



# Edwin T. Pratt:

Excellence and  
Opportunity

By Nancy Rawles



**MARCH FOR OPEN HOUSING**  
**SATURDAY, March 7, 1964**

*Assemble at 11:00 A.M.*  
AT ANY OF THESE GATHERING POINTS

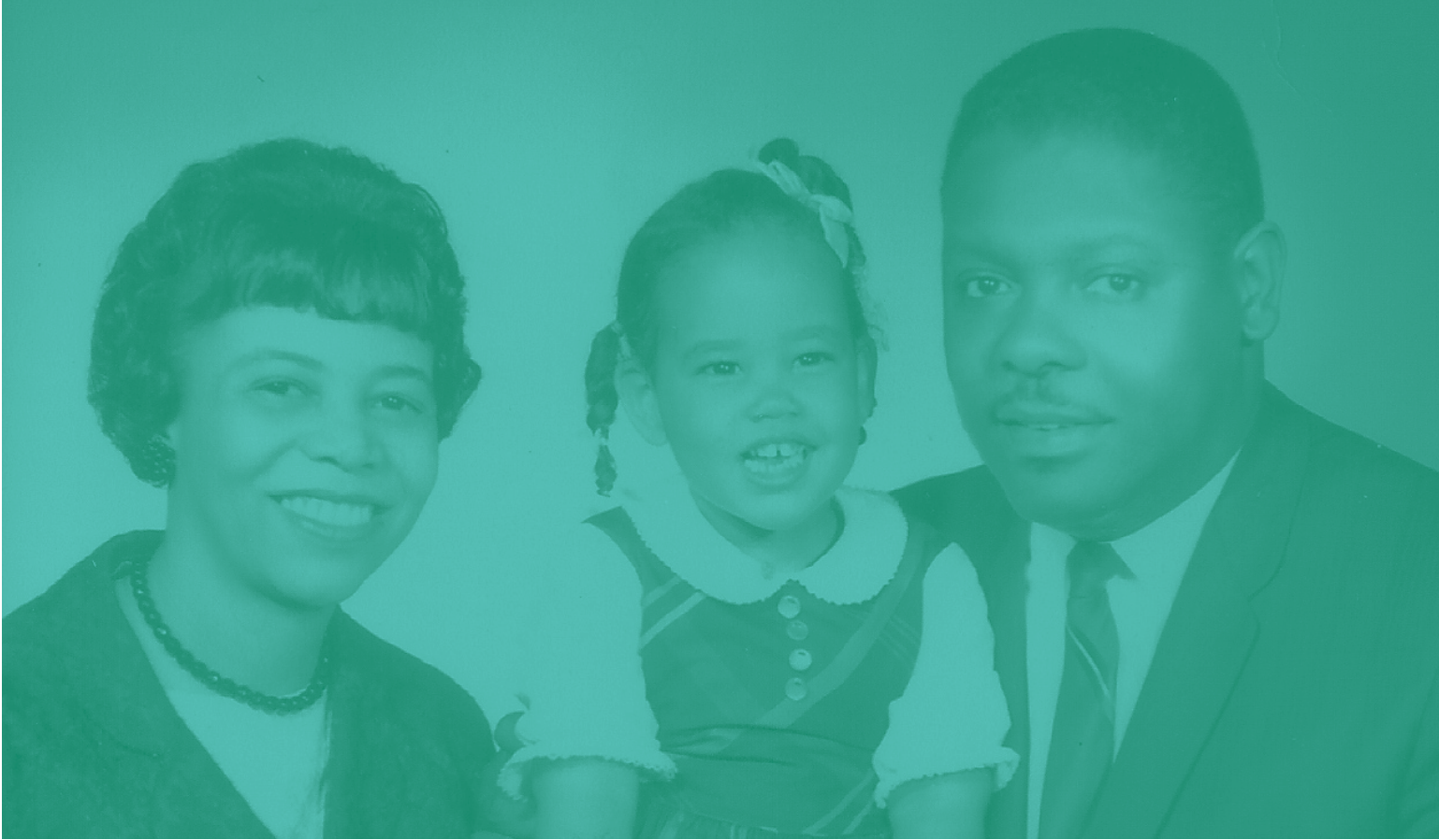
**FIRST A.M.E. CHURCH**  
1522 - 14th AVENUE      Down 5th

**ST. JAMES CATHEDRAL**  
9th & MARION      Down Seneca &

**SEATTLE CENTER**  
(Foot of Space Needle)      South on 5th Ave

**COURT HOUSE PARK**  
(3rd & Yesler)      North on 4th Ave

**MARCH TO THE HOUSING RALEIGH**  
**1:00 NOON on the WESTLAKE MARSH**



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# Notes on this Essay

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**I got interested in the life of Edwin Pratt while working at Pratt Fine Arts Center in the 1990s.** Like many people who saw his photo and read the words posted about him, I could glean little about the man himself. Most of the things I read focused on his assassination. I decided to write a play that expanded the story a bit. After talking to people who knew and worked with him and researching in the archives at the University of Washington, I had a beginning understanding of who he was. However, my depiction of the last year of his life inevitably built to the mystery surrounding his death. Dissatisfied, I abandoned the play after a few readings. This year, with many events and works to honor Pratt, I have a chance to try again.

**I hope to put Pratt's life in context – where he came from and the philosophies that shaped him.** My earlier research focused exclusively on his time in Seattle. When I set out to write this essay, it occurred to me that my difficulties imagining Pratt were due to my lack of knowledge about his people, his childhood and school years. If I were really going to get anywhere, I had to know about his life before he arrived in Seattle. I wanted to know his mentors and friends. I needed to understand his work as taking place in concert with a broad coalition of civil rights organizers, activists and supporters. I would have to avoid the archetypal narrative of the hero's journey. I've always considered people who work for human rights to be heroic. I just know they don't succeed on their own.

**This essay doesn't seek to give a comprehensive picture of Pratt's life nor does it go into depth about his work in Seattle.** That is the subject for a book. This is an attempt to bring to the page a life well lived. It's time Pratt were known more for his life than his death.

**After a prologue that imagines a day in Pratt's life as Seattle Urban League Executive Director,** I've arranged the essay chronologically into three sections. Each section has a theme, which comes from the poem at its beginning. The narrative starts with Pratt's parents and ends, not with his death but with his legacy. I have purposely given the years in Seattle only some of the attention. This is due to the fact that there

are books and articles that have been written and are being written which give excellent accounts of the work done by civil rights leaders in Seattle, of whom Pratt was one. I have drawn on that work here. Notes and citations for each page of this essay can be found at the very end, along with acknowledgements of those who contributed invaluable information and revisions. Even as I write this, new information is coming forth.

**The Edwin Pratt Legacy Collection archived by the Black Heritage Society of Washington State consists of photos, documents and artifacts recently donated by Miriam Pratt Glover, his daughter.** This new digital resource makes possible a trove of scholarship that goes far beyond anything written here. In the photos, we see Pratt as father, husband, friend and neighbor. We see Miriam as a baby watched over by parents Edwin and Bettye, who appear the way parents of infants so often do, amused, adoring, and exhausted. There, she is a young child beautifully dressed, sitting with her half-brother Bill beneath an abstract oil paintings hanging in the family home in Shoreline. There again, on her father's lap at her fifth birthday party, six weeks before he was killed.

**In the 50th year of his loss, we who didn't know him have been given an opportunity to honor him,** a man who is still cherished, admired and mourned by those who knew him well.

NANCY RAWLES, FEBRUARY 2019

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# Prologue: May 1964

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“Mr. Pratt.” A hand pulls back the accordion grate. “I hope you haven’t been waiting long.”

*Hundreds of years, Cecil, hundreds of years,* he’s tempted to say. “Good morning.” Pratt greets him with his customary warmth.

Cecil turns the brass crank to the left. Through the glass door they watch the floors rush by. Two men standing a few feet apart. One tall and black in an ebony suit, starched white shirt, grey tie, black dress shoes, buffed and shined. One short and white in a navy blue suit, gold bands on the cuffs, black wingtips, buffed and shined.

The Smith Tower. A granite and terra cotta ivory tower. An ornate arrow pointing to the sky. Windows, three across with bronze frames. On a clear day, the observation deck gives a panorama view from the Lake to the Sound, the Cascades to the Olympics. The Chinese Room on the top floor has a carved teak ceiling and Blackwood furniture. The lobby, bright with bronze and marble, is decorated with carved mahogany Indian heads looking down from beneath their painted wooden feathers.

Two men rise encased in a small room with copper-plated walls.

Pratt glances at the folded newspaper in his

hand, creased at the headline announcing the defeat of Seattle’s open housing ordinance. He was expecting the loss. When he watched the vote come in the evening before, he was disappointed nonetheless.

He wonders how Cecil had voted. Every day, they share close quarters. And his neighbors in Shoreline. How would they have voted? In that solitary booth, out of sight of the black family around the corner.

He had convinced himself that the move to Shoreline was prudent. As Executive Director of the Seattle Urban League, he needed to test the boundaries. Things had gone better than expected, but there were the calls. Always the calls. Everyone got them. Rev. McKinney at Mt. Zion, Rev. Adams at First A.M.E., Rev. Jackson at Bethel. Charles Johnson and E. June Smith at the NAACP. Anybody who pushed hard for civil rights. Anybody who threatened the order of things.

In 1964, the sight of a black man in a suit heading to his office downtown was enough to inflame white racists. It wasn’t the suit itself. Take a walk from First A.M.E. to Mt. Zion on any Sunday. Nothing but fine suits and dresses and hats. Regal. Silk jackets and gloves.

It’s the power of the ministers and the men who gather around conference tables smoking pipes. And the men and women with the temerity to work in the Smith Tower, look downing on a city that feared them.

“Here we are, 16th floor.” Cecil stops the elevator exactly level with the floor.

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# Till Victory Is Won

## 1930-1949

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### Lift Every Voice and Sing

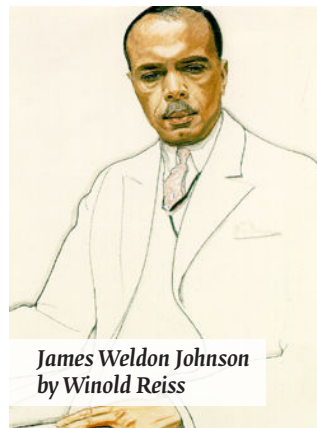
By James Weldon Johnson

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chastening rod,  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat,  
Have not our weary feet  
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the  
slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past,  
Till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who hast by Thy might  
Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.

Lest our feet stray from the places, our God,  
where we met Thee,  
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world,  
we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,  
May we forever stand.  
True to our God,  
True to our native land.



James Weldon Johnson  
by Winold Reiss

“A group of young men in Jacksonville, Florida, arranged to celebrate Lincoln’s birthday in 1900. My brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, and I decided to write a song to be sung at the exercises... and the song was taught to and sung by a chorus of five hundred colored school children. Shortly

afterwards my brother and I moved away from Jacksonville to New York, and the song passed out of our minds. But the school children of Jacksonville kept singing it; they went off to other schools and sang it; they became teachers and taught it to other children. Within twenty years it was being sung over the South and in some other parts of the country. The lines of this song repay me in an elation, almost of exquisite anguish, whenever I hear them sung by Negro children.”

— James Weldon Johnson, 1935

**In all likelihood, Edwin Thomas Pratt grew up singing “Lift Every Voice and Sing.”** As the child of Bahamian immigrants in Florida, he shared a heritage with the song’s writer, and by the time

## Till Victory Is Won: 1930-1949

**Higgs, Charles Christopher** 798 446 \*White \*Colored. 1  
(Surname) (Christian name) (Army serial number)

Residence: **Coconut Grove** of **FLORIDA**  
(Street and house number) (Town or city) (County) (State)

Place of birth: **Harbor Isl Bahama I B** Age or date of birth: **Sept 28/1896**

Organizations served in, with dates of assignments and transfers:  
**Co C 427 Res Labor Bn to disch**

Grades, with date of appointment:  
**Cpl July 2/18; Sgt Nov 17/19; Ssg Sgt Feb 21/19**

Engagements:

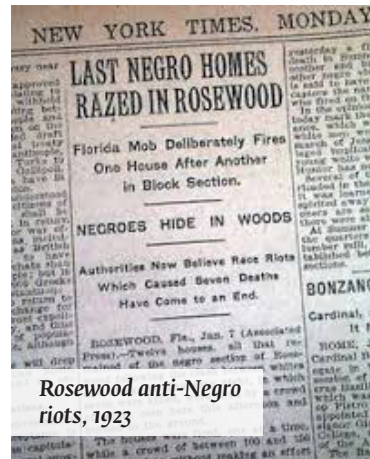
Wounds or other injuries received in action: None.

Served overseas from **18** to **19**, from **19** to **19**.

Honorably discharged on demobilization **Feb 29/19**, 19**19**.

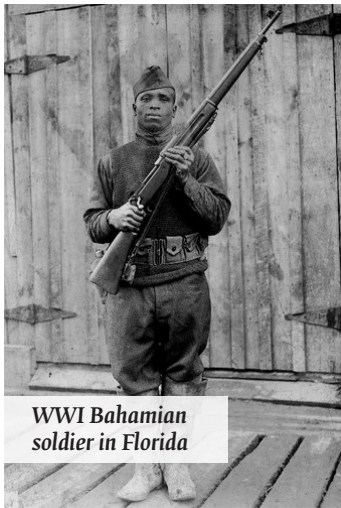
**Draft card of Charles Higgs, a relative of Pratt's mother**

FORM NO. 10-A (Rev. 11-17-1918) \*Strike out words not applicable. † Dates of departure from and arrival in the U. S.



and the post-war massacres of black communities was a reality that Josephus and Miriam Pratt could not escape. It was in these years that the men and women of their generation swelled the ranks of the

Edwin was born in 1930, James Weldon Johnson's rousing hymn had become "The Negro National Anthem." Edwin, his sister Marguerite and



WWI Bahamian soldier in Florida

brothers Josephus, Fred and Harry would have lifted their voices in the close-knit congregation of Bahamian immigrants at Christ Episcopal Church, joining a chorus of Black Americans whose aspirations were held in those lyrics. The children of Coconut

Grove knew they were "facing the rising sun of our new day begun" because their parents told them so every day. They were the ones who would break the color line. And to do it, they would have to be twice as good as whites.

When Josephus and Miriam Pratt sent their children off to school, they understood that the daily injustices meant to discourage them would instead arm them for the fight. In WWI, Josephus Pratt and his fellow soldiers had fought for their due. Their insistence on equality and their unflinching pride were met with violence. After the war, the lynching of black veterans

National Urban League, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and the Young Men's Christian Association for Colored Men and Boys (YMCA). The Great Migration was underway, and just as the parents had left the Bahamas and come to Florida for opportunity, their children would leave Florida and move to the cities of the North and beyond.

Edwin Pratt was born in a place where everyone looked like he did. He was surrounded by relatives living in shotgun houses constructed by men like his father. Josephus Pratt was from Cat Island, a place that would become known by its chanteys and anthems recorded by Alan Lomax in 1935. Pratt's mother was from the island of Eleuthera,



Florida family moving to New Jersey, 1940

## If You are a Stranger in the City

If you want a job    If you want a place to live  
If you are having trouble with your employer  
If you want information or advice of any kind  
CALL UPON

### The CHICAGO LEAGUE ON URBAN CONDITIONS AMONG NEGROES

3719 South State Street

Telephone Douglas 9098

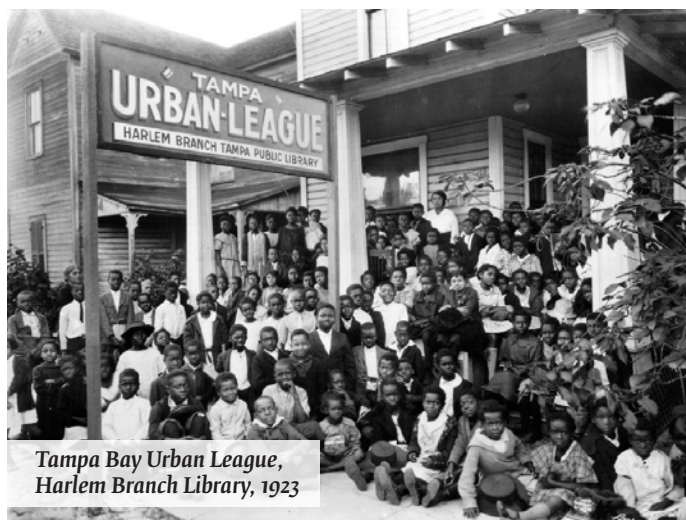
T. ARNOLD HILL, Executive Secretary

No charges—no fees. We want to help YOU

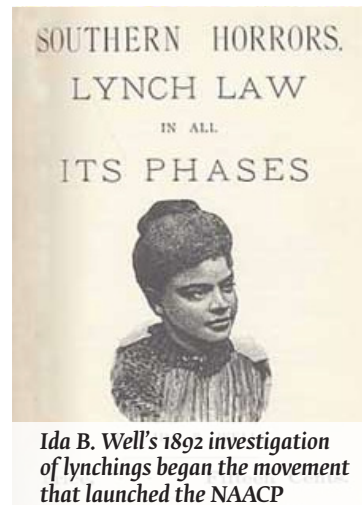
A card distributed by the Urban League  
in Chicago between 1916 and 1920

claimed by Puritans in 1648 as the birthplace of the Bahamas. The first Bahamian resident of Coconut Grove was Mariah Brown, who arrived from Eleuthera in 1889. As the village grew, she encouraged friends and family to join her. The coral-rocky soil of South Florida was familiar from the islands; they knew how to build structures that could withstand hurricanes.

Historian Marvin Dunn, author of *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*, describes how early Bahamian workers built the first tourist hotel in a place that would become known for them. They cleared the land of mangroves to make way for Miami Beach, an isolated strip of land that was considered worthless at the time. As Dunn described it, the white owners of the land didn't



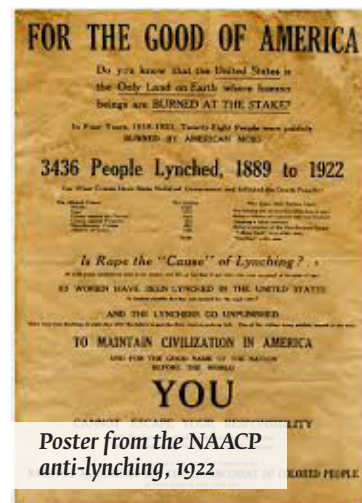
Tampa Bay Urban League,  
Harlem Branch Library, 1923



Ida B. Wells's 1892 investigation of lynchings began the movement that launched the NAACP

have cash to pay the workers and paid them in plots. Once the bridge was built, the plots became very valuable, and the workers lost their land to developers. “Keep in mind that every city in Florida that had the word ‘beach’ in its name — all of them — they called them ‘sundown towns’, meaning after sundown, black people could not be in those towns,” Dunn explained in an interview for *The Black Experience* in Miami. “So you didn’t have black people owning the land or even able to be present after dark in places like Miami Beach.”

The Pratt family lived at 3364 Plaza Street



Poster from the NAACP anti-lynching, 1922

around the corner from Charles Avenue, the main street of Coconut Grove. According to the 1940 Census, their small house was home to Josephus and Miriam, their four sons including the 10-year-old Edwin, daughter Marguerite,

her husband, and their one-year-old child. Like most Bahamian families, they planted mango trees in the back yard. Two of Pratt’s brothers migrated north to New York and Pennsylvania. Pratt’s nephew Josephus remembers visiting his uncle when they would both return to Miami for summer visits. He remembers sitting in the

**Till Victory Is Won: 1930-1949**



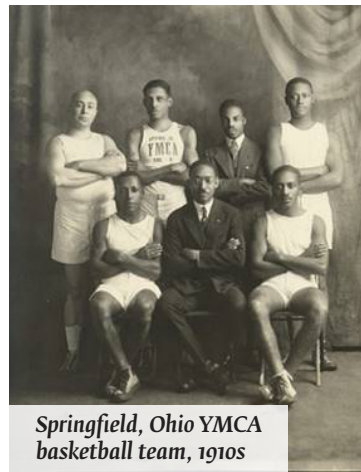
*Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, 1919*



*Washington, D.C. Phyllis Wheatley YWCA dramatic club, 1921*



*United Black Star Nurses March, UNIA, New York 1923*



*Springfield, Ohio YMCA basketball team, 1910s*

backyard eating mangoes while his Uncle Edwin imparted wisdom to the younger generation.

Shotgun houses like the Pratt family’s can still be seen in West Coconut Grove. Efforts are being

made to preserve them from demolition, but many have already been lost to development and gentrification. The Pratt’s house still stands, but it has been expanded and renovated.



*Bahamians in Coconut Grove, 1890s*

Founded in 1873, the town of Coconut Grove became Miami’s oldest neighborhood when it was annexed by the city in 1925. Lifelong civil rights activist Thelma Gibson described West Coconut Grove during the time Edwin Pratt lived there. “It was a time when...you might have heard the terminology ‘know your place.’ So we sort of knew our place, and our place was in West Coconut Grove, in Colored Town. It wasn’t as vibrant as White Town. They had the main stores in White Town. We had mom and pop stores.”

By the time Edwin was old enough to work



## Till Victory Is Won: 1930-1949



*Cat Island, Bahamas 1935,  
photos by Alan Lomax*

summers at the Miami Beach hotels, he would have had to report to the police station, be photographed and fingerprinted for an ID card that he would carry with him at all times, by law, to work in a hotel restaurant. For much of his childhood, his mother worked as a housekeeper in the beach hotels. She would have started carrying her pass in 1936 when Miami Beach enacted Ordinance 457, requiring all seasonal workers to register with the police.

By virtue of their jobs in the tourist industry, hotel workers were liable to get a glimpse of some of the leading celebrities of the day. Star entertainers from Ella Fitzgerald to Billie Holiday to Count Basie and Duke Ellington played the beach hotels, then crossed “over town”

to stay in Brownsville and Overtown, the bustling center of Black Miami. The Mary Elizabeth Hotel and Georgette’s Tea Room hosted the leading intellectuals of the day, including W.E.B. Du Bois, Thurgood Marshall, and Zora Neale Hurston. Nat King Cole and Jackie Robinson might be seen in the nightclub at the Sir John Hotel.



*Traditional Coconut Grove houses*

As African Americans moved away from the South, their aspirations and ambitions were influenced by the famous artists and scholars of the day. The white stars were in Los Angeles and so were the black stars. Even if they couldn’t live on the same side of town, they were there. In New York, white people went to Harlem when they wanted to experience the leading edge of culture and radical thought. Black people in Detroit took the money earned from making cars and used it to nurture their children’s talent. All the railroads met in Chicago, and the Great Migration transformed the city and made it a hub for black business and media. And everywhere, the migrants filled ever-expanding churches with the transcendent songs of their hometowns, songs that held both memory and the promise of transformation.



*Three men at a segregated beach in Miami, 1940s*

In his 1903 masterpiece, *The Souls of Black Folks*, W.E.B. Du Bois argued that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem

## Till Victory Is Won: 1930-1949



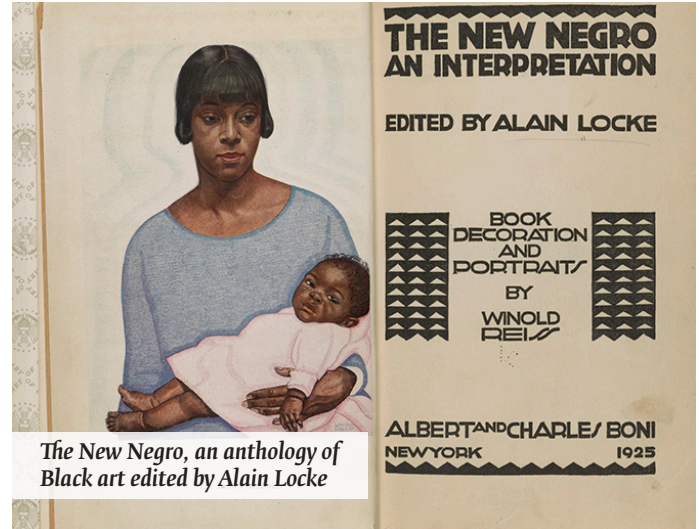
of the color-line.” Du Bois was convinced a new class of African Americans would lead the country forward. Despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles and virulent opposition, the educated elite Du Bois referred to as “The Talented Tenth” would cross the color line.

Du Bois’ ideal was widely embraced by the leading thinkers in business, law, education and the arts. He was speaking to the “race men” who were charged with the duty of lifting up their community.

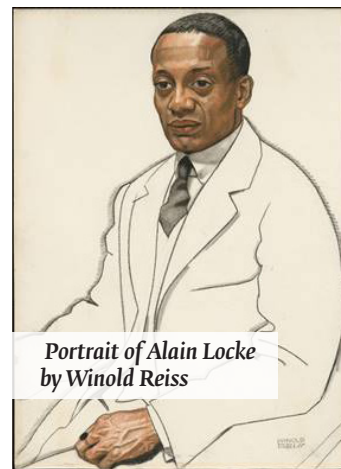
The idea of uplift was ever present at the National Urban League. In 1923, the League began publishing *Opportunity: A Journal of Negro Life*, which made a vital contribution to the Harlem Renaissance by

putting the work of African American artists and writers before the public eye. Harlem was a Mecca for black artists, especially for the many who were gay. Community conferred a personal freedom that would not have been possible in isolation.

In 1925, Alain Locke published *The New Negro*, an anthology of Black achievement in the arts. Locke, a leading philosopher of the Harlem Renaissance,



*The New Negro, an anthology of Black art edited by Alain Locke*



*Portrait of Alain Locke by Winold Reiss*

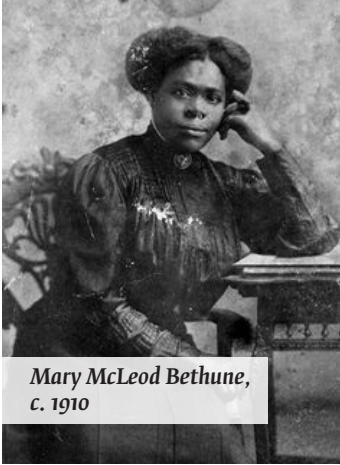
regarded the era following WWI as an opportunity for African American talent to be shown on the national stage as never before.

Edwin Pratt would be one of that Talented Tenth, one of the New Negro leaders who would serve his

community with the distinct combination of pride and respect that marked his class. James Weldon Johnson, civil rights lawyer and poet, Mary McLeod Bethune, human rights activist and educator, Zora Neale Hurston, writer and anthropologist of the New Negro Movement, Augusta Savage, Harlem Renaissance sculptor and teacher — all hailed from Florida. Johnson and Bethune were of the same generation as Pratt’s grandparents; Hurston and Savage were of the same generation of Pratt’s parents. Each was prominent on the national stage when Pratt was a young man.

Growing up in the segregated South, Edwin Pratt was not at a loss for role models. He could

## Till Victory Is Won: 1930-1949



Mary McLeod Bethune,  
c. 1910

measure himself against any number of ambitious and accomplished people. Francis S. Tucker was the principal of George Washington Carver High School where Pratt attended. While serving on the faculty at Tuskegee

Institute, she had met Dr. Carver himself, the world-famous scientist after whom Pratt's high school was named. In cities and towns across the South, women like Mrs. Tucker were preparing thousands of Negro children to integrate. If whites were afraid to compete with them, they had every reason to be.

In 1949, after graduating with honors from George Washington Carver High School, Pratt left Miami to attend Clark College in Atlanta. He had never been out of Florida.

Years later, Pratt would write, "Can you imagine a Negro youth being afraid of going

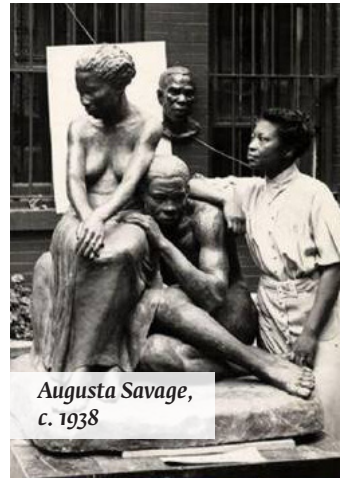


Zora Neale Hurston,  
1934

from one segregated pattern to another?" He was referring to himself. As a youth, he had gotten his ideas about the "red-muck, race baiting state of Georgia" from newspapers and radio. Looking back, he wrote "Now, this experience

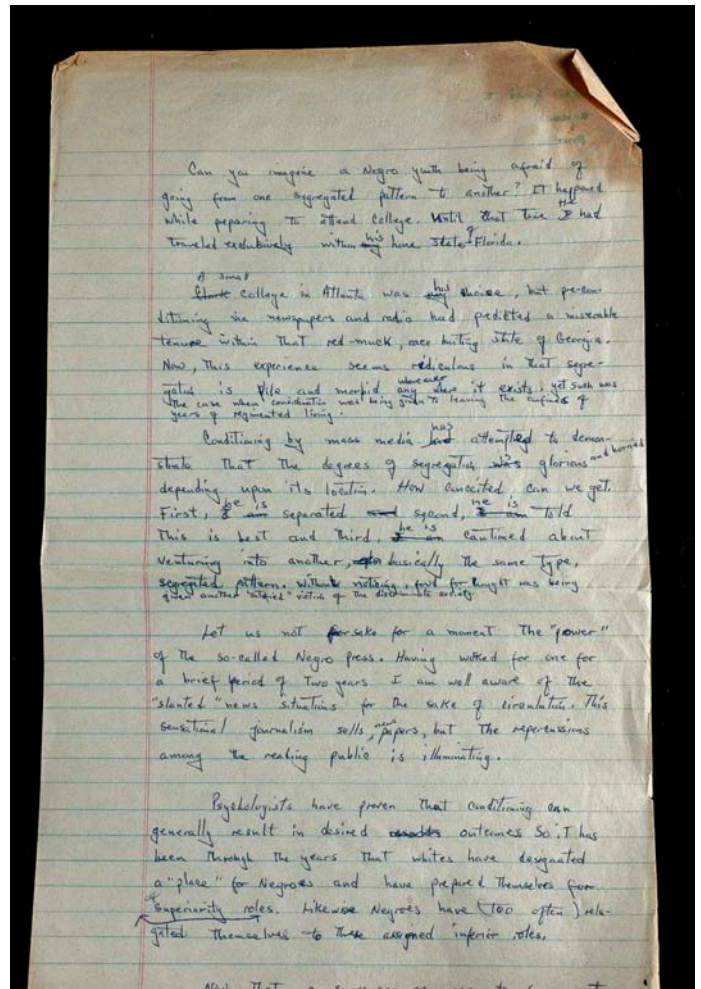
seems ridiculous in that segregation is vile and morbid wherever it exists."

Four years after the 1896 Supreme Court ruled in Plessy v. Ferguson that racial segregation did



Augusta Savage,  
c. 1938

not violate the 14th Amendment, James Weldon Johnson wrote "Lift Every Voice and Sing." Facing the rising sun of our new day begun, let us march on till victory is won. He could have written those words just as easily in 1949.



Handwritten note by Edwin T. Pratt — Black Heritage Society of Washington Edwin Pratt Legacy Collection

Can you imagine a Negro youth being afraid of going from one segregated pattern to another? It happened while preparing to attend college. Until that time I had traveled exclusively within my home state of Florida.

A small black college in Atlanta was my choice, but personal detesting in newspapers and radio had predicted a miserable tenure within that red-muck, race baiting state of Georgia. Now, this experience seems ridiculous in that segregation is vile and morbid wherever it exists, yet such was the case when consideration was being given to leaving the confines of years of segregated living.

Conditioning by mass media had attempted to demonstrate that the degrees of segregation were glorious and honored depending upon its location. How coveted, can we get? First, I am separated and second, I am told this is best and third, I am cautioned about venturing into another, which is basically the same type, segregated pattern. Without realizing a fool for thought was being given another instance of the distributable article.

Let us not forsake for a moment the "power" of the so-called Negro press. Having worked for one for a brief period of two years I am well aware of the "slanted" news situations for the sake of circulation. This sensational journalism sells newspapers, but the repercussions among the reading public is illuminating.

Psychologists have proven that conditioning can generally result in desired reactions outcomes. So, it has been through the years that whites have designated a "place" for Negroes and have prepared themselves from superiority roles. Likewise Negroes have (too often) relegated themselves to these assigned inferior roles.

Now that a succession of separate ( )

# Tomorrow, I'll Be At the Table

## 1950-1962

### I, Too

By Langston Hughes

*I, too, sing America.*

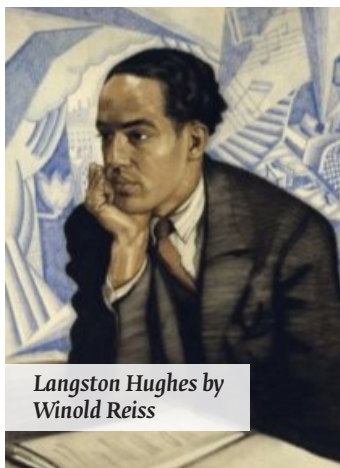
*I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes,  
But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.*

*Tomorrow,  
I'll be at the table  
When company comes.  
Nobody'll dare  
Say to me,  
"Eat in the kitchen,"  
Then.*

*Besides,  
They'll see how beautiful I am  
And be ashamed—*

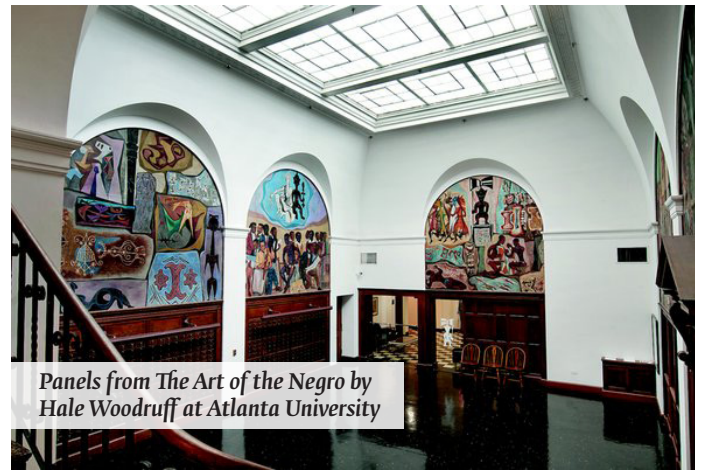
*I, too, am America.*

Langston Hughes published "I, Too" as part of his poetry collection *The Weary Blues*. The title poem was published in *Opportunity*. It won the magazine's top prize for poetry in 1925.



Langston Hughes by Winold Reiss

### Clark College and Atlanta University



Panels from *The Art of the Negro* by Hale Woodruff at Atlanta University



**When Edwin Pratt was in his sophomore year at Clark College, Hale Woodruff, who had moved to New York in 1946 after founding the art department**

at Atlanta University, returned to paint his six-panel mural celebrating African and African American culture and history. Atlanta was home to three black colleges — Clark, Morehouse, and Spelman — and one black graduate school, Atlanta University. It was a short stroll from one to another. Woodruff wanted the murals to instruct and inspire students at all four institutions as they formed their ideas about a future America that would include them as equals.

Pratt's move to Atlanta brought him to the center of a cultural transformation. As a student

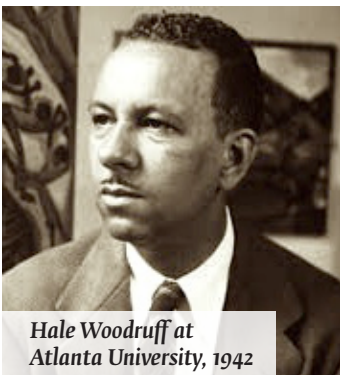
## Tomorrow, I'll Be At the Table: 1950-1962



Birmingham, Alabama, 1956  
photo by Gordon Parks

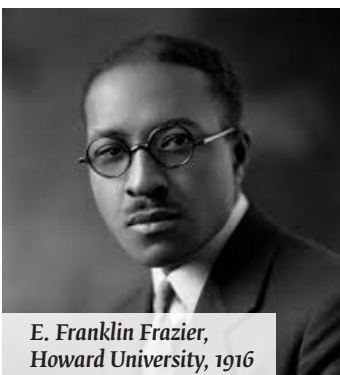
at Clark, he studied psychology and education. There he read the writings of E. Franklin Frazier, the leading scholar on the black family who was known for his view that racism was a pathology. Frazier had taught at Morehouse a generation before and founded the Atlanta University School of Social Work.

The Atlanta University Library held an



Hale Woodruff at  
Atlanta University, 1942

important collection of books, journals, articles, and dissertations by black scholars. While Pratt was on campus and for decades after, the Dean of the School of Library Service was Virginia Lacy Jones. In an essay for the book *The Black Library in America*, Jones described her family as “poor, hardworking, proud, and ambitious,” words that might have defined the majority



E. Franklin Frazier,  
Howard University, 1916

of black families living under segregation. All of



Virginia Lacy Jones

these qualities were either a result of or a response to the harsh conditions they were forced to endure.

Jones had a formidable mind and a PhD from the University of Chicago. During her 36 years as Dean, the School of Library Service trained nearly two thousand black librarians who served all over the country. Their influence on black communities was immeasurable. Books offered a way out.

Of the scholars and leaders who influenced Pratt, the person who would serve as his most



Whitney Young, Atlanta  
University School of  
Social Work, 1954

important mentor was Whitney Young, Dean of the School of Social Work and the Director of the National Urban League. Young was a powerful, dynamic

presence, and Pratt would seek guidance from him for the remainder of his life.

In Atlanta, Pratt found men and women engaged in challenging the doctrine of racial inferiority. If they were going to prove its fallacy with their achievements, they had to attack its premises in order to spur achievement. On the same page about his fears leaving Miami for Atlanta, Pratt wrote years later about the insidious conditioning that maintained this doctrine. “So it has been through the years that whites have designated a ‘place’ for Negroes and have prepared themselves for roles of superiority. Likewise Negroes have (too often) relegated themselves to these inferiority roles.”

## Tomorrow, I'll Be At the Table: 1950-1962



W.E.B. Du Bois in his Atlanta University office

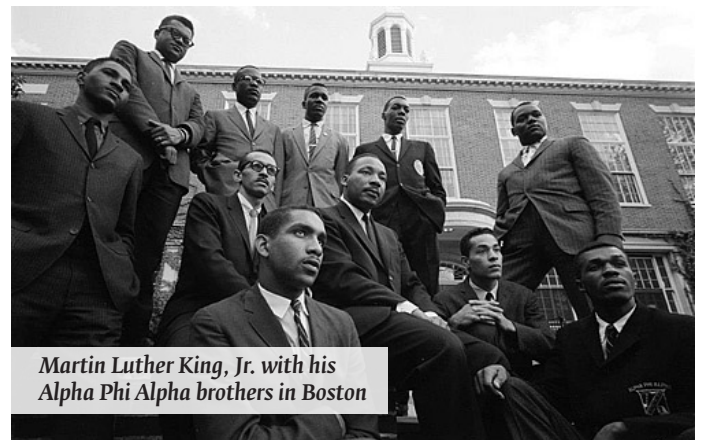
To understand Atlanta University's importance, it's useful to consider that W.E.B. Du Bois spent much of his teaching life there. He first came to the university in 1897 and stayed until 1910. It was during this period that he wrote his most famous work, *The Souls of Black Folk*. In 1906, a race riot in Atlanta sent Dr. Du Bois rushing back there from a residency in Alabama.

When he reached his home, he grabbed his shotgun, determined to protect his family from marauding whites. In 1910, he left the city for New York, where he would be instrumental in founding the NAACP. The years 1934-1944 brought him back to chair the Sociology Department. It was then that he wrote his pioneering study *Black Reconstruction in America*, a work placing African Americans at the center of a universal struggle for freedom. In 1944, Du Bois was fired from the university on the grounds that he had become too difficult to work with.

This was the intellectual environment in which Edwin Pratt studied. Atlanta was an exciting place for a black college student. They could be forgiven if they thought of themselves as the center of the center. During his time there, Pratt honed his leadership skills as a member of the Clark

College student government. He also participated in numerous organizations that would remain important to him throughout his life.

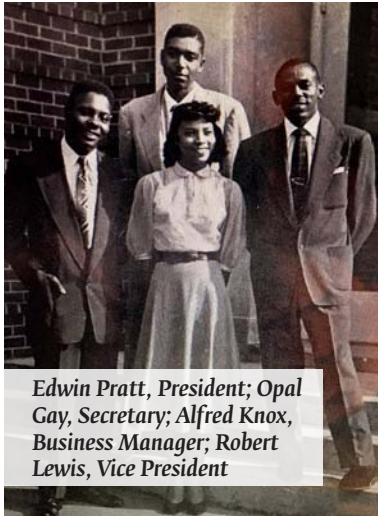
Religion was important to Pratt, and Atlanta was a religious town. The leading civil rights advocates in Atlanta were a powerful group of ministers that included Martin Luther King, Sr. In 1944 at the age of 15, Martin Luther King, Jr., then known as Mike King, was appointed assistant pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church and gave his first sermon. By the time Pratt arrived at Clark College, King had graduated Morehouse and was enrolled in Crozier Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania. From there he would go to Boston University to study Theology.



Martin Luther King, Jr. with his Alpha Phi Alpha brothers in Boston

Soon after arriving, Pratt pledged Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. Founded at Cornell College in 1906, the Alphas were the first black Greek organization in the United States. Martin King had pledged the Alphas at Morehouse. The son of a leading Atlanta family, King was the quintessential Alpha man — ambitious, dignified, and courageous. So was Pratt.

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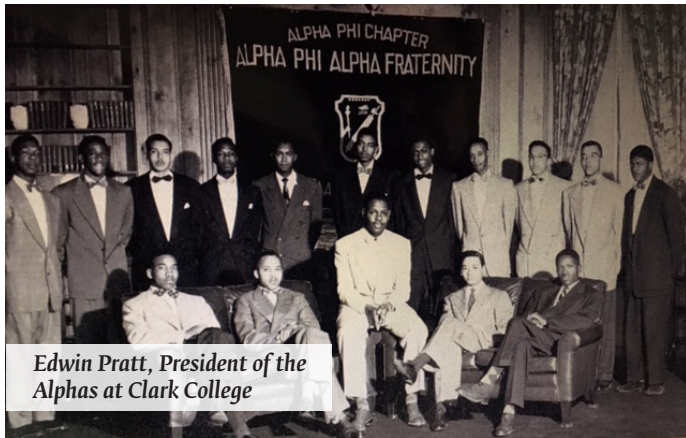


Edwin Pratt, President; Opal Gay, Secretary; Alfred Knox, Business Manager; Robert Lewis, Vice President

### Excellence

In his junior year at Clark, Pratt was voted Student Council President. He was also a member of the Men's Glee Club, and he helped organize Religious Emphasis Week. He played Demetrius

in the Drama Club's production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. And he was voted Prince Charming, a title conferred on an individual judged to an able conversationalist, thinker, and all-around student, someone friendly and popular who also



Edwin Pratt, President of the Alphas at Clark College



Edwin Pratt as "Prince Charming"



Pratt as Student Council President, 1951-1952 academic year

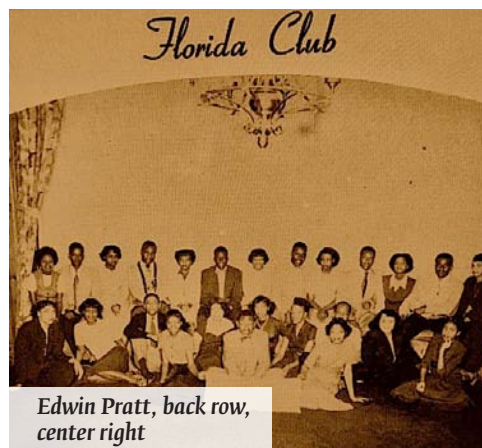
possessed sympathy, the consummate groomer, well-proportioned figure with the best physique.

In March 1950 during his sophomore year at Clark, Edwin Pratt became a father. His son Bill lived with his mother in Florida. She and Edwin



Edwin Pratt, standing third from left; seated, Miss Ollie Brown, Director

had been high school sweethearts. Along with his mother, Bill lived with his step-father and younger



Edwin Pratt, back row, center right

sisters while growing up in Homestead, outside of Miami. From the time of his birth, he and his father

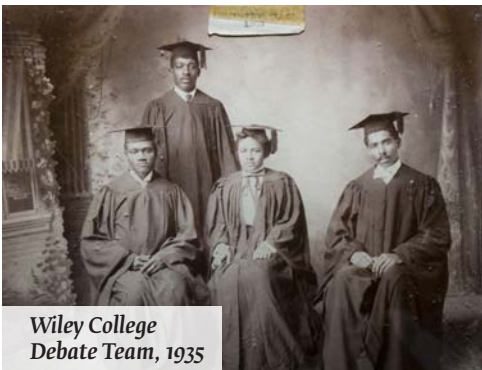
maintained a close relationship. Edwin Pratt visited Miami frequently to see his son and the rest of the Pratt family. But there was never any question he would finish his education.

## A Meeting of Minds, Bettye Jean Williams



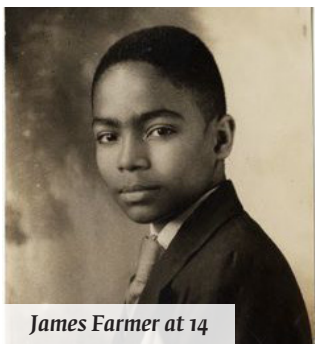
Wiley College

**Bettye Jean Williams did not go to Clark College. She went to Wiley College in her hometown of Marshall, Texas.** Founded in 1873, Wiley was the first college in Texas that African Americans could attend. Marshall was proud



Wiley College  
Debate Team, 1935

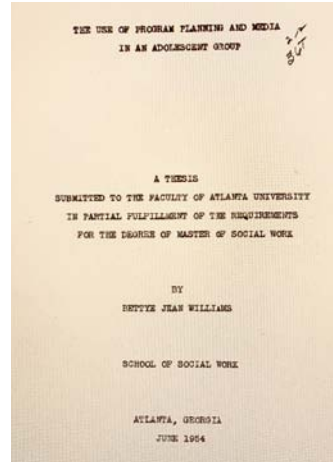
to boast two black colleges, Wiley and Bishop. Wiley College was famous for its debate



James Farmer at 14

team, which was coached by poet Melvin B. Tolson. In 1935, they electrified black scholars everywhere when they beat the University of Southern California all-white debate team.

The youngest member of the winning team was James Farmer, Jr., who was only 14 at the time. His father, a professor at Wiley, had a PhD



1954 Thesis, Bettye Jean Williams, "The Use of Program Planning and Media in an Adolescent Group" (left); 1955 Thesis, Edwin Thomas Pratt, "Across the Track": The Development and Operations of the Miami, Florida Precinct Municipal Court (right)



in Theology from Boston University. The young Farmer went on to pursue a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Howard University. At the age of 21, he was invited to meet with Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt at the White House. He asked the President a question about European colonialism in Africa. Despite urging from Mrs. Roosevelt, the President didn't answer. Soon thereafter in 1942, Farmer became one of the founders of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), an organization devoted to nonviolence that would be central to the Civil Rights Movement.

Bettye Williams graduated from Wiley in 1951. If not for her decision to pursue a Masters in Social Work, she and Edwin Pratt would have likely never met.

Both Edwin and Bettye earned Masters in Social Work from Atlanta University. Whitney Young became Dean of the School of Social Work in 1954, shortly after Atlanta University began offering its graduate degree in Social Work. Bettye Jean Williams and Edwin Thomas Pratt were two of the first students to graduate from the MSW Program.

For her thesis on developing social programming for youth, Bettye did her field work



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SUMMARIZED RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS

Interview Questions	Im- proved	Favorable	Un- favorable	Mixed Feelings	Con- sparable	No Comment	None
1. What was your reaction when early proposals for a separate Negro municipal court were announced?	0	11	8	6	0	0	0
2. What do you think of the Negro court as a factor in the community?	0	18	3	2	0	2	0
3. How do your friends (neighbors, club members, etc.) consider the work of the Negro court in the community?	0	14	2	6	0	3	0
4. What is the status of the Negro court in relation to other municipal courts?	1	0	6	2	12	0	0
5. To what extent do you feel that the Negro population has respect for the Negro court?	0	18	2	0	0	2	3
6. To what extent have the vocational ambitions of Negro youth been affected since the establishment of a Negro court?	4	5	0	0	0	6	10
7. In your opinion, what social results can be attributed to the addition of Negro police and Negro court?	22	0	0	0	0	0	3
8. How does the "justice" of the Negro court toward Negro defendants compare with that of the white court toward Negro defendants?	16	0	0	5	4	0	0
9. What would be your reaction toward the integration of clients (defendants) appearing before the Negro judge?	0	18	2	4	0	1	0

Left: Bettye Williams completed her thesis in the spring of 1954 and received her degree that June. Edwin Pratt finished his degree a year later.

Above: Questions from a survey Pratt conducted to measure the support for Miami's new municipal court that adjudicated misdemeanors in the African American communities of Liberty City, the Central District, and Coconut Grove.

at Emerson House in Chicago from early-October 1953 until mid-February 1954. Emerson house was an interracial and nonsectarian settlement house located on the West Side. In 1953, the neighborhood was predominately Polish and Italian and had only a small Negro population. The population was overwhelmingly Catholic. The parents were mostly laborers.

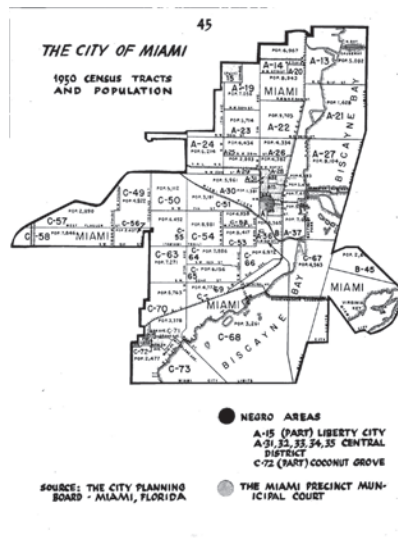
In her thesis, Bettye, described her role as “an advisor, teacher, and enabler,” for a group of nine girls ages 15 and 16. She wrote that the group “expressed a desire for discussions which seemed to indicate an unexpressed desire to talk about and understand themselves and to gain a knowledge of problems common to other adolescents in order that they would feel more competent and secure in their social growth.” She later stated the reason the girls gave for forming the group: to discuss sex, dating, home and parents, and to roller skate and dance. For clarification as to the exact topics of interest, “I asked if it were necking, petting and the various things pertaining to sex. They gave a chorused ‘That’s right.’ They were all quite



Bettye Pratt skating with the girls in her group at Emerson House, Winter 1954

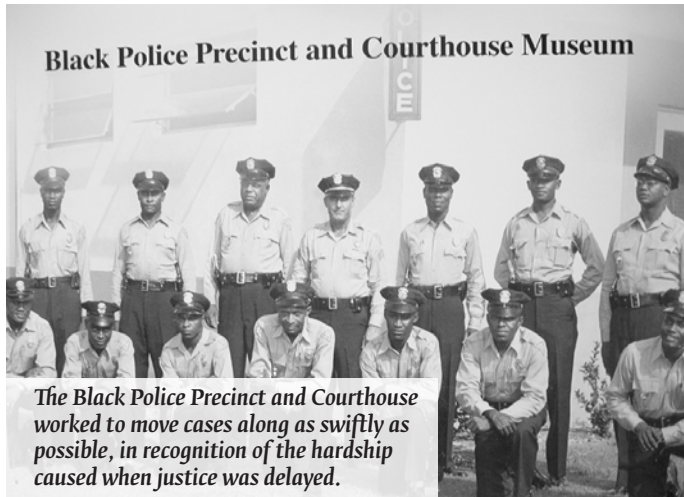
excited... I talked about the interrelatedness of the things they were interested in. They kept agreeing and exclaiming... The feeling among them was tremendous.”

On one occasion, Bettye led a general discussion about birth control. When pressed by a girl named Mabel, she talked about ‘timed birth control,’ a method she suggested might be allowed by the Catholic Church. “The girls all sat with their mouths open looking in awe at me.” She can barely hide her amusement. “I said that I wasn’t trying to sell them any ideas, that they would have to practice what they believed. I said it was important that they decide on what they felt was right for them.”



Map showing Negro Areas of Miami, 1950

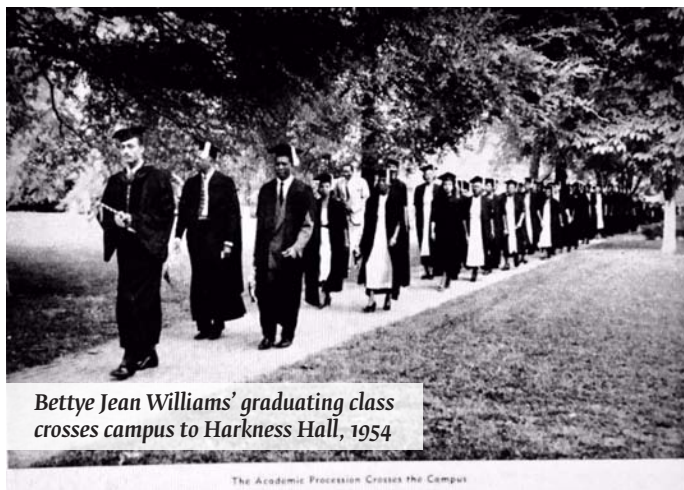
Edwin Pratt went home to Miami for his field study in 1954. His thesis examined the creation and efficacy of a new court brought about by black citizens demanding a change in Miami’s racially-biased



criminal justice system and discriminatory police practices. The new court was administered by African American police officers, bailiffs, and clerks and presided over by an African American judge.

Pratt observed that “Many of the defendants seemed at ease and there was no apparent ‘fear’.” Pratt noted the informal feeling of the procedures, with both the judge and the defendants using slang. “Defendants may have felt an ‘identification’ with the court since the staff was almost entirely composed of Negroes.”

Once their thesis papers were accepted, all that was left for Bettye Williams and Edwin Pratt was to graduate. Bettye graduated in June of 1954. Edwin followed in 1955.



## On to Kansas City

Before Pratt completed his degree, Whitney Young recommended he take a job with the Urban League of Kansas City. Shortly after graduating, Pratt packed his bags for a colder place.

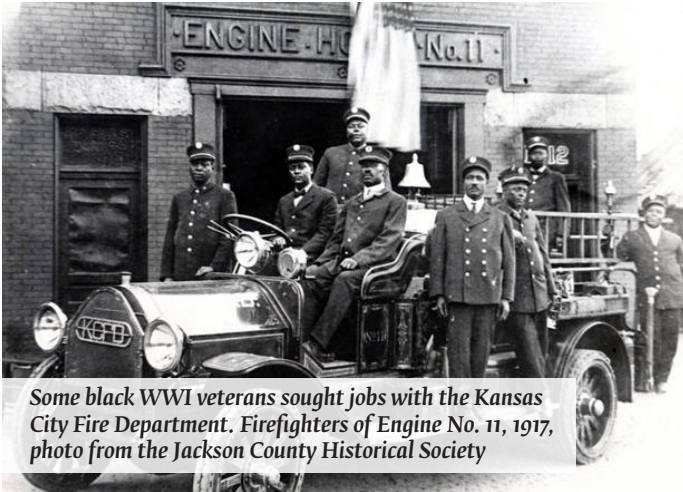
In 1950, there were 456,620 people in Kansas City, Missouri. Of that number, 55,682 or 12.2% were black. By 1960, the black population had reached 17.5%. The white population had lost some 9,000 people, but the black population had gained nearly 28,000. Edwin Pratt was part of that number. By contrast, black people represented around 37% of the population of Atlanta when Pratt lived there.

With the rapidly growing community, the Urban League of Kansas City had its hands full. Founded in 1919, the chapter providing housing and employment services and opportunities for migrants and returning soldiers after WWI.

When Pratt arrived in 1955, the Urban League had grown to include health services, on-the-job training programs, education and athletic programs, summer camps and a day care center. Lucile Buford, an early member of the NAACP and powerhouse in local politics, was editor and publisher of *The Kansas Call*, a prominent black



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Some black WWI veterans sought jobs with the Kansas City Fire Department. Firefighters of Engine No. 11, 1917, photo from the Jackson County Historical Society



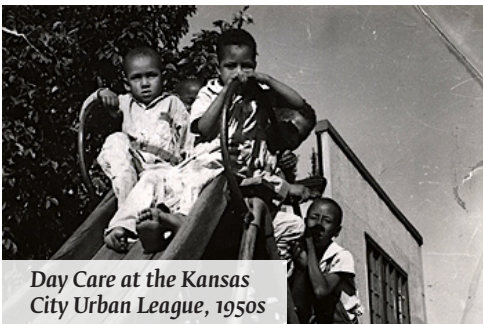
Lucile Buford and staff of The Kansas City Call, 1930s

newspaper. The Call regularly published news of Urban League programs,

initiatives, meetings and conventions. The Kansas City Branch was well-connected nationally and was instrumental in planning the proposed 1941 March on Washington for WWII jobs.

All of this made the Urban League of Kansas City an excellent place for Pratt to learn the ropes.

Kansas City had a high profile for another reason. It was home to the Kansas City Monarchs,



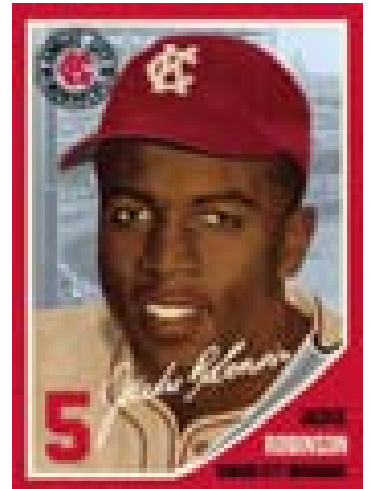
Day Care at the Kansas City Urban League, 1950s

the team with the best record in the Negro Leagues and the best pitcher in all of baseball,

Satchel Paige. In 1945, The Monarchs recruited an Army baseball coach named Jackie Robinson. Robinson would become famous for breaking the

color line when he signed with a Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. The Kansas City Monarchs sent more players to Major League Baseball than any other Negro Leagues team.

With the rising tide of black achievement and power, the National Urban League needed to shore up its offices around the country. Edwin Pratt's next Urban League posting would take him even farther away from home.



Left to right: Kansas City Monarchs poster; Jackie Robinson, 1941



Kansas City Monarchs postcard, 1953

## The Honour of Your Presence

**While Edwin worked in Kansas City, Bettye spent the two years after her graduation working in Chicago.** They were very much in love, writing to each other frequently, visiting whenever they could.

Bettye Jean Williams and Edwin Thomas Pratt



were married at her family's church in Marshall, Texas on Friday, July 27, 1956. They went to Florida for their honeymoon, where they spent a lot of time with Edwin's parents, his son Bill, and the rest of the Pratt family.



## Welcome to Seattle

**The Pratts moved to Seattle shortly after getting married.** Seattle was farther from Atlanta and Miami than any other city in the continental United States. Its small black population consisted of pioneering families who came to Washington at the end of the 19th century when it was first admitted to the union, others with a pioneering

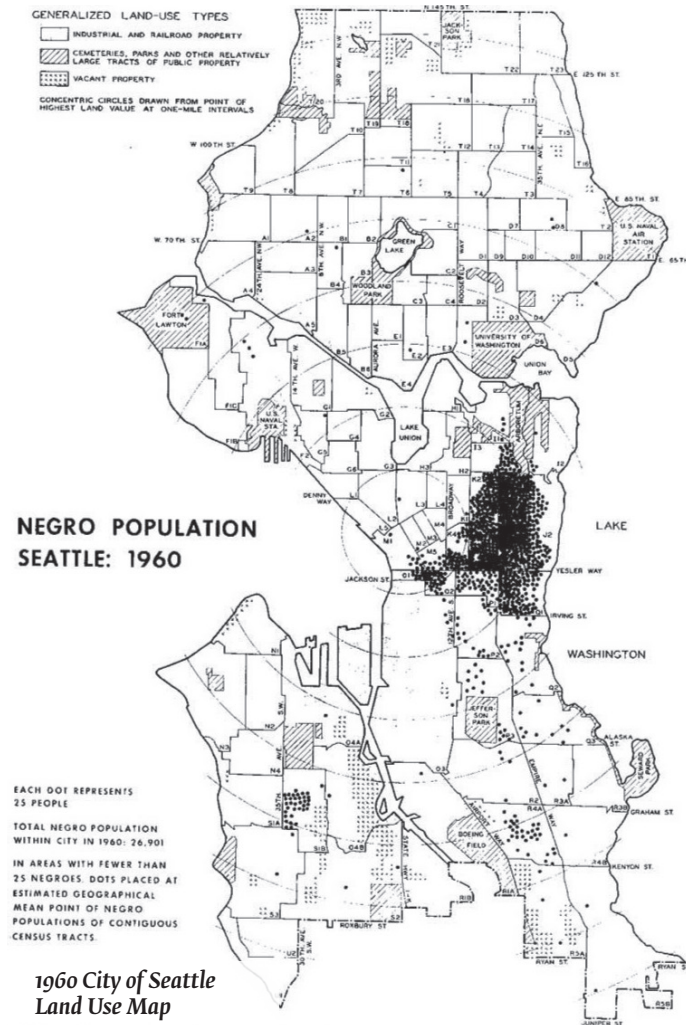
spirit who migrated during the WWI era, and newcomers from the rural South who arrived during WWII to work in the defense industry.

Between 1940 and 1950, the African American population had grown from less than four thousand to nearly sixteen thousand, and most of that increase was due to work in some aspect of the defense industry. After years of pressure, the Boeing Company had finally relented after President Roosevelt, himself pressured by black labor leader A. Philip Randolph, signed Executive Order 8802 outlawing discrimination by companies that did business with the federal government. Initially Boeing resisted the order. A public campaign and legal pressure from the NAACP resulted in the hiring of two African American women in 1942, a stenographer and a sheet metal worker, both from the South. A year later, it had roughly 330 black workers, and more than 280 of them were women. At the peak of its wartime hiring in 1944, there were about 1,600 African American workers at Boeing.

Workers in Seattle faced discrimination in most sectors of the post-war economy. While black homeownership rates climbed over forty percent, red lining and real estate covenants restricted where African American families could live. The vast majority of Seattle's African American population lived in the Central District. Redlining by realtors and bigotry on the part of white homeowners kept Black Seattle in its place. As years passed, the area became more and more crowded, and housing conditions deteriorated. And despite the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. The Board of Ed*, the Seattle School District had no plans to desegregate the city's public schools. Racial discrimination by the police was rampant, but little if anything was done about it.

In his article "Swing the Door Wide: World War

## Tomorrow, I'll Be At the Table: 1950-1962



II Wrought a Profound Transformation in Seattle's Black Community," historian Quintard Taylor writes:

"Seattle's growing black population faced increasing segregation and exclusion as "Whites Only" signs suddenly appeared for the first time in restaurants, theaters, motels and recreational areas. Businesses and public accommodations that did not openly exclude blacks often discouraged patronage by providing poor service or by segregating them from whites."

When the Pratts came to Seattle, they were coming to an established black community. Black pioneers had settled downtown, but moved to Madison Valley after the Seattle Fire of 1889. War



Women working keypunch machines

brought successive waves of soldiers, dockworkers, factory workers, and laborers. Entrepreneurs and professionals served a community that had become increasingly confined as it grew and prospered. For the most part, White

Seattle made sure that Black Seattle stayed in its place. Although blacks made up less than five percent of the total population in 1956, Seattle had long been the home of civil rights organizations, including the NAACP, UNIA, and Urban League.

Like Pratt, most of Seattle's civil rights leaders came to the city from the South. If they didn't know each other before they arrived in Seattle, they may well have known of each other. All were highly educated men and women. Most had attended black colleges and universities and, even if they hadn't, they belonged to black fraternities and sororities. Faith was the guiding force in their lives, and black churches were their beacons. Family was paramount. Through their efforts, they would provide more opportunities for their children, who would be taught to strive for excellence, the same way they were.

The Pratts became good friends with Charles and Lazelle Johnson. The Johnsons, who belonged to several service organizations in the city, took the Pratts under wing. Raised in Little Rock, Arkansas, Charles Johnson had come to Seattle in 1954 to attend the University of Washington School of Law. By the time the Pratts arrived in 1956, he was a leader at the Seattle chapter of the NAACP. In two years, he would become its president. Lazelle Johnson had worked as a clerk at Boeing and could

## Tomorrow, I'll Be At the Table: 1950-1962

school the newcomers in Seattle's history as a company town. As the Seattle Urban League grew, she would go to work in its office. The two couples shared meals and hours of conversation about the state of the world. They threw themselves into the work that was pressing upon the nation but being largely ignored by the white leadership establishment in their newly-adopted town.

Bettye Pratt soon got a job with Neighborhood House, Seattle's oldest social work organization, founded in 1906 by the National Council of Jewish Women. Like Emerson House in Chicago where Bettye had conducted her thesis project, Neighborhood House initially provided education, housing, and employment services for European immigrants, in this case Jewish immigrants from Turkey and Greece. As with the Urban League, its work was to resettle a population fleeing persecution and seeking opportunity. In 1956, the year the Pratts arrived in Seattle, Neighborhood House became a nonprofit and providing services to public housing residents in Yesler Terrace.

When Pratt arrived at the Seattle Urban League, Lewis Gould Watts was the Executive Director. He had just completed a study about changing race relations in Seattle and had written a report for a national coalition about federal employment discrimination in Seattle. In 1949 at the University of Washington, Watts had written his Master's thesis about racial tension in Seattle. He had been working for years with only a small staff in a city that seemed largely indifferent to his efforts. Pratt's assignment to the Seattle office represented a recognition on the part of the National Urban League that more attention was being paid to racial discrimination in the Pacific Northwest. Like many civil rights leaders of the time, Watts was involved in interfaith efforts that approached racial justice as a moral imperative.

He had directed the Seattle League as it dealt with the sweeping changes brought about as a result of WWII, when race hatred and genocides had brought the world to the brink. In 1959, Watts was offered a one-year teaching and research post at Brandeis University outside of Boston. Watts left Seattle for Boston, where he studied the effects of urban renewal on black homeowners.

In July of 1959, the Pratts had moved to Shoreline, a city on Seattle's northern border. The move was a controversial one. Shoreline had only one other black family. Racial covenants put in place by William Boeing dictated that restricted property could not be "sold, conveyed, rented, or leased in whole or in part to any person or persons not of the White or Caucasian race." The Pratts challenged this practice.

When Lewis Watts decided to stay at Brandeis, Edwin Pratt took over as Executive Director of the

said Tracts to a corporation or association formed by residents or owners of property in Innis Arden No. 2, or to a corporation or association formed by residents or owners of Innis Arden, for community purposes, in the activities of which corporation or association residents of Innis Arden No. 2 shall have the right to participate, subject to reasonable restrictions and requirements imposed by such corporation or association.

14. **RACIAL RESTRICTIONS.**...No property in said addition shall at any time be sold, conveyed, rented or leased in whole or in part to any person or persons not of the White or Caucasian race. No person other than one of the White or Caucasian race shall be permitted to occupy any property in said addition or portion thereof or building thereon except a domestic servant actually employed by a person of the White or Caucasian race where the latter is an occupant of such property.

15. **ANIMALS.** No hogs, cattle, horses, sheep, goats, or or similar livestock shall be permitted or maintained on said property at any time. Chicken hens, pigeons, rabbits and other similar small livestock, not exceeding a total of twenty-five in number, shall be permitted but must be kept on the premises of the owner. Not more than one dog and cat may be kept for each building site. No pen, yard, run, hutch, coop or other structure or area for the housing and keeping of the above described poultry or animals shall be built or maintained closer

*Racial restrictive covenant from  
Shoreline's Innis Arden subdivision*

Seattle Urban League. It was 1961. As leader of the Northwest branch of a national civil rights organization, Pratt could directly address the same issues that had plagued his community for

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## Tomorrow, I'll Be At the Table: 1950-1962

generations in the Southeast. Here was his chance to do what he had been preparing to do his whole life.

Now was the time for reaping. The country had a new President, John F. Kennedy, who had been elected by the thinnest of margins. His victory had been due to the Negro vote. Kennedy was not known as a champion of civil rights, but when Dr. King was arrested and taken to Georgia State Prison in late October 1960, Kennedy's phone call to Coretta Scott King had turned the election in his favor. Around the country, civil rights leaders were poised to pressure the new administration for changes in the law.

In 1961, Kennedy's first year as President, Whitney Young took the helm as the President of the National Urban League. Pratt's mentor and friend would be a thorn in the side of Kennedy and his brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, as they sought to move the country toward racial progress without alienating the Southern Democratic Party. Pratt sought Young's advice about plans to bring the Urban League's initiatives in Seattle.

At the same time national civil rights leaders were, civil rights leaders in Seattle were developing their own plans to attack discrimination on every front — in offices and stores, on construction sites, in courtrooms and classrooms, in housing and in law enforcement.

Rev. Dr. Samuel B. McKinney was the son and grandson of ministers who preached the gospel of social justice. He had grown up in Cleveland, where his father was pastor of a church that hosted speeches by leading civil rights lawyer Thurgood Marshall. Samuel McKinney decided to become a civil rights lawyer like Marshall. After graduating high school, he headed south to Morehouse College, his father's alma mater.

At Morehouse he was reacquainted with Mike King, a fellow preacher's kid who would become forever known as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Benjamin Mays, the Morehouse College President, encouraged McKinney to pursue the ministry. After graduating Morehouse, King went to Boston University for his Doctorate in Theology; McKinney went to Colgate Rochester Divinity School in New York. After earning his doctorate in 1952, McKinney returned to Cleveland, where he met and married Louise Jones, a Case Western graduate and consummate educator. In Seattle, Louise McKinney became a leading advocate for the education of black children. The McKinneys would take Seattle by storm in 1958 when he was chosen as pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Seattle's largest black church.

With the McKinneys, the Johnsons, and the Pratts, Seattle's civil rights leadership was growing. In 1962, Rev. John Hurst Adams was assigned as pastor to First A.M.E. Church. Originally from Columbia, South Carolina, Adams was not one to mince his words. Neither was Walter Hundley, the leader of CORE who came to Seattle from Philadelphia to get his M.S.W. from the University of Washington. Charles Johnson was followed as NAACP President by E. June Smith, who had come to Seattle in 1941 from St. Louis. She was an insurance agent and her husband was a railroad porter. A businesswoman and community organizer, she had been committed to civil rights work ever since the movement was in its infancy. Walter Hubbard was a New Orleans Catholic who made sure the faithful from St. Therese were represented in every cause, organization, and protest. Besides Smith of the NAACP and Dorothy Hollingsworth of the Christian Friends for Racial Equality, Hubbard had lived in Seattle longer than any of the others. A leader in fight

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University of Washington  
Daily article on Dr. King's visit

for open housing, Hollingsworth had come to Seattle in 1945 when her husband was stationed at Ft. Lewis, where Walt Hubbard had been stationed in 1943. Along with Smith, they had been on

the front lines as Seattle struggled to come to grips with the increasing demands of its black citizens. In order to be effective, Seattle civil rights leaders knew they would need to work closely together and stay in step with the national movement. And unlike organizers in other parts of the country, they had the burden of convincing white Seattle that there was a problem.


In 1961, Rev. Samuel McKinney invited Martin Luther King, Jr. to speak in Seattle. King was not nearly as well known as he would become in 1963. Even so, there were death threats.

The Supreme Court decision in *Brown* had given the movement the legal tools necessary to dismantle Jim Crow segregation. The lynching of Emmett Till in 1955 had propelled a revolution. The Montgomery Bus Boycott, The Little Rock Nine, The Greensboro Sit-In, The Freedom Rides—all produced victories after months and months of strategic, nonviolent protests. The country was coming apart at the seams, just the way it needed to.

In an entirely unfamiliar place, Pratt had come to see racial segregation as a universal problem, “vile and morbid wherever it exists,” as he wrote in his notes years later. And now he was directly responsible for doing something about it.

Pratt was at the table.

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MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH  
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Southern Christian Leadership Conference  
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NINETEEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY ONE  
*at*  
**THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
Seventh Avenue at Spring Street  
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**DOORS OPEN AT 7:30 P.M.**  
Reserved Seats Held Until 7:50 P.M.

**PUBLIC INVITED**

Poster for King's lecture  
at Mt. Zion Church

Rosellini Papers, Washington State Archives.



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# Hear the Fierce Hammering 1963-1969

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## truth

Gwendolyn Brooks

*And if the sun comes  
How shall we greet him?  
Shall we not dread him?  
Shall we not fear him?  
After so lengthy a  
Session in the shade?*

*Though we have wept for him,  
Though we have prayed  
All through the night-years —  
What if we wake one shimmering morning to  
Hear the fierce hammering  
Of his firm knuckles  
Hard on the door?*

*Shall we not shudder?  
Shall we not flee  
Into the shelter, the dear thick shelter  
Of the familiar  
Propitious haze?*

*Sweet is it, sweet is it  
To sleep in the coolness  
Of smug unawareness.*

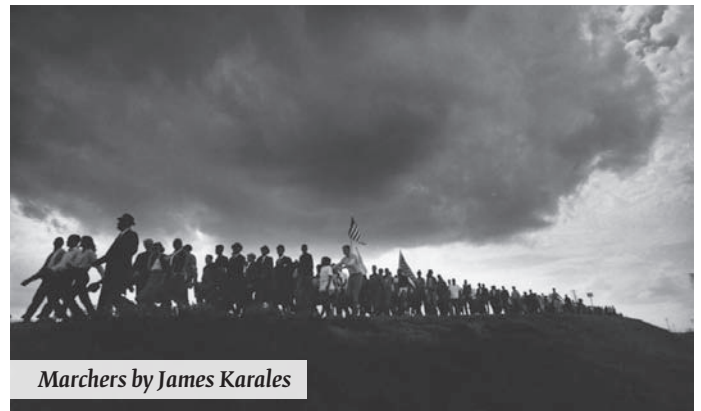
*The dark hangs heavily  
Over the eyes.*

Gwendolyn Brooks was born in Topeka, Kansas in 1917. While she was still an infant, her family moved to Chicago, where she spent her life as renowned and beloved a poet and teacher. Brooks began publishing poetry as a teenager, and from the time she was 17, her poems were being selected for publication in *The Chicago Defender*, one of the countries leading black newspapers. In 1950, she won the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry, becoming the first African American to do so. In the poem “truth,” she is speaking to the country.

## 1963 — Woke Up This Morning With My Mind Set On Freedom

### The world changed in 1963.

In April and May of that year, civil rights marchers in Birmingham, Alabama were attacked with dogs and fire hoses. The news was broadcast all over the world, and the persecution and oppression of black citizens in the United States was displayed in stunning black and white photos that belied the cruelty they depicted. It was in April that Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote *A Letter From a Birmingham Jail* declaring that “Justice too long delayed is justice denied.”



Marchers by James Karales

## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969



*Opportunity Magazine  
Industrial Issue, illustration  
by Aaron Douglas*

Civil rights leaders in Birmingham initiated the Children's Crusade in response to the many children eager to join their parents on the front. On May 2, 1963, more than a thousand children skipped school to join the protests. They set out from the Sixteenth Street

Baptist Church. Hundreds were arrested. The next day, more protestors followed. White firefighters turned hoses on them. Policemen beat them with batons and turned dogs on them. The worldwide outcry was deafening.



*Arrest of protestor Mattie Howard by the Birmingham police, 1963, by Bruce Davidson*

After pressure from the Kennedy administration, the City of Birmingham negotiated with the organizers of the campaign — the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, led by Birmingham stalwart Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, and King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference — and agreed to desegregate public accommodations and

private businesses. A measure of victory was won in Birmingham, but civil rights leaders had no illusions about the determination of their enemies.

The June assassination of Medgar Evers, Field Secretary for the NAACP in Mississippi, sent shock waves of sorrow and rage through the civil rights movement. Evers was assassinated outside of his home in front of his wife and children. At his funeral procession in Jackson, Mississippi, some of the thousands of mourners shouted, “After Medgar, No More Fear.”



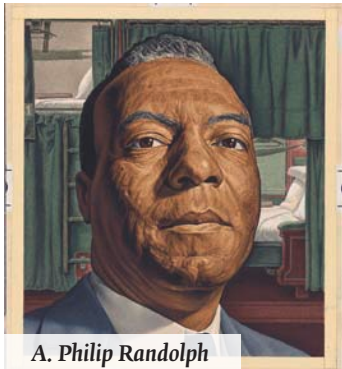
*Marchers in Portland, Oregon, after the assassination of Medgar Evers*

In 1963, James Baldwin published *The Fire Next Time*, which included the essay “My Dungeon Shook — A Letter to my Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of Emancipation.” It was a searing look at American racism. Addressing his nephew as well as millions of black people who shared his fate, Baldwin wrote:

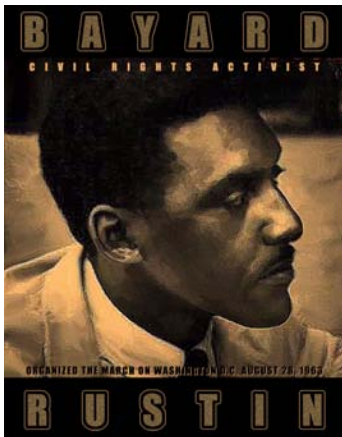
“You were born where you were born and faced the future that you faced because you were black and for no other reason. The limits to your ambition were thus expected to be settled. You were born into a society which spelled out with brutal clarity and in as many ways as possible that you were a worthless human being. You were not expected to aspire to excellence. You were expected to make peace with mediocrity.”

## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969

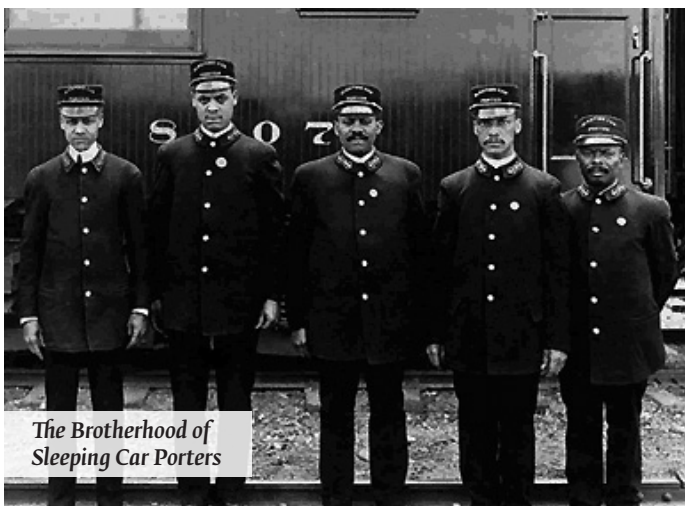
On Wednesday, August 28, 1963, the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom was held in Washington, D.C. The March had been in the



A. Philip Randolph



works for more than two decades. In 1941, A. Philip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and civil rights organizer Bayard Rustin had planned a march that was intended to pressure President Roosevelt for job opportunities. When Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802, which barred discrimination in the defense industry and federal employment, the March was called off. It was Randolph and Rustin who took the lead in organizing the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.



The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters

It was at the 1963 March that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

Before a crowd of more than 250,000 in front of the Lincoln Memorial, King issued a warning:

"Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a

beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges."

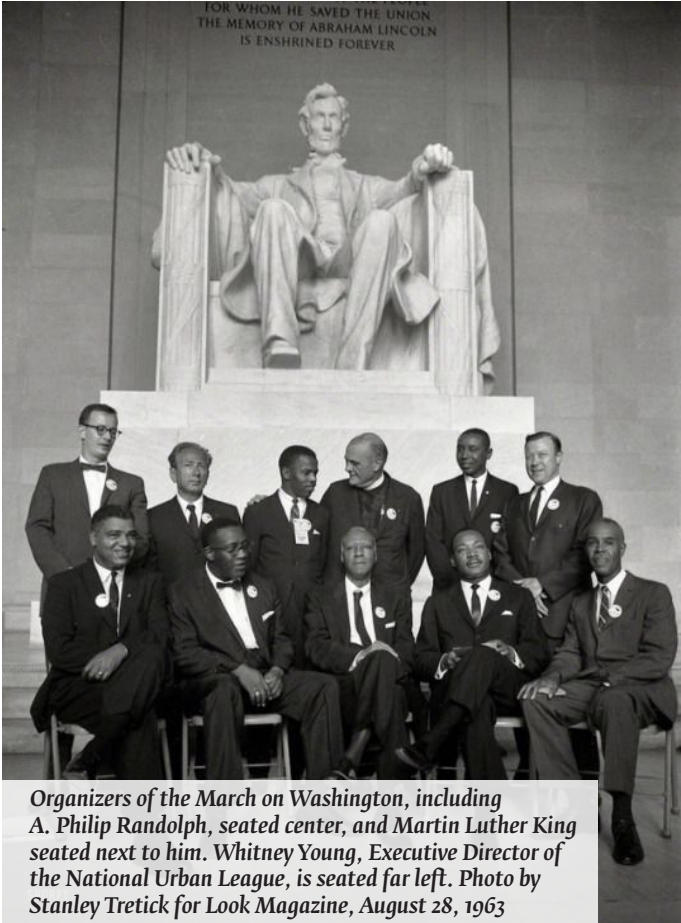
The monumental triumph of the March on Washington was followed by atrocity.



Marchers by Leonard Freed

On Sunday, September 15, 1963, the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham was bombed. Four girls died, and twenty other worshippers were injured. Addie Mae Collins, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley were 14 when they were killed in the Birmingham bombing. Carol Denise McNair was only 11. The Ku Klux Klan had planted 15 sticks of dynamite, timed to go off just before the service. Like Emmett Till's murder, this unforgivable act was a turning point for the Movement. Anyone who dared challenge racial oppression could be murdered at any time. It didn't matter if they were children.

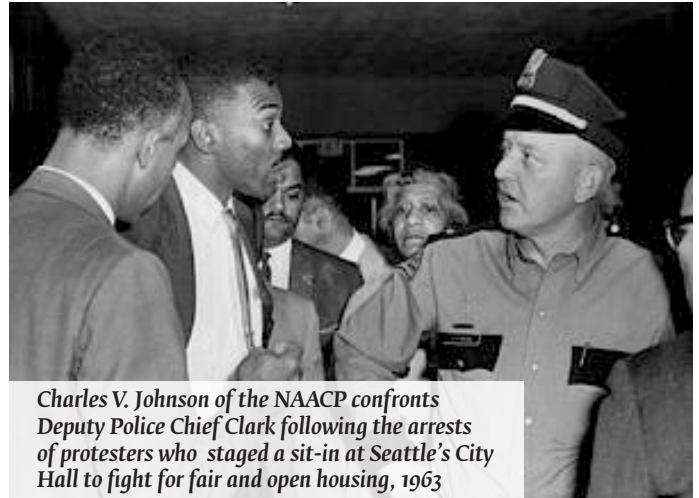
## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969



Malcolm X responded to the carnage in Birmingham with a speech at the University of California denouncing nonviolence and calling for racial separation and Black Nationalism. The violent attacks in Birmingham and elsewhere convinced civil rights leaders with radically different visions that it was necessary to work together as much as possible. By any means and every means.

In Seattle, the rising tension was felt personally by everyone involved in civil rights work. They could hear it on the radio and in phone calls with family in the South. They could read it in the letters from Little Rock and Atlanta and Miami and New Orleans. It was there at the national meetings and conferences. No one could afford to work in isolation.

The leaders of the major civil rights



organizations in Seattle formed the Central Area Civil Rights Committee (CACRC) to work together on joint goals. Founding members included Edwin Pratt of the Urban League, E. June Smith and Charles Johnson of the NAACP, Rev. John Adams of First A.M.E. Church, Rev. Samuel McKinney of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Walter Hundley of CORE, Dorothy Hollingsworth of CFRE, and Walter Hubbard of the Catholic Interracial Council. The leaders would work as a united front in the campaign for civil rights in Seattle. Each organization would bring pressure to bear on the city's white establishment. Although their tactics might vary, their plans and strategies would be jointly decided.

In addition to continuing their sustained effort to pressure area employers to hire black workers, they sought to convince black consumers not to shop where they couldn't work. And they began a coordinated push for the Seattle City Council to pass an Open Housing Ordinance. A protest march in July led to a sit-in at the Mayor's office, followed by the arrests of 23 protesters, many of them in high school students.

Edwin Pratt and the Urban League worked and fought with the downtown business and political establishments to move the civil rights agenda

## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969



Property of Museum of History & Industry, Seattle

**Reverend Samuel B. McKinney protests segregation in front of the Seattle Municipal Building. Mayor Gordon Clinton listens with his arms folded. In response to calls for open housing, the Mayor announced the formation of the Seattle Human Rights Commission.**

pressure of protests, strikes and boycotts to bolster his arguments. While Pratt was using the skill and tactics of a negotiator to move Seattle's

forward. Whitney Young had characterized his role at the helm of the National Urban League as that of a "militant mediator" making concrete demands on those in power while using the



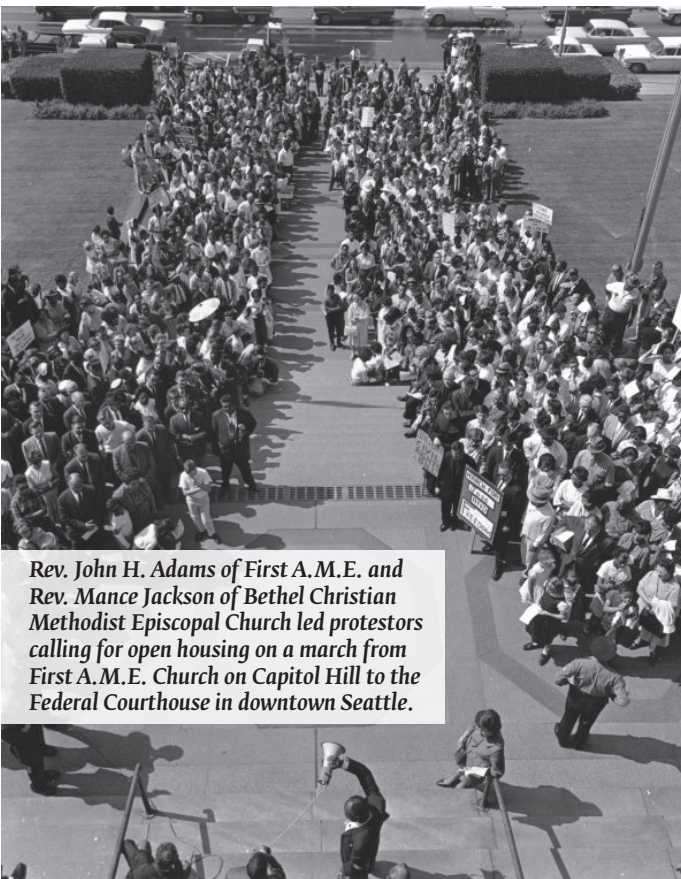
**Rev. Mance Jackson leads protesters in the march, which coincided with the March on Washington, August 28, 1963**

power structure, Young was making demands on President Kennedy, who couldn't afford not to act, given the disastrous events of the day.

Pratt sought to follow Young's lead. He was arguably the person with the closest ties to white leaders entrenched in city government and on corporate boards. He understood that every issue was an economic one, and that appeals to conscience only went so far with this crowd. It was his job to convince them that doing the right thing made economic sense and that failing to act have economic as well as political costs.

The open housing campaign had been a decades-long effort; the Pratts' move to Shoreline could be seen in that light. The CACRC leaders worked together to take the fight to the next level. Joined by allies like City Council members Wing Luke and Phil Hayasaka, along with fair housing advocate Sidney Gerber, they pressed for the passage of an ordinance that would desegregate Seattle housing.

In 1963, the work of the Civil Rights Movement took on a new urgency. Martin Luther King's Letter from a Birmingham Jail and James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* had both addressed that urgency. Protesters in Birmingham had been beaten and jailed and killed. They had had fire hoses and dogs turned on them, but the marches only grew and spread around the country. No one could have prepared for what was to come. They couldn't have



**Rev. John H. Adams of First A.M.E. and Rev. Mance Jackson of Bethel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church led protestors calling for open housing on a march from First A.M.E. Church on Capitol Hill to the Federal Courthouse in downtown Seattle.**

## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969

known how 1963 would set the stage for the rest of the Civil Rights Movement.

On November 22, 1963, while riding in the back of an open-top limousine, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. In a photo that appeared in newspapers all over the world, Lyndon Johnson was sworn in on Air Force One with Jacqueline Kennedy standing by his side, her husband's blood caked onto the front of her coat and dress and gloves.



The country reeled from the news. No one was too high to be brought down by the rage and hatred of those seeking to protect their power.

### 1964 — A Change Is Gonna Come

**At the very end of 1963, a little girl was born who would change the Pratt family forever.**

Bettye and Edwin Pratt would adopt her six months later and she would become the light of their lives, brighter even than a world on fire. They named her Miriam, after Edwin's mother.

No one can bring to light the necessity of change and the possibility of transformation in the way that a child can. For generations of African American families in the United States, the desire and necessity for life to be better, freer,

The Pratt Family in 1964, photos from the Black Heritage Society of Washington State Edwin Pratt Collection, donated by Miriam Pratt



safer, fairer for their children had seldom been achieved. For most, emancipation had brought only a brief period of relative freedom, followed by relentless and violent obstruction. For many, the promise of freedom and jobs that caused people to leave the South

lasted only a generation or two before they found themselves constrained and confined in a different sort of hell.

In 1964, the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement in Seattle and across the country were about the same age as Edwin and Bettye Pratt. Most had been born in the late 1920s or early 1930s. Almost all had young children. The young people coming up behind them had grown the movement and pushed it forward. Embodied by Linda Brown in Topeka and Ruby Bridges in New Orleans, they walked into schools where they were not welcome. Death threats followed and preceded them. Autherine Lucy and the Little Rock Nine, Diane Nash, John Lewis and the Freedom Riders were high school and college students. And who could forget the Children's Crusade and the four girls

## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969

who had been killed at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church? Generation after generation of families had faced unimaginable loss. The Civil Rights Movement was a multigenerational undertaking.

People Pratt's age had been born during the Great Depression to parents born into Jim Crow. Their grandparents had been the children who watched all the gains of Reconstruction disappear. Their great grandparents had likely been born into slavery. The generations, some times in the same household, didn't argue about the need for civil rights, but they argued about the tactics. Was it better to go to work or go to the march, knowing you could lose your job? Did your parents know you were part of that group sitting at the lunch counter and that you wouldn't be home for dinner? Who let that baby go out into the streets? Get out of the way, these old bones can still walk.

Bettye and Edwin Pratt dreamed of great things for their daughter as their parents had for them. Along with activists everywhere, they worked with renewed energy. The Birmingham campaign and the March on Washington had galvanized activists across racial and religious lines. The shock of President Kennedy's death had forced a reckoning. Many people who had never participated in the Civil Rights Movement were now going to protests, coming to meetings, and voting.

The Civil Rights Movement joined hands with the other human rights movements that were beginning to sweep the country. Opposition to the Vietnam War had begun with demonstrations in 1964. Mexican and Filipino American farm workers had formed a union that would take on the California and national power structure. Women had continued to push for rights and recognition, and by 1964 had gained legal victories in civil rights, reproductive rights, and equal protection in employment. And the Free Speech

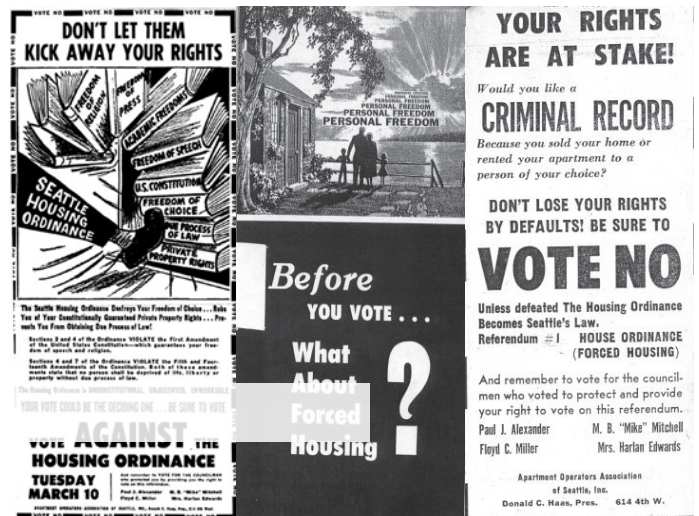


Poster in favor of Open Housing

hard to counter the blatantly racist appeals to white residents. The vote wasn't even close; the measure lost 2-1. Given the opposition, civil rights

Movement had taken hold in Berkeley. The local and national movements fed each other.

In Seattle, after failing to pass an open housing ordinance, the City Council put the measure on the ballot. Civil rights organizations worked



Fliers against open housing distributed in white neighborhoods

leaders must have known how slim their chances were. But they knew the fight would demonstrate how desperately the city needed to change.

On July 2, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, outlawing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Racial segregation in schools, public accommodations, and employment was prohibited. Open housing was not part of the deal. That would come in 1968 when Johnson

## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969

signed the Fair Housing Act, a week after the assassination of Martin Luther King. Seattle would finally pass its own ordinance a week later.

Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act during Freedom Summer, when civil rights organizations trained groups of volunteers to register voters in rural Mississippi. They recruited students from colleges inside and outside of the South. Bob Moses, who was from Harlem, traveled from Harvard to Pike County and Amite County in Mississippi to register voters. Like many students from cities in the North, it was his first experience of rural poverty, an experience that would make him a lifelong civil rights activist and advocate for education.

The presence of college students and interracial groups of volunteers had not stopped a white mob in Alabama from beating Freedom Riders and setting their bus on fire. And it would not stop the Klan, acting in concert with local law enforcement, from murdering three volunteers who had come to Mississippi to register voters. James Earl Chaney was a 21-year-old black man from Meridian, Mississippi. He had been active in the Civil Rights Movement from the time he was a teenager. Michael Schwerner, 24, and Andrew Goodman, 20, were both from New York. They had been raised in Jewish families that were involved in progressive causes.

The three men disappeared on June 21, 1964. Their bodies were discovered 44 days later. The country watched the news as hundreds of FBI agents and Navy sailors searched the swamps near Meridian, Mississippi. In the course of the search, the bodies of eight Mississippi black men were discovered. Two were college students who had disappeared that May. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed into law in the middle of the search.

## President Signs Rights Bill Into Law, Makes TV Appeal for End to Hatred



## 1965 — People Get Ready

**“The Seattle community has failed to grasp the essential unrest and desires the Negroes feel.** They (whites) have developed sporadic efforts to quiet this concern for equality but have not produced a plan of positive action... No one expects miracles, but we do insist upon sincere action.”  
—Edwin Pratt, as quoted in June 27, 1965 *Seattle Times* article “City Charged with ‘Failing’ Negro”

In February 1965, Malcolm X was shot to death by a member of the Nation of Islam while giving a lecture at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem. In March, voting rights demonstrators attempting to walk from Selma, Alabama to the State Capitol in Montgomery were brutally beaten by Alabama State troopers with nightsticks and whips. In August, Congress enacted the Voting Rights Act. Less than a week later, the Watts area of Los Angeles went up in flames.

Much of the city’s black population lived in Watts or areas surrounding Watts. Conditions for many were insufferable. The Los Angeles sun belied the desperation of people living with too little money, too few jobs, and too much police violence.

On Wednesday evening, August 11, a California Highway Patrol officer pulled over Marquette and Ronald Frye on a charge of reckless driving. When Marquette Frye failed a sobriety test, the



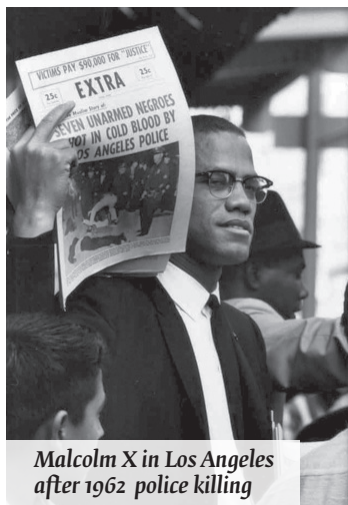
## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969

white officer attempted to arrest him. Marquette panicked. A scuffle ensued. Ronald joined in. A crowd gathered. Police began arriving from every direction, sirens blaring, batons swinging. As the crowd grew, more police arrived, this time with shotguns.

What the crowd saw was a son being beaten, his mother running to protect him, her being arrested and forced into a police car, another woman being chased by officers. The crowd surrounded the police, the police called for backup. A woman was dragged from the crowd. Rumor had it she was pregnant.

Rocks, bottles, and bricks, followed by days and nights of burning buildings, looting and curfews. Six days later, Watts was a war zone. Thirty-four people were dead. Hundreds had been injured and thousands arrested. Patrolling the streets, 14,000 National Guard troops.

In 1962, Malcolm X had held a press conference in response to a police raid on a Nation of Islam



Malcolm X in Los Angeles after 1962 police killing

mosque in Los Angeles. The raid resulted in the shooting of seven men and the death of Ronald Stokes, a mosque official and close friend. Malcolm denounced the “gestapo tactics” black people were subjected to by police all over the country.

“This happened in Los Angeles...not South Africa or France or Portugal or anyplace else, or in Russia behind the Iron Curtain, but right here in the United States of America.”

In his speech at the March on Washington, Dr. King had contended,



Los Angeles Times, August 15, 1965, Watts Riots

“We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote.”

The Voting Rights Act didn’t mean much to the people of Watts. Depending on their vantage point, Americans looked on with a mixture of sorrow, fear, disbelief, outrage, despair, resentment, resignation or a sense that Watts had been a long time coming.

In Seattle, an incident two months before the Watts Riots had led to a reckoning. Police misconduct and brutality, which had long been a simmering issue in the black community, moved to the forefront in the struggle for civil rights. On June 20, 1965, a black man had been killed by an off-duty white police officer. The officer had fired five shots into a car, striking Robert L. Reese in the back of the head. The shooting occurred after two white police officers, both off-duty and out of uniform, spent the night drinking with their wives at various restaurants and cocktail bars, arriving in the early hours of the morning at a small Chinese restaurant in the Central District. A black couple dining at the same restaurant later testified at the coroner’s inquest that one of the white men repeatedly denigrated the black diners.

## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969



One of the diners called a friend's house where a group of men were drinking. They got into their cars and rushed down to the restaurant. A fist fight began. One of the officers was beaten and briefly lost consciousness. When the black men left the restaurant, he followed them outside and shot into the car. The killing was ruled justified. Four black men were arrested and charged with third-degree assault in connection with the fight. Each was sentenced to 90 days in prison. The community was outraged.

Members of CACRC, led by Rev. John H. Adams, had been fighting for police accountability for some time. Along with the ACLU, they had proposed changes to police policy and training — changes that had been roundly rejected by the



Ann Holiday, Edwin Pratt and Randolph Carter leave the CORE headquarters at 22nd and Union for the first night of freedom patrols, on Saturday, July 24, 1965. The patrols focused on monitoring police activities around Madison and Jackson Streets.

Mayor and Police Chief. The City did not seem interested in preventing police violence. After the killing of Robert Reese, the civil rights leaders of CACRC organized “freedom patrols,” groups of citizens who volunteered to hold police accountable by

keeping watch, reviewing police conduct, writing reports, and educating residents of the Central District about what to do when confronted by police officers.

For years, activists in Seattle had attempted to alter the relationship of the Seattle Police Department and the black community in the Central District. Their efforts had been met with smug disinterest on the part of the Department and general indifference from residents in other parts of the city. The killing of Robert Reese brought citywide attention to the problem of police brutality.

After Watts, fear gripped the white establishment in cities large and small. Seattle was no exception. Rather than working to reform police departments, many cities did just the opposite, encouraging police to be even more repressive. The Seattle Police created a five-person Community Relations Unit. It was a small start. If it hadn't been for the Watts Riots and the six months of freedom patrols, the City might not have taken even that step.

“I don't think the attitude of the Seattle Negro is one of despair. Rather, it is disappointment.”  
—Edwin Pratt, as quoted in August 20, 1965 *Seattle Times* article from series on “The Negro Viewpoint”

### 1966 — While I Run This Race

**Miriam Pratt was growing.** It would soon be time for school. Edwin and Bettye Pratt were keenly aware of the power of education. They wanted their daughter to be educated in integrated schools, a right that had been won for her by Linda Brown's parents and those who joined them in the NAACP's case against the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas. They believed that integration would give black students access to resources that

## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969



Bettye, Miriam and Edwin Pratt in 1966

had been denied them in segregated schools.

Seattle was one of the most segregated cities in the country. In response to an NAACP lawsuit, the Seattle School District had come up with a voluntary integration plan. They announced the “Seattle Plan” and the settlement of the lawsuit on August 28, 1963 to coincide with the March of Washington. Given that the District was not providing transportation, very few students volunteered to leave multicultural South and Central Seattle for the North and West. Neither *Brown v. The Board of Education* nor the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had moved the Seattle Public Schools to consider its mandate to serve the students of the Central District with the same care afforded their white peers.

In 1966, the Seattle NAACP, along with CORE and CACRC, launched a campaign to desegregate the schools. Out of more than 100 schools in the District, a black student was likely to attend one of thirteen, all in the Central District or in close proximity. The campaign called for a boycott on March 31 and April 1. Students were encouraged to walk out of classes and attend “Freedom Schools,” where they would be taught about African American history and civil rights. The boycott had been planned after years of proposals from the NAACP and CORE had fallen on deaf ears.

In May 1965, Edwin Pratt proposed the Triad Plan. The Urban League plan would divide Seattle into zones, with white and black schools being matched. Students within these zones would attend school together, meeting at different levels of their education and providing students with “an enriched, expanded community with which to identify.” The Plan went nowhere. Which was precisely the place all the other plans and negotiations had gone.

The School Boycott gained widespread support in the black community. The Freedom Schools

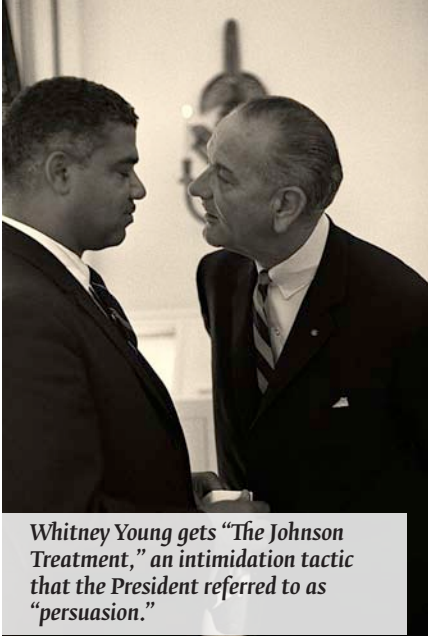


were modeled after the schools organized as part of Freedom Summer, the 1964 voter registration drive in Mississippi. They were held in churches and community organizations, 11 in all. A hundred community members

volunteered to teach. It was the NAACP’s E. June Smith who led the volunteers assigned to meet parents bringing their students to school and convince them to register their students for the Freedom Schools instead. All in all, roughly 3,000 students attended, their numbers making up most of the 10.2 percent of Seattle students who were absent on those days.

Altogether the School Boycott was considered a success, especially by students who reported learning more about Black History in their two

## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969



Whitney Young gets “The Johnson Treatment,” an intimidation tactic that the President referred to as “persuasion.”

days in the Freedom Schools than they had ever learned in the Seattle Public Schools. Ultimately, the Triad Plan and the Freedom Schools were another push toward school desegregation in Seattle, a battle that had

lasted for almost two decades by the time the District mandated busing in 1978. The mandate, in response to another lawsuit, led to the majority of white families leaving the Seattle Public Schools for private schools, parochial schools, and new homes and schools in the suburbs.

By 1966, white flight had begun in earnest. Black unrest, manifested by the Watts Riots, in which “Black Power” became a rallying cry, created a backlash against the Civil Rights Movement, not only from committed racists but from white people who didn’t think that the problems of black people affected them. They resented the intrusion.

In Washington, D.C., Whitney Young had become the Civil Rights Movement’s leading advisor to the President. As he saw opportunities for negotiated settlement slipping away, Young led the federal push for fair housing. The Civil Rights Act of 1966 would have made discrimination illegal in the buying, renting, or financing of housing. It passed the House of Representatives by a large majority, only to die in the Senate. The defeat was a withering setback for the Movement and for the President.

Johnson had other things on his mind. In 1965, he had ordered the bombing of North Vietnam. Marines had landed on the beaches near Da Nang, South Vietnam, the first troops to enter the War. The draft had been instituted that summer, with 50,000 troops being sent to fight Communism in Southeast Asia, and 35,000 being drafted in each month after. By the end of 1966, Vietnam War protests had spread to college campuses around the country, young men had held public demonstrations to burn their draft cards, those who refused to go had been thrown in prison, and there were almost 500,000 American troops in Vietnam, many of them African American.

The United States government had sent CIA operatives to launch a war in the neighboring country of Laos. That war, which would spread to engulf Cambodia as well, would cause the deaths of millions of people. The public did not yet know about the war in Laos, which was a closely-guarded secret.

The leaders of the Civil Rights Movements were not only fighting white retrenchment, they were facing a growing challenge from an emerging group of leaders who believed in militant, nationalist, and revolutionary change. These leaders were young and they lived in the cities of the North, East, Midwest, West, and Northwest. The non-violent Civil Rights Movement was now seen as a Southern Movement. Nothing cemented this idea more than Martin Luther King’s failed initiative in Chicago.

In January of 1966, Dr. King and his wife, Coretta Scott King, moved to an apartment on the Southside of Chicago. It was the only time they had lived outside of the South. They had been invited to Chicago by a group of civil rights and interfaith activists who wanted to further their movement, which was called the Chicago Freedom

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## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969

Campaign. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) had been founded in Chicago in 1942 with James Farmer as its first president. A generation older than Martin Luther King, Farmer was one of the leading philosophers of nonviolent direct action as a means to dismantle segregation. It was his belief that the system of violent racial oppression in the United States could only be brought down by massive and prolonged nonviolent resistance.

The violent racism King had faced in the South was alive and well in Chicago. But there was another element that was less visible in the South — the rage and despair of many of King’s neighbors. He was not prepared for the opposition he faced within the black community. The Campaign failed to win any significant victories. To the radical new leaders, it was further proof that the Movement was losing its ability to represent African Americans outside of the South.

Seattle was a world away from Chicago and Los Angeles and Birmingham. But the power structure in Seattle shared commonalities with each of those cities. Opportunities for Seattle’s black residents were routinely blocked and constricted. Aware of the growing discontent, especially among the youth, civil rights leaders worked to build upon their victories.

### 1967 — I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free

**In 1967, Edwin Pratt initiated Operation Equality, a program co-sponsored by the National Urban League that focused on finding adequate and affordable housing for low-income residents.** The Seattle Urban League took over the Fair Housing Listing Service, which had been founded by Sidney Gerber in 1962. Gerber had died in a plane crash in 1965, the same crash

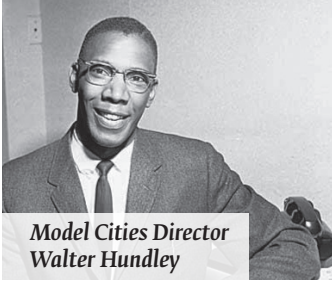
that took the life of Seattle City Councilman Wing Luke, another staunch advocate of fair housing. Under Pratt’s leadership, Operation Equality counseled first-time homebuyers in how to apply for federal housing assistance and it worked with the Seattle Housing Authority and Neighborhood House to improve services and conditions for people living in public housing. Operation Equality was funded by the Ford Foundation, and the Seattle Urban League staff grew as a result.

Although the Civil Rights Act of 1966 had failed to pass, Lyndon Johnson had created an antipoverty program that would have lasting effects. Model Cities was an initiative that would provide federal funding to cities working to combat poverty. Shortly after the program was announced, Seattle civil rights leaders began to strategize and plan. Their application would involve more housing and higher-paying jobs, primarily in the construction industry.

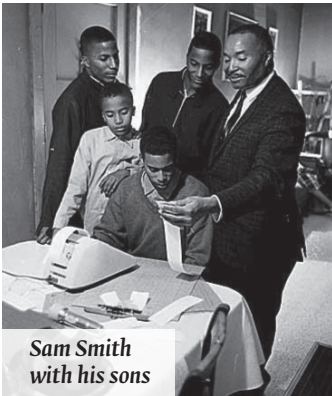
The War on Poverty had given birth to Seattle’s Central Area Motivation Program (CAMP) in 1964, a social service organization that provided food, shelter, and educational programs. Many leaders from CACRC were part of the committee that administered CAMP. In December of 1967, CAMP Executive Director Walter Hundley was selected to lead Seattle’s Model Cities Program.

Operation Equality, Model Cities, and other programs of the War on Poverty channeled millions of dollars into African American communities. At a time when jobs were being lost due to automation as well as discrimination, these dollars mattered. Initiatives on behalf of the black working class were often met with violent opposition, especially in the construction industry. As African Americans became more politically powerful, they demanded more economic opportunities.

## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969



Model Cities Director  
Walter Hundley



Sam Smith  
with his sons

In 1965, E. June Smith had founded an NAACP credit union. In May 1968, Liberty Bank would open at the corner of 24th and Union in the Central District. It would be the first Black-owned bank west of the Mississippi, founded as a community response to redlining throughout Seattle and disinvestment in Central Seattle. Rev.

Samuel McKinney would be one of the founders.

By 1967, African Americans in Seattle were advancing in the halls of power. At the end of the year, Sam Smith would become the first African American elected to the Seattle City Council.

In 1967, Judge Charles Z. Smith was the highest ranking African American jurist in Washington State. In 1966, he had become the first African



Judge Charles  
Zellender Smith

American appointed to the King County Superior Court, after being the first African American on the Seattle Municipal Court. Before that, he had been

appointed an assistant U.S. attorney by Attorney General Robert Kennedy.

The gains made as a result of the Civil Rights Movement became embodied in the new faces that were becoming increasingly prominent in American government, business and entertainment.

But the gains were not shared by everyone.

In the summer of 1967, police brutality led to deadly riots in Newark and Detroit. Poor housing conditions and the loss of jobs had made conditions unbearable that sweltering summer. Residents reacted with violence to what had become routine incidences of police abuse. In what would become known as the Summer of Rage, riots took place in more than a hundred U.S. cities. National Guard and Army troops were brought in to put down the rebellions. The U.S. government was fighting wars at home and abroad.

In the fight against police brutality, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) took the lead. SNCC had been formed in 1960 by college students in the South who had



1966 SNCC Newsletter  
on police brutality

organized sit-ins and other direct-action campaigns that led to African American political power and the opening of doors to black workers and consumers. Ella Baker, who had been active in the NAACP and in Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) provided early

leadership and organization strategies. After the Freedom Rides in 1961, younger leaders like John Lewis had come to prominence. Lewis, who was President of SNCC in 1963, helped organize the March on Washington. He had been the youngest person to take the podium that day.

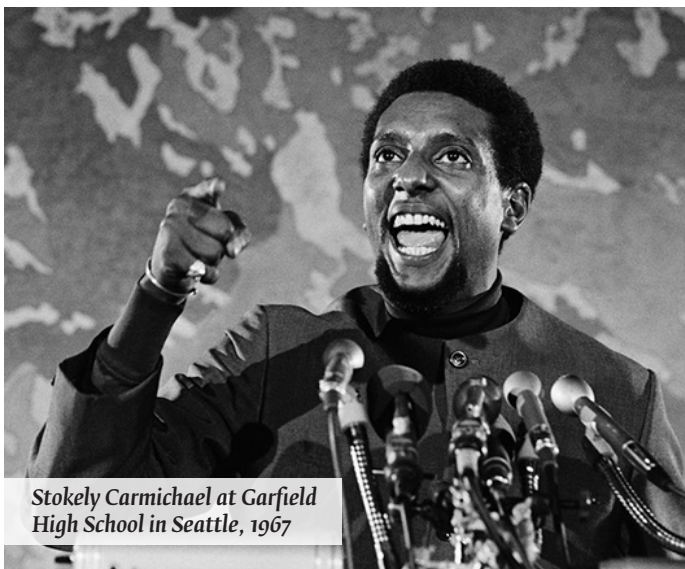
1966 SNCC Newsletter on police brutality At Birmingham, on the Freedom Rides and in Voting Rights Campaigns, the leaders of SNCC

## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969

had worked closely with the leaders of SCLC and the NAACP, who were typically 15-20 years older. It wasn't until the Watts Riots and the Vietnam War that the Civil Rights Movement, which had successfully found consensus among its various factions and across generational lines, began to fracture irrevocably.

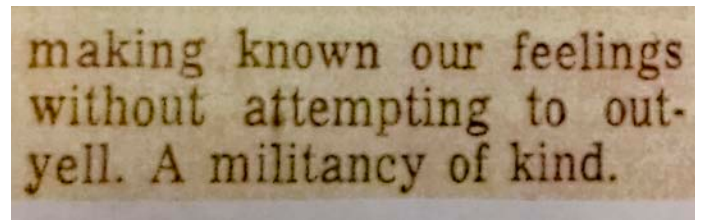
In 1966, Stokely Carmichael was elected the chairman of SNCC. Carmichael had been born in Trinidad, a Caribbean country known for its many highly educated artists and intellectuals who adhered to a philosophy of Pan-Africanism. Raised in the Bronx among Italians and Jews, Carmichael had been an excellent student. As a freshman at Howard University, he joined the Freedom Rides. At the time, he was a committed follower of the philosophy of nonviolence. By the time he became leader of SNCC, Carmichael had become an advocate of Black Power.

In April of 1967, Stokely Carmichael came to Seattle. His arrival was an event. He spoke at the University of Washington and at Garfield High School in the Central District before an audience of 4,000 people. His speeches electrified the crowd. By the time he left, "Black Power" had become the reigning philosophy and the rallying cry.



Stokely Carmichael at Garfield High School in Seattle, 1967

## 1968 — Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud



Excerpt from Edwin Pratt writings, Black Heritage Society's Edwin Pratt Collection

**At the very end of January in 1968, in the midst of Lunar New Year celebrations, the North Vietnamese military launched a coordinated surprise attack on South Vietnamese and U.S. forces in more than 100 cities, towns, and villages in South Vietnam.** The Tet Offensive, as it would be come to be known, was the event that changed the stance of many Americans who had either tacitly or roundly supported the War. It was effectively the end of Johnson's Presidency. He had survived virulent opposition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which he signed just four months shy of the Presidential election. But he could not survive the rancor of an American public deceived and confused about what exactly their country was doing in Vietnam.

In many ways, 1968 was the year 18 became the age of reckoning. The year they turned 18, men were required to register for the draft. Yet, 18 year olds did not yet have the right to vote. Young African Americans, much younger than 18, had been active in the Civil Rights Movement for decades. Young activists in Seattle would bring a new, more militant energy to the struggle.

In 1968, black students at the University of Washington organized the Black Student Union (BSU). Student activism had led to the organization of BSUs at colleges and universities throughout the United States. Larry Gossett and

## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969

Garry Owens were among the leaders of the BSU at the UW. They led protests and demonstrations at Seattle high schools as well as at the university. Their demands included changes to the curricula, the adding of Black Studies classes, and changes to admissions policies that would result in an increase in the numbers of black students and other students of color. Their actions were militant and insistent. And their demands were largely met.



*Defendants Aaron Dixon, Larry Gossett, and Carl Miller speak to the press at King County jail after their arrest for unlawful assembly in connection with the Franklin High School sit-in, March 1968.*

In 1967, Seattle residents Aaron and Elmer Dixon from Seattle met with Black Panthers leaders in Oakland, California. Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver had organized the Black Panther for Self Defense in late 1966. The Washington State Chapter was authorized in April 1968. It began accepting membership applications from residence in the Central District. Following instructions from the National organization, new members had to undergo a rigorous course of study in black history and thought, along with revolutionary works from around the world.

The Panthers knew that civil rights would not

be meaningful as long as black people were not safe from racial violence in their communities. The Seattle chapter interpreted its mandate to protect the community as going hand in hand with its duty to provide for the community. Along with a free breakfast programs in the Central District, they established the Carolyn Downs Family Medical Center to provide free health care for those who couldn't afford it.

Pratt and the Civil Rights leaders of CACRC worked with the younger leaders whenever they could. Anger and frustration were well-known internal and external adversaries. According to Larry Gossett, who later became a King County Councilmember, Pratt used the militancy of the BSU and the Panthers as a scare tactic when negotiating with the white leaders of Seattle's business and political establishment. Unless the meetings produced concrete action, he could not vouch for what might happen. The strategy was an effective one.

For all the gains that had come because of the civil rights movement, Pratt could see the window of opportunity closing. Because of opposition to the Vietnam War, Johnson would not run for re-election. The Presidential election for 1968 would be a raging battle between American ideas of liberalism and conservatism. Radical black power would not be on the platform of either party.



*King marching in New York for an end to the Vietnam War, 1967*



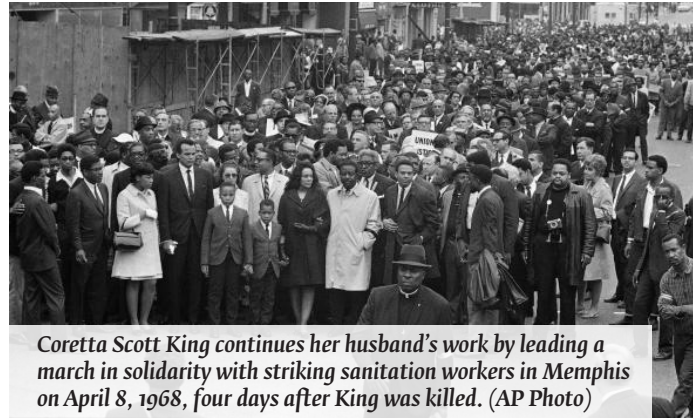
## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969

In the midst of the political turmoil that spring, Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated in Memphis. Exactly one year before on April 4, 1967, he had come out against the Vietnam War. King's assassination devastated Black America. His death was followed by rioting in more than one hundred U.S. cities, with the largest riots occurring in Washington, D.C., Chicago, Baltimore, and Kansas City. They were spontaneous uprisings as masses of people took to the streets in anger and grief.

On April 9, 1968, tens of thousands of people walked the four miles from Ebenezer Baptist Church to the Atlanta University campus as part of King's funeral procession. They listened as former Morehouse President Benjamin Mays, who King called his "spiritual mentor" and "intellectual father," delivered the final eulogy for the beloved leader of the non-violent liberation movement that had captured the world's respect.

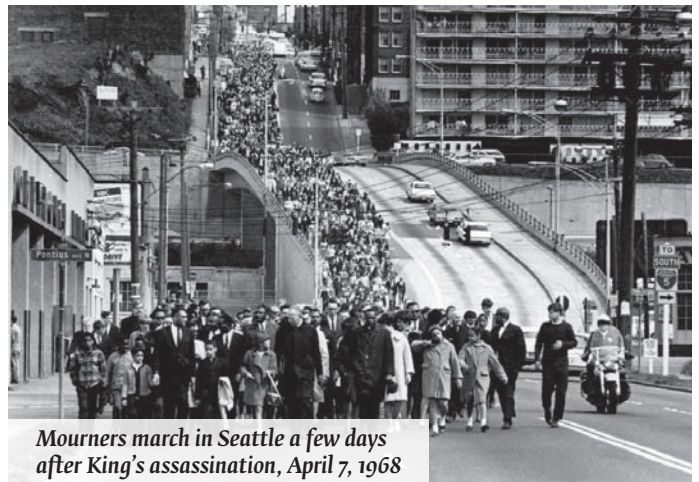
"As Mahatma Gandhi challenged the British Empire without a sword and won, Martin Luther King Jr. challenged the inter-racial wrongs of his country without a gun. And he had the faith to believe that he would win the battle for social justice." —*From the eulogy for Martin Luther King by Dr. Benjamin Mays*

The sight of King's young children leading his five-mile funeral procession from Ebenezer Baptist Church to the steps of Harkness Hall on the Clark/Atlanta University campus was almost too much to bear. It was impossible not to be reminded of the children of Medgar Evers and the children of John F. Kennedy. Two months later on June 8th, it would be the children of Robert Kennedy who would follow their mother as she led their father's funeral procession, the eyes of the world upon them, their country descending into chaos and fear.



*Coretta Scott King continues her husband's work by leading a march in solidarity with striking sanitation workers in Memphis on April 8, 1968, four days after King was killed. (AP Photo)*

Rev. Samuel McKinney and many of the leaders in Seattle's civil rights community knew King. If they didn't know him personally, they knew people in his circle. If they hadn't met him in Atlanta or Boston or Alabama, they had met him when McKinney, his good friend from Morehouse, invited King to visit Seattle in 1961. On April 7, 1968, a memorial march in Seattle for Dr. King drew thousands of mourners who walked from Capitol Hill to Denny Park.



*Mourners march in Seattle a few days after King's assassination, April 7, 1968*

King's death had a profound effect on Edwin Pratt. There was so much work to be done. There was no doubt that those called to serve would redouble their efforts in King's name.

In a StoryCorp interview with Pratt family friend Jean Soliz, Miriam Pratt recalled more than 50 years later how her father wept at the news of

## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969

King's death. "I remember my father was pacing back and forth and he was emotional. I'd never seen him like that."

"There are many eager to forecast the worst possible violence... Violence and the threat of violence have exposed the façade of the Northwest and laid bare its latent prejudices."

—Pratt quote from June 22, 1968, *Seattle Times Archives*

"We are going to stop worrying about offending "friends," if they are sitting on the fence and go against us when we come out with the truth..."

"No one is more angry than the people who work at the Urban League. Negroes tell us we are not moving fast enough and whites say we are moving too fast."

—Pratt quotes from August 8, 1968, *Seattle Times Archives*

Now more than ever, like-minded people had to come together. Family and friends had to cling to one another, shore each other up. And what to do with the anger?

The movements that had been gaining strength for years, decades and generations had no place in the politics of Ronald Reagan or Richard Nixon. Was it a wonder that the 1968 Democratic National Convention had descended into chaos? That war was being waged, in the countryside of Vietnam, in the streets of American, and in cities and countries around the world? The Civil Rights Movement had not gone away. But after the death of King, it was no longer center stage.

After King's assassination, the death threats against Seattle's civil rights leaders escalated. Less than ten months later, in the month after his daughter turned five, Edwin Pratt would be assassinated at his home in Shoreline.

## 1969 — Message from a Black Man

**"Seattle prides itself on having better race relations than, say Los Angeles, and Los Angeles is proud that its race relations are better than Chicago and Chicago is proud that its race relations are better than Jackson, Miss., and Jackson, Miss., says 'but we are better than Johannesburg, South Africa...'"**

—Edwin T. Pratt, as quoted in *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* article "A New Thrust: Last Speech of Edwin Pratt" published on January 28, 1969, two days after death

Edwin Pratt would not live to see much of the change that came to Seattle as a result of the Civil Rights Movement. He wouldn't live to see his close friend Charles V. Johnson appointed to the Seattle Municipal Court, where he would serve for fifteen years before being appointed to the King County Superior Court. He wouldn't see the Model Cities Program bear fruit or how Tyree Scott and the Central Area Contractors would fight for jobs on Model Cities construction sites.



Pratt didn't live to see the changes, but he knew they were coming. Would he have been surprised to see Seattle Black Panthers demonstrating on the steps of the Statehouse in Olympia? Young activists advocating for radical change were not

## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969



*Black Panther Party rally, downtown Seattle, 1969*

negotiating. It was too late for that.

In his lifetime, Edwin Pratt participated in the greatest expansion of civil rights in U.S. history. The changes brought African Americans into jobs and schools and neighborhoods and public spaces

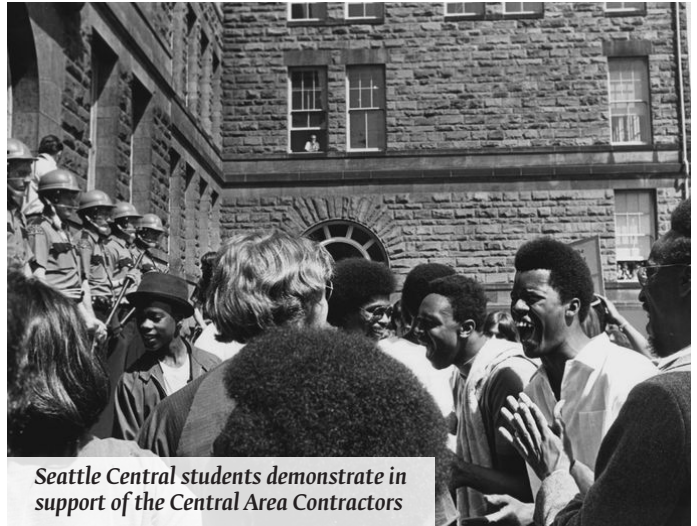
that had barred them. The rise in political power took black people to a new place. And in all of American history, one of worst things black people could be accused of was not knowing “their place.”



*Elmer Dixon serving children in the Black Panther's Free Breakfast Program, 1969*

Edwin Pratt insisted it was his prerogative to move freely about the country in which he was born. He believed it was his duty to step into spaces where he was not wanted, to make way for others.

Pratt spent much of his working life in meetings with white businessmen. There were other powerful black leaders at the table. Most worked in the black community. Their houses were



*Seattle Central students demonstrate in support of the Central Area Contractors*

nicer than Pratt's, but they were not outside its borders. They attended and ministered at churches in the Central District and on the south side of the city. They did their grocery shopping at South End stores.

Pratt lived in Shoreline. He attended church at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, where he was one of a handful of black worshippers. He worked in the Smith Tower downtown.



*Tyree Scott speaks to reporters at Central Area Contractors protest, 1969*

## Hear the Fierce Hammering: 1963-1969

The Pratts were secure in their Blackness. Like their dearest friends, they were from Black neighborhoods and Black schools in Black cities and towns. Their churches were Black churches in Miami and Marshall. They met at a Black university. But they believed in integration and they believed in it wholeheartedly. They believed the United States would not advance until it was One Society. And they believed it was their job to integrate by putting their persons squarely in the midst of White Seattle.

The evening he was killed, Pratt was at home with Bettye and Miriam. The city itself was at home. Snow and ice from a recent storm made travel all but impossible. A Sunday in late January. A day of snow and ice. The holiest day of the week. Someone, or maybe more than some one, or maybe a group of someones in an association that operated freely, without fear of retribution, had picked that day for the hit. They had paid for men to drive to a house in Shoreline and hide in the carport. These were the men who would pelt the house with snow until the owner came to the door. He was a black man, tall and standing in the light. It only took one shot to bring him down.



*Bettye Pratt is comforted by her stepson Bill*

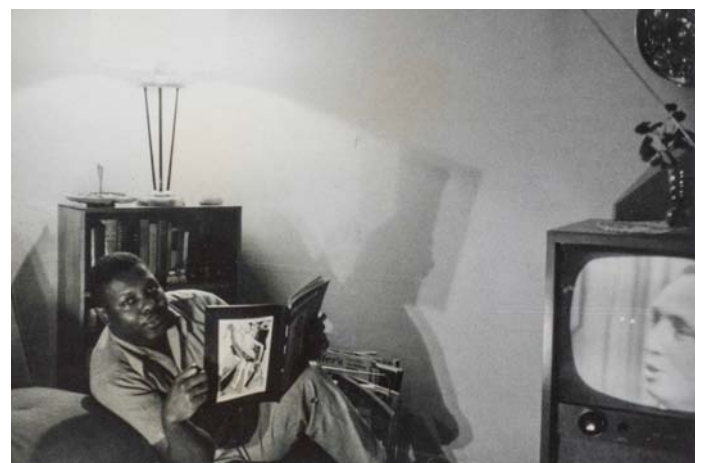
Pratt's funeral was held at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, the church he attended and where he is interred. His good friend, Dean John Leffler presided. More than 2,000 people attended. Whitney Young gave the eulogy. Flags were flown at half-mast. President Nixon declared a day of mourning and sent the FBI to investigate.

Six months after her husband's death, Bettye Pratt decided to leave Seattle. In an interview, she was quoted as saying she believed nothing was being done to solve her husband's murder, that he was "all but forgotten."



*Miriam Pratt with her brother Bill*

She couldn't have known that he would be remembered and celebrated 50 years later.



## NOTES AND RESOURCES



### Photo of Edwin Pratt

<https://www.kiro7.com/video?videoId=130135509&videoVersion=1.0>

## Prologue

### PAGE 4

#### **Cecil turns the brass crank to the left.**

Cecil Ivory began working as an elevator operator at the Smith Tower in 1946, when he was 19. He retired in 1991 at the age of 65. Ivory was described as a “small man with slicked back hair.”

“Winding Down An Up-And-Down Career — Cecil Ivory’s Run Elevators At Smith Tower Since 1946” by Don Duncan for the Seattle Times, 1991

<http://community.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/archive/?date=19900607&slug=1075898>

“Computers replace last operators of skyscraper elevators on Coast” by Pamela Hafey for UPI, 1984

<https://www.upi.com/Archives/1984/03/25/Computers-replace-last-operators-of-skyscraper-elevators-on-Coast/4886449038800/>

#### **The Smith Tower**

Built by Lyman Cornelius Smith, a businessman who made his fortune in typewriters, the Smith Tower was dedicated on July 4, 1914. The Tower, which is located at the corner of Yesler Way and 2nd Avenue in Seattle, was the tallest building west of the Mississippi until 1931 and the tallest building in Seattle until 1962, when it was surpassed by the Space Needle.

“Smith Tower (Seattle)” by John Pastier for HistoryLink.org, 2004

<https://www.historylink.org/File/4310>

#### **Smith Tower in vintage postcard, Pierson**

<https://www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/exhibits-and-education/online-exhibits/historical-postcards>

#### **Rev. McKinney at Mt. Zion**

Refers to Rev. Dr. Samuel B. McKinney, Seattle civil rights leader and pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Seattle from 1958 to 1998. Founded in 1890, Mt. Zion is the largest black church in the state of Washington.

“Samuel Berry McKinney (1926-2018)” by Mary T. Henry for HistoryLink.org, 2018

<https://www.historylink.org/File/152>

#### **Rev. Adams at First A.M.E.**

Refers to Rev. John Hurst Adams, pastor of First African Methodist Episcopal Church from 1962 to 1968 and a leader in the Seattle civil rights movement. Founded in 1886, First A.M.E. is the oldest black church in the state of Washington.

“Adams, Bishop John Hurst (1927)” by Mary T. Henry for HistoryLink.org, 2007

<https://www.historylink.org/File/8098>

#### **Rev. Jackson at Bethel**

Refers to Rev. Mance Jackson, pastor of Bethel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, who was prominent in the 1963-64 campaign for open housing in Seattle.

“Rev. Mance Jackson (1931-2007)” by Allison O’Connor for the BlackPast.org, 2007

[https://www.blackpast.org/aaw/vignette\\_aahw/jackson-rev-mance-1931-2007/](https://www.blackpast.org/aaw/vignette_aahw/jackson-rev-mance-1931-2007/)

#### **Charles Johnson and E. June Smith at the NAACP**

Refers to Charles V. Johnson who served as Executive Director of the Seattle branch of the NAACP from 1959-1964. He was succeeded by E. June Smith, who served from 1964-1968.

## NOTES AND RESOURCES

“Charles V. Johnson (1928- )” by Julia Swan for the BlackPast.org, 2007

[https://www.blackpast.org/aaw/vignette\\_aahw/johnson-charles-v-1928/](https://www.blackpast.org/aaw/vignette_aahw/johnson-charles-v-1928/)

“E. June Smith (1900-1982)” by Quin’Nita F. Cobbins for the BlackPast.org, 01/18/2007

[https://www.blackpast.org/aaw/vignette\\_aahw/smith-e-june-1900-1982/](https://www.blackpast.org/aaw/vignette_aahw/smith-e-june-1900-1982/)

## Till Victory Is Won 1930-1949

### PAGE 5

#### James Weldon Johnson

It’s almost impossible to describe what a towering figure James Weldon Johnson was. That he remains so generations after his death in 1938 is a testament to his accomplishments. Johnson was an educator, journalist, lawyer, diplomat, writer, and NAACP leader. He published two popular books — *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* in 1912 and *God’s Trombone* in 1927. He graduated from Atlanta University in 1894, where Edwin Pratt would be a student some 60 years later. His rousing anthem “Lift Every Voice and Sing” can still be heard in black schools, churches and stadiums on any

given day.

[https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/item/show/796052126\\_lift\\_every\\_voice\\_and\\_sing](https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/item/show/796052126_lift_every_voice_and_sing)

“A group of young men in Jacksonville, Florida...” James Weldon Johnson 1935

[http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/g\\_l/johnson/life.htm](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/g_l/johnson/life.htm)

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#### WWI Bahamian soldier in Florida

Bahamian citizens fought for both the American and British governments in WWI. Among them were Pratt’s father and his brothers. From Cat Island in the Bahamas, they were all living in Dade County, Florida during the War. Military archives list the brothers as:

Joecephus Pratt b May 28, 1893

Hezekiah Pratt Aug 28 1894

Obadiah Pratt b Nov 12 1898

(Joecephus is Edwin Pratt’s father. Later spellings of his name appear as Josephus.

<http://files.usgwarchives.net/fl/dade/military/1917prae.txt>

#### Draft card of Charles Higgs, a relative of Pratt’s mother

Charles Christopher Higgs b Sept 28 1886

Note: On Charles Higg’s draft card, Coconut Grove has its original spelling.

<http://files.usgwarchives.net/fl/dade/military/1917prae.txt>



#### James Weldon Johnson by Winold Reiss

The artist Winold Reiss emigrated from Germany in 1913. Reiss considered diversity to be America’s greatest asset. He painted portraits of Blackfeet Indians, Asian immigrants, Mexican revolutionaries, and African American artists and intellectuals. In 1922, he was chosen by the editor of *Survey Graphic* to make portraits of the major figures of the Harlem Renaissance for a special issue entitled *Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro*. In 1925, eminent scholar Alain Locke chose Reiss to illustrate *The New Negro: An Interpretation*. It was the most important anthology of the Harlem Renaissance.

<http://winoldreiss.org/life/index.htm>

<https://africanah.org/winold-reiss-and-the-harlem-renaissance/>

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## NOTES AND RESOURCES

### **The National Urban League**

In 1910, the Committee on Urban Conditions Among Negroes was created by a merger of three social service organizations. Its name was changed to the National Urban League in 1920.

Founded by George Edmund Haynes and Ruth Standish Baldwin in New York City, the Urban League was dedicated to the vision of “one society,” demonstrated by the fact that Haynes was black and Baldwin was white.

Haynes was born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas in 1880. His father was a laborer and his mother was a domestic servant. They saw education as the key to their son’s future and were willing to move so he could have better opportunities. They moved first to Hot Springs, Arkansas, then to Huntsville, Alabama, where Haynes attended high school. After high school, Haynes earned a bachelor’s degree from Fisk University. He went on to earn a master’s degree from Yale and a PhD from Columbia University, becoming the first African American to do so. Baldwin was a leading New York philanthropist from a prominent New England family known for its social activism.

Her husband, William Henry Baldwin, Jr., was president of the Long Island Railroad. The Baldwins were part of a wealthy circle of white New Yorkers who funded many causes that supported African Americans.

“The National Urban League: 100 years of Empowering Communities” by Anne Nixon for the Social Welfare History Project at Virginia Commonwealth University  
<https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/organizations/national-urban-league/>

### **The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**

The NAACP was founded in New York City in 1909. Dedicated to ending violence against black people, it quickly became the leading voice for civil rights. The organization’s website tells the story of its founding:

“In 1908, a deadly race riot rocked the city of Springfield, the capital of Illinois and resting place of President Abraham Lincoln. Such eruptions of anti-black violence – particularly lynching – were horrifically commonplace, but the Springfield riot was the final tipping point that led to the creation of the NAACP. Appalled

at this rampant violence, a group of white liberals that included Mary White Ovington and Oswald Garrison Villard (both the descendants of famous abolitionists), William English Walling and Dr. Henry Moscowitz issued a call for a meeting to discuss racial justice. Some 60 people, seven of whom were African American (including W. E. B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and Mary Church Terrell), signed the call, which was released on the centennial of Lincoln’s birth.”

<https://www.naacp.org/nations-premier-civil-rights-organization/>

### **The United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA)**

The UNIA was the largest movement of African Americans and the largest Pan-African movement in history. Founded by Marcus Garvey in Jamaica in 1914, the UNIA stood for black pride and Self-determination. By the 1920s it had 700 chapters in the United States, including an influential chapter that attracted Bahamians living in Miami.

<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/garvey.htm>

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## NOTES AND RESOURCES

### **The Young Men’s Christian Association for Colored Men and Boys**

The Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) was founded in London in 1844. Its purpose was to aid the rural poor who were drawn to the city for jobs. The first branches of the YMCA in North America opened in Boston and Montreal in 1851. Two years later, a former slave named Anthony Bowen founded the YMCA for Colored Men and Boys in Washington, D.C. For 100 years, YMCA branches in large cities were often the first stop for black men migrating from the South. They could live in the Y before they were able to secure permanent housing.

The YWCA for Colored Women and Girl was founded during the women’s movement of the late 19th century. The YMCA and YWCA provided social and cultural gatherings, along with educational opportunities and job referrals for African Americans. Jacob Lawrence had his first solo exhibition at the Harlem YMCA in 1938.

University of Minnesota Libraries, “A Brief History of the YWCA and African American Communities”

<https://www.lib.umn.edu/ymca/guide-afam-history>

Virginia Commonwealth University Social Welfare History Project

<https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/youth/young-womens-christian-association/>

### **Rosewood anti-Negro Riots, 1923**

<https://www.nytimes.com/1923/01/08/archives/last-negro-homes-raized-rosewood-florida-mob-deliberately-fires-one.html>

The Rosewood Massacre was one of scores of riots that began before the Civil War and lasted well into the 20th century. Rosewood was a small black town in rural Levy County in northern Florida. The events that led to the massacre began on New Year’s Day 1923. By the end of the week, the entire town of Rosewood had been razed and its residents had been forced to leave. In 1994, the Florida Legislature passed the Rosewood Bill authorizing reparations for the nine remaining survivors.

“Rosewood Massacre (1923)” by Trevor Goodloe for the BlackPast.org, 2008

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/rosewood-massacre-1923/>

### **The Great Migration was underway...**

The Great Migration is often referred to as the movement of Southern blacks to the North, but the roads and railroads out of the South led north, east and west.

Isabel Wilkerson, author of the consummate history of the Great Migration, *The Warmth of Other Suns*, describes the exodus this way:

“The migration began, like the flap of a sea gull’s wings, as a rivulet of black families escaping Selma, Alabama, in the winter of 1916. Their quiet departure was scarcely noticed except for a single paragraph in the *Chicago Defender*, to whom they confided that “the treatment doesn’t warrant staying.” The rivulet would become rapids, which grew into a flood of six million people journeying out of the South over the course of six decades. They were seeking political asylum within the borders of their own country, not unlike refugees in other parts of the world fleeing famine, war and pestilence.”

“The Long Lasting Legacy of the Great Migration” by Isabel Wilkerson, *Smithsonian Magazine*, 2016



## NOTES AND RESOURCES

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/long-lasting-legacy-great-migration-180960118/>

### **Florida family moving to New Jersey, 1940**

Photo by Jack Delano, Library of Congress, public domain

## PAGE 7

### **A card distributed by the Urban League in Chicago between 1916 and 1920**

<https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2015/onewayticket/panel/36/history/>

Local chapters of the Urban League distributed cards like this one, posted them in black hotels and boarding houses, and placed ads in black newspapers around the country.

### **Tampa Bay Urban League, Harlem Branch Library, 1923**

In addition to its branches outside of the South, the Urban League had branches in Southern cities that attracted migrants from rural areas.

Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative, Library History: <https://hcplc.org/thpl/history>

### **Ida B. Well's 1892 investigation of lynchings began the movement that launched the NAACP**

From the Digital Public Library:  
<https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/ida-b-wells-and-anti-lynching-activism/sources/1115>

### **Poster for the NAACP anti-lynching campaign, 1922**

National Museum of African American History and Culture at the Smithsonian

[https://nmaahc.si.edu/object/nmaahc\\_2011.57.9](https://nmaahc.si.edu/object/nmaahc_2011.57.9)

The horror of lynching was a continuation of the pervasive torture, mutilation and murder that was common under slavery, conquest and colonization. Rebellious African and Indigenous peoples were murdered with impunity. Lynching was not limited to those who rebelled. Victims were killed to serve as a warning that terror might strike at any time. Their deaths were borne of unquenchable hatred and memorialized in souvenir postcards that Southern white families passed down the generations. When the ritualized horror took place before cheering crowds, these crowds included young children brought by parents carrying picnic baskets.

The NAACP campaign against lynching was the legacy of black journalist and activist Ida B.

Wells, who published scathing articles exposing the collective violence of racial terrorism. Following the lynching of three of her friends in Memphis in 1892 — they were fighting attempts to run them out of business — Wells spoke and campaigned internationally to bring attention to the violence of Jim Crow laws and practices. She published a *Red Record* with 14 pages of data documenting lynchings in the U.S. from 1892-95. The voice of moral outrage, she summoned others to join her in the fight for rights for blacks and women, demanding nothing less than full civil rights. Wells helped to form the NAACP but she remained in Chicago where she had moved after receiving death threats for publishing political articles in Memphis. There she married attorney Frederick Lee Barnett, editor and publisher of the *Colored Conservator*, Chicago's first black newspaper.

Ida B. Wells: A Courageous Voice for Civil Rights” by Patti Carr Black for Mississippi History Now

<http://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/articles/49/ida-b-wells-a-courageous-voice-for-civil-rights>

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## NOTES AND RESOURCES

### **Historian Marvin Dunn, author of *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century...***

“The Black Experience on Miami Beach: Interview with Marvin Dunn”

<http://miamibeachvisualmemoirs.com/blacks-on-miami-beach/>

### **Pratt’s nephew Josephus remembers...**

From the writer’s conversation with Josephus Pratt at the commemoration for Edwin T. Pratt held at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Seattle on Feb. 2, 2019

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### **A photo of Marcus Garvey appears on a pamphlet promoting the Black Star movement, 1919**

Garvey was a charismatic leader who gave electrifying speeches. Born in Jamaica, he founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1914 by proclaiming “A Declaration of Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World.” The UNIA was a Pan-African organization for Black pride, nationalism, and economic empowerment. Garvey encouraged people of African descent to join his Black Star Movement that encouraged economic autonomy. His Black Star Line ships promoted trade and travel between Africa,

America and the Caribbean. Garvey’s radical ideas eventually led to him align with white segregationists and call for blacks to return to Africa. In 1924 W.E.B. Du Bois claimed, “Marcus Garvey is the most dangerous enemy of the Negro race in America and in the world.” After being imprisoned in the United States, Garvey was deported back to Jamaica.

<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/garvey.htm>

### **UNIA Black Cross Nurses parade in New York, 1922**

Corbis photo, public domain [https://digitalharlemblog.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/unia-nurses\\_1922corbis.jpg](https://digitalharlemblog.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/unia-nurses_1922corbis.jpg)

UNIA parades attracted tens of thousands of people to their marches in Harlem in the 1920s. The pride and dignity displayed by the marchers was reminiscent of the WWI military parades of Negro soldiers.

**Segregated institutions, such as the YMCA and YWCA,** played an important role in the movements for African American economic uplift, civil rights. All of these movements were by the strong ties and black pride forged in segregated communities.

Black History Month grew out of a movement that began in 1915 with the establishment of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History founded by Carter Woodson at the Wabash YMCA in Chicago.

### **Springfield, Ohio YMCA basketball team, 1910s**

<https://ymcacolumbus.org/blackhistoryatthey>

### **Washington, D.C. Phyllis Wheatley YWCA dramatic club, 1921**

“Phyllis Wheatley YWCA,” DC Historic Sites: <https://historicsites.dcpreservation.org/>

### **Bahamians in Coconut Grove, 1890s**

<https://thenewtropic.com/miami-floridas-black-history/>

The history of the Bahamas and Florida are closely linked. Closer to Florida than Cuba, the indigenous people of the Bahamas were Taino, who also inhabited the Florida Keys, along with other indigenous tribes. Spanish colonization and slavery had decimated the Taino in the Bahamas within a generation of the Columbus conquest. When the Pilgrims arrived from England a century later, they brought slaves from the West Coast of Africa to the thirteen English colonies that would become the United States as well as to the Bahamas. The

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Pratt family ancestors were these West African captives.

<https://www.nytimes.com/1987/02/22/travel/a-silver-of-the-old-bahamas.html>

### **Lifelong civil rights activist Thelma Gibson...**

“Thelma Gibson looks back on 90 years in West Grove” by Roshan Nebharajani for *The New Tropic*, 2016

<https://thenewtropic.com/thelma-gibson/>

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### **Cat Island, Bahamas 1935, photos by Alan Lomax**

Library of Congress, Lomax Collection

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/lomax/>

Alan Lomax was the son of cultural anthropologist John Avery Lomax. John Lomax made hundreds of field recordings across the South as part of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal. The federal government’s Works Progress Administration (WPA) hired artists, photographers, documentarians and folklorists to collect and preserve America’s cultural heritage during the Great Depression.

Zora Neale Hurston was one of the anthropologist hired by

the WPA to interview people and make audio recording of black life and music in Florida. Hurston, who later spent time studying African religious traditions in New Orleans and Haiti, was scheduled to go to Cat Island in the Bahamas with Alan Lomax to record the chanteys, anthems, games and stories of the people living there. Hurston decided not to go after meeting an NYU professor, Mary Louise Barnicle, who was accompanying Lomax on the trip. Hurston found Barnicle’s drinking excessive and her humor offensive.

She wrote to Alan’s father, “Out in the Bahamas MANY folks felt that both the white race and Americans had been shamed.”

“Zora Neale Hurston, September 16, 1935 Letter to John A. Lomax,” context provided by Ellen Harrold, 2008

<http://www.culturalequity.org/alan-lomax/friends/hurston>

Library of Congress, Lomax Collection

<https://www.loc.gov/audio/?q=John+Lomax>

American Roots Music, PBS

[https://www.pbs.org/americanrootsmusic/pbs\\_arm\\_saa\\_lomax.html](https://www.pbs.org/americanrootsmusic/pbs_arm_saa_lomax.html)

### **Traditional Coconut Grove houses**

Bahamian immigrants built the shotgun houses of South Florida in the African-Caribbean style – one room after another without hallways. When both front and back doors are open, a breeze will carry throughout the house.

“Bahamians used their unique knowledge of Southern Florida’s “coral-rocky” soil to their advantage. They brought their own trees, vegetables, and fruits to the area, as well as their skills in masonry building. In a 1941 statement, founder of the City of Coral Gables George E. Merrick said that some of the oldest buildings in Miami “are of the same construction which has been in use for 150 years in the Bahamas. Built... with the only native lime mortar, these houses have withstood the countless hurricanes of the Bahamas.”

“Preserving the Shotgun Homes of Miami’s 19th Century Immigrants” by Carson Bear for CityLab, Oct 10, 2018

<https://www.citylab.com/design/2018/10/preserving-the-shotgun-homes-of-miamis-19supthsup-century-immigrants/572542/>

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### **Three men at a segregated beach in Miami, 1940s**

“‘White sand, black beach’: The black history of Virginia Key” by Roshan Nebhrajani for *The New Tropic*, 2017

<https://thenewtropic.com/virginia-key-beach/>

### **She would have started carrying her pass in 1936 when Miami Beach enacted Ordinance 457...**

“Beaches that are havens for black vacationers now used to be our only options” by Nneka M. Okona for the *Washington Post*, 2018

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2018/06/19/beaches-that-are-havens-for-black-vacationers-now-used-to-be-our-only-options/?utm\\_term=.fd882a4790c4](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2018/06/19/beaches-that-are-havens-for-black-vacationers-now-used-to-be-our-only-options/?utm_term=.fd882a4790c4)

### **The Mary Elizabeth Hotel and Georgette’s Tea Room...**

“Miami History: 1940s to 1960s” by Mandy Baca for the *New Tropic*, 2016

<https://thenewtropic.com/miami-black-history-1940s-1960s/>

### **In his 1903 masterpiece, *The Souls of Black Folks*, W.E.B. Du Bois argued...**

In his most famous work, Du Bois gave voice to many of the ideas that governed black thought and American race

relations. He wrote about the “double consciousness” of being both Black and American. He identified African American music as the “spiritual heritage of the nation.” And he called on black colleges and universities to educate leaders that would lift up the race as a whole.

*The Souls of Black Folks* by W.E.B. Du Bois (1903), accessed on line through Project Gutenberg

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/408/408-h/408-h.htm>

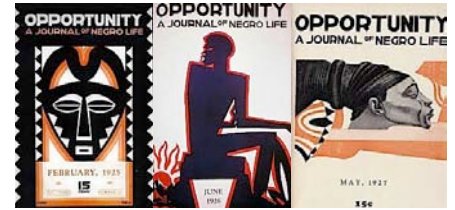
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### **The Talented Tenth**

“The Talented Tenth of the Negro race must be made leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among their people. No others can do this work and Negro colleges must train men for it. The Negro race, like all other races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men.”

W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Talented Tenth,” from *The Negro Problem: A Series of Articles by Representative Negroes of Today* (New York, 1903). Retrieved from The Gilda Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition

<https://glc.yale.edu/talented-tenth-excerpts>



### **Covers by artist Aaron Douglas for Opportunity magazine, published by the National Urban League**

Aaron Douglas’ art, with its distinctive use of Cubist and Art Deco design, captured the edgy and stylish aesthetic of the Harlem Renaissance. He was the artist of Harlem’s avant garde, and his talent was recognized by the prominent intellectuals James Weldon Johnson, W.E.B. Du Bois and Alain Locke. When Johnson chose Douglas to illustrate his book-length poem *God’s Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse*, his art reached far beyond Harlem. In 1934, Douglas was commissioned to paint a series of murals for the New York Public Library’s 135th Street branch in Harlem (now the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture). That work, *Aspects of Negro Life*, is among his most famous pieces.

University of Kansas, Spencer Museum of Art

[http://www.aarondouglas.ku.edu/resources/teacher\\_resource.pdf](http://www.aarondouglas.ku.edu/resources/teacher_resource.pdf)

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Aaron Douglas: Artist and Designer of the Harlem Renaissance by Hannah Kononen, Published December 12, 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hDIss0JdGI>

Treasures of the New York Public Library

<http://exhibitions.nypl.org/treasures/items/show/170>

**In 1925, Alain Locke published *The New Negro*, an anthology of Black achievement in the arts.**

Excerpt from “Enter the New Negro” by Alain Locke (March 1925):

“And certainly, if in our lifetime the Negro should not be able to celebrate his full initiation into American democracy, he can at least, on the warrant of these things, celebrate the attainment of a significant and satisfying new phase of group development, and with it a spiritual Coming of Age.”

Alain Locke, “Enter the New Negro” Survey Graphic, Vol. 6, No. 6 (March 1925): 631-634

[http://www.amistadresource.org/documents/document\\_07\\_07\\_030\\_locke.pdf](http://www.amistadresource.org/documents/document_07_07_030_locke.pdf)



***The New Negro*, an anthology of Black art edited by Alain Locke**

Library of Congress, Digital Collection

<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/segregation-era.html>



**Portrait of Alain Locke by Winold Reiss**

National Portrait Gallery at the Smithsonian

[https://npg.si.edu/object/npg\\_NPG.72.84](https://npg.si.edu/object/npg_NPG.72.84)

**Zora Neale Hurston, writer and anthropologist of the New Negro Movement**

Zora Neale Hurston was from Eatonville, the oldest black town founded between 1865 and 1900 by former slaves. After studying at Howard, Barnard, and Columbia universities, she began to make a name for herself as an anthropologist. If not for Hurston’s work, many

of the stories, voices and music of African culture common to communities in the South and the Caribbean Islands would have been lost. Hurston became an important writer of the Harlem Renaissance. Her books *Of Mules and Men* (1935) and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) captured the rich language and storytelling traditions of Southern black culture.

Hurston biographer Valerie Boyd describes Hurston’s arrival on the literary stage:

“Zora Neale Hurston knew how to make an entrance. On May 1, 1925, at a literary awards dinner sponsored by *Opportunity* magazine, the earthy Harlem newcomer turned heads and raised eyebrows as she claimed four awards: a second-place fiction prize for her short story “Spunk,” a second-place award in drama for her play *Color Struck*, and two honorable mentions.”

<https://www.zoranealehurston.com/about/>

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**Mary McLeod Bethune, human rights activist and educator**

In 1904, Mary McLeod Bethune opened the Daytona Beach

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Literary and Industrial School for Training Negro Girls, a boarding school that later became a college. It merged with the all-male Cookman Institute to form Bethune-Cookman College in 1929. Bethune was one of the most prominent educators and political activists of the first half of the 20th century. She was a member of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Black Cabinet" and a founder of the National Council of Negro Women. She was the only black woman present at the founding of the United Nations. A close friend of Eleanor Roosevelt, the two shared much in the fight to establish human rights and dignity.

<https://aaregistry.org/story/civil-rights-pioneer-mary-mcleod-bethune/>

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/eleanor-bethune/>



**Mary McLeod Bethune, c. 1910**

<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/137891>



**Zora Neale Hurston, c. 1934**

Portrait by Carl Van Vechten

<https://theartstack.com/artist/carl-van-vechten/zora-neale-hurston-1920>

### **Augusta Savage, Harlem Renaissance sculptor and teacher**

Augusta Savage had all of \$4.60 to her name when she migrated to New York from West Palm Beach, Florida. Savage became mentor to many Harlem Renaissance artists, including Jacob Lawrence and Gwendolyn Knight. She taught drawing, painting and sculpture in her basement studio at West 143rd Street in Harlem, where she made busts of such figures as W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey. Her sculpture *The Harp* was inspired by James Weldon Johnson's "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

"Augusta Savage," One Way Ticket: Jacob Lawrence's Migration Series

<https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2015/onewayticket/key-figures/augusta-savage/>

Smithsonian American Art Museum

<https://americanart.si.edu/artist/augusta-savage-4269>



### **Augusta Savage with her sculpture Realization, c. 1938**

Federal Art Project, Photographic Division collection, 1935-1942. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

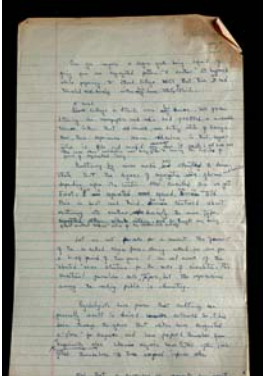
<https://americanart.si.edu/artist/augusta-savage-4269>

### **Francis S. Tucker was the principal of George Washington Carver High School...**

Francis S. Tucker Papers, 1921-1964, The Black Archives and Research Foundation of South Florida

<http://www.theblackarchives.org/archon/?p=collections/findingaid&id=123&q=>

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### **Handwritten note by Edwin T. Pratt — Black Heritage Society of Washington Edwin Pratt Legacy Collection**

Along with hundreds of other artifacts, this handwritten note was donated to the Black Heritage Society of Washington by Edwin Pratt's daughter, Miriam Pratt Glover. It is part of a collection curated by the Black Heritage Society and archived at the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI).

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## **Tomorrow, I'll Be at the Table, 1950-1962**

### **Langston Hughes**

Ideas of place and belonging figure prominently in Hughes' work. As a child, he grew up in a series of Midwestern towns in the care of maternal relatives and family friends. Shortly after Hughes was born in 1902, his father took off for Cuba, then Mexico. After graduating high school, Hughes lived with

his father for a brief time. He then moved to New York City to attend Columbia University.

Though he only stayed at Columbia for a year, Hughes reveled in the world that was Harlem. He would travel and work all over the world, from Paris and London to West Africa and Central Asia to Mexico and the Caribbean. New York was the place he always returned to. For the last two decades of his life, his house at 20 East 127th Street in Harlem was a gathering place for artists and intellectuals.

Like many other prominent artist, writers, and musicians of the Harlem Renaissance, Hughes may well have been gay. He traveled between worlds.

In his New Yorker essay "The Elusive Langston Hughes," Hilton Als writes, "Hughes's genial, generous, and guarded persona was self-protective, certainly. It's important to remember that he came of age in an era during which gay men—and blacks—were physically and mentally abused for being what they were."

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/02/23/sojourner>

## **Clark College and Atlanta University**

### **Panels from *The Art of the Negro* by Hale Woodruff at Atlanta University**

Hale Woodruff may be best known for his magnificent six-panel mural at Talladega College in Alabama. The panels depicts important events in black history, beginning with the story of the *Mutiny on the Amistad*. In three panels, Woodruff painted Mende slaves aboard the Spanish ship *La Amistad* killing their captors, being recaptured and standing trial for the mutiny, then being freed and repatriated to Sierra Leone. Woodruff painted the mural in 1939, one hundred years after the mutiny.

<https://www.high.org/exhibition/rising-up/>

### **PAGE 13**

### **Hale Woodruff at Atlanta University, 1942**

Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection

### **E. Franklin Frazier, Howard University, 1916**

<https://www.gf.org/fellows/all-fellows/e-franklin-frazier/>

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### **Virginia Lacy Jones**

[http://www.libsci.sc.edu/histories/georgia/statehistory/Oral\\_History\\_Project.PDF](http://www.libsci.sc.edu/histories/georgia/statehistory/Oral_History_Project.PDF)

### **Whitney Young, Atlanta University School of Social Work, 1954**

<http://www.cau.edu/news/2015/09/cau-ssw-95-anniversary.html>



### **Birmingham, Alabama, 1956 photo by Gordon Parks**

Gordon Parks began documenting American life as a photographer for the Works Projects Administration. An artist of everyday life, Park's photos documented the quiet dignity of Birmingham's black population as it faced the daily indignities of segregation.

<http://www.gordonparksfoundation.org/archive/segregation-story-1956?view=slider#8>

### **PAGE 14**

### **...W.E.B. DuBois spent much of his teaching life there**

W.E.B. Du Bois's Legacy Deferred by David Lindsay for *Atlanta Magazine*, 2013

<https://www.atlantamagazine.com/civilrights/web-du-bois-legacy-deferred/>

In his essay 2014 in the *New Yorker*, "The Politics of Black Aspiration," Jelani Cobb writes:

"At the turn of the twentieth century, W. E. B. Du Bois crusaded against the evils of segregation, one of which was the forced association of men of his standing with ruffians and undesirables."

### **In 1944 at the age of 15, Martin Luther King, Jr., then known as Mike King...**

"The story of how Michael King, Jr. became Martin Luther King, Jr." by DeNeen L. Brown for the *Washington Post*, January 15, 2019

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2019/01/15/story-how-michael-king-jr-became-martin-luther-king-jr/?utm\\_term=.18b88100242b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2019/01/15/story-how-michael-king-jr-became-martin-luther-king-jr/?utm_term=.18b88100242b)

### **Martin Luther King, Jr. with his Alpha Phi Alpha brothers in Boston**

<http://www.thechessdrum.net/blog/2013/10/11/alpha-phi-alpha-promotes-scholastic-chess/>

**Black sororities and fraternities** provided the scholarships, encouragement and support that granted generations of scholars the friendships, mentoring, and networks of brother and sisters they would carry with them wherever they went.

<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/the-importance-of-black-greek-letter-organizations>

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### **Edwin Pratt, President of the Alphas at Clark College**

Yearbooks for Clark College and Atlanta University

<http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/cauyrbks/index.3.html>

### **Excellence**

Edwin Pratt is featured in the Clark College yearbooks for 1952 and 1953. The photos presented in this essay represent only a fraction of the pursuits he was involved in while there.

Yearbooks for Clark College and Atlanta University

<http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/cauyrbks/index.3.html>

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### **A Meeting of Minds, Bettye Jean Williams**

**She went to Wiley College in her hometown of Marshall, Texas.**

Vintage Postcard, Wiley College Campus View, c. 1920s-1930s

<https://www.hippocard.com/listing/marshall-texas-tx-wiley-college-campus-view-c1920s-30s-postcard/16364615>



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**Wiley College was famous for its debate team, which was coached by poet Melvin B. Tolson.**

Wiley College's Great Debaters by Gail Beil for Humanities Texas, 2008

<https://www.humanitiestexas.org/news/articles/wiley-colleges-great-debaters>

“Graduate Theses of Atlanta University, 1954 - 1959: with Supplement through 1961” (1962). Indices to Historical Theses and Dissertations. Paper 4. [http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/lib\\_tdindex/4](http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/lib_tdindex/4)

<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/9420165.pdf>

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**...Bettye did her field work at Emerson House in Chicago.**

**In her thesis, Bettye, described her role as “an advisor, teacher, and enabler... what they felt was right for them.”**

Williams, Bettye Jean. *The Use of Program Planning and Media in an Adolescent Group*. Atlanta University, 1954.

Graduate Theses of Atlanta University, 1954 - 1959: with Supplement through 1961” (1962). Indices to Historical Theses and Dissertations. Paper 4.

[http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/lib\\_tdindex/4](http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/lib_tdindex/4)



**Bettye Pratt skating with the girls in her group at Emerson House, Winter 1954**

Black Heritage Society of Washington, Edwin Pratt Collection

**Map showing Negro Areas of Miami, 1950**

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**The Black Police Precinct and Courthouse (photo)**

Pratt, Edwin Thomas. *Across the Track: The Development and Operations of the Miami, Florida Precinct Municipal Court*. Atlanta University, 1955.

Graduate Theses of Atlanta University, 1954 - 1959: with Supplement through 1961” (1962). Indices to Historical Theses and Dissertations. Paper 4.

[http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/lib\\_tdindex/4](http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/lib_tdindex/4)

**Bettye Jean Williams' graduating class crosses campus to Harkness Hall, 1954**

Atlanta University Bulletin, s. III, no. 87, July 1954

<http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/aunewsletters/96/>

**Edwin Pratt's Atlanta University graduating class, 1955**

Atlanta University Bulletin, s. III, no. 91, July 1954

<http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/aunewsletters/98/>

## On to Kansas City

**By 1950, there were 456,620 people in Kansas City, Missouri... Atlanta when Pratt lived there.**

<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1950/>; <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1960/>

### PAGE 19

**Some black WWI veterans sought jobs with the Kansas City Fire Department**

A century of safety: Historical photos of Kansas City's police and fire departments by Brian Burnes for the Kansas City Star, 2016

<https://www.kansascity.com/news/local/article59303278.html>

**Lucile Buford, an early member of the NAACP and powerhouse in local politics...**

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### **Lucile H. Buford and the Kansas City Call**

<https://www.busboysandpoets.com/events/th-evt-7006578/>

### **Lucile Buford and staff of The Kansas City Call**

Library Commemorates Legacy of Lucille Buford

<https://www.kclibrary.org/blog/library-commemorates-legacy-lucile-bluford>

### **Day Care at the Kansas City Urban League**

Urban League of Kansas City Photograph Collection, Missouri Digital Heritage

[https://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/mdh\\_splash/default.asp?coll=kcurbanleague](https://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/mdh_splash/default.asp?coll=kcurbanleague)

### **It was home to the Kansas City Monarchs... Negro Leagues team.**

The Negro Leagues started in 1885 and played their last game in 1958. Legendary players like pitcher Satchel Paige and catcher Josh Gibson were considered by many to be the best ballplayers in the country, bar none. Because Major League Baseball teams would not sign black players, no matter how talented and accomplished they were, the Negro Leagues existed in a kind of parallel universe, thrilling the thousands of fans that came out to see them

whenever they played. Teams like the Kansas City Monarchs reigned supreme. As much as African Americans rejoiced when the Brooklyn Dodgers signed Jackie Robinson in 1947, many also mourned, knowing that integration would eventually mean the loss of the Negro Leagues and the diminishment of many other cherished institutions of black society. The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum is in Kansas City, Missouri.



### **Kansas City Monarchs poster**

National Museum of African American History and Culture

[https://nmaahc.si.edu/object/nmaahc\\_2013.135.3](https://nmaahc.si.edu/object/nmaahc_2013.135.3)

### **Jackie Robinson, 1941**

<https://www.pinterest.com/AWoolley42/negro-leagues/>

### **Kansas City Monarchs postcard, 1953**

Library of Congress, Digital Collections

<https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/july-07/>

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### **The Honour of Your Presence**



### **Wedding invitation for Bettye Williams and Edwin Pratt, July 27, 1956**



### **Wedding photo of Edwin and Bettye Pratt**

Black Heritage Society of Washington, Edwin Pratt Collection

## Welcome to Seattle

### **After years of pressure, the Boeing Company...**

“Battle at Boeing: African Americans and the Campaign for Jobs, 1939-1942”

Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project,

University of Washington

[https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/boeing\\_battle.htm](https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/boeing_battle.htm)

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### **...the two African American women in 1942**

Coney, Cheryl M., “Overcoming Barriers: Black Women at Boeing” (2013). Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences Master’s Projects and Theses, page 15, UW Tacoma

[https://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=10150&context=ias\\_masters](https://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=10150&context=ias_masters)

### **In his article, “Swing the Door Wide...”**

Taylor, Quintard. “Swing the Door Wide: World War II Wrought a Profound Transformation in Seattle’s Black Community.” Columbia Magazine, Summer 1995: Vol. 9, No. 2

<http://www.washingtonhistory.org/files/library/swing-door-wide.pdf>

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### **1960 City of Seattle Land Use Map**

Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project

<https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/segregated.htm>



**Women working keypunch machines**

Seattle Opportunities Industrialization Center, 1967 MOHAI, Seattle Post-Intelligencer Photograph Collection, Image no. 2000.107.177.26.03

<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/imlsmohai/id/11044/rec/247>

### **Charles Johnson had come to Seattle in 1954**

Johnson, Charles V. (b. 1928) by Mary T. Henry, 10/13/1998, HistoryLink.org Essay 8610

<http://www.historylink.org/File/8610>

### **PAGE 22**

### **Bettye Pratt soon got a job with Neighborhood House...**

National Council of Jewish Women, Seattle Section  
Lee Micklin, 11/02/1998, HistoryLink.org, 110

<http://www.historylink.org/File/110>

### **When Pratt arrived at the Seattle Urban League... preparing to do his whole life.**

Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle by Mary T. Henry, 11/29/2008, HistoryLink.org Essay 8470

<http://www.historylink.org/File/8470>

### **Racial covenants put in place by William Boeing...**

**Racial covenant from Shoreline’s Innis Arden subdivision**

Racial Restrictive Covenants  
Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project

<https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/segregated.htm>

### **PAGE 23**

### **Rev. Dr. Samuel B. McKinney was the son and grandson of ministers...**

The Rev. Dr. Samuel McKinney “We’re not in Heaven yet.” Legacy Washington, Washington Secretary of State, 2018.

<https://www.sos.wa.gov/legacy/who-are-we/stories/samuel-mckinney/>

### **In 1962, Rev. John Hurst Adam...**

Adams, Bishop John Hurst (b. 1927) by Mary T. Henry, 2/22/2007, HistoryLink.org Essay 8098

<http://www.historylink.org/File/8098>

### **Charles Johnson was followed as NAACP President by E. June Smith...**

“E. June Smith (1900-1982)” by Quin’Nita F. Cobbins for the BlackPast.org, 01/18/2007

[https://www.blackpast.org/aaw/vignette\\_aahw/smith-e-june-1900-1982/](https://www.blackpast.org/aaw/vignette_aahw/smith-e-june-1900-1982/)

### **Walter Hubbard was a New Orleans Catholic...**

“Walter Hubbard”

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Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project

<http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/hubbard.htm>

**A leader in fight for open housing, Hollingsworth had come to Seattle in 1945...**

“Dorothy Hollingsworth (1920-)” by Quin’Nita F. Cobbins for the BlackPast.org, 11/06/2007

[https://www.blackpast.org/aaw/vignette\\_aahw/hollingsworth-dorothy-1920/](https://www.blackpast.org/aaw/vignette_aahw/hollingsworth-dorothy-1920/)

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**In 1961, Rev. Samuel McKinney invited Martin Luther King, Jr. to speak in Seattle.**

**Poster for King’s lecture at Mt. Zion Church**

“The Rev. Dr. Samuel McKinney ‘We’re not in Heaven yet.’” Legacy Washington, Washington Secretary of State, 2018.

<https://www.sos.wa.gov/legacy/who-are-we/stories/samuel-mckinney/>

**University of Washington Daily article on Dr. King’s visit**

“Martin Luther King’s Controversial Visit to Seattle Rev. Samuel B. McKinney Tells the Story”

Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project

<https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/mlkvisit.htm>

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**Hear the Fierce Hammering, 1963-1969**



**Marchers by James Karales**

Photographs and songs were to the Civil Rights Movement what writing and art had been to the Harlem Renaissance – they gave the world a vision of freedom. No photo is more expressive of this message than *The Marchers* by James Karales. Karales’ work portrayed what words could not.

**Gwendolyn Brooks was born in Topeka, Kansas...**

“Gwendolyn Brooks,” The Poetry Foundation

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/gwendolyn-brooks>

Understanding the movements of the 1960s seems all but impossible without knowing something of the music that galvanized American and people all over the world who longed for freedom and equality. With the devastation and genocides of WWII as a testament to the

destructive power of hatred and racism, the music of the civil rights movement was a cry of love, anger, determination and longing.

**1963 — Woke Up This Morning With My Mind Set On Freedom**

*I woke up this mornin’ with my mind set on freedom  
I woke up this mornin’ with my mind set on freedom  
I woke up this mornin’ with my mind set on freedom  
Hallelu, hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah  
I woke this mornin’ with my mind on freedom, hallelujah*

*Traditional African American Gospel Song*

The SNCC Freedom Singers took this song on the road, along with many other traditional spirituals and gospel hymns that served as freedom songs.

SNCC Digital Gateway

<https://snccdigital.org/inside-sncc/sncc-national-office/freedom-singers/>

One of the most beloved hymns was “We Shall Overcome” written by Rev. Charles Albert Tindley as “I’ll Overcome Some Day.” Written in 1900, the same year James Weldon Johnson wrote “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” it was one of many traditional songs adapted after WWII by labor organizer Zilphia Horton to sing on picket lines.

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<https://www.evangelicalsforsocialaction.org/compassion-and-justice/we-shall-overcome-the-story-behind-the-civil-rights-song/>

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#### **Arrest of protestor Mattie Howard by the Birmingham police, 1963, by Bruce Davidson**

In 2018, Bruce Davidson was given an Infinity Award by the International Center for Photography. He was quoted as saying: “It’s important to roam the world and explore it with empathy.”

The Eye of Photography, 2018 ICP Awards

<https://loieldelaphotographie.com/en/2018-icp-awards-bruce-davidson-its-important-to-go-the-world-and-explore-it-with-empathy/>

#### **Civil rights leaders in Birmingham initiated the Children’s Crusade...**

National Museum of African American History and Culture, The Children’s Crusade

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/blog/childrens-crusade>

#### **The June assassination of Medgar Evers... “After Medgar, No More Fear.”**

The assassination of Medgar Evers brought the work of local civil rights leaders – and the risks they were taking – into sharp relief.

“The Legacy of Medgar Evers,” NPR, June 10, 2003

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1294360>

#### **Marchers in Portland, Oregon, following the assassination of Medgar Evers in Mississippi**

Diversity and Inclusion, Oregon State Bar

<https://storywall.osbar.org/1960-1979/>

#### **“You were born where you were born and faced the future that you faced...”**

*The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin

Digital Public Library of America

<https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/the-fire-next-time-by-james-baldwin>

Baldwin’s voice was so clear and precise that what he said and wrote had the power to stun and shame an indifferent white America. His words were unabashedly bold and undeniably true. One of the many artists who lent their passion and profiles to the

Civil Rights Movement, he gave inspiration to people all over the world. Like organizer Bayard Rustin, writer Lorraine Hansberry and many other prominent civil rights activists, Baldwin was gay. The necessity of love was not an abstract idea.

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#### **A. Philip Randolph**

Asa Philip Randolph by Ernest Hamlin Baker

National Portrait Gallery

[https://npg.si.edu/object/npg\\_NPG.96.TC5](https://npg.si.edu/object/npg_NPG.96.TC5)

#### **Bayard Rustin**

Bayard Rustin, Civil Rights Activist

American Friends Service Committee

[http://www.quakerinfo.com/quak\\_br.shtml](http://www.quakerinfo.com/quak_br.shtml)

#### **Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters**

Virginia Commonwealth University

VCU Libraries, Social Welfare History Project

<https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/eras/great-depression/brotherhood-of-sleeping-car-porters-win-over-pullman-company/>

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### “Nineteen sixty-three is not an end...”

*I Have a Dream* speech, Martin Luther King, Jr.

American Rhetoric: Top 100 Speeches

<https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkhaveadream.htm>

### Handbill for 1963 March

National Museum of American History

<https://www.si.edu/spotlight/1963-march-on-washington>

### Two Marchers by Leonard Freed

Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

<https://www.si.edu/spotlight/1963-march-on-washington>

### On Sunday, September 15, 1963, the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church...

The bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church remains one of the most widely-referenced acts of racist terror in United States history. Director Ava DuVernay begins her 2014 film *Selma* with Dr. Martin Luther King accepting the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize “for our lost ones.” This scene is juxtaposed with a group of girls in Sunday dresses descending a staircase never to return. The names of the four girls killed are still

spoken in African American households as a reminder of the cruelty, suffering and sacrifice caused by those who violently opposed civil rights for African Americans.

An article from the Teaching Tolerance Project describes the moment before the bombing: “In the basement ladies’ lounge of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, four girls were chatting nervously and straightening their fancy white dresses. In a few minutes, the worship service would begin. Addie Mae Collins, 14, and Denise McNair, 11, were in the choir. Carole Robertson and Cynthia Wesley, both 14, had been chosen to serve as ushers.”

<https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/texts/addie-mae-collins-denise-mcnair-carole-robertson-cynthia-wesley>

In a *New Yorker* essay “Fifty Years After the Birmingham Children’s Crusade,” Charlayne Hunter-Gault, the first African American woman to enroll in the University of Georgia, recalls that “Birmingham, 1963, was known as Bombingham: there had been some fifty dynamite attacks on black homes since the end of the Second World War. Birmingham had another label:

the most segregated city in the South.”

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/fifty-years-after-the-birmingham-childrens-crusade>

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### Organizers of the March on Washington...

Library of Congress, A Day Like No Other

<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/march-on-washington/day-of-the-march.html>

### Malcolm X responded to the carnage...

The Black Past, “(1963) Malcolm X, Racial Separation”

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/speeches-african-american-history/1963-malcolm-x-racial-separation/>

### The leaders of the major civil rights organizations in Seattle formed...

Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, University of Washington

<https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/organizations.htm#central-area-civil-rights-council-cacrc>

### ... Seattle City Council to pass an Open Housing Ordinance.

The Black Past, “The Seattle Open Housing Campaign, 1959-1968: Housing Segregation and

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Open Housing Legislation” by Anne Frantilla, 2007

<https://www.blackpast.org/uncategorized/history-seattle-open-housing-campaign/>

### **A protest march in July led to a sit-in at the Mayor’s office...**

<https://www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/exhibits-and-education/digital-document-libraries/the-seattle-open-housing-campaign>



### **Charles V. Johnson of the NAACP confronts Deputy Police Chief Clark...**

### **Whitney Young had characterized his role...**

The Journal of Southern History, from *Militant Mediator: Whitney M. Young Jr.* by Dennis C. Dickerson. University Press of Kentucky, 1998.

<https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-65358786/militant-mediator-whitney-m-young-jr>

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### **Reverend Samuel B. McKinney protests segregation... Mayor Gordon Clinton listens with his arms folded.**

Cary Tolman, 1963, Seattle P-I collection, MOHAI

<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/imlsmohai/id/1786/rec/444>



### **Rev. John H. Adams of First A.M.E. and Rev. Mance Jackson of Bethel...**

Seattle Post-Intelligencer Collection, 86.5.5929, Museum of History & Industry.

<https://www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/exhibits-and-education/digital-document-libraries/the-seattle-open-housing-campaign>



### **Rev. Mance Jackson leads protesters in the march...**

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### **Front page of *The Washington Post* the day after John F. Kennedy was assassinated**

<https://www.johnfkennedy.org/p/a-wounded-nation.html>

## **1964 — A Change Is Gonna Come**

*It’s been too hard living, but I’m afraid to die*

*‘Cause I don’t know what’s up there, beyond the sky*

*It’s been a long, a long time coming*

*But I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will*

Lyrics from “A Change Is Gonna Come” by Sam Cooke

Legendary singer Sam Cooke released “A Change Is Gonna Come” in 1964. Its soulful longing for better days made it a staple of the Civil Rights Movement.



### **The Pratt Family in 1964, photos from the Black Heritage Society of Washington State Edwin Pratt Collection, donated by Miriam Pratt**

Edwin and Bettye Pratt adopted Miriam in early summer of 1964, about the same time Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

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**In Seattle, after failing to pass an open housing ordinance...**

**Poster in favor of Open Housing; Fliers against open housing distributed in white neighborhoods**

Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, University of Washington

[https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/CORE\\_housing\\_media.htm](https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/CORE_housing_media.htm)

**On July 2, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964...**

Library of Congress, “Civil Rights Act of 1964: A Long Struggle for Freedom”

<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/civil-rights-act-of-1964.html>

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**Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act during Freedom Summer...**

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2014/07/02/the-civil-rights-act-became-law-50-years-ago-today-heres-how-the-washington-post-covered-it/?utm\\_term=.dd18824bd978](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2014/07/02/the-civil-rights-act-became-law-50-years-ago-today-heres-how-the-washington-post-covered-it/?utm_term=.dd18824bd978)

**Bob Moses**

SNCC Archives, “Bob Moses Goes to McComb”

<https://snccdigital.org/events/bob-moses-goes-to-mccomb/>

**Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner**

SNCC Digital Archives, “Bodies of Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner Discovered”

<https://snccdigital.org/events/bodies-chaney-goodman-schwerner-discovered/>

**1965 — People Get Ready**

*People get ready, there’s a train comin’  
You don’t need no baggage, you just get on board*

*All you need is faith to hear the diesels  
hummin’*

*You don’t need no ticket you just thank  
the lord*

*People get ready, there’s a train to  
Jordan*

*Picking up passengers coast to coast*

*Lyrics from “People Get Ready” by  
Curtis Mayfield*

A 1965 hit by The Impressions, “People Get Ready” became a rallying cry. Mayfield’s gospel-inspired hit grew out of his anger at the injustices of the time.

<https://www.curtismayfield.com/curtis-mayfield-biography.html>

**Less than a week later, the Watts area of Los Angeles went up in flames... Watts had been a long time coming.**  
“Watts Riots: Traffic Stop that

Ignited Days of Destruction in Los Angeles” by James Queally for the Los Angeles Times, July 29, 2015

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**Malcolm X in Los Angeles after 1962 police killing**

<http://www.usprisonculture.com/blog/2012/08/12/the-day-that-malcolm-won-harlem-over/>

**Los Angeles Times, August 15, 1965, Watts Riots**

<http://www.rarenewspapers.com/view/631624>

**On June 20, 1965, a black man had been killed by an off-duty white police officer...**

**The killing of Robert Reese brought citywide attention to the problem of police brutality.**

Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, University of Washington, “The 1965 Freedom Patrols and the Origins of Seattle’s Police Accountability Movement” by Jennifer Taylor

[https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/freedom\\_patrols.htm](https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/freedom_patrols.htm)

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### **Ann Holiday, Edwin Pratt and Randolph Carter leave the CORE...**

Robert H. Miller 1965, MOHAI, Seattle P-I photo collection, Image 2000.107.131.21.21

### **1966 — While I Run This Race**

*Lord, hold my hand while I run this race*

*Oh, Lord, hold my hand while I run this race*

*Lord, won't you hold my hand while I run this race?*

*Because I don't want to run this race in vain*

*Traditional African American song*

Voices of the Civil Rights Movement: Black American Freedom Songs, 1960-1966, Smithsonian

<https://folkways.si.edu/voices-of-the-civil-rights-movement-black-american-freedom-songs-1960-1966/african-american-music-documentary-struggle-protest/album/Smithsonian>

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### **Bettye, Miriam and Edwin Pratt in 1966**

<https://crosscut.com/2018/01/seattles-own-civil-rights-assassination-still-a-cold-case>

### **Seattle School Boycott and Freedom Schools**

“The Seattle School Boycott of 1966”

CORE and the Central Area Civil Rights Campaign

Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, University of Washington

[https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/school\\_boycott.htm](https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/school_boycott.htm)

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### **In Washington, D.C., Whitney Young, Jr. had become the Civil Rights Movement's leading...**

Militant Mediator: Whitney M. Young, Jr. by Dennis E. Dickerson, University Press of Kentucky

### **Whitney Young gets “The Johnson Treatment”...**

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum

Photo by Yoichi Okamoto

<http://www.lbjlibrary.net/collections/photo-archive.html>

### **In January of 1966, Dr. King and his wife, Coretta Scott King, moved to an apartment... The violent racism King had faced in the South was alive and well in Chicago.**

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford University  
<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/chicago-campaign>

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### **1967 — I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free**

*I wish I knew how*

*it would feel to be free*

*I wish I could break*

*all the chains holdin' me*

*I wish I could say*

*all the things that I should say*

*Say 'em loud say 'em clear*

*for the whole 'round world to hear*

Lyrics from “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free,” written by Billy Taylor and Dick Dallas and recorded by Nina Simone in 1967

Together with “Mississippi Goddam” and “To Be Young Gifted and Black,” Nina Simone’s recording of “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free” made her a leading voice of the movements for Civil Rights and Black Power. After King’s assassination in 1968, she silenced listeners at the Westbury Music Festival with her devastating rendition of “Why? (The King of Love Is Dead,” a song written by Gene

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Taylor, the bass player in her band.

<https://www.npr.org/2008/04/06/89418339/why-remembering-nina-simones-tribute-to-the-rev-martin-luther-king-jr>

### **In 1967, Edwin Pratt initiated Operation Equality...**

“Pratt, Edwin T. (1930-1969)” by Mary T. Henry for HistoryLink.org, 1998

<https://www.historylink.org/File/62>

### **Operation Equality, Model Cities, and other programs of the War on Poverty...**

Seattle Model Cities Program Records, Seattle Municipal Archives

<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv22921>

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### **Model Cities Director Walter Hundley**

Seattle Post-Intelligencer Collection, MOHAI

<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/imlsmohai/id/90/rec/2>



### **Sam Smith and sons**

Seattle Post-Intelligencer Collection, MOHAI

<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/imlsmohai/id/1582/rec/197>



### **Judge Charles Zellender Smith**

Charles Z. Smith, Legacy Washington, Office of the Secretary of State

<https://www.sos.wa.gov/legacy/stories/charles-z-smith/>

Charles Z. Smith was from Lakeland, Florida. He graduated from the University of Washington Law School in 1955. When the Pratts arrived in Seattle, Smith had just joined the King County Prosecutor’s Office after being the first African-American law clerk at the Washington State Supreme Court. He would be appointed to the post of assistant U.S. Attorney by Attorney General Robert Kennedy in 1961. When

he returned to Seattle in 1965, Smith became the first African American to be appointed to the Seattle Municipal Court and to the King County Superior Court a year later. In 1988, he became the first African American to serve on the Washington State Supreme Court.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/obituaries/state-supreme-court-justice-charles-z-smith-blazed-trails-for-jurists-of-color/>

### **The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) had been formed in 1960...**

#### **1966 SNCC Newsletter on police brutality**

“The Story of SNCC,” SNCC Digital Gateway

<https://snccdigital.org/inside-sncc/the-story-of-sncc/>

### **In 1965, E. June Smith had founded an NAACP credit union.**

NAACP Seattle branch records, 1950-2003

<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv06463>

### **In May of 1968, Liberty Bank would open at the corner of 24th and Union...**

“The History of Liberty Bank”

<http://libertybankbuilding.org/liberty-bank/>

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#### **In 1966, Stokely Carmichael was elected the chairman of SNCC.**

May 1966, Stokely Carmichael Elected as SNCC's Chair, SNCC Digital Gateway

<https://snccdigital.org/events/stokely-carmichael-elected-snccs-chair/>

#### **In April of 1967, Stokely Carmichael...**

"April 19, 1967: Stokely at Garfield" by Jeff Stevens, The Seattle Star, April 2015

<http://www.seattlestar.net/2015/04/april-19-1967-stokely-at-garfield/>

#### **1968 — Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud**

*Uh! Your bad self!*

*Say it loud! I'm black and I'm proud*

*Say it louder! I'm black and I'm proud*

*Look a-here!*

*Some people say we got a lot of malice, some say it's a lotta nerve*

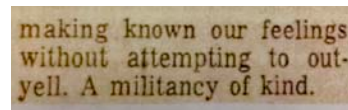
*But I say we won't quit movin' until we get what we deserve*

Lyrics from "Say It Loud," written by James Brown and Alfred "Pee Wee" Ellis, 1968] James Brown, the Godfather of Soul, was also the herald of the Black Pride Movement. The day after King's assassination, Brown used an already-scheduled concert in Boston to pay tribute to the

slain leader, thereby calming the crowd and giving them a chance to mourn.

"James Brown Speaks to the Crowd at the Boston Garden, 04/05/1968, WGBH Vault

[http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/A\\_15770C18FF5B4F8EA0F6B5FC23218277](http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/A_15770C18FF5B4F8EA0F6B5FC23218277)



making known our feelings  
without attempting to out-  
yell. A militancy of kind.

"A Militancy of Kind" partial quote from Pratt's Last speech, "A New Thrust" as published in the Seattle P-I after his death, Black Heritage Society of Washington Edwin Pratt Legacy Collection

#### **In 1968, black students at the University of Washington organized...**

"History of the BSU at UW"

Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, University of Washington

[http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/BSU\\_history.htm](http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/BSU_history.htm)

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**Defendants Aaron Dixon, Larry Gossett, and Carl Miller speak to the press...**

MOHAI, Cary W. Tolman Photographs, Image no. 2002.68.9.10

<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/imlsmohai/id/9243/rec/93>

#### **In 1967, Seattle residents Aaron and Elmer Dixon from Seattle met with Black Panthers leaders...**

"The Black Panther Party: Seattle and the Nation"

<https://www.blackpast.org/special-features/the-black-panther-party-seattle-and-the-nation/>

#### **Pratt and other leaders used the militancy of the BSU and the Panthers as a scare tactic...**

King County Councilmember Larry Gossett speaking at a Commemoration for Edwin Thomas Pratt at St. Mark's Cathedral in Seattle, Feb. 2, 2019

#### **King marching in New York for an end to the Vietnam War, 1967**

AP Photo, March 25, 1967 as published in the Los Angeles Sentinel, "MLK: Beyond Vietnam Speech 50 Years Later" by Kimberlee Buck, April 5, 2017

<https://lasentinel.net/mlk-beyond-vietnam-speech-50-years-later.html>

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#### **On April 9th, tens of thousands of people walked the four miles from Ebenezer Baptist Church...**

“Atlanta’s Four-Mile Goodbye to King” by Rosalind Bentley, photos by Ken Guthrie, Atlanta Journal Constitution Special Issue, April 4, 2018

<http://specials.myajc.com/mlk-funeral/>

#### **Benjamin Mays, who King called his “spiritual mentor” and “intellectual father,” ...**

“Martin Luther King’s Unfinished Work on Earth Must Truly Be Our Own,” excerpt from the eulogy for King by Benjamin Mays, published in his book *Born to Rebel, An Autobiography*, first published by the University of Georgia Press in 1971

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/02/benjamin-mays-mlk-eulogy/552545/>

#### **Coretta Scott King continues her husband’s work by leading a march in solidarity with striking sanitation workers in Memphis on April 8, 1968, four days after King was killed.**

(AP Photo) Coretta Scott King and her children are surrounded by civil rights leaders and close

friends, some of whom were with King the evening he was killed in Memphis, Tennessee.

<https://www.npr.org/2018/04/08/597703360/after-mlks-death-coretta-scott-king-went-to-memphis-to-finish-his-work>



#### **Mourners march in Seattle after King’s assassination, April 7, 1968**

“The Injustices MLK fought are still present in Seattle Today” by Jerry Large for the Seattle Times, April 2018

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/the-injustices-mlk-fought-are-still-present-in-seattle-today/>

#### **In a StoryCorp interview...**

“Miriam Pratt and Jean Soliz” for StoryCorps, originally aired March 22, 2019 on NPR

<https://storycorps.org/stories/miriam-pratt-and-jean-soliz-190333/>

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#### **1969 — Message from a Black Man**

*Yes, my skin is black,*

*But that’s no reason to hold me back.*

*Why don’t you think about it?*

*Think about it...*

*I have wants and desires,*

*Just like you.*

*So move on the side,*

*‘Cause I’m comin’ through...*

Lyrics from “Message from a Black Man” by Norman Whitfield and Barnett Strong

The popular Motown group the Temptations had several chart-topping hits in 1969. Among them were, “I Can’t Get Next to You,” “That’s the Way Love Is,” “I Need Your Lovin’,” and “Runaway Child, Runnin’ Wild,” songs that mixed rhythm and blues with soul and rock. They also released their first openly political songs – “Slave” about the prison state and “Message from a Black Man.” They furthered their reputation for popular protest music with the 1970 hits “Ball of Confusion (That’s What the World Is Today)” and “War.”

#### **He wouldn’t live to see his close friend Charles V. Johnson appointed to the Seattle...**



**Seattle Black Panther Party members, Capitol Building, Olympia 1969**

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“Seattle Black Panther Party History and Memory Project”  
Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project,  
University of Washington  
<https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/BPP.htm>

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#### **Black Panther Party rally, downtown Seattle, 1969**

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/memphis-and-mogadishu-history-african-americans-martin-luther-king-county-washington-1858-2014/>



#### **Elmer Dixon serving children in the Black Panther's Free Breakfast Program, 1969**

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/black-panther-partys-legacy-to-help-sick-poor-lives-on-at-seattle-health-clinic/>



#### **Seattle Central students demonstrate in support of the Central Contractors Association**

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/education/seattle-central-college-turns-50-celebrates-history-of-social-activism/>



#### **Tyree Scott speaks to reporters at Central Contractors Association protest, 1969**

“Central Contractors Association” Kayomi Wada for the BlackPast, 2008  
[https://www.blackpast.org/aaw/vignette\\_aahw/central-contractors-association/](https://www.blackpast.org/aaw/vignette_aahw/central-contractors-association/)

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#### **Bettye Pratt is comforted by her stepson Bill**

“Edwin Pratt Is Murdered

Outside His Shoreline Home on January 26, 1969” by Heather Trescases for HistoryLink.org, 2003

<https://www.historylink.org/File/414>

Photo courtesy of the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle



#### **Miriam Pratt with her brother Bill** Black Heritage Society of Washington Edwin Pratt Legacy Collection

In an email, Jean Soliz, who was Miriam’s babysitter and the Pratt family’s friend and neighbor, remembered that Bill, who grew up with younger sisters, “knew how to relate to little girls. I guess that’s why he and Miriam were close. He was 13 when she was adopted.” Soliz continued, “Bill came for some holidays and always for a while in the summer. He was close to his father and Bettye - a woman children loved.” Soliz also remembered that “Bill was a freshman in college when Edwin died. He went on to earn a Masters in Social Work, just like his father and stepmother. Bill worked in child protection and eventually became a middle

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## NOTES AND RESOURCES

school teacher. He had his father’s calm demeanor and a wonderful singing voice, also like his father.”

Bill Pratt and William Carmichael were high school friends. They graduated from South Dade Senior High in 1968. In an email, Carmichael remembered Bill, his wonderful singing voice, and the racism he endured at school. “In high school I sang in two performing music groups with him, a 20+ voice “Varsity Singers” and an Octet. We won Superior awards at state competition. Bill had an incredible baritone voice and gave a remarkable performance as El Gallo in *The Fantastics*. When we toured for performances and competitions overnight, I always volunteered to share a room with Bill. None of the other white boys would do it — I had no problem at all because Bill was a good friend of mine and an incredibly nice guy. He was one of a very few non-whites at South Dade Senior High School as a result of enforced desegregation. I remember having many ugly arguments with my white friends about this. It was surreal... everybody “liked” Bill Pratt. You couldn’t dislike

him! And yet, racism was so deep in people...”

Bill died on January 27, 2012 at the age 61

### **Six months after her husband’s death...**

Bettye Pratt as quoted in May 1969 *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*



*Edwin Pratt relaxes at his first Seattle home, which was located in the Central District close to Pratt Park*

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**This essay could not have been written without the support of** Pratt Fine Arts Center and the committee that met regularly to plan artworks and events honoring Edwin T. Pratt in the fiftieth year after his death. Board members Preston Hampton and Damien Villareal, Executive Director Steven Galatro and Marketing and Communications Director Karina San Juan all lent expertise to this effort.

The essay would not have taken shape and come to fruition without the deep knowledge of Stephanie Johnson-Tolliver of the Black Heritage Society of Washington State, who is curator of the Pratt Legacy Collection. The Black Heritage Society of Washington State, Inc. was founded in 1977 and is committed to collecting, preserving and sharing the history and legacies of black people from throughout the state. BHS collections are an accessible public asset that is key to everyone's history. The Pratt Legacy Collection was gifted to the Black Heritage Society of Washington State by Miriam Pratt, daughter of Edwin and Bettye Pratt.

With Miriam Pratt's generous donation of letters, speeches, and notes in her father's hand, along with family photos and other treasures that make up the Pratt Legacy Collection, Pratt's family life, ideas about civil rights, voice and memories would have remained inaccessible. The Collection, which is housed at the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI), is an insightful and compelling look at Pratt's individual, family and professional life that allows the public inside the everyday complexities of an emerging to widely respected civil rights leader who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

In addition, I am grateful for the help of Pratt family friend Jean Soliz. The Pratts helped raise Jean, who was Miriam's babysitter; the two

remain close to this day. Jean Soliz is currently finishing a biography of Edwin Pratt, a project she began after retiring from state government. The biography is an in-depth look at Pratt's life and Seattle's Civil Rights Movement. She also explores why the homicide investigation was unsuccessful.

A commemorative event at St. Mark's Episcopal Church afforded me to opportunity to meet members of Pratt's extended family that traveled from the East Coast to attend this and other tributes to Edwin Pratt. Among them was Pratt's nephew Josephus, who remembered childhood when he visited his uncle at the family home in Miami.

As part of a theater project I undertook many years ago, I had the good fortune of interviewing Pratt's good friends and civil rights stalwarts Judge Charles and Lazelle Johnson, Reverend Samuel and Louise McKinney, Judge Charles and Ellie Smith. I was also fortunate to meet and interview Niki Riley, Donna Linsted and others who worked with Pratt, along with Kay Bullitt, who joined him in many Urban League efforts and who worshipped with him at St. Mark's. Mary T. Henry, Esther Mumford, Quintard Taylor, J.T. Stewart, Marita Dingus, Aaron Dixon and Barbara Earl Thomas provided important insights to the times, mood and history of Seattle in the 1960s.

I relied on research obtained from the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle; University of Washington, Seattle Times, Seattle P-I, and MOHAI Archives; Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project at the UW; Seattle Municipal Archives; Washington State Archives and the Seattle Public Library; Northwest African American Museum; NAACP Archives and SNCC Digital Gateway; Black Past Remembered and

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

History Link; New Tropic; Atlanta University Digital Commons, African American Registry, and Archives West. Without these and other sources, research would have been impossible.

I am indebted to these individuals and organizations for giving me the context necessary to understand a man whose death has often been given more attention than his life. This essay was written to tell a different story.