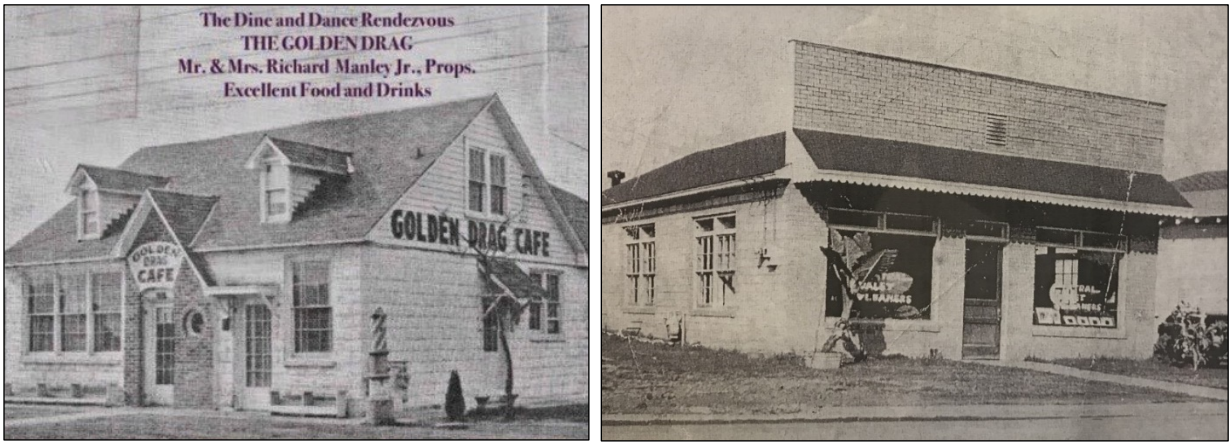

Figure 17. Two of Conway's Black-owned and operated business on Markham Street: (left) the Deluxe Diner (extant) and (right) Central Valet Cleaners, not extant (Pine Street CommUnity Museum)

Markham Street in the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood was known as "The Drag" and served as the community's main commercial corridor.[91] Black-owned businesses on Markham included the Sunset Café and The Deluxe Diner (also known as the Golden Drag). The Deluxe Diner was the only Conway business featured in *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, a guide published from 1936 to 1966 by Victor H. Green to help Black travelers find amenities. At night, Markham Street became the

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[89] An inventory of the building stock currently extant and a more in-depth physical description of the neighborhood is included within the windshield survey report completed as part of this project.

[90] Morgan, Gordon. "Growing up in Conway's Black Community." *Log Cabin Weekender*, April 7, 1985, 2, at the Pine Street CommUnity Museum.

[91] Markham was paved with concrete in the 1930s as part of the State Highway Commission's Conway City Connection project "Plan and Profile of Proposed State Highway, Conway City Connection, Faulkner County." State of Arkansas State Highway Commission, 1936.

entertainment district. An oral history with Dr. Lloyd Hervey indicated that most of the neighborhood's kids were not allowed to hang out on Markham Street: "If I went there it was to get a haircut in the barber shop… that was the gist of my going, because my grandmother would've probably come and drug me out if she caught me down there dancing."

Other Black-owned businesses in the neighborhood included a café, a dry cleaner, and several small grocery stores/confectionaries mixed into the fabric of the residential areas; these small neighborhood stores did not have a large selection and neighborhood residents walked or drove downtown to White-owned grocery for some items. The Mattison family started a blacksmith shop at Mill and Markham in the early 1900s, which grew into a general repair and welding shop then transitioned to auto repair; Mattison's is extant at 1213 Markham.[92]

Figure 18. Willie J. Mattison started a blacksmith shop at Mill and Markham, which grew into general repair shop and welding then auto repair; the auto repair shop is extant at 1213 Markham 1213 Markham Street. (McDoux)

Overnight lodging was a problematic aspect of travel for African Americans during the segregated Jim Crow era. Many small towns did not have hotels available for Black travelers, who often had to find an available room in someone's home. Lodging options for Black travelers in the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood included the Ebony Motel and several rooming houses. None of these appear to be extant, although part of the concrete slab for the Ebony Motel remains.[93]

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[92] Pine Street School. *The Pini 1950 Yearbook.* Conway, AR: 1950. Pine Street CommUnity Museum. *The Pini* has an ad for Willie Mattison, general repair shop and welding, horse shoeing and blacksmith work.

[93] Ibid.

Figure 19. "Son" Thomas, barber and owner, with Murmon Thomas (standing) and Milton Woods (Pine Street CommUnity Museum)

Barber shops and beauty parlors emerged as a significant business type in African American communities during the Jim Crow Era. Black barbers had previously cut White customers' hair as part of their work in the service industries, but as communities became more segregated, White patrons shifted their business to White-owned shops, and Black barbers established shops within their own communities. Both the Sunset Café and the Deluxe Diner contained barber shops, and a number of free-standing barber shops and beauty parlors were present throughout the neighborhood. Several residential buildings were remodeled or expanded to include space and a separate entrance for a beauty parlor. Black-owned barber shops included John Rodgers and Sallie Bell's store and beauty shop on Harkrider and the Edna James beauty shop (extant on Pine Street).

The Pine/Markham Street community was centered around the Pine Street school, Conway's segregated public school. The school came to hold such a prominent role that many area residents referred to the neighborhood simply at Pine Street.

Figure 20. Elementary school buildings at Conway's African American public school, the Pine Street School. (Pine Street CommUnity Museum)

At the beginning of the Jim Crow Era, African American students attended the City's original Black public school which, in 1904, had the largest enrollment in its history.[94] In 1909, the school district placed the school property up for sale and, in 1910, purchased Block 12 of the Burns Addition for a new African American public school. The school was to "be a neat frame building with three rooms, each measuring 28 x 32 feet."[95] The school was never officially named but became known as the Pine Street School.

[94] "Conway Colored Public School Closes." *Daily Arkansas Gazette*, May 18, 1904. In the 1903-1904 year, the school had 201 pupils under principal J.R. Anderson.

[95] "Notice," *Conway Log Cabin Democrat,* June 17, 1909, 1, and Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 244.

Pine Street School opened in 1912 and taught nine grades.[96] Former students remember strict but supportive teachers who taught an innovative, cutting-edge curriculum:

> Their philosophy was to be twice as good as a White student, which meant we had to dress the part, we had to speak the part, we had to look the part, we had to act the part. But I know they were trying to prepare us to move in to society at that time, which had limited opportunities for African Americans ... We had to be clean, if you needed a bath, you'd go across the street to Miss Daisy Hill's house, they'd give you a bath, Mr. Theodore Jones who was the shop teacher, agricultural teacher, he had a barber's chair in his shop. [97]

The school was enlarged and improved over the decades. A brick veneer was added to the building in 1925; the school was increased with additional rooms in 1927, and a junior high was added.[98] The Rosenwald School Project indicates that the Rosenwald program provided funds for a four-teacher type school in 1929–1930.[99] In 1930, more funds were raised for a building used as a canning center, which later developed into a Home Economics Department.[100]

The school did not originally contain a high school and, until the 1930s, graduates of the Pine Street junior high who wanted to continue their education traveled to Menifee to attend the Conway County Training School.[101] However, demand for a high school was great, so in 1937, Pine Street became a senior high school as well.[102]

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[96] Hassebrock, "Before desegregation: Woman researches history of rural black schools," 2.

[97] Oral history with Dr. Lloyd Hervey, March 2021.

[98] Faulkner County Historical Society, Faulkner County: Its Land and People, 245, and "Pine Street School (Black), Conway District," Faulkner County School History Project and Faulkner County: Its Land and People, p. 244.

[99] Fisk University Rosenwald Fund Card File Database, Nashville, TN. Accessed March 6, 2021.http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/

[100] "Pine Street School (Black), Conway District." Faulkner County School History Project.

[101] Faulkner County Historical Society, Faulkner County: Its Land and People, 245.

[102] "Pine Street School (Black), Conway District." Faulkner County School History Project.

Pine Street's brick school building burned in a suspicious fire in 1943. It was rebuilt in 1944;[103] in the interim, four neighborhood churches let the school to use space for classrooms.[104] A new elementary building was erected in 1952 and the vocational building was remodeled the following year.[105]

Figure 21. The Pine Street School's high school building in 1947 (University of Central Arkansas Archives)

The Pine Street School did not originally have a gymnasium. Students played basketball games at the National Guard Armory (currently the fire station) downtown, and Hendrix College allowed Pine Street's student athletes to play football on their field.[106] In 1961, additional lots were purchased to construct a physical education building at Pine Street.[107]

Pine Street educated many African American students who lived outside Conway in rural Faulkner County and further strengthened the rural communities' ties to Conway. School consolidation efforts resulted in the closing of a number of small

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[103] Ibid.

[104] "Fire Destroys $25000 Negro School Here," publication unknown, date unknown, article at the Pine Street CommUnity Museum.

[105] "Pine Street School (Black), Conway District." Faulkner County School History Project.

[106] Oral history with Dr. Lloyd Hervey, March 2021.

[107] "Pine Street School (Black), Conway District." Faulkner County School History Project.

rural schools in 1910 and again in 1948.[108] African American schools around Faulkner County that were consolidated with the Pine Street School included Bee Brand, Bethel, Caney, Clinton Chapel, Friendship, Gold Creek, Horseshoe Mountain, Jones Chapel, Preston, Rocky Ridge, Salem, and Scuffel Ridge. According to Dr. Lloyd Hervey, some students had a 100-mile round trip.[109]

Figure 22. After the Caney School consolidated with Conway's Pine Street School in 1949, Gifford Maltbia transported schoolchildren by bus into Conway. (University of Central Arkansas Archives)

The Pine Street School was an anchor and community hub for the Black community inside Conway and throughout much of Faulkner County. The school was active until desegregation in the 1960s, discussed further in the following section.

[108] Marc J. Holley, "School Consolidation," CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas. https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/school-consolidation-5052/ (accessed April 7, 2021). Early efforts to consolidate Arkansas's many small rural schools began around 1910 and in the 1920s, a law was passed that allowed a county's voters to approve the consolidation of local schools. This contributed to the closure of more than 1,500 school districts. In 1948, additional consolidation measures were passed and more than 1,100 school districts were closed.

[109] Oral history with Dr. Lloyd Hervey, March 2021.

Figure 23. Undated photograph of Union Baptist Church, extant at 1257 Lincoln Street (Pine Street CommUnity Museum)

The church remained a source of strength, solidarity, and resistance in Black communities across the South during the segregated Jim Crow Era. The Pine/Markham Street neighborhood developed a strong religious community and a number of new church buildings in several denominations were built during this time period. Congregations from the original Black neighborhood near downtown relocated to new buildings in the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood. A few identified during this project included St. John Baptist Church and White's Chapel Baptist Church, which consolidated in 1933 to form Union Baptist Church (extant at 1257 Lincoln Street and perhaps the most architecturally impressive resource extant in the neighborhood).[110] St. James C.M.E. relocated to the neighborhood as well. The churches had harmonious relations and supported one another. In an interview, Leona Walton said that, after the Pleasant Branch Baptist Church burned and the congregation left Lollie Bottoms, they did not have a place to meet. The Church of

[110] Sanborn Map Company. 1931. Sanborn fire insurance maps. Teaneck, N.J.: Chadwyck-Healey and "Church History." Union Missionary Baptist Church, accessed April 1, 2021, https://www.unionmbcconwayar.org/church-history. The 1948 Sanborn map, p. 19, labels the Union Baptist Church building at 1257 Lincoln as St. John's Baptist Church. St. John Baptist Church developed during the Post-Reconstruction Era and was originally located in Conway's earlier Black neighborhood at Court and Prairie. White's Chapel Baptist Church was originally located in Argenta, at the southeast corner of Garland and Harrison.

Christ at Harrison and Willow let them meet there on the second and fourth Sundays of each month until 1955.

As the neighborhood's congregations grew and accumulated wealth, they often moved to new, larger buildings or added onto and improved their existing churches. Stakeholder interviews indicated that the most prominent churches in the community during the Jim Crow Era time were Union Baptist, Ebenezer's, St. James, and Church of Christ. A list at the end of this section identifies all the churches know to have been active during this time period.

Figure 24. The Black Businessman's Association. First row (left to right) Johnny Sutton, Richard Manley Jr., Unknown, Dr. Cummings; Second row - Unknown, Unknown, Unknown, Odell Embry, Bruce Bynum, Mr. Mitchell; Third row - Mr. Bryant, Mr. McFarland, Homer Palmer, Charlie Henry, Hayward Owens, Ezekiel Hill, Pat Balenton (collection of Theodis Gatewood Manley)

Most African American business and community leaders in Conway also belonged to a fraternal order, lodge, or business league. These organizations offered camaraderie, recreation, and talent development. The Conway Negro Business League and the Black Businessman's Association were both professional organizations active during the Jim Crow era. The Conway Negro Business League

worked with the Committee on Negro Organization to increase the number of African American voters in Arkansas, using the slogan "Bring Out the Vote."[111]

Figure 25. At left, the International Order of Odd Fellows Center Line Lodge No. 73 at a 1912 social function: Dr. A.C. Mattison, Alex Jones, Columbus Blair, Sam Pery, Ben Stewart, Sherman De Vass, Marshall Burton, Claude Eads, Jim Thompson, Jim Jones, Albert Zynamon, John Dorman, and Willie Spann (Newman, Images of America: Conway). The photo at right shows a gravestone in Robinson Cemetery for a member of the International Order of Twelve Knights and Daughters of Tabor, Leading Light Tabernacle No. 7; many markers associated with this lodge were observed in the cemetery (McDoux Preservation)

Fraternal organizations documented in the Conway community included the Knights of the Guiding Star of the East, the International Order of Odd Fellows Center Line Lodge No. 73, and the International Order of Twelve Knights and Daughters of Tabor, Leading Light Tabernacle No. 7.[112] Oral history interviews indicated that social clubs for women were also popular and included The Social Arts Club and The Pink Rose Club.

Recreation opportunities were limited for African Americans during the Jim Crow Era. They were often denied access to public parks, golf courses, swimming pools, and other amenities. While this project did not include extensive research on segregation in Conway specific to recreation, oral history and stakeholder interviewees indicated

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[111] John A. Kirk. *Beyond Little Rock: The Origins and Legacies of the Central High Crisis.* Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2007. Accessed June 18, 2021. doi:10.2307/j.ctt1ffjdjt.18.

[112] "Guiding Star Grand Lodge Shows Growth", *Conway Log Cabin Democrat*, August 13, 1914, p. 2. The article notes that one of the prominent figures attending the meeting was "Mother" M.E. Stringley of Morrilton, whose husband, Ge. W. Stringley, was founder of the organization. The International Order of Odd Fellows, Center Line Lodge No. 73 is shown in Newman, *Images of America: Conway, Arkansas*, 61. We observed a number of headstones in Robinson Cemetery inscribed for members of The International Order of Twelve Knights and Daughters of Tabor.

that Conway's African American families took their outdoor recreation at either the Pine Street School grounds or at Mountain View Park (now Curtis Walker Park) northeast of the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood. Mountain View Park had baseball fields and a building with a concession stand, jukebox, and pool tables.[113]

Figure 26. The rear of the former Clarence Day Feed and Grocery building, which operated from 1941–1986 at 1012 Front Street. The store had a front entrance on Front and a back entrance on Spencer Street for loading and unloading. (Booneville Democrat)

Conway's Black community apparently stayed within the Pine/Markham Street community as much as possible, although they still needed to patronize some White-owned businesses during the Jim Crow era. Interviewees remembered that some business owners were friendly, while others followed them throughout the stores. Black customers often had to enter by the back door or request items from outside. The Clarence Day Feed Store (building extant) was mentioned by interviewees who said they went there to buy candy, and Albessie Thompson said the country families went to the back doors to buy canned food and animal feed. Conway's movie theaters also were segregated; at the Grand Theater, African American patrons had to go up the side of the building to the balcony and at the Conway Theater, they had to climb a steep fire escape to the balcony.[114]

[113] Stakeholder interview Leona Walton and Charlene Bland, March 15, 2021.

[114] Oral history with Dr. Lloyd Hervey, March 2021.

The Rural Experience during the Jim Crow Era

Conway continued to be a social draw for Faulkner County's rural African American community during the Jim Crow Era, likely bolstered by the fact that many of their children went to school at Pine Street. In her oral history for this project, Albessie Thompson remembered that the social epicenter for these country visitors was a place they called "The Mule" (not extant). The Mule, or The Mule Barn, was located immediately southwest of the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood.[115] Originally a mule barn with a dirt floor, The Mule became a social gathering site where African Americans from rural areas would visit town to shop and meet friends – originally in wagons and then in automobile. The Mule sold food and people hung out on long benches, and there was a loan shark who would advance credit to those who needed it. Visitors would park at the Mule then go out to do their shopping or get their hair fixed at Conway's Black barbershops and beauty parlors. "It was a place where Black people went to socialize. And I was looking at it today. Everything's gone… You would never know, there's no sign, no footprint, that that used to be the hangout, the places where black people cut hair, they cooked, and that was their life. It's gone. I don't know where it is now."[116]

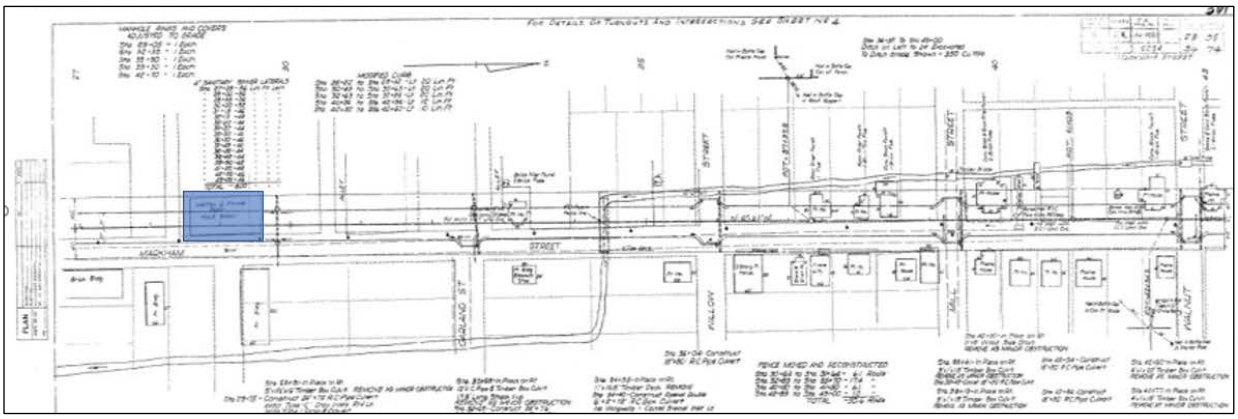

Figure 27. This 1936 map from the Conway City Connection state highway plan shows the location of the Mule Barn (highlighted in blue by McDoux) on Markham, currently the location Malvern National Bank. (City of Conway)

Outside Conway, the social lives of Faulkner County's rural farming communities during the Jim Crow era centered around the church and the school. Community churches were small and usually reflected the Craftsman influence with gabled

[115] The Mule was located on Markham between Smith and Van Ronkle. It was demolished at an unknown time and the location is currently the site of Malvern National Bank.

[116] Oral history with Albessie Thompson, March 2021.

porches and multi-pane, double-hung windows.[117] The Pleasant Branch Baptist Church in Lollie Bottoms area continued to be active during this time; during the 1927 flood, it served as a place of refuge for people displaced by the disaster.[118] However, Pleasant Branch was completely destroyed by a fire believed to be caused by arson in 1930. The church was not rebuilt as plans stopped due to the pastor's sudden death in 1950 and the disbanding of the Little Farm.[119]
A number of rural African American schools were established near Conway during the Jim Crow era, several of which were Rosenwald Schools. Rosenwald Schools were an important component of African American history during the Jim Crow era. Julius Rosenwald was a successful businessman and philanthropist who was influenced by Booker T. Washington's autobiography, *Up From Slavery*. The Julius Rosenwald Fund rural school building program was established in 1917 to create more equitable opportunities for African Americans in the South by helping fund schools for Black children, especially in rural areas. State records indicate the program aided in building 389 school buildings (schools, shops, and teachers' homes) in Arkansas.[120]

Consolidation significantly impacted rural African American schools during this time period. Efforts to consolidate Arkansas's many small rural schools began in the 1910s under Governor Donaghey. In 1929, a new law allowing county voters to approve the consolidation of local schools to the closure of more than 1,500 school districts. Consolidation measures were passed again in 1948, based on student commute distances, methods for appealing closure decisions, loss of local control, and the loss of education jobs. More than 1,100 school districts were closed between 1948 and 1949.[121] Many of Faulkner County's rural African American schools consolidated to

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[117] Silas Owens MPS NR nomination

[118] "History of the Greater Pleasant Branch Missionary Baptist Church 1880-2016," https://greaterpleasantbranch.org/index.php/about-us/history/.

[119] Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 160.

[120] Ralph S. Wilcox, "Rosenwald Schools." CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas. https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/rosenwald-schools-2371/, accessed April 6, 2021 and Fisk University's Rosenwald Fund Card File Database at http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/. The database has listings for seven Rosenwald schools constructed in Faulkner County: the Bethel School (1927-28), Conway School or the Pine Street School (1929-30), Friendship School (1923-24), and Lollie School (1928-29) (which was on the Little Plantation. The Faulkner County School History Project indicates that the Lollie school formed in 1914; the Rosenwald building may have replaced an older school), Mayflower School (1928-29), Vocational Shop at Mayflower School (1929-30), and Preston School (1924-25).

[121] Marc J. Holley, "School Consolidation," CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas. https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/school-consolidation-5052/ (accessed April 7, 2021).

Conway's Pine Street School. This included Bethel, Clinton Chapel and Bee Brand, Caney, Friendship, Gold Creek, Horseshoe Mountain, Jones Chapel, Preston, Rocky Ridge, Salem, and Scuffel Ridge.[122] Some of the students reportedly traveled up to 100 miles round-trip each day.[123]

The Little Farm

The Lollie Plantation, or the "Little Farm" as it is known in Conway's Black community, was a White-owned plantation that heavily influenced Conway's African American experience. The Little Farm was founded during the Post-Reconstruction Era but was most influential during the early 20th century, so it has been included within this section of the report.

John Elijah ("J.E.") Little was born in 1858 in Attala County, Mississippi, the son of a farmer.[124] Local histories indicate that Little came to Faulkner County in 1883 and worked as a "riding boss" or overseer on the Lee B. Atkeison Plantation. In 1887, Little began acquiring farm lands along the Arkansas River and developed a plantation that eventually became one of the largest in Central Arkansas. The 3,200-acre Lollie Plantation was located twelve miles southwest of Conway and ten miles west of Mayflower along the Arkansas River.[125] Little was a wealthy and influential community member who donated land to Hendrix College and Faulkner County Hospital.[126] Historical newspapers and accounts of the time referred to him as "Col. J.E. Little" although our research did not reveal any history of military service. "Colonel" was frequently used as a title of respect for wealthy White men in the South at the time.

The Lollie Plantation was named after Little's first wife. The community eventually had its own federal post office, commissary, blacksmith shop, cotton gin, sawmill for lumber and shingles, and a mill for making molasses, as well as schools for both Black and White children whose parents worked on the farm. The Little Farm produced corn, cotton, sorgo, and sorghum, and used the Arkansas River as well as the train,

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[122] Hassebrock, "Before Desegregation: Woman Researches History of Black Schools." 2.

[123] Oral history with Dr. Hervey, March 2021.

[124] 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Attala County, Mississippi, Township 15 Range 5, Attala, Mississippi, Page: 440, via ancestry.com.

[125] Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 304.

[126] Lovelace-Chandler, Sherriann, edited by Holly Hope. "J.E. Little House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1998).

wagons, and later trucks for shipping and receiving goods.[127] J.E. Little passed away in 1928; at that time there were 50 Black families and 32 White families living in Lollie. Son Julian Little continued to manage the plantation, introducing the mechanical cotton picker and crop-dusters. In 1952, the farm was divided among J.E. Little's five heirs and closed.[128]

Lollie Bottoms was identified by the City of Conway at the outset of this project as historically associated with Conway's African American community and part of the study area. Our stakeholder interviews with members of Conway's African American community confirmed that many of their grandparents and forerunners worked on the Little Farm and moved to Conway seeking employment after they were let go or it closed. The Little Farm and J.E. Little were clearly significant in the history and development of Conway; however, the documentation we found had not looked at this history from the perspective of those working on the farm. For the purposes of this African American context, we have tried to tie the Little Farm into significant trends and themes that shaped African American history during this time period.[129]

Sharecropping and Convict Labor on the Little Farm

After the Emancipation Proclamation and the end of the Civil War, many freed Blacks continued to be forced to work against their will throughout the South. This was accomplished through systems such as peonage, sharecropping, convict leasing, and chain gangs, several of which took place on the Little Farm.

To save money on prison construction initially, and later to actually generate revenue, Southern states and counties began leasing convicts to local plantations, lumber camps, factories and railroads. The lessees paid minimal rates for their workers and were responsible for their housing and feeding.[130] John Elijah Little relied heavily on convict labor (both Black and White) to get the Lollie Plantation up and running in its

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[127] Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 304.

[128] Ibid, 304-305.

[129] Leona Walton indicated her family who worked the Little Farm included the Beasleys, Conways, and Tuggles. Based on "First Bloom is on Average Date," *Conway Log Cabin Democrat,* June 21, 1920, 3 and "Carry Guns; Jailed," *Arkansas Democrat,* March 9, 1922, 2, other Black farmers on the Little Farm included tenant farmer Kit Nash, who picked the first cotton bloom from Faulkner County in 1920. Ollie Bell, employed by Little as a teamster, and Charles W. Jones were arrested in Conway after Bell "let slip his long, shiny "gat" and it fell to the pavement;" "Col. Little declined to come to the rescue of the negroes, declaring they had been ordered not to go armed.

[130] Wagner, Nancy O'Brien, "Slavery by Another Name." Twin Cities Public Television. https://www.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name/about/credits/.

early years. The area was heavily covered with trees and undergrowth; laborers were needed to clear the land with fresnos or scoops pulled by mules, drain bayous and low places, and construct a levee.[131] In 1898, Little entered into a contract with the state penitentiary board which provided "for the working of 1,100 acres on shares and the clearing of 1,000 acres;" under this contract the state was to clear the 1,000 acres and have the use of it for a period of seven years, at the expiration of which it would revert to Little.[132] 150 convicts were employed to that effort; newspaper articles detailing the escape of several prisoners in 1902 show that both White and Black convicts worked on the Lollie Plantation at the time.[133] Little's prisoner contracts were cancelled by the state penitentiary in 1902 due to need for prison labor at the new state convict farm at Cummins.[134]

Sharecropping was another major system of labor in the South after Emancipation, wherein families rented small plots of land from a landowner in return for a portion of their crop being given to the landowner at the end of each year. Freedmen typically lacked capital to buy their own land and opted to sharecrop, which could provide some semblance of independence and autonomy. In exchange for land, a cabin, and supplies, sharecroppers raised a cash crop and give a portion to their landlord. They were sometimes required to buy their supplies from the company store, with landlords charging high rates that caused workers to become indebted to planters. Workers were often unable to re-pay the debt, and found themselves in a continuous work-without-pay cycle.[135] J.E. Little was landlord to around 300 sharecroppers, both Black and White.[136] Little never made cash advances to sharecroppers and tenant farmers, but used coupon books wherein they could buy things from the Lollie general store. Dated coupons, daybooks, and ledgers that are on file at the Arkansas State Archives and could provide additional information about the lives of tenant farmers on the Lolle Plantation.[137] Sharecropping faded in the 1930s, due in part to New Deal crop reduction and subsidy programs administered by the Agricultural

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[131] Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 304-305.

[132] "Land Office Busy," *The Arkansas Democrat*, December 13, 1898, 8.

[133] "State Convicts," *The Southern Standard*, January 7, 1898, 4 and "Convict Escaped," *Arkansas Democrat*, April 15, 1902, 1, and "Escaped Convicts," *The Monticellian*, May 9, 1902, 1.

[134] "Cancel Contracts," *The Arkansas Democrat*, December 25, 1902, 1.

[135] Wagner, "Slavery by Another Name."

[136] Jack Temple Kirby. "The Transformation of Southern Plantations C. 1920-1960." *Agricultural History* 57, no. 3 (1983): 257-76. Accessed May 19, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3742453.

[137] Kirby, "The Transformation of Southern Plantations C. 1920-1960," 257-76.

Adjustment Administration – landlords collected their subsidies then used the cash to hire laborers and invest in machinery, which resulted in the consolidation of plantations and the eviction of tenants. It is likely that many of the aforementioned families that moved to Conway from the Little Farm did so after Little switched from sharecropping to mechanization and using hired labor on the farm.[138]

Experiences of African American families on the "Little Farm"

Recollections from some notable African Americans demonstrate the experiences of African American tenant farmers on the Little Farm, and are representative of sharecropper conditions across the South.

Dr. Gordon Morgan was a former Conway resident, a 1949 graduate of Pine Street School, taught social sciences and math at the school, and eventually became the first Black professor at a university in Arkansas, teaching sociology at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville from 1969-2012. Morgan's family lived on the Little Farm for a brief stint. When interviewed by the Arkansas Memories Project, he remembered:

my dad [Roosevelt Morgan] had been kicked off the plantation [Little's Farm] that was about five miles, I guess, west – uh – to the Arkansas River, and he had been evicted from the plantation for asking for receipts whenever they took something up at the commissary, which was a little store on the plantation. Mama [Georgia Morgan] was pregnant with me."[139]

Dr. Edith May Irby Jones was an American physician who was the first African American to be accepted as a non-segregated student at the University of Arkansas Medical School and the first Black student to attend racially mixed classes in the American South. She was also the first African American to graduate from a southern medical school, first Black intern in the state of Arkansas, and later the first Black intern at Baylor College of Medicine. Jones lived for several years of her childhood on the Little Farm, where her father was a sharecropper. Jones was born in 1927 to Robert and Mattie (Buice) Irby in Mayflower, Arkansas. Robert Irby was a World War I veteran. The family lived in "a little shotgun house."[140] Dr. Jones was also interviewed

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[138] Kirby, "The Transformation of Southern Plantations C. 1920-1960," 257-76. Kirby notes that the conversion from sharecropping to using hired labor is shown in financial records of the Little Plantation. It also coincides with an increase in Conway's Black population, which rose from 741 in 1920 to 973 by 1940.

[139] Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Arkansas Memories Project, Gordon Morgan interview, February 15, 2006.

[140] Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Arkansas Memories Project, Edith Irby Jones interview, April 3, 2006, 8.

for the Arkansas Memories Project and remembered her early life on the farm, particularly her father's death and the aftermath. Her father was injured while riding a horse and died in the front room of their home. Jones and her two siblings were left with their mother, a homemaker with an eighth-grade education. Upon his death:

> the owner of the farm in which she [Irby Jones' mother] was living wrote her a letter saying that she had to get off. And I have a documentation of a letter that she received that she never showed me, and I only found it after her death in the bottom of her trunk. It was that my father had borrowed $25 to make the crop that year, and for that $25 he was – he got a horse and he got some other things in order to make the crop. She did not have $25. He took everything my father had – the T-Model Ford that he had bought that had nothing to do with the $25, the buggy, the crop that was his share of the crop – everything. But I didn't know that then. I – all I knew is that my father, who I thought I was his favorite child, had died.[141]

Dr. Jones' mother took them to live with her family in Conway after they were expelled from the Little Farm.

[141] Ibid.

Notable Community Members during the Jim Crow Era

Conway's African American community came into its own during the Jim Crow Era, with business owners, teachers, farmers, and church leaders establishing themselves in the thriving Pine/Markham Street enclave. The list below is not comprehensive, but highlights some of the notable individuals identified during our research.

Bruce Bynum was a local builder. Bynum's advertisement in the Pine Street year book showed his business as general building repairs, as well as concrete blocks and tile. It was located at 624 Cemetery (not extant). His work included the Deluxe Diner building.[142]

Dr. Ralph Percy Cummings was an early African American doctor in Conway. Born in 1883 in British Guyana, he emigrated to the United States and in 1914 earned a medical degree from Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1919, he established a medical practice in Conway. He served the city until his death in 1945. Dr. Cummings was an active member of the community, participating in several local organizations.[143] His practice was located in his residence in the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood at 1272 Spencer, which is extant.

Figure 28. Dr. Ralph Percy Cummings (Pine Street CommUnity Museum)

[142] Pine Street School. The Pini 1947–1948 Yearbook. Conway, AR: 1948. Pine Street CommUnity Museum.

[143] Display at the Pine Street CommUnity Museum.

Richard and Ruby Manley owned and operated one of the African American community's most prominent businesses during the Jim Crow era – the Deluxe Diner. Manley purchased a small wood-framed cafe at 1163 Markham Street, which burned in the late 1930s. His son Theodius Manley told his in his oral history interview that local banks would not lend to Black people at the time, so Manley paid cash for a new concrete building constructed by Bruce Bynum and started The Golden Drag. The Golden Drag contained a café, barber shop, pool tables, juke box, and an area for live music/dancing, and became the spot to go for entertainment. Manley eventually renamed it the Deluxe Diner. The Deluxe Diner was the only amenity in Conway listed in *The Traveler's Green Book,* a guide published from 1936 to 1966 to help African American road trippers locate safe, Black-friendly services. In the 1950s, Manley constructed the three-room Ebony Motel next door.[144] The Deluxe Diner building is extant; the Ebony Motel has been demolished but the concrete slab remains.

Figure 29. Ruby Mae Gatewood Manley and Richard Manley, Jr. in 1949 (Theodius Manley)

[144] Antoinette Johnson. "The Deluxe Diner," unpublished report, February 2021.

William T. Mattison was born in 1833 in Honea Path, South Carolina. In his oral history for this project, great-great grandson Winton Mattison recalled stories of William T. Mattison moving to the area in a covered wagon with about 23 children (possibly following his son, Dr. Columbus Mattison, who moved to Conway in the 1890s). Mattison's obituary notes that he moved to Faulkner County in 1903 and was a prosperous farmer who owned a large farm at the time of his death. Mattison had 24 children, of whom three were physicians, five teachers, one a preacher, and the other farmers.[145] The 1910 census shows that the Mattison clan lived in several farming households on Ridge Road (then just southwest of Conway but now within city limits).[146] William T. Mattison was a notable member of the community. A newspaper clipping provided by Winton Mattison (Figure 30) shows that William T. Mattison was a landlord to tenant planters, including White farmers. The "experiences and contributions of African American landlords in the South have been largely overlooked in research and scholarship" and "discussions concerning the rural black population have focused primarily on African Americans as landowners, producers, sharecroppers, tenants, renters, and day laborers."[147] William T. Mattison died November 13, 1913, and is buried in Robinson Cemetery. A road in the area where the family resided has been named "Mattison Road." Mattison's role as an important African American farmer and landlord is a research topic that merits further exploration.

Figure 30. William T. Mattison (Winton Mattison)

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[145] "Father of 24 Children Dies." *Conway Log Cabin Democrat*, November 15, 1913, 1.

[146] 1910 U.S. Census, Conway, Wards 1, 2, and 3, Cadron Township, Faulkner County, Arkansas, Supervisor's District No. 5, Enumeration District No. 24, ancestry.com.

[147] Valerie Grim. "African American Landlords in the Rural South, 1870-1950: A Profile." *Agricultural History 72,* no. 2 (1998): 399. Accessed January 31, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3744389.

William Josander Mattison. "Willie J. Mattison" was born 1888 in South Carolina, the son of William T. Mattison. Mattison presumably migrated to Conway as a teenager with his parents and ~23 kids in a covered wagon. The 1910 census shows Mattison living on his father's Ridge Road farm and working as a blacksmith. By 1920, he and wife Luella had purchased a home at 349 Markham Street and owned a blacksmith shop next door. Mattison's family stayed in the blacksmithing business for several decades; eventually Mattison's grew into a welding general repair shop then auto repair. The Mattison's auto repair shop building is extant at 1213 Markham. Willie J. Mattison died June 25, 1956, and is buried in Robinson Cemetery.

Figure 31. Willie J. Mattison (UCA Archives)

Major William T. Mattison is one of Arkansas' Tuskegee Airmen and a former Red Tail. He was born in Conway in 1915, the son of Willie J. and Luella Mattison. Mattison attended Arkansas AM&N College in Pine Bluff and Howard University. He graduated from Tuskegee's flight program in 1942 and served as operations officer of the 100th Fighter Squadron, led the 302nd Fighter Squadron, and was a member of the 332nd Fighter Group. Major Mattison died in 1951 in a plane crash.

Figure 32. Major William T. Mattison (American Air Museum in Britain, http://www.americanairmuseum.com/media/9974)

Preston and Florence Mattison. Preston Mattison was a son of William T. Mattison, born in South Carolina in 1893. In 1923, Mattison was named principal of Pine Street School, where he served until 1947 and was instrumental in convincing the school board to construct a high school there. Florence Mattison taught for 20 years in the Conway School District, beginning in 1926. The Mattison's left Pine Street School because the school board refused to pay them as much as they paid some White teachers with the same experience and qualifications.[148] The couple lived in what was then outside of Conway near Donnell Ridge. Preston and Florence Mattison Elementary School was named for them in 2019.

[148] "Florence Mattison Still Speaks Out." *Log Cabin Democrat*, May 24, 1981, p. unknown. From the Pine Street CommUnity Museum.

Silas Owens, Sr. was born in 1907 in the Faulkner County community of Solomon Grove, a traditionally African American settlement homesteaded circa 1890. Silas Owens, Sr. became known for his exemplary rockwork in Faulkner County, where the bulk of his work is located. The "Mixed Masonry Buildings of Silas Owens, Sr." Multiple Property Submission (MPS) was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2005 and 24 individual properties have been listed as part of the MPS, four of which are in Conway (the Hall-Hogan Grocery Store at 1364 Mitchell, the Sellers House at 89 Acklin Gap Road, the Tyler-Southerland House at 36 Southerland, and the Earl and Mildred Ward House at 1157 Mitchell Street).

Summary of Significant Themes

The primary theme of the Jim Crow era is the consolidation of Conway's Black community in the segregated Pine/Markham Street Neighborhood. The area became a thriving enclave where community members built houses, started businesses (cafes, barber shops, small grocery stores, blacksmiths), educated their children, and worshipped together. African Americans in rural Faulkner County had a stake in the Pine/Markham Street community as school consolidation meant that their children were educated at Pine Street and they came to town to buy supplies and socialize. Many African Americans in Faulkner County continued to work as farmers and farm laborers, but many were let go toward the end of the period and moved to Conway seeking employment.

Civil Rights Movement (1950–1970)

History and Development during the Civil Rights Movement

During the 1950s and 1950s, African Americans mobilized to fight the prejudice and violence against them. The Civil Rights movement was significant for the battle for social justice as they sought to gain equal rights under the law in the United States. The desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock is considered the most defining moment of the civil rights movement in Arkansas.

Based on our interviews with residents, Conway was relatively quiet during the Civil Rights era; no one mentioned the marches or sit-ins organized in other Southern cities. Interviewees said that they stayed in their place because they knew that police beatings and deaths were not over – shopkeepers followed them in stores to make sure they were not trying to steal, or checked their bags when they left. Older family members advised them not to cross the railroad tracks at night because that was where the White people lived.

A chilling event incurred in 1960, when African American Menifee resident Marvin Leonard Williams was killed in police custody. After attending prom at the Conway County Training School, Williams and his friends visited the Sunset Café on Markham Street. Williams was arrested for public intoxication and died while in police custody; police reports indicated that he slipped on the staircase at the Faulkner County Courthouse and struck his head. Twenty-five years later, the family received a letter from another inmate claiming that he saw officer beating the 21-year-old with a blackjack. In the 1980s, his brother Ronnie Williams worked with the NAACP and then-Governor Bill Clinton to have the case reopened and bring charges against the officers. The officers were acquitted in 1985.[149]

The foremost civil rights events in Conway were related to school segregation. The Pine Street School continued to be the cornerstone of Conway's African American community into the 1960s. Desegregation changed this.

At the beginning of the civil rights era, the city's larger educational institutions – such as the universities – remained closed to Blacks. In 1956, Joseph Norman Manley, a 1954 graduate of Pine Street School, was accepted as the first Black student at Arkansas State Teachers College (now University of Central Arkansas).[150] In 1964, the

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[149] Adena J. White. "The Truth Always Comes Out: The Murder of Marvin Leonard Williams." *Blackbelt Voices,* February 26, 2020, https://blackbeltvoices.com/2020/02/26/marvin-williams/.

[150] "Joseph Manley, First Black Graduate of Arkansas State Teachers College." *University of Arkansas, Land of (Unequal) Opportunity: Documenting the Civil Rights Struggle in Arkansas.*

Hendrix College the Board of Trustees authorized the admission committee to admit any qualified student "regardless of race, color or national origin" and the first black students enrolled at Hendrix the following year. Arkansas State Senator Linda Pondexter Chesterfield was the first African-American Hendrix graduate.[151]

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* that racial segregation in public schools violated the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which prohibits states from denying equal protection of the laws to any person within their jurisdictions. Several school boards in Arkansas complied with the desegregation ruling almost immediately while other districts took longer to reach compliance. Attendance at the Pine Street School was affected by the 1957-1958 crisis at Central High in Little Rock, as Black students were unsure that education was safe in Arkansas, although it rebounded.[152] In 1965, the Conway school district's Board of Directors adopted a Statement of Policy that "The Conway Public Schools will comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Said compliance will be based upon a plan of gradual accomplishment to be submitted to the office of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C."[153]

Desegregation in Conway was accomplished through a "freedom of choice" system implemented where students could choose which school they wished to attend. Separate bus routes for White students and Black students were eliminated and a unified transportation program was used. Duplicate runs of all busses were eliminated except where the number of students living on a given bus route necessitated that two or more busses travel over all or part of the same bus route, in which each student, without regard to race, color, or national origin, would ride the bus serving the school to which the student was assigned.[154] Out of an enrollment of 315 students, 199 chose to remain at Pine Street and Pine Street produced a graduating class of 21 in 1967. This was the last year secondary students could attend Pine Street.[155] Due to increased enrollment at Pine Street School, students in grades

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https://digitalcollections.uark.edu/digital/collection/Civilrights/id/462

[151] "History of Hendrix." Hendrix College, accessed March 28, 2021, https://www.hendrix.edu/CollegeHistory

[152] Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 246.

[153] "Pine Street School (Black), Conway District." Faulkner County School History Project: Col. M96-5, Box 2, File 103. UCA archives.

[154] Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 249.

[155] "Pine Street School (Black), Conway District." Faulkner County School History Project: Col. M96-5, Box 2, File 103. UCA archives.

9–12 were transferred to Conway Junior High and Conway Senior High for the 1967-1968 school year. Students in grades 6–8 were transferred to Conway Junior High School for the 1968-69 school year, and students in grades 1-5 were transferred for the 1969-70 school year to one of the three elementary schools.[156] In May 1969, the doors to Pine Street were closed for the last time. In the late 1970s the high school building was demolished and only the gymnasium building remains.[157]

While Conway did not experience the major unrest with desegregation seen in Little Rock, it was a difficult time for many Pine Street students. At Pine Street, teachers were stern but emotionally invested in their students' futures and students participated in cheerleading, athletics, student council, and yearbook. After integration, our interviewees said that White students did not want to sit beside them and some teachers exhibited overt racism. There were no Black homecoming queens and the students were not able to participate in most extracurricular activities. For any student positions that were voted upon, the Black students were outnumbered and had little representation. At a pep rally, the first song played was Dixie and there were walkouts from the pep rallies after that. Black students held a library sit in to protest of no Black cheerleaders.

Some of the teachers were brought over; others retired. Oral history interviews with these teachers would be an opportunity for additional research. Mrs. Rose Bryant Woods and Mr. Leroy Siddell were identified as potential sources for more information.

Many of the churches from earlier time periods remained active in this era. In 1957, the Pleasant Branch Baptist Church, originally been located in the Lollie Bottoms area but was destroyed by a suspicious fire in the 1930s, reorganized in Conway. The congregation started meeting at Little Bethel A.M.E. Church each second and fourth Sunday.[158] In 1955, they purchased a one room, tin-topped, rectangular shaped frame building and moved services to 1423 Ingram Street in the Pine/Markham neighborhood. The building was expanded and a brick veneer added to the exterior in 1969; an official cornerstone was laid in 1970.[159] Pleasant Branch constructed a new building in 1989 at 601 Spruce, which is the church's current location. The

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[156] Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 249.

[157] "Pine Street School (Black), Conway District." Faulkner County School History Project: Col. M96-5, Box 2, File 103. UCA archives.

[158] Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 304.

[159] "History of the Greater Pleasant Branch Missionary Baptist Church 1880-2016, https://greaterpleasantbranch.org/index.php/about-us/history/.

building on Ingram is currently home to the Agape Community Temple of Servants.

Notable Community Members

Faber Bland was a local businessman who owned Central Valet Cleaners at 1163 Markham (not extant). He was also the first African American in Conway to serve on the local school board.[160]

Dr. Gordon Morgan, professor emeritus of Sociology at the University of Arkansas, was the first black professor at a university in Arkansas. Morgan grew up in Conway, attended the Pine Street School, and wrote numerous articles about the area's African American history that were featured in the local newspaper and community histories.

Joseph Norman Manley, a 1954 graduate of Pine Street School, was accepted as the first Black student at Arkansas State Teachers College (now UCA) in 1956. He became an ophthalmologist.

Dr. J.O. Massey. After a period of several years where the community did not have an African American doctor, Dr. J.O. Massey came to Conway from Little Rock. His office was located at 1158 Harrison. The building is extant.[161]

Summary of Significant Themes

The primary significant theme during the Civil Rights era in Conway was the desegregation of public schools and closure of the Pine Street School. Residential development slowed in the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood; some new houses were built but not many. Many Pine Street students came into their own during this era and started successful careers. Additional research could shed light on Civil Rights activities in the area.

[160] Oral history interview with Robert Bland, March 2021.

[161] "City News." Undated article at the Pine Street CommUnity Museum. Publication unknown.

Post-Civil Rights (1970–)

History and Development during Post-Civil Rights

Conway's population has grown steadily in recent decades, from 20,375 in 1970 to 58,908 in 2010. The African American population has also grown, from 1,214 in 1970 to 9,711 in 2010. The African American percentage of Conway's population increased from its low point of 8% in 1970 to 16% in 2010.

Figure 33. The expansion of Highway 64/65 along Harkrider resulted in the demolition of building and moving of houses. (James Fontenot)

After the closure of the Pine Street School in the 1960s, the East Side/Pine Street community lost much of its cohesion. Former and current residents of the neighborhood we met with at the Pine Street CommUnity Museum said that the area attracted gang members from other towns in the 1980s, who had a bad influence on the neighborhood's youth. Original residents passed away and their homes were left vacant as the buildings were lost to taxes and/or younger generations left Conway in search of better opportunities. The expansion of Highway 64/65, which bisects the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood along Harkrider Street, resulted in houses being moved, buildings demolished, and split the neighborhood down the middle. The area attracted gang activity in the 1980s and a number of long-time residents moved out of the neighborhood to other parts of Conway. Many of the area's historic Black-

owned businesses closed during this time and residents moved out of the neighborhood. In 1975, Richard Manley retired from the Deluxe Diner and rented the cafe to Acklin Funeral Home.

In the 1980s, a neighborhood watch was established a police substation came in.[162] In 1985, Pleasant Branch Missionary Baptist Church, historically located in Lollie Bottoms, purchased the Pine Street School property from the Conway School District. They adopted the name Greater Pleasant Branch Baptist Church and built a new sanctuary on the site in 1989.[163]

In the late 1980s, the Faulkner County Citizens for Equal Representation and Conway Black Citizens for Equal Representation organized to increase the voice of Blacks in Conway politics. Lehmin Perry, chairman of the Conway group, said that at-large alderman elections diluted the power of the Black vote because many African Americans lived in one concentrated area. The group developed a proposal to increase the number of wards from four to five, increasing the number of aldermen from eight to 10. The proposal was intended to give Black candidates for of an opportunity to be elected alderman and also potentially win a seat on City council.[164] The group met at Christ Temple Holiness Church at 820 Willow. The group organized a march with over 200 people who walked from Pleasant Branch Baptist Church on Pine Street to the Faulkner County Courthouse to encourage Black citizens to get politically involved and alleviate voter apathy. The keynote speaker, State Rep. Ben McGee of Marion, lashed out at the lack of Black people in positions of authority in Conway. "There are eight schools and no black principals and only one black fireman and one black police officer."[165]

In 2008, the City began focusing on redevelopment in the Pine Street to address high unemployment, low education rates, a high number of boarded up houses and rental properties, and a slightly higher crime rate. A report noted that less than 10 homes had been built in the neighborhood since the 1970s. But a City report notes that directly across a minor arterial from the neighborhood is one of the highest priced per square foot homes in the city with $100 million investment in mixed use

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[162] Oral history with Robert Bland, March 2021.

[163] Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 160.

[164] David Mabury. "Black citizens' group asks Conway council consider fifth ward." *Log Cabin*, October 1, 1990. Page unknown. Collection of James Brownlee.

[165] Heidi Stambuck. "Organizers expect big crowd for voter registration march." *Log Cabin*, and John Haman, "Push for power, state senator tells 200 blacks at Conway voter rally," date and page unknown. Collection of James Brownlee.

development. Pine Street is located within walking distance of the city's thriving downtown and a major fast food, banking, and small retail arterial that runs from the interstate to downtown.[166]

Under the City of Conway's Consolidated Plan, the City used funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to undertake a Pine Street Neighborhood Revitalization project. The project resulted in the construction and rehabilitation of public facilities and oversaw acquisition, demolition, and utility improvement activities in the Pine Street Neighborhood in an attempt to stabilize housing, diversify the residents, and encourage private development.[167] These developments have allowed some former Pine Street residents to return to the neighborhood.[168]

Markham Street is also being redeveloped in an attempt to connect Conway and Hendrix College. The redevelopment project will encourage mixed-use developments with retail on the ground floor and residential above and attempt to make Markham an extension of the downtown area.[169]

The Pine Street CommUnity Museum opened in the neighborhood with a mission to discover, document, and display the rich legacy of those who lived, worked, worshipped and were educated in the Pine Street neighborhood.

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[166] City of Conway. "2016-2020 Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development." July 31, 2015. https://media.conwayarkansas.gov/conwayarkansas-media/documents/conplan2016-2020.pdf, 68, 70, 107.

[167] Ibid, 3.

[168] Jordan Howington. "Conway woman returned to childhood roots thanks to new affordable housing." THV11, accessed at https://www.thv11.com/article/news/local/outreach/conway-woman-returns-to-childhood-roots-thanks-to-new-affordable-housing/, on April 15, 2021.

[169] Keith, Tammy. "Downtown Conway apartments proposed." Arkansas Democrat Gazette, October 31, 2016. https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2016/oct/31/downtown-conway-apartments-proposed/

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING HISTORIC RESOURCES

Types of Designations

Historic resources in Conway could be historically designated at the federal, state, or local level. These different designations and their restrictions are explained below.

National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the program is administered by the National Park Service to coordinate and support efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. To be listed, properties must generally be at least 50 years old (unless they are of exceptional significance) and retain their historic character. Properties must also meet one of the following criteria:

- Be associated with important events that have contributed significantly to the broad pattern of our history.
- Be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or represent the work of a master; or possess high artistic values; or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

National Register listing does not impose any restrictions on private property owners unless federal funding, licensing, or permitting is involved in a project.

Arkansas Register of Historic Places. The Arkansas Register of Historic Places is the state's official record of properties, sites, structures, buildings, landscapes, and objects significant in the history, architecture, and culture of the state and its communities. Arkansas Register listing does not restrict an owner's right to use, modify or dispose of the property, although it may qualify property owners for certain grant funds. The Arkansas Register is administered by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (AHPP). The AHPP nominates properties for Arkansas Register listing; however, private individuals, organizations, and local governments often initiate the process and prepare documentation.

Properties eligible for inclusion in the Arkansas Register generally must be at last 50 years old, possess integrity of design materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Association with events of state or local historical significance
- Association with the lives of persons of significance in the history of the state or locality
- Represent a type, style, or period of architecture
- Association with important elements of Arkansas's history or pre-history

However, unlike the National Register, the Arkansas Register does not specifically preclude the nomination of commemorative properties, structures that have been moved from their original locations, or reconstructed buildings. Buildings that have been physically altered may be deemed eligible for inclusion providing that the criteria listed above are satisfied. All places within the state listed in or nominated to the National Register will automatically be placed in the Arkansas Register. The Arkansas Register of Historic Places uses the same application/nomination form as is used for National Register nominations.

Local Historic Districts. Historic districts can be designated in accordance with Conway's historic preservation ordinance. The Robinson Historic District and the Old Conway Design Overlay District were created for the purpose of enhancing, protecting, and preserving the aesthetics, sustainability, and the historic nature and character of the older residential areas in Conway by requiring new construction to conform to proper design standards.

This section provides guidelines for evaluating and designating historic properties. It begins with a description of how the National Register of Historic Places defines property types and integrity. It then describes property types associated with Conway's African American community, identifies the significance associated with each type, and discusses of integrity thresholds required to list properties in the National Register of Historic Places.

Historic Property Types

The National Park Service has defined five categories of historic properties that may be listed in the National Register of Historic Places:

- Building: Buildings are defined as resources created principally to shelter any form of human activity. Examples would include a house, church, barn, mill building, school, or social hall.
- Structure: A structure is a functional construction made for purposes other than creating human shelter, such as a bridge, fence, grain elevator, or silo.
- Site: A site is the location of a significant event or building, where the location itself possess historic, cultural, or archeological value. Examples can include cemeteries significant for historic associations, designed landscapes, or battlefields.
- District: A district possess a significant concentration of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united by plan or physical development.
- Object: Objects are primarily artistic in nature or are relatively small in scale and simply constructed, such as a fountain, monument, or boundary marker.

Historic resources can also be classified by property type, which refers to how a property is used. An example of this would include a church – the historic property classification would be "building" while the property type would be "religious."

A context may be represented by a variety of important property types. For example, African American history in Conway can include residences, commercial buildings, churches, etc. This will be further developed below based on our findings, but the list is not comprehensive. Future surveys can be used to refine this list of property types and will help to improve the recognition and preservation of significant property types associated with Conway's African American community.

Historic Integrity

Properties eligible for historic designations must retain integrity. Integrity is defined by the National Park Service as the ability of a property to convey its significance. The National Park Service defines seven aspects of integrity; a property does not have to retain all seven aspects, but should retain a majority. *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* provides an in-depth description of each aspect:

- Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
- Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.

- Setting is the physical environment of a historic property.
- Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
- Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during a given period in history or prehistory.
- Feeling is the property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

Preservation professionals increasingly acknowledge that integrity standards perpetuate the exclusion of Black heritage; many are advocating that those policies become more flexible to account for change over time and loss of form and material integrity, while elevating cultural and historical significance.

The number and density of resources associated with African Americans varies widely throughout the state. In areas where a large number of these resources may exist, such as the Mississippi River delta, stricter standards may apply in terms of significance. The resources of a city with a smaller historic African American population like Conway may inherently be more significant as a result of their scarcity.

The most important aspects of a resource's integrity are related to the reason it is considered significant. Properties that are significant for their architecture must retain a high level of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Integrity must relate to the resource's "period of significance," the time period when the property became significant. Some types of alterations may affect integrity more than others. Alterations to primary façades are generally more detrimental than alterations to secondary elevations.

Guidelines for Evaluating Property Types Associated with the Context

The section below identifies and describes property types associated with African American history in Conway that may be eligible for historic designation, each property type's potential area(s) of significance associated with National Register of Historic Places criteria for evaluation, and general integrity thresholds that must be retained to qualify for National Register listing.

Residential Buildings

Description:

A residential building's primary purpose is to provide housing. Historic African American residential property types in Conway are predominantly single- family houses, although there are some multifamily dwellings and boarding houses. Historic-age African American residences in Conway are largely of wood-frame construction in a Traditional style, building in the first half of the 20th century, with wood lap siding and hipped or gabled roofs, and located in the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood. There are also some later houses in the study area constructed in the Minimal Traditional and Ranch houses styles. Some examples of the mixed masonry work of local builder Silas Owens, Sr. are located in the city. We did not identify any historic-age public housing, but further research may yield examples.

Significance:

Buildings associated with significant members of the African American community could be eligible under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage (if their significance can be shown to correlate with patterns of social history related to the African American experience) or Criterion B for their association with significant individuals; additional areas of significance could apply depending on the individual. This could likely include residences such as those associated with notable members of the Mattison family or the home of Dr. R.P. Cummings, one of Conway's early Black doctors. Houses of African American tenant farmers, sharecroppers, land owners, or those related to other important trends in African American housing have significance related to the transition from enslavement to freedom, development of residential enclaves, and the transformation of the rural landscape. Modest vernacular dwellings, which are commonly considered to lack architectural significance, can be very important architectural features.

Houses associated with builder Silas Owens, Sr. that retain integrity would be eligible for listing under Criterion C on the basis of their architecture; a number of Owens' buildings have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the *A Storm Couldn't Tear Them Down: The Mixed Masonry Buildings of Silas Owens, Sr.,*

1938–1955 multiple property listing. We did not identify any other African American homes in Conway that would be individually significant on the basis of their architecture in the course of this study; however, residences that embody the distinctive architectural characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction may possess significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture.

Houses would likely qualify at the local level of significance.

Integrity Thresholds:

Residences should possess the key features that relate to their use during the lives of the significant individuals who lived in them or their period of significance. They should retain integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and setting. A residence should retain its historic form and roofline, especially at the street-facing façade. Retention of the front entry, historical ornamentation, and window pattern are most important; some window and door replacement is generally acceptable provided the replacements are compatible and conform to the pattern and size of the original openings. The historic exterior cladding should generally be retained.[170] Additions on secondary elevations are generally acceptable provided the essential character of the historic building was preserved.

Associated Property Types:

- Pre-Emancipation Era and Post-Emancipation/Reconstruction Era: We did not identify any historic residences associated with these eras; however, additional research could reveal early housing.
- Post-Reconstruction: The original "East Side" neighborhood established during Conway's early development was located close to Conway Station along Front, Prairie, Chestnut, and Court Streets just south of Main. The area has long been redeveloped and is now comprised of commercial and bank buildings as well as surface parking lots. It is possible that there could be houses remaining in the area from this early era of Black history that were not identified.
- Jim Crow Era: Residential buildings associated with the Jim Crow Era would primarily include single-family homes and the occasional duplex in the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood.[171] It could also include farmhouses and

[170] The Arkansas Register is more flexible about these integrity requirements than the National Register of Historic Places, and may be an easier path to designation for some of Conway's African American resources.

[171] The residential buildings associated with the Jim Crow Era are too numerous to list here; the Windshield Survey Report completed in conjunction with this study provides more detailed information.

sharecropper cabins outside the original city limits.
- Civil Rights Movement: Later homes in the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood.

Commercial Buildings

Description:

Commercial properties are those that accommodate all types of non-industrial businesses such as stores, restaurants, and offices. Commercial enterprises provided segregated African American communities with necessary services and merchandise at a time when they were not allowed free admittance to White-owned businesses. Because of the economic discrimination that African American business owners faced, business may historically have been housed in reused or adapted buildings. Employment opportunities for Blacks were limited as well, and owning a business represented an opportunity for success and affluence. Business owners were often leaders in the community, providing support to Black organizations and associations.

Within Conway, African American commercial areas developed during the historic period on Markham Street and later along Harkrider (US Highway 64/65). Examples of commercial buildings that may be eligible for designation include former neighborhood stores, confectionaries, restaurants, cafés, bars, funeral homes, laundries, blacksmiths, barber shops, and beauty shops. These examples are often considered significant for their relationship with African American heritage, although additional research would be required to establish their individual histories and significance.

Barber shops and beauty parlors, for example, were an important business type in Black communities during the Jim Crow Era. Black barbers previously had cut White customers' hair as part of their work in the service industries; but during segregation, White patrons shifted their business to White-owned shops. Black barbers established shops within their own communities, catering to a growing Black consumer market. These barbershops attracted a regular customer base and became socials hubs where men congregated. Beauty parlors owned by Black woman became vital public spaces that nurtured debate and activism among women within the community. Beauty parlors also provided their owners an avenue to economic independence when few such opportunities were available to Black women.[172] Barber shops and beauty parlors were freestanding, located within other businesses

[172] Braden, Donna R. "Black Entrepreneurs during the Jim Crow Era." *The Henry Ford*, February 21, 2018, https://www.thehenryford.org/explore/blog/black-entrepreneurs-during-the-jim-crow-era.

like cafes, and some residential buildings were remodeled to include space and a separate entrance for a beauty parlor.

Since Conway's African American population was relatively small, business sometimes served multiple commercial and entertainment purposes.

Significance:

In order to be potentially eligible for the National Register in association with this context, commercial properties must have played a significant role in the African American community. Businesses and commercial properties are generally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Commerce and Ethnic Heritage. Those that served as entertainment venues with live music, dancing, or gambling may also have significance in the area of Entertainment/Recreation or Performing Arts. Business associated with prominent local entrepreneurs may qualify under Criterion B for Person as well. Commercial buildings that embody the distinctive architectural characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction may possess significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Conway's commercial properties would likely qualify for listing at the local level of significance.

Integrity Thresholds:

Commercial buildings should retain integrity relating to their use during the period of significance such as location, design, setting, feeling, and association. Buildings should retain their historic form and roofline, especially on the primary façade. On the primary façade, they should retain their original pattern of windows and doors and at least some historic ornament (if applicable). The interior public spaces should retain their basic layout as it existed during the period of significance, particularly in terms of how the spaces were used.

Associated Property Types:

- Pre-Emancipation Era and Post-Emancipation/Reconstruction Era: We did not identify any historic commercial resources associated with these eras; however, additional research could reveal the location of early businesses such as blacksmiths.
- Post-Reconstruction: The original "East Side" neighborhood established during Conway's early development was located close to Conway Station along Front, Prairie, Chestnut, and Court Streets just south of Main. Our research did not identify any extant commercial buildings associated with African American history, but further research could identify businesses (such as blacksmiths or stores).

- Jim Crow Era: cafes, restaurants, grocery stores, barber shops, dry cleaners, beauty parlors, confectionaries, blacksmiths, lodging, etc. Extant known examples of commercial buildings and Black-owned businesses in the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood include:
    - The Deluxe Diner at 1151 Markham
    - Mattison's Shop at 1213 Markham
    - Pat's Precision Cuts building at 871 Pine
    - Former grocery at 920 Garland
    - Former grocery and office at 1158 Harrison
    - Houses that have been remodeled to include beauty parlors

  Non-extant commercial buildings include:
    - Frazier Brown's store at the corner of Harkrider and Pine
    - Joe Woodson's at the southeast corner of Markham and Mill
    - Mrs. Tharp's store at the southwest corner of Factory and Walnut
    - Tom Wallace's store at the northwest corner of Clayton and Pine
    - Roosevelt "Kid" McCuien's Cosmo Café on Harkrider
    - Faber Bland's Central Valet Cleaners at 1163 Markham Street
    - Richard Manley's Ebony Motel (the concrete slab is visible)
    - Buster Mattison's rooming house on the SE corner of Walnut and Spencer
    - Mrs. Mack's rooming house in a rare two-story frame building at the northeast corner of Markham and Willow
- Civil Rights Movement: We did not identify any associated resources.

Cemeteries

Description:

Throughout American history, African Americans were typically buried separately from their White counterparts. Enslaved laborers were buried in slave cemeteries and most cities developed African American municipal cemeteries, frequently in marginal areas. Rural African American cemeteries, identified a number in this report, are rarely documented. In addition to the granite or marble headstones and markers found in most cemeteries, African American cemeteries often include unique marker types with cultural significance such as unmarked field stones and handmade concrete markers. Other marker types may include wooden crosses, found objects, metal funeral home markers, and statuary.

Significance:

African American cemeteries may qualify for listing under Criterion A for their association with segregation and the development of Conway's African American

community, Criterion B for association with a group of person of importance to the African American community, Criterion C for notable markers (such as the folk craft traditions represented by handmade grave markers), and/or Criterion D for their ability to yield information about the burial practices used to inter Africans Americans and/or the poor during the relevant time period. The period of significance usually extends from when a cemetery was established or constructed until burials ended or, if still active, 50 years ago. Ordinarily, cemeteries or graves of historical figures are not considered eligible for the National Register unless they derive their primary importance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events (Criteria Consideration D).

Integrity Thresholds:

Cemeteries must retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Cemetery integrity may be compromised by the presence of modern grave markers; as a result, it is common to list only the oldest sections of a cemetery containing a critical mass of historic grave markers. A survey would be used to determine sections of a cemetery is eligible for inclusion in the National Register.

Associated Property Types:

- Pre-Emancipation Era and Post-Emancipation/Reconstruction Era: We did not identify any cemeteries associated with these eras; however, additional research could divulge graveyards or unmarked burials of enslaved and emancipated people.
- Post-Reconstruction (1876–1900)
    - Robinson Cemetery was Conway's first African American municipal city cemetery, established in 1889 as a burial ground for African American residents and still active.[173] Located at the southeast corner of the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood, the four-acre cemetery is bounded by Mill Street to the north, Ingram Street to the east, Garland Street to the south, and Lincoln Street to the west. Burials span from the 1880s to the present day. The earliest known burial is the Rev. E.L. Little, pastor of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Conway. Rev. Little was shot to death by the City Marshall in 1888 and likely buried elsewhere then reinterred in Robinson when it opened in 1889.[174]

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[173] "Robinson Cemetery" *Find a Grave*, accessed March 2021, https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/1964951/robinson-cemetery.

[174] "E.L. Little." *Find a Grave*, accessed March 2021,

- Pleasant Branch Cemetery, associated with the Pleasant Branch Baptist Church in Lollie Bottoms, is located on privately-owned land but extant. The cemetery is located on a wooded plot of land measuring about 1.3 acres off Lollie Road. There is little information about the cemetery, it was likely abandoned after the church burned and the congregation left the area. The area surrounding the cemetery is primarily rural and agricultural land, and the cemetery tract is now part of a larger, privately owned parcel of mostly pasture and timbering land. 14 known graves are present and of those, only five are marked with formal engraved headstones. Several graves are marked only with stones. The known burials date mostly to the 1920s to 1940s; the earliest grave is for Delia Scott, who died on October 8, 1906, while the most recent is for Charlie Vaughn, who died in 1943.[175] Two military headstones are present, one for Lee Alexander, who was drafted to serve in World War II and died in 1942, and one for Robert Irby, who served in World War I and died in a riding accident in 1930. Robert Irby's daughter, Dr. Edith May Irby Jones, was an important African American doctor.
- Salem Baptist Cemetery is located next to Salem Baptist Church in an area that has been annexed into the City of Conway. The church is currently housed in a 1957 building at 4949 Prince Street which is noted on the corner stone noted as "rebuilt", indicating that the congregation is older. The earliest documented burials appear to date from the 1890s. Illegible funeral home markers and depressions in the soil suggest additional unmarked graves.[176] The cemetery is still active.
- Frauenthal Cemetery is located north of Conway on the north side of Lake Beaverfork. The land for this cemetery was provided by the Frauenthal family, wealthy merchants in Conway who wanted to provide a burial ground for African Americans in the area. The earliest record of a burial is in 1882; however, property records indicate burials could have been made prior to 1880. Local histories indicate that many of those buried at Frauenthal were formerly enslaved freedmen and women.[177]

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https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/135331654/e-l-little.

[175] "Pleasant Branch Cemetery" *Find a Grave*. Accessed April 1, 2021. https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/55709/pleasant-branch-cemetery.

[176] "Cemeteries in Faulkner County, Arkansas." *Arkansas Gravestones*. Accessed March 26, 2021, https://arkansasgravestones.org/cemetery.php?cemID=9411

[177] "Frauenthal Cemetery." *Find a Grave*. Accessed May 10, 2021,

- Jim Crow Era:
    - Jerry Kay's Cemetery or East Fork Cemetery is an abandoned African American Cemetery located north of Conway. There are only three markers in the cemetery, Alice Jones, Jerry Kay and Mattie McClenon.
    - Friendship Cemetery is located next to Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church at 146 Taylor Circle. The church was established 1917.
- Civil Rights Movement: We did not identify any associated resources.

Religious Resources

Description:

Churches have played a fundamental role in the African American community. They were among the first buildings African Americans constructed using their own resources following the Civil War and provided space for religious activities, community gatherings, and classroom space. Most Black Southerners ended up joining independent Black churches including the African Methodist Episcopal (AME), the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ), the Colored (now "Christian") Methodist Episcopal Church, or the National Baptist Convention. Men commanded the pulpits of the black church; women organized social services, missionary societies, temperance associations and reading groups.

Churches and houses of worship were one of the earliest building types established by African Americans in Conway. Many of Conway's congregations started in buildings that originally housed other churches or uses. As congregations grew and acquired wealth, they added onto their buildings, augmented their appearance, or moved into larger new buildings. Buildings not specifically built as churches (or spaces within buildings) where people gathered for worship, such as private residences, businesses, or fraternal organizations, may also be considered in relation to this category.

Significance:

Historic churches and houses of worship associated with Conway's African American community may qualify for listing at the state or local level, with significance under Criterion A in the areas of Religion, Ethnic Heritage, and Social History. Church buildings that embody the distinctive architectural characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction may possess significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The National Register stipulates that a religious property must derive its primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance

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https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2536173/frauenthal-cemetery

(Criteria Consideration A). The significance of African American churches should also be considered in light of the fact that their central role in the community made them a popular target for racial violence; some historic churches in the Conway area are not extant because of destruction by arson.

Integrity Thresholds:

Because of the extremely important role played by the church as an institution in the African American community, most historic Black churches would be eligible for listing provided they maintain a fair level of integrity and their historic role can be documented. To retain integrity, churches should retain their main features relating to their use in conducting religious services during their period of significance including location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The primary façade should retain its historic form and roofline, as well as its original pattern of windows and doors. Historical ornament should be retained. The primary interior public spaces should retain the layout as it existed during the period of significance (worship spaces, meeting rooms).

Many of the extant churches in Conway were altered by their congregations over the years; some were enlarged and beautified (such as adding new brick cladding to a wood-frame building or replacing sash windows with leaded stained glass) as the congregations grew and gained wealth. These changes may have significance and would not preclude a building from designation if made during the resource's period of significance.

Associated Property Types:

- Pre-Emancipation Era and Post-Emancipation/Reconstruction Era: We did not identify any religious building associated with these eras; however, additional research could indicate churches or other buildings where services were held.
- Post-Reconstruction: Newspaper articles from 1888 indicate that Conway had four African American churches during the Post-Reconstruction era; none of these buildings appear to be extant. Churches in Conway we identified from this time period are:
    - Baptist Church. The 1897 Sanborn shows a wood frame "Baptist Church (Col'd)" at 158 Front Street (at the "Road to Oil Mill," the current southwest corner of Front and Mill). According to local history, the site originally housed a White Methodist church that originated in 1870to hold services for the railroad work camp. The Methodist Church moved to a new location in the 1880s; it would appear that an African American

congregation took over the site and possibly the building.[178]

- Unidentified African Methodist Church. We were not able to pinpoint the name or location of this church, but newspaper articles from 1888 indicate that Rev. E.L. Little was pastor of Conway's African Methodist Episcopal Church at the time.[179]
- St. John's Baptist Church was likely one of the earliest Black churches in Conway. The building shows up on the 1909 Sanborn maps – the earliest to show this area –in the original African American enclave at the northeast corner of Court and Prairie.[180] The building is not extant; date of its demolition is unknown, but it was replaced by a dwelling by 1931. St. John's congregation merged with White's Chapel Baptist Church in the 1930s to form Union Baptist Church (extant at 1257 Lincoln Street).
- White's Chapel Baptist Church, also known as White Chapel Baptist, was active by 1900. The building was located in the Argenta neighborhood at the southeast corner of Garland and Harrison.[181] The building was originally a White Methodist church; when the Methodist congregation constructed a new building, the "old meeting house on Front Street was torn down in 1904 and moved to another area to erect a Negro church, called White's Chapel."[182] However, White Chapel appears to predate that 1904 date, as an earlier article notes that the African American Baptist state convention was held in Conway in 1900 and White Chapel was enlarged and remodeled to accommodate the large crowd.[183] In 1912, White Chapel and another African American church were offered for sale at public auction to satisfy delinquent assessments levied by Waterworks District of Conway.[184] The church was purchased by G.S. McHenry but, in 1912, members of congregation paid the taxes and

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[178] "The Methodist Church." Faulkner County Church History, from the *Log Cabin Democrat Centennial Edition,* accessed May 10, 2021, http://www.argenweb.net/faulkner/church.html and *Biographical and Historical Memoir of Pulaski, Jefferson, Lonoke, Faulkner, Grant, Saline, Perry, Garland and Hot Springs Counties, Arkansas,* 715.

[179] "E.L. Little." *Find a Grave*, accessed March 2021, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/135331654/e-l-little.

[180] The 1913 Sanborn shows the address as 115 S. Court.

[181] Sanborn Map Company. 1931. Sanborn fire insurance maps. Teaneck, N.J.: Chadwyck-Healey.

[182] "The Methodist Church," http://www.argenweb.net/faulkner/church.html

[183] Daily Arkansas Gazette, May 3, 1900, 4.

[184] "Will Sell Negro Churches for Tax," *Conway Log Cabin Democrat*, June 13, 1912, 5.

penalties to the owner and regained possession of their house of worship.[185] Dr. Columbus Mattison was a member of the congregation, and meetings of the Knights of the Guiding Star of the East were held in the church.[186]

- St. James C.M.E. Church. St. James C.M.E. was an early African American congregation in the community.[187] We did not establish the location of the congregation's original church is unknown but it was likely located in the original African American neighborhood off Main. In 1912, the church was offered for sale at public auction to satisfy delinquent assessments levied by Waterworks District of Conway; the debt was able to be paid off prior to the sale and the congregation retained ownership of the building.[188] The St. James C.M.E.'s congregation is still active in a non-historic-age building located at the northeast corner of Markham and Pine Streets (1304 Markham).

Additional research could identify extant rural churches or other buildings where religious services were held. Our research documented the following rural church that was active during this time period:

- Pleasant Branch Baptist Church in Lollie Bottoms has been identified as Faulkner County's oldest African American congregation. The congregation formed in 1880 in an area known as the Providence settlement. Oral history accounts indicate that Rev. Lawrence Cornelius was the church's organizer and first pastor, preaching to a congregation made up of freedmen and women who migrated to Arkansas from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee who worked as farmers on the J.E. Little Plantation. The church was a one-room, rectangular building with vertical planking surrounded by a fence with two gates, one for wagons and teams to enter and another for the congregation.[189]

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[185] "G.S. M'Henry Sells Church," *Conway Log Cabin Democrat*, August 15, 1912, 2.

[186] "Guiding Star Grand Lodge Shows Growth", *Conway Log Cabin Democrat*, August 13, 1914, p. 2. The articles notes that one of the prominent figures attending the meeting was "Mother" M.E. Stringley of Morrilton, whose husband, Ge. W. Stringley, was founder of the organization.

[187] The church's social media at https://www.facebook.com/stjameslove/ indicate that the congregation was founded in 1872; McDoux was unable to confirm this date.

[188] "Will Sell Negro Churches for Tax," *Conway Log Cabin Democrat*, June 13, 1912, 5.

[189] "History of the Greater Pleasant Branch Missionary Baptist Church 1880-2016." *Greater Pleasant Branch Missionary Baptist Church*, accessed April 1, 2021, https://greaterpleasantbranch.org/index.php/about-us/history/.

Pleasant Branch was destroyed by a fire in 1930, believed to have been caused by arsonists.[190]

- Jim Crow Era: A number of churches were active during this time period. Extant historic-age church buildings include:
    - Union Baptist Church is located at 1257 Lincoln Street and possibly the most architecturally impressive historic resource extant in the Pine/Markham Street neighborhood. Historic photos suggest that the brick-clad building was originally wood; the church history website confirms that the building was 'brick-veneered and beautified.' The church was organized December 10, 1933 when St. John Baptist Church and White's Chapel Baptist Church consolidated.
    - Lucy Memorial A.M.E. Church/Jones Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church. We were not able to find much information about the small, front-gabled masonry church extant at 1319 Harrison (Extant). A sign on site indicates the building is Jones Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, and it shows upon the 1931 Sanborn maps as Lucy Memorial A.M.E. Church.

  Non-extant churches from the Jim Crow Era include:
    - Harrison & Willow Church of Christ/Madison Street Church of Christ. The church was founded in 1932, when over 100 people were baptized during two weeks of tent meetings near Conway's old cotton gin. The converts met in homes of members until 1933, when a one-room frame building was built. Located on Madison Street, they became designated as the Madison Street Church of Christ. In 1939, the congregation purchased an existing house on the corner of Harrison and Willow Streets (land site of their present location at 1130 Harrison). The congregation is still active at 1130 Harrison in a building constructed in 1995.
    - Ebenezer M.E. Church. Ebenezer Church was located on the southwest corner of Pine and Factory, near the Pine Street School. It has been demolished.
    - The A.M.E. Church at 1133 Harrison. It shows up on the 1926 Sanborn map as a wood-frame building; the corner stone indicates the current building was constructed in the 1960s.
- Civil Rights Movement: We did not identify any associated resources.

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[190] Faulkner County Historical Society, *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, 160.

Educational Resources

Description:

African Americans managed to receive an education in a number of different environments before they were fully integrated into Conway's public school system. Conway and Faulkner County have a history of segregated schools that extends from the 1870s until desegregation was accomplished in 1969. Every school that served African American students is an essential part of the area's Black experience. This includes segregated African American schools and associated buildings such as Rosenwald schools, rural one-room and multi-room school buildings from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, primary and secondary schools of the 20th century, landmarks of integration, Catholic and other religious-based educational facilities where African American pupils were educated, and also homes of educators (but only if they are the most representative property associated with the significant individual).

Significance:

Significant schools associated with African American history would qualify for listing under Criterion A in the areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage at the local or state level of significance. If they were part of larger patterns of the community establishment, they may also be eligible under Community Planning and Development. Landmarks of integration should be given special consideration. Schools that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction may be eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture.

Integrity Thresholds:

Because of the importance of education to the African American experience and the scarcity of educational resources, schools need only retain a minimal level of integrity to be potentially eligible for the National Register. They would need to retain sufficient integrity of design, materials, and workmanship to be recognizable as a school. Location and setting are desirable aspects of eligibility; however, it is possible that a relocated school could retain eligibility if it remains relatively close to the community it served.

Associated Property Types:

- Pre-Emancipation Era: We did not identify any historic schools associated with the Pre-Emancipation Era.
- Post-Emancipation/Reconstruction Era: Conway did not yet have an African American school at this point. We have identified two schools that developed during this era; the buildings' status was not established:

- Caney School, established in 1870 by A.B. Bunting, M.K. Dozier, and L.B. Bloodsoe. Dozier was a teacher and helped buy land for the schoolhouse from the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern Railway. Caney was originally a one-room schoolhouse. In 1930, a second room added. Eight grades were taught in the two rooms, using church benches for seating. 102 students attended in the 1934-35 school year and the school had two teachers. Teachers included A.W. Winston, Henrietta Lyons, George Anderson, Macie Mattison Thompson, Mildren Brown, and Alice Sewell. When the school district was integrated into the Conway district in 1949, Caney students were bussed to Pine Street School and the Caney School building sold to Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Givands for $750[191]; the 1930 census shows Givands lived on Jacksonville Road. It was located in the northwest corner at the junction of Highway 286 East and Skunk Hollow Road.
- Salem School formed on July 24, 1874 and was located west of Conway just north of the intersection of Arkansas Highway 60 and Padgett Road. 45 African American students attended in the 1934-35 school year; eight grades were offered and the school had one teacher. In 1949, the Salem School consolidated to Conway's Pine Street and the school was dissolved.[192]

- Post-Reconstruction:
  - Conway's first school for African American students was established during the Post-Reconstruction period at Lot 6 Block 2 Robinson Plan, facing south onto Main. It is not extant.

A number of rural schools were constructed throughout Faulkner County; their status is not known, but additional research could identify whether any of these buildings are extant. Examples include:

- The Preston School was formed in 1880, south of Conway near the present-day intersection of Arkansas Highway 365 and Lawrence Landing Road. Our research indicates that Preston was a freedom community and also called the Gold Lake Community or the Gold Creek Community. The school was described as a one-room building built like a barn with vertical planks; students sat at old iron desks. Teachers

[191] Hassebrock, "Before desegregation: Woman researches history of rural black schools," 2-3, and *An Educational Survey Present and Proposed School Faulkner County,* prepared by the Administrative Staff Arkansas Study of Local School Units, Little Rock, March 1937, pp. 8 and 10.

[192] "An Educational Survey Present and Proposed School Faulkner County." Administrative Staff, Arkansas Study of Local School Units, Little Rock, AR: March 1937, pp. 8 and 10.

included Macy Thomas, Mildred Brim, George Allison, and Jim Anderson; Thomas lived in Conway and rode down each day in a wagon.[193] The Rosenwald Program funded another school building at Preston in 1924-25.[194] The Preston School was consolidated to Conway's Pine Street School in 1928 and dissolved in 1936.[195]

  - Rocky Ridge was formed in 1896, southeast of Conway near the intersection of Adams Lake Road and Canterbury Gap Road. It was consolidated in 1949 to Conway Pine Street and dissolved in 1949.[196] G.M. Bud was a Rocky Ridge school board member and one of the first Blacks in Faulkner County to own a school bus; he transported Black children to Conway after consolidation.[197]

- Jim Crow Era: The Pine Street School Gymnasium is extant; the elementary classroom building is present but heavily modified. We identified one other African American school operating during the Jim Crow era – Good Shepherd Catholic School. We did not identify its location, but Dr. Lloyd Hervey believed it was located on Ingram Street.[198] Good Shepherd School closed in 1965.[199] Additional research may yield rural schools still extant that were active during this time period.
- Civil Rights Movement: We did not identify any associated resources.

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[193] Oral History with Emma Price by interviewer Bill Nutter, July 19, 1991. Faulkner County School History Project: School Sites, UCA archives and Faulkner County School History Project: School Sites. UCA archives.

[194] Fisk University Rosenwald Fund Card File Database, Nashville, TN. Accessed March 6, 2021.http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/

[195] Faulkner County School History Project: School Sites, UCA archives.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Hassebrock, "Before Desegregation: Woman Researches History of Black Schools," 2.

[198] Oral history with Dr. Lloyd Hervey, March 2021.

[199] Tara Little, "More to know about integration in the dioceses."

Neighborhood and Commercial Districts

Description:

Across the country, African American enclaves historically had under-developed infrastructure such as unpaved roads, no streetlights, and insufficient or no water/sewer systems. Buildings were sometimes substandard. Such neighborhoods reflect historical patterns of community growth and planning, especially those associated with overt or de facto segregation. Segregation was enforced through redlining, restrictive covenants, zoning laws, and business licensing/permitting practices. African Americans in Conway historically lived in informally-designated Black enclaves on the East Side of the railroad tracks, which developed a mix of single- and multi-family residences (owned or rented), churches, schools, businesses, and entertainment.

Significance:

Neighborhoods and commercial districts associated with African American history may qualify for listing at the local or state level. Districts would typically be listed with significance under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage and Community Planning and Development and possibly Criterion C for Architecture. Business districts may be significant in the area of Commerce.

Integrity Thresholds:

Historic districts as a whole should retain integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association. At least 51% of the principal structures would need to contribute to the district's significance, meaning that those individual resources would need to retain their basic historic form, roofline, and window openings on the street facing façade(s).

Associated Property Types:

- Pre-Emancipation Era and Post-Emancipation/Reconstruction Era: We did not identify any districts associated with these eras.
- Post-Reconstruction: The original "East Side" neighborhood was established during this era along Front, Prairie, Chestnut, and Court Streets just south of Main. Our research did not identify any extant resource associated with this property type.
- Jim Crow Era: The Pine/Markham Street neighborhood. The Markham Street Commercial District.
- Civil Rights Movement: We did not identify any associated resources.

Agricultural Properties

Description:

Conway's African American history has long-standing ties to agriculture. After the Civil War, freedmen and women immigrated to the area and freedom colonies developed throughout rural Faulkner County. Black families sought financial independence and autonomy in these rural settlements and worked independent farmers on their own land, sharecroppers, or tenant farmers. Conway developed as a hub for area farmers with services, transportation, and processing facilities. Examples of agricultural properties would include residences were African Americans lived such as farm houses or sharecropper rental housing, properties owned by African American farmers, plantation stores or commissaries, or agricultural processing facilities such as cotton gins or pressing machinery where African Americans were employed.

Significance:

Agricultural properties would likely be eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Agriculture.

Integrity Thresholds:

To retain integrity, agricultural properties should possess the main features relating to their use in agriculture during the period of significance. This would include location, design, setting, feeling, and association.

Associated Property Types:

- Pre-Emancipation Era and Post-Emancipation/Reconstruction Era: We did not identify any historic agricultural resources associated with these; however, additional research could reveal areas where early farms and plantations existed (this is further explored in the Potential Historic Cultural Landscapes reported prepared in conjunction with this project).
- Post-Reconstruction: Resources within Conway would include the Mule Barn (not extant) and agricultural processing facilities as cotton gins. Stakeholder interviews and oral histories indicated that there may be extant sharecropper cabins or other buildings associated with the Lollie Planation/Little Farm. McDoux surveyors visited a farm located at the intersection of Sand Gap Road and Lollie Road where the owners indicated their property was the site of the Lollie store and school, and their barn was constructed using wood from the Lollie store. They also identified a field just north of Lollie Road/Highway 89 as the former location of a Lollie Bottoms cemetery and cabins, which now contains wheat. McDoux was unable to substantiate the information about the

store or the locations of buildings. Other resources from this time period could include farms and plantations where African Americans farmed, or freedom colonies/Black communities such as Jones Chapel.

- Jim Crow Era: The rural experience was a vital part of the African American history in Faulkner County during this time. Agricultural resources associated with that history would likely include residences (farm houses and sharecropper/tenant housing), agricultural properties owned by African American farmers (especially those associated with the Mattison family), or plantation stores or commissaries. Properties that speak to the varied experiences of Black farmers merit further research – land ownership, tenant farming, etc. "Experiences and contributions of African American landlords in the South have been largely overlooked in research and scholarship" and "discussions concerning the rural black population have focused primarily on African Americans as landowners, producers, sharecroppers, tenants, renters, and day laborers."[200] The 1910 census shows that the area where the Mattison's were living – on Ridge Road – was home to a number of Black farmers, who both self-employed farmers owning their own lands and wage earners. Per the school project, it was close to several African Americans schools --- Salem, Bethel, and Clinton Chapel. Additional research into this community (looking the residents and their schools, churches[201], and cemeteries) could potentially reveal information about a freedom colony.[202]
- Civil Rights Movement: We did not identify any associated resources.

[200] Grim, "African American Landlords in the Rural South, 1870-1950: A Profile," 399.

[201] Bethel Church is nearby.

[202] African American landowners on Rocky Ridge in 1910 included William T. Mattison, Nolan Mattison, Elliott Mattison, Auston and Sarah High, David A. and Rasa A. Hill, William and Lydia Mims, Sam and Emily Kindle, Lee and Rasa Foster, Daniel and Eliza Ferris, Alonzo Sullivan, Joe and Luisa E. Mitchel, Reuben Fair, James M. and Anna Morris, and Ray Henry. There were additional African American "wage earner" farmers.

Recreational Resources

Description:

Recreational resources would include public parks, squares, and open spaces where African Americans gathered or celebrated, as well as segregated pools or golf courses. It also includes commercial recreation such as movie theaters, clubs, taverns and music venues.

Significance:

To be eligible for the National Register in association with the themes of this context, recreational resources need to have a demonstrated significance in the African American community and would generally be eligible under Criterion A in the areas of Social History and Ethnic Heritage. A building that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction may be eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture.

Integrity Thresholds:

To retain integrity, recreational resources should be sufficiently intact to convey their original purpose. For those where the primary experience occurred in the interior space, interior integrity of design and feeling is important. Location and setting are important factors as they convey the relationship of the building to the larger community.

Associated Property Types:

- Pre-Emancipation Era, Post-Emancipation/Reconstruction Era, and Post-Reconstruction Era: We did not identify any resources associated with these eras.
- Jim Crow Era: Mountain View Park (now Curtis Walker Park)
- Civil Rights Movement: We did not identify any associated resources.

Fraternal Organizations, Social Organizations, or Union Halls

Description:

Masonic and fraternal organizations have a long history in the African American community, especially in migrant communities. For families "separated from extended kin, settlers without a school, new arrivals seeking a church, or unemployed persons looking for work without the benefit of their old connections, creating community institutions and networks of mutual support was critical to their quality of life."[203] This is being studied further in Arkansas through the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center in Little Rock, a museum that preserves and interprets African American fraternal organizations and entrepreneurs.

Significance:

Unions, fraternal organizations, and social organizations associated with African American history could qualify for listing at the local or state level, generally under Criterion A in the areas of Social History and Ethnic Heritage. A building that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction may be eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture.

Integrity Thresholds:

To retain integrity, buildings associated with fraternal or social organizations and unions should possess the primary features relating to their use as places of community building during the period of significance. This includes integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Associated Property Types:

- Pre-Emancipation Era and Post-Emancipation/Reconstruction Era: We did not identify any resources associated with these eras.
- Post-Reconstruction: We did not identify any extant resources. Meetings of the Knights of the Guiding Star of the East were held at White Chapel (not extant).
- Jim Crow Era: Our research indicated that such groups were active during this time period but did not establish where these organizations met. This could include meeting places of the International Order of Odd Fellows, the International Order of Twelve Knights and Daughters of Tabor, The Social Arts Club, The Pink Rose Club, The Conway Negro Business League, the Black Businessman's Association, or the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. Newspaper articles from 1913 refer to an African American lodge that was

[203] Matkin-Rawn, "The Great Negro State of the Country," 40.

located on East Main and torn down at that time.[204] The 1926 Sanborn maps shows a "Negro hall" at the northwest corner of Harrison and Willow; it is not extant.[205] Additional research would like yield information about such organizations.

- Civil Rights Movement: We did not identify any associated resources.

Resources Associated with Civil Rights-Related Activities

Description:

Civil Rights resources would include sites, buildings, or public spaces in which civil rights-related activities occurred such as protests, marches, or sit-ins.

Significance:

Resources associated with the Civil Rights movement could qualify for listing at the state or local level, with significance under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage, Politics/Government, or Social History.

Integrity Thresholds:

Resources would need to retain integrity related to their significance during the time period when the activities took place. This would include integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and/or association.

Examples:

No examples of resources associated with Civil Rights activities were identified from the historic time period (through 1970) during research, but unidentified examples may exist in Conway.

[204] "Destroy Negro's Blacksmith Shop," *Conway Log Cabin Democrat,* June 19, 1913, 4.

[205] Sanborn Fire Insurance map, 1931, p. 8.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

African American community members have had a profound impact on the historical and cultural development of Conway and the state of Arkansas. However, the significance of buildings, structures, objects, and sites associated with the African American experience have been undocumented and overlooked. This African American historic context study is an important step in researching, documenting, and preserving the diverse and inclusive history of the Conway community. We have the following recommendations for continuing this work.

1. **Preserve the extant historic resources associated with Conway's African American history.** The City has stated their goal to develop a context for historic resources significant for their association with the African American community and develop materials highlighting Conway's African American heritage. The built environment is a tangible way to show that history, and we recommend that the City make it a priority to retain and preserve the existing historic resources associated with Conway's African American history. We would recommend that the City meet with the African American community to discuss how they would like to see their history preserve and learn about which resources they would prioritize.

2. **Pursue National Register listing for eligible historic resources.** With few historic resources remaining in Pine/Markham Street neighborhood, we recommend that the City seek to list significant historic resources in the National Register of Historic Places. National Register listing does not impose any restrictions on private property owners, but it demonstrates that a resource is historic and worthy of preservation. Listing can also qualify owners to use state and federal rehabilitation tax credits to work to the historic building. An inventory of resources identified as potentially eligible is included in the windshield survey report prepared as part of this study, and cultural landscapes are detailed in the cultural landscapes report. Again, we would recommend that the City meet with the African American community to learn about the resources whose preservation they would prioritize.

3. Pursue state-level designation for individually significant resources and historic districts that may not meet National Register integrity standards. The Arkansas Register of Historic Places is the state's official record of properties, sites, structures, buildings, landscapes, and objects significant in the history, architecture, and culture of the state and its communities. Arkansas Register

listing does not restrict an owner's right to use, modify or dispose of the property. The Arkansas Register does not require the high level of integrity that the National Register deems necessary and buildings that have been physically altered may be determined eligible provided they satisfy criteria for significance. The Pine/Markham Street neighborhood has lost a significant amount of historic fabric and likely would not qualify as a National Register historic district; however, it may qualify for the Arkansas Register. In our meetings with community residents, they expressed interest in designating the Pine Street School. Portions of the school campus have been demolished and/or modified; Arkansas Register designation may be the appropriate avenue for honoring that history.

This history context study identifies important themes associated with Conway's historic African American community, describes how those themes shaped the built environment, and establishes a framework that may be used in future preservation efforts. While we researched the African American community's history as part of that work, this study is not intended to be a comprehensive history. Throughout this report, we identified areas of additional research that the City may wish to undertake. The areas of further study that we believe should be prioritized are below:

- Education was an essential part of the African American community's experience. Black students managed to receive an education in a number of different environments before they were fully integrated into Conway's public school system. When Conway's schools desegregated, some African American teachers were brought over to continue teaching while others retired. Oral history interviews with these teachers would document an extremely important time in Conway's history. Our oral history interviews revealed that Rose Bryant Woods and Leroy Siddell are retired teachers who could be potential sources of more information. The people who lived through this era will not be available for much longer.
- We did not identify sit-ins, marches, or other activities associated with the Civil Rights movement in Conway. It is possible that not many of these took place, but additional research by contacting the local chapter of the NAACP or religious leaders could provide additional insight into Civil Rights activities.

- he experience of African American land owners, farmers, tenant, and sharecroppers was an extremely important part of Conway's history. We did some research on this topic while investigating the historic context, but additional research could shed light on in important aspects such as:
    - Freedom Colonies and the communities developed by freedmen and women (some of which may have been incorporated into the City of Conway)
    - The Mattison family and their role as landowners in Faulkner County (the area where the family's farm was located appears to have been annexed into the City)
- Freedmen's Bureau records are available online and could provide additional information about the history of individual African American farmers and landowners during Reconstruction.
- Work with the community to establish and prioritize aspects of Conway's African American history outlined in this context that merit further research; then document and designate that important history.

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