THE CHANGING RESIDENTIAL PATTERN OF BLACKS IN BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN: A STUDY IN HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

THE CHANGING RESIDENTIAL PATTERN OF BLACKS IN BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN: A STUDY IN HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

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In recent years, the number of geographical studies on black Americans has increased tremendously. However, few studies have focused on the spatial development and formation of black communities, with even fewer on the development of black communities in small sized cities of 50,000 or less.

This study examines the changing residential pattern of blacks in Battle Creek, Michigan. The genesis, growth, and migration of blacks to Battle Creek as reflected in the changing residential patterns are examined over a 90 year period. This, in turn, involves tracing the social and economic forces behind the migration and settlement patterns in different periods.

The "Dagwood Sandwich" approach in historical geography is utilized in an attempt to describe and explain the spatial distribution of the black population. The first step in the approach was to establish a history of change by mapping the residential location of black families for the nine decades between 1850 and 1930. The second step was to describe

the patterns and analyze the processes creating the patterns. The study relied heavily upon manuscript censuses and city directories to identify black households.

Because of changes in social and economic conditions in Battle Creek, the residential patterns were temporarily divided into three parts: the 1850 to 1870 period--an era of rapid in-migration of blacks, mainly from the border states to the pioneer village; the 1880 to 1900 period--an era of marked increase in economic growth and low in-migration of blacks; and 1900 to 1930--an era of rapid urbanization and concomitant heavy in-migration of southern blacks to Battle Creek.

Cartographic analysis reveals that the residential patterns of blacks were dispersed during the three periods. However, in the 1900 to 1930 period, the patterns were becoming increasingly clustered. Spatial assimilation, seemingly, was the process by which the spatial patterns were formed. The principal factors working to produce the spatial distribution of blacks in Battle Creek were accessibility to sources of jobs, low income housing, and to a lesser degree, kinship and friendship ties, and group identification. After 1910, racial discrimination became an important factor in the residential pattern of blacks. While no formal restrictive covenants were imposed, it became increasingly difficult for blacks to purchase housing outside of certain areas.

The data indicate that the forces which created and changed the residential patterns of blacks in Battle Creek,

a small sized city, as opposed to metropolitan cities, were different in degree rather than kind. Because of the low magnitude of blacks in the city from 1850 to World War I, blacks were widely dispersed throughout the city; later residential clustering intensified in response to rapid in-migration. These stages in the development of residential areas were experienced in other cities, e. g., Lansing, Michigan, Chicago, Detroit, and Seattle Washington, to mention a few, at a much earlier period in the development of these cities, depending on the size of the city and the magnitude of the black population. In fact, with the exception of Lansing and Seattle which developed black areas a few years later, a ghetto pattern had emerged by 1930, and the process of "invasion and succession" had been clearly identified as the mode of expansion of the black residential areas. Battle Creek was in the embryonic stage of ghetto development during the last decade of this study.

To My Family

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Several individuals have assisted me in the preparation of this study, and to them I am grateful. To Dr. Daniel Jacobson, the chairman of my committee, I wish to express my sincere gratitude. I am indebted to him for his patience, concern, and guidance in helping me prepare this dissertation. A special word of thanks is also extended to the members of my committee, Dr. Lawrence Sommers, Dr. Ian Matley, Dr. Gary Manson who substituted for Dr. Matley, and Dr. James McKee for their consenting to serve and for their helpfulness.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

In recent years social scientists, in general, and geographers, in particular, have become increasingly concerned with problems of blacks[1] in the urban areas of America. The emigration of blacks from the South, and the concommitant formation and rapid expansion of the black ghetto and its associated problems have made such investigations necessary. The primary foci of the research have been on: (1) rural to urban migration,[2] (2) residential mobility, residential segregation and ghetto formation,[3] (3) black

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[1]The terms Negro and Black will be used interchangeably in this study to refer to Americans of African descent.

[2]C. Horace Hamilton, "The Negro Leaves the South," Demography 1 (1964): 278; Dorothy K. Newman, "The Negro's Journey to the City - Part I, Monthly Labor Review 88 (May 1965): 18-34; Eunice Grier and George Grier, "The Negro Migration: II," Housing Yearbook (1962), pp. 17-20; Paul F. Coe, "Nonwhite Population Increases in Metropolitan Areas," Journal of the American Statistical Association 50 (June 1955): 283-308.

[3]Charles S. Johnson, Patterns of Negro Segregation (New York: Harper and Row, 1943); Robert C. Weaver, The Negro Ghetto (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1948); St. Clair Drake and Horace Clayton, Black Metropolis (New York: Harper and Row, 1962); Robert E. Forman, Black Ghettos, White Ghettos, and Slums (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1971); Ernest W. Burgess, "Residential Segregation in American Cities," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 140 (November 1928): 105-115; Reynolds Farley, "The Changing Distribution of Negroes within

lifestyles,[4] and (4) social histories of black communities.[5]

In spite of the vast research dealing with black America, little is known about the spatial development and formation of black communities in small-sized cities (population <50,000). Much of the research on black communities has been focused on the larger metropolitan cities: Detroit, Chicago, Washington, D. C., Cleveland, and Atlanta, to mention a few, and to a lesser extent medium-sized cities, such as Lansing, Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Jackson, Mississippi.[6] These cities, for the most part, being within the most industrialized regions of the United States, experienced the largest numerical influx of blacks. Conversely, the small-sized cities, while experiencing small absolute black population increases, have experienced proportionally large increases in black population, but have received comparably little attention from geographers.

Metropolitan Areas: The Emergence of Black Suburbs," American Journal of Sociology (January 1970): 512-529; O. D. Duncan and Beverly Duncan, The Negro Population of Chicago (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

[4]Edward C. Banfield, The Unheavenly City: The Nature and Future of our Urban Crises (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1970); Daniel P. Moynihan, "Employment, Income, and the Ordeal of the Negro Family," Daedalus 94 (Fall 1965); 768-69; and U. S. Department of Labor, The Negro Family: The Case for National Action (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1965).

[5]John W. Blassingame, Black New Orleans 1860-1880 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973); James Weldon Johnson, Black Manhattan (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1930); and Allan H. Spear, Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto 1890-1920 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967).

[6]Ralph A. Sanders and John S. Adams, "Age Structure in Expanding Ghetto-Space: Cleveland, Ohio, 1940-1965,"

While knowledge of blacks in metropolitan areas is important, detailed case studies on blacks in small cities are needed--not only for future city planning and development--but to fill gaps in our knowledge on how and why black communities form and how they change over time. Further, studies of black communities in the nineteenth century are needed, if we are to understand the peculiarities of the black experience.

Hence, it is the purpose of this study to extend knowledge on the spatial dynamics of black residential patterns in small-sized cities.

Statement of the Problem

The study examines the genesis, growth, migration, and residential patterns of blacks in Battle Creek, Michigan between 1850 and 1930. This, in turn, involves tracing the social and economic forces behind the migration and settlement patterns in different periods.

Specific research questions to be answered are: (1) Who were the first blacks to come to Battle Creek? (2) Where

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Southeastern Geographer 11 (November 1971): 121-132; Donald R. Deskins, Jr., Residential Mobility of Negroes in Detroit, 1837-1965 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Geographical Publication No. 5, 1972); David Ralph Meyer, Spatial Variation of Black Urban Households (Chicago: The University of Chicago, Department of Geography, Research Paper No. 129, 1970): Stanley Brunn and Wayne L. Hoffman, "The Spatial Response of Negroes and Whites Toward Open Housing: The Flint Referendum," Annals of the Association of American Geographers 60 (March 1970): 18-36; Donald Deskins, Jr., "Negro Settlement in Ann Arbor" (M. A. thesis, University of Michigan, 1963); George W. Carey, Lenore Macomber, and M. Greenberg, "Educational and Demographic Factors in the Urban Geography of Washington, D.C.," Geographical Review 58 (October 1968): 515-537; and Walter C. Farrell, Jr., "Interurban Mobility and Environmental Perception in a Black Middle Class Ghetto: A Case Study in Flint, Michigan" (Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1974).

did they come from? (3) What was the original settlement pattern of blacks in Battle Creek? (4) What changes have taken place in the residential distribution of blacks in Battle Creek from 1850 to 1930? (5) How do these settlement patterns fit within the general framework of the areal development and expansion of Battle Creek? (6) What are the factors, both internal and external, which have influenced the patterns? and (7) How persistent was the black community from 1850 to 1930?[7]

Related Literature

Although many geographical studies have been made on blacks,[8] the spatial pattern and structure of black residential areas have not received adequate attention. Hence, this literature review will encompass studies conducted in geography and other disciplines on the development and formation of black communities. This will include studies on residential change of ethnic groups in urban areas; residential segregation and ghetto formation; and social history of black communities.

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[7]Persistence is defined as the percent of black households reappearing in subsequent manuscript censuses or city directories.

[8]For extensive bibliographies on geographical literature on black Americans, see: Alvar W. Carlson, "A Bibliography of the Geographical Literature on the American Negro, 1920-1971," Virginia Geographer 2 (Spring-Summer 1972); Donald R. Deskins, Jr., "Geographical Literature on the American Negro 1949-1968: A Bibliography," The Professional Geographer 21 (May 1969): 146-148; O. Fred Donaldson, "Geography and the Black American: The White Papers and the Invisible Man," The Journal of Geography 70 (March 1971): 138-149; and Robert T. Ernst, "The Geographical Literature of Black America: 1949-1972: A Selected Bibliography of Journal Articles, Serials Publications, Theses and Dissertations," Council of Planning Librarians Exchange Bibliography 492, 1973.

Residential changes of ethnic groups in urban areas. In 1969, Jakle and Wheeler[9] undertook research on the changing residential patterns of the Dutch in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Incorporating the concept of acculturation in the study of the origin and spatial evolution of the ethnic community in Kalamazoo, they ascertained that the Dutch were initially dispersed throughout the city as a result of rapid acculturation. Later residential clustering developed in response to rapid Dutch immigration and acculturation decreased. In the final stage, the city's ethnic ghettos almost disappeared because of the acculturation of later generations.

In 1964, Mackun studied the changing pattern of Polish settlement in the greater Detroit area.[10] Using city directories as sources for his data, he recreated the original pattern of Polish settlement and analyzed subsequent changes over a 60 year period. He found that there was a steadily rising rate of areal dispersion of Polish households accompanied by a high degree of cultured assimilation.

More recently, two geographers have focused on the residential patterns of blacks. The first, by Meyer, dealt

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[9]John A. Jakle and James O. Wheeler, "The Changing Residential Structure of the Dutch Population in Kalamazoo, Michigan," Annals of the Association of American Geographers 59 (September 1969), 441-460.

[10]Stanley Mackun, "Changing Pattern of Polish Settlement in Greater Detroit Area, Geographic Study of the Assimilation of an Ethnic Group" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1964).

with the changing residential pattern of blacks in Lansing, Michigan from 1850 to 1969.[11] He found that prior to 1915, blacks were spatially assimilated in Lansing. With the large influx of blacks in the post war years, residential clustering intensified, and by 1950, a ghetto had emerged in West Lansing. Invasion and succession was identified as the mode of expansion of the ghetto. In the final stage of the spatial pattern, the ghetto declined slightly as some of the black population involuntarily dispersed into relocation sites near the outskirts of Lansing.

In a similar study, McKee studied the residential patterns of blacks in seven Mississippi cities.[12] He hypothesized that black residences in the pre-Civil War cities of Natchez, Vicksburg, Columbia, and Greenville would be less segregated and more spatially scattered than in the post-Civil War cities of Hattiesburg, Laurel, and Meridian primarily because of certain social, economic, and political processes associated with a particular historical tradition. In addition to his hypothesis being substantiated, he concluded that (1) displacement of black residences rather than invasion by black residences on a block basis was the general tendency in small Mississippi cities. (2) Creeks and railroad tracts were more divisive as

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[11]Douglas K. Meyer, "The Changing Negro Residential Pattern in Lansing, Michigan, 1850-1969" (Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1970).

[12]Jesse O. McKee, "The Residential Pattern of Blacks in Natchez and Hattiesburg and Other Mississippi Cities" (Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1972).

residential barriers to areal expansion of black residences in post-Civil War than in pre-Civil War cities. 3) The black residential areas generally started from and presently contain multiple core centers rather than just one ghetto core. And (4), the historical time period with its associated cultural processes together with the original geographical site and situation of the city were two of the most critical explanatory factors.

Formation of Ghettos. Another aspect of research pertinent to understanding the residential pattern of blacks in Battle Creek is that pertaining to ghettos. Although this section and the aforementioned category overlap, they are, to some extent, sufficiently distinct so that they may be treated separately. The focal point of the research on ghettos has been on the expansion of the ghetto.

Black residential patterns have been studied by sociologists of the University of Chicago since the early 1920's. Thus it is fitting to mention one significant work on the spatial aspect of black residences in a central city. In 1957, Duncan and Duncan conducted a study on the black population of Chicago.[13] They found that the general outlines of the black community were established by 1920. By 1950, over 50% of the black population resided in census tracts over 95% black. The major contribution of the Duncans was the development of an Invasion and Succession model, incorporating four stages (Penetration, Invasion, Consolidation and Piling Up) in the process.

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[13]Otis Duncan and Beverly Duncan, The Negro Population of Chicago (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 95.

Developing models, a few geographers have attempted to simulate the pattern of ghetto expansion. One of the pioneers in geography of the ghetto was Richard Morrill. In 1965, he traced the origin of the black ghetto, examined forces that perpetuate it, and evaluated proposals for controlling the ghetto.[14] A simulated model of ghetto expansion as a spatial diffusion process into surrounding white areas was developed and tested in the black community of Seattle, Washington. Forces such as prejudice of whites against blacks, characteristics of blacks, discrimination by real estate industry and associated financial institutions, and legal and governmental barriers were identified as sustaining the ghetto. He concluded that the ghetto expanded by a spatial diffusion process via block by block transition. Three crucial factors were identified for the transition: (1) proximity of the ghetto, (2) proportions of whites and nonwhites, and (3) preparation of the neighborhood for acceptance of Negro entrance.

Criticizing the diffusion concept in Morrill's model, Rose constructed an alternative model in 1970 in which he emphasized "Negro search behavior" and "white propensity for desegregation."[15] Using a model with demographic, producer, and consumer components, he found that a deficiency in some basic assumptions caused underprediction in the housing market,

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[14]Richard L. Morrill, "The Negro Ghetto: Problems and Alternatives," The Geographical Review 55 (July 1965): 339-361.

[15]Harold M. Rose, "The Development of an Urban Subsystem: The Case of the Negro Ghetto," Annals of the Association of American Geographers 60 (March 1970): 1-17.

especially nearest the ghetto edge, and overprediction in areas farthest removed from the ghetto. Given that certain assumptions are corrected, Rose noted that the model might be employed to describe the process of ghetto development.

In 1972 Sands examined the growth of the Detroit ghetto and some of the forces which have influenced it.[16] Tracing the evolution of the ghetto since 1940, he found that between 1940 and 1950, the doubling of the black population made the geographic expansion of nonwhite areas inevitable. The 1960-1969 increase in population was accommodated by increasing the densities in the established ghetto. Over the forty year span, generally, he found little change in the essential nature of the ghetto.

In the same volume, Haake analyzed the effect of a political boundary (that separating Highland Park from Detroit) on the expansion of a ghetto area.[17] Utilizing census tract and block statistics, he found that the political boundary delayed ghetto expansion in a particular direction.

A similar study was conducted by Hodgart on the spatial expansion of the black neighborhood in Cleveland, Ohio.[18] The

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[16]Gary Sands, "Ghetto Development in Detroit" in Robert D. Swartz et al., eds., Metropolitan America: Geographic Perspectives and Teaching Strategies (Oak Park: National Council for Geographic Education, 1972): 175-198.

[17]John H. Haake, "Political Fragmentation and the Growth of Black Residential Areas: The Case of Highland Park," Idem, Metropolitan America, pp. 199-215.

[18]Robert T. Hodgart, "The Process of Expansion of the Negro Ghetto in Cities of the Northern United States: A Case Study of Cleveland, Ohio" (M.A. thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1968).

specific research question was: "Is it possible to discern in the pattern of expansion of a Negro ghetto any tendency to expand more rapidly into certain types of white neighborhoods than others?" The study covered the years 1920 to 1965, with 1920-65 being studied cartographically and 1950-60 studied more intensively with the quantitative technique of factor analysis. He found the role of Jewish and Non-Jewish immigrant communities in determining the location of ghetto expansion to be very significant: Jewish communities--ghetto expansion; non Jewish communities (especially Italian, Hungarian, and Polish working class)--retardation of ghetto expansion. He found proximity to be important in ghetto expansion, "but indicates that the process of ghetto expansion is much more complex than a simple one of peripheral accretion. To understand its locational pattern it has to be considered as an upward social diffusion process as well as an outward spatial diffusion process." The intensive statistical analysis of 1950-60 period was consistent with the general conclusions derived from cartographic analysis of the 1920-1965 period.

In 1973 using census tract data, Darden examined Afro-Americans in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania from 1930 to 1970.[19] While his study contained a brief discussion on the development of Pittsburgh's black community, the main objectives of his research were to measure the spatial dimensions and spatial dynamics of residential segregation and to identify economic and

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[19]Joe T. Darden, Afro-Americans in Pittsburgh, The Residential Segregation of a People (Toronto: Lexington Books, 1973).

discriminatory factors that influenced the patterns. His findings revealed that between 1930 and 1970, the residential segregation of blacks in the city remained at a high level (i.e., over 70%). Instead of continuously increasing over the period, he found an increase in segregation from 1930 to 1950 (71.6% to 75.7%); from 1950 to 1970, there was a slight decrease (75.7% to 70.5%). Economic and discriminatory factors were found to have influenced residential segregation over the period.

Social history of black communities. A number of works have focused on the social history of the black community in large cities. They included DuBois, The Philadelphia Negro; Osofsky, Harlem, The Making of a Ghetto; Drake and Clayton, Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City; Spear, Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto 1880-1920, and Katzman, Detroit Before the Ghetto.[20] For the most part, these historians and sociologists have tended to emphasize the history of settlement, racial attitudes, and economic and social conditions which contribute to the formation of black residential areas.

In summary, the literature review reveals that very little research has been conducted on the spatial patterns of black residential areas, with even less done on small-sized cities. Also, most of the studies have focused on short spans of time, usually a decade or two. It appears that a study

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[20]W. E. B. DuBois, The Philadelphia Negro, Publication of the University of Pennsylvania: Political Economy and Public Law, No. 14 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1899 Reprinted, New York: Schocken Books, 1967); Gilbert Osofsky, Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto (New York: Harper and Row, 1966); St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Clayton, Black

expanding upon these foci would be a logical continuation of research in the area.

Hypotheses

In view of the literature, the following hypotheses are presented:

1. The spatial pattern of black residences is directly related to the proportion of blacks living in a community and the rate at which black immigrants enter a community.

   a. There is a greater dispersal in residential patterns when the black population is small.

When the black population is small and in-migration is light, the community at large experiences little pressure in absorbing blacks and is "able psychologically, socially, and economically"[21] to absorb the black population.

   b. The greater the influx of black immigrants and the larger the black population, the more concentrated the residential areas.

Research has shown that rapid in-migration of blacks trigger defense mechanisms, such as general process barriers (e.g., prejudicial practices in real estate, financial restrictions, etc.), physical barriers (walls, green spaces, railroad tracks), and political barriers (zoning laws, gerrymandering) within the host community and significantly influence growth and direction of black residential areas.

Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City (New York: Harper and Row, 1962); Allan H. Spear, Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967); and David Katzman, Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973).

[21]Jakle and Wheeler, "The Changing Residential Patterns," p. 448.

2. As the black population increases, its original area cannot absorb all of the increase and so it expands via the invasion and succession process. Since the original clusters are almost always in the lowest socio-economic status area of a city's inner zone, this expansion will most likely be along sectoral lines to better residential areas.

This hypothesis on ghetto expansion, formulated by Johnson,[22] has been confirmed for a number of metropolitan cities. It was tested in this study to ascertain if the same mechanisms apply for a small-sized city, specifically, Battle Creek, Michigan.

The hypotheses relate to past spatial changes and processes creating those changes in black residences. They were tested by comparing maps depicting the spatial distribution of black households through time. Data were secured from manuscript censuses, city directories, and other sources.

Area and Period of Study

Area. When examining complex inter-relationships, it is best to ignore political boundaries and incorporate the whole metropolitan area as a unit for study. However, the unavailability of data for the metropolitan area of Battle Creek prohibits this approach; therefore, the incorporated city of Battle Creek was selected as the area of study. Selection of the city was based on two criteria: the black population of Battle Creek is sufficiently large and dynamic for a changing pattern of black settlement to be discernible. In 1970 Battle Creek's total population was 38,931, of which 20%

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[22] R. J. Johnston, Urban Residential Patterns (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), p. 243.

was black. More importantly, Battle Creek has shown a gradual decrease in white population, beginning in 1940 and continuing through 1970, with the largest decrease in 1970. Conversely, the black population has been steadily increasing. In 1950, the black population doubled the 1930 rate of four percent of the total; in 1970, it quintupled the rate of 1930.

Secondly, Battle Creek has a rich and colorful history. Once a station on the Underground Railroad, many of the blacks who settled in Battle Creek during the 1840's and 1850's were allegedly passengers on "the train."

Period of Study. Originally the bounds of the study were set from the earliest record of black settlement to the contemporary period. However, many problems were encountered in ascertaining the spatial data for blacks in a city as small as Battle Creek, which made it feasible to shorten the span of the study.

The year 1850 was selected as the baseline date. It is considered the first critical date where reliable records may be obtained. A new method of federal census enumeration was initiated in 1850 which provided "bits and pieces" of social and economic data on the entire population of a community. Name, relation to head of household, sex, age, race, occupation, marital status, place of birth for both individual and his parents, property holdings, and education were included in the data collection. Prior to 1850, the federal census only included a head count; individual inhabitants of a community were not listed by name.

Portraying the final stage in the evolution of the patterns is problematic and raises the question: Where does one stop? Nineteen hundred and thirty was arbitrarily selected as the terminal date because of the inadequacy of spatial data up to 1970. After 1900, the manuscript census was no longer available and after 1918, the city directory was useless in identifying black households (to be discussed later in this chapter). Moreover, unlike central cities, census tract data were unavailable for Battle Creek until 1970. Thus, from 1900 to 1930, a large percentage of the black households could still be ascertained. With the large influx of blacks after 1930 it became increasingly difficult to gather information on the extent of the spatial pattern of black residences; the outline of the pattern, however, was observable.

Methodology, Procedure, and Data Sources

H. C. Prince points out that "There is very little in the present day landscape that cannot be explained by reference to the past. The geography of the present is almost all history."[23] This perspective of viewing geography as concerned with the temporal element in space will be employed in studying the changing residential patterns of blacks in Battle Creek, Michigan.

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[23]H. C. Prince, "The Geographical Imagination," Landscape 11 (Winter 1961-62): 25.

Traditionally, historical geography has provided numerous approaches related to time in space. Of the 12 approaches defined by Newcomb,[24] the most pertinent methodology for explaining the changing residential patterns of blacks is the Dagwood Sandwich Approach--a combination of the cross section and the vertical theme approaches. The purpose of this approach is to "integrate the description of the landscape in stages with an analysis of the mechanisms which brought about successive changes in landscape, and hence, the settlement."[25]

In utilizing this methodology, the first step, then is to establish a history of change, via reconstructing residential patterns for specific time periods. The second step is to describe and understand the structure of change, rate of change...the distribution of individual significant phenomenon, of multiple functions of phenomenon, or of important interactive processes"[26] associated with the spatial change of black residences through time.

In order to portray a history of change, the spatial distribution of black residences were mapped. Nine cross

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[24]Robert N. Newcomb, "Twelve Working Approaches to Historical Geography," Association of Pacific Coast Geographers 31 (1969): 27-50.

[25]Paul M. Koroscil, "The Changing Landscape of Whitehorse, Yukon Territory: A Historical Perspective," Julius Minghi ed., B. C. Geographical Series No. 15 (Vancouver, Canada: Tantalus Research, 1972): 182.

[26]Andrew H. Clark, "Geographical Change: A Theme for Economic History," Journal of Economic History 20 (December 1960): 612.

sections in time--1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1918, and 1930 were selected to depict the phases of black community growth as reflected in changing residential patterns in Battle Creek. Choice of the specific dates was made on the basis of data availability. The study relied heavily upon historical records. Federal manuscript censuses and city directories were the main sources used to identify residences occupied by black persons or families. Houses and apartments, so identified, have been designated as black households and mapped for each cross section.

Because of the incompleteness of the chief data sources, other historical sources and field methods were employed. The data collection and method of analysis are presented below in greater detail:[27]

1) Historical Sources: Some of the sources of information include: (a) Federal Manuscript Censuses for the City of Battle Creek for the years 1850-1880, and 1900; (b) City directories from 1870-1931; (c) early plat maps and land ownership records; (d) The Michigan Tribune, Battle Creek Daily Journal, Battle Creek Weekly Journal, Battle Creek Enquirer and News; (e) Assessment and tax rolls; (f) church and cemetery records; and (g) Burton Historical Commission Michigan Historical Collection, and Michigan Historical Commission records.

2) Field Methods: The following sources provided the primary data for describing and analyzing the residential patterns for the years 1910 to 1930: Interviews with older black residents furnished information on spatial changes of residences as well as information on family

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[27]This is adapted from Meyer's study on "The Changing Negro Residential Patterns in Lansing, Michigan, 1850-1969."

residential histories. People from various agencies were interviewed: City Planning Commission, Battle Creek City Assessor's Office; Battle Creek Public School System; and Greater Battle Creek Urban League.

3) Cartographic Analysis: Contemporary maps were constructed to show the original residential pattern, and to show a series of distributional changes through time. For all maps, the smallest spatial unit--the individual household--was the basis of analysis. The sources of data for the specific years, and the difficulties encountered are discussed in the next section.

To reconstruct the residential patterns for the 1850 and 1860 cross sections, blacks[28] were identified from the manuscript censuses for the respective years. Of these, the property owners were differentiated because addresses were not recorded in the census until 1880, and because the city directory was not printed for Battle Creek until 1869. Having been identified, they were then traced through property deeds and Calhoun County Tax Assessment Rolls for legal descriptions of property holdings. With this information, the writer consulted platbook maps of the city and was able to discern an approximation of the spatial pattern of black residences.

A major limitation of this method was that non-property owners could not be spatially identified. This was

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[28]For the purpose of this study, all persons listed as black or Mulatto in the manuscript censuses were considered black.

especially critical for the 1860 census where only 13 out of 44[29] households were listed as property owners. Selected church and cemetery records, newspapers, and public records used in conjunction with land ownership records were slightly helpful in piecing together the cross sections.

For the 1870 residential pattern, the city directory for that year was employed to construct the pattern. As an accuracy measure, blacks identified in the census were checked against the city directory for accuracy. Considering that the city directory listed people 15 years of age and older, discrepancies obviously existed. These discrepancies will be discussed in detail later.

For the 1880 and 1900 cross sections, names and addresses of blacks were obtained from the respective manuscript censuses. These were cross-checked against the 1880 and 1900 city directories. The 1890 pattern posed unique problems in reconstruction. Because the 1890 manuscript census was destroyed by fire in 1920, the 1890 city directory was the most complete source available for recreating the cross section. Additionally, racial identification--which had been included in previous directories--was omitted in this issue. Hence to discern the black population, the writer traced individuals identified in the 1880 and 1900 censuses[30] through the 1890

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[29]In 1850, six out of nine black households were identified as property owners, and consequently, identified spatially.

[30]For the 1890 pattern, all individuals five years and older in the 1880 census were traced through the 1890 city directory; from the 1900 census, all individuals 25 years of age and older were traced backwards through 1890 because 15

city directory. As a double check, since the 1883 and 1900 city directories were nearest to 1890 which distinguished race, these were compared with the 1890 city directory. Succeeding cross sections (1910-1930) were constructed by tracing subjects identified in the 1900 manuscript census[31] and the 1918 directory of black citizens[32] through subsequent city directories.

We may now review briefly the discrepancies between the basic data sources, how these were resolved, together with some of the limitations of the information and the approach. When comparing the census with the city directory, two major discrepancies appeared: Individuals identified in one, sometimes, were missing from the other (after allowing for both 15 years as the earliest age of inclusion in the city directory, and for single women who may have gotten married); and addresses listed in both were occasionally non-congruent. This raises two questions: How does one handle the discrepancies in data sources? And how reliable are the manuscript census and the city directory? To resolve the first dilemma, because the census is more complete than the city directory,

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years of age seems to be the earliest age at which people were listed in Battle Creek's city directory.

[31]This procedure was adopted because of the unavailability of manuscript censuses to the public after 1900, and because racial identification was dropped from the city directory after 1910.

[32]Claude L. Evans, Directory and Business Guide for the Colored Citizens of Battle Creek (Battle Creek, Michigan: By the Author, 1918.

the writer chose to proceed from the census to the city directory. Where the census did not survive (e.g., 1890), or is not yet available (1910-1930), the city directory served as a surrogate. Other sources which have been mentioned previously complemented the major data sources.

As for the reliability of the two sources, several writers have addressed themselves to this issue.[33] Summarily, the following shortcomings were delineated from the census: (1) age falsification; (2) place of origin (required to name only their state or nation of birth); (3) persons included more than once in an enumeration, especially domestics who were sometimes counted both at home and at work; (4) records in handwriting with many abbreviations differing from those of today; and (5) large numbers of blacks omitted, especially in 1870, when an estimated 10% of the black population was missed.[34] The method of taking the census, the enumerators

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[33]See: Peter R. Knights, "Using City Directories in Antebellum Urban Historical Research," (Appendix A), pp. 127-139, and "A Method for Checking the Accuracy of Some Manuscripts Census Data," (Appendix B), pp. 140-143 in Peter R. Knights, The Plain People of Boston: 1830-1869 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971); Peter R. Knights and Stephen A. Thernstrom, "Men in Motion: Some Data and Speculations about Urban Population Mobility in 19th Century America," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 1 (Autumn 1970): 7-35; and Sam Bass Warner, Jr., Streetcar Suburbs. The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

[34]Katzman found that in 19th century Detroit at least 10% of the black population was never enumerated in city directories. Newspapers, court records, and association records indicated that a large number of black residents of Detroit or transients were neglected at the time of the census. Also see: U. S. Bureau of the Census, Negro Population 1790-1915 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918), pp. 26-29.

themselves, and the process of tabulation--all contributed to creating inaccuracy in the censuses.

Generally, the city directory, which was designed primarily for the businessman, was distinctly biased against low status residents--property owners were much more likely to be included than non-property owners; against very recent migrants--tending not to include them until they had lived in the city for a length of time; and racially biased--white households were listed much more frequently than black households.

Despite the shortcomings indicated above, the census and the city directory afford an approximation of reality at particular times and are, therefore, invaluable.

Two major limitations of tracing individuals through sources are outstanding. First, when tracing from the census or city directory (where race is not distinguished), from one decade to another, in-migrants during the interim were undoubtedly missed. Second, women, certainly some of whom were heads of households, were underrepresented in the population because of surname changes accompanying marriage. Despite the ommission and biases in this approach, changes in residential patterns should be discernible for the period between 1850 and 1930.

Organization of the Study

The remainder of the study is divided into four chapters. Chapter II outlines the growth and development of blacks in Michigan, generally, while Chapter III focuses on

the growth and migration of blacks to Battle Creek, specifically. The residential patterns are described and analyzed in Chapter IV. Lastly, Chapter V gives the major findings and recommendations for subsequent research.

CHAPTER II

GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE HISTORY OF BLACKS IN MICHIGAN

To place the development of the black community of Battle Creek in perspective, it is necessary to review the history of black settlement in Michigan. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to examine the distribution and movement of the black population from the period of slavery in the French and British Northwest to the post World War I migration to Michigan cities and the emerging concentration in ghettos.

Prestatehood Period: 1700 to 1837

The history of blacks in Michigan began with blacks as slaves during the French Regime of the Old Northwest Territory in the 18th century. Exactly when blacks initially entered Michigan is unknown; however, 45 slaves were recorded in Detroit[1] as early as 1706. Not until 1738 was specific reference made to black slaves in Michigan.[2] The parish

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[1]Of these 45, no racial distinction was made (i.e., black or Indian slaves). See: David M. Katzman, "Black Slavery in Michigan," Midcontinent American Studies Journal 11 (Fall 1970): 65.

[2]Arthur Raymond Kooker, "The Antislavery Movement in Michigan, 1796-1840" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1941), p. 45.

register of the Church of St. Anne of Michilimackinac, in which was recorded every rite of the Church as it was administered to Indian and black slaves, listed the baptismal entry of one black slave.[3] Between 1731 and 1750, 16 baptismal entries of slaves were listed in the St. Anne Parish register, with specific reference to five blacks.[4]

During these years, and continuing to 1805 when Michigan became a separate territory, Michigan was primarily a hunting and trapping region, with two settlements of significance--Michilimackinac and Detroit. The settlement at Michilimackinac was mainly a transit station. It was little more than a trading post for fur traders and trappers from Montreal and Detroit. Under both French and British regimes, the permanent non-Indian population rarely numbered more than a commandant and a few men.[5] On the other hand, Detroit--"the largest town west of the mountains"--was a stable but expanding frontier outpost; consequently, nearly all slaves in Michigan were held by small farmers in Detroit.[6] From 1706 to 1750, a total of 78 black and Indian slaves were recorded for Detroit;[7] of these, 33 (in a total population of 483) were recorded by French authorities in 1750 alone.[8] In 1765, two

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Katzman, "Black Slavery in Michigan," p. 58.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., p. 65.

[8]Kooker, "The Antislavery Movement in Michigan," p. 45.

years after the Northwest Territory was relinquished to the British, the census of Detroit recorded 60 slaves; in 1773, 75 slaves were reported; in 1778, 127 were enumerated; and in 1782, 178 slaves were recorded.[9] In 1796, when the Old Northwest Territory was transferred to the Americans, the slave population at Detroit peaked at approximately 300.[10] Since the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 banned bringing additional slaves into the Territory, slavery declined steadily thereafter until its official demise upon statehood. In what numbers free blacks were in Michigan during this period is unknown.

As with the South, shortage of labor for both the fur trader and the farmer was the chief factor responsible for the coming of blacks to Michigan. As early as 1688, Governor de Denonville urged King Louis XIV of France to authorize the importation of black slaves to New France to alleviate the labor scarcity.[11] In 1709, slavery was officially established in New France; however, the plantation system envisioned never developed, and seemingly no Africans were imported to Canada.[12] The sources, then, of nearly all slaves in Canada were:

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[9]Katzman, "Black Slavery in Michigan," p. 65. There are discrepancies in the number of slaves reported. Silas Farmer in History of Detroit and Wayne County and Early Michigan reported 96 slaves in Detroit in 1773; 128 in 1778; and 175 in 1782.

[10]Ibid., p. 58.

[11]Ibid., p. 57.

[12]Ibid.

(1) by Indians capturing blacks in forays in outlying southern plantations in Virginia and Kentucky, as well as in New York;[13] (2) by being taken as prisoners by the British during the Revolutionary War;[14] and (3) by being brought in by Virginia planters who settled in the Territory.[15]

In 1810, five years after Michigan was designated as a separate territory, the black population was 144 compared to a total population of 4,762. Of these, 24 were slaves.[16] By now, there were four small centers of occupance within the territorial boundaries: Frenchtown (Monroe), Sault Sainte Marie, Mackinac, and Detroit, with Detroit being the focal point of population for both whites and blacks. One hundred thirteen blacks (71%) resided in the city of Detroit; 13 lived in Macomb County in the District of Erie; two resided in Oakland County, Civil District of Huron; and 16 resided in Michilimackinac District.

As a result of the opening of the Erie Canal which joined Lake Erie to the Atlantic in New York in 1825, the sparsely settled territory began filling in. From New England,

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Kooker, "The Antislavery Movement in Michigan," p. 10.

[15] Ibid., p. 19. Laying claim to the Old Northwest Territory under colonial grants from the English Crown, Virginia made cessions to the Americans in 1784; consequently, any Virginian settling in the Old Northwest could bring his slave into the Territory.

[16] U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Third Census of the United States, 1810, 88.

New York, and Europe streams of immigrants, pouring westward by the Canal and the Great Lakes, rapidly peopled the northern portions of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, as well as the southern sections of Michigan and Wisconsin. Along with the waves of white eastern migrants came rural free yankee blacks, who except for skin color were little different from their counterparts. By 1827 increases in the black population were significantly large for the territorial legislature to pass the black code of Michigan, designated as "An Act to regulate Blacks and Mulattoes , and to punish the Kidnapping of Such Persons."[17] In this first display of anti-black and anti-slaveholder sentiment, which later permeates the decades of the 50's and 60's, the act superficially appeared to protect black settlers. In reality, the law tended to discourage free blacks, fugitive blacks, and slaveholders from entering the growing territory.[18] The main provisions of the law required that blacks possess a valid court attested certificate of freedom in order to enter the territory, to register with the clerk of the county in which they resided, and to post a $500 surety bond as a guarantee of good behavior. Further, it provided that the sheriff arrest all persons accused of of being fugitives, and that anyone aiding escaped slaves

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[17] Laws of the Territory of Michigan, Vol. 1 (Lansing: W. S. George and Co., 1871-74), pp. 484-86.

[18] David M. Katzman, Before the Ghetto, Black Detroit in the 19th Century (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p. 6.

would be subject to punitive fines.[19]

Despite these legal restrictions, the black population in the following 15 years increased appreciably. On the eve of statehood, the federal census enumerated 273 blacks (up from 174 in 1820), in an aggregate population of 31,639.[20] Although 32 of these blacks were listed as slaves, only three (two in Monroe County and one in Cass County) were identified within the present boundaries of Michigan; the remaining slaves were held in Brown, Crawford and Iowa counties which later became part of Wisconsin Territory. At the dawn of statehood, the free black population was enumerated at 379, contrasted with a white population of 174,000.[21] As in previous decades, black settlement radiated largely around the southeastern section of the Lower Peninsula: 60 percent were in Wayne County; 14 percent in Washtenaw County; 9 percent in Monroe County; and 3 percent in Oakland County. The remaining 14 percent were scattered through Calhoun, Jackson, St. Joseph, Chippewa, and Mackinaw counties (in order of concentration).

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[19] Laws of the Territory of Michigan, II, 634-636.

[20] U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Fifth Census of United States, 1830: Population, 153.

[21] Contemporary accounts of the number of blacks in Michigan in 1837 differ; however, no estimate exceeds 400. See George N. Fuller, Economic and Social Beginnings of Michigan, 1807-1837 (Lansing: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, Crawford Co., 1917), p. 537; Manual of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1830, Quoted in Kooker, "The Antislavery Movement in Michigan," p. 263.

The Formative Years: 1837 - 1910

The first relatively large black migration into Michigan began in the 1840's, and continued to 1880. From 379 in 1837, the black population increased to 753 in 1840 (up 93 percent). The 1850 federal census recorded 2,583 blacks (230 percent increase); in 1870, there were 11,849 blacks (359 percent increase over 1850); by 1890 there were 15,223 blacks (up 29 percent); and by 1910, 17,115 (12 percent over 1890) were enumerated. In spite of these large proportional increases, the ratio of black population to total population of Michigan remained less than one percent (Table 1).

Numerous factors could account for the growth of Michigan's black population. Foremost among these was a softening of white hostility toward blacks, manifested in active encouragement of black settlement by whites, especially between 1840 and the Civil War. This must be examined first in the context of the social reform movement which began developing in the East around 1825, concurrently as the Erie Canal began transporting waves of migrants to Michigan. By 1831 the social and moral reform movement swept across not only the northern section of the United States, but Europe as well. Stemming from a growing popular concern for the welfare of the underprivileged persons, the antislavery movement as well as the movements for peace, women's rights, dietary reforms, prison reforms, and temperance movements was one of its manifestations.

As Eastern pioneers moved westward, so did the spirit of the benevolent movement. By 1834 a wave of popular

TABLE 1

BLACK POPULATION OF MICHIGAN, 1810 to 1930

Year	Black	Intercensal % Change	Total Population	% Black
1810	144	--	4,762	3.0%
1820	174	21%	8,765	2.0
1830	273	57	31,639	.9
1840	753	176	212,267	.03
1850	2,583	230	397,654	.06
1860	6,799	160	751,110	.09
1870	11,849	73	1,184,059	1.0
1880	15,100	27	1,636,937	.9
1890	15,223	.8	2,093,890	.7
1900	15,816	3	2,420,982	.7
1910	17,115	8	2,810,173	.6
1920	60,082	251	3,668,412	1.6
1930	169,453	182	4,842,325	3.5

Source: U. S. Censuses, 1810 - 1930

opposition to slavery as an institution began sweeping across Michigan. That year the first antislavery society in Michigan was organized in Lenawee County by Quaker women in the village of Raisin;[22] in 1836, representatives from seven counties gathered in Ann Arbor to found a state antislavery society.[23] By the second half of 1837, four additional antislavery organizations were established in Lenawee County at Franklin and Cambridge; in Livingston County at Green Oak; and in Genesee County at Mount Morris.[24] By 1838, 19 antislavery societies were established in Michigan.[25]

In the vanguard of the antislavery movement were the Quakers; however, several other denominations in Michigan, including Baptists, Wesleyans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists, were almost equally vehement against slavery.[26] This sentiment against slavery found expression not only in the previously mentioned abolition societies, but

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[22]Clarence P. E. Knuth, "Early Immigration and Current Residential Patterns of Negroes in Southwestern Michigan," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1970), p. 13.

[23]Theodore Claire Smith, Liberty and Free Soil Parties in the Northeast (New York: Russell and Russell, 1967), pp. 8-10, 14; and M. M. Quaife and Sidney Glazer, Michigan From Primitive Wilderness to Industrial Commonwealth (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1948), p. 197.

[24]Knuth, "Early Immigration and Current Residential Patterns," p. 14.

[25]George B. Catlin, The Story of Detroit (Detroit: The Detroit News, 1923), p. 322; and Kooker, "The Antislavery Movement in Michigan," p. 80.

[26]Knuth, "Early Immigration and Current Residential Patterns," p. 16.

also in the "Underground Railroad."[27] Established routes allegedly ran from Niles through Cassopolis, Schoolcraft, Climax, Battle Creek and along to Detroit or northward to Port Huron.[28] From these "ports" blacks were helped to reach Canada, though some undoubtedly remained in Michigan.

Simultaneously as the antislavery advocates were encouraging black settlement in Michigan, there was a curtailment of rights of free blacks in slave and border states. Partly in response to abolitionist activities, and partly in response to the collapse of the traditional agricultural structure in the Tidewater states, free urban blacks, especially in Virginia, encountered increasingly oppressive treatment in the form of tightening enforcement of black codes,

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[27]In recent years the legacy of the Underground Railroad has come under dispute. In their evaluation of the Underground Railroad, revisionist historians, pointing to the dearth of contemporary sources, support the thesis that the Underground Railroad has been glamorized and overstated, and thus, "neither as important nor as successful as it has sometimes been portrayed." See Larry Gara, The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961).

[28]From a composite map of reported underground routes to Canada, reconstructed by Siebert, three major routes are identified in Michigan. Running parallel to the south shore of Lake Michigan, the first route enters southwestern Michigan near Cassopolis, passing through Schoolcraft, Battle Creek, Marshall, bifurcating with a minor route traversing Lansing, Durand to Port Huron; with another minor route traversing Jackson, Leoni, Ann Arbor, Farmington to Detroit. From Angola, Indiana, the second route enters south-central Michigan near Coldwater, passing through Centre, Springfield, Cambridge, Saline to Ypsilanti, terminating in Detroit. The third route enters southeastern Michigan from Toledo, running through Blissfield, Adrian, Clinton to Detroit. See Wilbur H. Siebert, The Underground Railroad From Slavery to Freedom (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1898).

unemployment, riots, lynchings, social alienation, and threats of deportation to Africa.[29] Many sought to escape this repression by emigrating: first to the Appalachians, later into the Ohio Valley, and eventually pouring northward into Michigan, when the former locations proved hostile.

Hearing of Michigan's reputation as "gateway to freedom" (especially as a result of abolitionists' intervention in the celebrated Crosswhite case[30] and, to a lesser extent, the Underground Railroad), the tradesmen, the mechanics, and the farmers came--from the Carolinas, Virginia, Kentucky, and Ohio--settling in two major zones in Michigan (Fig. 1). The first zone--the focus of earliest black and white settlement in the southeastern corridor of the state--consisted of Wayne, Washtenaw, Macomb, Monroe, and Oakland counties, with a more recent addition of St. Clair County. Sixty-one percent of the 753 blacks in the State were located here in 1840.[31] One hundred ninety three blacks were situated in the city of

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[29]Knuth, "Early Immigration and Current Residential Patterns," pp. 18-26; and David M. Katzman, "Early Settlers in Michigan," Michigan Challenge 8 (June 1968): 10-11.

[30]In an attempt by Kentucky slave hunters to recapture and extradite the Crosswhite Family of Marshall in 1847, local abolitionists intervened and the Kentuckians were detained by legal authorities while the Crosswhites escaped to Canada. Drawing national attention and southern scorn, the incident, supposedly, influenced the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850.

[31]U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Sixth Census of the United States, 1840: Population, 171.

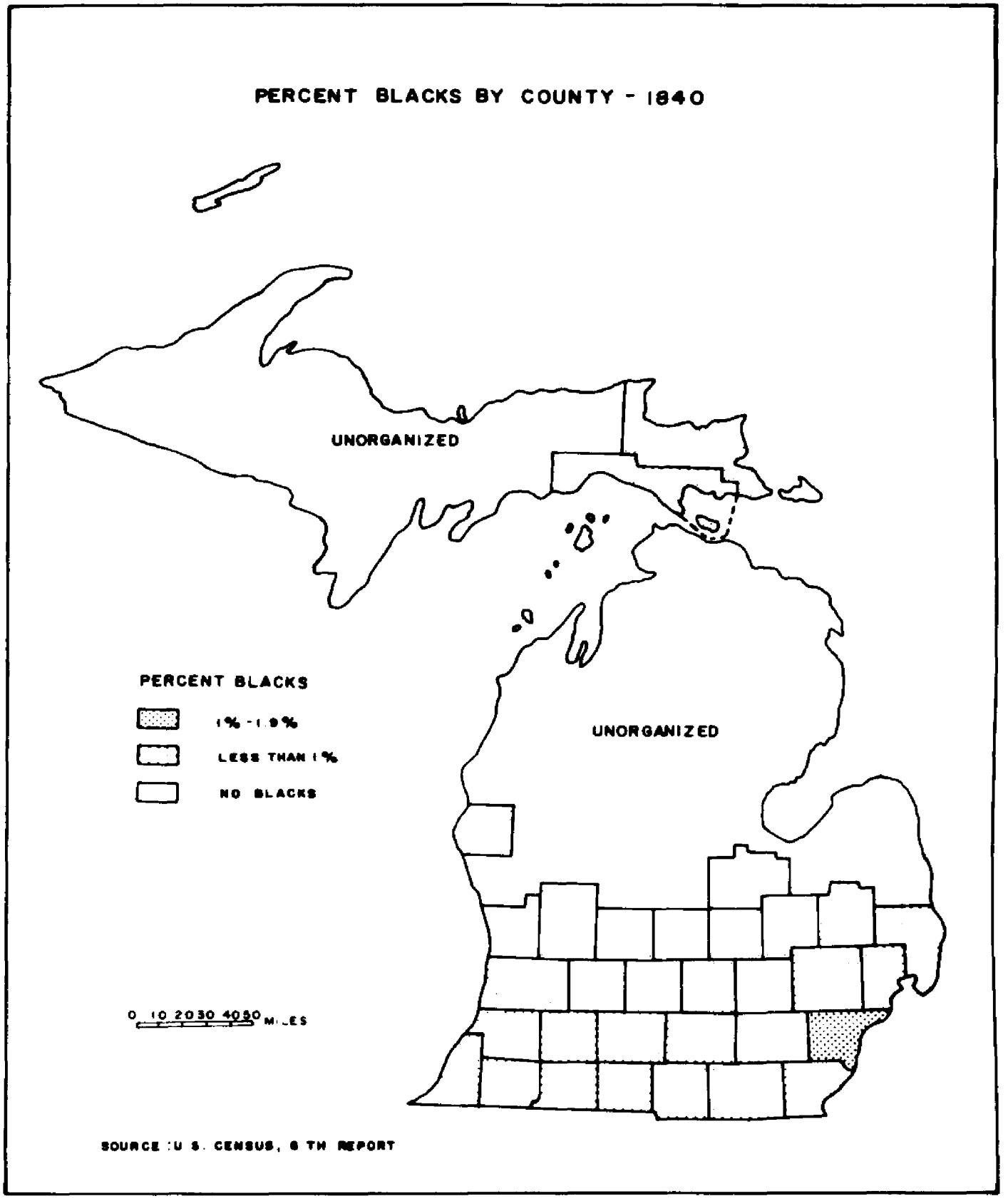
PERCENT BLACKS BY COUNTY - 1840
UNORGANIZED
UNORGANIZED
PERCENT BLACKS
1% - 1.9%
LESS THAN 1%
NO BLACKS
0 10 20 30 40 50 MILES
SOURCE : U S. CENSUS, 6 TH REPORT

Figure 1

Detroit, alone; the others settled near agrarian Quaker settlements in western Wayne County, near Greenfield Township, Plymouth, Livonia, Springwells, and Brownstown; in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Pittsfield in Washtenaw County; at Farmington, Pontiac and Royal Oak in Oakland County; in Warren and Sterling in Macomb County; at Raisinsville and Monroe in Monroe County; and at Port Huron in St. Clair County.

The second zone of concentration emerged in the vicinity of abolitionist centers in south-central and southwestern Michigan. In the southernmost tier of counties--Berrien, Lenawee, Cass, St. Joseph, Branch, and Hillsdale--along the Ohio and Indiana borders, black settlement became prominent. From this tier of counties, the black population progressed northward generally in small numbers, to Kalamazoo, Calhoun, Jackson, Genesee, and Lapeer counties. More importantly, within these counties blacks were again localized in or near townships noted for Quaker sentiment. Leading centers of black settlement were Niles and St. Joseph in Berrien County; in Calhoun County, Battle Creek, and Marshall; in Hillsdale County, Fayette; at Flint in Genesee County, in Parma and Jackson in Jackson County; at Oshtomo and Kalamazoo in Kalamazoo County; at Lapeer in Lapeer County; and in Lenawee County at Adrian, Madison, and Macon. Many of these were sites of the earliest antislavery societies, as well as alleged stations on the Underground Railroad.

In the 1850 census, the black population showed heavy immigration; 2,583 blacks were recorded for Michigan (up 340

percent over 1840).[32] However, no significant changes were noted in the pattern of distribution. The two zones identified in the previous decade served as strong magnets for the newcomers; the villages, hamlets, and townships which experienced increases in 1840 now witnessed an even greater concentration. In the southeastern corridor, for example, the cities of Detroit, Ann Arbor, and Ypsilanti more than doubled their black population (from 193 to 587, from 0 to 79, and from 5 to 76, respectively). Augusta and York (small villages in Washtenaw County) also had substantial increases in black population. Pontiac, Royal Oak, Monroe, Macomb and Port Huron were still nuclei of black settlements in their respective counties.

In the second zone in southcentral and southwestern Michigan, many abolitionist centers which had small black populations in 1840 now included sizable increases. Berrien County, for example, increased from 39 to 239: Cass County from 6 to 309; Lenawee County from 33 to 92; Calhoun County from 23 to 207; Jackson from 26 to 85; and Kalamazoo from 14 to 99. Among villages, hamlets, and townships which experienced marked increases were Battle Creek, Emmet Township and Marshall (Calhoun County); city of Jackson (Jackson County); Kalamazoo (Kalamazoo County); and Adrian, Madison, and Woodstock (Lenawee County). By then Michigan's frontier

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[32]U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Population, 1:886-896.

had inched northward because most land was settled in the two southernmost tier counties; and along with it, blacks pushed slowly into third and fourth tier counties. Allegan, Eaton, Ionia, Clinton and Livingston which had no blacks in 1840, now had from 2 to 8 blacks; other counties revealed slightly larger increases: Barry (39), Ingham (25), Kent (34), Lapeer (22), Ottawa (39), and Genesee (28). Approximately seven percent of the black population was located within these two northern tiers.

In this decade, the embryo of a third pattern of distribution was developing. Into the lumbering and mining regions of the northern Lower Peninsula and Upper Peninsula, into the counties of Chippewa, Houghton, Midland and Ontonogon, blacks trickled.

By 1860, the black population reached 6,799, as compared to a total population of 751,110, with the surge occurring in the latter half of the decade.[33] From 1850 to 1854, the black population increased slowly from 2,583 to 3,338.[34] The slow growth apparently may be attributed to the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. The object of this law was to return escaped slaves to their owners. In general it provided: (1) that escaped slaves who were arrested were not entitled to

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[33]U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Population, 3: 232-233.

[34]Michigan, Department of State, Census and Statistics of the State of Michigan, 1854, 1:379.

writ of habeas corpus; (2) that United States marshalls were required to make arrests and if they refused, they were liable to a fine of $1,000 and for the cost of the slave; (3) that marshalls and commissioners were empowered to call upon bystanders to assist in making captures, and if a citizen refused, he could be imprisoned six months, and fined $1,000 and made liable for $1,000 damages; (4) that the commissioner be allotted a ten dollar fee, if he decided for the master, and a five dollar fee, if he decided for the slave; and (5) that any persons aiding a fugitive could be fined $1,000 or imprisoned up to six months.[35] As a result of these stringent measures, not only escaped slaves, but free blacks as well, lived in constant fear. Being denied due process of law, they could be arrested under false pretense of former ownership and remanded to slavery. Consequently, many blacks emigrated to Canada. In 1855, Michigan enacted personal liberty laws which nullified the Fugitive Slave Act, again making the state attractive to black settlers.

With the onset of the 1860 decade the framework for the pattern of distribution which was to prevail until about 1910 was entrenched. Blacks were highly concentrated in two distinct regions: the southeastern corner of the state in the counties of Wayne, Washtenaw, Oakland, Monroe, Macomb, and St. Clair, with 44 percent of the total black population

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[35]William Hobart, "Marshall Men and Marshall Measures," Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collection 29 (1899): 267.

(2,968); and the rural southwestern corner of the State consisting of Berrien, Cass, Van Buren, St. Joseph and Allegan counties, with 27 percent 1,898 of the population (Figure 2).

The remaining blacks were dispersed in two general areas: around the agricultural villages in southcentral Michigan and in the forest and mining regions in the northern counties. In southcentral Michigan, blacks began abandoning (and continued to do so until the twentieth century) the declining farm areas--often the site of earlier abolitionist centers, as well as earlier nuclei of black settlements in the State--for probably the growing hamlets and villages of the day, in many instances, in the same county. For example, rural hamlets such as Coldwater in Branch County, Emmet Township in Calhoun County, and Hillsdale in Hillsdale County lost black population, while villages such as Battle Creek and Marshall in Calhoun County, Jackson in Jackson County, Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo County, and Lansing, Ingham County experienced twofold or more growth in black population. Genesee, Ionia, Eaton, Branch, Barry, and Hillsdale counties experienced small absolute increases in black population. In spite of these minor shifts in population, the general pattern was unaltered.

In the forest and mining regions, blacks were concentrated in newly formed milltowns--East Saginaw, Muskegon, Lowell, Grand Rapids, Ottawa, and parts of Mecosta County in the Northern Lower Peninsula and, in mining towns--Houghton, Ontonagon, Holmes, Marquette, and parts of Chippewa County

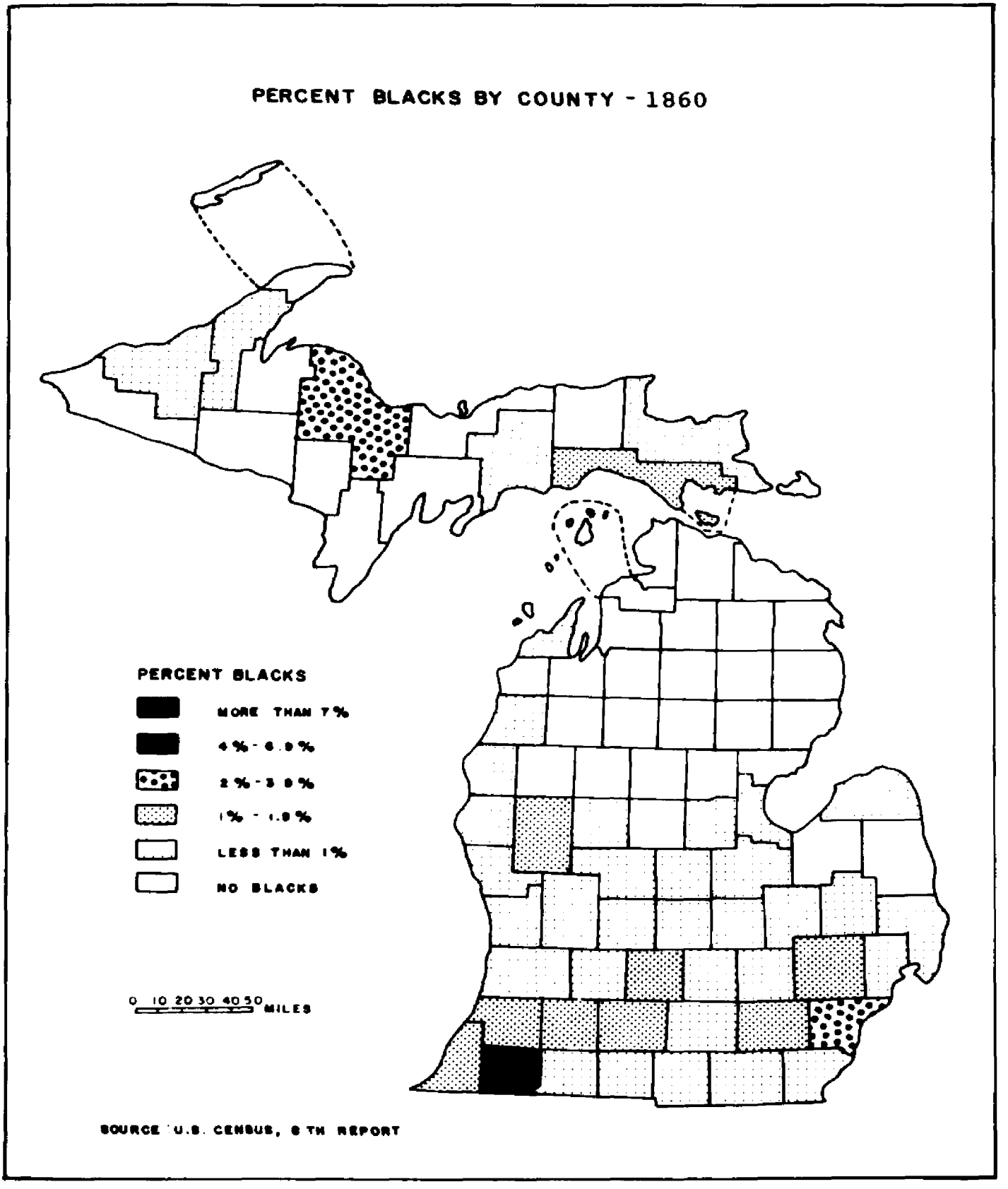
PERCENT BLACKS BY COUNTY - 1860
PERCENT BLACKS
MORE THAN 7%
4% - 6.9%
2% - 3.9%
1% - 1.9%
LESS THAN 1%
NO BLACKS
0 10 20 30 40 50 MILES
SOURCE U.S. CENSUS, 8TH REPORT

Figure 2

in the Upper Peninsula. It should be stressed that although the number of blacks involved in mining and lumbering was small, their role is important in an understanding of black settlement in Michigan.

Between 1880 and 1910, the decline of black populations in small centers which affected the early abolitionist centers in 1860, now spread to other zones of black concentrations. With black immigration but a trickle, the black population (as well as white) in the smaller centers (population less than 2,500), declined steadily, while middle size centers (2,500 to 25,000) rose in black population.[36] This is reflected in the peak of the rural black population in 1880 at 54 percent (8,000), and the steady decline thereafter, though Michigan's total black population increased in numbers.[37] Despite the loss of blacks in the small rural centers in all four zones of settlement, the general pattern of distribution remained intact until approximately 1910.

Migration and Urban Growth: 1910 to 1930

In the early twentieth century, Michigan experienced a phenomenal increase in its black population. In 1900, there were 15,816 blacks; they represented seven-tenths of

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[36]Amos H. Hawley, The Population of Michigan 1840 to 1960: An Analysis of Growth, Distribution and Composition, University of Michigan Governmental Studies, No. 19 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1949), p. 32.

[37]U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Population, 1: 213-221.

one percent of the population of the state. By 1930, the black population numbered 169,453 and comprised 3.5 percent of the total population. A more dramatic statistic, however, is not directly revealed by the preceding figures, but is derived therefrom: between 1900 and 1930, Michigan experienced a 100 percent increase in total population, but in the same thirty year period, it experienced a 971 percent increase in black population!

Two questions immediately arise when population change, such as that evidenced by the foregoing data, occurs on a relatively large scale: where did they come from and why?

Migration was the major factor in the growth of Michigan's black community. Over 80% of its black population in 1920 was born in states other than Michigan. Unlike immigration in the 19th century, in which the majority of blacks moved to Michigan from the Border States, the largest portions of these migrants originated in the Deep South: Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Louisiana, Arkansas, South Carolina, Texas, and Florida. Upper South and Border states (Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, District of Columbia, West Virginia, Oklahoma, and Delaware) were a secondary source of Michigan's black population; only 22.7 percent came from these states as opposed to 45 percent from the Deep South. The states located directly south of Michigan supplied the larger segment of the population from the Deep South and Border states.[38]

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[38]U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Population

Several factors explain this massive population movement to the North, in general, and to Michigan, in particular. Foremost among these were economic and social 'push and Pull" factors. In the South, mechanization of agriculture; crop failures, especially during 1915 and 1916; reduction of cotton acreage; natural disasters associated with the boll weevil (in 1892), 1915, and 1916) and floods on the Mississippi River--all tended to push blacks out of the South. Various social conditions, such as lynchings, terrorism, unfairness in the courts, poor educational systems, discrimination, segregation, and disenfranchisement, aggravated the economic conditions and further forced blacks away from the South.

Simultaneously, "pull" factors were beckoning people north. The labor shortage which developed during World War I was undoubtedly the strongest attraction. With immigrants returning to Europe and with immigration cut off, first by the war, and later by restrictive legislation, automobile and other industries turned to southern blacks and whites to fill the labor shortage; recruiting agents brought blacks in by trainloads to fill jobs in automobile, steel, and meat packing industries, to mention only a few. A second "potent lure" for southern blacks was certainly the five dollar a day minimum wage for all workers instituted by Henry Ford in 1914.[39] In fact, this has been accredited with marking the beginning

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2: 636-638.

[39]Joel D. Aberbach and Jack L. Walker, Race in the City Political Trust and Public Policy in the New Urban System (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1913), p. 9.

of the "great migration." These centripetal forces, in addition to shorter working days than on farms, less political and social discrimination than in the South, better educational facilities, and persuasion of friends and relatives already in Michigan acted as magnets drawing blacks to Michigan.[40]

Perhaps as interesting as the migration of blacks is the question of their distribution within the State. Prior to 1910, as has been noted, the majority of Michigan's blacks lived in rural areas of the state--in the rural hinterland of Detroit, around agricultural villages in southcentral and southwestern Michigan, in the mining region of the Upper Peninsula and in the lumbering areas around Saginaw Bay and in the vicinity of the Muskegon River. Since 1910, the trend in black population has been to urban sectors of Michigan, a part of the national trend of rural to urban migration.

In 1910, 71 percent (12,156) of the black population lived in urban areas. Fifty-four percent (9,244) of the total resided in cities with populations 25,000 and above. Some of the cities within this category, listed according to percentage of the total black population, are as follows: Detroit, 24%, Kalamazoo, 6%, Grand Rapids, 3.8%, Battle Creek, 3.4%, Flint, 2.3%, Jackson and Lansing, 2.1%, Saginaw, 1.8% and Bay City, .9%. Seven percent (1,198) of the total black population was concentrated in Ann Arbor, Pontiac, Norway, Benton

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[40]Eunice Grier and George Grier, "The Negro Migration," pp. 17-20, and C. Horace Hamilton, "The Negro Leaves the South," p. 278.

Harbor, Dowagiac, Niles and St. Joseph (in order of concentration).[41]

As the automobile industry continued its expansion during the 1920's, Michigan continued to attract a steadily increasing flow of black workers from the South. The supply of those eager to migrate north was ensured by the lingering depression in the cotton economy after World War I, and the spreading mechanization of southern agriculture. Thus, by 1920, the black population of Michigan increased 251 percent (60,082) over the previous decade, representing 1.6 percent of the total population of the State; by 1930 it had reached 169,453--a 182 percent increase over 1920, and 251 percent increase over 1910, and it comprised 3.5 percent of the total population of Michigan.[42]

The bulk of this growth was concentrated in the large urban and industrial centers in the southern half of the Lower Peninsula (Figure 3). Of the four major centers of black population growth in the North--New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Detroit--the greatest relative increase in black population occurred in Detroit, where numbers increased from 5,741 in 1910 to 40,838 in 1920 or 611.3 percent; in 1930, 120,006 blacks--194 percent increase over 1920, and 1,990 percent

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[41] U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population 2: 932-948.

[42] U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Population 3: 1147-1153.

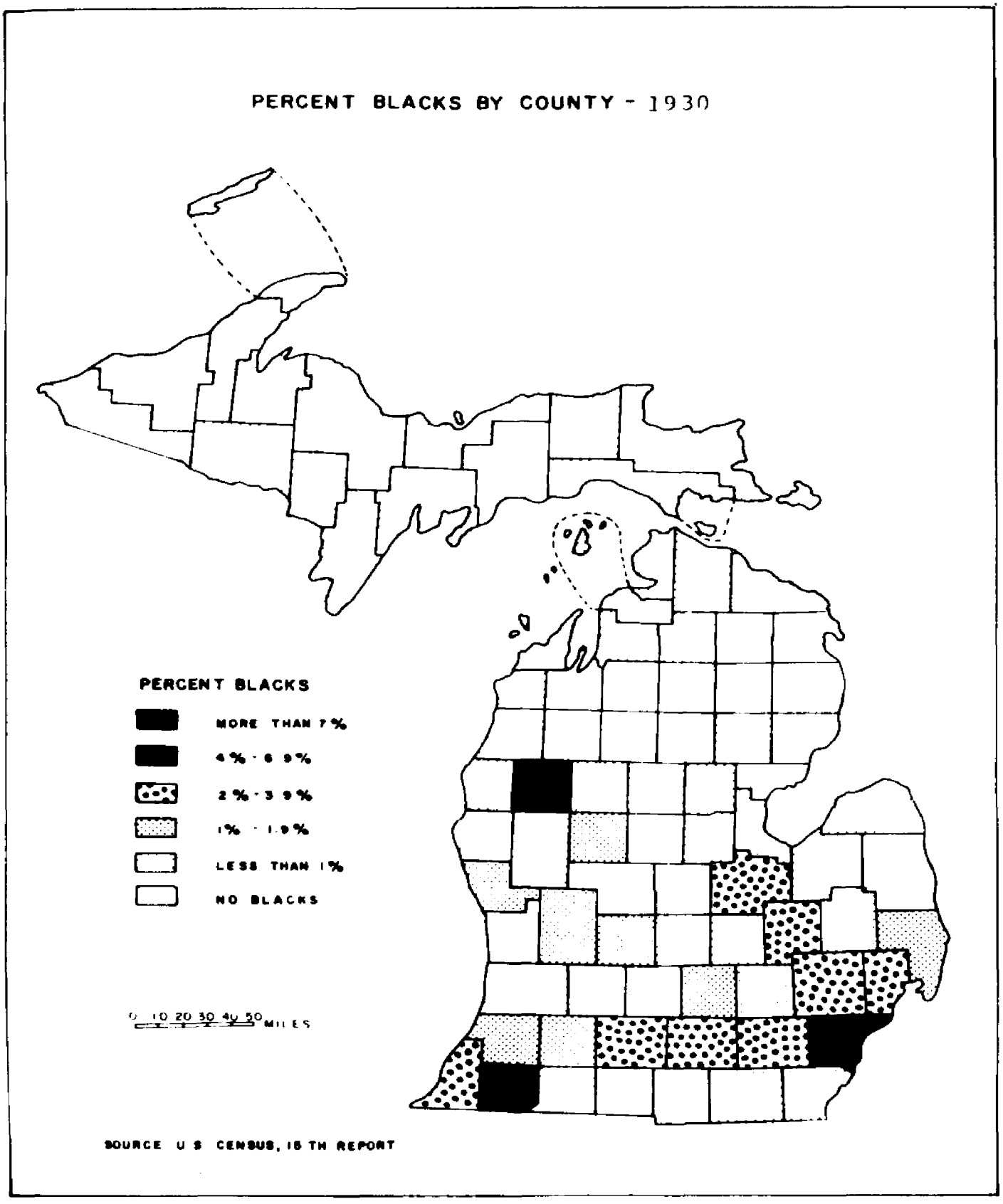
PERCENT BLACKS BY COUNTY - 1930
PERCENT BLACKS
MORE THAN 7%
4% - 6.9%
2% - 3.9%
1% - 1.9%
LESS THAN 1%
NO BLACKS
0 10 20 30 40 50 MILES
SOURCE U S CENSUS, 15 TH REPORT

Figure 3

CHAPTER III

BLACKS IN BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN

Having determined to some extent the general distribution and movement of blacks in Michigan, an examination of the genesis, growth, and migration of the black community in Battle Creek, Michigan is clearly essential. More specifically, in this chapter, the conditions and characteristics underlying the spatial distribution of blacks in Battle Creek will be examined. Some of the questions to be answered are: Who were the first blacks to come to Battle Creek? Where did they come from? What was the basis for the early twentieth century migration? And where did the recent migrants come from?

Before proceeding to the development of the black community, limitations of the data for this chapter will be discussed briefly. In the words of Richard Wade:

> In reconstructing the urban experience of the American people, for example, scholars are never quite sure how many people lived in a city at a particular time, how long they had been there, where they came from, or how long they stayed. It is no problem to identify the prominent, the rich and the successful, or even the notorious. Yet the ordinary are easily lost in the fragmentary documentation that survives the attrition of time.[1]

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[1]Richard Wade, Foreword to The Plain People of Boston 1830-1860, by Peter R. Knights (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. v.

In the same vein, blacks are most often lost in the attrition of time, with blacks of Battle Creek being no exception. In addition to very little published information on blacks in Battle Creek, there are few private papers of community leaders, few memoirs, few diaries, few letters, and few church records to reconstruct the early formation of the black community of Battle Creek. Nevertheless, the "influx, flux, and efflux" of the city's black population did not go completely unregistered, and it is primarily from materials meant for ephemeral use such as manuscript censuses, tax assessment rolls, newspapers, along with interviews with older residents, that some of the story of the genesis and growth of the black community of Battle Creek may be reconstructed. Even though the sketchy and incomplete data hinder a total analysis of the black community of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is the responsibility of the social scientist to ask questions about phenomena for which little information has been gathered. With this in mind, the beginnings of the black community, and the later growth and migration will be discussed.

The Origin of Battle Creek

Battle Creek is situated in Calhoun County in the southcentral section of Michigan, midway between Chicago (162 miles northeast) and Detroit (114 miles west). Several central cities surround it: Kalamazoo, 24 miles west; Jackson, 44 miles east, and Lansing, 47 miles northeast (Figure 4).

The origin of Battle Creek dates to 1831, when Sands McCamly and George Redfield, "appreciating the value of the

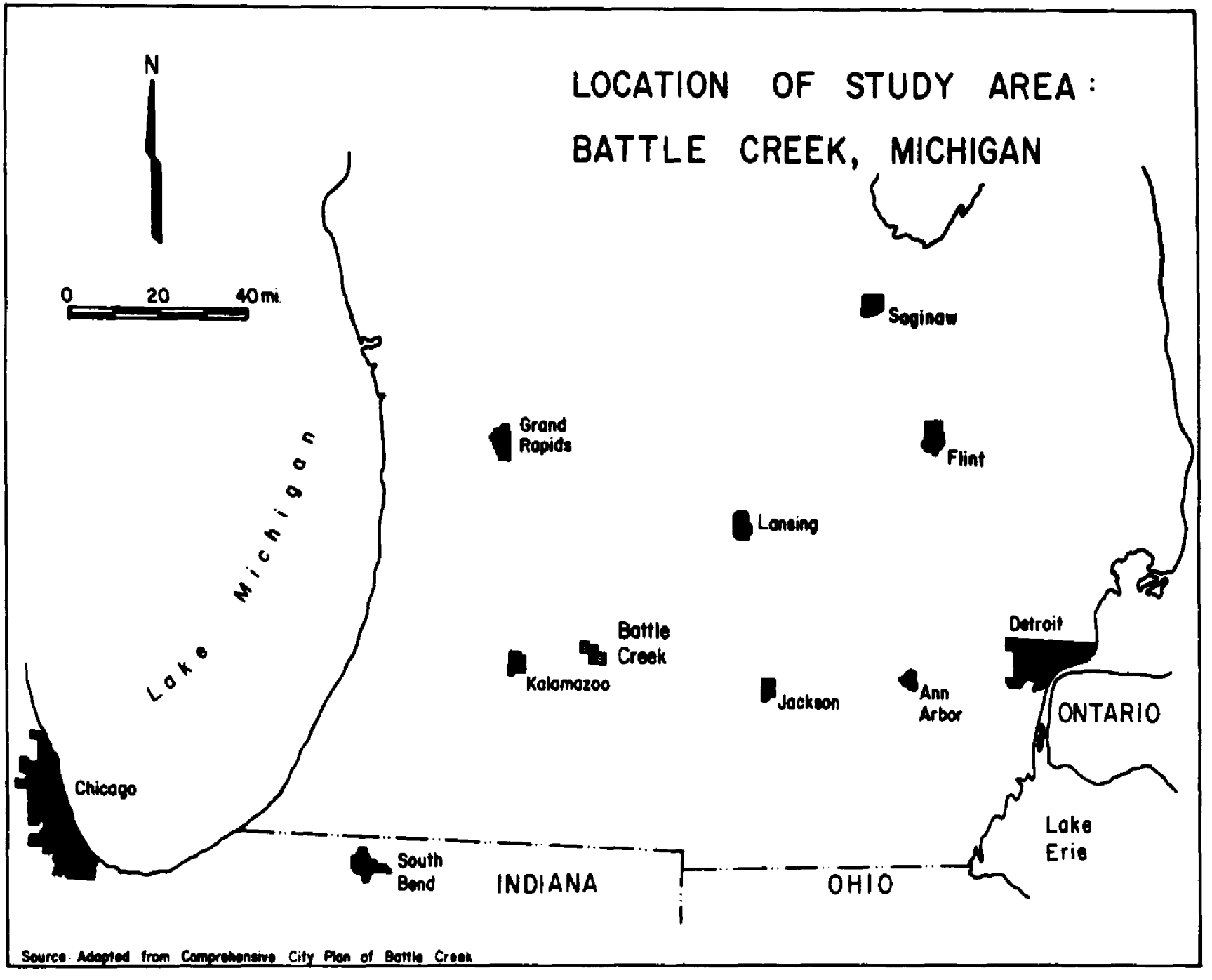
LOCATION OF STUDY AREA:
BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN
N
0 20 40 mi.
Lake Michigan
Chicago
South Bend
INDIANA
OHIO
Lake Erie
ONTARIO
Grand Rapids
Saginaw
Flint
Lansing
Battle Creek
Kalamazoo
Jackson
Ann Arbor
Detroit
Source: Adapted from Comprehensive City Plan of Battle Creek

Figure 4

site for (water) power, decided to purchase the land which lies in the valley about at the convergence of the Kalamazoo and Battle Creek Rivers."[2] When McCamly and Redfield arrived at the land office in White Pigeon, three others were there interested in purchasing the same land.[3] Thus, the area was bought by the entire group and plans were laid for the development of Battle Creek.

In 1836, with a population of 400, the village was platted.[4] The following year, the erection of the first grist mill marked the local industrial development,[5] and pioneer industries such as planing mills, grist mills, wood cording mills, and wagon factories soon emerged in Battle Creek.[6] By 1845 the first railroad reached Battle Creek, followed in 1848 by Nichols and Shepard Company, an agricultural machinery manufacturer.[7] This expansion of transportation and industry provided momentum to community development, and by 1850, with a population of 1,064, Battle Creek was incorporated as a village, followed in 1859 with incorporation as a city. With

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[2]H. Thompson Straw, "Battle Creek: A Study in Urban Geography," Part II, Papers Michigan Academy Science, Arts, and Letters 22 (1936): 71-72.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Harland Bartholomew et al., Comprehensive City Plan: Battle Creek, Michigan, Chapter II: Economic Background, 1949, p. 4.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Straw, "Battle Creek," p. 74.

[7]Bartholomew, Comprehensive City Plan, p. 4.

the coming of the railroad, the pioneer industries declined; Battle Creek became an "agricultural trading hub" for surrounding farming areas--a preeminence it maintained well into the twentieth century.

More importantly, however, in shaping and directing the development of Battle Creek were the decisions of the Seventh Day Adventists to move their headquarters in 1855 and their publication offices in 1861 to the city. Stressing temperance and health reform, the Seventh Day Adventists indirectly made Battle Creek renown as "food city" and "health city."[8] Incorporating their ideas of dietary and health reform, the Western Reform Institute was established in Battle Creek in 1866, from which the Battle Creek Sanitarium was developed a decade later. With the development of the breakfast food factories in the 1890's, Battle Creek's future growth and prosperity was partially insured: Battle Creek was to become the food cereal capital of the nation. By 1930, Battle Creek functioned primarily as a manufacturing center: food cereal, and machinery and equipment manufacturers were the most important industries.[9]

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[8]"Food city" emanated from the Seventh Day Adventist's ideas about diet in which they advocated a vegetarian diet of cereal, fruit, and vegetables, and an avoidance of coffee, tea, liquor, pork, and highly seasoned foods; "health city" ensued from their beliefs related to treatment of disease, i.e., by use of water, air, and light, with little or no assistance from drugs.

[9]In 1930, approximately 42% of the work force was in manufacturing. Of this percent, 13% were employed in cereal processing; 11% in steel machinery and industries. The remaining 18% were dispersed between manufacturing printing presses,

Black Beginnings in Battle Creek

The exact date when the first black settler appeared in Battle Creek is unknown; however, as early as 1840 two blacks were identified in Battle Creek. Erastus Hussey mentioned Samuel Strauther (sic), "a colored man" as one of the five antislavery men in the city at the time of the organization of the Underground Railroad.[10] It is questionable if Strothers was indeed in the village of Battle Creek, for no documentation, excepting the above, could be found. The 1840 census was fruitless in establishing Strothers as a resident of Battle Creek, for not until 1850 was the Village enumerated separately from the township.[11] Moreover, in 1847, Strothers was recorded as selling property in "East Battle Creek" in Emmet township.[12] In 1850, he was listed, once again, not in the village of Battle Creek, but at the outskirts of East

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gas and electric ranges, and a sundry of smaller items. See Straw, "Battle Creek," p. 80.

[10]Charles E. Barnes, "Battle Creek as a Station on the Underground Railroad," Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections 38 (1912): 280.

[11]The 1840 manuscript census enumerated six blacks (not by name, unfortunately) in Battle Creek Township. A breakdown by age and sex revealed two females: one between 1 and 10 and one between 24 and 36. Four males were listed: one between 5 and 10; one between 10 and 24; and two between 24 and 36. Based on his age in the 1850 census, Strothers could have been one of the men between 24 and 36; however, the evidence is inconclusive to establish him in the Township.

[12]Record of Deeds, Calhoun County, Book 31, p. 837. It should be noted that the incorporated village of Battle Creek straddled two townships--Emmet and Battle Creek. However, the plat known as "East Battle Creek" in Emmet Township which was resurveyed in 1849 was not included in the 1850 census as a portion of the village of Battle Creek.

Battle Creek.[13] Could Strothers have been in so-called East Battle Creek from 1840 onward? The available data preclude an answer; however, in all probability, Strothers was in the vicinity of Battle Creek as early as 1840.

Lewis and Louise Jackson made up the other black family in Battle Creek in 1840. According to the record of deeds, the Jacksons purchased one-fifth acre of land in the town of Milton (Battle Creek) on March 14, 1840.[14] Little is known of the Jacksons. When they arrived in Battle Creek and why, is open to speculation.[15]

Among the initial black settlers was John J. Evans, whose arrival in Battle Creek in 1845 is more eagerly recounted by local historians. Evans was born in Cherokee County, Georgia on March 13, 1840 to free parents. A recount of the family's journey as it appeared in the Detroit Journal in 1892 follows:

> In 1845 his father imbued with the belief that the north presented better advantages for the success of his family than did the

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[13]Tax and Assessment Rolls, Calhoun County, Vol. 6, 1849-50; and 1850 Manuscript Census, Calhoun County. In addition to land sold in East Battle Creek in 1847, Strothers sold property in East Battle Creek to Joseph Skipworth in November, 1848; to Henry Denman in January, 1850; and to John Simpson in September, 1850. Further, in 1849 and 1850, he was assessed property tax on land he owned at the outskirts of East Battle Creek. Having searched the records of deeds thoroughly, no record of his purchasing or his being granted the land by the Government could be found.

[14]Record of Deeds, Calhoun County, Book 12, p. 242.

[15]The Jacksons are credited with being the parents of the first black child born in Battle Creek. Their son, John H. Jackson, was born in 1842. See: "Obituary John H. Jackson," Battle Creek Daily Journal, March 18, 1895.

> slave states, so he came to Indiana. This was the time when refugee colored families were hunted down by owners, and Indiana was a most convenient state for these repeated raids. Fearing for the safety of his family, he arranged to bring them further north, when death overtook him.... The mother's indomitable will, however, was guided by her late husband's counsel, and she concluded to carry out the idea of getting the family further north, so she started for Cass County, Michigan. Not liking the surroundings there, she came to this city, the whole journey from the south being completed during the year 1845....[16]

Five years later when the manuscript census was conducted, the Evans family was located in Emmet township (East Battle Creek).[17]

In 1847, a small party of blacks settled in or near Battle Creek. Cass County, a well known haven for fugitive slaves, was raided by Kentucky planters in August of that year. As a result, 45 blacks fleeing from there enroute to Canada, allegedly via the Underground Railroad, stopped to rest overnight in Battle Creek.[18] Of this group, William Casey, Perry Sandford, Joseph Skipworth and Thomas Henderson elected to remain in Battle Creek.[19] In addition to these whom local historians reported stayed in Battle Creek, Nelson Stephens and his family were probably among those who remained. According

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[16]"J. J. Evans, A Handsome Complimentary Sketch in the Detroit Journal," Battle Creek Daily Journal, April 14, 1892.

[17]1850 Manuscript Census, Calhoun County.

[18]Barnes, "Battle Creek as a Station on the Underground Railroad," p. 283.

[19]These men and their families added at least 16 people to the population. See: 1850 Manuscript Census, Calhoun County.

to a biographical sketch of Perry Sandford, Casey, Stephens, and he originated from the same general area in Kentucky; all fled to Cass County within short periods of each other; and all were in Cass County at the time of the raid.[20] Thus, in all probability, they fled from Cass County together. In any case, in 1849, Nelson Stephens was recorded as a property owner in Battle Creek.[21]

These people--the Strothers, the Jacksons, the Evans and those who followed shortly afterwards--formed the nucleus for a settlement of blacks in Battle Creek. By 1849, there were enough blacks in Battle Creek to formally organize the Second Baptist Church. By 1850, the black population was 34, contrasted to a total population of 1,064.[22] In addition to this number, Battle Creek's black community also included a number of blacks in East Battle Creek--many of whom apparently considered themselves a part of the growing community of Battle Creek, for they helped organize the black church in Battle Creek.[23]

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[20]"Out of Bondage, A Reminiscence of the Underground Railroad--How Perry Sandford Escaped from Slavery as told by Perry Sandford in August, 1884," Clipping in Wiegmink, Early Days of Battle Creek Scrapbook, p. 679. Sandford also listed George Hamilton as among the group who fled from Kentucky. Born in Kentucky, he may have been from the same general area. However, he apparently did not escape the same time as Casey et al. for he purchased land in Bedford township in Calhoun County in 1842. See: Record of Deeds, Calhoun County, Book 22, p. 100. By 1850, he was in Emmet township (East Battle Creek) and then married to widow Evans.

[21]Tax Assessment Rolls, Calhoun County, 1849.

[22]1850 Manuscript Census, Calhoun County.

[23]According to the Manuscript Census, 59 blacks were in Emmet township in 1850.

Forming 3.9 percent of the population in 1850, the black population was unusually high, as compared to the six-tenth percent black for the State as a whole. Conditions which made Battle Creek favorable for black settlement could probably be accounted for by the presence of a large number of Quakers among the citizenry of early Battle Creek.[24] As noted previously, Quakers were foremost in aiding and abetting the abolitionist movement, and Quakers of Battle Creek were no exception. In fact, "the stronghold of the abolitionists in central Michigan was the little brown Quaker meeting house in Battle Creek."[25] Beginning in 1840 and continuing to the Civil War, the Underground Railroad, allegedly operated in Battle Creek, with Erastus Hussey, a Quaker, the stationmaster. Although the importance of the railway is being questioned, it apparently accounted for a sizable number of the earliest blacks in Battle Creek prior to 1850: at least five of the nine black families mentioned here were fugitive slaves, arriving most likely via the Underground Railroad.

Growth of the Black Population: 1860-1900

During the 1850's and 1860's the population of the city of Battle Creek experienced tremendous growth, and the small black settlement attracted an increasing number of blacks.

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[24]"Slavery and the Underground Railroad," in Michigan Since 1815, ed. Ferris Lewis (Hillsdale, Michigan: Hillsdale Educational Pub., 1973), p. 46.

[25]Anson Du Puy Van Buren, "History of Churches in Battle Creek" Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections 5 (1883): 290.

The total population increased by 122% in 1860, bringing the total population to 3,359; and by 1870, a 74% increase over 1860, placed it at 5,838. For the same period, the growth of the black population was even more dramatic: from 34 in 1850, the population jumped to 155 in 1860--a 356% increase over 1850; and to 315 by 1870--a 103% increase over 1860. The black proportion of total population increased from 3.3% in 1850 to 5.2% in 1870 (Table 2).[26]

Numerous factors could account for this growth. For the town in general, employment opportunities in the developing industries constituted a constant attraction for pioneers.[27] For blacks, in particular, it seems not to have been the employment opportunities accompanying the industrial growth which attracted them to Battle Creek. They did not, generally, leave their place of origin planning to settle in Battle Creek, but were, in all probability, seeking safety/freedom and economic opportunity wherever possible. Having ventured to Battle Creek and finding a favorable environment, both in terms of receptivity and employment, many blacks undoubtedly chose to remain.

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[26] Census of United States, 1850-1870.

[27] In 1850, 19 business firms in Battle Creek had an annual value little over $500 and a total annual value of merchandise of $142,524. By 1860, the number of business enterprises with annual value over $500 rose to 43 and the total annual value of merchandising was $562.88. Agricultural enterprises and farm productivity both witnessed the same progress. See: Ruthven Prime, "Battle Creek, 1850-1860: A Political History," Student Paper, Andrews University, May 28, 1971, p. 22.

TABLE II

GROWTH OF BLACK POPULATION OF BATTLE CREEK:
1850 - 1930

Year	Total Pop.	Increase No.	Increase %	Black Pop.	Increase No.	Increase %	% Black
1850	1,064	--	--	34	--	--	3.3
1860	3,359	1,295	121.7	155	121	355.9	4.5
1870	5,838	2,479	73.8	315	160	103.2	5.2
1880	7,063	1,225	21.0	270	-45	-14.3	3.8
1890	13,197	6,134	86.8	355	85	31.5	2.7
1900	18,563	5,366	40.7	525	170	47.9	2.8
1910	25,267	6,704	36.1	575	50	9.5	2.3
1920	30,164	10,897	43.1	1,055	480	83.5	2.9
1930	43,573	7,409	20.1	1,795	740	70.1	4.0

Source: U. S. Census of Population: 1850 - 1930.

More important in explaining the growth of the black population in Battle Creek during the 50's and 60's was the increasing hostility of whites towards blacks, especially in the border states and Midwest in the years prior to and during the Civil War. Emanating partly from sectional conflicts between the North and the South in the 50's and partly from a fear that emancipated blacks would flood the North in the 60's, this hostility found expression in reactivation of black codes (similar to those of the 1830's) and in exclusion or attempted exclusion laws in the Midwest which made it illegal for blacks to settle there.[28] Where black settlement predated the exclusion acts, hardening public opinion made it difficult for them to live without fear.[29]

A brief profile of two blacks who settled in Battle Creek during these years shed additional light on the magnetism the city held for blacks. Sojourner Truth,[30] nationally known as a lecturer, first for abolitionist movement,

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[28]Jacques V. Voegeli, Free But Not Equal; The Midwest and the Negro during the Civil War (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967); "The Edge of Caste: Colored Suffrage in Michigan, 1827-1861" Michigan History 56 (Spring 1972): 20. Indiana passed exclusion laws in 1852; Illinois in 1853; and Ohio citizens petitioned for exclusion laws in 1862 (Voegeli, 2, 7). An examination of the state of birth of migrants (to be discussed later in this chapter) supports the thesis that states from the border region and Midwest provide the largest number of black migrants to Battle Creek.

[29]Voegeli; Free but Not Equal, pp. 2, 7.

[30]Sojourner Truth, is cited mainly from Sojourner Truth edited by Berenice Lowe, Michigan Historical Collections, University of Michigan, 1964, (Typewritten).

and women suffrage, and later for temperance, and refugee freedmen, initially came to the vicinity of Battle Creek in 1856. To the Spiritualist community of Harmonia, six miles west of Battle Creek, she returned a year later and purchased a house. In 1867, she moved to 10 College Street in Battle Creek, where she lived between speaking engagements until her death in 1883. Having strong ties with Quakers, Sojourner's initial visit to the Battle Creek area is believed to have been at the invitation of a Quaker reformer, Henry Willis, who himself traveled extensively, and in those travels he very likely met Sojourner Truth.

Sojourner's presence in Battle Creek has been attributed to the large number of blacks settling there. One writer suggests a number much larger than those attracted because of Quaker sentiment and equality.[31] Although no direct proof exists that Sojourner brought a large number of blacks or that a significant number came to Battle Creek because of her reputation, it is highly probable that in her many travels throughout the country, she influenced some blacks to settle in Battle Creek. Through her work with the Freedmen Bureau in general, and "Freedman Village" (located at the outskirts of Washington, D. C.) in particular, in the late 1860's, she was probably more instrumental in blacks settling in Battle Creek.

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[31]J. L. Hawks, "Blacks in Battle Creek," Senior Honor Thesis, Olivet College, Olivet, Michigan, 1949, p. 2.

Bernard[32] reported that between 1867-68, while she was traveling and addressing meetings, Sojourner found many jobs available and returned to Washington to find men to fill them. In all likelihood, she found jobs in Battle Creek as well. Additionally, from the slums of Freedman Village, Sojourner, with the aid of the Freedmen Bureau which paid railway fares, reportedly brought trainloads of blacks west, dropping them off in small towns where she believed they would have a chance to better themselves.[33] How many of these settled in Battle Creek is lost to history.[34]

An account of one family whom Sojourner brought is probably representative of others who came. The Grayson family, Eliza, and her three children, Addie, Ben, and Payton,

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[32]Jacqueline Bernard, Journey to Freedom (New York: Norton, 1967), pp. 221-222.

[33]"Brought Here by Sojourner Truth Local Man Recalls Famous Worker," and "That Great Day, 80 Years Ago Vivid One to Payton Grayson," Newspaper Clippings in Sojourner Truth, ed. Berenice Lowe; and Victoria Ortiz, Sojourner Truth: A Self-made Woman (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippencott Company, 1972), 113-120. Katzman reports that after the Civil War, the National Freedmen's Relief Association sent black farm workers to the agricultural district around Battle Creek. Sojourner probably influenced the Bureau to relocate blacks here. See: David Katzman, "Rural Blacks in Michigan," Michigan Challenge 9 (June, 1969): 30.

[34]In the 1870 Manuscript Census, Washington, D. C. was the state of birth of five blacks; prior to that census, no blacks in Battle Creek were born in D. C. Of the six blacks born in Maryland, in Battle Creek in 1870, none were here in prior censuses. Could they have come as a result of Sojourner Truth? Further, as in the case of the Graysons who were originally from Virginia and who had migrated to Washington, other blacks probably left states of Kentucky, Virginia, etc. finally settling in D. C., before departing for the West. How many of these, boarding the train in D. C. settled in Battle Creek?

arrived in Battle Creek in November, 1867 on one of several freedman trains.[35] Originally from Farquhar County, Virginia, they fled to Washington, D. C. during or shortly after the close of the Civil War. In Freedman Village, Sojourner, after meeting the Graysons, made arrangements whereby the Government furnished their transportation west. Once in Battle Creek, Eliza found work and eventually married Thomas Quaintance, an emigree from Maryland, who came on one of Sojourner's trains from Washington between November and December, 1867.[36]

Further, examination of the State Census of Michigan revealed that most of the growth of the 60's occurred after 1864: from 143 in 1864--an .8% decrease from 1860, the black population increased to 315 in 1870--a 121% increase over 1864.[37] Thus, it is possible that Sojourner Truth, directly or indirectly, coupled with Quaker sentiment may be responsible for the relatively large influx of blacks by 1870.

During the decades 1880 to 1900, the manufacturing centers in southern Michigan in general, and Battle Creek in particular, witnessed a marked increase in population growth. From 7,063 in 1880, the total population increased to 18,563 in 1900--a 163% increase. Although not as dramatic as the total population, the black community experienced a large

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[35]Graysons, Newspaper Clipping in Lowe, Sojourner Truth.

[36]"Quaintance-Grayson Wed," Battle Creek Daily Journal, December 12, 1867.

[37]Michigan, Department of State, Census and Statistics of the State of Michigan, 1864, 73.

influx of newcomers. From a 14% decline at the onset of 1880, the black population increased in 1890 to 355--a 32% increase, and by 1900 was recorded at 525--a 48% increase over 1890, and a 94% increase over 1880! Despite the relatively large increase in absolute numbers, the proportion of black to total population steadily declined from 3.8% in 1880 to 2.8% in 1900.

Opportunities for employment have a major influence upon growth potential. For Battle Creek, the extension of the Grand Trunk Railroad to the city in 1873, and later concentration of regional work shops of both railroads in the city, coupled with Battle Creek's claim as "leading manufacturing town in the state" in the 1870's and 1880's[38] triggered a genuine boom (a boom which was to intensify the decades, 1900-1930) in growth and development of the city.

Early Twentieth Century Growth: 1900-1930

At the beginning of the new century, Battle Creek entered the period of its most rapid growth and development. With a population of 18,563 in 1900, it increased to 43,573 in 1930, a 74% increase over 1900. Although somewhat stable in the decade 1900 to 1910, the black community increased dramatically from 1910 onward. From 575 in 1910, the black population witnessed an 85% increase by 1920, bringing it to 1,055, and by 1930, a 70% increase over 1920, placed it at 1,795. From 2.8%, the proportion black jumped to 4.0% of the total population by 1930.

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[38]"The City of Battle Creek--Its Early History, Growth, and Present Condition" (From the Detroit Post and Tribune January 16, 1878) Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections

Factors affecting growth were increased employment opportunities resulting from a continuation of the cereal food factories boom[39] began in the 1890's; and wartime mobilization in general, and the construction of Camp Custer in 1917 (a huge Midwest regional training center for troops) in particular. Migrants, both white and black, flocked to Battle Creek seeking work in constructing the Army base. Later, family and friends joined troops who were stationed at the base; many settled permanently in Battle Creek.

For the city, 1929 signaled not only the end of a decade, but also the end of an era of tremendous growth and development, viz. 1900-1930, in which the rate of growth of the city surpassed that of the United States and Michigan.[40] In ensuing years, the city proper was to experience a decline in browth, while the suburbs were to increasingly gain in population.

Origins of Black Population of Battle Creek

Perhaps equally as interesting as the growth of the black population are the questions: What are the components

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3 (1881); 347-363; and "Toledo's Testimony, The Remarkable Growth of Battle Creek," Battle Creek Daily Journal, November 6, 1884.

[39]The cereal boom apparently had little effect on the growth of the black population. Of the two leading cereal factories--Kelloggs and Posts--at the time, Post hired no blacks, and Kelloggs hired a few, but only as janitors. This information was gleaned from interviews with senior citizens.

[40]Battle Creek Comprehensive Plan, Battle Creek, Michigan, Prepared for City Planning Commission by Harland Bartholomew and Associates, St. Louis, Missouri, December, 1966, p. 17.

of black population growth? and Where are the migrants from? Unfortunately, the unavailability of data prohibits analyses of sources of population growth (i.e., natural increase and migration) for the black community between 1850 and 1930. Migration, apparently was the major component of this growth. During the five decades (1850-1900), the percentage of blacks born in states other than Michigan ranged from 76% in 1850 to 47% in 1900.[41] From the state of birth data,[42] the origins of these migrants was ascertained.

Following the national migration trend of blacks, the pre-1910 migration pattern was a relatively small movement of blacks originating in the Border states and Upper South,[43] and only a slight extent from the Lower South to the North. From 1850 to 1900, the greatest relative and absolute numbers of blacks in Battle Creek originated in the Upper South and Border States Region. Kentucky and Virginia contributed the largest stream of migrants from the region, with Tennessee,

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[41]State of birth data is available for Battle Creek only for the years, 1850-1880, and 1900. The 1890 census was destroyed by fire in the 1920's.

[42]Beginning with the 1850 Census, each person was required to indicate his state of birth. From this data, one can ascertain the origin of migrants. A drawback, however, is that the data reflect only one movement: from place of birth to final destination, and does not provide information on intervening movements.

[43]The Upper South and Border States Region includes Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, Washington, D. C., West Virginia, Oklahoma, and Delaware. This regionalization is based on Spear, Black Chicago, p. 13.

North Carolina, and Maryland increasing their proportions from 1870 onward (Figures 5 and 6). The Middle West Region (excluding Michigan)[44] was the secondary source of migrants to Battle Creek for the five decades. Within the region, Indiana contributed by far the largest percent of migrants to the city until 1900, when Indiana and Ohio both sent 45% of the black population.

Canada was the third major source of migrants to Battle Creek. Sending migrants in all decades, Canada furnished the largest proportion of immigrants in 1880, with 11.5% of the total population.

While the Northeast,[45] especially New York and New England, supplied the largest percentage of white migrants to Battle Creek, it supplied a relatively small number of blacks. The largest proportion from the region was 5.1% of the black population in 1870. The leading state of the region invariably was New York.

Finally, the Lower South[46] contributed the smallest number of migrants throughout the period, with the exception of the West; California sent two migrants in 1900. The highest proportion which originated from this region occurred

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[44]The Middle West Region includes Ohio, Indiana, Kansas, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Iowa.

[45]The Northeast includes Pennsylvania, New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

[46]The Lower South includes Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Arkansas, South Carolina, Texas, and Florida.

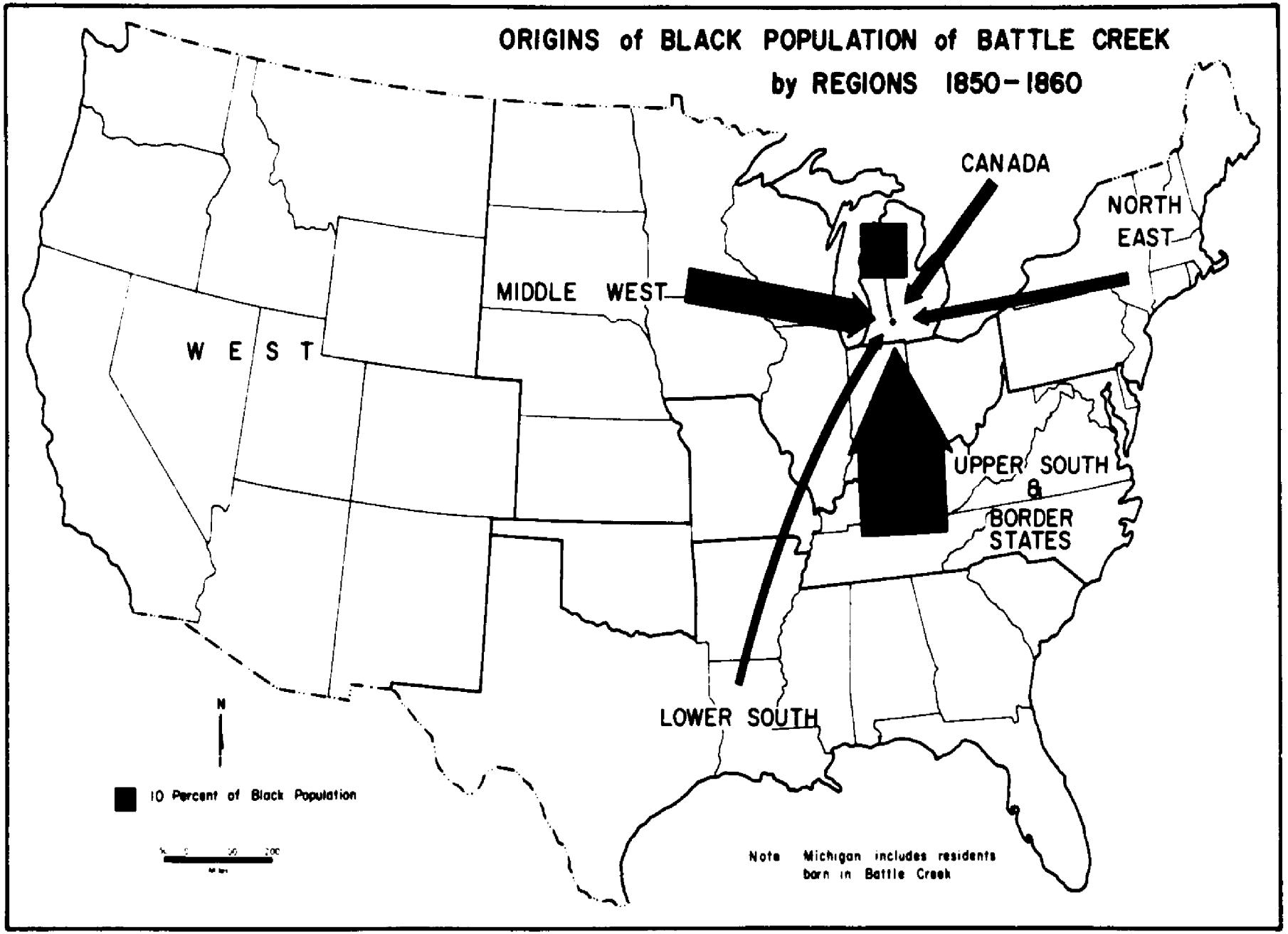
ORIGINS of BLACK POPULATION of BATTLE CREEK
by REGIONS 1850-1860
CANADA
NORTH EAST
MIDDLE WEST
W E S T
UPPER SOUTH & BORDER STATES
LOWER SOUTH
N
10 Percent of Black Population
Note Michigan includes residents born in Battle Creek

Figure 5

ORIGINS of BLACK POPULATION of BATTLE CREEK
by REGIONS 1870-1900
CANADA
NORTH EAST
MIDDLE WEST
WEST
UPPER SOUTH & BORDER STATES
LOWER SOUTH
N
10 Percent of Black Population
Note Michigan includes residents born in Battle Creek

Figure 6

in 1870--five years after the War. The newly acquired mobility of blacks resulting from Emancipation is reflected in the diversity of origins within this region. Seven states were the birthplaces of 7.3% of the black population of Battle Creek. Prior to 1870, three states (Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina) supplied all of the migrants.

Migration after 1900. From 1910 to 1930, the census does not permit a breakdown of Battle Creek's black population by state of birth. The only material available is state of birth data for Michigan. In all probability the data for Battle Creek closely parallel the statewide figures. Moreover, considering the literature, the innumerable references to the large influx of blacks from the Deep South, from 1914 onward, assumption can be made that the pattern of migration to Battle Creek, just as that of Michigan as a whole, began to differ from the pre-1900 pattern, with the greatest numbers originating from Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, Texas, Florida, Arkansas, and Louisiana.

CHAPTER IV

THE RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS: 1850 - 1930

The preceding discussions on the genesis, growth and migration of blacks to Michigan, particularly Battle Creek, serve as an introduction to the changing residential patterns of blacks in Battle Creek. The focus of this chapter is on the spatial configuration of the black community from 1850 to 1930. Specific research questions to be answered are: What was the original settlement pattern? What changes have taken place in the spatial distribution of the black community through time? How do these settlement patterns fit within the general framework of the areal development and expansion of Battle Creek? What were the factors, both internal and external, which have influenced the patterns? Lastly, how persistent or how stable was the black population during these years?

In an attempt to answer these questions, nine cross-sections in time--1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1918, and 1930[1]--were selected to illustrate the phases of black community growth as mirrored in the changing residential patterns. The choice of specific years was based on the

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[1]In the absence of a 1930 city directory, the 1931 directory was substituted in the analysis of the 1930 cross-section.

availability of data. Because of changes in social, economic and political conditions in Battle Creek, for the purposes of this study, the residential patterns can temporarily be divided into three parts: the 1850 to 1870 period--an era of rapid in-migration of blacks, mainly from border states, to the pioneer village, resulting in a dispersed residential pattern; the 1880 to 1900 period--an era of low in-migration of blacks, resulting in simultaneous dispersion and light concentration of black households; and 1900 to 1930--an era of rapid urbanization and concomitant heavy in-migration of southern blacks, resulting in increasingly concentrated, but not segregated residential areas. With city directories and federal manuscript censuses as prime starting points, answers to the aforementioned questions will be sought.

The 1850 to 1870 Period

Battle Creek began its rise to dominance in Calhoun County rather inauspiciously. From its platting in 1836 (population about 400) until 1850, it had grown a little over 1,000. Sparked by industrial development in 1848, and railroad development in 1849, the population jumped to almost 6,000 two decades later. From a frontier village with "six stores, two taverns, two sawmills, two flouring mills, two machine shops, two blacksmiths, and one cabinet manufacturer"[2] in the late 1830's, Battle Creek, by 1870, had become the "agricultural

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[2]History of Calhoun County, 1830-1877 (Philadelphia: L. H. Everett and Co., 1877), p. 90.

trading hub" of Calhoun, Barry, Eaton, and part of St. Joseph counties.[3] The commercial core had expanded from one block in length on West Canal Street in 1856[4] to the entire span of West Canal in 1870, then southerly on Jefferson Street, and East Canal Street and the Mill Race.[5] Twenty-five manufacturers were there in Battle Creek;[6] they helped to make up the industrial core located near the outskirts of the settled area.[7]

At the onset of the period, settlement was centered north and east of the Kalamazoo River; land south and west of the river was mostly in farms.[8] Few in number, the black households were dispersed mainly between the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Rivers (Figure 7).[9] One black household, Curtis and Oglesby, was west of this area on Main Street. Four residences scattered on Jefferson, West Canal, Lydia, and Division

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[3]Gerald Carson, "Foodtown USA," Michigan History 41 (1955): 308.

[4]Henry Wiegmink, "Early Days of Battle Creek," Michigan History Room, Willard Library, Battle Creek, Michigan, n.d., p. 90.

[5]Determined from 1869-70 Calhoun County Business Directory.

[6]Beers, Atlas of Calhoun County, p. 31.

[7]Straw, "Battle Creek: A Study in Urban Geography," p. 78.

[8]Henry Wiegmink, "Early Days of Battle Creek," p. 194.

[9]Using property ownership records, addresses were obtained for only five of the nine black households listed in Battle Creek in 1850. The three residences around Marshall Street were situated in what was called East Battle Creek--a plat included in the incorporation of the village in 1850, but which was not enumerated as part of the town in the 1850 manuscript census.

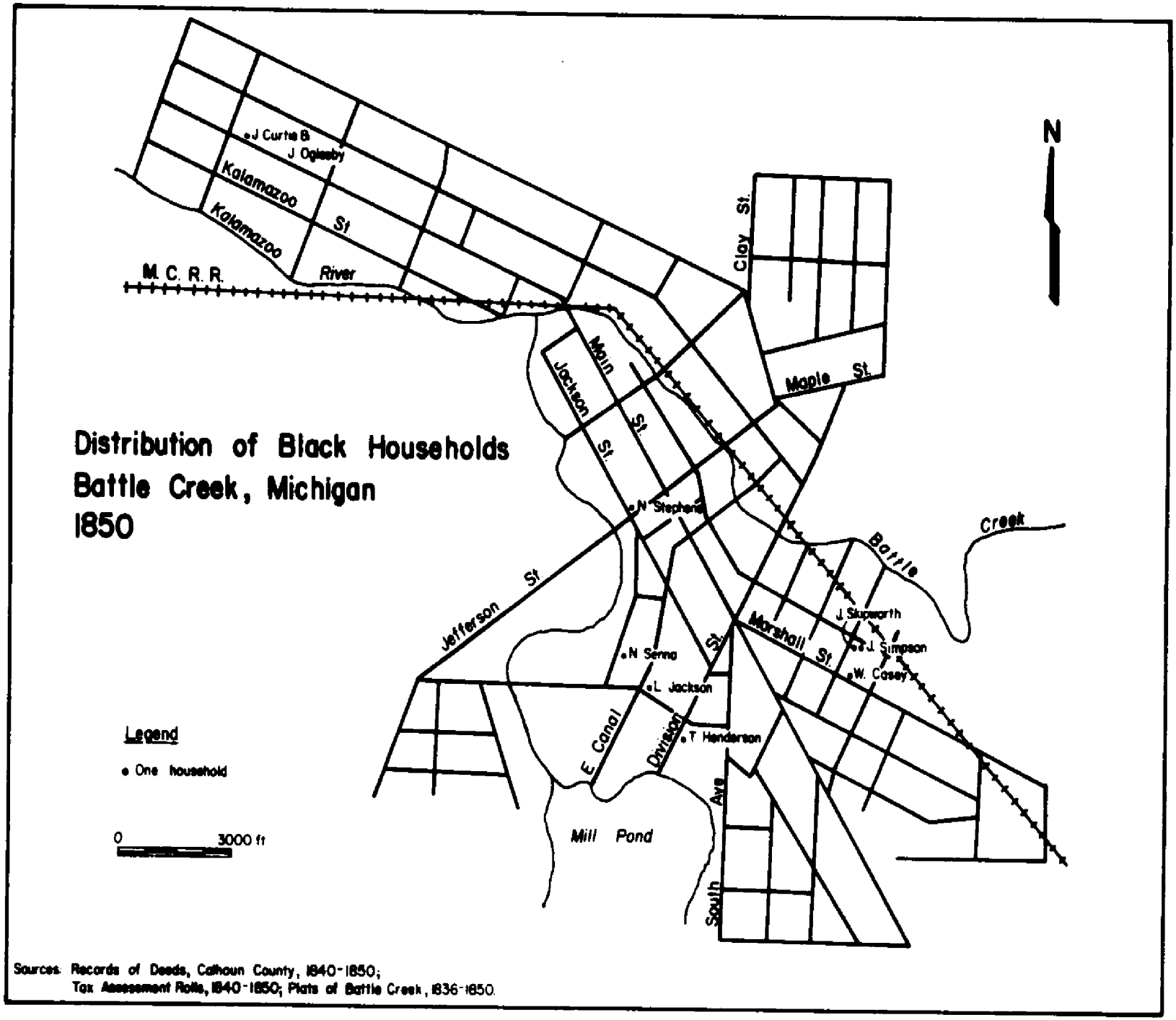
Distribution of Black Households
Battle Creek, Michigan
1850
N
Legend
• One household
0 3000 ft
Sources: Records of Deeds, Calhoun County, 1840-1850;
Tax Assessment Rolls, 1840-1850; Plats of Battle Creek, 1836-1850.
M. C. R. R.
Kalamazoo River
Kalamazoo St
J Curtis
J Oglesby
Clay St.
Maple St.
Main St
Jackson St
N Stephens
Jefferson St
Battle Creek
J Stapworth
J Simpson
W Casey
Marshall St
N Senna
L Jackson
T Henderson
E Canal
Division St
Ave
Mill Pond
South

Figure 7

streets were just beyond the zone of commercial land use, apparently at the edge of the village. This area, for the most part, lying within the flood plain, was characterized by poorly drained land. While no residential areas existed in the village where blacks were concentrated, a hint of clustering was emerging in the fourth block of Marshall Street.[10] This cluster may partially be explained by the fact that all three--Skipworth, Simpson, and Casey--purchased their land rather inexpensively from Samuel Strothers,[11] who has previously been identified as owning considerable property in East Battle Creek in the 1850's. The relatively low cost of the lots--$40 each for Skipworth and Simpson[12]--was probably the major attraction of blacks to this section of the city.

By 1860 the relatively large influx of blacks, representing a population of 155, comprised 44 households. Where

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[10]Although addresses were not included in the census enumeration prior to 1880, the "dwelling houses" and the "families enumerated" listed in columns 1 and 2, respectively, of the schedule according to order of visitation of the census marshall provided some insight into the distribution of the population. In this instance, a Smith household, enumerated immediately after Casey, was among the cluster on Marshall Street. Unfortunately, it was impossible to determine his exact location, and consequently, map his residence as no property ownership record could be found.

[11]Despite considerable landholdings in East Battle Creek in the 1850's, Strothers exact location in Battle Creek was not determined until 1870. Apparently, he was on the outskirts of the city until then.

[12]Casey purchased three lots from Strothers for $425 in early 1850's; George Hamilton also purchased a lot from Strothers in the same vicinity in the early 50's for $150. See Records of Deeds for Casey, Hamilton, Skipworth, Strothers, and Simpson.

the majority of the population resided is lost to history, for the spatial distribution of only 12 (27%) could be ascertained from the available data. As in 1850, these few households were basically in the same location a decade later (Figure 8). In the northeastern section of the city, one residence--Joseph Jones, a barber--was located on West Kalamazoo Street, not too far from the defunct site of the Curtis and Oglesby household in 1850. Joseph Johnson, a well digger, lived on Main Street, adjacent to the small business district. In South Battle Creek, stretching diagonally from West Canal to Jay Street, four households were located within a four block area, near the fringe of the city. The light cluster around Marshall Street persisted: four households were located within a few feet of each other.[13] Residences appeared for the first time on nearby Flint Street. With the abandonment

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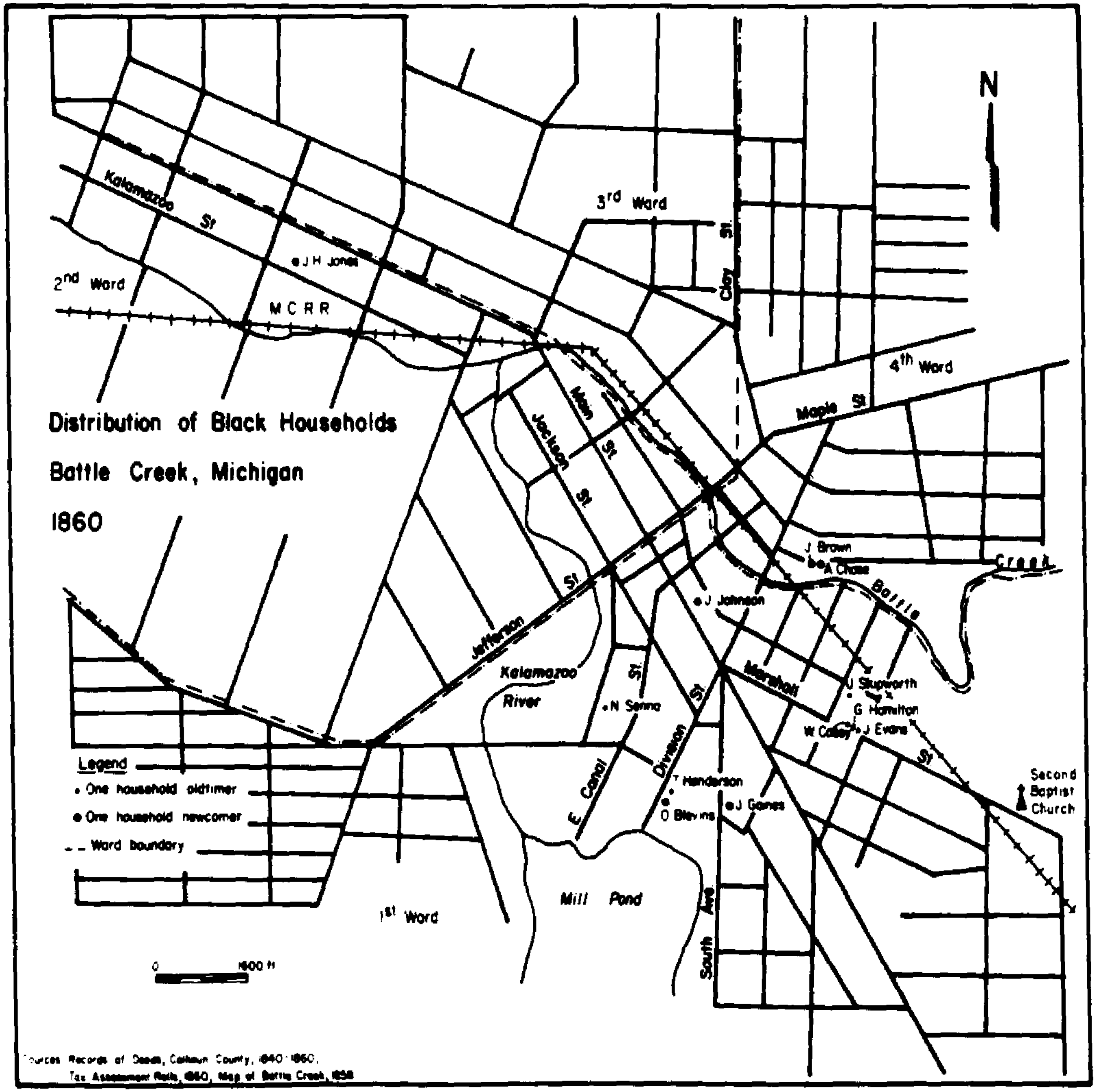
[13]It should be noted that from the dwellings and families enumerated in columns of the 1860 manuscript census, the distribution of the black population is more fully delineated. From the order of visitation of the census marshall, concentration is more pronounced in the two general areas already identified on the map. Within the Division Street cluster in South Battle Creek, dwelling numbers 380, 381, 382, 384, 386 (Blevins) and 389 (Henderson) were identified as black households. Comparing the numbering with the 1858 map of Battle Creek, in all probability, these households extended from the millpond north along Division to Lydia Street. The Marshall Street cluster is somewhat more dispersed than Division Street; dwelling number 575 is the Casey household; dwelling number 611 is the Skipworth household. Lying between these were the house numbers 592, 593, 594, 595, and 599--all black households, for which no addresses could be determined, but very likely in East Battle Creek on or near Marshall Street. See: Manuscript Census of Calhoun County, 1860.

Figure 8



Distribution of Black Households
Battle Creek, Michigan
1860
N
2nd Ward
3rd Ward
4th Ward
1st Ward
Kalamazoo St
M C R R
J H Jones
Clay St
Maple St
Main St
Jackson St
Jefferson St
Kalamazoo River
Battle Creek
Marshall St
Division St
E Canal St
South Ave
Mill Pond
J Brown
A Chase
J Johnson
N Senna
J Stupworth
G Hamilton
W Casey
J Evans
T Henderson
O Blevins
J Gaines
Second Baptist Church
Legend
One household oldtimer
One household newcomer
Ward boundary
0
1600 ft
Sources Records of Deeds, Calhoun County, 1840-1860,
Tax Assessment Rolls, 1860, Map of Battle Creek, 1858

of the second Baptist Church on Green and Pittee in 1859,[14] and its subsequent relocation "a little distance east of Michigan Central Railroad crossing on Marshall Street,"[15] the Marshall Street cluster in 1860 was emerging as the focal point of the black community.

Continuing its rapid growth, especially during the latter half of the 1860's, the black population doubled by 1870. For the first time, the population of Battle Creek was available by wards (Table 3).

TABLE III

POPULATION OF BATTLE CREEK, BY WARD, 1870

Ward	Black Population		White Population	
	No.	%	No.	%
1	201	64	2,178	39
2	42	13	782	14
3	47	15	1,238	22
4	25	8	1,325	24
Total	315	100%	5,523	99%

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1870.

Although the largest percentage of the black population was found in the First Ward, black households were interspersed with white households. The two pockets of black households

[14] Wiegmink, "Early Days of Battle Creek," p. 192.

[15] History of Calhoun County, Michigan: 1830-1877, p. 82.

identified as early as 1850 still existed (Figure 9). The Marshall Street cluster expanded both westward toward the central business district and eastward toward the area of heavy industry (Nicholas and Shephard Thresher Works). The Division Street sector remained generally intact. In south Battle Creek, an enclave within a milieu of white households emerged south of Peninsular Railroad between East Main and the Mill Pond. With 11 households within a two block area, this apparently was the most densely black populated sector in the city. The remainder of the households in the First Ward were dispersed throughout; one black and few white households were located west of the Mill Pond; two households were located on East Main Street within the commercial core. John Evans, a barber, lived here in the rear of his shop.

What was the quality of the black neighborhoods in the First Ward? Although the data are sketchy, the residences north of Peninsular Railroad seems to have represented a lower class area. This generalization is based on the fact that many unrelated individuals, viz., lodgers, especially near the commercial core, on East Main Street, Stock, East Canal, and Jackson streets resided within households reflecting the low economic level of the householders.[16] Moreover, in 1863,

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[16]Not until 1880 did enumerators record the relationship of inhabitants to the head of the household. Thus, the statement is based on the assumption that inhabitants with surnames different from the head, usually listed last in the household, were boarders.

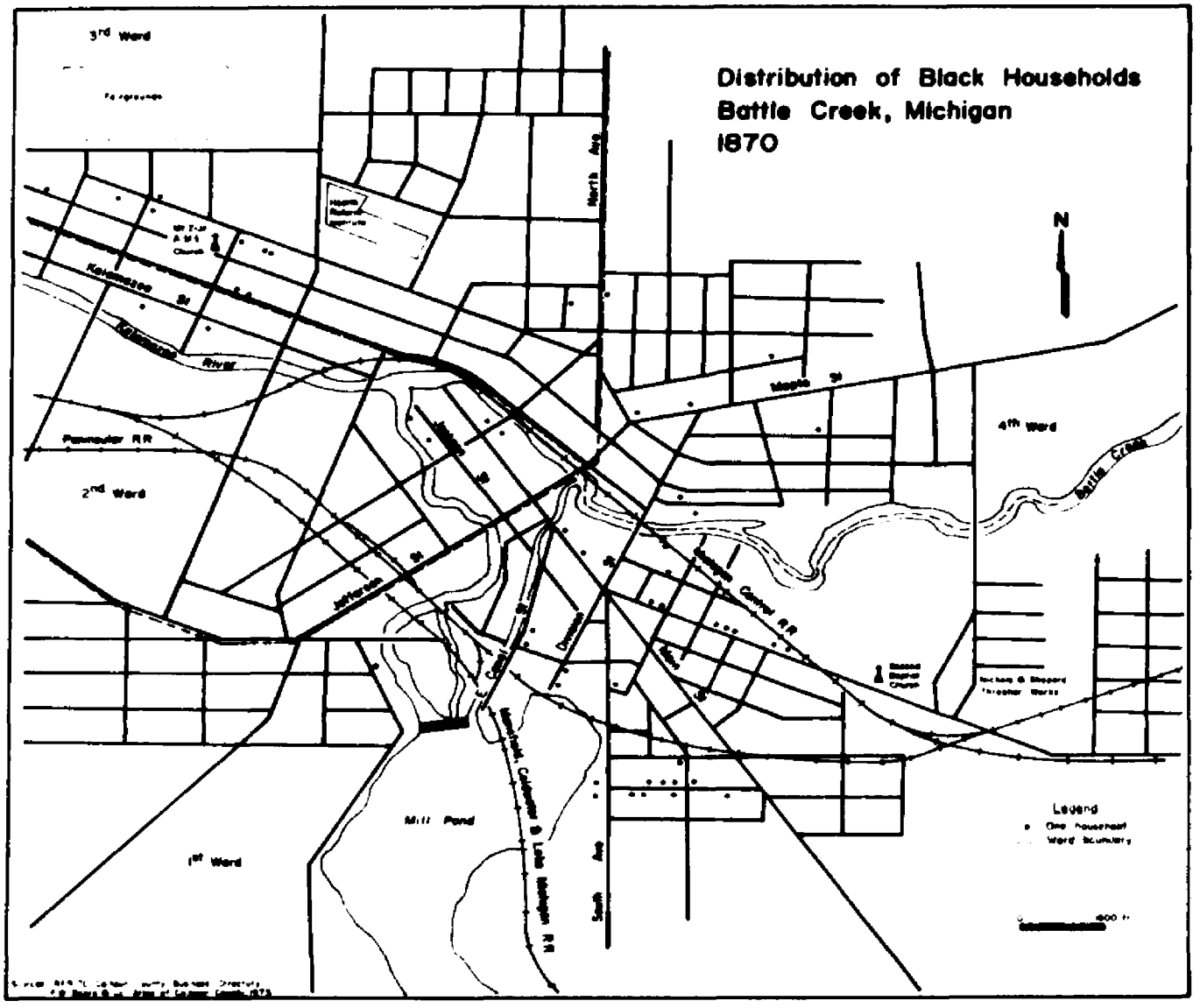
Distribution of Black Households
Battle Creek, Michigan
1870
N
3rd Ward
2nd Ward
1st Ward
4th Ward
Kalamazoo River
Pennsylvania RR
Michigan Central RR
Mill Pond
Legend

Figure 9

most occupants around Lydia Street, Division, and South Jefferson Avenue to Kalamazoo River were described as "poor."[17] It is unlikely that the conditions had altered considerably by 1870. Further, many residences were intermingled with light industry, and near offensive factories (e. g., in rear of stockyard, next door to soap factory and tannery)--undesirable qualities even in 19th century cities. One-fifth of the households reported real estate in 1870[18]--a percent lower than black households in other areas of the city. Heads of households were almost equally divided between unskilled and semiskilled jobs: there were eight laborers, two barbers, three blacksmiths, one whitewasher, and one well digger. Generally, it was the day laborer who depended on boarders to make ends meet.

Not all of the blacks in the First Ward lived in the lower class neighborhood. The area south of Peninsular Railroad developed as a "working class" neighborhood.[19] Of the

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[17]Wiegmink, MS Scrapbook of Battle Creek, "Glimpses of Half a Century," p. 22.

[18]Real estate figures must be used with caution, for it was left to the head of the household to declare value of real and personal property. In fact, because of the subjectivity of this category, it was dropped from the census in 1880.

[19]Considering that economic data of the population are unavailable for Battle Creek, a crude attempt has been made to classify the black neighborhoods of Battle Creek into three residential areas: lower class, working class, and upper class based on occupation, environmental conditions, density of households, and prior to 1880, value of personal and real estate. The lower class area was defined as an area with a high degree of doubling and lodgers, adjacent to or intermixed with heavy industry, crisscrossed by railroads, and subject to frequent flooding. Occupations consisted mainly of day laborers

eleven households, five owned real estate valued from $500 to $1,000. Nine were laborers, one a shoemaker, and one a blacksmith. Samuel Strother, a resident of this area, was undoubtedly one of the most prominent blacks in the city. As early as 1840, he was buying and selling property in East Battle Creek.[20] In contrast to the Marshall Street sector, there was no piling up of unrelated individuals, and only one two-family dwelling was found here, reflecting relative well-to-do blacks.

The proportions of blacks in the Second, Third, and Fourth wards were 13, 15, and 8, respectively. The majority of the black households in the Second Ward were located near the bifurcation of the Kalamazoo River, near the commercial core. In the northwestern section of the city in the Second and Third wards, a second nucleus of black settlement was emerging around Mt. Zion AME Church. Bounded on the west by the city limits, on the north by Champion Street, on the east by Washington Street, and on the south by the Kalamazoo River, this area contained 22% (11) of the black households in the city. Historically, the Methodist Church has been an

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and personal servants. The working class area was defined as an area with little doubling and few boarders. Occupations of head were usually in the semiskilled (e.g. Painters, Teamsters, etc.) and unskilled categories (e.g., laborers with steady employment at factories). The upper class area was defined as an area with a preponderance of skilled workers (e.g. masons, bricklayers, well diggers, ministers, barbers, etc.); a high degree of home ownership as reflected in real estate; and removed from heavy industry, railroads, floodplain, etc.

[20]Record of Deeds, Calhoun County, Book 28, p. 682, Henry Mailing to Samuel Strother.

important link in the chain of upper class black life. Apparently, Battle Creek was no exception. Upon examining the manuscript census, this enclave seemingly was developing as an "upper class" black neighborhood.[21] The jobs held by heads of households were mainly in the skilled and semiskilled trades: there were a farmer, two whitewashers, a stone mason, a teamster, two barbers, and three laborers. Almost half of the households were recorded as owning property valued from $600 to $1,200. Renters and boarders so pervasive in the First Ward were uncommon in the Third Ward; households were composed of family members.

Within the Fourth Ward, the most fashionable residences in the city were located, especially along Maple Street.[22] The few blacks who resided here were widely scattered. Some were live-in servants (those on Maple Street) and caretakers; others were laborers, blacksmiths, and teamsters.

Thus, from the few households located in small clusters around Marshall and Division Streets in the 1850's (in what was later to become the First Ward), the black households by 1870 had diffused throughout the city with two nuclei of black settlements emerging. This dispersal partially reflects the level and extent of the economic differentiation within the black community. Initially, blacks settled in the low income sectors of Battle Creek--on Marshall Street (then at the fringe

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[21]Eight of the 11 households were charter members of the AME Church.

[22]"The City of Battle Creek - Its Early History, Growth, and Present Condition," p. 349.

of the city and sparsely settled) and around Division Street; from these, expansion was radiated outward to "better" class clusters. The low cost housing created by relative unattractive river lowlands and distance from the city core, coupled with nearness to jobs apparently were the main forces in creating and sustaining the residential patterns from 1850 to 1870. As yet, from no areas in the city were blacks systematically excluded.

The Persistence of the Black Population: 1850 - 1870

With the influx and efflux of the black population being alluded to in previous discussions, the question arises: How stable or how persistent was the black population during this period?[23] Tied closely to the stability inquiry is the question: When did a permanent black community evolve in Battle Creek?[24] As noted previously, the black population

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[23]Persistence is defined as the percent of black households reappearing in subsequent manuscript censuses or city directories. In determining the persistence rates, heads of households were traced through the manuscript censuses or city directories (when the census was unavailable). Heads of households were employed because of the availability of data; names of all inhabitants within the city were unavailable for the span of the study. Further, in utilizing households to ascertain the persistence rates, the margin of error created by high mortality rates for children, and the drop out resulting from women changing their names upon marriage was reduced.

[24]Here community is broadly defined as "people who are in continuous social contact with one another over some time period and who have many common experiences." A community is assumed to be evident when business establishments, churches or schools, formal and informal associations are present. See: Leo F. Schnore, ed., The New Urban History: Quantitative Exploration by American Historians (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1974).

rose from 34 in 1850 to 155 in 1860, and to 315 in 1870; in terms of households, these represented 9, 44, and 96, respectively. These figures indicate a net addition to the city of 281 people and 87 households over the three decades. However, if one examines the population change on a decennial basis, not to mention an annual basis, the gross turnover would reveal even greater change in the black population. Many blacks moved to Battle Creek, stayed to be recorded in one census, and moved on; many more probably moved in, stayed for a short time--a few months, perhaps a year or two--and moved before the census marshall could record their presence. At any rate, the black population of Battle Creek, as in other 19th century cities, was highly mobile. In fact, the persistence rate did not rise above 17% (Table 4)--a rate slightly lower than persistence rates for total populations in Atlanta, Boston, and Omaha, generally, over the same period of time, but more in keeping with the persistence rate on Lansing, Michigan from 1850 to 1860.[25] This relatively high population turnover may partially reflect the climate of the times: a period when blacks--both free and escaped slave--endangered

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[25]Between 1850 and 1880, the persistence rates in Lansing, Michigan, Atlanta, Boston, Omaha, to mention a few, ranged from 7 to 53%, with Lansing 7%. See: Meyers, "The Residential Pattern of Blacks in Lansing, Michigan," p. 77; Blake McKelvey, Rochester: The Flower City, 1855-1890 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 3n; Chudacoff, Mobile Americans, p. 40; and Richard J. Hopkins, "Status, Mobility, and Dimensions of Change in a Southern City: Atlanta, 1870-1910," in Cities in American History, eds. Kenneth Jackson and Stanley Schultz (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972): 216-231.

TABLE IV

PERCENTAGE OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS PRESENT IN BATTLE CREEK AT THE START OF SELECTED YEARS, 1850 - 1930

Years	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1918	1930
1850	100%	16%							
1860		100%	17%						
1870			100%	53%					
1880				100%	61%				
1890					100%	46%			
1900						100%	52%		
1910							100%	77%	
1918								100%	66%
1930									100%
Total Households	13	44	96	76	96	156	200	212	196

Sources: Manuscript Censuses, 1850-1880, 1900, City Directories, 1870-1931.

as a result of the stringent Fugitive Slave Law,[26] fled to Canada.

A careful scrutiny of the composition of those who continued to reside in Battle Creek may offer some explanation for the rates. Among those who stayed in Battle Creek from 1850 to 1860 were Thomas Henderson, George Hamilton, William Casey, Perry Sandford, Joseph Skipworth,[27] Louis Jackson, and Nelson Stephens (Figures 7 and 8). Generally, these were the pioneer settlers of the village; the dates of their arrival were discussed in Chapter 3. From 1860 to 1870, Henry Tillman, John Tillman, Henry Olds, Samuel Strothers, and Henry Clark, to mention a few, were added to this list. Laborers, barbers, well-diggers, and farmers who had acquired some real property in Battle Creek, these men, seemingly, were able to form a stable economic connection which apparently helped to hold them in the community. Of those who left the city, few were property owners.[28] Both employed and unemployed, perhaps, they were attracted to larger cities where chances of success seemed better.

With a small stable core of blacks, it is not surprising that "community feeling and organization,"[29] developed early in the history of black settlement in Battle Creek.

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[27]Skipworth was also spelled Skiperth and Skipperth.

[28]Three-fourths of those who left owned no property. See: 1850 and 1860 Manuscript Census.

[29]The phrase is borrowed from Daniel Jacobson, "Lansing's Jewish Community: The Beginnings, Michigan Jewish History 16 (January 1976): 8.

As noted in Chapter 3, the first permanent black institution in the city, as in most cities, was the Second Baptist Church, organized in 1840. Samuel Strothers, and Joseph Skipworth--two of the people instrumental in founding the Church remained in Battle Creek for several decades. By 1862 or 1863, a second church, the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church had been organized. Heads of households instrumental in establishing this church were Nathan Vestal, Henry Clark, Charles Davis, Nathan Sena, Ben Williams, John Tillman, Newton Snodgrass, John Caines, Levi Fisher, and Sam Reade--people who stayed through the decade (Figure 10).[30]

In addition to the churches--the focal point of nearly all activities and the mainstay in providing a stabilizing and cohesive influence in the community--other evidences of community feeling emerged. Beginning in 1853 and continuing through the 1870's, the emancipation of slaves in the British West Indies, and after 1865, emancipation of American slaves were celebrated in Battle Creek with much fanfare: parades, picnics, guest speakers from within and without the city, and visitors from as far away as Niles, Lansing, and Detroit participated in the events.[31] Voluntary associations--the United Colored American Association and Improvement Society, and the

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[31]Interview with Mrs. Maxine Good, January 1975.

[32]Emancipation in British West Indies," Battle Creek Journal, July 26, 1861; "Emancipation Celebration," Battle Creek Journal, January 5, 1870; Battle Creek Scrapbook, Vol. 3, p. 230 Michigan Room, Willard Library, Battle Creek, Michigan.

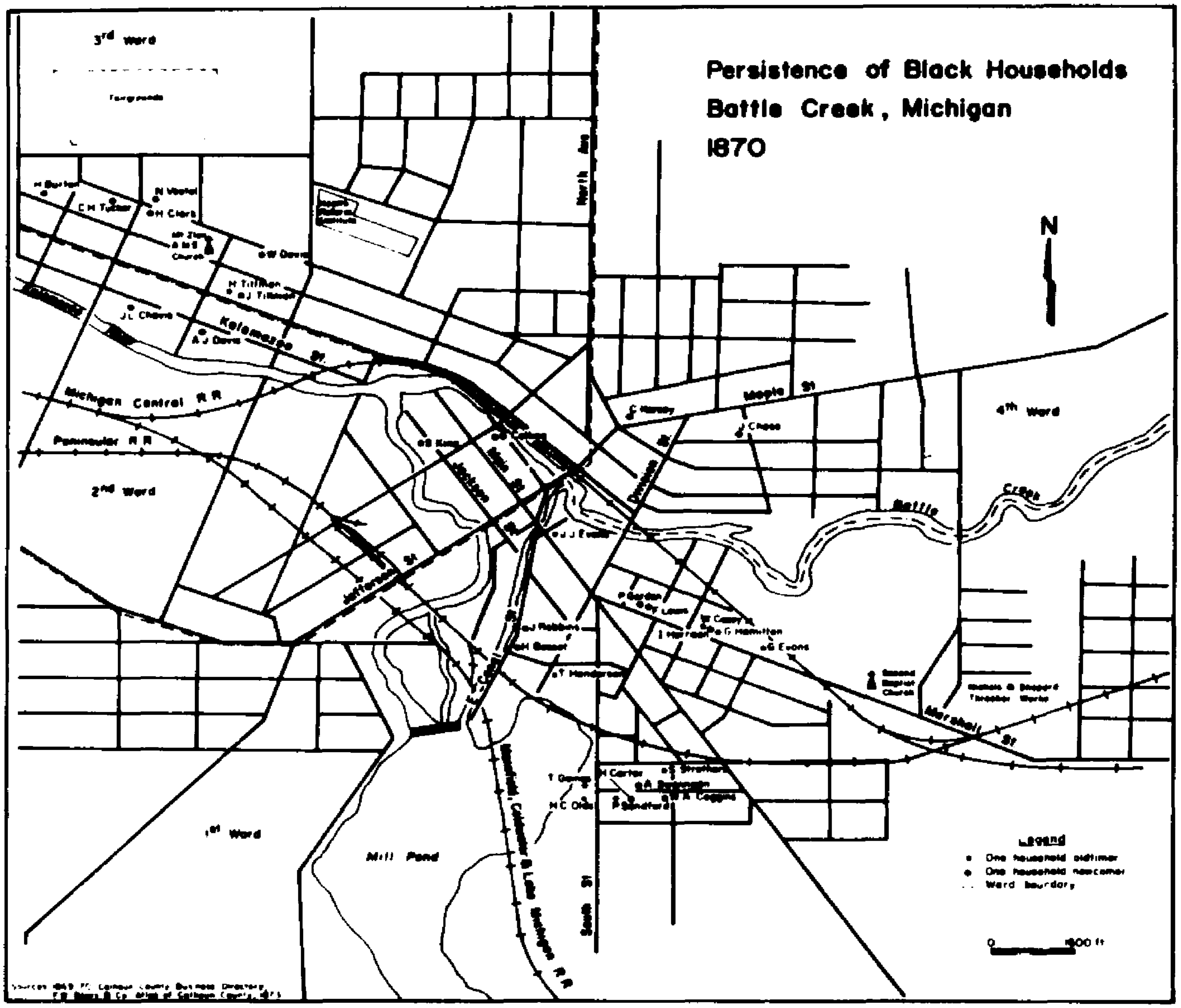
Persistence of Black Households
Battle Creek, Michigan
1870
N
3rd Ward
2nd Ward
1st Ward
4th Ward
Kalamazoo St
Michigan Central R R
Peninsular R R
Jefferson St
Maple St
Marshall St
Battle Creek
North Ave
South St
Mill Pond
Legend
One household oldtimer
One household newcomer
Ward boundary

Figure 10

Masonic Lodge organized in the early 1860's--further attest to the development of a permanent black community.[32] As with the churches, the names William Casey, John Gaines, Thomas Henderson, John Simpson, John Evans, Nathan Vestal, John Tillman, Joseph Johnson, John Woodfork, and George Hamilton, to mention a few--appeared repetitiously in connection with the social and political activities; apparently, they gave leadership to the black community. In sum, then, the heads of households who had stakes in the community were generally those who stayed through time.

The 1880 to 1900 Period

Despite the depression of the early 1870's, Battle Creek, from about 1877 to 1900 witnessed a marked increase in growth. In 1880, the population numbered 7,063; by 1900, the population jumped to 18,653. Improved public transportation[33] and industrial expansion[34] provided momentum for construction

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[32]Battle Creek Journal, June 1, 1860. An Article on The United Colored American Association picnic; on October 8 and 9, 1860, "the first organization to better the condition of blacks in Michigan held a convention of colored men in Battle Creek, for the purpose of petitioning the Legislature for the rights of suffrage, and to consider the intellectual and moral status of the colored people, and to devise means to better their condition...." William Casey of Battle Creek was elected to attend the conference. See: Michigan Manual of Freedmen, p. 35; Strothers Masonic Lodge, #3 received its charter from the Grand Charter of the State in 1863. See: Battle Creek City Directory, 1880.

[33]The horsecar was introduced in Battle Creek in 1879, followed three years later by the electric streetcar. See: Arthur K. Bartlett, "Glimpses of Half a Century," in Wiegmink, Battle Creek, p. 18, and "First Streetcar in Battle Creek." Verticle File, Michigan Room, Willard Library, Battle Creek, Michigan.

[34]Regional work shops of Chicago and Grand Trunk Railway and Michigan and Ohio Railway, coupled with the budding

and further growth. In 1883 alone, "500 new buildings were erected in Battle Creek,"[35] and between 1879 and 1884, six additions were platted. By the turn of the century, Battle Creek was on the verge of one of the biggest population growths and areal expansions in its history.

Meanwhile, the black population continued to grow, but more slowly than the total population. From 270 in 76 dwellings in 1880--a decline of 14% in population and a 20% reduction in dwelling units since 1870--the number had grown to 525 by 1900 in 156 dwelling units. With the decline in black households between 1870 and 1880, the residential pattern changed but slightly. A decline in a former nucleus, light accretions in others, while at the same time, light dispersions of households outward from the core areas as the city expanded in all directions characterized the spatial pattern of black residences at the start of the period (Figure 11).

Specifically in the First Ward,[36] some rearrangement of the residential pattern occurred. For example, expansion occurred in the area west of East Canal Street: in 1870, only

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new factories: Battle Creek Implements Co., Battle Creek School Furniture Manufacturer, Advance Thresher works, etc. sparked the expansion which was fueled after 1895 with cereal processing factories, resulting in "boom" conditions in the early 1900's. See: "Toledo's Testimony: The Remarkable Growth of Battle Creek." Battle Creek Daily Journal, November 6, 1884.

[35]"Our City, its Appearance from a Toledo Outlook," Battle Creek Daily Journal, October 23, 1883.

[36]The area that comprised the First Ward in 1870 was divided in half at South Avenue in 1880 to make the Fifth Ward.

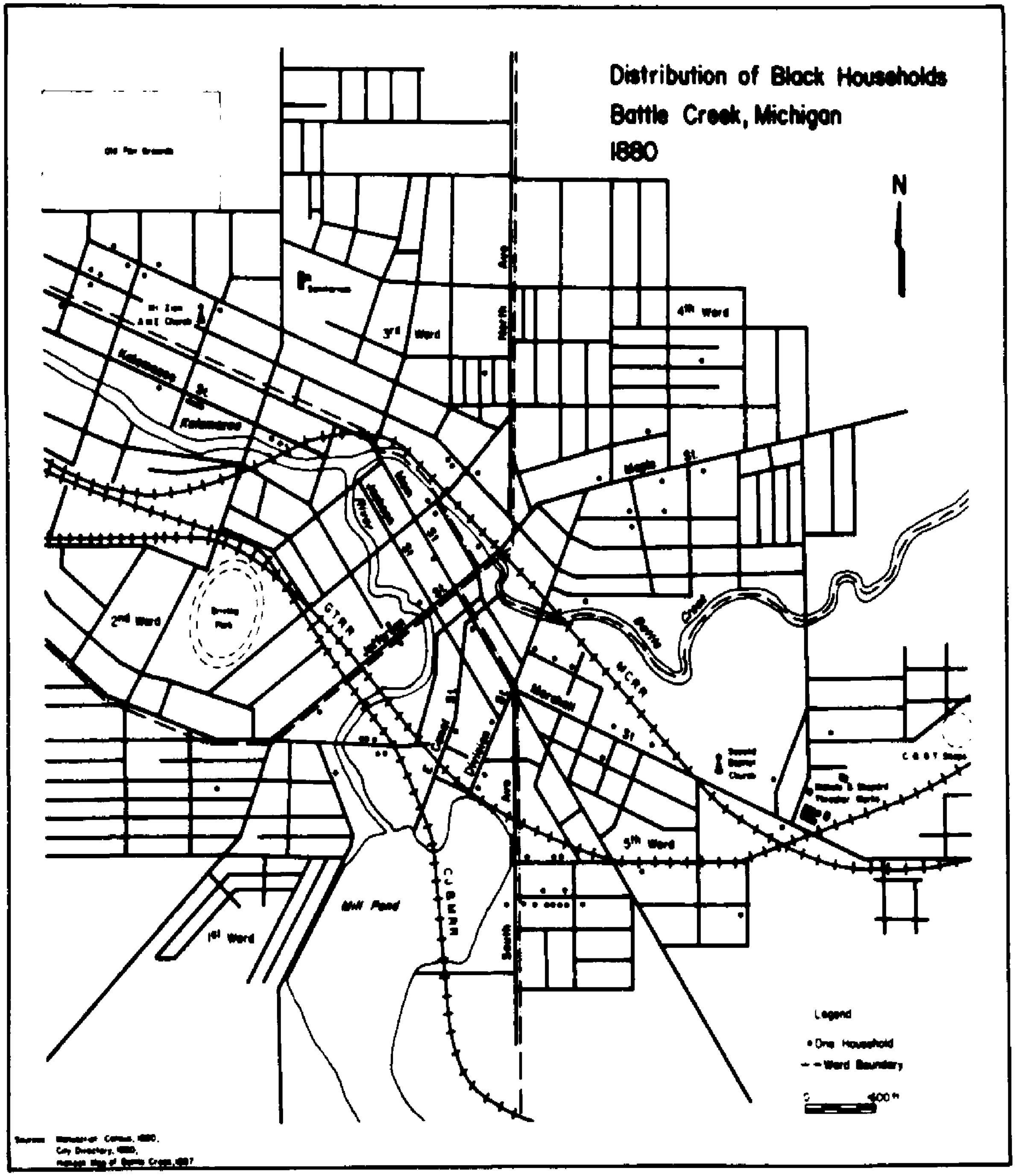
Distribution of Black Households
Battle Creek, Michigan
1880
N
4th Ward
3rd Ward
2nd Ward
1st Ward
5th Ward
Kalamazoo St
Main St
Maple St
Jefferson St
Marshall St
Canal St
Division St
North Ave
South Ave
GTRR
MCRR
CJ&MRR
Battle Creek
Mill Pond
Legend
• One Household
– – Ward Boundary

Figure 11

one household was located here. Now nine--most of them old-timers--displayed a tendency toward clustering on Lydia Street, between Kalamazoo River and C. & G. T. Railway crossing--an area arced by light industry (a nail factory, C. J. & M. Depot, and Gas Works Shop). Two households, a farmer and a laborer, had spread as far west as Rittenhouse Street,[37] an area in 1870 which was mostly in farms, reflecting the progressive inching out of the population from the core of the city. The remaining households in the First Ward were located in the same general area as in earlier years--adjacent to the Mill Pond and within the business core.

As there was no change in the occupational status of blacks in 1880, within the First Ward, similarly as in other wards, blacks were employed mainly in personal service jobs and as day laborers, while a few were employed in the skilled trades. The nature of the work--especially day laboring which was tenuous at best, involved daily hiring, demanded long hours, and paid low wages--forced blacks to live in low cost dwellings, typically in the lowlands in close proximity to their places of employment which was probably in the business core or in the heavy industry near the outskirts of town. Many of those in personal service jobs (servants and cooks) lived with their employers.

In the Fifth Ward, with the Murdock's, the Casey's, the Page's, the Lewis', the Bailey's and the Jackson's leaving

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[37]The 1880 census listed two black households on Ritten-Street, but only provided the house number for one--the Scott household which was plotted on the map.

the city, the nucleus of black settlement along Marshall Street declined and households became very dispersed around the Second Baptist Church. A few households had diffused to the newly opened land west of Michigan Central Railway crossing around Nicholas and Shepard Thresher Works, seemingly in an attempt to be near their place of employment--Nicholas and Shepard.

Remaining intact, the Warren Street cluster in the southern part of the ward continued to be the most densely populated sector in the city. Within a milieu of white households, nine oldtimers were joined by six newcomers in dwellings situated next door, across the street, or a few doors away. Most of the heads of households in this sector worked at Nicholas and Shepard, some as long as 13 years,[38] as blacksmiths, laborers, stonemasons, carpenters, machinists, painters, and yardmen--a factor which may account for the stability of the cluster.

The Second, Third, and Fourth Wards contained 14, 12, and 9 black households respectively. In the Second Ward, blacks continued to live adjacent to or in the midst of the business district on West Canal, West Main, and the westside of Jefferson street; however, those on West Main and Jefferson streets were mainly live-in servants. In the northwestern section of the ward, black households expanded along Kalamazoo

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[38]The length of time blacks had worked at Nicholas and Shepard was gleaned from a newspaper account in 1875 which listed the number of years many employees had worked there and from the 1880 city directory which continued to list Nicholas and Shepard as the place of employment for many blacks. See: Battle Creek Daily Journal, January 2, 1875.

Street; seven households within a three block area, most a few doors apart, formed the core of black settlement in the ward. Jobs held by these were mainly in the skilled category: teamsters, carpenters, hostlers, and whitewashers, with three in the unskilled class: two laborers and a porter. Within the Third Ward, blacks continued to live near the A.M.E. Church; however, shifting a block westward, they now had become slightly more concentrated. A few blacks, mostly private household workers, resided in the "Upper Class" neighborhood on Van Buren Street, near the fringe of the business district.[39] Similarly, as in the Second Ward, the Third Ward tended to attract blacks of higher occupational status; they were mainly employed in skilled and semi-skilled jobs--well diggers, tanners, ministers, stonemasons. A few were employed in unskilled jobs as cooks, washerwomen, and laborers; however, these occupied a much lower percentage than in other sections of the city. Within the Fourth Ward, black residences were widely scattered on Maple, Frelinghuysen, Wendell, Clay, and Flint streets. However, most blacks on and north of Maple were domestic servants, waiters, and caretakers who resided at their place of employment. Among the few south of Maple, who owned their residences were a barber, a blacksmith, a deliveryman, and a laborer who probably worked in the business core or at Nicholas and Shepard, a few blocks to the east.

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[39]According to the manuscript census, addresses ranging from about 10 to 100 were within an upper class white neighborhood; the only blacks living therein were servants. Black households began from about 130 Van Buren onward.

By 1880, then, black households were becoming slightly more dispersed--inching outward from initial settlements into newly developing areas nearer the outskirts of the city, while simultaneously becoming slightly more concentrated in some well established areas. In spite of these minor shifts in the black population, the basic residential pattern was unaltered. Factors--nearness to place of employment, low cost housing, nearness to friends and family--which influenced black settlement in these areas in previous decades probably continued to do so in 1880. Further, since the influx of blacks was light and the proportion of blacks in the total population was relatively small, Battle Creek apparently experienced little difficulty in absorbing the migrants; consequently, residential segregation did not develop.

During the 1880's, the black population continued to grow (Table 5), numbering 354, in 97 households by 1890.

TABLE V

POPULATION OF BATTLE CREEK, BY WARD, 1884

Ward	Black Population		White Population	
	No.	%	No.	%
1	55	16	1,535	16
2	101	29	1,633	17
3	67	19	2,261	23
4	49	14	1,882	19
5	82	23	2,370	24
Total	354	101	9,691	99

Source: State Census of Michigan, 1884.

From the table, it is apparent that in some instances, blacks were located within wards in equal or nearly equal proportions to whites, reflecting the integration of the population.

At the onset of 1890, dispersion clearly was the most striking change in the residential pattern (Figure 12). Within the First Ward, 22 households were scattered, extending as far west as Upton Avenue and Jewel Street. Six households were now located in the western part of the ward, about three blocks from Lake Avenue streetcar route; three households were bunched near the corner of Lake Avenue and Fountain Street on the streetcar route. In 1880, only two black households were located in this area west of Coldwater Street. It should be noted that the expansion of black households towards the outskirts of the city probably was not the result of transportation improvements, which were introduced in 1883. It is generally accepted that the electric streetcars had minimal effect on the residential pattern of the poor who continued to reside near job opportunities which were usually in the business district, while the more affluent tended to migrate outward from the core of the city.[40] Rather, the expansion of black households westward may be viewed as an attempt to be near place of employment--which for many of these households was the west side of town. In fact, most of the heads of households west of Lake Avenue worked as laborers, blacksmiths, masons, and carpenters, either at Advance Thresher

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[40]Warner, Streetcar Suburbs, p. 80.

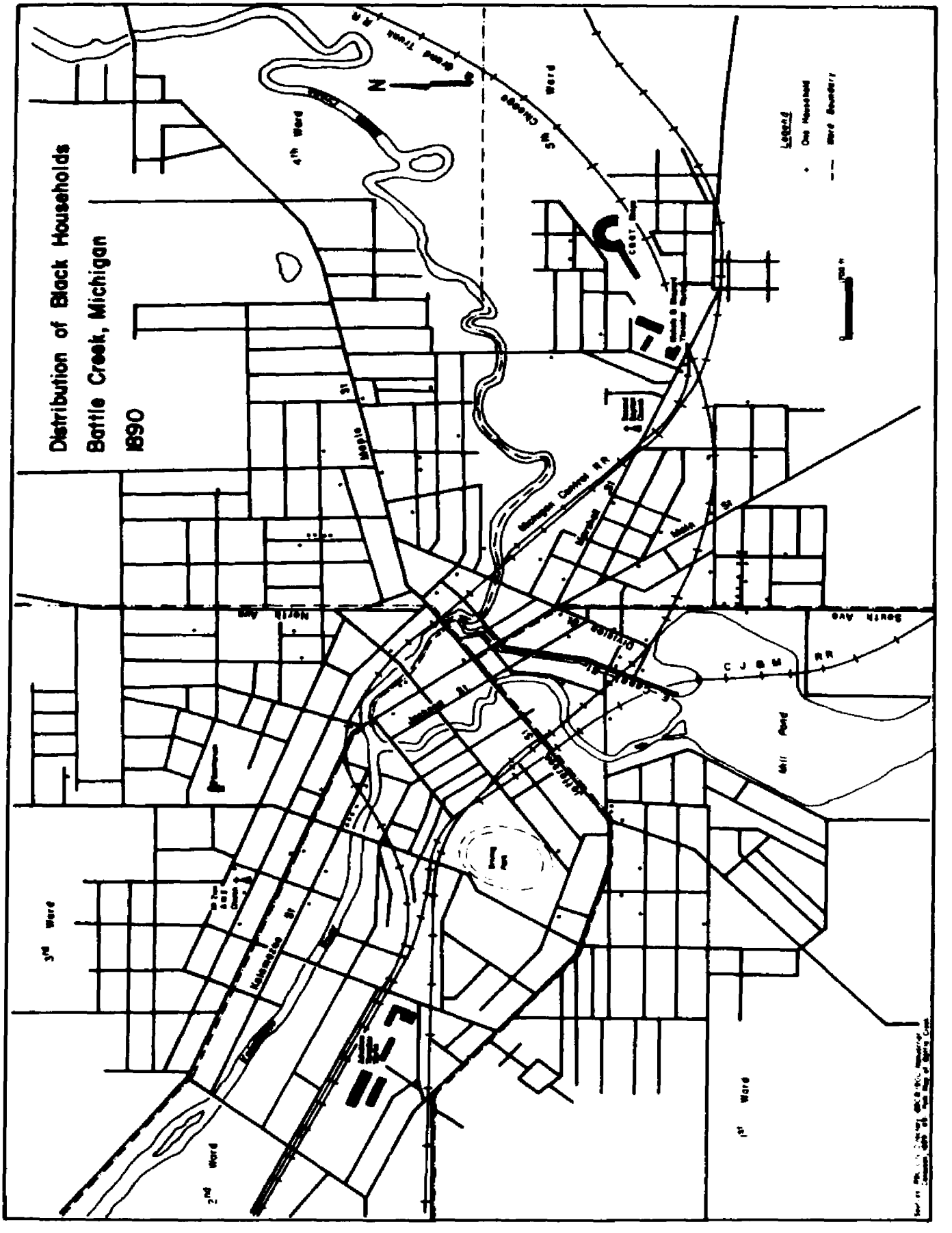
Distribution of Black Households
Battle Creek, Michigan
1890
N
Legend
One Household
Ward Boundary
1st Ward
2nd Ward
3rd Ward
4th Ward
5th Ward
Mill Pond
Kalamazoo St
Michigan Central R.R.
C J & M R.R.
South Ave

Figure 12

or J. Upton Company, within walking distance of their residences.

Twelve households were scattered throughout the area east of Coldwater Street, along Lydia and Division streets--the sites of initial black settlement four decades earlier. Unlike 1880 in which several households were clustered along a street, a single black household--at most two located a few doors apart--was the rule, rather than the exception. A southerly expansion of the business district coupled with expansion of light industry, especially along Jefferson and Lydia streets probably contributed to the displacement of black residences.

With this area being somewhat centrally located, blacks worked at Nicholas and Shepard in the eastern part of town, at Advance Thresher Works in the western part of town, and on the fringe of the business district, mainly at Chicago and Grand Trunk Depot and Michigan Central Depot. Within this district could be found a mason, a machinist, a laborer, a porter, a cook, a foreman of a blacksmith shop, a section-hand, a dressmaker (who probably used her house as workplace), and two barbers (who, in all probability, worked in or near the business core).

The residential pattern of black households changed very little in the Fifth Ward. Of the 29 households in the ward, 16 continued to be located within the relatively stable Warren Street cluster--still the most densely populated sector in the city, while the majority of these residents continued

to work at Nichols and Shepard. A few residences were scattered north of the Grand Trunk Railway, on East Main, Bennett, Locust, and Marshall streets. The gradual expansion eastward toward the outskirts of the city, begun in 1880, now was slightly intensified; six households had spread east of Union Street with two (both employees of C. & G. T. Shops) stretching as far east as Third Street.

Containing 16 black households, the Second Ward remained relatively stable. A few households continued to be located within the commercial core on Main and West Canal street. Now, however, a few households had diffused to the southern part of the ward, near the driving park. Nevertheless, the locus of settlement, although slightly diminished in number, was still Kalamazoo Street.

With the households in the western part of the Third Ward shifting a block eastward toward the A.M.E. Church, a coalescing of households on Kalamazoo Street (Second Ward) and Van Buren Street (Third Ward) reappeared. Although somewhat dispersed, 14 households were located within the area bounded on the south by Kalamazoo River, on the east by Barney Street, on the north by Champion, and on the West by Kendall Street. For the first time, a black household appeared on Orin Street, near the northern city limits. Four households--mostly domestics, living with their employers--were scattered northward from the business core to McCamly, West, and College streets.

As in previous decades, the 19 black households in the Fourth Ward were widely scattered. With the exception of five

households clustered on Martha Street, the lone black household in a block was still the rule rather than the exception. Many of these, especially those on Van Buren, Maple, Calhoun, and Frelinghuysen were private household workers residing at their workplace. On Clay, Flint, Hart, Cherry, Fremont, and Central streets, six households were also scattered. The settlement of blacks on these streets was not unusual, for most of the heads of households, working as laborers, barbers, horsemen, stable hands, cooks, and tailors, probably found work nearby in the business core.

Thus by 1890, the dispersion of black households, which had begun a decade earlier, became more pronounced. With the population growing slowly during the 1880's, as a result of light migration and natural increase, black households remained in small clusters, while at the same time diffusing outward toward the periphery of the city. The unavailability of data prohibits an analysis to determine if those blacks who migrated outward from the core were upwardly mobile; based singularly on occupation, no area stands out as an exclusive "better class" neighborhood. Theoretically, however, residential movement toward the periphery of a city, especially after 1880, generally indicates an improvement in economic conditions.[41]

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[41]Those who have previously concerned themselves with economic differentiation within black residential zones tend to verify the existence of an increase in the level of socio-economic status with distance from the core of the city. See: Kenneth T. Jackson, "Urban Deconcentration in the 19th Century: A Statistical Inquiry" in The New Urban History ed. Leo F. Schnore, (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 129.

The 1900 Cross Section. A modest influx of blacks to Battle Creek during the 1890's--some because of family and friendship bonds, a few as a result of active recruitment by the Sanitarium,[42] some attracted by the Seventh Day Adventists,[43] and others seeking employment in a booming economy--pushed the black population to 525, comprising 156 households by 1900. By mid 1890, however, the proportion of blacks and whites within wards was shifting. The gaps in the proportion of blacks to whites in the First and Fourth wards were widening, while the proportions in other wards, converging, were fairly equal (Table 6). For the First Ward, the shift in proportions probably reflects the evolving low economic status of the ward, especially in the area east of Coldwater Street. Conversely, the Fourth Ward increasingly tended to attract the wealthier professional and commercial class, which probably accounts for the low percentage of blacks in the area.

With the economic and concomitant building boom around 1900, the city expanded in all directions. Black households--newcomers and oldtimers--moved increasingly inward to and outward from the old established core areas on Warren and Kalamazoo-Van Buren streets, as these, advancing moderately on one front

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[42]Gleaned from an interview with Mrs. Dorothy Johnson, March 1976, who reported that her mother along with several other women were recruited in Tennessee to work at the sanitarium in the late 1890's.

[43]"Mainly About Folks," Battle Creek Enquirer and News, September 7, 1847. Article on James H. Lewis who arrived in Battle Creek about 1890 because Battle Creek was headquarters of the Seventh-Day Adventists. Others were probably attracted by this religious element.

TABLE VI

POPULATION OF BATTLE CREEK, BY WARD, 1894

Ward	Black Population		White Population	
	No.	%	No.	%
1	113	25	2,182	14
2	73	16	2,415	16
3	103	22	3,834	25
4	43	9	3,205	21
5	128	28	3,421	23
Total	460	100%	15,057	99%

Source: State Census of Michigan, 1894.

while contracting on the other, persisted. The gradual diffusion of black households toward the outskirts of Battle Creek is reflected in the decreasing density of the black population as it moved outward from the corner of Main and Jefferson streets--the "heart of town." Seventeen black households were located within one-fourth mile from the center of town, within the business core; 30 were one-fourth to one-half mile from the intersection; 55 were one-half to three-quarters of a mile away; 27 were three-quarters to one mile; 4 were between one and one and one-quarter mile from the intersection; and 4 were one and one-quarter to one and three-quarters miles from the center of town. In 1890, the farthermost distance of black

households from the intersection was about one and one-eighth miles.[44] Thus, at the turn of the century, dispersion continued to be the major change in the residential pattern of blacks in Battle Creek.

Upon examining the distribution of black households within the wards, simultaneously, dispersion and concentration were more pronounced (Figure 13). The single black household, which had moved outward to the newly opened plats in 1890, was joined at the onset of this decade by a few households (often friends and family), forming light clusters, while at the same time an advance guard inched further outward into the recently opened plats of the late 1890's.

In the First Ward the number of black households increased from 22 to 39. Within the business core along Main, Jackson, and River streets, eight households were situated (three of which were servants living with their employers), as compared to three in 1890. A small concentration of residences appeared around Coldwater and Sycamore streets. Another light cluster emerged in the 200 and 300 blocks of Fountain Street. A few households had spread as far south as Monroe Street near the city limits, and as far west as Upton Avenue and Chapell Streets, with households--one each--appearing on Meacham, Webber, Corwin, Cleveland, and three residences situated a few doors apart on Goguac Street. In the eastern part of the ward, one household had spread to Burchard Street below the Mill Pond,

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[44]Computed from one-fourth mile tiers on 1900 R. L. Polk map of Battle Creek.

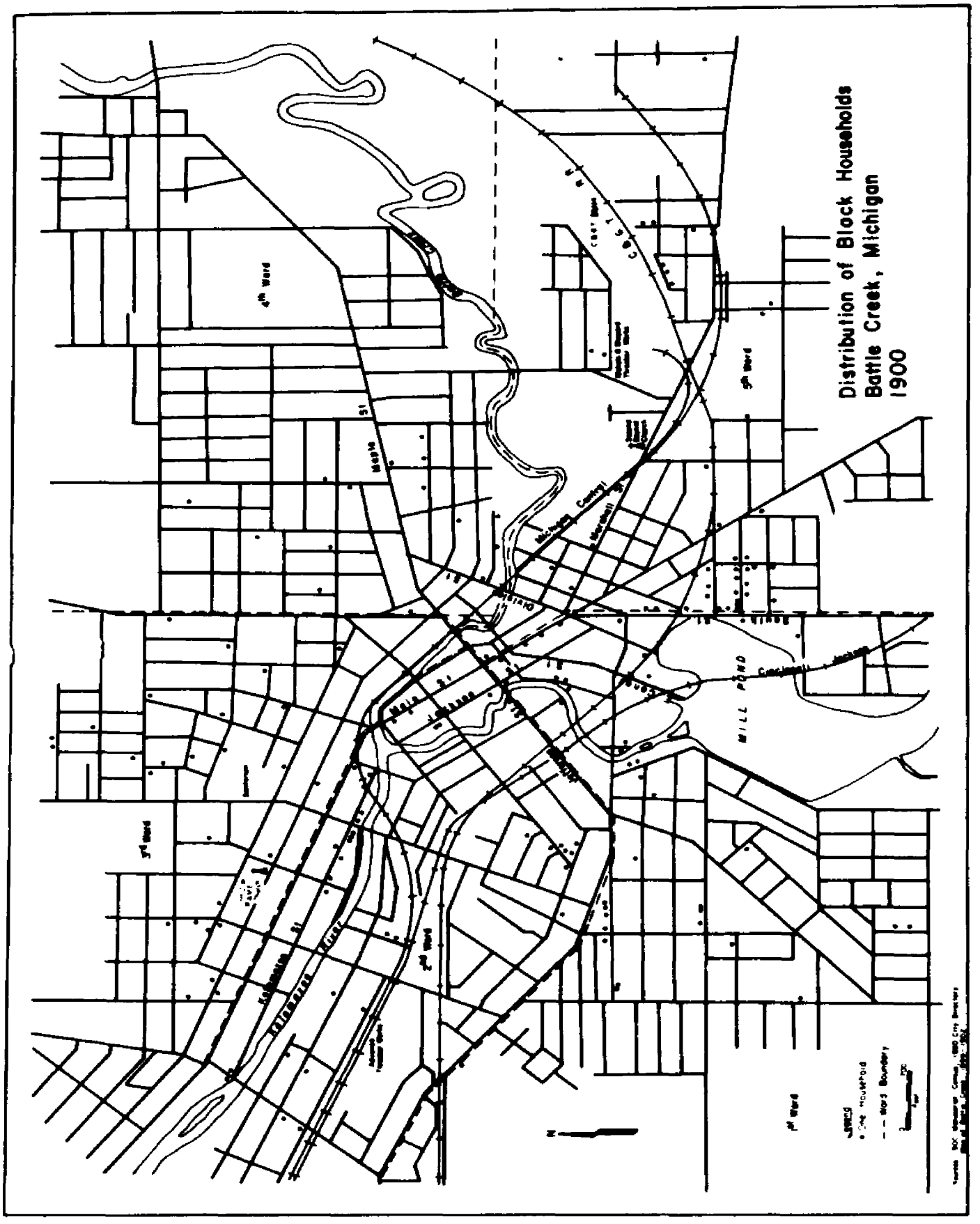
Distribution of Block Households
Battle Creek, Michigan
1900
MILL POND

Figure 13

while a few remained scattered on Short, Division, and South Avenue--the general vicinity of black households in 1850.

Within the Fifth ward, 40 black households were located. The Warren Street cluster became slightly more concentrated, with a tentacle stretching from the intersection of Hall Street and South Avenue, northward along South Avenue for about five blocks. Eight newcomers moving into the area joined 19 oldtimers, some of whom had been there for three decades and worked at Nicholas and Shepard equally as long. Maintaining its rank as the most concentrated section of black settlement for three decades, the area continued to be interspersed with white households. In the eastern part of the ward, black settlement--mainly teamsters and masons who probably walked to their jobs at Nicholas and Shepard and C. & G. T. Shops--appeared for the first time on Greenville, Idaho, East, and Clark streets, reflecting the small but steady push toward the periphery of the city.

The major changes in residential pattern occurred in the Second and Third wards in which black households increased over the decade from 16 to 33, and from 11 to 30, respectively. A light cluster (7 households) appeared in the southern part of the Second Ward around McCamly, Pearl, and Grove streets; in 1890, only three residences were here. From Page to Angell streets in the midwestern portion of the ward, nine households were scattered near Advance Thresher Works. The former Kalamazoo-Van Buren nucleus of settlement drifted apart in this decade. A slight filling in of black residences occurred

on Kalamazoo Street, while the residences on Van Buren Street, advancing about two blocks on the western front, shifted northward onto Hubbard,[45] Wood, North Kendall, and Manchester streets. In the northeastern section of the Third Ward, black households continued to spread; in the area bounded on the west by North Washington, south by Champion Street, east by North Avenue, and north by the city limits, 17 households were located on Howard, Hazel, Lincoln, Barbour,[46] Brook, Spring, Popular, College, North Avenue, Franklin, and Hill streets. Some of these blacks were live-in domestics; others were employed by the Sanitarium, within easy walking distance of their homes--as barbers, nurses, and laundry workers. A few possibly worked at Battle Creek Knitting Mill located near the corner of Champion and Tompkin streets as laborers, also within walking distance.

Within the Fourth Ward, the number of black residences declined slightly from 19 to 14 during the decade; however, the pattern of residences remained stable. Black residences were still widely scattered with those on and north of Maple mainly live-in private household workers, and those south of Maple predominately laborers who probably worked in the business core or at Nicholas and Shepard at the eastern edge of the city.

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[45]Nine blacks resided at Haskell Home, an orphanage on Hubbard Street. See 1900 Manuscript Census.

[46]Seventeen blacks (students and employees) lived at the Sanitarium dormitory on Barbour Street. See: 1900 Manuscript Census.

Such were the spatial patterns of black residences in Battle Creek from 1880 to the turn of the century. In sum, two primary concentrations of black households--neither of which was predominately occupied by blacks--existed by 1900. Continued migration over the 20 year period led to expansion for the most part, of these clusters, while at the same time, led increasingly to the dispersal of households from these core areas.

The social consequences of these patterns are easily visualized. The vast majority of black households were dispersed throughout the city, suggesting a general acceptance by and consequently spatial assimilation into the wider society. It should be noted that the experiences of the migrants during this period probably provided them with a head start toward assimilation. Migrating mainly from the Upper South and Border States, many of them came as artisans with some capital, or were quickly able to accumulate some capital; they tended to be better educated, more active in community leadership, and more familiar with urban living than blacks after World War One. More important than their social and economic skills was probably the fact that arriving in Battle Creek in small numbers, the migrants did not "intrude on the host society and threaten its values;"[47] consequently, residential segregation did not occur.

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[47]R. J. Johnston, Urban Residential Patterns (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), p. 49.

Persistence of the Black Population: 1880 - 1900

As noted previously, during the first 30 years, the large majority of blacks did not make Battle Creek their permanent home. Nonetheless, a small core of blacks remained in the city to form the black community. In this period, as more laborer and service jobs opened up, the persistence rates of black heads of households increased to 53%, 61%, and 46%,[48] respectively (Table 4).

As in the previous period, a small group of oldtimers--people who had been present for decades--John J. Evans, H. F. Snodgrass, Harry C. Olds, William Casey, William Curley, Jim McGruder, Perry Sandford, and William Woodlin (Figures 14, 15, and 16)--provided guidance and direction for shaping the black community.

The 1910 to 1930 Period

The first decade of the 1900's marked the beginning of an increasing flow of people to Battle Creek; by the end of the period, the population jumped from 25,267 to 43,573. While increasing minimally the first decade, the black population jumped from 525 in 1910 to 1,795 by 1930. This growth was sparked by two primary factors. In the years 1900-1909, the breakfast cereal boom attracted newcomers. A decade later, wartime mobilization beckoned people, as some were stationed at Camp Custer, and others, mainly from the southern states of

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[48]This slight decline in the 1890-1900 decade may be a reflection of incompleteness in the 1890 cross sectional data.

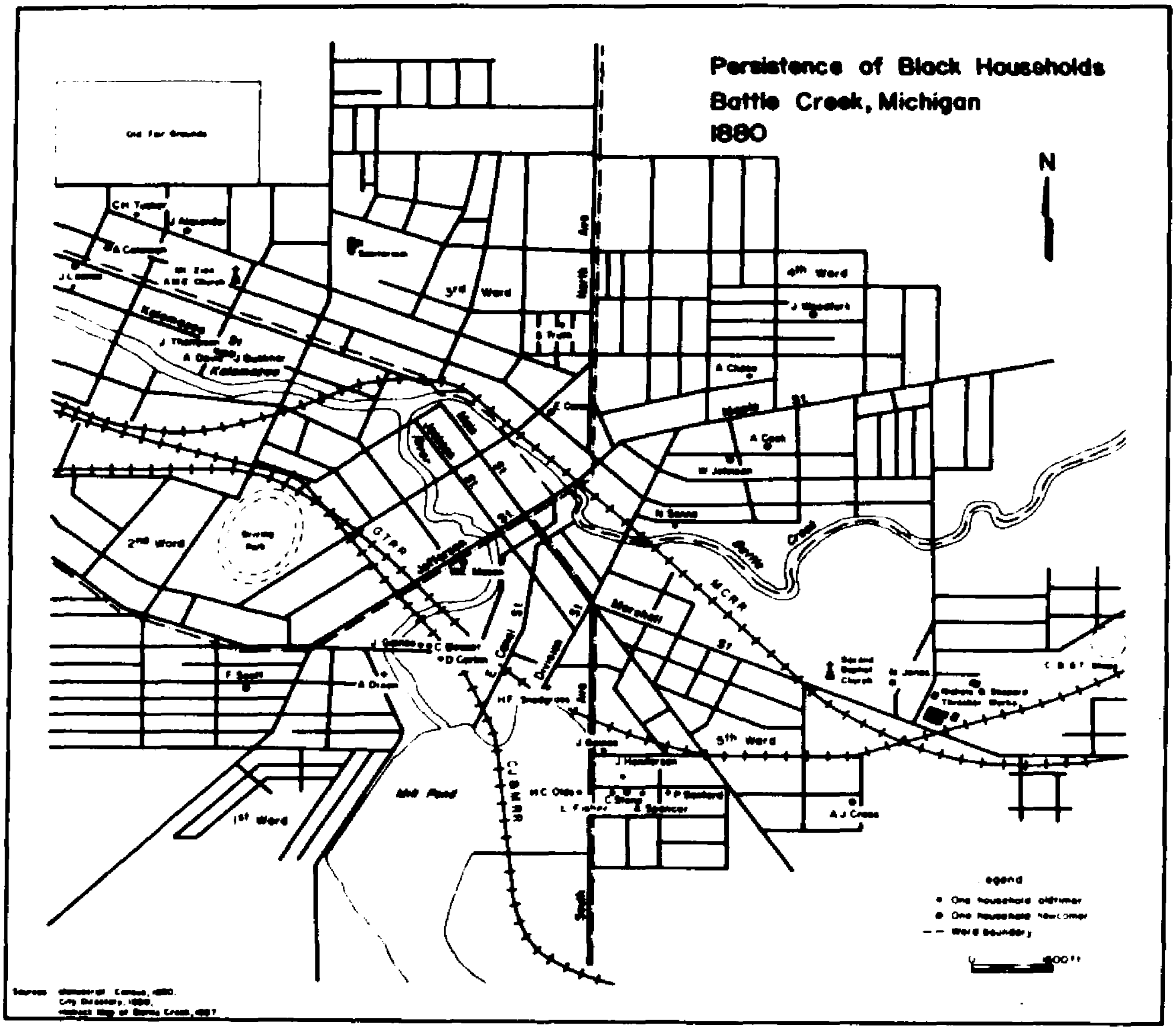
Persistence of Black Households
Battle Creek, Michigan
1880
N
3rd Ward
4th Ward
2nd Ward
1st Ward
5th Ward
North Ave
South Ave
Jefferson St
Main St
Canal St
Division St
Marshall St
GTRR
MCRR
Battle Creek
Mill Pond
Kalamazoo
Second Baptist Church
Legend
One household oldtimer
One household newcomer
Ward boundary

Figure 14

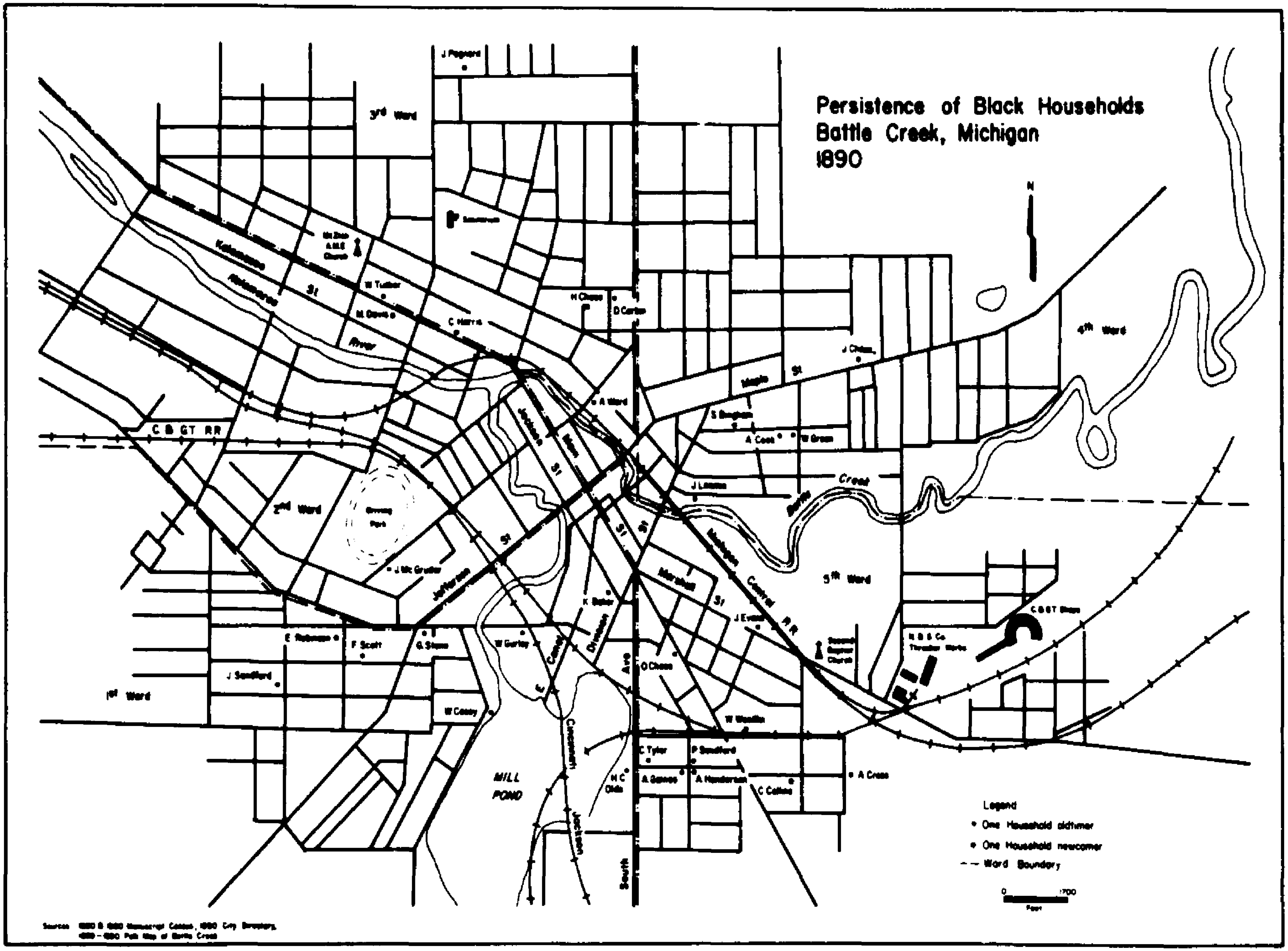
Persistence of Black Households
Battle Creek, Michigan
1890
N
1st Ward
2nd Ward
3rd Ward
4th Ward
5th Ward
Kalamazoo St
River
C & GT RR
Maple St
Battle Creek
Jackson St
Main St
Jefferson St
Division
Michigan Central RR
South Ave
Canal
MILL POND
Legend
One Household oldtimer
One Household newcomer
Ward Boundary
Feet
J Sandford
E Robinson
F Scott
G Stone
W Gurley
W Casey
C Harris
H Chase
D Carter
J Chase
S Bingham
A Cook
J Evans
O Chase
C Tyler
P Sandford
A Henderson
A Cross
C Collins
H C Olds
J Mc Gruder
K Baker
A Ward
W Tucker
M Davis
J Lawson
W Green
Second Baptist Church
C & G T Shops
N & S Co. Thresher Works

Figure 15

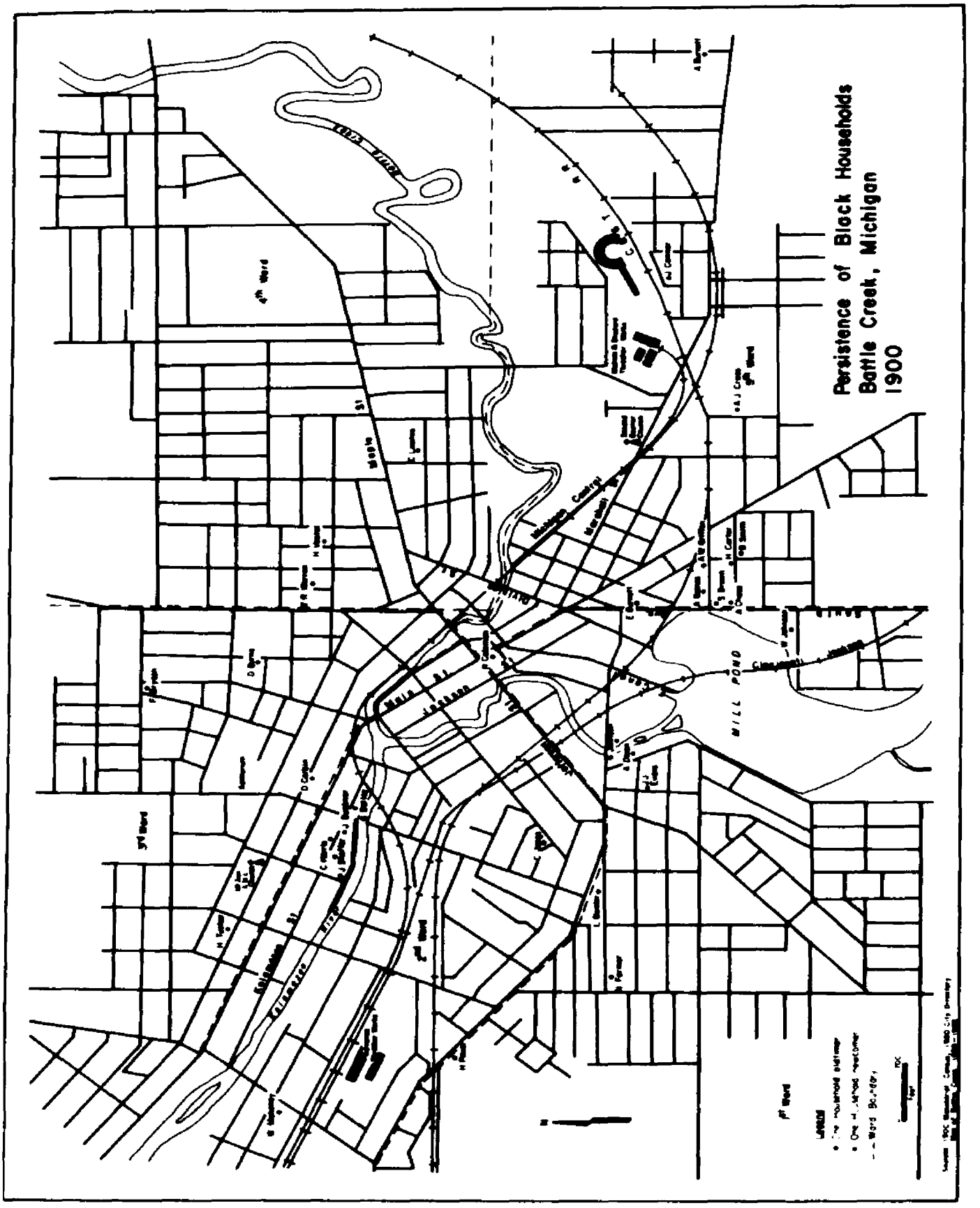
Persistence of Black Households
Battle Creek, Michigan
1900
MILL POND

Figure 16

Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee, sought work in the factories.

As new residents came, the physical appearance of the city changed. New subdivisions were opened in all directions, and the city expanded its boundaries to include these newly opened additions. Between 1900 and 1910 alone, 15 additions were platted to accommodate the growing population.[49] Described as a "working class expansion," by 1904, houses--lots and all--could be purchased in the Post Addition (Lathrop, Kingman, Inn Road, and East Main streets) as well as in other developments in the eastern and western parts of the city for a little over $750.[50]

As people continued to flock to Battle Creek, especially during World War One, suburban development, which was opened just outside the city in the early 1900's, began filling in. In Urbandale and Washington Heights in Bedford Township, Goguac Lake and Columbia Avenue in Battle Creek Township, and Marshall Road in Emmett Township, settlement spread as the streetcar, the interurban, and most importantly, the automobile made it feasible for people to move outward even more.

For the black population, specifically, residences were becoming increasingly more concentrated. As old established clusters waxed and waned, new racially mixed pockets emerged towards the outskirts of the city. Yet, by the close of the

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[49]H. Thompson Straw, "Battle Creek: A Study in Urban Geography," p. 77.

[50]"Tale of Battle Creek's Growth is Story of Area and People," Battle Creek Enquirer and News, January 1, 1951.

period, no section could clearly be identified as a black area.

Before discussing the residential patterns in detail, it should be noted that of the blacks who were attracted to Battle Creek during this period because of the cereal boom, wartime expansion, or for whatever reason, a higher percentage tended to remain from one decade to the next than in the 19th century. For example, in 1910, 52% of the heads of households were in Battle Creek in 1900; in 1918, 77% were from 1910; and in 1930, 66% remained from 1918. Given this pattern of rather high stability in the black community, it is not surprising that many of the names appear repetitiously among the sampled heads of households on the persistence maps (Figures 17, 18, and 19). The impact the residents--both new and old--had on the residential patterns will now be considered.

The 1910 Cross Section. By 1904 the proportion of blacks to whites within the wards was becoming increasingly more disparate (Table 7). From 1894 to 1904, the concentration of black population shifted from the noncontiguous First, Third, and Fifth wards which contained 75% of the population to the contiguous First, Second, and Fifth wards, with 73% of the population. In contrast, the proportion of whites in the wards remained relatively stable over the decade. Despite the increased proportions of blacks within the wards, the absolute numbers were small and no zone emerged as a black area.

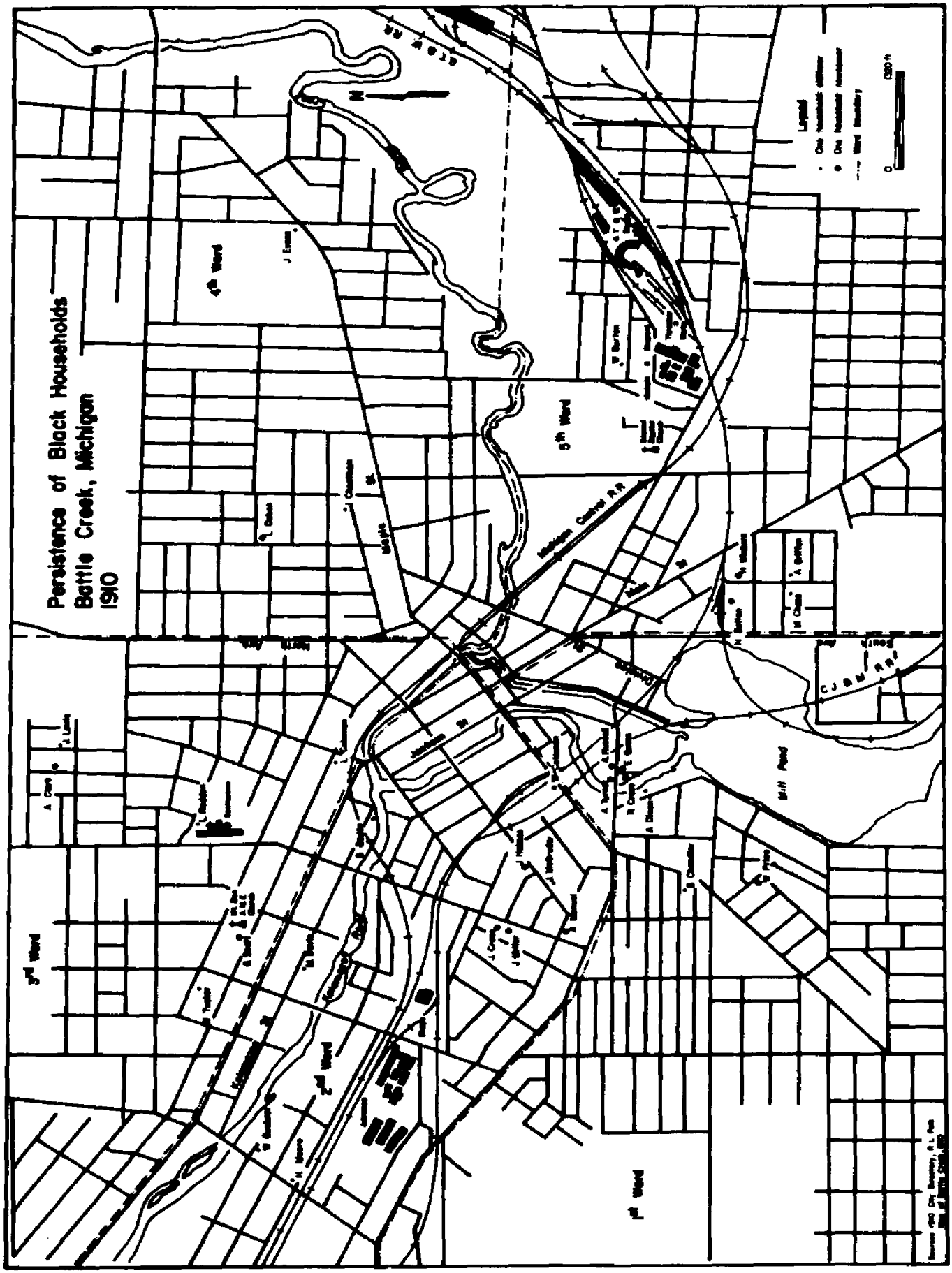

Persistence of Black Households
Battle Creek, Michigan
1910

Figure 17

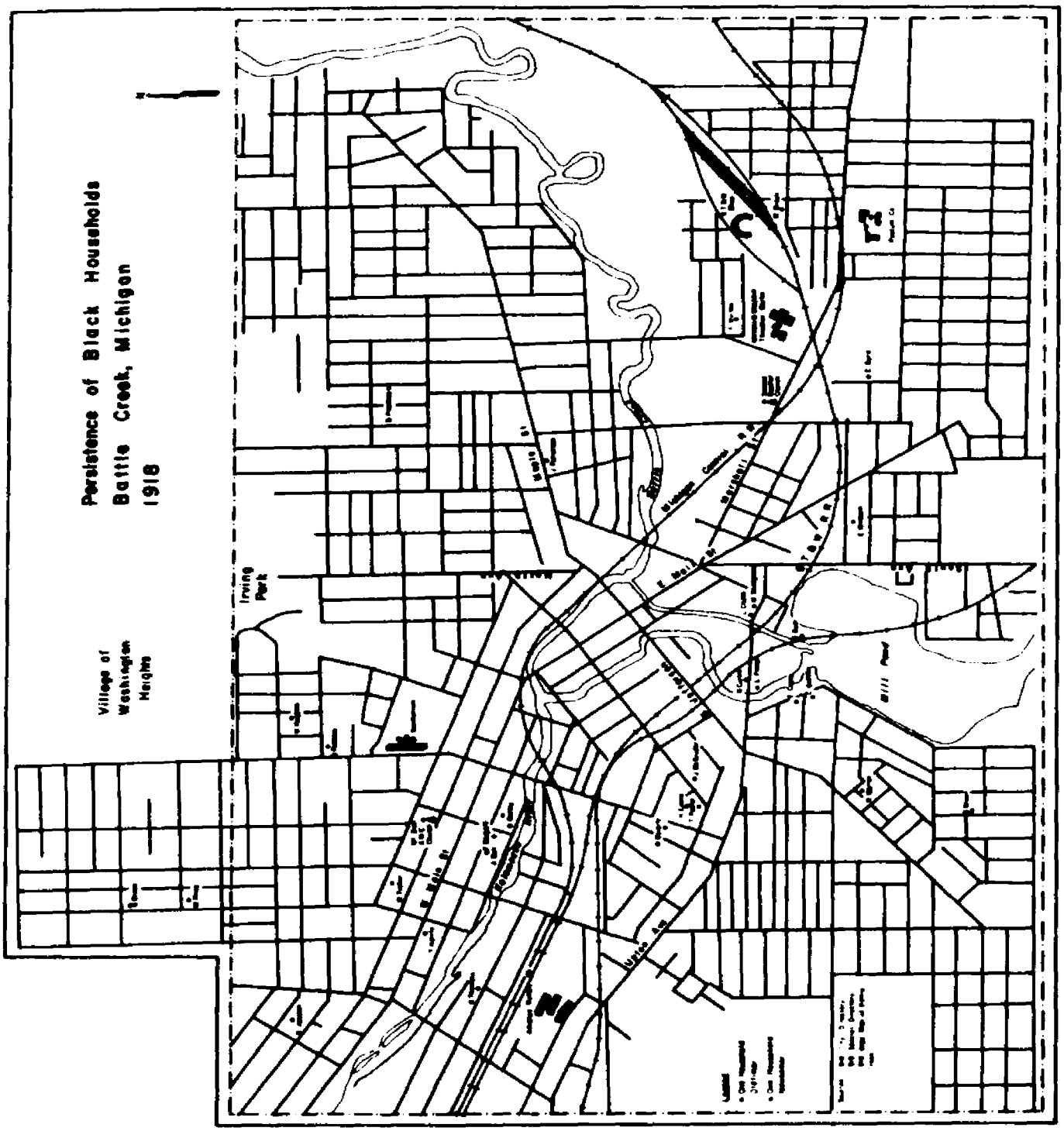

Persistence of Black Households
Battle Creek, Michigan
1918
Village of Washington Heights
Irving Park

Figure 18

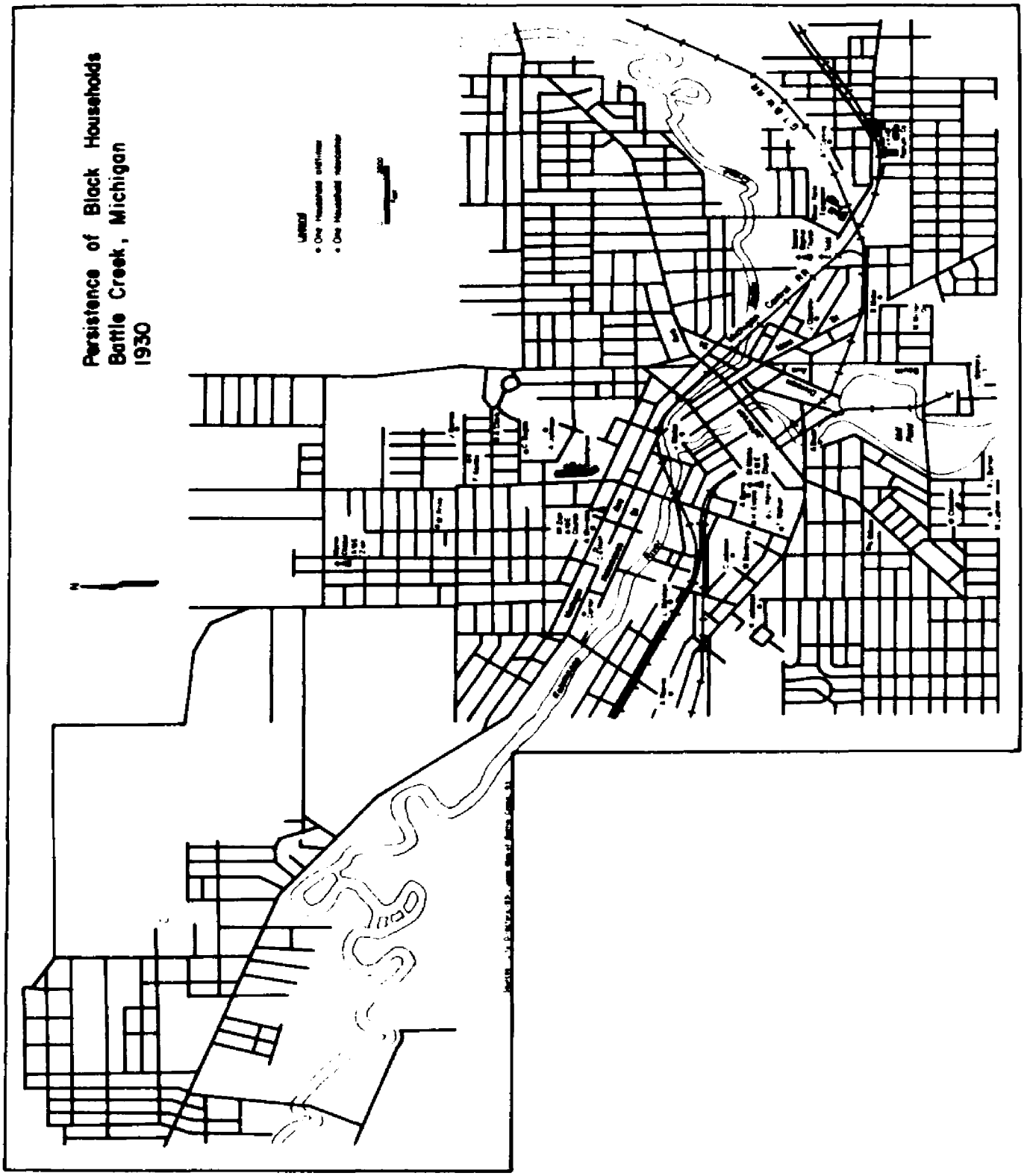

Persistence of Black Households
Battle Creek, Michigan
1930

Figure 19

TABLE VII

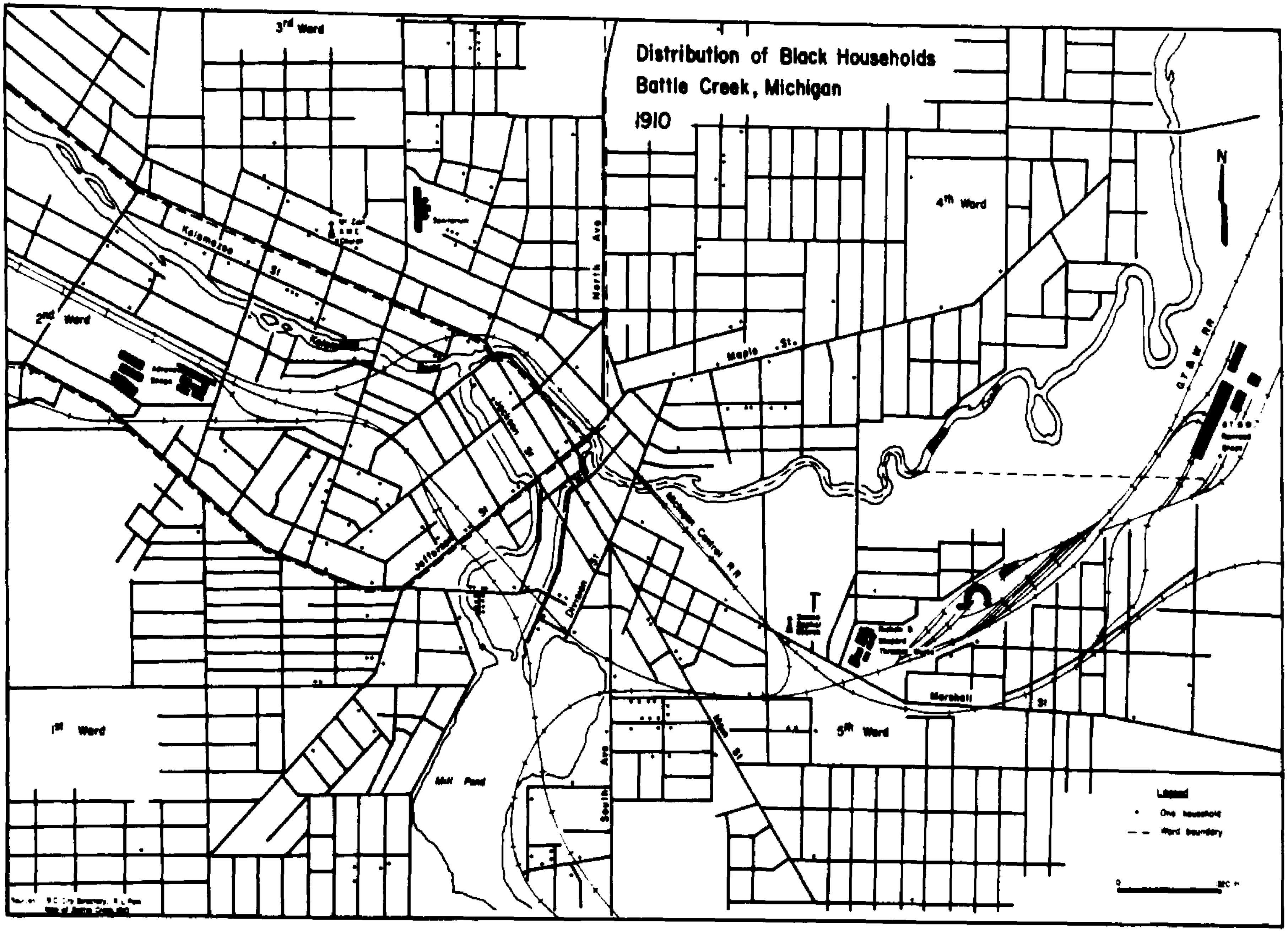
POPULATION OF BATTLE CREEK, BY WARD, 1904

Ward	Black Population		White Population	
	No.	%	No.	%
1	131	25	3,752	17
2	140	27	3,724	17
3	78	15	4,699	22
4	57	11	4,567	21
5	111	21	4,937	23
Total	517	99	21,679	100

Source: State Census of Michigan, 1904

By 1910 the distribution of the black population by wards still probably repeated the 1904 pattern, for the First Second, and Fifth wards contained 68% of the black households. Within the wards, blacks--dispersed throughout the city--were in the same general areas as in 1900. However, a slight tightening up in the spatial pattern was observed as blacks in small numbers moved near existing households. Further, with the increase in residents during the decade, the black population was continuing to shift its locus from the southern half of Battle Creek (area south of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo rivers) to the western half of the city (area west of South and North avenues) (Figure 20).

Figure 20



Distribution of Black Households
Battle Creek, Michigan
1910
3rd Ward
4th Ward
2nd Ward
1st Ward
5th Ward
N
Kalamazoo St
North Ave
Maple St.
Jackson St
Jefferson St
Division St
Michigan Central RR
Main St
South Ave
Marshall St
Mill Pond
Legend
One household
Ward boundary

Specifically, in the First Ward, blacks became slightly more concentrated, especially near the southern fringe of the business district, while a few diffused southward toward the city limits. Displaced by business and commercial enterprises, all but one black household had left the central business district. Some had probably spread a few blocks south to the section bounded on the west by Coldwater Street, south by the Mill Pond, east by Division Street, and north by Fountain Street. Containing 20 households in this narrow strip, if any section in Battle Creek could be identified as a black area, this would be it. With 11 households--some which housed boarders and one which housed three families--Sycamore Street, the only all black street in the city, formed the heart of the cluster. Arced by the River and the Mill Pond and interspersed with heavy industry, seemingly, this was a low income area. The heads of households who lived here were mainly laborers, with a peddler, junk dealer, cook, teamster, barber, and janitor thrown in.

With the Sycamore-Monroe area forming the nucleus of black settlement in the First Ward, the concentration of black households declined as one progressed outward from the core. West of Coldwater Street, 14 households were widely scattered on Blanch, Rittenhouse, Battle Creek, Lake, Goguac, Bidwell, Scenery, Logan and Corwin streets. Southeast of the Mill Pond, a second small pocket of black residences emerged. On Fonda, Burchard, Virginia, and Pauline streets, nine households were located as opposed to one in 1900.

The most striking change in black residences was the decline of households in the Fifth Ward, which in previous years was second to the First Ward in the number of black households. With the demise of many of the oldtimers in the Warren Street cluster, the density of the area declined; the boundaries, however, remained relatively stable. As the number of black households dipped sharply to six on Warren Street, the core of the cluster, the households, although numbering 23, became very dispersed. A few households were scattered north of the railroad tracks, on Marshall Street where the Second Baptist Church still stood as a reminder of a once thriving nucleus of black settlement. Farther to the east, the few residences scattered around Nicholas and Shepard Company remained relatively stable as the heads probably continued to work in the nearby factories. A light diffusion of residences to the southern part of the ward (to Post and Kingman streets) was observed.

As black households in the Fifth Ward were scattering black residences in the Second Ward were becoming more compact. With 46 households in the area, a slight filling in was observed in blocks which had only a few households in 1900. For example, the number of black households increased slightly from six to ten within the business district. However, the most noticeable change in residences was seen in the southern part of the ward. In the area bounded on the west by South Kendall, on the north by the railroad, on the south by Upton Street, and on the east by South Jefferson, 20 black households

were scattered; in 1900, seven residences were here. Another pocket was emerging in the vicinity of Advance Thresher Works on Parish, Hamblin, and Railroad streets; in the next decade this pocket would fuse with the South McCamley Street cluster. And lastly, the Kalamazoo Street node, inching slightly westward, remained rather stable in number of black households.

Within the Third Ward, a few black households remained scattered in the vicinity of the A.M.E. Church. However, the majority of blacks were filling in the blocks surrounding the Sanitarium, probably reflecting a residence-workplace tie. A few blacks, private household workers, lived on Van Buren Street near the business district. A more striking change in black residences occurred slightly north of the Third Ward, immediately outside the city limits. Platted in the early 1900's, the Village of Washington Heights, known as a Seventh Day Adventist area, began attracting a few blacks. Six households were scattered on Wood, Goodale, Vineyard, and Oneida streets.

As in earlier years, the proportion of black households in the Fourth Ward continued to be the lowest of the wards; one-eighth of the households were located herein. With the exception of John A. Evans, a black businessman at the intersection of East Avenue and Maple Street, blacks on and north of Maple Street continued to be personal service workers residing with their employers. The few black households south of Maple--janitors, policemen, porters--probably represented well-to-do blacks.

Thus, on the eve of "the Great Migration," the density of black households was increasing lightly in most sections; nonetheless, blacks were still widely dispersed through Battle Creek.

The 1918 Cross Section. With the rapid influx of blacks during the war decade, the black population increased nearly two-fold, to 1,055. The percentage of blacks, however, climbed less than one percent (from 2.3% to 2.9%) as the city as a whole grew from 18,000 to 25,000 by 1920. Significantly, the number of black households did not keep pace with the rapid influx of blacks: from 200 black households in 1910, the number increased slightly to 212 in 1920, indicating a high degree of doubling up, but more importantly, reflecting the economically marginal life style of blacks in Battle Creek. As yet, the black population was not confined to a ghetto; most blacks lived in racially mixed neighborhoods. They tended to settle in the same general areas as in 1910, but on an increasing scale (Figure 21).

In the eastern part of town (i.e., east of North and South avenues), a decline in the number of black households was observed as the percentage dropped from 30 to 24 over the decade. At the same time, black households became slightly more concentrated in three areas. The first, the Warren Street cluster in southeastern Battle Creek once again, became a nucleus of black settlement as 21 households focused in a four block area--on West Hall, Warren, and Oak Streets with a few households scattered at the fringe on South Avenue, East Hall,

Mott, and Willow streets. The second cluster emerged farther to the east around Nicholas and Shepard, G.T.W. Shops, and Postum Cereal Company. A total of 14 households as compared to three in 1910 were located on First, Idaho, Second, Shepard, and Nicholas streets.

Despite an overall decline in the number of black households, despite the light accretion of black residences in the Maple-Clay streets area, the third pocket, situated north of the Battle Creek (formerly the Fourth Ward), contained the most widely scattered black residences in the city--a position the area has maintained for over four decades. Maple Street continued to be the "showplace of the finest homes" in the city, and consequently, the dividing line between upper and lower class residential areas. All blacks who lived on Maple Street, except John A. Evan who was still at the intersection of East and Maple streets, and many of those scattered north of Maple continued to be private household workers living with their employers. Among the other blacks living in the area (on Central, Elizabeth, and Fox streets) were a painter, a laborer, a barbershop proprietor, a chauffeur, and a retiree; they had probably achieved a modicum of success, as evidenced by their place of residence. Five black households were located south of Maple Street on Clay and East Van Buren (formerly Hart) streets. Two of these served as boarding houses, possibly reflecting a residential area lower in status than the area north of Maple Street.

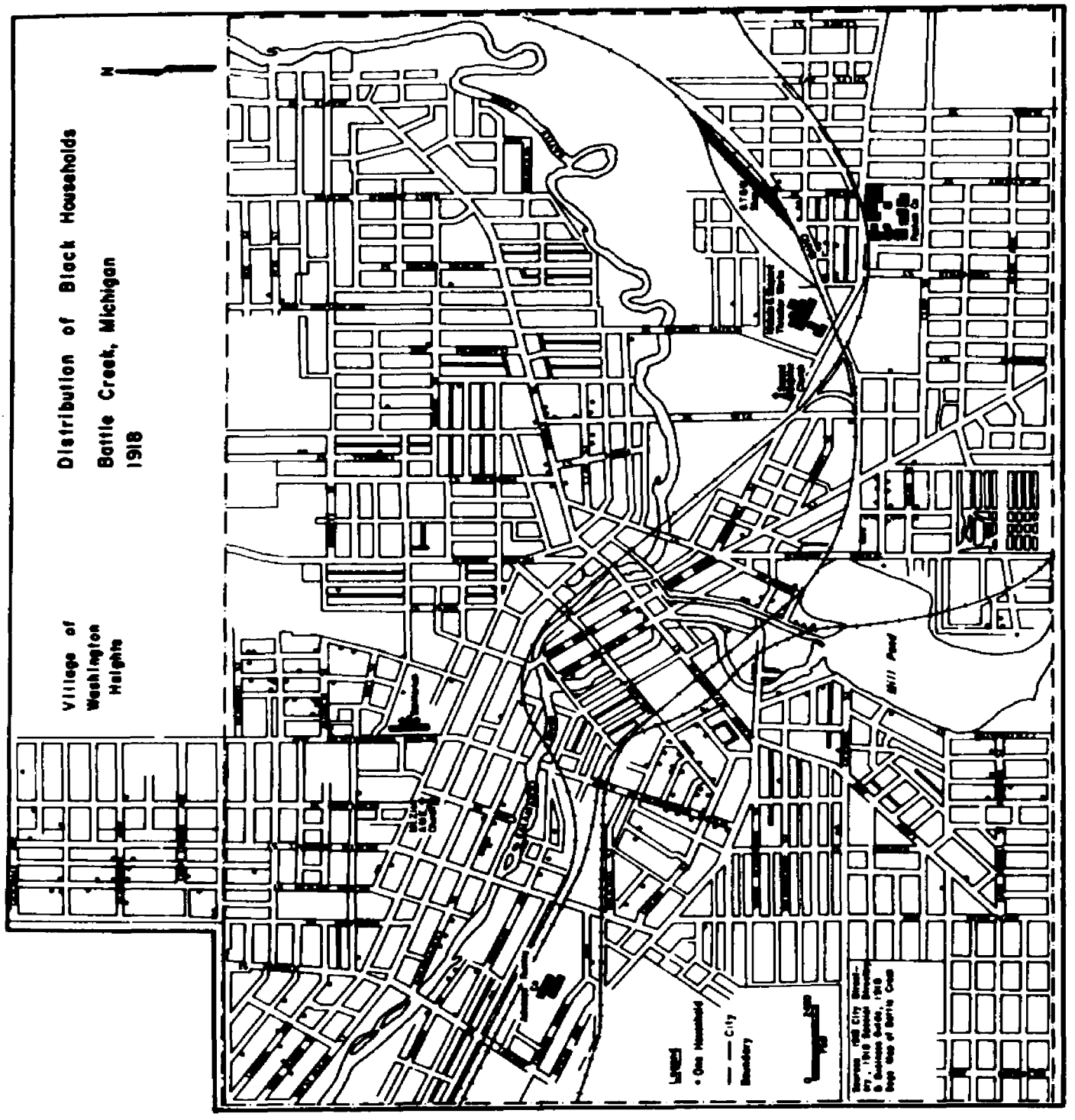

Distribution of Black Households
Battle Creek, Michigan
1918
N
Village of Washington Heights
Mill Pond

Figure 21

With 76% of the black households located in the western half of the city, blacks were clustered in four primary nodes, and several minor ones. The first core, located in south-central Battle Creek, referred to here as the Sycamore-Monroe street area, experienced a slight accretion of black households; it grew from 20 to 26. More important than the increasing density, however, was the shift in the pattern of black residences. The Sycamore Street sector remained stable with the only totally black street in the city, while blacks piled in on Monroe Street, causing a doubling of the residences and a fairly compact spatial pattern. As in earlier years, this area continued to develop as a lower class area. Frequent flooding, mixed residential and industrial land use, noise and pollution from railroads and nearby industry, absence of public sewers, to mention a few, served to make it unattractive to all but the poorer citizens of Battle Creek.

Leapfrogging, the low income area expanded a couple of blocks westward to the South McCamley Street area--bounded on the west by Grand Trunk Avenue, north by Grand Trunk Railway, east by South Jefferson, and south by Upton Avenue. With 38 households, increasing density as well as a locational shift in black residences was observed. In 1910 with no distinct core, the houses were widely scattered throughout the area; eight years later, the district had become fairly compact as blacks moved in large numbers to South McCamly, South Washington, Clyde, Pearl, and Liberty streets--the heart of the area. With the large percent of newcomers and the moderate degree of doubling

this area along with the Sycamore-Monroe streets sector was seemingly the "port of entry" for many of the rural poverty stricken blacks from the South.

With households much more scattered than the two areas just mentioned, the third pocket referred to here as as Kalamazoo-Parish streets district--was bordered on the north by Kalamazoo Street, west by Angell, South by Michigan Central Railway, and east by South Washington. With half of the 22 households in the cluster located on it, Kalamazoo Street--for decades a node of the black settlement--formed the core of the section. The other households, directed toward the Advance Thresher Works, were scattered in the more recent settlement on Page, Hamblin, Parish, and Lafayette streets in a section environmentally inferior to Kalamazoo Street. Subjected to frequent flooding, and bordered by railroads and heavy industry, the district south of the River was probably shaping up as a lower class area.

The fourth core which developed north of the sanitarium will be referred to as the Irving Park Area. Bounded by Howard Street on the north, North Washington on the west, Irving Park on the east, and Champion on the south, the area remained stable in the number of black households (23) over the decade. However, the residential pattern changed radically as expansion of the sanitarium forced the dispersed residences of 1910 to shift northward to form a clustered spatial pattern in 1918. Hanover, Hazel, and Bedford streets contained a majority of the residences. Many of the heads of these households worked at the Sanitarium as cooks, barbers, nurses, and laundry workers

which may account for this spatial expression of black residences.

In addition to these nuclei of black settlements, blacks were located in other sections of the western part of the city in fairly dispersed residential patterns. Immediately to the north of the city limits in the Village of Washington Heights, blacks were spreading in moderate numbers: increasing from 6 to 19 over the eight year period. These were laborers, janitors, barbers, hairdressers, and machinists--some oldtimers, but most newcomers--who had probably achieved a small degree of economic security; this seemingly was a middle class area.

Within the city, another high status area was shaping up in the northwestern corner of the city. Bounded on the north by Welch Avenue, east by Hubbard, south by Michigan, and west by the city limits, blacks moved into the section initially in this decade. This is the only section in Battle Creek where blacks settled for the first time in 1918; in the other locations at least one or two blacks were there in previous years. The remaining black households were widely dispersed in two areas: a few blocks east of the Welch Street cluster in the vicinity of the A.M.E. Church, and south of Upton Avenue--on Blanch, Goguac, Corwin, Eldred, Elsmere, Scenery, Logan, Burchard, and Oakland streets.

In sum, by 1918, the residential pattern of blacks in Battle Creek was becoming increasingly more concentrated. With 29% of the black households, the low income area between South Kendall and Division streets was apparently emerging as the

nucleus of the black community.

The 1930 Cross Section

During the twenties, the increasingly large influx of blacks mainly from the South, pushed the black population to 1,795 by 1930, up 70% from 1920, and comprised 4% of the total population. The number of households, however, dropped to 196. The low number of residences is probably not a reflection of intense crowding in Battle Creek's black community, but more likely, a reflection of a limitation in the data.[51] The households represent people who were traced through the 1931 city directory, as well as those newcomers with whom oldtimers boarded. Thus anyone establishing a new household in Battle Creek in 1930, unless an oldtimer resided with him, unfortunately, could not be identified.

Keeping this lacuna in data in mind, the residential pattern of blacks changed slightly over the 12 year period. Generally, blacks continued to reside in the same general areas as in previous years; however, the density of households increased in enclaves on the westside and decreased on the eastside (Figure 22).

With 85% of the households, blacks were dispersed throughout the westside (i.e., west of South and North avenues). A tendency toward clustering, nonetheless, was still evident as four primary neighborhoods were virtually the same as in

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[51]See Chapter 1 for details on the approach used to trace individuals through the decades.

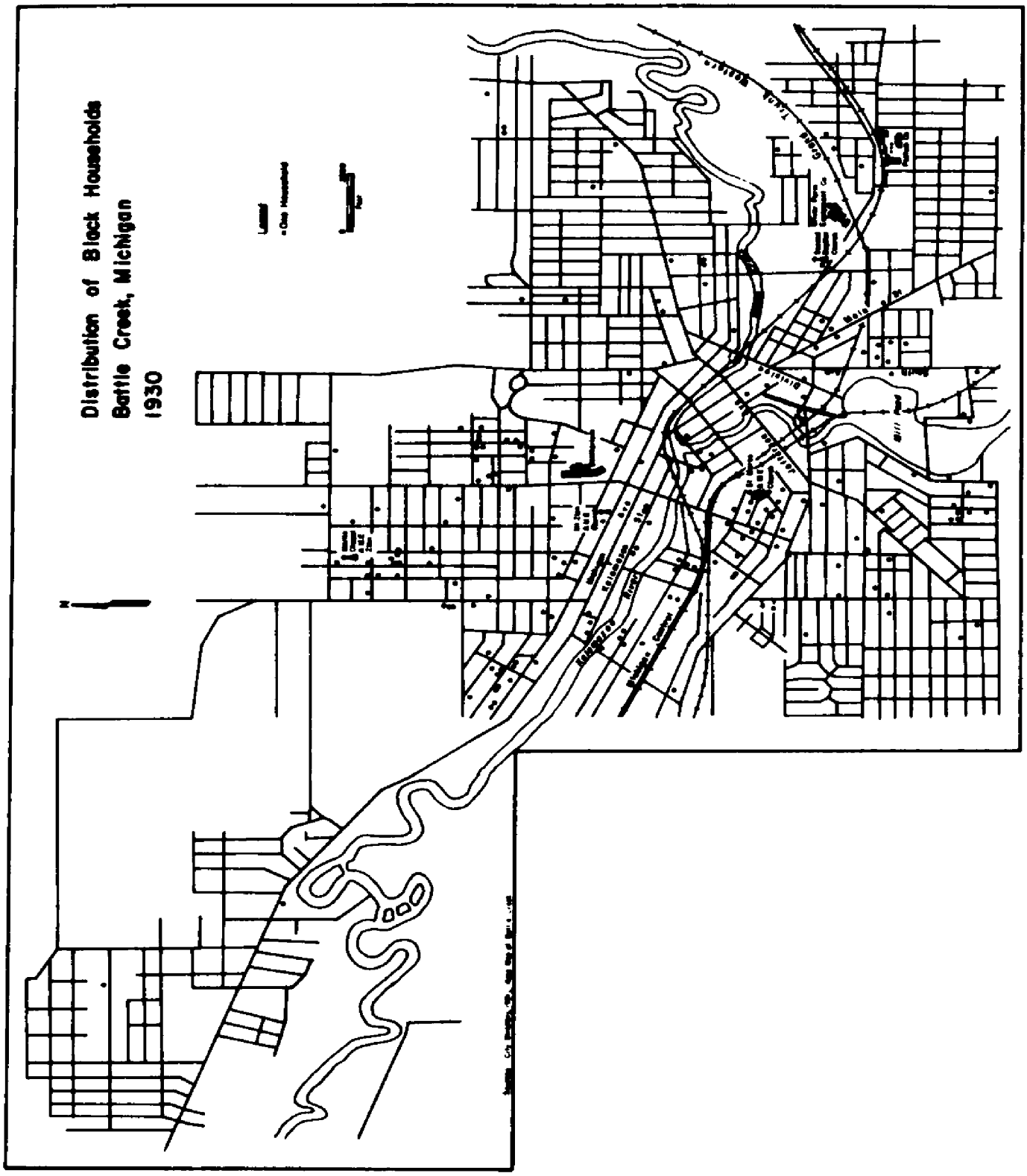
Distribution of Black Households
Battle Creek, Michigan
1930

Figure 22

1918, with the exception of a light filling in of residences. The most radical change occurred within the Sycamore-Monroe streets enclave--a low income sector in the central part of the city, and an older site of black settlement. Displaced by heavy industry and a public institution, the densely settled, all black Sycamore Street was obliterated in this decade. A few blacks, however, continued to reside on River, East Fountain, Monroe, and Division streets, with tentacles stretching northward into the business district and eastward across South Avenue to East Main and Yuba streets in the eastern part of the city. To the west of the Sycamore-Monroe streets cluster, Parish Street and McCamly Street enclaves--two low income areas--fused. Bounded on the west by Angell Street, south by Upton Avenue, east by Jefferson Street, and north by the Kalamazoo River, this wedge of land which contained 35 residences was the most densely populated enclave of the black settlement in the city. The locus of the cluster continued to be near Pearl, Liberty, and Clyde streets as evidenced by the emergence of St. Marks A.M.E. Church on South McCamly Street. Referred to as "the Bottoms," this sector was characterized by lowlands, poor drainage, frequent flooding, lack of public sewers, a high degree of doubling, and adjacent to and interspersed with heavy industry, railroads, and the business core.[52]

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[52]From three studies on Battle Creek, the characteristics of the residential areas were gleaned. In 1934, Thompson identified three residential areas based on personal appearance, proximity to heavy industry, railroads, and commercial core. "Third Class Residence," the poorest residential area,

To the south of Upton Avenue, 26 households were widely scattered on Frisbie, Rittenhouse, Bluff, Webber, Burr, Ravine, West Bidwell, Corwin, Elsmere, Scenery, Logan, and Riverside streets. In these homes were families headed by a repairman, a machinist, a clerk, a bellman, and several laborers and janitors. They probably represented well-to-do blacks, for they lived in a residential area described as "Second Class," neither the lowest status nor highest status residential area. East of the Mill Pond, black residences on Fonda, Virginia, and South avenues remained stable in what Thompson described as a "Third Class" residential area.

North of the Kalamazoo River, blacks located mainly in three "Second Class" neighborhoods.[53] The first--the Irving Park neighborhood, north of the Sanitarium, slightly declined in black households, while the Washington Heights sector, now incorporated into the city--slightly gained black households. Becoming faintly more concentrated, the locus of district

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was adjacent to the business district, etc. "First Class Residence," the site of the finest residences in the city extended about three blocks on Maple Street. "Second Class Residence" was all residences within the city not counted in the above. It is unlikely that the residential areas changed significantly over the four years. See: H. Thompson Straw "Battle Creek: A Study in Urban Geography," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1936); Hawks, "The Negro in Battle Creek, Michigan," and Allan A. Twichell and Emil A. Tiboni, "Housing Problems and Policy in the Battle Creek Community, (Battle Creek, 1948), (typewritten).

[53]Thompson identified the area north of Kalamazoo River as "second class residence." This is probably equivalent to middle class residence.

shifted from North Wood Street, a block eastward to Roseneath, Kendall, and Roosevelt Streets. Martin Chapel A.M.E. Church, organized in the late 20's, was located on North Kendall Street. With a few residences located on the fringe of the cluster (on Howland, Vineyard, and Haskell streets), the Irving Park and Washington Heights clusters were on the verge of coalescing.

In the third neighborhood, the Welch Avenue cluster, black households doubled over the 12 year period. A light filling in of residences on West Van Buren and Graves streets was observed as black households increased from 9 to 19. With a large number of professionals, this area was delineated as an "upper class" black residential area in 1948;[54] in 1934, Thompson described it as a "second class" residential area. Containing a wide range of occupations--professional, clerical, craftsmen, proprietors, service and laborers--was this area emerging as a high status area in 1930? The evidence is inconclusive, but considering the occupations of those who resided there, and extrapolating, if possible, from 1949 housing data, the area may have been in its embryonic stage as a "better class" residential sector.

Outside of these nodes, blacks were again settling--albeit in small numbers--in the vicinity of Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church, on Kendall, Champion, Van Buren and Kalamazoo streets--the general site of black settlement in the 1860's. No extensive outward movement of blacks to new areas occurred

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[54]Hawks, pp. 13-14; Twichell and Tiboni, "Housing Problems," p. ii.

during the decade; two families (a mason contractor and a laundry proprietor) settled in recently annexed Urbandale in the northwestern part of town.

On the east side, blacks were living in the same general areas as in 1918, but they were increasingly more dispersed as the density within the clusters declined. For example, the Warren Street cluster--an area of "second class" residence and a sizable number of oldtimers--declined almost 50% as many of the older residents died. Likewise, the Idaho Street cluster, a low income area near Nicholas and Shepard, declined by 75%.[55] North of Battle Creek, a few households remained scattered on East Van Buren, Clay, Maple, Frelinghuysen, Adams, Wabash, Broad, Pittman, and Charlotte streets. Two households (headed by an auto mechanic and a machinist) had diffused just outside the northern city limits on Pleasant View and Cornell streets. In this decade, there was a sharp decline in personal households servants living with their employers, especially on Maple Street. John A. Evans, president of Evans Manufacturing Company, continued to reside at the intersection of East and Maple. A barber shop proprietor, two blacksmiths, a policeman, a janitor, two laborers, and an electrician lived here in what has been termed "second class residence," probably equivalent to a middle class residential area.

Such then was the residential pattern of blacks in Battle Creek at the onset of the "Great Depression." Blacks

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[55]Thompson, "Battle Creek," p. 24.

continued to be found throughout the city; however, concentrations were increasing on the west side of town, specifically, in the low income sector called "the bottoms," and in the "better class" residential areas north of the Kalamazoo River. The black neighborhoods were by no means exclusively black. By the close of the period, the outline of the future black ghetto of Battle Creek had crystallized.

The processes working to produce the patterns in earlier years still seemed to be operative in Battle Creek in this period. With blacks still concentrating at the lower rung of the occupational ladder, nearness to sources of jobs--mainly the central business district, and the heavy industry near the outskirts of the city, and location of low cost housing were the primary factors in the choice of where to live.

In addition to these economic factors, social factors influenced the settlement of blacks, to a lesser degree. The first of these friendship and kinship ties may account for some of the residential clustering. In some cases, newcomers to the city were attracted to Battle Creek because of a friend or family member already living there. Upon arriving in the city, oftentimes, the recent migrants would settle with the older residents, until becoming familiar with the city, then moved outward--next door, a few doors away,[56] but probably maintaining close friendship or family ties. This process is

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[56]Gleaned from City Directories and maps.

referred to as "chain migration."[57] Group identification or ethnicity[58] may account for another fraction of the residential clustering. And finally, although no formal restrictive covenants were imposed on blacks in Battle Creek, after World War I with a housing shortage,[59] it became increasingly difficult for blacks to purchase housing outside of the low income sectors; thereby contributing to the eventual spatial separation of the black and white communities.

While residential clustering characterized a segment of the residential patterns of blacks in Battle Creek, dispersion or spatial assimilation characterized the remaining portion. Blacks continued to move outwards from the clusters into new areas, but at decreasing rates.

In conclusion, two hypotheses were presented at the beginning of the study, the first,

> The spatial pattern of black residences is directly related to the proportion of blacks living in a community, and the rate at which new immigrants enter a community

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[57]Bryan Thompson, "Newcomers to the City: Factors Influencing Initial Settlement and Ethnic Community Growth Patterns; A review," in Immigrants and Migrants: The Detroit Ethnic Experience, ed. David W. Hartman (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1974), p. 32.

[58]Ibid.; Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Patterns of Residence in Early Milwaukee," Schnore, ed., The New Urban History, p. 149.

[59]"First Auto, Food Boom..." Battle Creek Enquirer and News, July 20, 1975. In 1920 it was estimated that 2,000 homes were needed in Battle Creek to accommodate the growing population; in 1926, the greatest building year in the city's growth, 340 homes were built, and in 1927, 225 houses were built. For reference to confinement of blacks to certain areas, see: Marie Duesenberg, "A History of Negroes in Battle Creek, Willard Library, Battle Creek, Michigan, April 30, 1952. (typewritten);

tended to be confirmed. Throughout the decades, the black population remained less than five percent of the total population. In the years, especially before World War I, blacks were widely scattered; with the war, and the relatively large influx of blacks and whites, black residential areas began tightening up.

The second hypothesis,

> As the black population expands, its original area cannot absorb all of the increase and so extends via an invasion and succession process, along sectoral lines into better residential areas,

tended not to be confirmed. Although blacks were widely dispersed throughout the city during the 90 year period, blacks began concentrating in the Parish-McCamly street sector, especially after World War I. However, because of the low ratio of black to total population, and the relatively small influx, although a doubling of absolute numbers, the minimal threshold generally recognized for ghetto formation (50% black of a census tract for a ghetto neighborhood and 75% or more for a ghetto core)[60] was not attained. At the termination of the study, spatial assimilation as reflected in dispersed residential patterns was seemingly the process by which black residential patterns were formed.

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and Urban League Papers, Bentley Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

[60]Rose, "Black Residential Subsystem," p. 51. It should be noted that census tract data for Battle Creek were not available at the time; nevertheless, of the data available, no section of the city would qualify as 50% black.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In recent years the number of geographical studies on black Americans has increased tremendously. However, few studies have focused on the urban residential pattern of blacks, with even fewer on the residential pattern of blacks in small-sized cities of 50,000 or less. In an attempt to bridge the gap within this research area, this study investigated the residential pattern of blacks in Battle Creek, Michigan, a small town of 38,000 in 1970, located in south-central Michigan. The origin, growth, and migration of blacks as reflected in the changing residential pattern were examined over a 90 year period.

The guiding research questions were: (1) Who were the first blacks to come to Battle Creek? (2) What was their place of origin? (3) What was the original settlement pattern of blacks in Battle Creek? (4) What changes took place in the residential patterns from 1850 to 1930? (5) How do these settlement patterns fit within the general framework, and areal development and expansion of Battle Creek? (6) What factors influenced the patterns? and (7) How persistent was the black community from 1850 to 1930?

The "Dagwood Sandwich" approach in historical geography was employed in an attempt to describe and explain the

spatial distribution of the black population. The first step in the approach was to establish a history of change by mapping the residential location of black families for the nine decades between 1850 and 1930. The second step was to describe the patterns and analyze the processes creating the patterns. The study relied heavily upon manuscript censuses, city directories, tax and assessment rolls, newspapers, and unstructured interviews to identify black households. Two hypotheses relating to spatial patterns and processes creating those patterns were considered.

I. The spatial pattern of black residences in Battle Creek is directly related to the proportion of blacks living in a community, and the rate at which newcomers enter the community.

   A. A greater dispersal in residential pattern exists when the black population is small and the influx of newcomers is light.

   B. The greater the influx of black immigrants and the larger the black population, the more concentrated the residential area.

II. As the black population increases, its original area cannot absorb all of the increase; it, therefore, expands via the "invasion and succession" process. The original clusters

> are almost always in the lowest socio-economic status area of the city's inner zone and this expansion will most likely be along sectoral lines to better residential areas.

The first set of hypotheses is confirmed by the study. Between 1850 and 1910, the migration of blacks to Battle Creek was rather light as indicated by the small population: up from 34 in 1850 to 575 in 1910. The highest percentage of blacks in the total population was 5.2% in 1870; 315 blacks were in residence at the time. Concomitantly, the residential patterns of blacks were widely dispersed. Beginning around 1914 and continuing through 1930, the black population increased threefold, to 1,795. Growing chiefly by migration, the black population jumped almost 84% from 1910 to 1920; it increased a little over 70% from 1920 to 1930. Maps depicting the residential location of blacks for the 16 year period showed an increasing tendency toward clustering.

The second set of hypotheses relating to the processes by which ghettos expand is not confirmed. Over the 90 year period, the black population did not reach the minimal threshold--50% black of a census tract for a ghetto neighborhood and 75% or more for a ghetto core--generally recognized for ghetto formation. By the year 1930, no

exclusive black areas had developed. Although residential areas for blacks were becoming more clustered, spatial assimilation seemingly was the process by which the residential patterns were formed.

The factors working to produce the spatial distribution of blacks in Battle Creek appears to have been accessibility to sources of jobs, low income housing, and to a lesser degree, kinship and friendship ties, and group identification. After 1910, racial discrimination became an important factor in the residential pattern of blacks. While no formal restrictive covenants were imposed, it became increasingly difficult for blacks to purchase housing outside of certain areas.

The research findings indicate that the forces which created and changed the residential patterns of blacks in Battle Creek, a small sized city, as opposed to metropolitan cities, were different in degree rather than kind. Because of the low magnitude of blacks in the city from 1850 to World War I, blacks were widely dispersed throughout the city; later residential clustering intensified in response to rapid in-migration. These stages in development of residential areas were experienced in other cities, e.g., Lansing, Michigan, Chicago, Detroit, and Seattle, Washington at a much earlier period in the development of these cities, depending on the size of the city and the magnitude of the

black population. In fact, with the exception of Lansing and Seattle which developed black areas a few years later, a ghetto pattern had emerged by 1930, and the process of "invasion and succession" had been clearly identified as the mode of expansion of the black residential areas. It appears that Battle Creek was in the embryonic stage of ghetto development at the close of this study.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study covered the development of the black community from 1850 to 1930; thus, a logical extension of research would be to examine the residential patterns from 1930 to the current period. The results should prove interesting, for most of the changes in the spatial configuration of the black community occurred during these years. By 1970, the city of Battle Creek was 20% black, and many of the areas in 1930 in which blacks were increasingly confined were at least 90% black. It should be noted that lacunae in the residential data may hinder a thorough analysis of the black community. However, with 1970 census tract data, and the opening of the 1910 manuscript census in four years, a somewhat more accurate picture may be obtained.

Secondly, a replication of the study on black residential areas in other small and medium size cities in the South, West, and North to a lesser extent, would add knowledge on the spatial patterns and processes involved in the development of permanent black communities in particular, and urban residential patterns in general.

APPENDICES

PHOTOGRAPHS OF BATTLE CREEK

APPENDIX A

BUSINESS DISTRICT, MICHIGAN AVENUE, 1862

Source: E. W. Roberts Collection, Willard Library, Battle Creek, Michigan.

ARE

APPENDIX B

LOOKING WEST FROM CORNER OF JEFFERSON (CAPITAL AVENUE) AND MAIN (MICHIGAN AVENUE), ca. 1868

Source: E. W. Roberts Collection, Willard Library, Battle Creek, Michigan.

APPENDIX C

NORTH JEFFERSON STREET (N. E. CAPITAL AVENUE), 1869

Source: E. W. Roberts Collection. Willard Library, Battle Creek, Michigan.


BOOTS & SHOES

APPENDIX D

EAST MICHIGAN AVENUE, LOOKING WEST, ca. 1872

Source: E. W. Roberts Collection, Willard Library, Battle Creek, Michigan.

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