

# One High Point Commission

Reparations and Reconciliation Report

JULY 27, 2023

## FEBRUARY 11 1960

ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1960, AT THE CLOSE OF THE SCHOOL DAY, A GROUP OF 26 STUDENTS IN HIGH POINT BECAME THE FIRST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES TO STAGE A WOOLWORTH "SIT-IN" DEMONSTRATION. THIS ACTION BY THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FOLLOWED AN EARLIER DEMONSTRATION ON FEBRUARY 1, 1960 BY THE "A & T FOUR" COLLEGE STUDENTS IN GREENSBORO.

STUDENT ORGANIZERS OF THIS EVENT WERE MARY LOU ANDREWS, BRENDA JEAN FOUNTAIN, MIRIAM LYNN FOUNTAIN AND ANDREW DENNIS MCBRIDE. LED BY REVEREND B. ELTON COX, ACCOMPANIED BY REVEREND FRED SHUTTLESWORTH, THIS DEMONSTRATION WAS TO PROTEST THE RACIAL, SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL INJUSTICES THAT EXISTED. KEY RALLYING SONGS WERE "AIN'T GONNA LET NOBODY TURN ME 'ROUND" AND "WE SHALL OVERCOME." THESE, ALONG WITH PRAYER, WERE ESSENTIAL TO THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS.

AFTER EIGHT LONG YEARS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE, EFFORTS BEGAN IN EARNEST TO HEAL THE CITY WITH THE FORMING OF AN INTERRACIAL HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION, WHICH STILL EXISTS.

"THE SIT-INS WERE, WITHOUT QUESTION, PRODUCTIVE OF THE MOST CHANGE... NO ARGUMENT IN A COURT OF LAW COULD HAVE DRAMATIZED THE IMMORALITY AND IRRATIONALITY OF SUCH A CUSTOM AS DID THE SIT-IN... THE SIT-INS REACHED FAR OUT INTO THE BACK COUNTRY. THEY INSPIRED ADULT MEN AND WOMEN, FATHERS, MOTHERS, GRANDMOTHERS, AUNTS AND UNCLAS, TO SUPPORT THE YOUNG STUDENTS IN THE CITIES. NOT EVEN THE SUPREME COURT DECISION ON SCHOOLS IN 1954 HAD DONE THIS..."

RALPH MCGILL

COUNTER SERVICE  
WHITE ONLY

CITY OF  
**high  
point.**



## ***Dusk to Dawn: Black Labor, the Law, and the Struggle for Justice in North Carolina***

Dr. Omar H. Ali, Allyson Beatty, and Kaila Dollard

*[We] had to work... I 'member it well.*

Ms. Emma Blalock, b. 1849, North Carolina Slave Narratives, Federal Writers' Project, 1937, Vol.11, p.107



FIGURE 1 - ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY ALMANAC, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, 1840

Redressing the centuries-long exploitation of Black labor for the extraction of wealth is at the heart of the One High Point Commission to Explore Community Reparations for the African American Citizens of High Point, North Carolina. It is also at the center of the nation's contradiction: a land of freedom based on slavery, specifically the enslavement and legal discrimination of Black people. Inscribed into the Carolina colony during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century,

and continuing over the next two and a half centuries through the codification of racial slavery (linking Blackness to enslavement in the law) followed by Jim Crow (the legal segregation and disfranchisement of African Americans), the origins of today's inequities in wealth must necessarily inform any meaningful discussion on reparations.

As the African American researcher and sociologist Karen Fields and her sister, the Columbia University historian Barbara Fields, explain in their seminal book *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life*, “enslavement of Africans made possible the freedom of Europeans, and then cast a long shadow... Out of that process emerged an elaborate public language of ‘race’ and ‘race-relations’ that disguised class inequality and, by the same stroke, impoverished Americans’ public language for addressing inequality” (p. 111). Acknowledging the social construction of race as a function of power, we use the terms ‘Black’ and ‘White’ with an understanding that although *racism* certainly exists, institutionally and otherwise, there are no biologically distinguishable *rac*es. There is only one race, the human race, with as much genetic variation within, as there is between Black and White populations (see Alan Goodman et al., *Race: Are We So Different?* published by the American Anthropological Association).

Beginning in the North American British colonial era and throughout the history of the United States, poor and working-class people have been pitted against each other, maintaining and sustaining a largely White ruling class. The case of Bacon’s Rebellion in neighboring Virginia in 1676 is perhaps the best-known early example of this, where White men were armed in the wake of the failed multi-racial revolt against the colonial elite while it became illegal for Black people to carry arms. This maneuver of giving certain rights and privileges to the growing White poor male population—both indentured White servants and those who had served their contracts and were now free—over Black co-workers was part of the racial codification of slavery. Starting in 1640 and continuing into the next century, laws and regulations in the Chesapeake increasingly placed people of African descent into ‘lifelong servitude.’ The system was seamlessly carried into the Carolina colonies.

As history would reveal, no matter how poor or politically marginalized a White person might be, the notion of their racial superiority over others would do little, and does little, beyond keeping them poor and politically marginalized. The myth of racial distinctions, however, has enabled and served the White ruling class well: the exploitation and control of Black labor with support from poor and working-class White people based on notions of shared White racial superiority, keeps the White wealthy in power. Class inequality is disguised.

In light of this, a brief history of Black labor and the struggle for justice in North Carolina provides a useful context for better understanding the call for reparations. More specifically, redressing the historical injustices and institutionalized forms of discrimination that have significantly enriched some at the expense of others in the community currently encompassed by the city of High Point must be based in an unflinching review of our collective history.

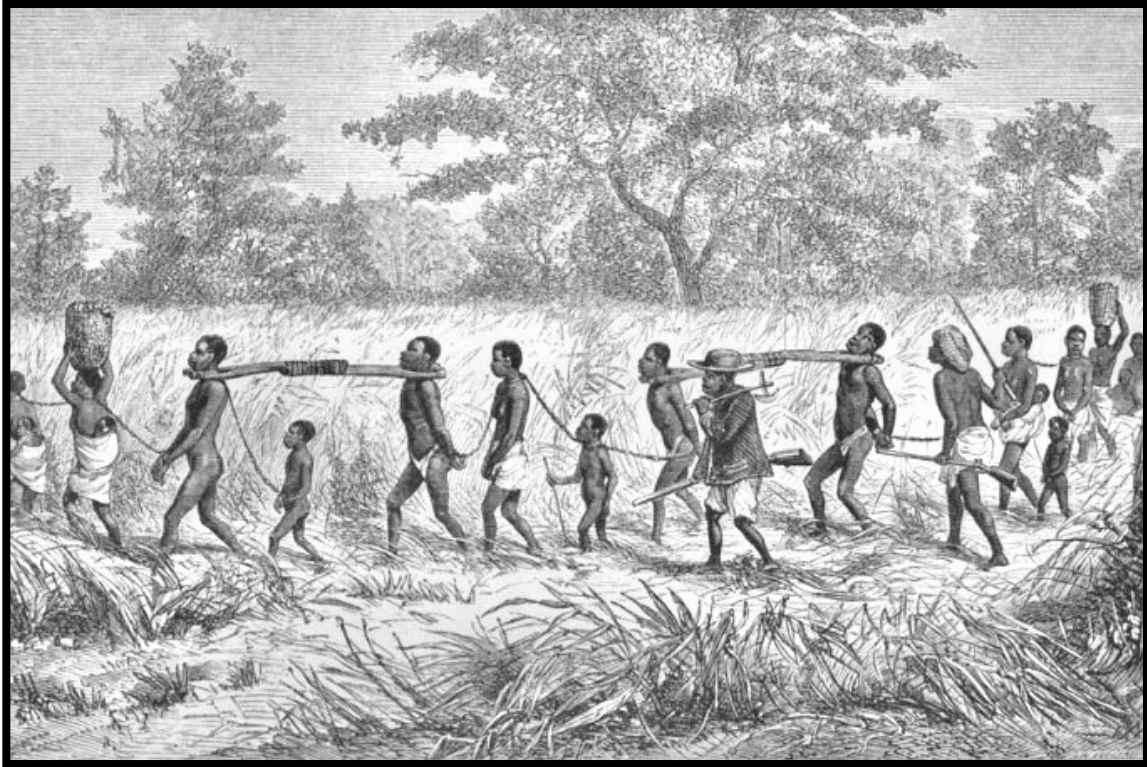


FIGURE 2 -LATE 18TH C. DRAWING OF BOUND CAPTIVES BEING MARCHED FROM AN INTERIOR AREA OF AFRICA TOWARDS EUROPEAN TRADING POSTS ON THE COAST, HARPER'S, 1865-1866, VOL. 32, P. 719



FIGURE 3 - SHACKLES, NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF HISTORY, COURTESY OF AVERY RESEARCH CENTER FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE, COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON



## Trade of Enslaved People In North Carolina

African Americans in High Point are part of a long and deep history of struggle against economic exploitation and political marginalization. Starting in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and accelerating in pace and numbers in the following centuries, enslaved Africans—among them, Igbo, Yoruba, Fon, Ewe, Bijago, and Senegambians—arrived in coffles to Carolina via the Caribbean. The initial trade of enslaved people was limited due to the colony’s geography, with its coastline being particularly challenging and dangerous for ships to land. As a result, most slave ships chose to land in ports to the north or south of the colony. The one exception was the port of Wilmington because of its accessibility sitting at the mouth of the Cape Fear River. As a result, enslaved Africans were brought from Virginia or South Carolina.

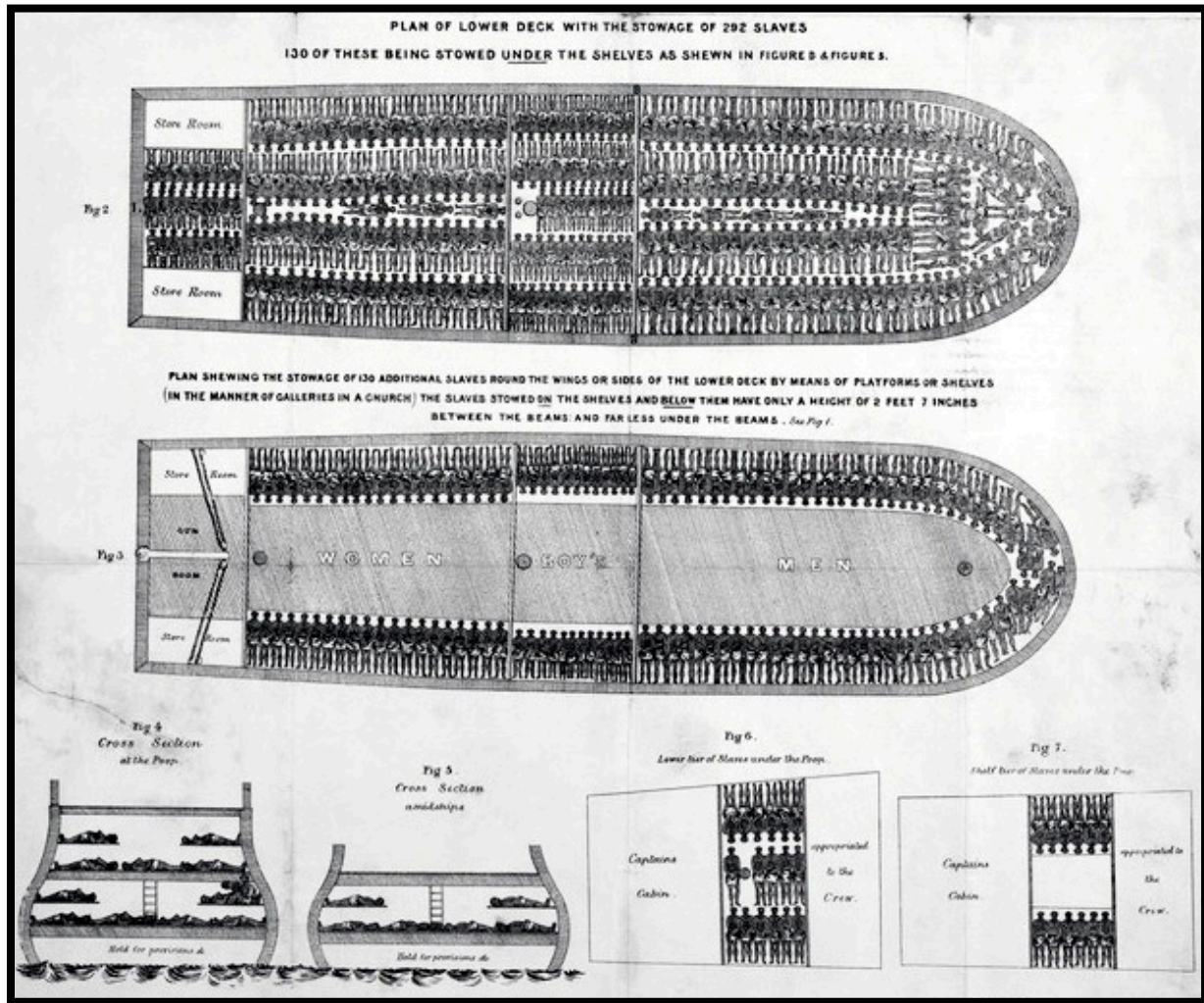


FIGURE 4 - BRITISH SLAVE SHIP BROOKES, 1788, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION

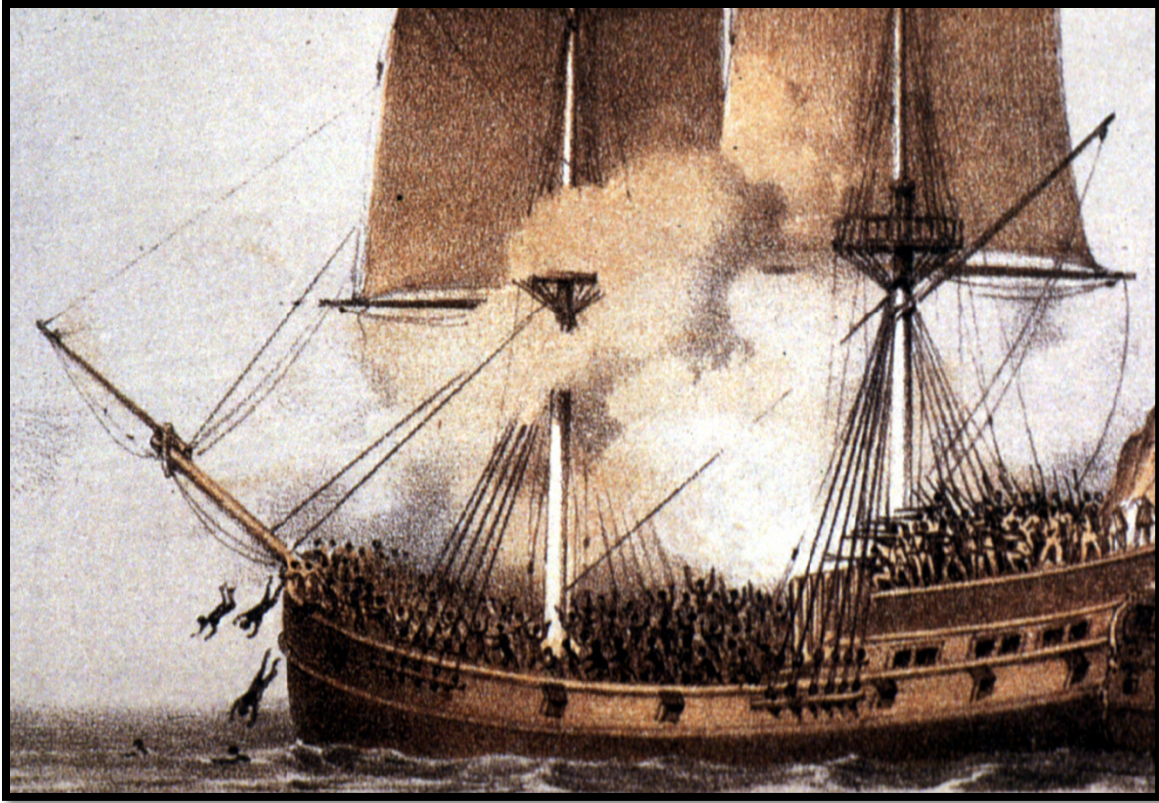


FIGURE 5 - ILLUSTRATION FROM CARL B. WADSTROM'S AN ESSAY ON COLONIZATION, LONDON, 1794, WIDENER LIBRARY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, CAMBRIDGE, MA

Regardless of where the enslaved men and women came from, the accumulation of wealth on the backs of Africans and their descendants for the benefit of White Englishmen who asserted their rule over the land and its people was by design. In 1663, King Charles II gave eight Lords Proprietors a royal charter for Carolina specifically to use the labor of enslaved people to develop the colony: fifty acres of land for every enslaved person over fourteen years of age brought to Carolina. (The single Carolina colony was divided into two separate colonies in 1729, today's North and South Carolina.) Notably, the royal charter was issued despite the land it covered being inhabited and used by multiple Native American nations and peoples (Tuscarora on the coast, Catawba in the lower Piedmont, and Cherokee in the west) and the enslaved Africans being neither English criminals nor subjects, but captives of war or kidnapped from their own lands.

One can only begin to imagine the havoc, despair, destruction, and living nightmare of families and communities in West and West-Central Africa who lost kith and kin to the transatlantic slave trade; and the horrors experienced by those taken and subjected to the weeks-long journey of the Middle Passage, packed into the stench-filled hulls of slave ships traveling across the choppy Atlantic Ocean. Aboard the dreaded ships, a combination of sweat, vomit, blood, and feces swished across the floorboards to which the enslaved captives—men, women, and children, each with their own stories, their own dreams—were tightly fastened or frustratingly chained. Sharks



quickly learned to follow the slave ships to consume bodies thrown overboard, bodies that had succumbed to the abominable onboard conditions, or accidentally killed by crewmen, who were, in turn, punished for losing costly 'cargo' financed by private banks and merchants.

The historian Markus Rediker documents some of this in *The Slave Ship: A Human History*, as he does the resistance of enslaved Africans aboard the factory-like ships who tried to overcome the *barricado*, the reinforced wooden barriers built midship behind which pressed and impressed young crewmen, no doubt themselves terrified or numb from the violence they inflicted upon the African men, women, and children, retreated in the event of slave uprisings. From their elevated position, the crew could fire weapons, including small cannon, down at the rebels below who had conspired and somehow managed to free themselves from their shackles. To be sure, resistance to slavery began at the first point of contact in the transatlantic system, as the Igbo Olaudah Equiano, who was enslaved but later became a member of the British abolitionist group the Sons of Africa, recounted in his widely-distributed autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, first published in 1789.

Among the first English colonists to invest in Carolina were planters and other wealthy businessmen from Barbados. Through financial influence and political pressures, these wealthy European men persuaded the Lords Proprietors to institute the headright system under which English settlers received fifty acres for each "Negro-Man or Slave" and "Woman-Negro or Slave" brought to the province. Over the next two and a half centuries, these men and their White descendants profited off of the work of Black people—including the talents, skills, and creativity of these Africans and their descendants.

From the knowledge Senegambians brought with them regarding the cultivation of rice in the Carolinas during the colonial era to the discovery of a method of curing bright-leaf tobacco by an enslaved African American named Stephen Slade in Caswell County, Black people helped to create much of the wealth that made the colonies and then nation prosper. As scholars are beginning to better understand, the history of science, medicine, and technology is inextricably tied to indigenous African and Native American knowledge and practices that were later used by and credited to others. Most recently, the historian of science James Poskett provides examples of this across areas of the global African Diaspora in his book *Horizons: The Global Origins of Modern Science*.



FIGURE 6 - LUISA, ENSLAVED NANNY, MISSOURI HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 19TH C.



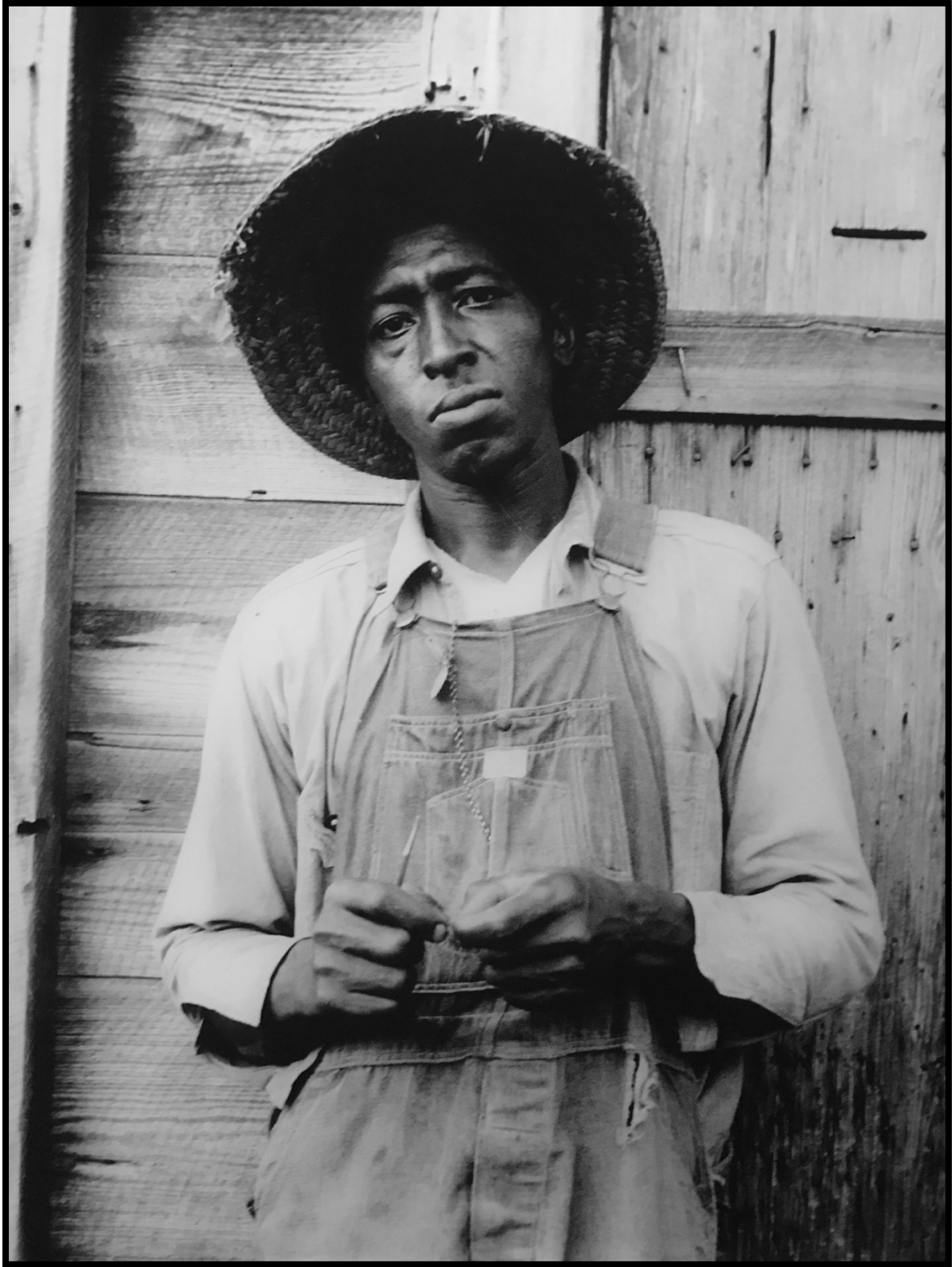


FIGURE 7 - NORTH CAROLINA SHARECROPPER, COURTESY OF THE NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF HISTORY



FIGURE 8 - TOBACCO PICKING, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WASHINGTON, D.C.



### ***Wealth from Exploitation of Africans and African Americans***

Beyond specific inventions, practices, and techniques refined by Africans and African Americans that advanced efficiencies, most of the accumulated wealth and daily services directly or indirectly reaped by the City of High Point, the state, and the nation, came either through financial gains in the form of products made by Black people and sold, or through taxes on such products and sales. African Americans worked in the tobacco and cotton fields and processing centers, in the timber and mining industries, in the construction of roads and buildings, and their work as domestic servants, nannies, cooks, and cleaners, or used or rented out as carpenters, tanners, butchers, and masons, among other forced or under-compensated work, created the wealth that made the city, state, and nation run. Notably, and with few restrictions, super-exploited Black labor was backed by the law, be it common law prior to Independence or constitutional law and local ordinances and codes, thereafter. While cases of redress were heard in court, few free Black petitioners and their White allies succeeded in pursuing legal avenues, as the laws were largely created to protect property owners and the ruling class.



FIGURE 9 - WHITE OAK COTTON MILLS IN GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA, CIRCA 1910



FIGURE 10 - "JUVENILE CONVICTS AT WORK IN THE FIELDS," DETROIT PHOTOGRAPHIC CO., 1903



FIGURE 11 - BLACK FAMILY PICKING COTTON, NINETEENTH CENTURY

Compound interest, working to the benefit of financiers, planters, and merchants, worked in the negative when it came to non-property owners and the enslaved, creating intractable forms of poverty—the cast of a long shadow. In turn, generation upon generation of legalized political and economic marginalization of African Americans in North Carolina have resulted in poorer nutrition and health, higher infant mortality rates, and lower life expectancies among Black people, including members of the High Point community, in comparison to wealthier, White communities. That is, African Americans created significant wealth for others at their own physical and financial expense. The relative benefits and harm would compound over generations, making the inequities between High Point’s Black and White populations extensive (see the demographic and housing report by Stephen J. Sills for the One High Point Commission).

### ***The Prison Industrial Complex***

An additional driver of poverty in Black communities was the emergence of the prison industrial complex, the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment to control Black communities. The punitive system continues to drive disproportionate African American incarceration relative to other populations. Starting off as forms of posse comitatus, slave patrols, then police guarded against possible Black rebellion. The convict-lease system, where prisoners were rented out for labor, extended forced labor into the late 19th century and into the 20th. In North Carolina, convict leasing was not explicitly prohibited until 1933. In these ways, the police and prisons became powerful extensions of the law—a public-private partnership—in controlling Black communities, and further extracting the labor of African Americans. Within this context of layered institutional forms of discrimination (racism towards African Americans), the concentrated success of High Point’s historic Washington Street, with its churches and independent Black businesses, including a theatre, hotels, a pharmacy, law office, and dental and medical services, may be even more fully appreciated in the face of the multiple constraints and burdens placed upon African Americans historically.

As the late African American historian John Hope Franklin detailed in his classic study, *The Free Negro in North Carolina, 1790-1860*, despite the enslavement of the vast majority of Black people in the state, prior to the abolition of slavery in 1865 with the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, there was always a small free Black population. And among these free Black women, men, and children, were those who resisted the institution of slavery alongside enslaved African Americans, whose self-liberatory actions have been documented since the colonial period. Most notable were the slave revolts of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and runaway communities that formed near plantations, to be able to visit loved ones, or deep in the forests or swamps—from New Garden woods in Guilford County to the Great Dismal Swamp in northeastern North Carolina.





**TEN DOLLARS REWARD**—Ran away from the subscriber on Saturday, the 28th ult., the griffe girl **MARIA**, aged about 45 years, formerly a cake marchand. She is about 5 feet 2 or 3 inches high. The above reward will be paid to any one who will return her to the subscriber.

ap7—6t\*

**Mrs. A. DOVAL,**  
corner of Carondelet and Calliope sts.



**ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD**—Ran away from the subscriber on the 5th instant, **ANDREW READ**, a boy about 23 years of age, 5 feet 4 or 5 inches high, well set, yellow complexion, long black hair, slightly curled and worn usually tucked under on the back part of the head; large black eyes; reads and writes and is a very good accountant. In his general appearance he is rather genteel, generally dresses well, and is pleasing in his address. I will give one hundred dollars for the apprehension and delivery of said boy, or for his confinement in any jail so that I can get him. As he can provide himself with a pass, he will most likely attempt to secure passage upon a steamboat. Captains will please be on the lookout.

ap6—1f 1/2

**ALLEN JONES, 17 Royal st.**



**FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD**—Will be paid by the subscriber for the arrest and delivery to him of the negro man **JOHNSON**, very black, about 6 feet 6 inches high, thirty years old; has generally whiskers. He is a shoemaker and saddler by trade, and no doubt he will try to obtain employment as such. I purchased him on the 28th October last, from Bernard Kendig, and he ran away on the 25th November following. I believe he is in the city.

ap1—12t

**J. P. FRERET.**

FIGURE 12 - RUNAWAY SLAVE ADVERTISEMENTS, 1857

As part of surviving or attempting to escape the brutality of enslavement, African Americans pooled their resources, created and maintained cultural traditions, and supported each other—kith and kin alike—as best possible. (The term ‘fictive kin’ is sometimes used by scholars to more accurately describe people who are not biological relatives, but from the vantage point of the

people being described, there is nothing fictive about such relations—they are family.) As Guilford County resident and community builder Ms. Linda Dunston Stacey notes, “as much as there has been political struggle in our history, it was love and care for each other that sustained us all” (personal communication, June 23, 2023).

The brutality of slavery, from sexual assault, especially of girls and women, and other attacks and forms of torture, to the threat of violence, either to oneself or a loved one, compelled many of the enslaved to either hide or run away—and far away. The historian Sylviane Diouf’s book *Slavery’s Exiles: The Story of the American Maroons*, in combination with that of Fergus Bordewich’s *Bound for Canaan: The Underground Railroad and the Soul of America*, with a chapter dedicated to New Garden, offer vivid accounts of the history of runaways and the ways in which they stayed hidden.

‘Maroon,’ the word for runaway or fugitive slave, comes from the Spanish word *cimarron*, which was then Anglicized. *Cimarron* was the word used by Iberian colonists to describe both runaway cattle and enslaved people, since, in the law enslaved people were also property. Of the approximately 11 million Africans enslaved and taken to the Americas, the vast majority first went to parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, accounting for today’s large Afro-Latin American populations across the western hemisphere; less than five percent of enslaved Africans between 1502 and 1860 (the last slave ship, *Clotilda*, arrived at Mobile Bay, Georgia, on July 9, 1860) went directly from the continent to the North American British colonies or the United States—due to the ocean currents and winds making a direct northern route from Africa to the eastern seaboard of the United States longer and more difficult. This explains why most enslaved people arriving in North Carolina came from the Caribbean.

Contemporary eyewitness accounts provide harrowing stories of Africans and African Americans seeking freedom through self-liberation: running away. Levi Coffin, the Guilford County Quaker conductor of the Underground Railroad does so in partnership with an African American man named Saul. Little is known beyond Saul’s role as a facilitator in communicating with prospective runaways, but we know that he eventually escaped north. Coffin offers the following account in his autobiography, *Reminiscences*, about his experience meeting African and African American runaways:

*“Runaway slaves used frequently to conceal themselves in the woods and thickets in the vicinity of New Garden, waiting [for] opportunities to make their escape to the North... I sat in the thickets with them [and] listened to the stories they told of hard masters and cruel treatment, or spoke in language, simple... yet glowing with native eloquence, of the glorious hope of freedom which animated their spirits in the darkest hours, and sustained them under the sting of the lash.” (p. 20)*



## ***Resistance and Revolt***

By 1800, 133,296 Black people, or one out of four North Carolinians, were enslaved. Many lived under the sting of the lash, or the threat of such violence to themselves or loved ones. Resistance and revolt were natural responses to enslavement—desperate acts of courage in the face of cruelty and what would eventually be deemed as crimes against humanity. One out of ten slave ships experienced slave revolts. Resistance took a range of forms, starting at the first point of contact with slave raiders in Africa; it continued at the holding forts dotting the west coast of Africa (notoriously, El Mina, among other sites); revolts took place aboard slave ships, and when they disembarked; enslaved people ran away, but also engaged in work slowdowns, destroyed property, and in some cases, took up arms. Most famously, Nat Turner’s 1831 revolt in neighboring Virginia had the effect in the wake of its defeat of creating ever-more restrictive laws in North Carolina. For the rebellion itself, eleven suspected organizers were hanged. Throughout the era of slavery, and its systematic violence, and continuing through the era of Jim Crow, Black people were active agents of resistance, change, and survival even as they created the wealth of the city, the state, and the nation.

With the rise of the Abolitionist movement in the North, making the abolition of slavery a public issue for debate, and the rising number of enslaved Black people working in North Carolina, many African Americans fled and joined the ranks of the Union Army with the outbreak of the Civil War. And while the war led to the ending of slavery in 1865 with the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, African Americans were subjected to the highly inequitable system of sharecropping and became increasingly in debt. Black communities pooled their resources to create organizations of their own: churches, schools, associations, and other cooperative ventures.

African Americans mobilized to support Reconstruction—the Republican-led federally-directed rebuilding of the physical and political infrastructure in the South, starting in 1863 (initially in Union-occupied areas and then across the region). However, by the late 1870s, in the midst of an economic downturn and pressure from the Redeemers—the Southern wing of the Democratic Party, which sought to regain their power and enforce White supremacy—would help ensure the

## **Resisting Enslavement**

Fighting slave raiders

Jumping overboard slave ships

Revolting aboard slave ships

Running away

Suicide and Infanticide

Purposefully moving slowly

Coordinated work

slowdowns

Poisoning Food

end of Reconstruction. The old plantation class returned to power in a new form, some turning to industry.

In the years following the collapse of Reconstruction, a new movement of Black farmers, sharecroppers, and agrarian workers arose in the South, arriving in North Carolina in approximately 1886. Black Populist leader, the Rev. Walter A. Pattillo, led the formation of the Colored Farmers Alliance and then advocated for the creation of a third party, the People's Party. That party worked in coalition with the Republican Party in the state, running shared candidates and receiving a majority of votes to usher in a Populist-Republican 'fusion' government in the early 1890s. However, by 1898 the White-supremacist Democratic Party (whose logo even used the words "White Supremacy" to make it perfectly clear what they stood for) would no longer tolerate the Black and White movement and moved to overthrow the democratically elected government. Continuing the violence inflicted on African Americans and their allies starting in the late 1880s in the form of public lynching in response to the growing movement, the Democrats with their paramilitary adjunct organizations, the Red Shirts, overthrew the government of Wilmington in 1898, where a prominent Black middle-class community had formed.



FIGURE 13 - BLACK POPULIST LEADERS, REV. WALTER A. PATTILLO, TOP ROW SECOND FROM LEFT, 1890-1900



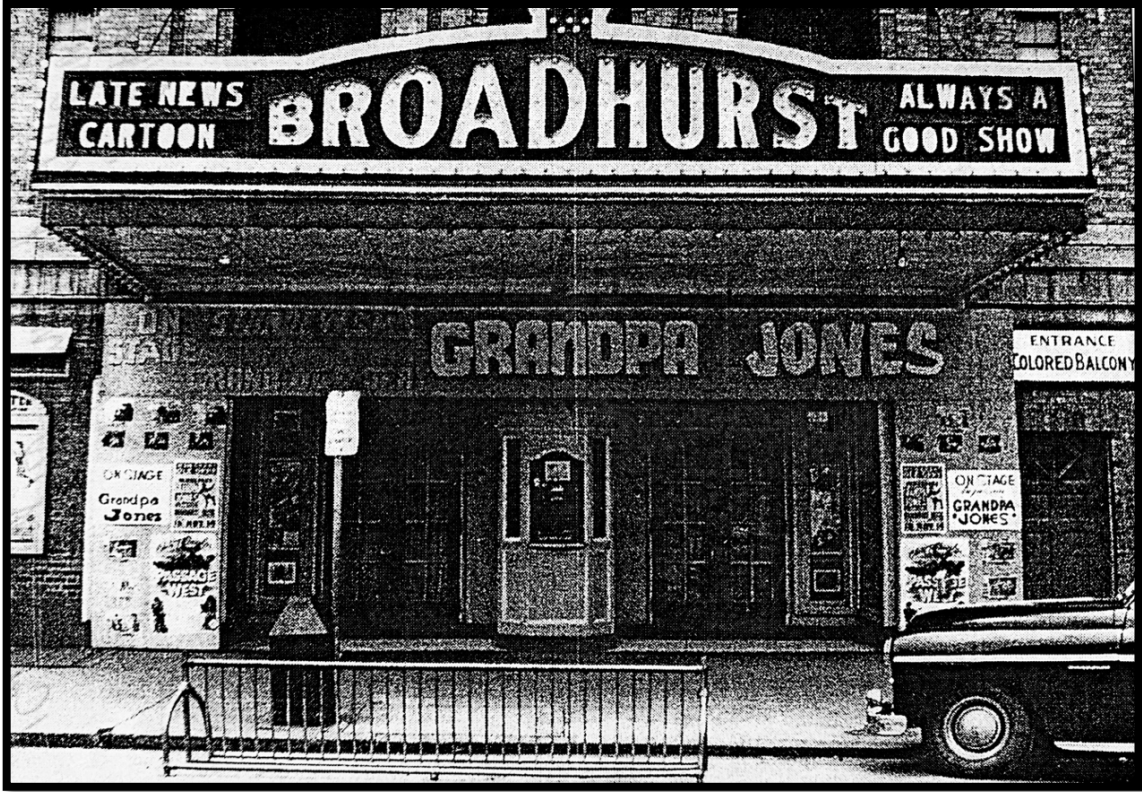


FIGURE 14 - SEGREGATED BROADHURST THEATER, HIGH POINT, NORTH CAROLINA, CIRCA 1951



FIGURE 15 - WILLIAM PENN H.S. BAND, CHRISTMAS DAY PARADE MAIN STREET, HIGH POINT, NC CIRCA 1949

## ***The Twentieth Century***

The first several decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the legal disfranchisement and segregation of African Americans. The divide and conquer strategy of Jim Crow to ensure that poor and working-class people from across the color line who shared economic interests were driven apart—the ongoing strategy of the ruling class—worked with great effect. While the movement of Black farmers and other workers was temporarily crushed in North Carolina, a new movement arose with the sharecropper’s union and tenant farmer organizations in the decades thereafter. Meanwhile, in the North, the New Negro movement, the Black Nationalism of Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), and the work of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), gained traction.

Ultimately, it would take a new generation, that of the modern Civil Rights movement, to finally build sufficient political pressure to begin to dismantle Jim Crow and challenge the inequities faced by African Americans in terms of access to land, housing, jobs, healthcare, transportation, and education (see the reports of Paul Ringel and Virginia Summey for the One High Point Commission), and Black disfranchisement.

On February 11, 1960, ten days after the Woolworth’s lunch counter sit-ins began in Greensboro, North Carolina, young people in High Point launched their own sit-ins, which spread across the South. Older African American leaders, such as Ella Baker, lent their support to this younger generation of Black activists.

High Point’s civil rights activists continued their protests with other forms of boycotting and picketing, including of the segregated movie theaters downtown in 1963. Rev. B. Elton Cox would also call for a reinstatement of a Human Relations Committee which could work with local business owners and civil rights leaders to advance integration. An earlier committee had been formed but only lasted briefly. Rev. Cox, among others, saw the reinstatement of such a committee as a way of bridging divides and creating more allies in the city. However, frustrated with slow progress on this front, he placed additional pressure on the city by stating “Unless we get our civil rights here in High Point, we will take 1,000 Whites and Blacks down to the furniture building and lay down in the street” (noted in the High Point Museum’s section entitled “The Civil Rights Movement at its Peak”). Threatened by the prospects of negative publicity regarding the nationally-attended Furniture Market with the potential civil rights protest, the city’s business leaders negotiated with city officials to allow a permanent human relations commission to encourage further integration.





FIGURE 16 - STUDENT SIT-IN PROTEST AT THE HIGH POINT WOOLWORTH'S LUNCH COUNTER. THE HIGH POINT ENTERPRISE NEGATIVE COLLECTION, FEBRUARY 11, 1960



FIGURE 17 - STUDENTS FROM WILLIAM PENN H.S. PROTESTING FOR CIVIL RIGHTS IN 1966

Under mounting local and national political pressure from the Civil Rights movement, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965, ensuring equal protection of the law under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, with federal enforcement of voting rights.

A Black Power movement nevertheless arose in the years after the Civil and Voting Rights Acts, asserting the importance of the redistribution of wealth, in what was criticized as liberal dressing to deep structural inequities. Under the leadership of African Americans, including Eddie McCoy and Ben Chavis, and building on the Black independence and call for justice and both political and economic power for African Americans, the Black Panther Party came to symbolize the new movement. Calls for reparations began to be articulated among this newest generation of Black activists steeped in the history of slavery and having themselves lived under Jim Crow.

### ***Conclusions***

From dawn to dusk, and deep into the night, the labor of Black people was fundamental in the creation of High Point's wealth, as with the State of North Carolina and the nation as a whole. African Americans in the city are an inextricable part of what is a long and disturbing history of injustice that began with the enslavement of dozens, then hundreds, thousands, and finally millions of people from various parts of West and West Central Africa kidnapped and forcibly taken across the world. Here on the other side of the Atlantic, Black people worked on the plantations and in the mines, factories, and homes of people and institutions that were never their own. From the colonial era through much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, those who were enslaved or faced daily discrimination under Jim Crow resisted their exploitation and dehumanization for years, decades, indeed, entire lifetimes.

The political actions of African Americans, with allies alongside them, have changed the course of history. Such actions have brought about laws that have created opportunities for social, political, and economic advancement for some African Americans. However, policies to ensure full citizenship and redress the economic injustices of slavery and its legacy of Jim Crow community-wide have yet to be implemented. Together as a city, and grounded in our collective histories, we move with high hopes and great possibilities toward the light of dawn.

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In Appendices A & B you will find excerpts from contemporary interviews of long-term African American residents of High Point and a detailed timeline of African American political, economic, and legal history in High Point, Guilford County, and the State of North Carolina.

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## Appendix A – Timeline of African American History 1600-2022

Synthesizing the work of historians, political scientists, economists, and sociologists, what follows is a historical timeline of Black labor and the struggle for equality with particular milestones regarding African Americans drawn from the North Carolina Museum of History, High Point Museum, and the references listed at the end of the document, including Glenn Chavis' *Our Roots, Our Branches, Our Fruit: High Point's Black History, 1859-1960*, to help guide the Commission and serve as an educational tool for the public.

- **1600** Upwards of 40 million people organized into centralized states as well as decentralized societies have been living in complex cultural, economic, and political entities across West and West Central Africa for over two thousand years. Meanwhile, Native Americans, organized into multiple nations and scores of tribes in the area of North Carolina include Tuscarora on the seaboard east coast, Catawba in the Piedmont, and Cherokee in the western mountains. The Saura (Cheraw) and the Keeyauwee live near the area of High Point. They were Siouan people, sharing a similar language and culture.
- **1606** The area of present-day North Carolina is included in English King James I's charter to the Virginia Company of London.
- **1607** Jamestown, the first successful English colony in North America, is established in Virginia. The colonists begin using tobacco as a cash crop for export to England.
- **1619** A Dutch ship arrives at Jamestown carrying 20 captive African natives. These Africans are treated as indentured servants and worked in tobacco fields. Their introduction into Virginia sets the stage for African slavery to develop in English America.
- **1629** King Charles I grants land south of Virginia to Sir Robert Heath. The king names the region Carolina, or Carolana, for himself.
- **1650** White settlers begin to move into Native American lands along the coastal sounds and rivers of North Carolina.
- **1650–1820** The area of present-day North Carolina serves as a haven for runaway slaves. Locally, many flee to the New Garden woods (Guilford Woods today) while many



others flee to the Great Dismal Swamp in the northeastern part of the state, where some establish communities.

- **1663** King Charles II grants Carolina to eight supporters called Lords Proprietors. The region, which includes present-day North and South Carolina, stretches from Albemarle Sound in the north to present-day Florida in the south and west to the Pacific Ocean. The Proprietors divide this land into three counties: Albemarle, Clarendon, and Craven. Scottish merchant William Drummond is appointed governor of Albemarle County, the only one of the three counties with colonists. Tobacco becomes a major export crop, although lack of a deep-water port prevents shipment of goods directly to England.
- **1663–1667** Colonists from Boston and Barbados attempt to settle in the Cape Fear region, but no settlements last long. Settlers continue to enter the colony from the north, but the Cape Fear region will not have permanent colonists until 1725. The Albemarle County Assembly, North Carolina’s earliest legislative assembly, meets for the first time.
- **1669** In an attempt to tighten their control over unruly Albemarle colonists, the Lords Proprietors issue the Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina, written by John Locke. This document increases the power of appointed officials, decreases the power of elected officials, and makes ownership of 50 acres of land a requirement for voting. Locke asserts that enslaved people are an extension of property; they do not have civil or political rights in his world view.
- **1672** George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends (Quakers), and missionary William Edmundson visit Albemarle and convert many colonists to Quakerism. Edmundson preaches the first sermon in the colony near the site of Hertford. Quakers will become the first religious body to obtain a foothold in Carolina. Some would emerge as strident Abolitionists and allies to African Americans seeking their liberation.
- **1677** Albemarle settlers using enslaved Black labor market 2,000 hogsheads of tobacco, receiving £20,000 for the year’s crop (equivalent to approximately \$3 million today)
- **1689** The Lords Proprietors appoint Philip Ludwell governor of Albemarle and all of the colony “north and east of the Cape Feare.” This splits Carolina into two political entities.

- **1700** An escaped slave serves as an architect in the construction of a large Tuscarora fort near the Neuse River.
- **1701** English settlers begin moving west and south of the Albemarle area.
- **1709** Surveyor John Lawson, who began a thousand-mile journey through the colony at the end of 1700, publishes *A New Voyage to Carolina*.
- **1710** The Tuscarora on the Roanoke and Tar-Pamlico Rivers send a petition to the government of Pennsylvania protesting the seizure of their lands and enslavement of their people by Carolina settlers.
- **1711** The Tuscarora capture surveyor John Lawson and two enslaved Africans. Lawson argues with the chief, Cor Tom, and is executed. The Native Americans spare one White settler and the Africans. In a series of uprisings over the next four years, the Tuscarora attempt to drive away White settlement. The Tuscarora are upset over the practices of White traders, the capture and enslavement of Native Americans by White people, and the continuing encroachment of settlers onto Tuscarora hunting grounds.
- **1715** An act of assembly declares the Church of England the established church of the colony and adopts plans to build roads, bridges, ferries, sawmills, and gristmills throughout the colony, for which enslaved Black labor will be used. North Carolina adopts its first slave code, which tries to define the social, economic, and physical place of enslaved people. The General Assembly enacts a law denying Black people and Native Americans the right to vote. The king will repeal the law in 1737. Some free African Americans will continue to vote until disfranchisement in 1835.
- **1720** Exports of pitch and tar to Great Britain by way of New England are reported at 6,000 barrels. Enslaved Black labor is used for production.
- **1723** South Carolina planters settle along the Lower Cape Fear River and begin developing the rice and naval stores industries. They bring large numbers of enslaved Black people and a large, plantation-style system of slavery.
- **1729** North Carolina becomes a royal colony when King George II purchases shares from seven of the eight Lords Proprietors. Only Earl Granville refuses to sell. Small quantities of iron are shipped to England at this time.

- **1730** Excluding Native Americans, North Carolina's population is approximately 35,000.
- **1731** The port of Brunswick (just south of Wilmington today) flourishes. Forty-two vessels carrying cargo sail from the port in one year. The cargo is produced with enslaved Black labor.
- **1734** The first tobacco market in North Carolina opens in Bellair, Craven County.
- **1741** A law is enacted by the General Assembly requiring newly freed slaves to leave North Carolina within six months.
- **1750s** Armed conflicts arise between the Cherokee and colonists, who continue to expand areas of settlement further into the western part of the colony.
- **1753** The colony reports exports of pitch, tar, and turpentine at 84,012 barrels, drawing on enslaved Black labor.
- **1763** A group of White men from Edgecombe, Granville, and Northampton Counties petition the General Assembly to repeal a 1723 law that heavily taxes free African Americans upon marriage. The petitioners state that the tax leaves Black and mixed-race people "greatly impoverished and many of them rendered unable to support themselves and families with the common necessities of life."
- **1767** There are about 40,000 enslaved people in the colony, ninety percent of whom were field workers who performed agricultural jobs. Most of the remaining ten percent were domestic workers, and a small number worked as artisans in skilled trades, such as butchering, carpentry, and tanning. In the area of Guilford County, the Rev. David Caldwell opens a school, later known as Caldwell's Log College. The school, which serves as an academy, a junior college, and a theological seminary, becomes the most important one in the colony. Notably, Caldwell and his wife, Rachel, own an enslaved woman, **Ede**, who is prominently figured in years to come in the Abolitionist writings of Quaker Levi Coffin.
- **1774** Rowan County freeholders adopt resolutions opposing Crown taxes and duties, favoring restrictions on imports from Great Britain, and objecting to the "African trade."
- The First Continental Congress issues a "Declaration of Rights and Grievances" against Great Britain later in the year.



- **1775** North Carolina has a population estimated at 250,000, making it the fourth most populous mainland British colony. Between 10 and 30 percent of the backcountry population is of German descent, and most other White settlers in the region are Scots-Irish. Eastern North Carolina is populated mostly by English colonists and enslaved African Americans. From November to December, Virginia's royal governor, the Earl of Dunmore, calls upon slaves, indentured servants, and other Loyalists to assist in suppressing the rebellion of American colonists, promising those who were enslaved their freedom. Hundreds of African Americans from Virginia and North Carolina join his Royal Ethiopian Regiment. At the Battle of Great Bridge, Virginia and North Carolina colonials defeat Dunmore's forces.
- **1776** The Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends—Quakers—denounce slavery and appoint a committee to aid Friends in emancipating their slaves. Forty enslaved people are freed, but the courts declare them still enslaved and resell them. The British recruit enslaved and free African Americans along the North Carolina coast to form the Black Pioneers and Guides, a regiment of guides and laborers. This unit serves throughout the Revolutionary War. The Provincial Congress adopts the first North Carolina state constitution and elects Richard Caswell as governor.
- **1778** A list of Black people in the Continental Army shows that 58 African Americans served in the North Carolina Brigade. Upwards of one-tenth of George Washington's Continental Army consisted of African American men. On November 15, the Continental Congress adopts the Article of Confederation, uniting the colonies in the war against Great Britain and toward a unified government. African American **John Chavis** from Halifax County joins the Fifth Virginia Regiment of the Continental Army. Chavis remains in the army for three years and will go on to become a prominent teacher and minister. In 1832 Chavis will write to Senator Willie P. Mangum: "Tell them if I am Black, I am [a] free born American & a revolutionary soldier & therefore ought not to be thrown out of the scale of notice."
- **1781 Ned Griffen**, an enslaved Black man from Guilford County, fought on the Patriot's side of the American Revolutionary War at the Battle of Guilford Court House. Griffen

served as a substitute for his master William Kitchen who had deserted the North Carolina Brigade. Kitchen promised Griffen his freedom upon discharge, but instead reneged and sold him to a slave owner in Edgecombe County. Griffen, who was enlisted for just over one year (June 1781 to July 1782) petitioned the legislature for his freedom and three years later the General Assembly passed a law freeing Griffen “forever hereafter” and enfranchisement. His heirs were deeded 640 acres of land in October 1783.

- **1782** The British evacuate Charlestown, Massachusetts. With them go more than 800 North Carolina Loyalist soldiers (some will later be joined by their families) and perhaps as many as 5,000 African Americans, many of them runaway slaves from North and South Carolina.
- **1784** Methodist circuit riders, or traveling preachers, cover the North Carolina backcountry. Some Methodists are “Republican Methodists” who denounce slavery, and many circuit riders bar slaveholders from communion. Meanwhile, the Quakers’ North Carolina Yearly Meeting begin sending petitions to the North Carolina Legislature stressing the immorality of slavery and the importance of abolition.
- **1785** The General Assembly enacts a law requiring free and enslaved African Americans to wear badges in the towns of Edenton, Fayetteville, Washington, and Wilmington. Enslaved people must wear a leaden or pewter badge in a conspicuous place. Free Black people must wear a cloth badge on his or her left shoulder with the word free in capital letters.
- **1787** The banjo, an African musical instrument, is first mentioned in a journal by a visitor to Tarboro. (In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, former Guilford County resident and Guggenheim Fellow, **Rhiannon Giddens** will help revive the African American tradition of the banjo, for which her music will receive a Grammy.)
- **1788** An iron mine and forge operate in Lincoln County. Enslaved Black labor is likely used in the mining operation.
- **1790** The federal government takes the first census of the United States. Total North Carolina population, 393,751; Enslaved population, 100,572; Free Black

population, 4,975. **Henry Evans**, a free Black shoemaker, and Methodist minister, is credited with starting the Methodist church in Fayetteville.

- **1791** Wilmington exports about 3,000 hogsheads of flaxseed. Flax and hemp are important in the economy of backcountry farms, some of which include enslaved Black labor.
- **1792** Approximately 1,200 African Americans living in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Canada, many formerly from the Carolinas, resettle in Sierra Leone, West Africa. **Thomas Peters**, formerly enslaved in North Carolina, leads the party. Peters left his Wilmington-area plantation in 1776 to join the Black Pioneers and eventually attained the rank of sergeant in the regiment.
- **1793** Eli Whitney invents the first commercially successful cotton gin in Georgia. The cotton gin eventually changes the agricultural face of North Carolina by making cotton a profitable cash crop. Work begins on the Dismal Swamp Canal, which will link South Mills in Camden County with waterways in Virginia. Constructed with enslaved Black labor, the canal is the oldest man-made waterway in the United States.
- **1799** Gold is discovered on John Reed's farm in Cabarrus County, starting North Carolina's gold rush, which draws on enslaved Black labor. North Carolina becomes the primary supplier of gold for the United States until 1849.
- **1800** North Carolina total population 478,103; Enslaved Black population, 133,296. An average of 3,500 enslaved Africans and African Americans are being brought into North Carolina every year for their labor.
- **1802** A planned slave rebellion alarms White residents of northeastern North Carolina. Eleven suspected organizers are brutally executed to serve as an example to other potential rebels.
- **1807** Federal law ends the legal importation of enslaved Africans. However, Africans who are enslaved are still smuggled into the country, and internal slave trading continues until the abolishment of slavery across the nation nearly six decades later.



- **1808** The freeborn African American and veteran of the American Revolutionary War, **John Chavis**, opens a school in Raleigh. Chavis teaches White children by day and Black pupils at night.
- **1810** North Carolina total population, 555,500; enslaved Black population, 168,824. New Garden (Guilford) woods Underground Railroad conductor **Saul**, who partnered with Quaker Abolitionist Levi Coffin in Guilford County, risks his life to help other enslaved Africans and African Americans gain their freedom.
- **1814** The North Carolina Manumission Society organizes at New Garden Friends Meeting with Levi Coffin and cousin Vestal Coffin among its founding members. The organization is Quaker led but interdenominational and committed to gradual emancipation and the legal reforms to bring an end to slavery.
- **1819** Congress passes the Missouri Compromise, which admits Missouri to the United States as a slave state but prohibits slavery in the northern territories. North Carolina congressmen are divided on the issue: those from the east oppose the slavery exclusion measure, and those from the west favor it. During this year, both North Carolina and Virginia's legislators enact changes to facilitate interstate slave trading. Also, **John Dimery** is kidnapped by his former master's heirs and escapes to the New Garden woods, where he is assisted by Vestal Coffin—an early account of the Underground Railroad operating in Guilford County. Dimery would soon make his way to Wayne County, Indiana.
- **1820** North Carolina total population, 638,829; Enslaved Black population, 205,017; Free Colored population, 14,612.
- **1824** Gold is discovered in Rowan County in an area that becomes known as Gold Hill. Extensive mining begins in 1843, creating a short-lived boom town. Copper is also found in the area and will be mined until 1907. Enslaved Black labor is used in this mining until the end of slavery in 1865.
- **1825** African American artisan Thomas Day begins making furniture and opens his own shop, where he teaches his trade to White apprentices and enslaved Black workers.

- **1826** The North Carolina General Assembly passes a law forbidding the migration of free Black people into the state.
- **1829 George Moses Horton** publishes a book of poetry entitled *The Hope of Liberty*. It is the first book by an enslaved Black person not only in North Carolina but across the entire South.
- **1830** North Carolina total population, 737,987; Enslaved Black population 245,601; Free Colored population, 19,543. The General Assembly passes “Black Codes” restricting the activities of free and enslaved African Americans—for instance requiring a \$1,000 bond for each enslaved person freed to be on ‘good behavior’ and mandating that they leave the state within 90 days. David Walker, an African American born free in Wilmington in 1785, publishes *Walker’s Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* in Boston. Walker advocates open rebellion and the North Carolina General Assembly bans Walker’s writings, as well as other “seditious” works that “might excite insurrection.”
- **1831** The enslaved preacher **Nat Turner** leads twenty followers in a bloody revolt through Southampton County, Virginia, just north of the North Carolina border. The North Carolina militia is called out to assist in stopping the rebellion. The NC General Assembly passes a law forbidding Black preachers to speak at worship services where enslaved people from different owners are in attendance, and forbidding anyone to teach African Americans to read and write. **Omar ibn Said**, an enslaved Senegambian Muslim scholar, who had run away from South Carolina but is caught in Fayetteville, where he is re-enslaved, writes his autobiography in Arabic. Intrigued by his abilities, Said’s new owner, General James Owen, gives him less work and permits him to study an Arabic translation of the Bible. Said learns English and nominally converts to Christianity, becoming a member of First Presbyterian Church in Fayetteville in 1820. He passes away in 1864, one year before the abolition of slavery, at the age of 94.
- **1835** The North Carolina state constitution is extensively revised, with amendments approved by voters that provide for the direct election of the governor and more democratic representation in the legislature. However, the new state constitution also disenfranchises free Black people.

- **1836** The Senate approves the Cherokee Removal Treaty by one vote.
- **1837** Quakers found New Garden Boarding School, later Guilford College, in Guilford County, which becomes a site of anti-slavery actions. In coming years, one of the college's Black washerwomen, **Vina Curry**, would lend her late husband **Arch Curry's** manumission papers to runaways.
- **1838** Approximately 17,000 North Carolina Cherokee are forcibly removed from the state to Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). This event becomes known as the Trail of Tears. An estimated 4,000 Cherokee die during the 1,200-mile trek. A few hundred Cherokee refuse to be rounded up and transported. They hide in the mountains and evade federal soldiers. Eventually, a deal is struck between the army and the remaining Cherokee. Tsali, a leading Cherokee brave, agrees to surrender himself to General Winfield Scott to be shot if the army will allow the rest of his people to stay in North Carolina legally. The federal government eventually establishes a reservation for the Eastern Band of Cherokee. Runaway slaves were sometimes incorporated into Native American communities.
- **1839 Stephen Slade**, an enslaved African American, discovers a method of curing bright-leaf tobacco on a plantation in Caswell County.
- **1840** North Carolina total population, 753,419; Enslaved Black population, 245,817; Free Colored population, 22,732. Enslaved African Americans from North Carolina have been appearing in New York and other cities in the North, such as Sarah Moore, a fugitive slave who would end up living in New Haven, Connecticut. Enslaved people of all ages ran away, but most were in their twenties—the average age being twenty-five and a half—which was their prime working years. Three-fourths of runaways were men. Fugitives who arrived in New York told stories of frequent whippings and other brutal punishments. They spoke of “great violence,” “hard master,” and “a very cruel man.” Second only to physical abuse as a motive for escape was the ever-present threat of being sold or having a loved one sold off. The sale of slaves from the Upper South to the Lower South was a very profitable business. Nathaniel Browser, an enslaved North

Carolinian Black man, fled after hearing his owner speak about purchasing a plantation in Louisiana and selling off the people he owned who did not want to go with him.

- **1842 Harriet Jacobs**, an enslaved African American woman from Edenton, is smuggled onto a ship to escape to the North after spending seven years hiding in a small crawlspace above her free grandmother's kitchen in order to stay close to family. With the assistance of a "friendly captain," she is able to make it to Philadelphia, where Robert Purvis and the Vigilance Committee received her and sent her to New York. She later becomes an Abolitionist and writes *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, published in 1861.
- **1844** The Methodist Church splits into northern and southern contingents over the issue of slavery, followed by a split in the Baptist Church a year later.
- **1846 Joseph Johnson**, an African American who worked on a ship in New Bern, North Carolina, is able to escape when the vessel, bound for Barbados, was "wrecked at sea" and another ship rescued the crew members and brought them to New York.
- **1849 Thomas Day**, a free African American cabinetmaker, operates the state's largest furniture-making business in Milton, Caswell County.
- **1850** North Carolina total population, 869,039; Enslaved Black population, 316,011. Congress passes the Fugitive Slave Act, requiring that all escaped slaves, upon capture, be returned to their masters and that both officials and citizens of free states had to cooperate, or face criminal charges themselves. The law was retroactive, applying to all enslaved people who had run away in the past, including those who had long been residents of free states. The Fugitive Slave Act did nothing to protect free Black people from being kidnapped.
- **1851** As a result of the Fugitive Slave Law, passed by Congress one year earlier, **Jerry McHenry**, who had escaped enslavement in North Carolina eight years earlier and settled in Syracuse, was arrested by federal marshals.
- **1854** The Kansas-Nebraska Act, passed by Congress, effectively repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820 that drew a line where slavery would be permitted. The bill reopens hostilities between North and South over the expansion of slavery in the



territories by making it possible, through “popular sovereignty,” for slavery to exist in the western territories as they became states.

- **1856** The North Carolina Railroad, which connects Goldsboro and Charlotte, and used enslaved Black labor, is completed. **Hannah Bond**, an enslaved African American woman who had escaped from North Carolina would write a novel entitled *The Bondwoman’s Narrative* under the name Hannah Crafts; she is the first Black woman in the United States to write a novel, but not published until 2002, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
- **1857 Hinton Rowan Helper**, born in Davie County, publishes his antislavery book *The Impending Crisis of the South*. The U.S. Supreme Court also issues the Dred Scott decision stating that Black people are not considered citizens and that slaveholders can legally take slaves into the free states.
- **1859** The City of High Point is incorporated and named after the highest point of the North Carolina Railroad between Charlotte and Goldsboro; it is a central location for the transportation of cotton and lumber, as well as the importation of processed goods. Its boundaries will eventually be within four counties: Davidson, Forsyth, Guilford, and Randolph. On October 16 of this year the militant Abolitionist John Brown captures the U.S. Arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Va., in an attempt to incite a slave insurrection. Two free African Americans from North Carolina, Lewis Sheridan Leary from Fayetteville and John Anthony Copeland from Raleigh, join Brown’s forces. Leary is killed when U.S. troops capture Brown’s forces. Copeland, along with Brown and other followers, is tried and executed for treason.
- **1860** The High Point African American population is no more than two hundred (an 1859 count notes a total population of 525 in the city); North Carolina total population, 992,622; Enslaved Black population, 361,522. The production of turpentine, primarily for use in shipping, and which uses enslaved Black labor, is the largest manufacturing industry in North Carolina. Two-thirds of the nation’s output of turpentine comes from the state. Most turpentine distilleries are located in Bladen, Cumberland, and New Hanover Counties. In October, a planned slave uprising near Plymouth fails when an enslaved person exposes the plot; and in November, Abraham Lincoln, who opposes the

expansion of slavery in the territories, wins the presidential election. After his election, seven southern states leave the Union.

- **1861** North Carolina lawmakers bar any Black person from owning or controlling a slave, making it impossible for a free person of color to buy freedom for a family member or friend. In February, the Confederate States of America is established with Jefferson Davis as its president. North Carolina initially remains in the United States but in May, a state convention held in Raleigh votes to leave the U.S. and join the Confederacy.
- **1861–1865** Approximately 42,000 North Carolinians lose their lives in the Civil War. North Carolina sends the most men and suffers the most casualties of any Confederate state. Native Americans have varying experiences during the war. Many Cherokees in western North Carolina, some of whom are slave holders, support the Confederacy. One of the best-known Confederate units has two companies of Cherokee soldiers. The Lumbee in eastern North Carolina, however, are forced to work on Confederate fortifications near Wilmington. Many flee and form groups to resist impressment.
- **1863** On January 1, President Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation. James City, a community of freed slaves, is settled near New Bern in Union-occupied Craven County.
- **1864** The Board of Commissioners of High Point passes multiple ordinances, including to stop “All Negroes trading at the trains or selling in the streets... and any Negro violating the ordinance shall receive fifteen lashes for each offense.” They also pass a regulation stating “It shall be the duty of the street patrol to see that not more than two Negroes are to gather at one place at a time on Sunday except it be on the way to preaching.” Moreover, the Board passed an ordinance that called on free White males between the ages of 16 and 60 years of age to work on the streets and roads of High Point but that “... all able bodied male slaves between the ages foresaid [16-60] shall be required to work as foresaid and all owners of such slaves shall be required to send them with such tools as the street commissioner shall designate.” (See Chavis, 1)
- **1865** On April 9, General Robert E. Lee surrenders the Army of Northern Virginia to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox, Virginia. Lee’s forces include large numbers of

North Carolinians. After abandoning the capital at Richmond, Confederate president Jefferson Davis and his cabinet stop in Greensboro to attempt to reorganize the failing Confederate war effort. Davis passes through Charlotte on his way south when the surrender of General Johnston's army becomes certain. General Sherman's Union army soon occupies Raleigh. Federal troops arrest Governor Zebulon B. Vance and William W. Holden is appointed governor by President Andrew Johnson, who takes office with the assassination of Lincoln. In October, a North Carolina convention votes to repeal the Ordinance of Secession and end slavery; on November 28, the General Assembly ratifies the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which officially abolishes slavery.

- **1867** Congress passes a Reconstruction Act, making North Carolina part of a military district under Federal army occupation.
- **1868** An election brings the first African American state legislators to office—3 senators and 17 representatives. **Wesley Lindsay**, an African American man from High Point, writes the Superintendent of Schools for help in starting a Freedman's School in the city for Black people. On July 4, North Carolina is readmitted to the Union.
- **1869** North Carolina has 257 schools for African Americans with a combined enrollment of 15,657 students. On March 5, North Carolina ratifies the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which gives African American men the right to vote.
- **1870** North Carolina total population, 1,071,361; Black population 390,650. Governor Holden proclaims Alamance and Caswell Counties in a state of insurrection after the Ku Klux Klan perpetrate acts of violence, including several murders. Empowered by an 1869 law, Holden declares martial law and deploys troops to the area. **Moses Nailor** is purported to be the first Black person to make brick by hand in High Point.
- **1871** African Americans begin establishing their own churches in High Point, such as **Rev. Harry Cowens**, who organizes First Baptist Church. Between February and March, Democrats, newly returned to power in the legislature, remove Republican governor Holden from power. They impeach Holden, who is convicted on six charges; in September, Congress, alarmed about recent events in North Carolina, investigates the role of the Ku Klux Klan in the state's politics. Nearly 1,000 men are arrested by federal

soldiers for alleged involvement with the Klan; 37 are convicted. This investigation helps limit Klan activity in the state for a period of years.

- **1873 James Edward O'Hara** becomes the first African American lawyer admitted to the North Carolina Bar. Two years later, **John A. Hyman** becomes the first African American to represent North Carolina in Congress. He serves until 1877. A stagecoach driver who became famous along Plank Road (now Main Street) in High Point was **Henry C. Davis**, a young African American who drove the route from Salem to High Point.
- **1877** Reconstruction ended when newly elected Republican president Rutherford B. Hayes removes Federal troops from the South in a compromise brokered by the Republican Party to allow him to win several contested electoral college votes. The General Assembly authorizes a normal school for Black people and chooses the Howard School, which opened in 1867 in Fayetteville and is renamed the State Colored Normal School (now Fayetteville State University), designated for teacher training. It is the first state-supported institution of higher learning for African Americans in North Carolina. Zebulon Vance, North Carolina governor during the Civil War, is reelected to the office as Democrats, known as Redeemers, regain control of the state government.
- **1879 Charles N. Hunter** helps form the North Carolina Industrial Association to try to improve the lives of African Americans by emphasizing economic progress rather than political activity (similar to Booker T. Washington soon thereafter). Hunter's Colored Industrial Fair, held in Raleigh, becomes the most popular social event for Black people in the state.
- **1880** North Carolina total population, 1,339,750; Black population, 531,277. North Carolina has 126 tobacco factories that annually manufacture 6.5 million pounds of plug tobacco and 4 million pounds of smoking and other tobacco, altogether valued at \$2,300,000. Tobacco manufacturing eventually becomes centered in Durham, Winston-Salem, Reidsville, and Greensboro. Meanwhile, African Americans in High Point are beginning to establish their own small businesses, such as restaurant owners **Willis R. Hinton** and his wife **Fannie Hinton** on South Main Street. North Carolina's first furniture factory opens in Mebane the following year.



- **1887** The Farmer's Alliance and Cooperative Union, a national grassroots organization, spreads into North Carolina, where the Colored Farmers' Alliance is under the leadership of Black Populist leader the **Rev. Walter A. Pattillo**. The Alliance encourages North Carolina farmers to band together to fight unfair credit practices among the state's merchants and to bring farm issues into the political arena. By 1891 the Colored Farmers' Alliance has up to 10,000 African American members. **Charles W. Chesnutt**, the son of freeborn Sampson County African Americans, becomes the first Black writer to publish in the *Atlantic Monthly* and serves as principal of the State Colored Normal School (now Fayetteville State University).
- **1888** The High Point Furniture Manufacturing Company is established. High Point begins its rise as a major furniture manufacturing center, drawing on Black labor. Willis Hinton, an African American businessman who arrived in High Point in 1868, first worked the North Carolina Railroad. After leaving a factory job in 1883, he opened a café on South Main Street. His business flourished for five years before selling it to open the 11-room Hinton Hotel on East Washington Street, which he operated for over three decades.
- **1890** North Carolina total population, 1,617,949; Black population, 561,018. Because of overproduction, cotton prices drop to an all-time low of 5¢ per pound, down from 25¢ per pound in 1868. Agricultural depression ruins many North Carolina farmers, forcing them into bankruptcy.
- **1891** The General Assembly charters the State Normal and Industrial School as the first state-supported institution of higher education for White women; Black women do not enter the institution for another six and a half decades. It later becomes known as Woman's College (now the University of North Carolina at Greensboro). The General Assembly charters the Agricultural and Mechanical College for the Colored Race (now North Carolina A&T State University). The school opens in Greensboro in 1893 to teach African Americans practical agriculture and mechanical arts and to provide academic and classical instruction.
- **1892** The State Colored Normal School (now Elizabeth City State University), chartered in 1891, opens at Elizabeth City to educate and train African American teachers for

North Carolina's public schools. Slater Industrial Academy (now Winston-Salem State University) is founded.

- **1893** The Society of Friends (Quakers) establishes the campus of High Point Normal and Industrial to educate African Americans after purchasing five acres of land from **James Day**, an African American man, for \$800.
- **1893–1898** An era of Fusion politics ensues when Populists and Republicans joined together in a coalition to defeat the ruling Democrats. Most Populists are White farmers who feel that the Democratic Party has not addressed their economic concerns; many are Black farmers.
- **1895–1896** Caesar and Moses Cone establish the Proximity Manufacturing Mill in Greensboro. Ten years later, they open a second plant, the White Oak Mill, which becomes the largest cotton mill in the South and the largest denim-manufacturing plant in the world. Cotton planting and harvesting are heavily reliant on Black farmers and agrarian workers.
- **1896** The U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that “separate but equal” accommodations are constitutional; **George Henry White** benefited from Fusion politics when he is elected to Congress from North Carolina's Second Congressional District in 1896 and 1898. He is the only African American representative in Congress. He appoints African Americans to federal positions within his district and introduces the first antilynching bill, which the Mississippi-born anti-lynching journalist and women's suffragist Ida B. Wells documents.
- **1897** The public school system, which begins in High Point this year, is partially funded through poll taxes that keep African Americans, who comprise thirty percent of the city, from voting. Private funds have supported Black education in High Point since the late 1860s. Tying public funding with disfranchising Black voters is an example of the city's political stance with regard to the African American population (see Ringel report for the One High Point Commission). **Alfred James Griffin** becomes the first Black principal of High Point Normal and Industrial Institute, which later becomes William Penn High School to honor the Quaker support in its initial funding. His tenure lasts until 1923, the

year the institute becomes part of the High Point City School System. Also this year, **Warren C. Coleman** opens the nation's first African American–owned and –operated textile mill in Concord.

- **1898** The Wilmington 'Race Riot' occurs on November 10 when White Democrats overthrow Wilmington's legally elected Republican government. Democrats install a White supremacist government. A large group of White men burn the office and press of the *Daily Record*, an African American newspaper. Dozens of Black people are killed, even as they fight back. The violent coup signals the end of Black Populism in the state. Some of the midwives in High Point's Black community are **Clara Donald, Ella Hoover, Kate Loftin, Camilla Tate, and Martha Conrad.**
- **1900** The total High Point population is 4,163; the African American population is likely no more than 1,000. The North Carolina total population, 1,893,810; Black population, 624,469. The state has 217 textile mills and 101 tobacco factories in operation. An amendment to the North Carolina Constitution is adopted that institutes a literacy test for voting. The amendment includes a grandfather clause that allows illiterate White people to vote but effectively disfranchises the state's African American citizens— the beginnings of Jim Crow.
- **1902** Black educator Charlotte Hawkins Brown opens Palmer Memorial Institute in Sedalia; nearly forty years later she speaks at High Point's Fairview Street School as part of "Negro History Week," and again a decade later at St. Marks Methodist Church to help raise money for a burned down dormitory at Sedalia. **Rev. L. D. Twine** will soon build the support to organize the Cherry Street Presbyterian Church at the old Freedman's School building on Perry Street in High Point. The name was later changed to Second Presbyterian Church.
- **1903** North Carolina passes its first child labor laws; Booker T. Washington addresses the North Carolina Industrial Association's annual fair. He advises African Americans to content themselves as agrarian people and eschew migration, as many Black people began moving to the North and West in what became known as the Great Migration.

- **1905** North Carolina author Thomas Dixon Jr. publishes his book *The Clansman*. The book serves as the basis for D. W. Griffith's racist silent film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), which was later screened by President Woodrow Wilson in the White House. High Point African American resident **J. W. Harris**, who owned a large lot near the colored Odd Fellows Hall, begins planning for an office building and opera house for Black citizens.
- **1907** R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company of Winston-Salem draws heavily on Black labor. While the company was among the first in the industry to integrate production lines, most African Americans were still denied better-paying jobs and typically worked in unpleasant conditions.
- **1910** North Carolina total population, 2,206,287; Black population, 697,843. High Point's Black middle class emerges with more businesses, including a store owned by local Black resident **Laura Gray** on Fairview Street and Patterson's Drug Store, located on East Washington Street—the first Black-owned and operated pharmacy in the city. High Point's total population is 9,525.
- **1911** The Greensboro city council and other southern cities pass ordinances requiring separate White and Black residential areas. In the midst of segregation, a number of African Americans in High Point are able to develop successful businesses, including **Nannie Kilby**, **Ed Wills**, and **John Patterson** on Washington Street, serving the Black neighborhoods of Griffin Park, Burns Hill, and South High Point.
- **1916** Fifteen Black citizens and trustees of the Odd Fellows and Morris Chapel ME Church, on Washington Street, petitioned the city of High Point to have Washington Street paved with asphalt. Several months later, the city approved the allocation of funds for this.
- **1919** The total High Point population is 14,302. The North Carolina total population is 2,559,123; Black population, 763,407. North Carolina is the second-most-industrialized state in the South, with an output of a billion dollars per year. The state's top industrial goods are textiles, tobacco products, and furniture, all of which use Black labor in multiple capacities. High Point Black resident **Jane Cameron Cosby**, the first Black



matron employed by the Southern Railroad Co., was killed by a train engine on her way home from work.

- **1920** The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, granting women the right to vote, does not necessarily apply to Black women living in the Jim Crow South. The same year, *The High Point Enterprise* reported that 52 women and 245 men had registered to vote in the upcoming elections. Of those, two were Black women and three were Black men. In Harnett County, African Americans served notice on the registrar that they are going to have their names placed on registration books “even to the point of shedding blood.”
- **1921** The Piedmont region is recognized nationally as a leader in wooden furniture manufacturing, which draws heavily on the work of African Americans. The same year, **Rev. Emily Nichols** becomes the first Black female preacher in High Point when she came to preach at Beulah Tabernacle on Fairview Street; the African American dentist **Dr. Eva Zeigler** would soon become the first female dentist to practice in High Point.
- **1922** African Americans from High Point meet at First Baptist Church on East Washington Street and raise funds to help with relief among the victims of fires that swept through 46 blocks of New Bern, North Carolina, leaving 3,000 people homeless by the disaster.
- **1925** The High Point committee appointed to look into a possible ordinance forbidding the serving of White and Black customers together in the same café recommended an ordinance to this effect, effectively segregating the city’s cafés.
- **1929** One-tenth of the state’s industrial labor force is employed by three tobacco companies, all reliant on Black labor. The same year, the Ku Klux Klan held a big parade and meeting in High Point.
- **1930** North Carolina total population, 3,170,276; Black population, 918,647. In High Point, a series of night community schools were organized, including one for Black men and women at William Penn High School. The high school hosts the renowned Black poet and author Langston Hughes the year after, who had been recruited by the school’s principal **Edward E. Curtright**.

- **1932** Cotton mill workers in High Point strike. The following year, employees at more than 100 additional mills go on strike. Black workers picked and packed much of the cotton for these mills. High Point African American resident Ossie Davis is the publisher of a local Black newspaper, the *Piedmont American*.
- **1933** A group of White and Black citizens in High Point endorsed the establishment of a commission for the city that would comprise Black and White citizens—the work of which they were to do together is not clear. Walter White, the national secretary of the NAACP, addresses the local Black community of High Point at St. Mark Methodist Church on East Washington Street to promote the establishment of a city chapter of the organization.
- **1934** The Emancipation Proclamation Day was celebrated in High Point at St. Mark Methodist Church and a parade started at Fairview Street School and proceeded across town to the church. The only African American member of Congress, Oscar De Priest, speaks at William Penn High School. Two years later in High Point, Professor Benjamin Quarles of Shaw University gives a talk on the Emancipation Proclamation celebration at the high school entitled “Emancipation Today and Yesterday.”
- **1937** The High Point Commission on Inter-Racial Cooperation presented a program at St. Mark Church with both Black and White citizens in attendance to foster better ‘race relations.’ In August of this year, three Black men were killed as they worked on the lowering of the Southern Railroad system tracks through the heart of High Point.
- **1938** African American students in Greensboro initiate a theater boycott that spreads to other cities. Black students boycott theatres owned by the all-White Southern Theaters Incorporated. This same year in High Point, **John R. Coltrane**, the father of the great jazz musician **John Coltrane** passes away. The senior Coltrane operated a tailor shop and played ukulele and violin. The junior Coltrane’s grandfather, **Rev. William Wilson Blair**, was a presiding elder of the AME Zion church and an influential person in High Point. The same year that Coltrane’s father passes away, so do his aunt and grandmother, leaving his mother to raise him on her own.

- **1939** The enrollment of Black students in the High Point School system is 1,458. They all attended segregated schools.
- **1940** The total population of High Point is 38,495, with a slowing down in the growth of the city and rapid expansion into the suburbs. The North Carolina total population is 3,571,623; Black population, 981,298. This year there were three public schools for Black students—William Penn High School, Leonard Street School, and Fairview Street School—and a total of 44 Black teachers. Their enrollments grew over the next four years to 342, 626, and 355 students, respectively.
- **1942** John Coltrane, who played the clarinet and alto horn in a community band before switching to the saxophone in 1940, graduates from William Penn High School this year before leaving for Philadelphia soon thereafter.
- **1943** To win votes in Black precincts, mayoral candidate Arnold Koonce promised that he would hire African Americans for the city's police force. Following Koonce's successful election, **O. H. Leak** and **B. A. Steele** were hired as the first two Black patrolmen. Each worked 364 nights a year and were restricted to arresting African Americans.
- **1944** Black soldiers from High Point returning from service in World War II are ignored by the city's government (not until 2013 were their efforts officially recognized and honored).
- **1945** The National Housing Authority based in Washington, D.C. approved an application for immediate construction of 100 new homes in High Point. Fifteen of the new homes were designated for Black people.
- **1946** The great African American educator, and civil and women's rights leader, Mary McLeod Bethune, spoke at the first anniversary of High Point's YWCA.
- **1947** The High Point Metropolitan Council of Negro Women, headed by **Galatia E. Lynch**, conducted a clinic to teach people the technique of registering and voting. A delegation of African Americans from High Point and attorneys for Leon Sharpe, owner of United Cab Company, appeared before the City Council to request more cabs. Two Black cab companies were only allowed to operate 18 cabs between them, which was

far insufficient to relieve the transportation needs of the Black sections of town. This same year **Kenneth R. Williams** becomes the first African American candidate in the 20th-century South to defeat a White opponent in a municipal election. Williams wins a seat on the Winston-Salem Board of Aldermen. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) tests a Supreme Court decision against segregation in interstate bus travel by sending eight African American men to ride on Greyhound and Trailways buses. Riders are arrested in Durham, Asheville, and Chapel Hill. This “Journey of Reconciliation” becomes the model for the “Freedom Ride” of 1961.

- **1949** There are now four Black Police officers assigned to High Point’s African American community; they walked the beat on East Washington and Fairview streets. Texas political scientist V. O. Key Jr. establishes the mid-twentieth-century image of North Carolina for both natives and outsiders in his book *Southern Politics in State and Nation*. He describes the state as “energetic and ambitious... It enjoys a reputation for progressive outlook and action in many phases of life, especially industrial development, education, and race relations.” The premise of good ‘race relations’ is questionable. The Federal Housing Act (FHA) is part of President Harry Truman’s “Fair Deal” with \$1 billion in loans to cities to help acquire the underdeveloped properties and living spaces of poor people, sometimes referred to derogatorily as ‘slums’ or ‘blighted,’ for redevelopment. The City of High Point will draw on these funds in the 1960s but will not use them in ways that meaningfully benefit African Americans.
- **1950** North Carolina total population, 4,061,929; Black population 1,047,353.
- **1953** Black Pharmacist Augustus M. Greenwood, who co-owns the Washington Street Pharmacy on East Washington Street, files for office in the upcoming City Council election, becoming the first African American to file for a seat in High Point’s history.
- **1954** In *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered that public schools be integrated “with all deliberate speed.” Most North Carolina schools are not actually desegregated for another decade and a half. Enrollment in High Point’s Black schools is as follows: William Penn High School, 506; Fairview Street, 386; Alfred J. Griffin, 248; Leonard Street, 542.



- **1955** In response to the *Brown* decision, the North Carolina General Assembly passes a resolution stating that “The mixing of the races in the public schools within the state cannot be accomplished and if attempted would alienate public support to such an extent that they could not be operated successfully.” High Point’s Parks and Recreation Commission recommended to the City Council that segregation in regard to recreation facilities be maintained. African Americans organized the High Point Citizens League in order to encourage interest and active participation among local citizens in acquiring and maintaining the highest degree of civic knowledge and involvement. Officers included **Rev. S. A. Speight**, president; **H. H. LeMon**, vice president; **T. R. McRae**, recording secretary; **Rev. F. O. Bass**, assistant recording secretary; **Lillian McDonnell**, financial secretary; **Louis B. Haizlip**, treasurer; **Dr. Jerome J. Wilson**, parliamentarian; **Dr. Hubert Creft**, chairman of the Executive Board; **D. L. Flowe**, vice chairman of the Executive Board.
- **1956** The North Carolina General Assembly passes an amendment to the state constitution known as the Pearsall Plan to allow the state to legally oppose immediate desegregation of public schools. Individual school systems are given the right to suspend the operation of their schools by vote, and the legislature is authorized to provide payment for students who attend private schools because their parents do not want them to attend integrated schools. This same year, High Point’s Negro Elks Lodge donated \$350 to pay for classroom equipment needed by the William Penn High School driver-training program. Among those in the Lodge who were instrumental were **Walter Moore**, **A. B. Walker**, **C. Lassiter**, **Frank Mason**, **Robert Anderson**, **W. M. Pledger**, and **Paul McAdoo**. Later in the year, the High Point Ministerial Alliance appointed the following as a committee to study and recommend ways of establishing an Inter-Racial Commission: **Rev. William P. Price**, the **Rev. Walter J. Miller**; and **Rev. W. S. McLeod**; other members of the alliance were **Rev. J. E. Melton** and **Rev. J. J. Patterson**.
- **1957** Seven Black activists led by the **Rev. Douglas E. Moore** seek service in the White section of an ice cream parlor in Durham. They are arrested and convicted of trespassing, but their sit-in presages a decade of activism. Meanwhile, in High Point,

the civil rights attorney **James Nabrit, Jr.** spoke at the New Bethel Baptist Church during the sixth annual celebration of Race Progress Day.

- **1958** The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. visits North Carolina in February, delivering speeches in Raleigh and Greensboro.
- **1959** African American resident of High Point, Andrew Mitchell, filed a \$30,000 lawsuit against two High Point policemen in April claiming the officers severely beat and crippled him during an arrest at his home on East Washington Street. Two Durham African American families successfully sue to have their daughters admitted to the city's predominantly White high school.
- **1960** North Carolina total population, 4,556,155; Black population, 1,116,021. High Point's Black business district on Washington Street had 54 businesses within a nine-block area as well as 76 residents. The Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) forms in Raleigh with the support of Civil Rights leader **Ella Baker**, a graduate of Shaw University. On February 1, the nation's first lunch counter sit-in begins in Greensboro when four students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College (now North Carolina A&T State University) are refused service at a Woolworth's counter. This form of protest used by **Ezell Blair, Franklin McCain, David Richmond,** and **Joseph McNeil** quickly spreads to High Point and across the South. In Greensboro, the A&T students are joined by students from Bennett College and Dudley H.S., along with students from the Woman's College (now UNC Greensboro) and Guilford College. Civil Rights leader Fred Shuttleworth, who worked closely with Ella Baker, was in High Point at this time and informed Baker that the sit-ins had spread to the city. On February 11, students at William Penn High School are the first high school students in the nation to launch a sit-in, which they carry out at the Woolworth's in the city. There is also a surge in African American voter registration in High Point this year. By May of this year there were 659 additional Black voters registered in the city, bringing the total Black electorate in High Point from 1,467 to 2,126. On October 26, nine African Americans in High Point, ranging in age from 14 to 18 picketed Paramount Theatre on S. Wrenn Street for two and a half hours after being refused entry to the lobby.

- **1962** The City of High Point is slow to move on integration but takes advantage of various improvement projects and studies aimed at urban renewal, the largest of which is the East Central project, which ultimately results in an overall lack of affordable housing, White flight, and the need to address the same issues a couple decades later. Other related projects, particularly those focusing on the Washington Street area, meet with similar results. In effect, municipal codes will lead to de facto residential segregation, barriers to Black homeownership, and hinder generational wealth in High Point's African American community (see Summey report for the One High Point Commission).
- **1963** In the case of *Gilmore et al v. High Point City Board of Education*, a group of African American families in High Point file a lawsuit in federal court to compel the city to integrate the city's schools. The case continues for nearly a decade as the Board drags its feet. Also this year, a group of African American citizens in High Point through the East Central Homeowners Association file a lawsuit claiming the Redevelopment Commission, which creates mass relocation of African Americans in the city under the name of progress, offers too little money for their properties. These renewal programs are dubbed "Negro Removal" programs because of the mass dislocation of Black residents and businesses. Meanwhile, in the Spring of this year, activists once again take to the streets of High Point. African Americans picketed two segregated movie theatres, the Paramount and Center theaters. High Point civil rights leader, **Rev. B. Elton Cox** calls for the reinstatement of a human relations committee to work towards integration.
- **1964** Congress passes a Civil Rights Act prohibiting discrimination against African Americans when it comes to seating and other services. The High Point Human Relations Commission addresses the housing issue in the city after being advised by Black residents that they found it impossible to buy or rent homes outside of their neighborhood.
- **1965** Congress passes a Voting Rights Act prohibiting discrimination against African Americans in their right to vote.

- **1967** There are over 500 applications for public housing in High Point, but less than half of them are able to get into affordable housing; hundreds of African Americans are displaced. The North Carolina Good Neighbor Council releases a report entitled “High Point: Progress in Human Relations” which articulates the grievances of African Americans in the city regarding housing (see Sills and Summey reports).
- **1968** Congress passes a Civil Rights Act prohibiting discrimination against African Americans in the sale or rental of housing. **Henry E. Frye** is elected to the General Assembly. He is the first African American elected to the N.C. State House of Representatives in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Pioneering attorney **Elreta Alexander** of Greensboro becomes the first African American elected judge in North Carolina. The Fair Housing Act of this year allows women for the first time to access mortgage financing that can help them with relocation when their families are displaced by urban renewal in High Point.
- **1969** Police and National Guardsmen fire on demonstrators at North Carolina A&T State University, where a student is killed. Urban renewal leads to further African American displacement in High Point where many Black residents are not able to access public housing not only because there is insufficient housing constructed to meet demand but also because they fail to qualify based on either making too little or too much money or having poor credit.
- **1970** Total population of High Point is 63,355. The North Carolina total population is 5,082,059; Black population, 1,126,478.
- **1971** A federal court in Charlotte orders busing to enforce school integration. Public schools across the nation are forced to follow suit. A grocery store in Wilmington is firebombed, sparking violence. The “Wilmington 10,” a group of mainly African American citizens, are convicted of arson and other charges. A federal court will overturn their convictions in 1980. In 1971, the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution would grant 18-year-olds the right to vote. Also during this year, William Penn High School graduate, **Sammie Chess**, who went on to law school and became a

judge, became North Carolina's first Black Superior Court judge. Prior to this Chess represented several African Americans in civil rights cases.

- **1976** The City of High Point publishes the report "Racial Housing Patterns in High Point"
- **1979** Members of the Communist Party and the Ku Klux Klan clash in Greensboro during an anti-Klan rally. Gunfire is exchanged, and Klan members kill five Communist supporters. A court clears the Klan members of all charges one year later.
- **1980** North Carolina total population, 5,881,766; Black population, 1,318,857. The portion of North Carolina's workforce employed in industry has increased from 29 percent in 1950 to 33. Agriculture, which employed one-fourth of the state's population in 1950, now employs only 3.6 percent of the workforce. Despite a reduction in the number of acres farmed—from 19,317,937 to 11,700,000—the average size of individual farms has increased from 67 to 126 acres as agriculture in the state has become more of a business and less of a family affair. Meanwhile, the number of land-owning Black farmers plummets. In 1930, 37 million acres of land were owned by Black farmers. That number would drop to less than 8 million by 1980. (In 2023 it is just 4.7 million—a half percent of farmland nationwide. In North Carolina, there are more than 46,000 farms, of which Black farmers run about 1,500.)
- **1981** The estimated total value of manufactured products in North Carolina reaches \$60 billion, the wealth of which is in significant measure generated by Black labor, but who see very little return to their communities.
- **1986** The space shuttle Challenger explodes shortly after liftoff, killing all seven people on board, including the African American astronaut Dr. Ron Erwin McNair, a 1971 graduate of North Carolina A&T State University who went on to receive his Ph.D. in Physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- **1990** North Carolina total population, 6,626,637; Black population, 1,456,323.
- **1991** Dan Blue becomes the first African American to serve as Speaker of the House in the General Assembly.
- **1997** Timothy Pigford, an African American farmer from North Carolina files a class-action discrimination lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture; in coming

years he wins the case, with an award totaling \$2 billion. However, only a small portion of the settlement is distributed.

- **2000** The total population of High Point is 100,432. The North Carolina total population is 8,049,313 and the Black population is 1,737,545.
- **2019** The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately negatively affects High Point's African American population. This is a trend seen across the nation with regard to urban Black populations, as noted by the Economic Policy Institute. For instance, Black workers saw greater losses in employment than White workers, with 9.8 percent loss among Black workers versus 7.8 percent fall among White workers. This was also seen with regard to Black-owned businesses, where 40% of Black business owners reported they were not working in April, compared with only 17% of White business owners. Finally, not only did Black workers lose their jobs at a higher pace and rate than White workers, but those who did not lose their jobs were more likely on the front lines of the economy in essential jobs, forcing them to risk their own and their families' health to earn a living.
- **2020** North Carolina total population, 10,550,000; Black population, 2,218,000.
- **2022** The City of High Point establishes the One High Point Commission to Explore Community Reparations. There are approximately 40,000 African Americans in the City of High Point, comprising approximately 35 percent of the city's population.



## Appendix B – Excerpts from Testimonies



FIGURE 34 - CIVIL RIGHTS ACTION BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN HIGH POINT, THE HIGH POINT ENTERPRISE NEGATIVE COLLECTION, FEBRUARY 11, 1960

As attested to by African American residents of High Point who lived under segregation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, three points become evident: (1) both private and public sectors discriminated against African Americans, including access to and resources allocated for education, as well as access and transportation to stores in the city and jobs; (2) members of the city's African American community looked out for each other through individual support among residents but also through associations of their own, namely churches and mutual aid associations; and (3) African Americans stood courageously in the face of discrimination and violence demanding justice in terms of affordable housing, adequate transportation, and job opportunities.

Below are excerpts from interviews both recently conducted as well as from the William Penn Oral History Collection of African American residents of High Point who lived through the era of Jim Crow.

*"The local government did not treat Blacks the same as Whites. I know for a fact that my family and other Black people in High Point worked hard, paid their taxes for decades, but the local government chose not to redistribute the resources equitably. So, for instance, I mentioned about going to school. I went to public schools segregated for six years. From the first year of sixth grade, and I went to Leonard Street Elementary School. It was decidedly separate and not equal. It was just that."*

Ms. Adrienne Middlebrooks

*"Racism, segregation, and the inequities that were forced upon us had this long lasting effect. When you don't provide what a person needs, or you withhold what a person wants and needs, and you make those advantages available to one group of people, and withhold it from another group of people, it has a long lasting effect ... They keep saying that it doesn't make a difference and that everybody is treated the same but the evidence is right there in front of your face... The facts are there for themselves."*

Mrs. Clarice Wilson

*"There were some people who just did not have and could not do what should have been done. And the teachers and parents who could would help those kids. It was just a different day then. People cared."*

Mrs. Peggy Allen

*"I attended a couple of meetings when the Black Panther Party came to town. My sister marched in the earlier years. She was a couple of years older than myself and I guess when all this movement started I was maybe 13 and my mother wouldn't allow me to take part in it. You know, she did what she felt was best, and that was to shield her children from getting hurt, getting killed, but my sister, she did march, and she did go to jail."*

Mr. Jerry Camp

*"... and it just seemed to be at that time anybody of color could be a target for any given reason, or no reason, anywhere."*

Ms. Mary Lou Blakeney

*"See, when you have your heritage, you can always come back to it. When you grow up in your heritage, then you go out and learn what's going on in someone else's heritage."*

Mr. John Barber