

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
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W.P.A. FEDERAL PROJECT NO. 1

"THE AMERICAN GUIDE"

WEEKLY FIELD REPORT

WICHITA

2 copy

Date for week ending ..... **March 28, '36**

Local Office: . . . . .

District assigned . . . . . in . . . . . County . . . . . State

WICHITA

SEDGWICK

KANSAS

If you are attaching editorial copy to this report, fill out (A).

If you are merely reporting progress, fill out (B).

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Number of words . . . . . **1500** . . . . . Special topic assigned **Racial Elements**

Part of assigned district or county covered in this report . . . . . **Groups; Negroes**  
(Township, village, town, quarter, or city, etc.)

Questionnaire categories incomplete or missing list below with reasons for omission, i.e. whether material is still to be covered or whether the questions are not applicable to your territory.

B (Report of progress, no copy attached)

Part of assigned territory you are now investigating . . . . .

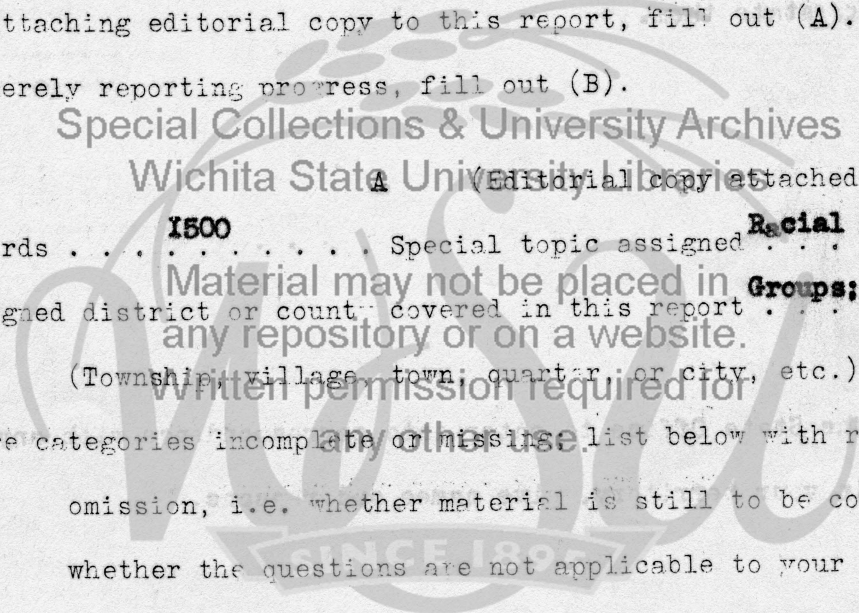
Special categories of Questionnaire you are working on (list below)

Are you reducing your field notes to a Field Continuity? . . . . .

Date of last editorial copy transmitted to State Office . . . . .

When do you expect to forward your next editorial copy? . . . . .

Time needed to finish present topic . . . . .



Special Memoranda

If you are faced by any problems in cooperation, make suggestions here for advice and assistance from your State Supervisor.

If there are any special conditions worthy of note in your territory, affecting your work, state them.

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If you wish the State Office to enter into correspondence with any individuals or agencies in your territory, give names and reasons.

SINCE 1895

Signed Bessie Walters

Local Field Worker

HUGH AMICK

Supervisor



1500 words

Racial Groups, Negroes  
by: Bessie Walters

It is a question never definitely settled just how the flood tide of immigration of colored ex-slaves from the South began, through a congressional investigation produced three large volumes of evidence on the subject. However, for several years prior to 1879 and 1880, many of these colored refugees had been leaving the South, where the plantation owners were said to still be trying to keep them in abject slavery. These "slaves" were not treated kindly by the whites after the Emancipation Proclamation by President Lincoln had freed them, thus bringing about the movement called "The great Exodus".

The "Great Exodus" movement brought a very perplexing problem to Kansas. Agents of the railroads, reformers of various degrees of veracity and certain politicians aided in stirring up the former slaves and inducing them to migrate to Kansas. "Forty acres and a mule" was promised each one of negroes who would come to Kansas. They were also promised the right to vote.

From the time this State was open to settlement in 1854, its very name had been a solace to the slaves, who were mistreated by their owners.

The rush, for Kansas began from Mississippi, Kentucky, Louisiana, Texas, Georgia and other Southern States. The Negroes flocked in numbers that created alarm in both the North and the South. Topeka, Lawrence, Wyandotte, Parsons, Coffeyville, Pittsburg, Fort Scott and other towns were forced to adopt strenuous measures to care for the new comers, arriving without food, clothing, or money.

The Kansas Freedman's Central Relief Association, with Gov. St. John as chairman, began raising funds for the 80,000 or more refugees who came into the State of Kansas. The refugees suffered many hardships. Hundreds died for lack of medical care and from starvation. Aid came from the surrounding country, as a response to appeals for help in relieving the suffering.

Many Negroes settled in Colonies as a result of the incoming people without homes. In Morris, Lyon, Graham, Douglas and other counties these colonies are still in existence, the descendants of the "Exodusters," still maintaining the farms their fathers were given during the years 1880 and 1881.

The children of the ex-slaves have become good citizens and excellent farmers. The descendants have become doctors, lawyers teachers, as well as following other professional vocations. They have held high positions of trust with credit to their race and to society.

The Negroes have two state schools, Western University at Kansas City, and the Kansas Vocational Institute at Topeka. Individuals of the negro race have graduated from all the other State schools, with a high scholastic standing. (1)

Dr. Henry Fellow, well known Wichita Quaker, (white) is related by direct descent to two characters in Harriett Beecher, Stowe's book, "Uncle Tom's Cabin,"

Dr. Fellow has in his possession an aged volume entitled "Reminiscence of Levi Coffin," who with the permission required for "Underground Railroad" system, so-called from serving the purpose of hiding runaway slave as they fled from the south to Canada and freedom -- Levi Coffin was the great Uncle of Dr. Henry Fellow. (2)

The first recognized business in Wichita under Negro management was a restaurant operated by George Turner in the five hundred block on East Douglas. The first company store was opened by Thomas Glover, Sandy Patten, Jim Harper and Alex Hutchenson, in the Gordon Building at Elm and Main Street. (3)

There is an estimated population of 5600 colored people in Wichita.

The negroes live, for the most part, in the north-east part of the city, on N. Water Street, N. Wichita Street, Wabash Avenue, Cleveland Avenue, Mosley Avenue, Mead Avenue, and neighborhood streets.

The negro population of Wichita includes several persons in professional service. Among these are five colored physicians, three lawyers and two dentists.

There are two colored mortuaries in Wichita, Jackson Mortuary, 703 N. Water Street and Citizen's Mortuary, 110 w. Elm Street.



The meat packing industries and railroad corporations are the large employers of negro labor. Department stores, hotels and office buildings employ a great number as janitors. Personal service and domestic service find a large number engaged.

There are three colored schools in Wichita: L'Ouverture, Thirteenth Street and Mosley Avenue, Douglas, 617 N. Water Street, and Dunbar, 935 Cleveland Avenue. These schools have an enrollment of 1272 negro children. There are 170 pupils in the two public high schools of Wichita. (4)

The negro population of Wichita has a number of clubs and fraternal organizations, such as the Lion's Club, 818 N. Water Street, Peppy Pilots Club, 502 N. Water Street, Friendly Indian Club, 305 S. Tyler Street, Central Athletic Ass'n, and University Men's Club, both at 502 N. Water Street. The young Men's Christian Association for the colored folk is located at 502 N. Water Street and is called the Water Street Branch of the Y.M.C.A. The Young Women's Christian Association for the colored race, called the Central Branch, is located at 818 N. Water Street.

The Youth Movement in the colored race, in Wichita is a project that originated in the Ministerial League, with the cooperation of the Negro Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. This movement fosters an educational and literary program to stimulate constructive thinking and good citizenship.

The Colored Ministerial League is another Association for the advancement of the negro race. This is a National organization with a branch agency in Wichita. Its purpose is primarily to make racial adjustments, to discuss matters of discrimination relative to race problems and the attitude of Courts in determining justice to the Colored race. (5)

The Ministerial league meets at 502 N. Water Street.

There are sixteen Negro Churches in Wichita, as follows: Grant's Memorial Chapel, 165 N. Mosley Avenue; St. Matthews A.M.E., 841 Cleveland Avenue; St. Paul's A.M.E., 541 N. Water Street; Calvary Baptist, 601 N. Water Street;

New Hope Baptist, 1001 Ohio Avenue; St John's Baptist, 803 E. Seventeenth Street; St Mary's Baptist, 1260 Wabash Avenue; Tabernacle Baptist, 834 N. Water Street; Church of Christ, 1131 Wabash Avenue; Church of Christ, 1014 E Eleventh Street; Church of God, 1040 New York Avenue; Church of God, 901 E. Ninth Street; Church of God in Christ, 1418 N. Mosley Avenue; Church of God in Christ, 1217 E. Murdock Avenue; St. Augustine Episcopal, 1002 E. Ninth Street; St Mark's M.E., 1221 E. Murdock Avenue. (6)

There are two colored world war veterans organizations in Wichita: Arthur Gossett Post, and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post. Arthur Gossett was the first negro soldier from Wichita who lost his life in war service.

S. W. Jones, negro Spanish War Veteran who resides at 501 E. Water Street, was born in 1868 at Levee, State, Mo. He belonged to the Twenty-third regiment of Colored men and was the first negro to enlist in the Spanish-American war in 1898. He was made captain of his company, serving six months in Cuba. Mr. Jones was educated in the public schools of Wichita, and was the only colored child in the schools of Wichita in the year 1875. He is a prominent member of the African Methodist Church and takes keen interest in Civic affairs.

Dr. George Washington Carver of Tuskegee Institute has been a lecturer guest of negro organizations in Wichita. Dr. Carver is known nationally for his chemical enchantment in creating useful new products from such seemingly useless material as peanut shells and fallen leaves. He is also an artist, especially skilled in painting flowers. (7)

A negro, who calls himself "Father Divine" has his headquarters in New York City and has a few followers in Wichita. This unique Negro marshalled decided influence in New York and contended for the power of Divinity. He publishes a Magazine called the Spoken Word.

Wichita is the home of a few living ex-slaves. Among the ex-slave residents of the city is Mrs. Jeannette Hill, living at 633 N. Water Street. She was born July 1, 1838, in Howard County, Missouri. She belonged at first to Aaron and Lucy



Fray, plantation owners in Missouri. While Mrs. Hill never attended school a day in her life, she was taught at home on the plantation by her owners. She learned to read best in her Bible, which she loves. After her marriage, five boys and five girls were born, three of them born in slavery. The white slave master and mistress designated a clause in their will as providing for the future of their much-loved slave. She was never to be sold, but remain with the heirs of the family. Mrs. Hill claims her master and mistress were kind and considerate.

The Negroes of Wichita have made marked progress, in the last decade, in the field of educational, industrial, social and religious endeavor. Some very fine talent is found in the negro population in music, literature and other arts. They are putting forth noticeable efforts to keep pace with the rapid growth of the city.

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Sources:

- (1) Evening Eagle - 5-9-'33 - Newspaper Clippings at Wichita University Library.
- (2) Wichita Eagle Clipping - 12-1-'29 - Wichita University Librarr.
- (3) Interview with S.W. Jones, 601 N. Water Street.
- (4) Report of Wichita Public Schools, 1934-35 City School Supt. office.
- (5) Interview, Rev. J.W. Hayes - 601 N. Water Street.
- (6) Wichita City Directory for 1936
- (7) American Magazine: Boston Transcript - 10-1-'32 - Clippings Wichita University Library.