

# Archaeology of Racial Violence: An Update of the Springfield Race Riot Project

by  
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and  
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Chicago Archaeological Society  
Zoom Presentation  
March 24, 2024

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On the morning of August 14, 1908, Mabel Hallam accused George Richardson of having raped her the night before.



Mabel Hallam (21; wife of streetcar motorman William Hallam)



George Richardson (36; construction laborer)

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Although Mrs. Hallam was later to recant her story, absolving Mr. Richardson of any wrong-doing, her actions unleashed a fury of violent activity that was to wreck havoc with the City of Springfield.

**The Illinois State Journal**

SEVENTY-SEVENTH YEAR      SPRINGFIELD ILLINOIS SATURDAY AUGUST 15 1908—10 PAGES      PRICE 3 CENTS

## Frenzied Mob Sweeps City, Wreaking Bloody Vengeance For Negro's Heinous Crime.

### MOB WRECKS LOPER'S CAFE DURING RIOT

Throng Attacks Restaurant  
Owned by Man Who Took  
Suspect Away.

PLACE TOTALLY BURNED

FURNITURE, CHAIRS, TABLES AND  
OTHER VALUABLES BURNED  
IN THE STREET.

AUTHORITIES HELPLESS

VICTIM OF NEGRO ASSAULT.



MRS. J. L. HALLAM.

### NEGROES REMOVED TO BLOOMINGTON

OFFICERS FEAR VIOLENCE AND  
SPIRIT FUGITIVE AWAY!

Street Alarmed From County Jail by  
Fleeing Alarm of Five White Deputies  
Barred from Jail.

### THE CASUALTIES

DEAD.

EDWARD STUBBS, 401 East First street, shot through the abdomen.

INJURED.

ALBERT OVERLINE, 410 East First street, shot through the left hip during street rioting.

GEORGE STUBBS, 401 East First street, shot through the left hip during street rioting.

ANDREW ALDRAN, 101 East Jefferson street, shot through the left hip during street rioting.

MURRY D. PARKING, 101 East First street, member of the Springfield chapter of the I. O. O. F., shot through the head while returning from the restaurant.

ROBERT W. CHAPIN, 101 East First street, shot through the head while returning from the restaurant.

DECK DANIELS, 101 East First street, shot through the head while returning from the restaurant.

JESSE M. CAMPBELL, 101 East First street, shot through the head while returning from the restaurant.

ROBERT DANIELS, 101 East First street, shot through the head while returning from the restaurant.

DAVID HALEY, 101 East First street, shot through the head while returning from the restaurant.

WILLIAM STUART, 101 East First street, shot through the head while returning from the restaurant.

THOMAS REAVEL, 101 East First street, shot through the head while returning from the restaurant.

CLAUDE ANAP, 101 East First street, shot through the head while returning from the restaurant.

JOHN BROWN, 101 East First street, shot through the head while returning from the restaurant.

WILLIAM STUART, 101 East First street, shot through the head while returning from the restaurant.

ROBERT DANIELS, 101 East First street, shot through the head while returning from the restaurant.

EUGENE W. CHAPIN, 101 East First street, shot through the head while returning from the restaurant.

JESSE M. CAMPBELL, 101 East First street, shot through the head while returning from the restaurant.

M. S. STUBBS, 101 East First street, shot through the head while returning from the restaurant.

ROBERT DANIELS, 101 East First street, shot through the head while returning from the restaurant.

### TWO ARE KILLED AND MANY HURT AS MOB WORKS

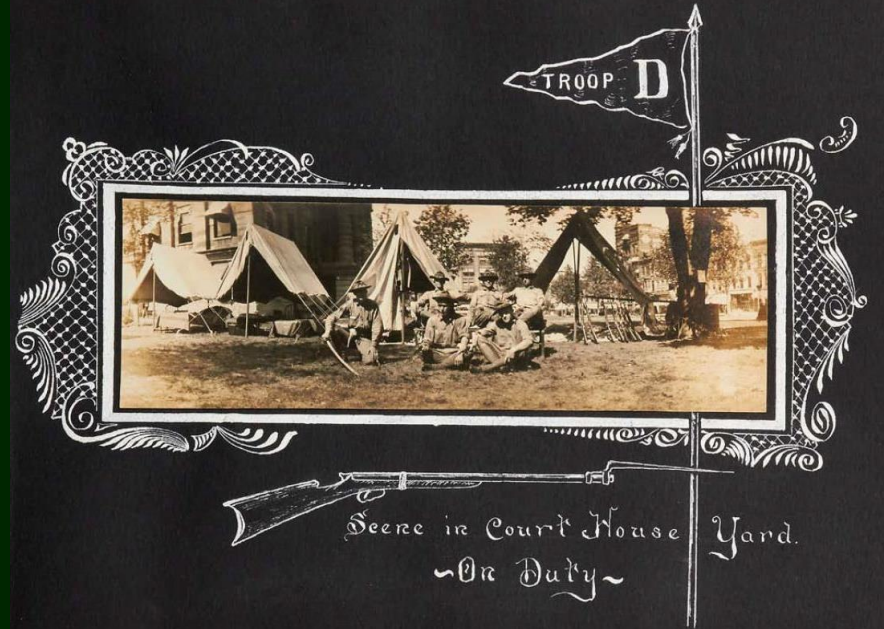
Springfield Helpless as  
Hordes of Thousands of  
Frenzied Citizens.

ASSAULT INCITED BY  
Local Woman.

RESTAURANT IN RUIN



On August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1908, the City of Springfield erupted in racially motivated mob violence that lasted for several days, and resulted in the lynching of two African-American citizens, as well as the destruction of numerous houses and businesses within the city. Much of the violence was centered on the Levee commercial district and residential Badlands. The violence was subdued through the efforts of the Illinois National Guard.

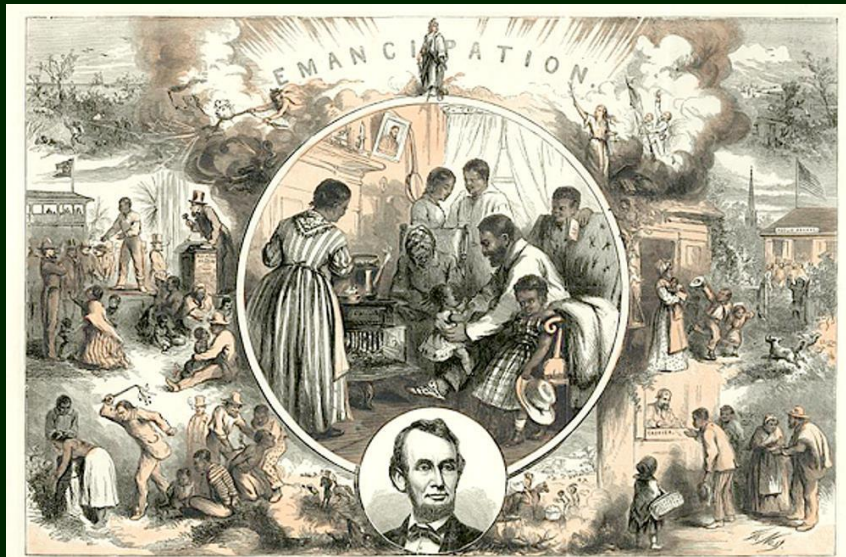




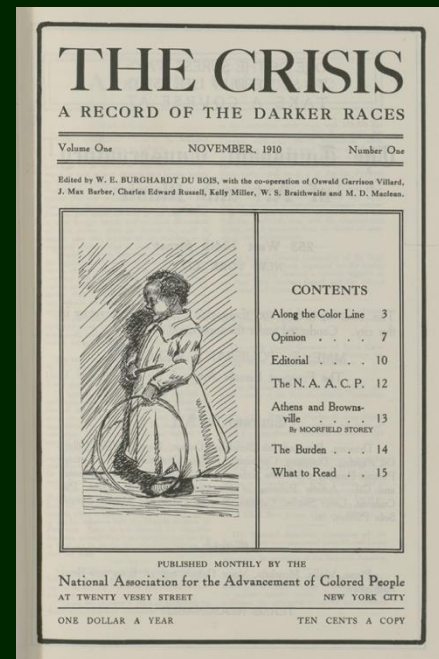
Photographs of East Madison Street, and National Guard in Springfield (August 1908).



The Springfield Race Riot of August 1908 was one of the catalysts that resulted in the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). On February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1909 (in conjunction with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lincoln's birth), the organization was formed. As quoted in the NAACP's webpage, "The NAACP was formed partly in response to the continuing horrific practice of lynching and the 1908 race riot in Springfield, the capital of Illinois and resting place of President Abraham Lincoln."



"Emancipation." A wood engraving by illustrator Thomas Nast from 1865, celebrating the emancipation of Southern slaves at the end of the Civil War. (Library of Congress)





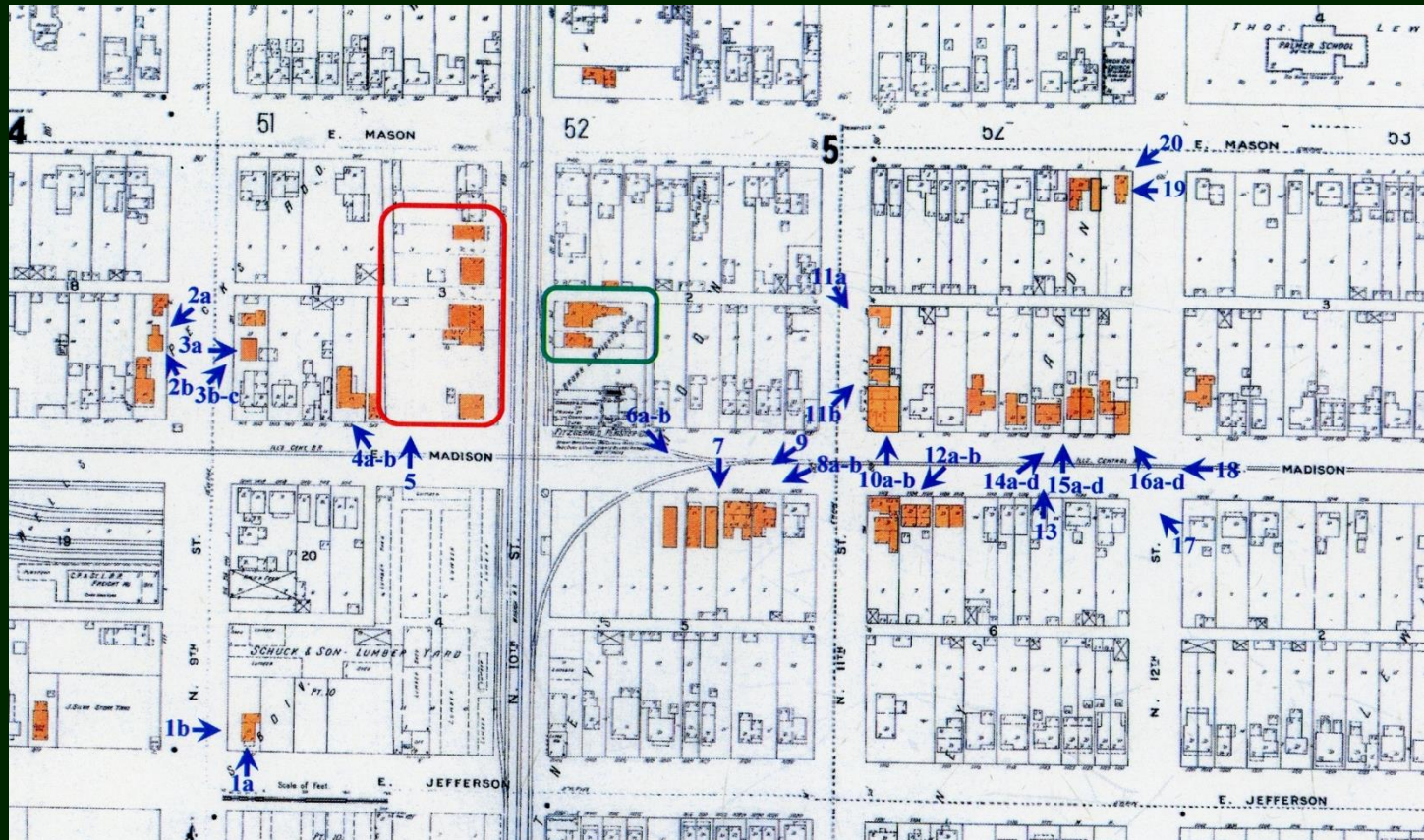
Phase II archaeological investigations on the Carpenter Street Underpass Project (the first component of the Springfield Rail Improvements Project) was undertaken in 2014.



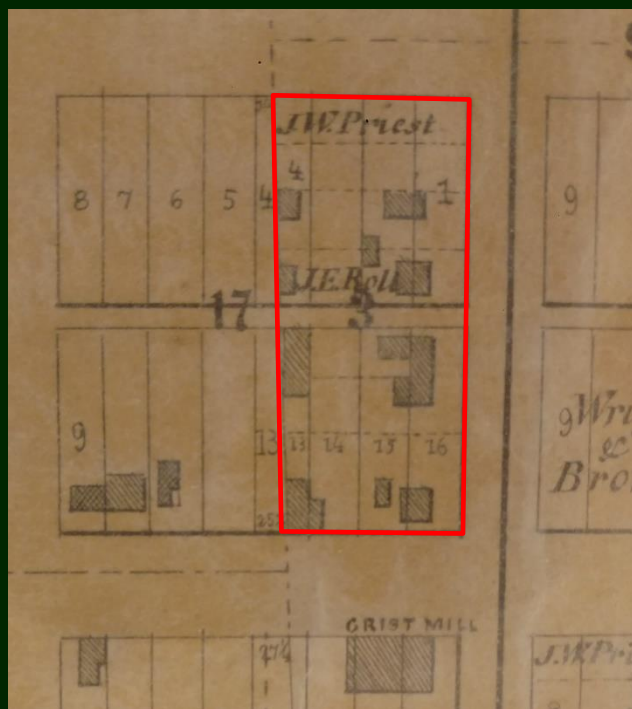
	 © Copyright Hanson Professional Services Inc. 2013	<b>CARPENTER STREET UNDERPASS</b>
		SANGAMON COUNTY SPRINGFIELD RAIL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT
		<b>EXHIBIT 1</b>



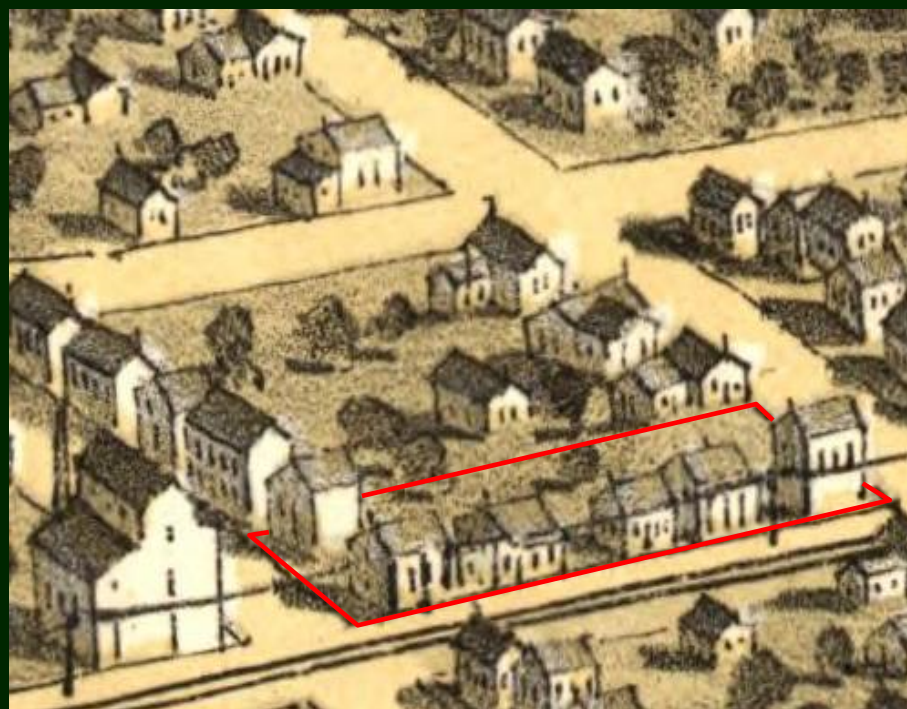
Over 40 houses and businesses were destroyed in the Badlands during the August 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, 1908 weekend in Springfield. This map depicts the location of the houses and businesses destroyed by fire during the riots (as depicted on the 1896 Sanborn fire insurance map). The 2019 project area is circled in red. The 2022 project area is circled in green. The blue arrows indicate the location of historic photographic views.



The well preserved remains of five houses constructed in the 1840s were uncovered during these investigations. They were built on lots re-oriented to face Tenth Street, along which the Great Western Railroad ran through Springfield. The homes initially were occupied by white families. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the residences were predominately occupied by African Americans tenants.



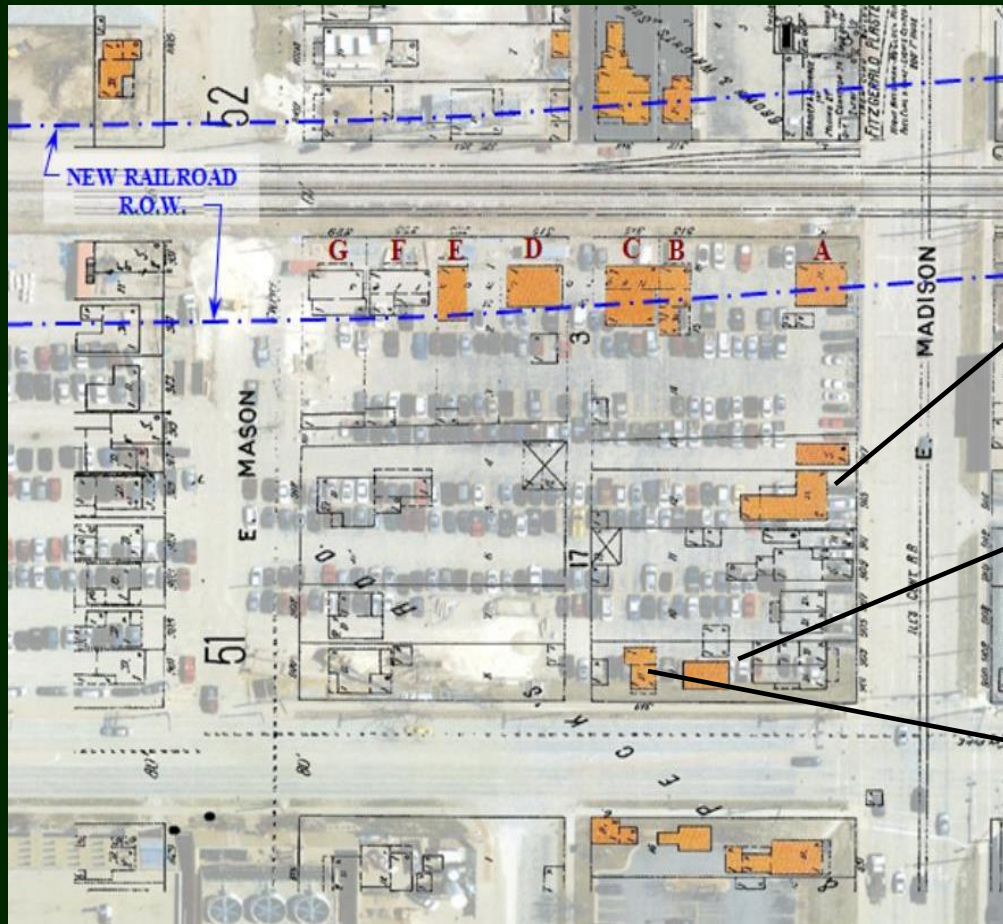
*1854 City of Springfield map*



*1867 Bird's Eye View of Springfield*

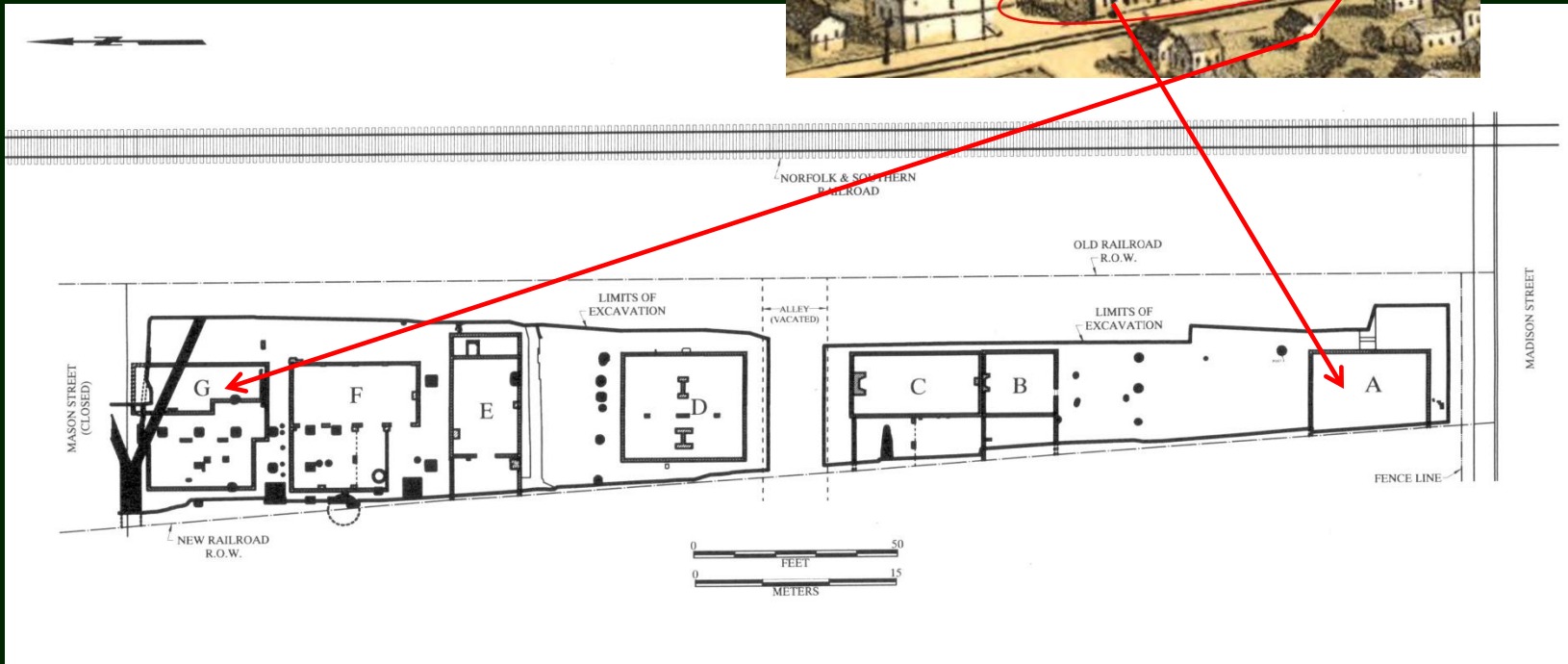


Location of burned (A-E) and unburned (F and G) houses in the Tenth Street Corridor, overlain on existing aerial view. Buildings highlighted in orange were destroyed by fire in the August 1908 Springfield riot. The railroad right-of-way depicted here was the original proposed right-of-way as envisioned in 2014.





Phase II archaeological testing of the project area was undertaken in late 2014. This work documented the well-preserved remains of seven nineteenth century houses—five of which had been burned in the riots of August 1908. Only the front sections of the houses were located within the proposed project area, with the rear yard activity areas associated with these houses located to the west beneath the existing parking lot.



Views of Houses A (left) and B (right) during Phase II testing. House A appears to have been occupied by, among others, the Smith family at the time of the 1908 riot. At the time of the Phase II research, the occupant of House B at the time of the riots was unknown.





Two views of House E (and associated brick walkway) during Phase II testing. This house was occupied by the Isaac Smith family for much of the nineteenth century. At the time of the 1908 riot, the house was reportedly occupied by “H. Stoutmeyer.”



Looking west



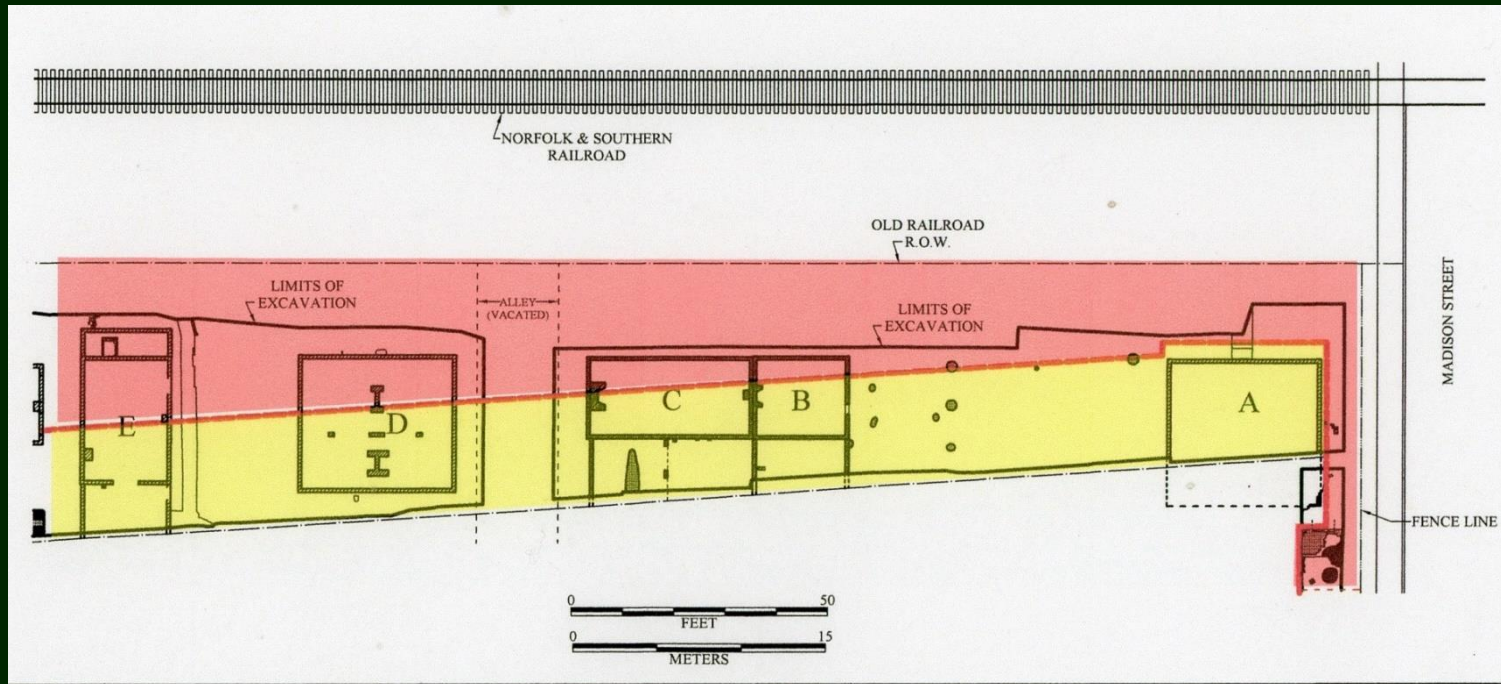
Looking south



A key aspect of the archaeological excavations was understanding the depositional sequence within the houses and the different contexts in which the artifacts were recovered (i.e. Pre-Fire; Fire; and Post-Fire). A distinct “fire zone” associated with the house’s destruction in 1908 was readily observable. The top and bottom of the fire zone is marked by the red lines, left. Burned floor boards and floor joist are exposed, on right.



After four years of coordination with various state and federal agencies, and the community (“Consulting Parties”), the decision was made to 1) shift the railroad right-of-way 22’ to the east to preserve in place those areas of Houses A through E outlined in yellow, and 2) completely excavate those areas within the new right-of-way that could not be preserved in place (those areas outlined in red).





House E after completion of the first half of the checkerboard (left), and after completion of the fieldwork (right)





House D after completion of the first half of the checkerboard (left), and nearing completion of the second half of the checkerboard (right).





House C after completion of first half of the checkerboard (left), and nearing completion of the second half of checkerboard.





House B after completion of first half of the checkerboard (left), and nearing completion of the second half of the checkerboard.



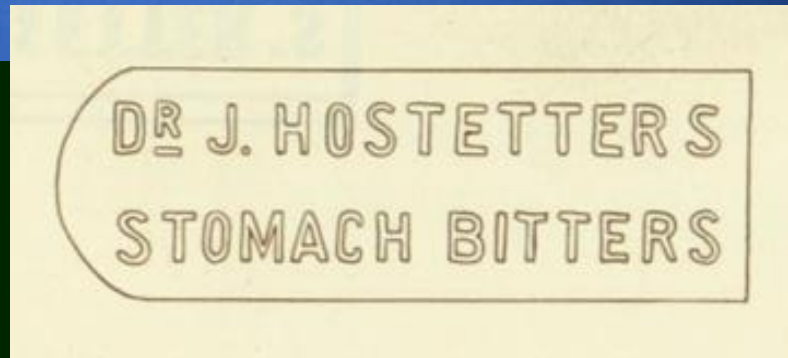


With the fieldwork completed in summer 2020, the focus shifted to the processing of artifacts and report production.





A wide range of artifacts dating from the 1830s through August 1908 were recovered. Pre-Fire deposits were generally subdivided into Early, Middle, and Late components. This image documents the *primary vessels* from the Early-Middle Pre-Fire context of House E deposited (circa 1845-1870) by the widow Smith and her family.



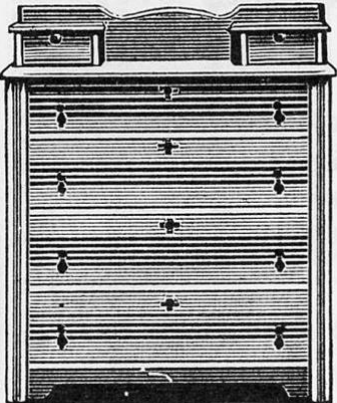
But the most significant assemblages recovered from these investigations in terms of our research goals are those associated with the Late Pre-Fire and Fire assemblages. These assemblages give us new insights into the lifeways of the Black occupants living in the neighborhood just prior to, and during, the riots—such as this table setting recovered from House B.



This table setting was recovered from House B, and it depicts a typical ceramic table setting for a working class family of the period—whether White or Black.



Of special interest to our research was the Fire deposits of House E. It was in House E that the charred and burned remains of both a dresser and a trunk were uncovered, and their contents have been of great interpretive value—giving voice to a young Black woman named Bessie Black.



7250s

**Bureaus and Dressers.**

72550 Bureau, antique finish, four drawers, no mirror; height, 3 ft. 7 in.; width, 3 ft. 1 in.; weight, about 75 pounds.  
Price, complete. ....\$5.00

A good line of dressers to go with iron beds.

**Canvas Covered Trunks.**



**No. 21631**

**No. 21631 An Unquestionable Bargain. Square Trunk, with heavy iron bottom. Painted canvas covering, heavy and strong, as well as neat in appearance. This trunk has hardwood slats on top and body, and is protected with heavy malleable iron clamps and bumpers.**

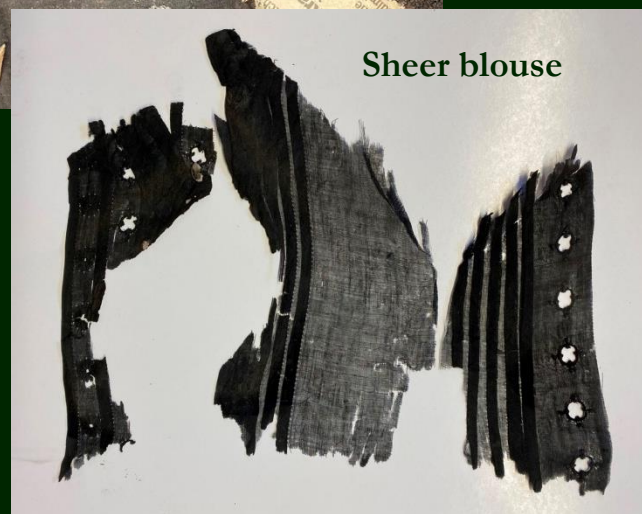
28 inch.....	\$2.50	32 inch.....	\$2.95
30 inch.....	2.75	34 inch.....	3.25



Unlike the trunk, the only items present in the dresser were the remains of several fabric garments—such as these two blouses. The garments in the dresser appear to represent only women's clothing.



Embroidered blouse



Sheer blouse



Example of a bodice (Textile 16) recovered from the dresser.



This is a fragment of a book found in the trunk, entitled *The Mechanics' and Laborers' Ready Reckoner* (which was originally published in 1847).



THE  
**MECHANICS'**  
AND  
**LABORERS'**  
**READY RECKONER.**

CONTAINING  
WAGES BY THE DAY, BOARD BY THE WEEK  
WAGES BY THE HOUR, FORMS OF  
WAGES BY MONTH, FORMS OF  
WAGES BY THE YEAR, FORM OF  
CONTRACT FOR BUILDING

NEW YORK.  
PUBLISHED BY C. P. HURD  
104 Nassau, corner of Ann.

Table 23.—\$1,62½.			Table 24.—\$1,68¼.		
Showing the rate of wages from 1-4 to 6 days, at \$1,62½ per day, or \$9.75 per week.			Showing the rate of wages from 1-4 to 6 days, at \$1,68¼ per day, or \$10.112 per week.		
Days.	Dols.	Cts.	Days.	Dols.	Cts.
½	40½	42½			
¾	81½	84½			
1	1 21½	1 26½			
1 ½	1 62½	1 68½			
2	2 03	2 11			
2 ½	2 43¾	2 53½			
3	2 84½	2 95½			
3 ½	3 25	3 37½			
4	3 65½	3 79½			
4 ½	4 06½	4 22			
5	4 46¾	4 64			
5 ½	4 87½	5 06½			
6	5 28	5 48½			
6 ½	5 68¾	5 90½			
7	6 09½	6 32½			
7 ½	6 50	6 75			
8	6 90½	7 17½			
8 ½	7 31½	7 59½			
9	7 71¾	8 01½			
9 ½	8 12½	8 43½			
10	8 53	8 86			
10 ½	8 93¾	9 28½			
11	9 34½	9 70½			
11 ½	9 75	10 12½			



Among the artifacts in the trunk was the burned remains of a life insurance policy issued by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. This policy was relatively new in August 1908 (note printed 1907 date on fragment).



M. L. I.

# Metropolitan

LIFE INSURANCE

## Company

HOME OFFICE:  
NEW YORK CITY.

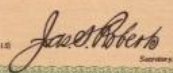

INCORPORATED IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
A Mutual Life Insurance Company

**In Consideration** of the payment of the premium mentioned in the schedule below, on or before each Monday, **Doth** **Verily** **Agree**, subject to the conditions below and on page 2 hereof, each of which is hereby made a part of this contract and contracted by the insured and every person entitled to claim hereunder to be a part hereof, and with the privileges and concessions to policy-holders on pages 2 and 3 hereof, which are hereby made part of this contract, to pay an **Endowment**, on the anniversary of this Policy next after the insured shall have passed the age of seventy-nine years, upon surrender of this Policy and the Premium Receipt Book, the amount stipulated in said schedule; **And** **Doth** further **Agree**, subject to the conditions aforesaid, if the insured shall die prior to the date of the maturity of the Endowment, to pay upon receipt of proof of the death of the insured made in the manner, to the extent and upon the blanks required herein, and upon surrender of this Policy and the Premium Receipt Book, the amount stipulated in said schedule. **Provided**, however, that no obligation is assumed by the Company prior to the date hereof, nor unless on said date the insured is alive and in sound health, but should the proposed insured not be alive or not be in sound health on said date, any amount paid to the Company as premiums hereon shall be returned. The Company may make any payment or grant any non-forfeiture privilege provided herein to the insured, the executor or administrator, husband or wife, or any relative by blood or connection by marriage of the insured, or to any other person appearing to said Company to be equitably entitled to the same by reason of having incurred expense on behalf of the insured, or for his or her burial, and the production of a receipt signed by either of said persons, or of other proof of such payment or grant of such privilege to either of them, shall be conclusive evidence that all claims under this Policy have been satisfied.

SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO.		
Number of Policy	Date	Name of the Insured
52872947	JAN. 18, 1916	MARY ANTHONY.
Age next birthday 20 years	Weekly premium 1.00	Amount payable at end of Endowment period or in the event of death after six months \$180-
One-half only of the above sum payable if death occur within six calendar months from date.		

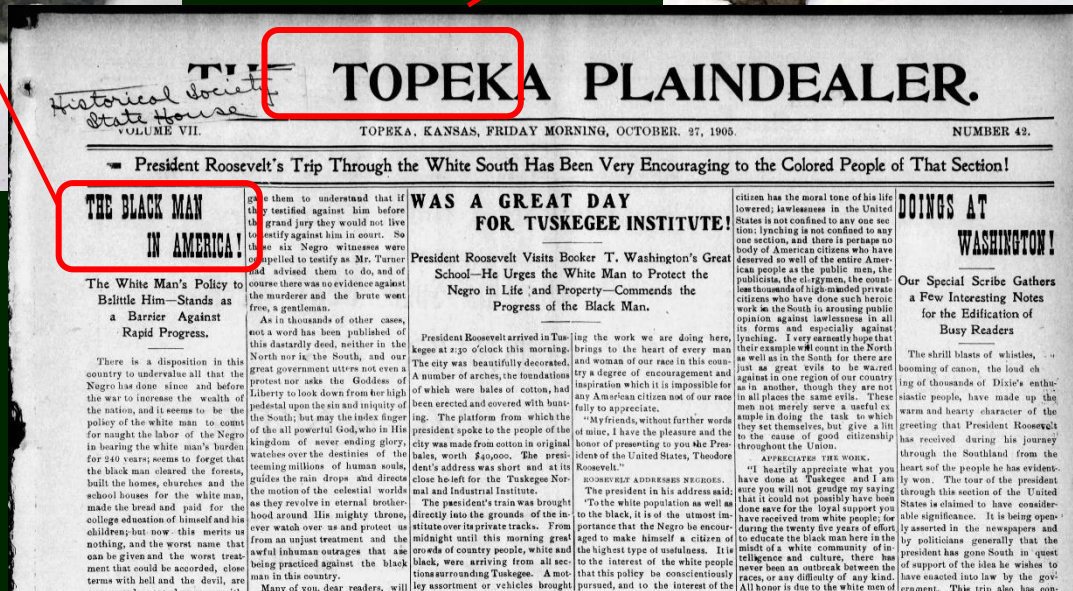
**In Witness Whereof**, the said Metropolitan Life Insurance Company has, by its President and Secretary, signed and delivered this Policy on the date named in the said schedule.

Adult Endowment Policy, payable on date of Policy after age 75.  
Partial Death Benefit Payouts Free in Months.  
Distribution of Surplus Fifth Year and Shareholder Annually.  
Form 1281 B — Rev. 8-1914. 12-15  
April 15 1915 P. 8-1010


  
 Secretary

Example of similar policy, albeit dated 1916.

Few, if any, artifacts by themselves indicate race. Although the implication was that the occupants of the houses burned were Black, the archival record was unclear as to the race of the occupants. The recovery from within the trunk of the October 17, 1905 issue of *The Topeka Plaindealer*—a Black owned and edited newspaper dedicated to a Black readership helped confirm the occupant of this House was most-likely Black, literate, and actively engaged in issues relating to her Black identity.





One of the more intriguing class of artifacts from the trunk was its *jewelry*. The jewelry included multiple brooches, a collar stud, several sets of cufflinks, and a 14 carot gold wedding ring.



Also of great interest was the recovery of three military service medals and a collar pin which were found in the Fire Deposits of House B. These service medals have been attributed to Robert Wright, a young Black man who enlisted in Company H, Eighth Illinois Regiment—the first all Black regiment in the U.S. fully under the command of Black officers. The young Robert Wright, occupant of House B, served in Cuba in 1898-99, and continued to serve in the Illinois National Guard up through the 1908 riots. He most likely moved into House B sometime just prior to the riots.





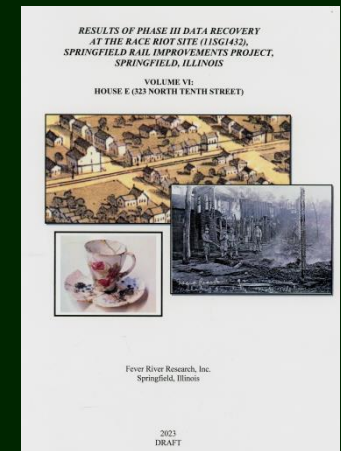
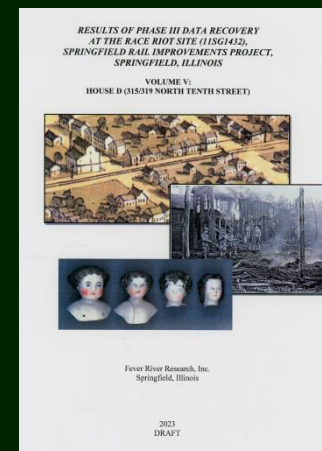
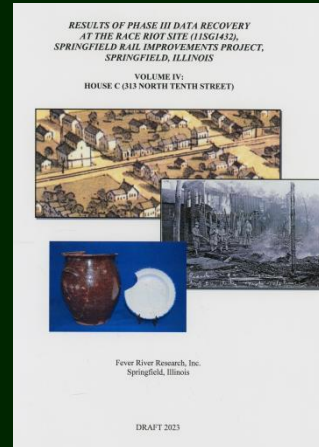
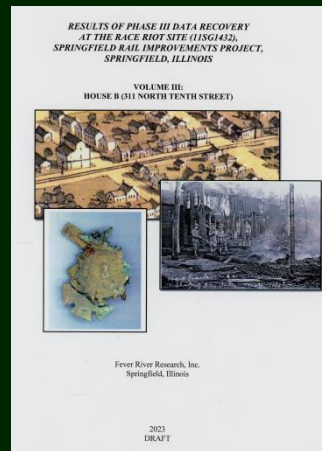
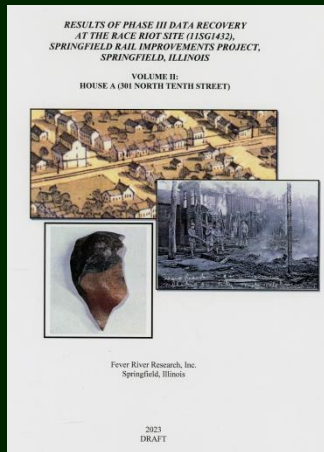
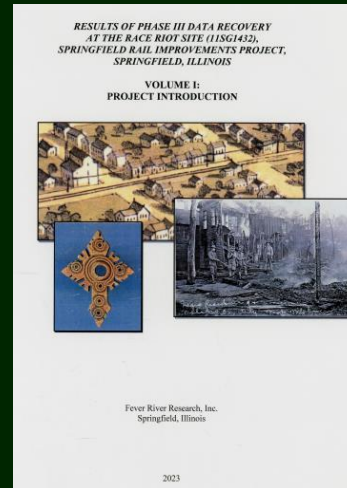
Although the Eighth Illinois did not arrive in Cuba in time to see combat, they served with honor as part of the Army of Occupation at Santiago. These are examples of the three medals recovered from House B—one of which appears to have been issued specifically to men of Springfield's Company H. One of the medal's recovered represents the only known example of such a medal (as illustrated in the central image on the veteran's chest).



Company H, Eighth  
Regiment in Cuba, 1899

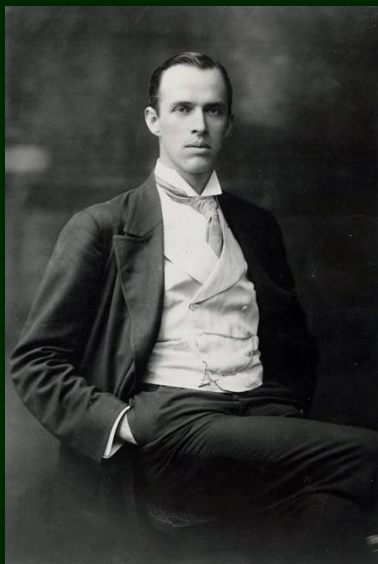


In June 2023, draft reports (consisting of an introductory volume and five site reports—one for each of the five houses) were submitted to FRA. These reports will soon be available on our web page.

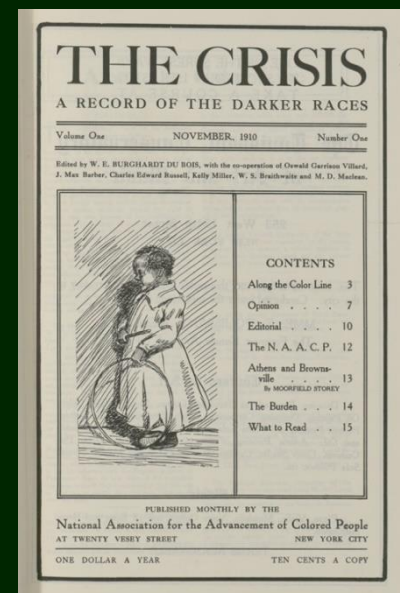




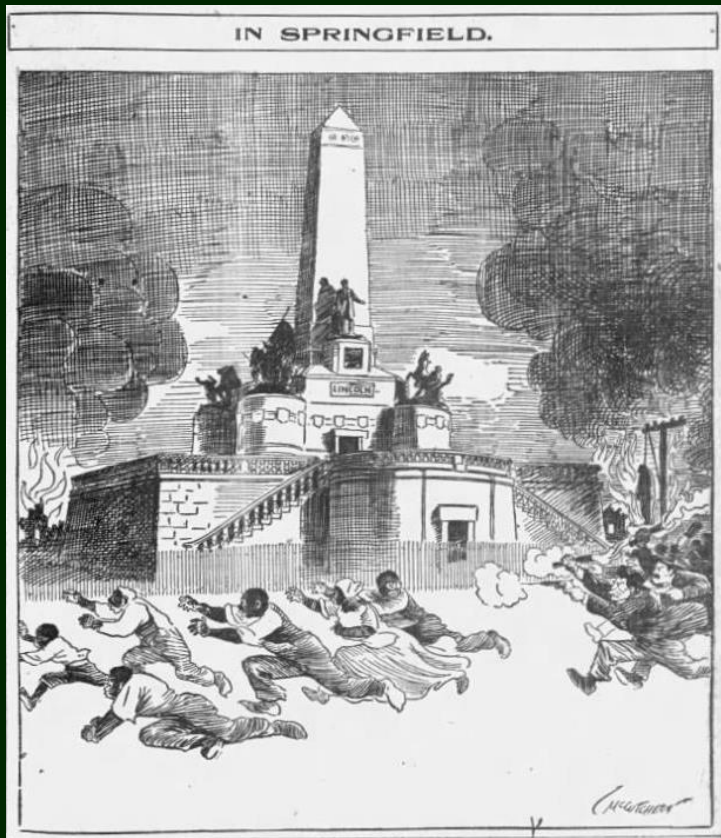
William English Walling was a labor and race activist (as well as co-founder of the NAACP in early 1909) who visited Springfield during the course of the riots and authored “The Race War in the North” which was published in the magazine *The Independent* the following month (September 1908). Walling stated that “Springfield had no shame...” and wrote of the community’s racial tension leading up to the riots—noting, in essence, that many of Springfield citizens believed it was the Blacks that brought this tragedy upon themselves.



*For the underlying motive of the mob and of that large portion of Springfield’s population that has long said that ‘something was bound to happen,’ and now approves of the riot and proposes to complete its purpose by using other means to drive as many as possible of the remaining two-thirds of the negroes out of town, was confessedly to teach the negroes their place and to warn them that too many could not obtain shelter under the favorable traditions of Lincoln’s home town. I talked to many of them the day after the massacre and found no difference of opinion on the question. ‘Why, the niggers came to think they were as good as we are!’ was the final justification offered, not once, but a dozen times....*



# THE PERCEIVED “REALITY” OF THE PRESS



In summarizing the impetus for the riots less than one month after their occurrence, Walling (1908) wrote that the feeling of the community was that “It was not the fact of the whites' hatred toward the negroes, *but of the negroes' own misconduct, general inferiority or unfitness for free institutions that were at fault.*”

The contemporary press painted a dire picture of the City's Black inhabitants and described the residential area as the *Badlands... infested by negroes... living in huts and shanties... disreputable...*



# THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL “REALITY”

The archaeological research for this project presents an image of the riot victims that is in sharp contrast to the contemporary historical record—a picture detailing individuals and families of color (including the young Bessie Black and Robert Wright) trying to live in a community which was rife with racial bigotry and hatred. The archaeological record documented several characteristics of these individuals’ character:

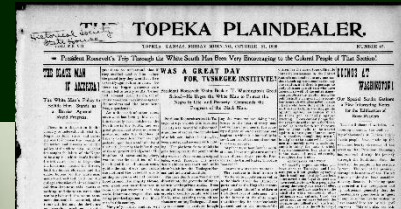
Literacy

Political Activism and/or Engagement

Service to Community and/or Country

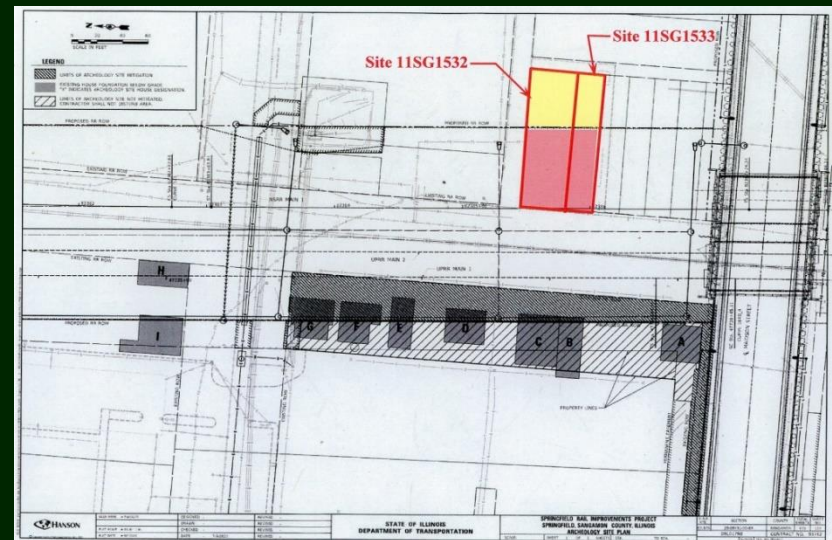
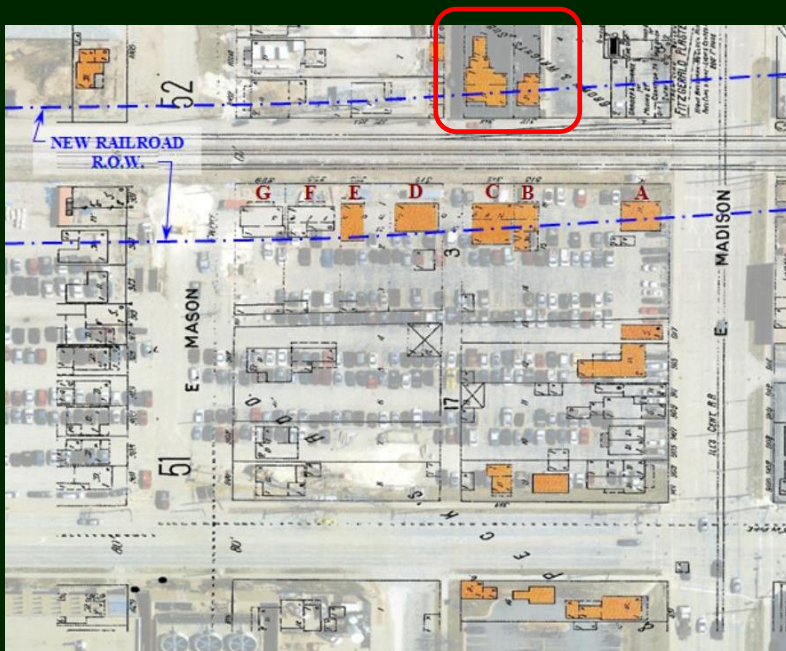
Religious Devotion and/or Conviction

Integration into Middle Class Respectability



After the re-design and shift of the right-of-way to the east, it was determined that Phase II archaeological testing was necessary at two additional burned-out house sites located on the east side of the rail corridor.

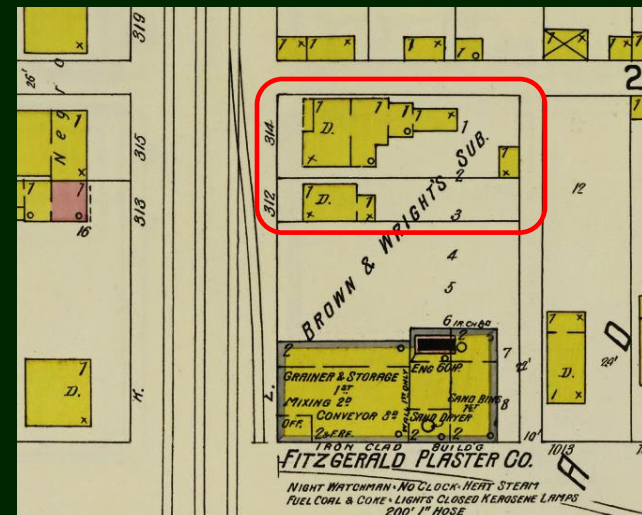
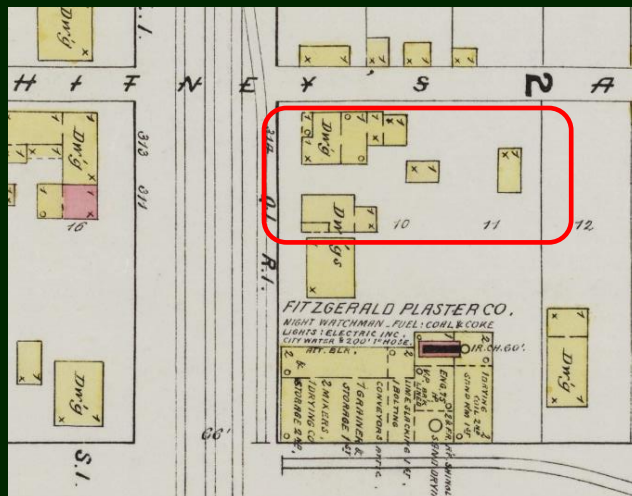
The archaeological investigations of these two house sites have added another significant dimension to our understanding of the early Black settlement within this neighborhood.





Unlike the houses located on the west side of the tracks (which were constructed for white tradesmen), the two houses located on the east side of the tracks were constructed for, and/or by, free-Black families who had settled on land they had purchased at this location during the Civil War years.

The northern house (on Lots 1-2) was constructed for George Price, a free-born African American barber who was born in Illinois and moved to Springfield from nearby Virden. The smaller southern house (on Lot 3) was constructed by David Sappington, a Black carpenter and laborer, who was born in Missouri and came to Springfield in the late 1850s, accompanied by his brother Elijah.



Detail of Sites 19 and 20 as depicted on the 1890 (left) and 1896 (right) Sanborn fire insurance maps.



William David Sappington, who was born in the house at this site in 1866, lived much of his life at this location. He owned the property during the later years of his family's occupation, and moved from this house in mid-1904. Sappington served in the U.S. Army in France during the First World War, when this photograph was taken.



Unfortunately, the Phase II testing had to wait for the demolition of a post-riot industrial building that had been constructed at this location for the Wright Hide Company.

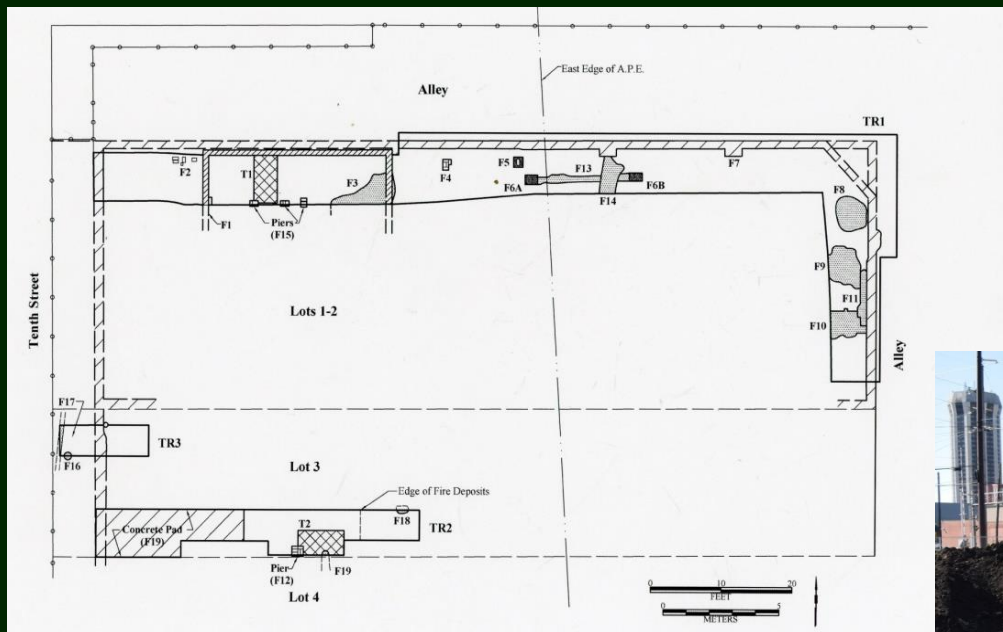


**Left: 1960s aerial view of Wright Hide Company building**



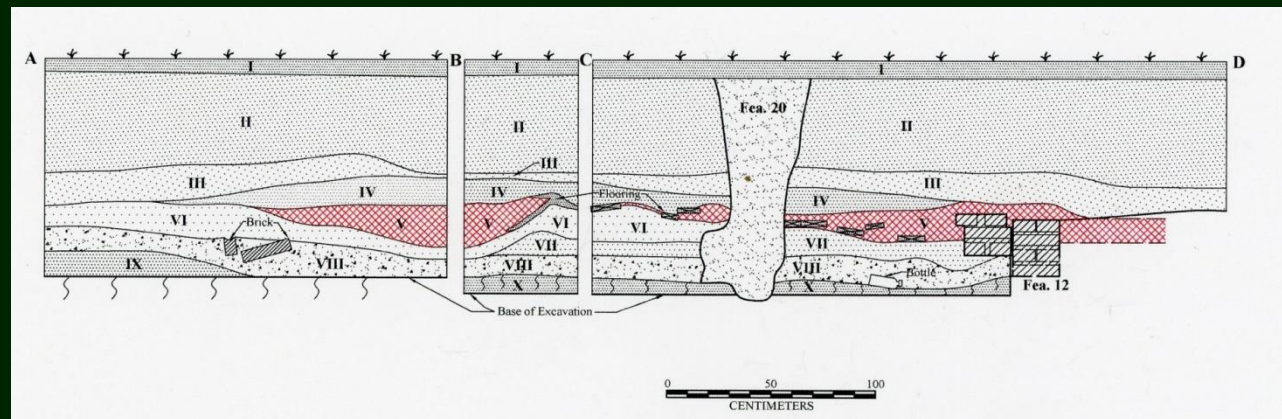
**Right: Contemporary views of the same building**

In late 2021, after demolition of the industrial building, Phase II archaeological testing was conducted at Sites 19 and 20. The archaeological testing indicated the integrity of both sites was excellent, and documented physical remains of two mid-nineteenth century houses.





The Phase II investigations documented the physical remains of both burned houses as well as the presence of stratified deposits dating from the 1850s through post-1908 era.



Additionally, as with the houses mitigated on the west side of the tracks, a variety of burned and melted artifacts representing the 1908 contents of the houses was recovered.



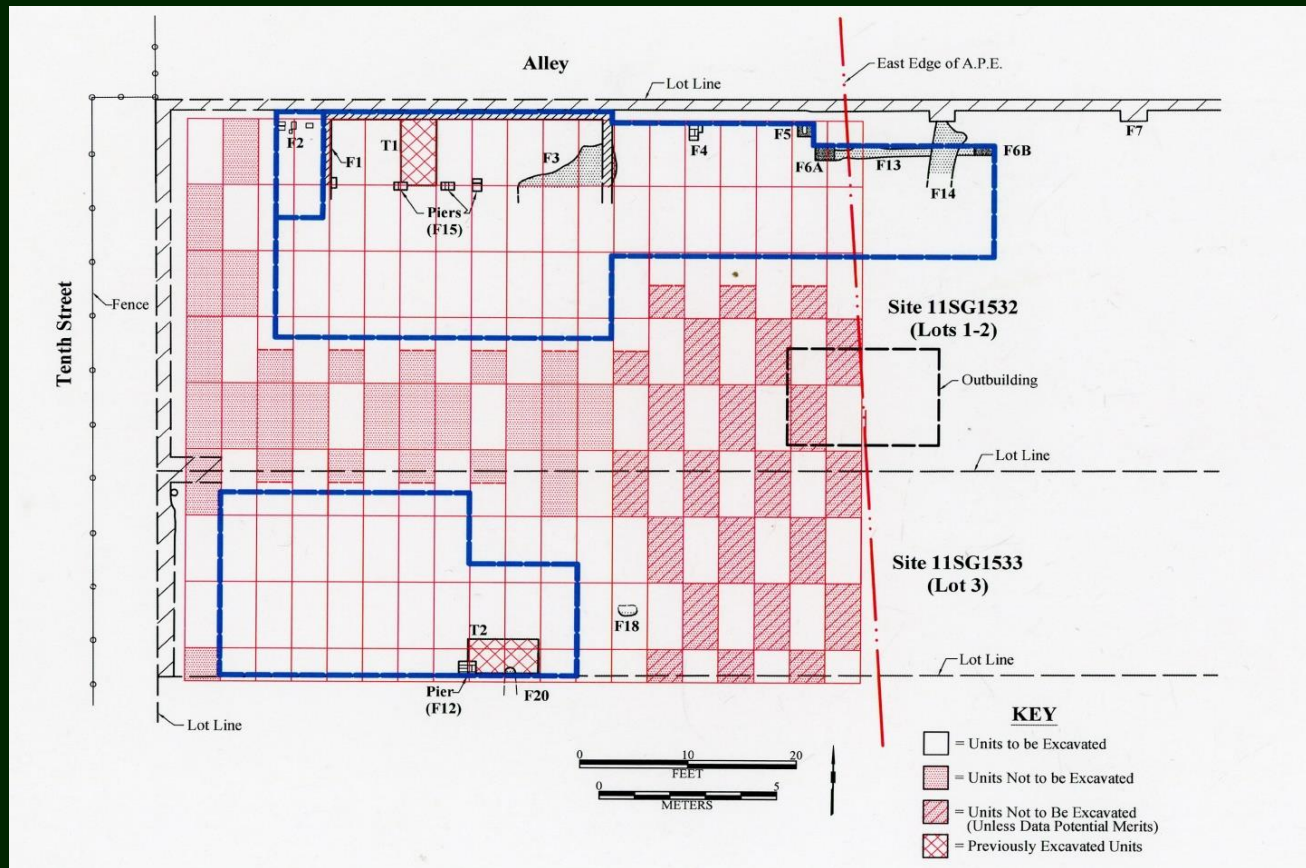
**Top Left: Small finds included variety of buttons and personal items.**

**Bottom Left: Melted glass containers.**

**Top Right: Melted liquor bottle and kerosene lamp font.**



In early 2022, a Data Recovery Plan was approved by the SHPO. This document called for the complete excavation of each house, and a sampling of the adjacent yard.



Fieldwork began in late May 2022. The original goal was to excavate alternating excavation units in a checkerboard pattern across each of the two sites. Fieldwork began at the Price/Edwards Site.





View of Price/Edwards Site (Site 19) after completion of first half of the checkerboard pattern (June 2022).

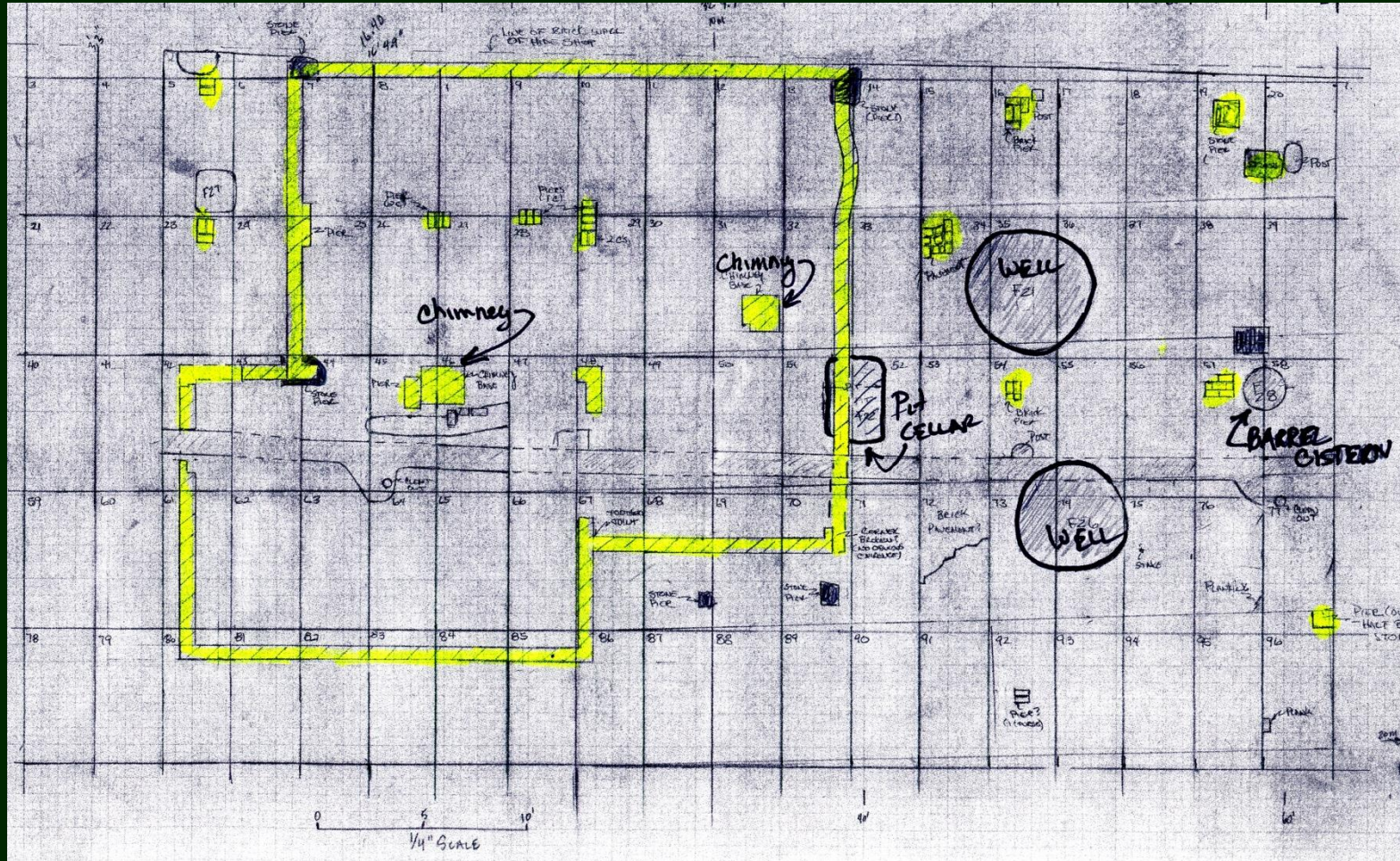


The 2022 excavations documented the housing constructed in the early 1860s by, and/or for, the Price/Edward and Sappington families. The excavations documented a range of structural and landscape features, as well as identified fill deposits segregated into Pre-Fire, Fire, and Post-Fire strata.





The Price/Edwards House (Site 19) site plan. Stone piers are illustrated in black, whereas brick piers, chimneys, and perimeter foundations are illustrated in yellow.





Work subsequently continued at the Sappington Site (Site 20).



Excavation of the first half of the checkerboard completed at the location of the Sappington House (August 2022).



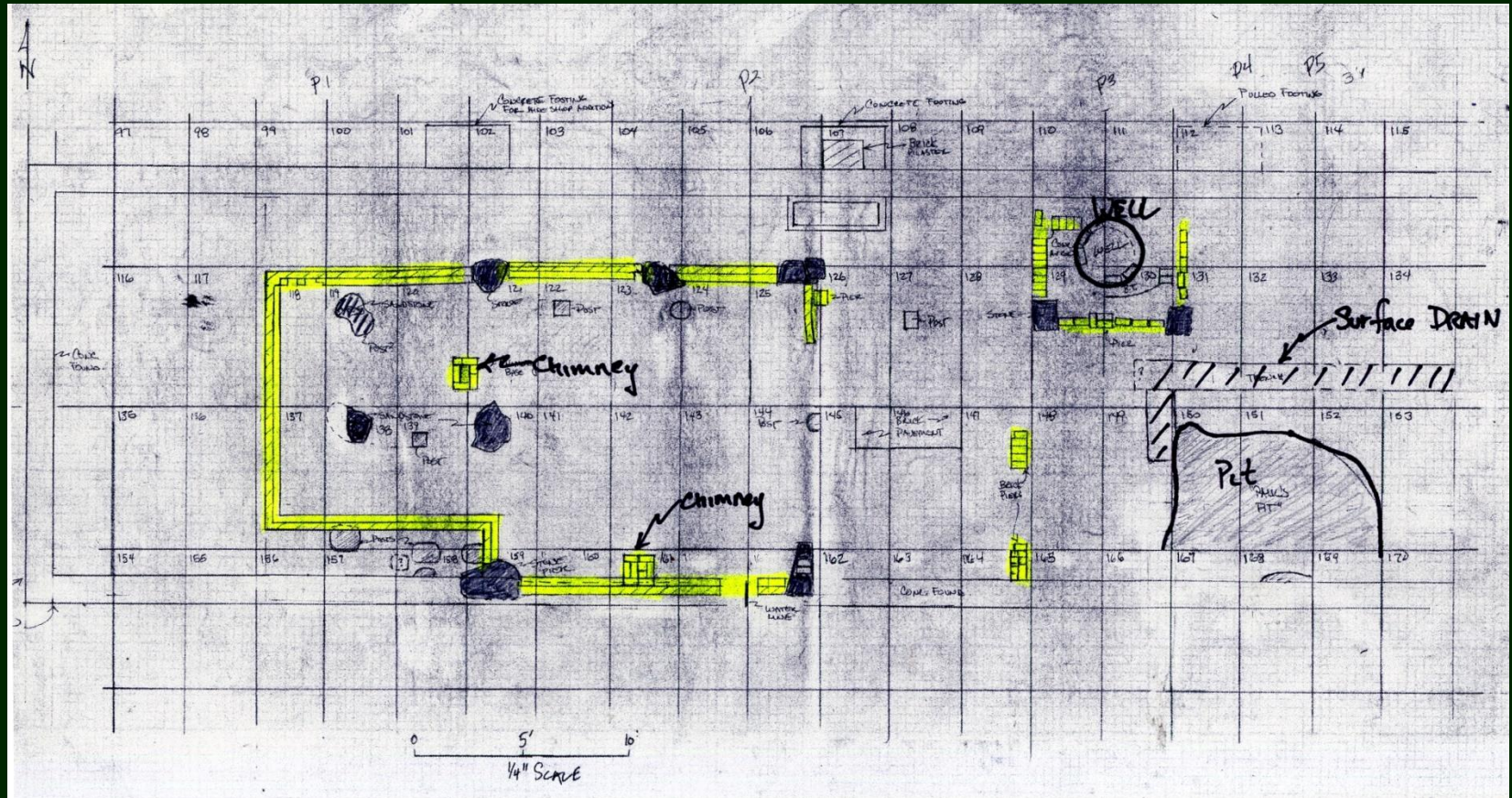


View of house foundations at the Sappington Site (Site 20).





The Sappington House (Site 20) site plan. Stone piers are illustrated in black, whereas brick piers, chimneys, and perimeter foundations are illustrated in yellow.





Besides uncovering details of the early housing, a wide range of artifacts dating to the initial years of occupation were also recovered.



The early artifact assemblage included several items which spoke to the pro-Union sentiment of the house occupants, as well as the potential presence of a Civil War veteran. The carved bone lapel pin and knapsack J-hook suggest an association with a Union soldier—perhaps Silas Sappington (who served with the 55<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, a Black Civil War regiment).







Additionally a wide variety of burned and melted household artifacts were recovered from the fire deposits of both the Price/Edwards and Sappington houses. These artifact assemblages document the lifeways of the 1908 occupants.



Artifacts recovered from the Fire and immediate Pre-Fire context at the Sappington House included at least seven distinctive ceramic pipe bowls with Chinese script.





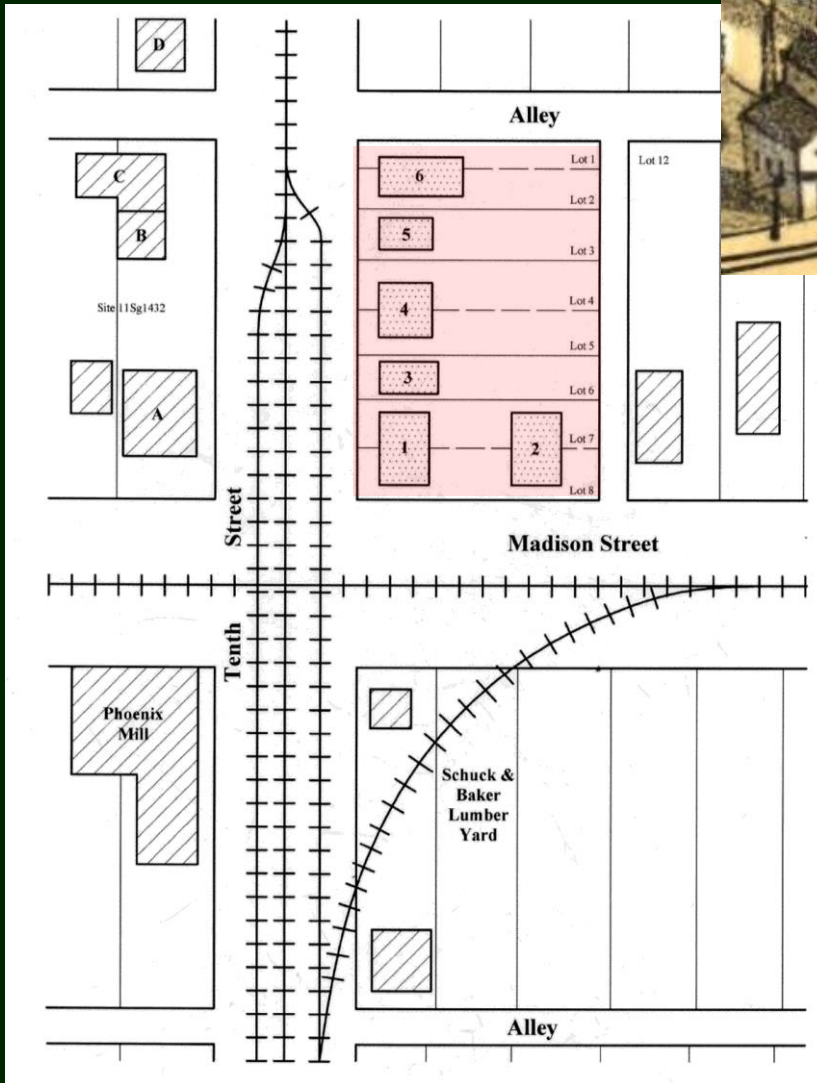
These opium pipes, and an Oriental porcelain tea cup also with Chinese script, appear to document the use of the Sappington family's house as an opium den just prior to the August 1908 riots (circa 1905-1908).



**Police Find Opium Outfit.**  
Aaron Kirby, William Jones and Eugene Griffen were arrested at an early hour this morning at a resort on Tenth and Madison streets, on a charge of disorderly conduct. The fellows, who are negroes, were creating a disturbance, and when the place was entered an opium outfit was also discovered.

*(Illinois State Journal, 2 August 1905, p. 6)*

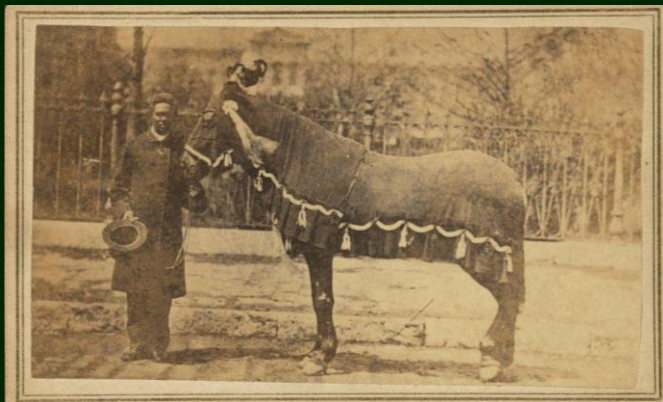
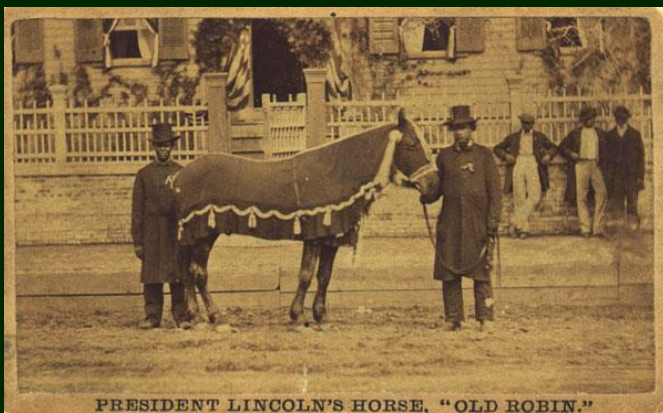




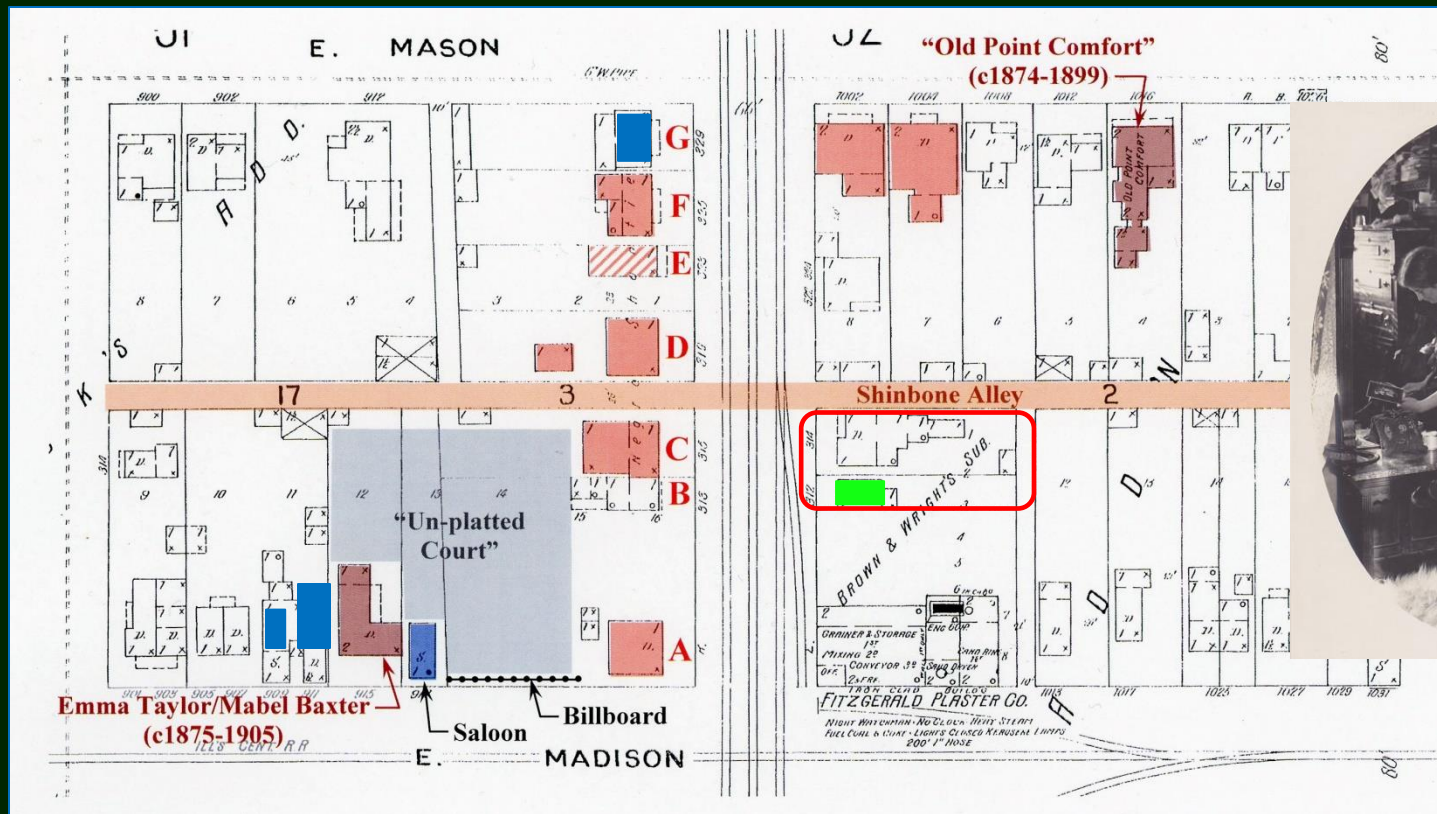
By the early 1870s, the Wright and Brown Subdivision (highlighted in red) included six houses constructed for, and occupied by, socially elite Black residents, which included: Reverend Henry Brown and his family (1), the widow Leanna Donigan Knox and her daughter (2), the Clay and widow Sidney Donigan families (3), the Joseph Faro family (4), the David Sappington family (5), and the recently widowed Cornelia Price and her family (6). Immediately across Tenth Street to the west were Houses A-D (many of which were also occupied by socially affluent Black families by this date).



The anchor of this early Black enclave was Reverend Henry Brown, a prominent AME minister who settled at this location in the later 1850s. Reverend Brown is pictured here, in May 1865, with another Springfield resident (and Reverend Trevan) at Abraham Lincoln's funeral procession. Reverend Brown, a friend to the assassinated president, had the honor of leading Lincoln's horse (Old Bob) during the funeral procession.

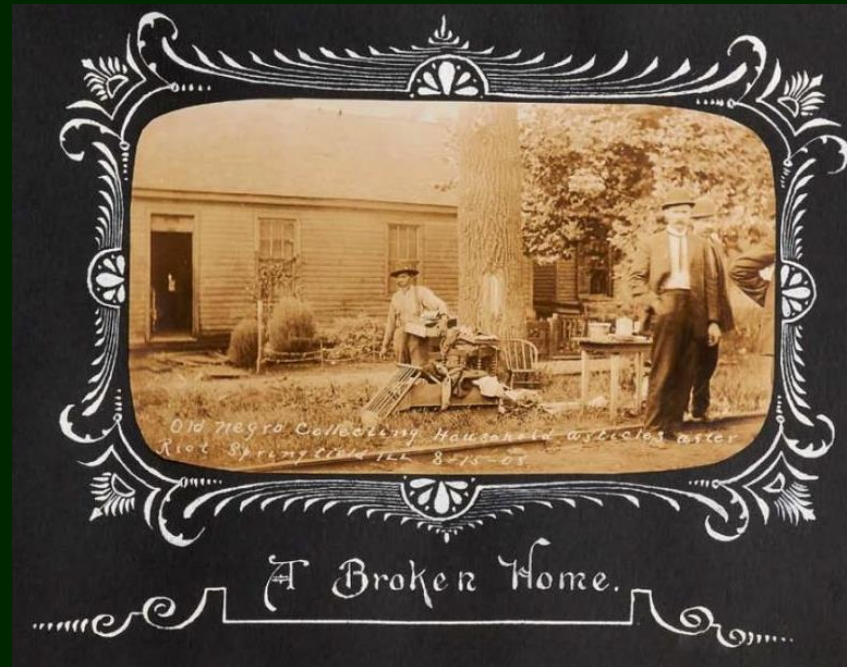


Tenth and Madison Street neighborhood in circa 1895-1905, illustrating the location of the two long-term, white-owned and operated “Resorts” or Houses of Ill Fame (dark red), saloons (blue), and lesser establishments known to have operated intermittently in a similar manner by both white and Black tenants (red). The older Sappington family home (green) most likely operated as an opium den sometime between 1905 and 1908, with all illicit activity connected via the notorious Shinbone Alley. By this time, the degradation of the neighborhood had earned it the name “BADLANDS” (a function of white commercial development).





The archaeological excavations, and the variety of artifacts recovered from the houses, have provided a “voice” for the more-or-less anonymous victims of the mob action and has resulted in a *significantly different perspective* as to who these individuals were, and the history of the neighborhood referred to as the “Badlands.” Although silenced for a long time, these “voices” *provide a sharp contrast between the racially-driven “perceived reality” of the past, and the “actuality” of the time period.*



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“Springfield had no shame. She stood for the action of the mob...” (Walling, September 1908).

After the riots, people—both black and white—seldom spoke of the events that transpired on that horrific weekend. It was an event that was quickly “swept under the rug” and not talked about for a long time. By the 1970s many Springfield residents were not even aware of the event, let alone its significance.

The archaeology of the Race Riot Site has given voice to the practically anonymous individuals that experienced this horrific event, and hopefully will yield a more holistic interpretation of who the people were who had the misfortune of being caught in the middle of this historical event.

History is complex, has multiple viewpoints, and must be interpreted in its proper context. Hopefully, this research will contribute to further discussion as to who we are as a society, to understand our past so that we can improve our future—**LEST WE FORGET.**

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In August 2020, the Race Riot Site became the 30<sup>th</sup> property listed within the African American Civil Rights Network. This network was created by the African American Civil Rights Act of 2017, and is administered by the National Park Service to “commemorate, honor, and interpret” the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.



U.S. Secretary of the Interior David L. Bernhardt in Springfield to list the Race Riot Site on African American Civil Rights Network,



With bipartisan Congressional support, efforts coalesced shortly after the initiation of this project, for creation of the *Springfield Race Riot National Historic Monument*, which would memorialize the events that transpired that fateful weekend (“Lest We Forget”), and to commemorate the formation of the NAACP.

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

## H. R. 139

To establish the Springfield Race Riot National Historic Monument in the State of Illinois, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
JANUARY 3, 2019

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

### A BILL

To establish the Springfield Race Riot National Historic Monument in the State of Illinois, and for other purposes

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**  
This Act may be cited as the “Springfield Race Riot National Historic Monument Act”.

**SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**  
In this Act:

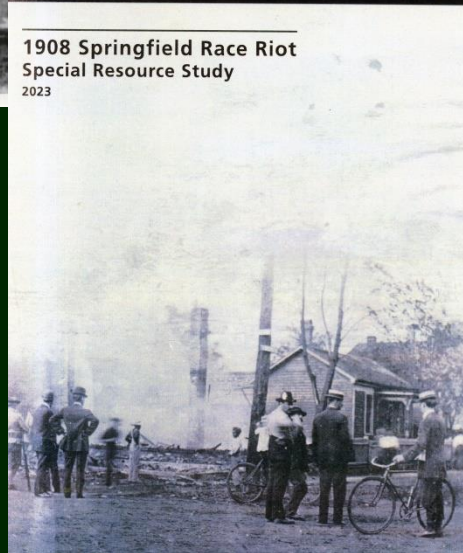
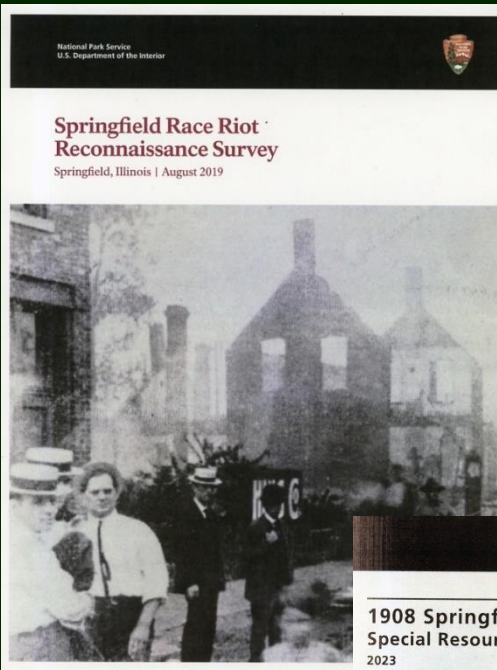
(1) HISTORIC MONUMENT.—The term “Historic Monument” means the Springfield Race Riot

Springfield Race Riot National  
Historic Monument Act of 2020  
(Public Law NO: 116-139)

[Click here to view a video of one memorial proposal.](#)



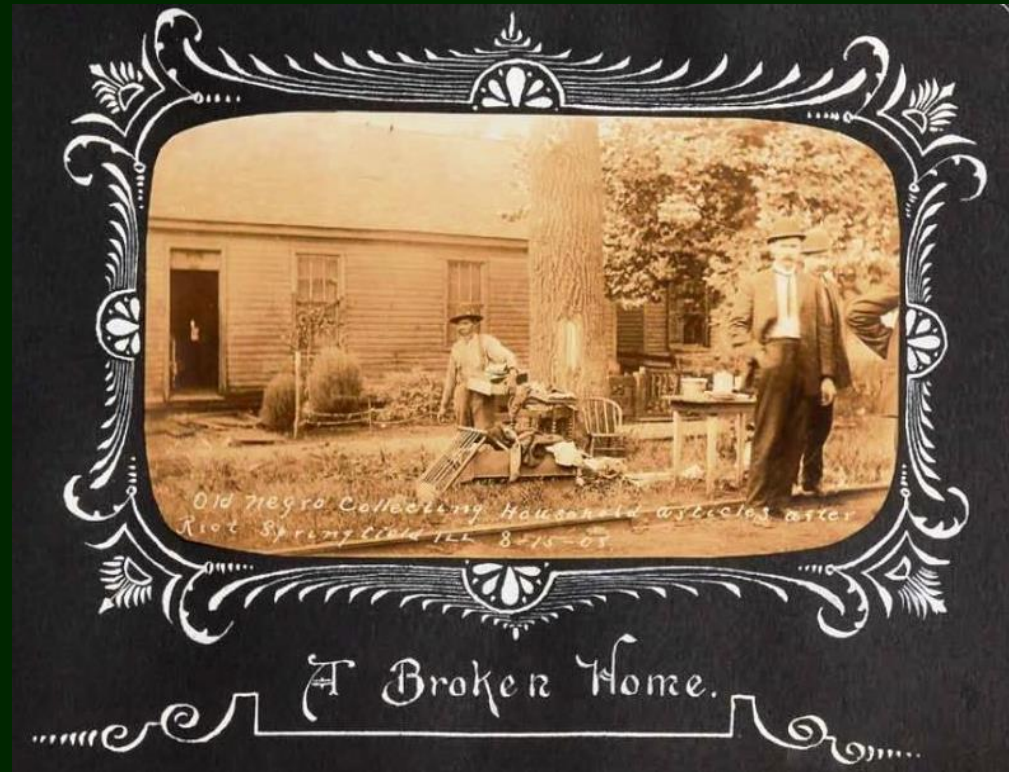




In late 2018, the National Park Service received a request by a U.S. Representative Rodney Davis to conduct a study to determine the potential of the sites inclusion into the National Park System. The **Reconnaissance Survey** was completed in August 2019. Based on the positive results of this initial study, a more detailed **Special Resource Study** was completed in June 2023. This second study determined that the site met the criteria for inclusion as a new unit within the National Park Service, and recommended formal Congressional approval for a proposed National Monument.

Lobbying efforts are also moving forward to nominate the site via a Presidential Proclamation (as per the American Antiquities Act).

## Questions Or Comments?



Email Contact: [fmansberger@comcast.net](mailto:fmansberger@comcast.net)

Facebook Coverage of Project: [Fever River Research](#)

Reports and PowerPoint Presentations: [IllinoisArchaeology.com](http://IllinoisArchaeology.com)  
[Go to "Miscellaneous Papers"]