

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

 X New Submission _____ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

The Black American Experience in Pasco, Washington

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)


- I. Making the "Mississippi of the North": WWII and the Advent of the Segregated Tri-Cities and its Black Community, ca. 1940-45
- II. The Tri-Cities' Black American Community in Postwar Pasco, 1940s-70s
- III. Civil Rights, Integration, and the Changing Racial Landscape of the Tri-Cities, 1940s-70s

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

 _____	SHPO _____	August 17, 2022 _____
Signature of certifying official	Title	Date

Washington State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

_____ Signature of the Keeper	_____ Date of Action
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Create a Table of Contents and list the page numbers for each of these sections in the space below.

Provide narrative explanations for each of these sections on continuation sheets. In the header of each section, cite the letter, page number, and name of the multiple property listing. Refer to *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* for additional guidance.

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 250 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section E: Statement of Historic Contexts

I. Making the “Mississippi of the North”: WWII and The Advent of the Segregated Tri-Cities and its Black Community, ca. 1940-45

The Second World War transformed society in countless ways and re-made places across the planet. Primary among those places was the confluence of the Columbia, Snake, and Yakima rivers in the northwestern United States, which in the early 1940s went from a cluster of small, remote, unremarkable farm and shipping towns (with a total 1940 population of about 6,100) to the booming-to-bursting Tri-Cities, a critical center of World War II American military production. The explosive growth stemmed first and foremost from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ January 1943 decision to produce plutonium (for the world’s first atomic bombs) in the area. The region already housed the Army’s Pasco Holding and Reconsignment Point, a.k.a. the Pasco Engineer Depot or Big Pasco, and the Pasco Naval Air Station, both established in 1942.¹

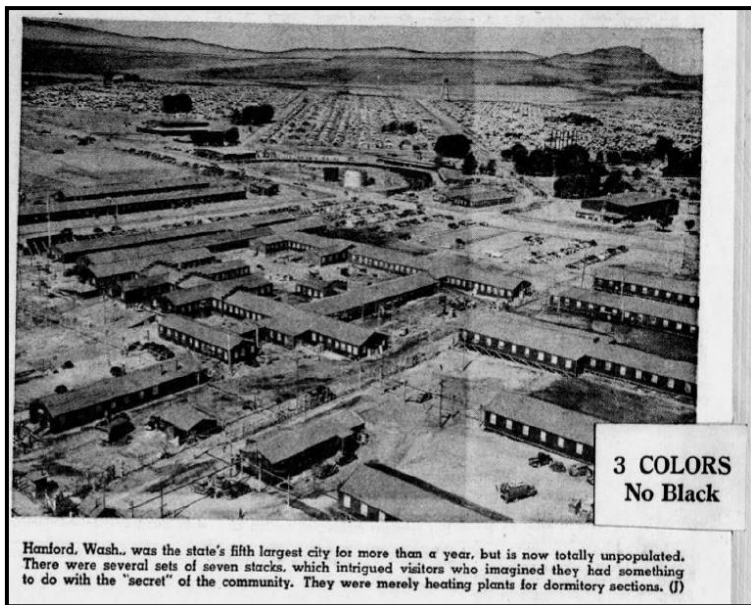


Figure 1. Hanford barracks, ca. 1944

Over the next eighteen months, workers poured in to build the Manhattan Project’s nuclear reservation—one of three major Manhattan Project sites across the United States. They needed to complete, quickly, not only Hanford production facilities but also hundreds of associated buildings to house and serve the massive construction workforce (in temporary quarters at Hanford itself) and production personnel and their families (in a “permanent village” at Richland, at the southeastern edge of the 625-square-mile nuclear reservation, some 15-30 miles from Hanford proper). By June 1944, the Hanford Engineer Works site, on former farmlands along the Columbia, was the state’s fifth largest city, home to some 51,000 people.²

Built and operated by the DuPont Company under contract to the federal government,

Hanford reflected the confluence of broader period trends in American economics and race relations, as well as the context of specific wartime policy developments. Primary among the latter was Executive Order 8802. The Executive Order, issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1941 “after lobbying by A. Philip Randolph and other black leaders,” and pressure from the March on Washington Movement, forbid “discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries of Government because of

¹ Schiessel, “Gold Coast Historic District (National Register of Historic Places Registration Form); Denfeld, “Pasco USO Club for Area Soldiers.”

² “Rowdy Hanford, Metropolis of Race Suicide”; Schiessel, “Gold Coast Historic District (National Register of Historic Places Registration Form); Denfeld, “Washington State Army Depots in World War II”; Manhattan Project National Historic Park, “Naval Air Station Pasco (Pasco Aviation Museum) (U.S. National Park Service); “African Americans and the Manhattan Project.”

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race, creed, color, or national origin.” Subsequently “a prohibition of discrimination clause was written in all defense contracts,” and the federal government established the Fair Employment Practice Commission and the War Manpower Commission to enforce the new policies.³

Executive Order 8802 opened up booming wartime manufacture jobs to Black Americans at an unprecedented scale, and helped drive what historians have termed the Second Great Migration. Black workers, often “striving to escape Jim Crow laws and the drought that devastated rural farming communities following the Great Depression,” migrated from the South and other regions to WWII production centers, which were concentrated on the West Coast. There, “the most dramatic black growth occurred ... as 443,000 blacks were pulled to Washington, Oregon, and California in the 1940s to work in defense industries at shipyards, food plants, and airplane production facilities.” The multi-site Manhattan Project was subject to the strictures of E.O. 8802, and Black workers “joined the project in the thousands. While some worked as scientists and technicians in Chicago and New York, most Black Americans on the project were employed as construction workers, laborers, janitors, and domestic workers at Oak Ridge and Hanford.”⁴

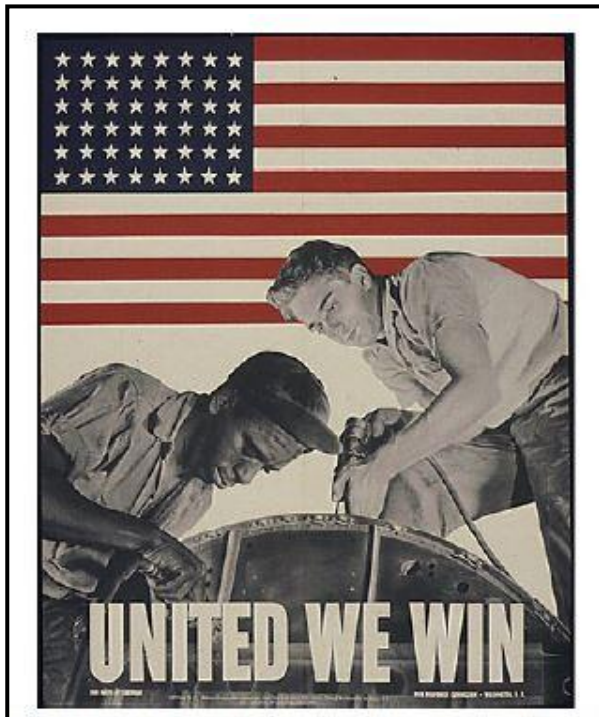


Figure 2. Recruitment poster designed to draw workers from around the county to Hanford.
Image National Archives

At Hanford, DuPont employed a workforce deemed by the Manhattan Engineer District (MED) to be “just [Black] enough to placate the Fair Employment Practices Committee’s requirements,” i.e., “the MED ensured that Black Americans never constituted more than 10-20% of the employees at Hanford.”⁵ In July 1944, during the “peak of the Hanford payroll,” there were about “50,000 workers at Hanford . . . just over 5,000 (4,100 men and 962 women), or roughly 10 percent, were Black American.” These men and women represented a portion of a larger total wartime migration to the area. Reportedly some “15,000 blacks arrived in the Tri-Cities between 1943-45.”⁶

Many of the new arrivals traveled from the southeast, especially Texas and Louisiana as well as Oklahoma and Arkansas, where “DuPont aggressively recruited white and black laborers.” According to historian Dr. Robert Bauman, “DuPont had been directed by the Manhattan Engineer District (MED), the organization within the Army Corps of Engineers responsible for building uranium and plutonium plants, to construct the Hanford Engineer Works as quickly as possible ... DuPont’s managers believed jobs at Hanford would appeal most to southern laborers, who received lower

³ “African Americans and the Manhattan Project”; Ruffin, Taylor, and Mack, *Freedom’s Racial Frontier*, 9.

⁴ “African Americans and the Manhattan Project”; Ruffin, Taylor, and Mack, *Freedom’s Racial Frontier*, 10–11.

⁵ “African Americans and the Manhattan Project.”

⁶ Bauman, “Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950,” 124–25; “Rowdy Hanford, Metropolis of Race Suicide.”

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wages than workers in other parts of the country.”⁷ The federal government also tried to recruit both Black and White workers to wartime production work at Hanford, mounting broad propaganda campaigns via assorted media.⁸

In addition to better jobs and higher wages, many Black migrants were “expecting to find less discrimination in the Northwest.”⁹ But the Hanford they helped build at the behest of DuPont, whose previous manufacturing sites were clustered in the Jim Crow South, proved to be deeply, systemically discriminatory and segregated. In employment, Black workers were relegated to unskilled positions (which were not only lower paid but were also, crucially, classified as temporary). When E. R. Dudley, assistant special counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), arrived “from New York to investigate continued charges of racial discrimination at Hanford” he found “extensive discrimination” in the workplace, noting “that the overwhelming majority of blacks at Hanford worked in construction or menial jobs. And though DuPont had recruited many Black women with promises of clerical jobs, it employed them almost exclusively as maids, waitresses, and cooks.”¹⁰ Indeed, Black workers sometimes found their opportunities and employment much reduced upon arrival. Velma Ray, for instance, had been living in Mare Island, California, where she “was a welder on warships under construction until she and her husband came to Hanford. Then she was assigned to waitressing in a mess hall.”¹¹ Restricted to low paying, temporary jobs, Black American workers were also segregated at work, toiling mostly on all-black crews under the supervision of white foremen.¹² Racial segregation at Hanford was even more thoroughgoing outside of the workplace. Strict segregation defined almost all aspects of life. Housing, dining, recreation, and even commissary facilities were all segregated by race. Most housing on site was in “a huge camp consisting of dormitory buildings to accommodate workers. A large trailer park provided facilities for those workers who brought their own trailers with them to the area.”¹³ Residential segregation extended across the variety of housing types at the sprawling site. In 1943, “Hanford had 110 barracks for white men, 21 for black men, 57 for white women, and 7 for black women,” and at its 1944 peak there were “separate barracks for 19,536 white men, 3,600 Black men, 4,560 white women and 560 Black women; beds for 17,600 more men in 880 Pacific type Quonset huts. Black Americans were kept together at the south (downriver) end of town.”¹⁴ For workers who brought campers or house trailers to live in, DuPont delineated “a separate Black trailer camp on-site.”¹⁵

Dining, shopping, and recreational facilities, as well as entertainment, also mirrored the racial segregation of the residential sector. As a 1948 article on the area’s “Jim Crow Rule” described it, “the south end of Hanford, behind barriers and a barbed-wire fence, was reserved for men and women of central African origin. There they had their own restaurants, stores, barber shops, and theater. It was

⁷ Bauman, “Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950,” 124; Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Politics.

⁸ Mudede, “Black Americans Came to Washington State from Around the Country to Help Build the Atomic Bomb.”; Northwest African American Museum, “The Atomic Frontier: Black Life in Hanford, WA [Museum Exhibit].”

⁹ Cary, “What Was Life Like at Hanford for Blacks During WWII? WSU Tri-Cities Project Will Research.”

¹⁰ Bauman, “Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950,” 125.

¹¹ Cary, “What Was Life Like at Hanford for Blacks During WWII? WSU Tri-Cities Project Will Research”; Interview with Velma Ray.

¹² Bauman, “Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950,” 125.

¹³ Gerber and Casserly, “B Reactor (National Historic Landmark Nomination Form).”

¹⁴ “Rowdy Hanford, Metropolis of Race Suicide.”

¹⁵ Bauman, “Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950,” 126.

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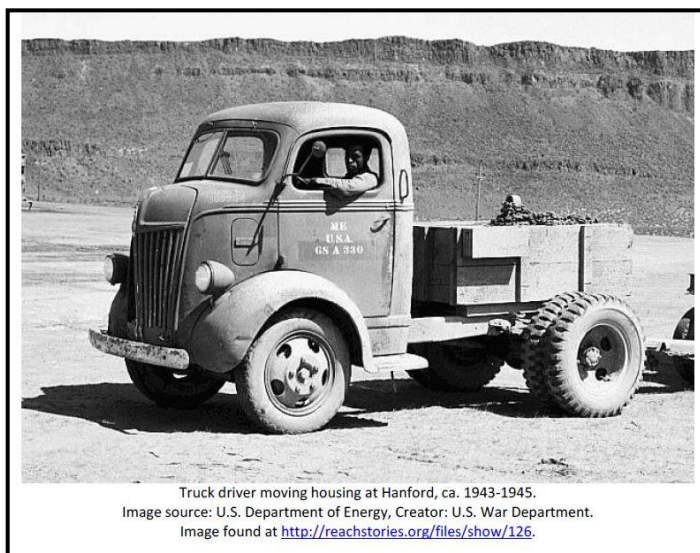
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segregation with a vengeance.”¹⁶ Dr. Bauman detailed the segregated facilities as follows: “of Hanford’s nine mess halls, eight were for whites and one was for Blacks. Commissary number two was the Black commissary; numbers one, three, and four were for whites. One of the Black barracks had a pool parlor and soda fountain so that black workers could relax and socialize away from whites. Most social activities at Hanford were segregated. For instance, Hanford officials planned separate Christmas events for each night of the month of December 1944 for Blacks and whites.”¹⁷ Hanford workers were even “transported on different buses.”¹⁸ It was, in the words of Lula Mae Little, a waitress who worked at the mess hall, the “Mississippi of the North.”¹⁹



Workers at Hanford, July 20, 1944.
Image from the U.S. Department of Energy, <http://energy.gov/em/articles/commemorating-black-history-contributions-african-americans-manhattan-project>.

Figure 3. Reprinted from Center for History of Physics, “Photographs of Black Americans at Hanford During World War II”



Truck driver moving housing at Hanford, ca. 1943-1945.
Image source: U.S. Department of Energy, Creator: U.S. War Department.
Image found at <http://reachstories.org/files/show/126>.

Figure 4. Reprinted from Center for History of Physics, “Photographs of Black Americans at Hanford During World War II”

¹⁶ “Jim Crow Rule Losing Ground.”
¹⁷ Bauman, “Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950.”
¹⁸ “History of Segregation in the Tri-Cities.”
¹⁹ “African Americans and the Manhattan Project.”

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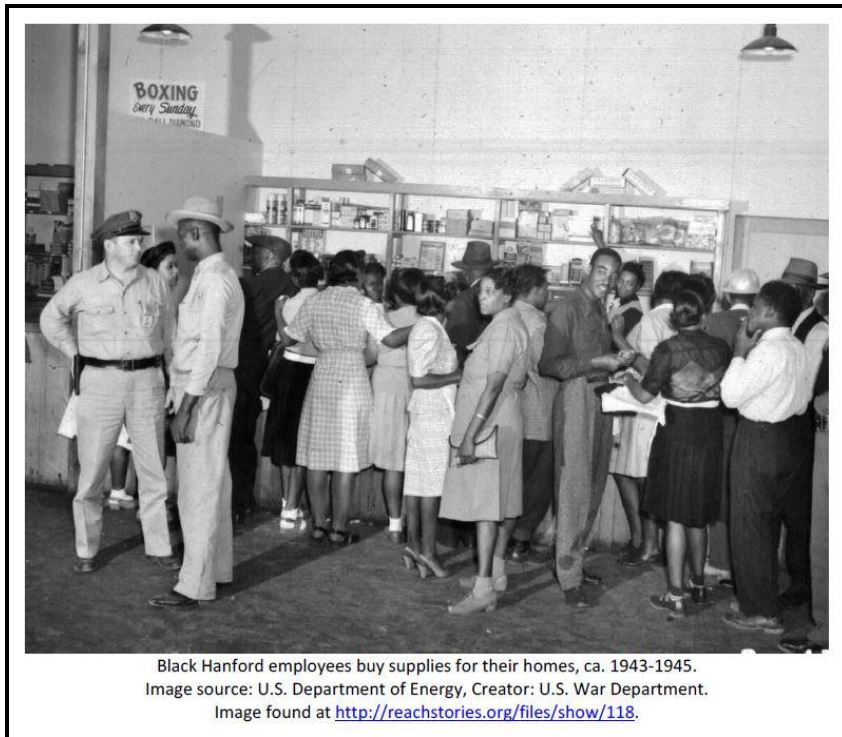


Figure 5. Reprinted from Center for History of Physics, "Photographs of Black Americans at Hanford During World War II"

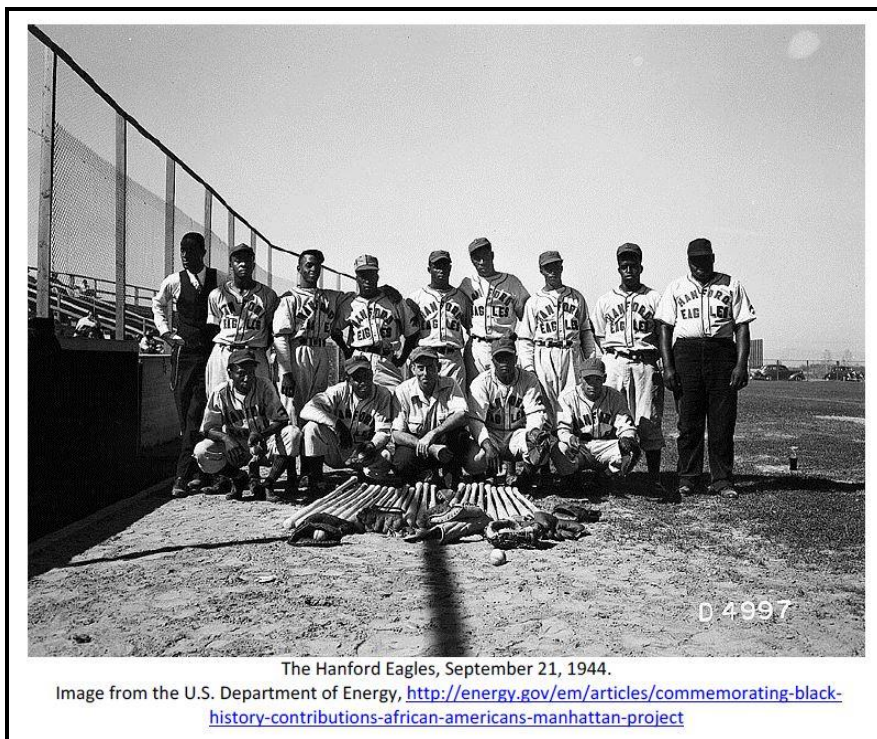


Figure 6. Reprinted from Center for History of Physics, "Photographs of Black Americans at Hanford During World War II"

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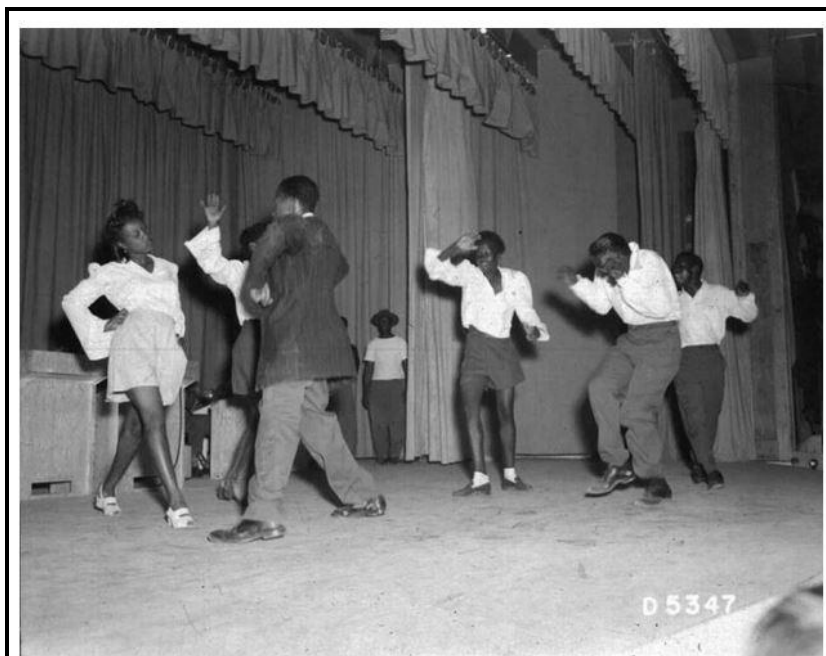
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The commissary for blacks at the Hanford nuclear reservation during World War II included a tavern that seated 508 patrons. It was a popular place for socializing.
Courtesy DOE

Figure 7. Reprinted from Cary, "What Was Life Like at Hanford for Blacks During WWII?"



World War II recreation facilities at the Hanford nuclear reservation were largely segregated and separate entertainment was planned for black workers, some documents show.
Courtesy DOE

Figure 8. Reprinted from Cary, "What Was Life Like at Hanford for Blacks During WWII?"

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II. The Tri-Cities' Black Community in Postwar Pasco, 1940s-1970s

In conjunction with local practices and policies, the systematic anti-Black discrimination of Hanford helped build segregation and white supremacy into the structural foundations of the Tri-Cities at large. Because racial segregation is fundamentally about space and place, these developments were not only reflected by and inscribed in, but also enacted through, the built environment. That built environment exploded to serve some 65,000 residents by 1950, down from a ca. 1945 peak that was even higher.²⁰ As the Tri-Cities burst into being during WWII, strict racial segregation was built into the cultural landscape. The most basic expression of this was the effective restriction of Black residents of the Tri-Cities (Pasco, Kennewick, and Richland) to the city of Pasco, and almost entirely to one specific section of the city, i.e., east of 4th Avenue, especially the underdeveloped fringe area separated from the city center by the big, busy Northern Pacific Railway tracks and trainyard. This area was called East Pasco.

Segregation of Black residents into Pasco during the advent of the Tri-Cities originated in both government policy and local practice. DuPont designed the government town of Richland as a White city from the beginning by restricting it to families of permanent Hanford workers only: as noted above, "blacks were hired only as construction workers, which were temporary positions," and thus "they were excluded from housing in the town."²¹ Richland had been the smallest of the confluence towns in 1940, with 300 residents. However, by summer 1945 it boasted a population of 25,000. Like the rest of the region, Richland's population began to decline after August that year, when the U.S. dropped Manhattan Project atomic bombs—one of which, dubbed Fat Man, was made with Hanford plutonium—on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The American bombs "killed between 129,000 and 226,000 people, most of whom were civilians." This slaughter effectively ended the Second World War.²²

Richland remained restricted to permanent workers when, in the context of an escalating Cold War with the Soviet Union, "a second, smaller wave of immigration occurred when the Hanford Site experienced another construction boom in 1947-49." The expansion at Hanford coincided with other major postwar projects in the area—on which "a good number of Black Americans worked." These included Ice Harbor Dam and "the nearby McNary Dam on the Columbia River and a new pumping plant for the Columbia Basin irrigation project. Thousands of workers were once again needed." As a result, another "several thousand Black Americans migrated to the Tri-Cities Virtually all Black Americans at Hanford again were employed as temporary construction workers, as they had been during the war."²³ A 1949 report by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) concluded that "although qualified black people applied for permanent Hanford work after the war, none were employed."²⁴ In this manner, throughout the 1940s, Richland—whose 1950 population stood at 21,809—excluded Black families completely, remaining entirely White.²⁵

²⁰ Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 10.

²¹ Bauman, "Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950," 126.

²² "Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki"; "Richland, Washington."

²³ Bauman, "Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950," 128. Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

²⁴ Cary, "What Was Life Like at Hanford for Blacks During WWII? WSU Tri-Cities Project Will Research."

²⁵ Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 9. According to Hayes and Franklin, "the first two black families moved into Richland" in 1950.

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The town of Kennewick, home to 1,918 residents in 1940, excluded Black Americans by other means. White leaders in booming Kennewick's local government and business sector worked to keep Black people out of the city completely, not only as residents but also as employees, customers, visitors, students, etc. A Washington State College (WSC) surveyor reported in 1949 that, "in Kennewick, through unwritten pacts and laws of the businessmen and other local citizens, no Negroes were permitted to live within the city." Kennewick's Chief of Police, interviewed for a September 1948 National Urban League (NUL) investigation into racial discrimination in the Tri-Cities, was blunter. When "asked about residential segregation in his city, the chief responded, "if anybody in this town ever sells property to a nigger, he's liable to be run out of town."²⁶ By these means, White Kennewick prevented so much as a single Black resident. A fall 1951 National Urban League survey of the area, "requested by civil leaders in the Tri-Cities," found that Kennewick, home to 10,106 people in 1950, had "no Negro population."²⁷

Kennewick's strict prohibition on Black American extended beyond housing. From the beginning, town authorities responded to the mere presence of Black Americans with violence. Police attacks on Blacks who ventured into Kennewick occurred throughout the 1940s. "Kennewick police arrested one black Hanford worker for riding in a car with two white men. They then tied him to a power pole until police from Pasco, where the man lived, came for him."²⁸ Pasco resident Vanis Daniels recalled that in 1948 "one of his cousins ended up 'chained to a pole like a dog' on a Kennewick street-corner. Daniels' cousin, Jimmy Lee Green, was waiting for some Hanford co-workers to come out of an all-white tavern with some beer, so they could go elsewhere to hang out, Daniels said. But when his co-workers came out of the bar, Daniels, 73, said his cousin was no longer there. They found him several blocks away on the corner of Washington Street and Kennewick Avenue, where police officers had chained him."²⁹ No Black Americans, even religious leaders, were safe from Kennewick police violence. Two years after the police attack on Jimmy Lee Green, "on a warm summer night in 1950, a preacher and two parishioners drove across [the] green bridge spanning" the Columbia River between Pasco and Kennewick "to buy hot dogs for a church picnic to be held the next day. The men were accosted by local police, told they were not welcome, and ordered to leave town or face arrest. The individuals, who were black, had little choice but to comply with the police officers' commands."³⁰ Indeed, as Katie Barton remembered, "one of her friends, after being arrested for a petty offense, was escorted from Kennewick back to Pasco because the former city did not want an African American in its jail."³¹

Among both Black and White residents of the area, Kennewick clearly had established itself as a "sundown town" in which Black Americans were not allowed and were in danger.³² This boundary of Black-exclusion was strictly marked, in the memory of the Tri-Cities Black American community, by "the old green bridge" over the Columbia River between Kennewick and Pasco. Oral histories suggest that "one of the most vivid memories the older community has is the sign posted" on the bridge, which "said something to the effect that blacks were prohibited in Kennewick after sundown."³³

²⁶ Bauman, "Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950," 130.

²⁷ "Tri-City Area Gains in Negro Population."

²⁸ Bauman, "Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950," 126.

²⁹ Pihl, "Black Tri-Citians Reflect on Struggles, Progress."

³⁰ Bauman, "Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950," 124.

³¹ Shu-Chen, "Katie D. Morgan Barton (1918-2010) •"

³² "Charge Kennewick as 'Sundown Town'; 'Kennewick 'Ban' of Negroes Cited."

³³ "History of Segregation in the Tri-Cities."

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Pasco and East Pasco (and its borderlands)

Of the Tri-Cities, only Pasco permitted Black Americans to live within its limits. The only significant exception to this restriction of the area’s Black population was North Richland, a temporary “separate community near Richland,” which in 1950 “had a black population of 300 living in government barracks and trailers.”³⁴ Thus, as the region’s population erupted in the early 1940s, Pasco, and specifically East Pasco, became the Tri-Cities’ Black community in two different ways: it was where almost all of the area’s Black American residents lived, and it was the Tri-Cities’ only Black neighborhood.

At the beginning of the 1940s Pasco had just 3,913 residents. However, by July 1943, the town “was trying to find beds for a population that had mushroomed to at least 9,000, not counting the estimated 7,500 servicemen at nearby Navy and Army stations.” Around that time a reported “1,200 blacks lived in East Pasco,” a figure that is likely an undercount given the chaotic nature of regional development in the period and the fact that “thousands of blacks . . . migrated to the Tri-Cities during World War II but left after the war.”³⁵ By the late 1940s most sources reported Pasco’s Black population as around 2,000, about 20% in its 10,000 population.³⁶



Figure 9. Whittier School, ca. 1940.
(Franklin County Historical Society collections)

As members of the Black community later recalled, “housing was difficult to find and for the most part was only available in one section of Pasco, east of the railroad tracks.”³⁷ Indeed, a 1948 Washington State College community survey of the Pasco-Kennewick area, commissioned by the “secretary of the Pasco Chamber of Commerce . . . On behalf of the Pasco and Kennewick chambers of commerce, city councils, and Kiwanis clubs,” found that “almost 95 percent of Blacks in Pasco lived east of the railroad tracks”³⁸ More specifically, as described in the *Spokane Spokesman-Review* that same year, “most of Pasco’s Negro residents . . . reside east of the Northern Pacific

³⁴ Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 10.

³⁵ Hayes and Franklin, 10; Bauman, “Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950,” 124.

³⁶ “Tri-City Area Gains in Negro Population”; “Probe Is Sought on Jim Crowism in Tri-City Area”; “Jim Crow Rule Losing Ground.”

³⁷ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Social.

³⁸ Bauman, “Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950,” 129.

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Station and south of Lewis Avenue.”³⁹ Within these boundaries the Black American residents’ neighborhood was also defined by the fact that “their children attended Whittier School,” which stood on the north side of E. Lewis and marked the northwest corner of the neighborhood.⁴⁰ The neighborhood was further defined not only by its borders, but by its border crossings—especially the dark concrete tunnel of the Lewis Street Underpass—and its borderlands: those Black Pasco residents who didn’t live in East Pasco proper resided almost exclusively just on the other side of the tracks, in a secondary trackside Black neighborhood north of Lewis and east of 4th Avenue. Together East Pasco and its borderlands—what we might term Greater East Pasco—contained almost every Black American home in the Tri-Cities.

Black ghettoization within Pasco reflected the same racist practices and policies that restricted the Tri-Cities’ Black American population to Pasco city limits. In the words of one longtime Black resident of Pasco, “they didn’t want no colored on the west side of the railroad track in 1944.” Indeed, for some white Pasco residents, the near-total restriction of Black people to East Pasco was insufficient. A Washington State College surveyor reported in 1949 that “some whites were heard rather wistfully suggesting that they should have kept the Negroes out of Pasco entirely, as has been done by the neighboring city of Kennewick, which prides itself on being ‘lily-white.’”⁴¹

While the geographic boundaries differed, white Pasco nonetheless enacted racial segregation through much the same means as its neighboring towns, via a combination of government policies and local practice, especially in the real estate sector. The aforementioned 1948 National Urban League study of “racial discrimination in the Tri-Cities” reported that “the vast majority of the black population in the Tri-Cities resided on the east side of Pasco because of racially restrictive covenants and local real-estate practices.”⁴² Eleven years later, regional newspapers described a similar situation, in which Pasco and Kennewick achieved segregation via the same means, i.e., “many real estate covenants in both cities restrict the property from being sold or rented to any person other than a member of the Caucasian race.”⁴³ These and other common actions by Pasco authorities and business leaders meant that, in most of Pasco, “owning property was virtually impossible for blacks. Outside of East Pasco owners refused to sell to black customers.”⁴⁴

Aggressive residential segregation within Pasco had its counterpart in the city’s civic and commercial realms, where Pasco’s local White leaders discriminated against Black Americans in numerous fundamental ways. White business owners and city officials’ actions inscribed racial boundaries onto the internal Pasco landscape, with particular places associated with different forms of anti-black discrimination. These Pasco patterns developed from the outset, and quickly defined Pasco’s community life. Regional newspapers reported that the “Jim Crow Rule” in the “Atomic Area” was “first introduced” in 1942, with “the painted signs reading ‘white trade only’ that appeared in stores.”⁴⁵

The Chamber of Commerce began looking into local race relations as early as 1944, when it

³⁹ “Jim Crow Rule Losing Ground.”

⁴⁰ Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 10.

⁴¹ Bauman, 126, 130.

⁴² Bauman, 130.

⁴³ “Tri-City Report Called Unfounded.”

⁴⁴ Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 11.

⁴⁵ “Jim Crow Rule Losing Ground.”

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Figure 10. Reprinted from Bauman, Jim Crow sign in above Pasco Tavern door. Reads "We Cater to white trade only."

"conducted a survey of local business and found that they would refuse to serve blacks."⁴⁶ In May of that year NAACP assistant special counsel E.R. Dudley also found that Pasco businesses discriminated against Blacks, reporting that there seemed 'to have been concerted action on the part of all business to deprive the Negroes of cafe service, bar and grill service and most stores refused them the privilege of trying on' clothes while shopping. Dudley estimated that 80 percent of restaurants, soda fountains, and lunch counters in Pasco refused to serve Blacks. He experienced this discrimination firsthand when the owner of Austin's Grill in Pasco told him that his restaurant 'did not serve colored people.' Blacks also had difficulty obtaining medical services in Pasco. One Black resident complained, 'you couldn't get a doctor to attend to a colored person in Pasco.'⁴⁷

In subsequent years, Black people faced a deeply segregated local landscape, and a generalized "racial hostility toward Blacks which existed outside East Pasco." They specifically noted that "many West Pasco businesses posted signs stating, 'We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone.' Too often, the 'anyone' referred to Black people."⁴⁸ Pasco businesses across the spectrum of services discriminated against Black Americans. Food service establishments were primary among them: "as the Black population in the area began to increase, many Blacks were refused service or made to feel unwelcome in local restaurants and taverns."⁴⁹ In September 1948, a Spokane newspaper counted "half a dozen restaurants" in Pasco that excluded Black

patrons, noting that "these eating places display signs similar to many seen in Spokane and other northwest cities: 'We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone.' This is commonly understood to mean that Negroes and in some case members of other minorities will not be served."⁵⁰

The WSC study completed that same year found that segregation in Pasco extended well beyond housing. ... No hotels or boarding houses accepted Blacks; only 2 of 12 restaurants in Pasco welcomed Black patrons (those that did not displayed Whites Only and No Dogs or Negroes Allowed signs); and the lunchroom at the bus terminal refused to serve Black Americans. Only two barbershops

⁴⁶ Denfeld, "Pasco USO Club for Area Soldiers."

⁴⁷ Bauman, "Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950," 126.

⁴⁸ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, "Cultural Awareness: Pasco's Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco's Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet]," sec. Economics.

⁴⁹ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, sec. Social.

⁵⁰ "Jim Crow Rule Losing Ground."

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would serve Black men, and both were operated by Black Americans. There were no beauty salons for Black women. Blacks were allowed in both movie theaters in Pasco but were restricted to either the balcony or the side aisle.⁵¹ Community members also recalled specifically that “in Pasco, there was a lunch counter in the drug store that wouldn’t serve” Black people.⁵²

These pervasive Jim Crow business practices were most readily visible in public spheres like stores, restaurants, and other service establishments, but they defined the more opaque, and more fundamental, realm of employment as well. Indeed, when the National Urban League (NUL) investigated race relations in the Tri-City area in 1951, Warren Banner, NUL director of research and community projects, concluded that, of the many realms in which the Black population faced racial discrimination, “employment and housing are the two main items that deserve special consideration.”⁵³ In this regard, the results of the aforementioned 1947 survey of Pasco’s Black community were telling: “a total of 342 people” were surveyed, “with the majority serving as laborers or railroad workers. Only two professional people were found, a minister and a bookkeeper, according to Robert E. Colby, a state health department official.”⁵⁴ As Vanis Daniels recalled, Black women often worked as farm laborers:

*in the ‘50s... mom and all of the women in the neighborhood, including me, worked in the grape fields, the mint fields, the bean fields, and all that stuff. That’s what the black women—and they would take me with them--and they would allow me to work with them because the women were there. Miss Anna B. Beasley, I never will forget it, we was right here where the bridge come across Richland here, I-82, was a mint field and I went to work with them that morning. I could drive, see, so I drove everybody to work.*⁵⁵

State and local civic authorities joined Pasco’s businesspeople in their efforts to expel, harass, impede, and immiserate Black Americans in the region. As with Jim Crow practices in commercial realms, government officials’ anti-Black activity began almost as soon as wartime immigration started. Indeed, early efforts sought to reverse Black immigration itself: in his diary entry of Aug. 18, 1943, Hanford’s commanding officer, Colonel Franklin Matthias, noted that Washington Governor Arthur Langlie “asked for his assurance that most construction workers would be returned whence they came after the war, ‘particularly the Negroes.’” Pasco officials pursued a similar effort, and the city reportedly “reached an agreement with DuPont officials that the company would pay to transport Blacks back to the South after their work was completed.” As the City sought to ensure the postwar removal of Black workers, it simultaneously worked to segregate them in the interim: in their negotiations with Dupont, “Pasco officials also demanded that black and white Hanford employees who lived in Pasco be transported to work on separate buses.”⁵⁶ White Pasco officials reportedly continued to try to expel Black Americans in the postwar period. In August 1948, in a letter to then-Governor Wallgren and Attorney General Smith Troy from the Seattle chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, “city officials of Pasco were accused of ‘a concerted plan of action whereby all Negroes are to be completely removed from the city.’”⁵⁷

⁵¹ Bauman, “Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950,” 129.

⁵² Interview with Vanessa Moore.

⁵³ “Tri-City Area Gains in Negro Population.”

⁵⁴ “On This Day ...”

⁵⁵ Interview with Vanis and Edmon Daniels.

⁵⁶ Bauman, “Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950,” 125. Citing Wiley.

⁵⁷ “Probe Is Sought on Jim Crowism in Tri-City Area.”

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Within Pasco proper, government officials neglected, harassed, and unfairly arrested Black residents. The 1948 WSC study “found that segregation in Pasco extended well beyond housing,” noting specifically that “the post office did not deliver mail east of the railroad tracks,” i.e., to 95% of the Black community. For its part, the City of Pasco “did not provide water or regular garbage service to the east side.” The police department, meanwhile, took a more active approach to its anti-Black practices. In 1943, the Pasco police “invented a new crime called “investigation,” which allowed police to arrest Blacks without charging them with a more specific infraction. Roughly 25 percent of all arrests of Blacks in the 1940s in Pasco were for investigation.” Five years later, WSC researchers documented how Pasco police “continued to discriminate against Blacks. Though Blacks constituted approximately 20 percent of the population, the community represented 90 percent of those arrested for gambling; 81 percent of those arrested for illegal possession of liquor; 61 percent of those arrested for the all-inclusive crime of investigation; and 58 percent of those arrested for vagrancy.”⁵⁸

The deeply discriminatory local government meant that the few integrated civic spaces stood out sharply. These included, especially, the Pasco Community Center at 1125 N. 4th Avenue, city swimming pools and the Pasco Carnegie Library (all of which were located in west Pasco).⁵⁹ The pool and the air-conditioned library served as a summer refuge from the searing heat for East Pasco families like the Johnson-Gix household, with Aubrey Johnson recalling his mom alternating 1950s summer days between the two cool locales:

“my mom would take us to the Pasco Carnegie Library. And we would go over there, and we would read books, and we joined the book club ... My mom would always say, you can’t go outside and play because you’ll get sun stroke. So she would take us to the pool. And then she would take us [to] the library. You know what, I was in my 50s, if not in my 60s when I realized why she took us to the library. It was so they had air conditioning. We didn’t have to be out there in the sun. So the days that we didn’t go to the pool, we went to the library. At our house, we didn’t have no air conditioning.”⁶⁰

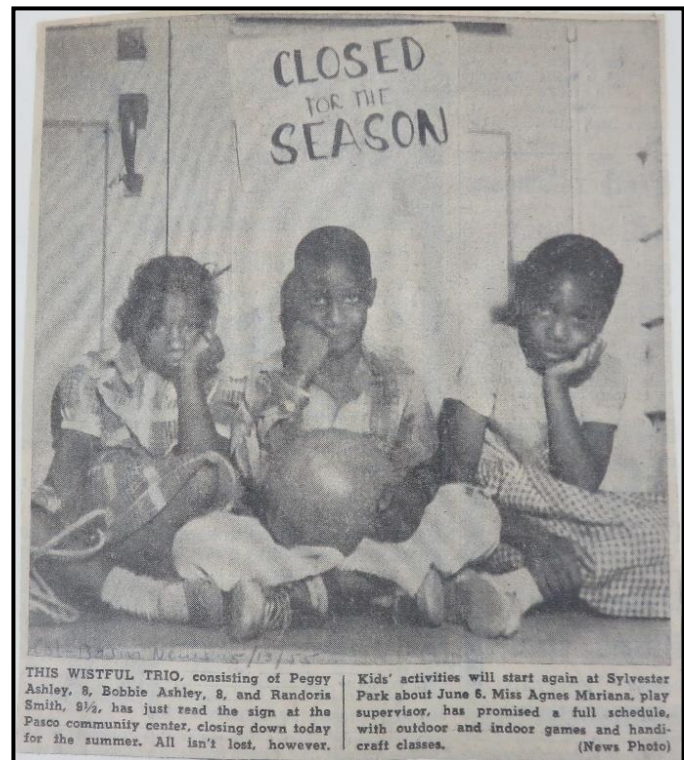


Figure 11. In front of the Pasco Community Center, May 1955.

⁵⁸ Bauman, 126, 129.

⁵⁹ “Pasco Pool Will Open May 25.”

⁶⁰ Interview with Aubrey Johnson.

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Figure 12. Pasco pool, July 1956.



Figure 13. Pasco Carnegie Library

In December 1947, Pasco City officials tacitly acknowledged the deep discrimination and segregation that defined the city, and the damage it did to Black residents, in a move that simultaneously reinforced and formalized these practices. That month, the Planning Board, citing the “many requests” it had received for “restaurants and other establishments to cater to Pasco’s Negro residents,” approved a “Negro Business Zone.” The “new commercial zone in the southeast part of Pasco” codified racial segregation—while extending it into the commercial sector and officially delineated it on the ground: The planning commission voted unanimously to rezone four blocks on “A” Street east and west of Oregon Street/Ave” to serve as the “Negro Business Zone.”⁶¹

The “Negro Business Zone” constituted a formalization of segregated Pasco space, and dramatized the way that discrimination physically shaped the city. It illustrated how Pasco’s anti-Black discrimination was literally built into the town. This fact was especially, and painfully, apparent in East Pasco. There, Black American residents were not only segregated but subsequently neglected and degraded by the city, which for years denied them the most basic infrastructure. Anti-Black racism was thus built into the Tri-Cities as a whole in multiple ways, via both spatial segregation of Black Americans into East Pasco and the deplorable physical conditions therein.

⁶¹ “Negro Business Zone Approved.”

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Discrimination in the Built Environment

The inadequacy of East Pasco's infrastructure was apparent from the get-go. Indeed, its undeveloped, peripheral status was part of why it became the Tri-Cities' Black space in the first place. As people poured in during the war years, the limited extant infrastructure in the area was overtaxed almost immediately. When thousands of people moved into Pasco, and over 1,200 Black Americans crowded into the only Tri-Cities section in which they were generally allowed to live, "the city [of Pasco] did not provide water or regular garbage service to the east side." Basic housing was difficult to find. During Hanford's construction "DuPont arranged for one barrack and one bunkhouse for "colored personnel" in Pasco, but many Black Americans were forced into makeshift residences, including trailers, shacks, tents, and chicken houses."⁶² As members of the Black community later recalled, "those settling in East Pasco found poor housing conditions. Trailer houses and shacks with outdoor toilet facilities made up most of the available housing."⁶³ Moreover, discrimination in the real estate sales and financing sectors meant that Black American were not only segregated in East Pasco but were restricted from owning, and improving, homes therein: "owning property was virtually impossible for Blacks. Outside of East Pasco owners refused to sell to Black customers. Local banks, in turn, redlined East Pasco, refusing to process any loans to residents from East Pasco."⁶⁴

While redlining extended to cover the few blocks along the west side of the tracks, an area in west Pasco area did contain a small Black residential cluster. East Pasco borderlands residents recalled that "it was known that from 2nd Avenue, which was where the bus station was, east, they had what they called an imaginary red line and all the blacks had to live east of that line. And they just did not cater to you at all."⁶⁵ Others remembered the redlining extended several blocks farther: "The banks had a boundary. Nobody on the east side of 4th Street would they lend. Nobody, to nobody. On the east side of 4th Street."⁶⁶

Washington State College surveyors provided greater detail on the racial disparities of Pasco's built environment in their 1948 study. They noted that "blacks considered the lack of adequate housing the most important reason for the unrest among the Black American population." The WSC report explained that "because of the restrictive covenants in Kennewick and Pasco, most Blacks lived in substandard housing. The surveyors found that 73 percent of Blacks and only 3 percent of whites lived in trailers; however only 12 percent of Blacks, over 77 percent of whites, owned homes; and 78 percent of Black families lived in one room, but only 6 percent of white families did." The also reported that "almost 95 percent of blacks in Pasco lived east of the railroad tracks," where they dwelt "in old trailers or small shacks made of tarpaper, wood, and sheet metal. Most of this area had no electricity or plumbing—only outhouses and a few communal showers."⁶⁷

⁶² Bauman, "Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950," 126.

⁶³ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, "Cultural Awareness: Pasco's Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco's Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet]," sec. Social.

⁶⁴ Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 11.

⁶⁵ Interview with Vanis and Edmon Daniels.

⁶⁶ Interview with Joe Williams.

⁶⁷ Bauman, "Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950," 129.

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Figure 14. Reprinted from Bauman, "Typical housing conditions in East Pasco, 1949."

Relegated to a single, undeveloped neighborhood without basic municipal services and infrastructure, Tri-Cities' Black residents also found themselves cited and censured by Pasco officials for their degraded physical circumstances. In one 1948 instance, after the City Sanitarian E. O. Wartensleben inspected "13 camps on Pasco's east side"—some of which did not have any "running water for customers"—he met with the "trailer-camp operators catering to Negro customers," and "explained ordinance 489, dealing with trailer and cabin camps ... He said the condition of toilets was not so good. The ordinance requires a toilet for each 15 persons. The toilet must be connected with a sewer or septic tank." The 19 camp operators, themselves likely restricted to residing in East Pasco, were, needless to say, well aware of the wretched and dangerous conditions of their community, and "expressed a desire to cooperate with health authorities in

providing sanitary facilities and meeting minimum health standards."⁶⁸ The following July, "city officials turned their big guns on substandard trailer and cabin camps ...after a survey of Pasco's east side...Their appraisal resulted in notices to clean up or close up served on a number of operators who were given until August 10 to comply with health, building, and fire regulations." As the American Civil Liberties Union put it, in a letter to state officials regarding Pasco's "segregation of Negroes, discrimination against them in providing essential public services": city officials "have refused to provide sewage disposal and water to the Negro community, which has been segregated, and have then threatened condemnation for the failure to comply with sanitation and health regulations."⁶⁹

James Pruitt arrived in the Tri-Cities in 1948, and described his new home as "very, very prejudiced. Very racist. I was surprised when I came here to find a place that I had left a few years back from Mississippi and came here and found the same thing that I found in Mississippi." And indeed, by the late 1940s, profound racism and discrimination had become an infamous, definitive feature of the area.

The blatant discrimination embodied by East Pasco inspired an ongoing flurry of investigations by different entities. Multiple investigations were conducted by the NAACP and the Pasco Chamber of Commerce during the war, and other studies followed after war's end. When in the fall of 1947 the Pasco Chamber Commerce "contact[ed] the Washington State College (WSC) field office in Pasco . . .

⁶⁸ "Increased Fires Listed in Pasco."
⁶⁹ "Jim Crowism Charge Denied."

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[and] asked that the college investigate and evaluate the problems caused by the area's population growth and demographic changes," it did so "on behalf of the Pasco and Kennewick chambers of commerce, city councils, and Kiwanis clubs." Supervised by Dr. T.H. Kennedy, chair of WSC's Social Sciences Division, "in the summer of 1948, faculty and graduate students from the college began to conduct surveys of local residents as well as research on other aspects of life in Pasco and Kennewick. One of the primary topics of study was race relations."⁷⁰

The study documented conditions in East Pasco and race relations in the Tri-Cities more broadly and served as the basis of not only the November 1949 survey report (*A Community Survey of the Pasco-Kennewick* by Washington State University, and General Extension Service) but also at least three WSU Master's theses (all completed in 1949). These included "A Study of Selected Socio-Cultural and Opinion Differentials among Negroes and Whites in the Pasco, Washington Community" by M. Elaine Burgess'; Gordon Rutherford's "An Appraisal of the Adult Education Implications of a Community Survey"; and James Wiley Jr.'s "Race Conflict as Exemplified in a Washington Town."⁷¹ Around the same time, the National Urban League completed at least two different investigations of race relations and discrimination in the Tri-Cities, one in 1948 and one in 1951. In 1948 the ACLU did the same, using information from "most reliable" local sources.⁷²

Black American Residences in Pasco

Given the abysmal-to-nonexistent nature of infrastructure like legitimate streets and houses (with mail service), even a partial reconstruction of the specific residential landscape of Black Pasco is difficult. Some Black Pasco residents lived in permanent dwellings with fixed addresses. Many, perhaps most, did not. Moreover, no post-war decennial U.S. Census information has yet be researched. The first census to contain information on Pasco's Black American residents is the 1950 federal census, which is just beginning to be opened for research in 2022. This census contains information about race and residential address for each individual enumerated. Until it can be studied in more detail, mapping Black Pasco's dwellings is difficult, and documenting a large number of its households impossible.

Despite these limitations, research for this project did document locations, and in some cases numerical addresses, for numerous Black American residences in East Pasco, as well as elsewhere in Pasco—mainly in the few blocks immediately west of the railroad tracks between the trainyard and 4th Avenue (north of West Lewis), which contained the only identifiable Black residential cluster outside of East Pasco proper.

The earliest date for Black residences with identified locations in East Pasco was 1940, when the federal decennial census recorded the Harris-Purnell family at 802 East A Street, and a married couple, the Stewarts, at 301 South Front Street. In 1943 Olden Richmond arrived, and "lived over here on Douglas in a trailer."⁷³ Joe Williams came that same year, living first in a trailer and then buying a two-room dwelling (one of a row of about seven) "from the railroad on Front Street." Williams "also built a café there," and subsequently "built a really, really nice house on Orange Street." Williams ultimately

⁷⁰ Bauman, "Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950," 129.

⁷¹ Wiley, "Race Conflict as Exemplified in a Washington Town."

⁷² "Jim Crowism Charge Denied"; Bauman, "Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950," 130; "Tri-City Area Gains in Negro Population."

⁷³ Interview with Olden Richmond.

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“built numerous homes on Orange Street,” owning a total of seven homes in Pasco.⁷⁴ In 1944, Luzell Johnson moved to the area and “bought a little place ... at 321 South Front Street in Pasco.” He “lived there for a good while” and then “bought some land and ... built a house” elsewhere.⁷⁵ These early residences served as the institutional as well as residential foundations of the community. For instance, in 1945, Morning Star Baptist Church “began with a small group of singers meeting in the homes of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Williams and Mr. and Mrs. Luzelle Johnson.”⁷⁶

The following year, in 1946, Aubrey Johnson moved to Pasco with his parents. As Johnson recalled, when they

“first got here, not having a place to live, we stayed in the kitchen of a pastor, Reverend Stewart’s house for a while. After they got employment and stuff, we moved into a trailer. And eventually, we bought a little small house, and we lived there for a few years. In 1948 they moved it down to the property they would live on now at 705 South Douglas. It was a shotgun house... I think it was ’48, that’s when my mom and they bought that little shotgun house that we had and they moved it from, on Oregon and Butte Street down to Douglas and Butte. They bought some property there from a guy, Eldon Wallace. I think my mom told me they paid \$300 for it and we bought three lots, and they set that little shotgun house up on it.”⁷⁷

The Johnson’s subsequently broke up (his mom was married to Eddie Gix ca. 1950-56) but the family stayed at the S. Douglas property and “added on to that shotgun house two bedrooms. But there was no bathroom. There was a faucet over at the corner that we got running water from... up until 1956. We had an outhouse.” Johnson recalled several other East Pasco Black residences during his childhood, especially those across the street from Kurtzman Park, where they’d “go down ... and play, so it was like a safe haven. I remember there was a lady across the street, Big Irene, and the Butchers lived over across the street. Then there was California Street ... and Wehe, they intersect. And they intersect right in front of the park and there was a row of houses there and I could probably name you everybody that lived in those houses.”⁷⁸

Also arriving in the ‘40s were the Robinsons, who came in 1947 and bought or built a house on “a piece of property over in East Pasco, just adjacent to the railroad tracks ... on Queen Street.... right there kind of where Tommy’s Steel and Salvage” later was from 1969-2020. The Robinson’s lived there until “urban renewal came through...and bought my parents out and so forth, and we moved to the west side of town. Right across the street from what is now a Boys & Girls Club in Pasco.”⁷⁹ Despite demolition of their home ca. 1969-70, the Robinson place could still be identified in 2018, when one could “still see some of the trees that were in my backyard at the time. They’re still there all these years later.”⁸⁰

After a brief earlier stay in the area, Mae Fite moved back to Pasco permanently with her family in

⁷⁴ Interview with Joe Williams.
⁷⁵ Interview with Luzell Johnson.
⁷⁶ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Religion.
⁷⁷ Interview with Aubrey Johnson.
⁷⁸ Interview with Aubrey Johnson.
⁷⁹ Interview with Rickie Robinson.
⁸⁰ Interview with Rickie Robinson.

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1950, and Fite remembered that “when we moved back, there was a little home there across the street from Morning Star Baptist Church. We lived in there in like a little fourplex. And from there we moved to Parkside Homes. My sister was born in 1953 when we were living in Parkside ... [near] Navy Homes Park over on 4th Street? And then Dad built our home over on Owens in east Pasco, and then that’s where we grew up.”⁸¹

The Dorsey family arrived at the same time as the Fites, 1950, when, as Ellenor Moore (née Dorsey) recalled,

“the living conditions and housing was just horrible ... My mother actually cried because of where they had to live when they first came here ... it was like a little encampment over on, what, Idaho Street, I believe it was. It was owned by a family called the Haney’s ... they owned some property and they’d put up some little shacks that people could rent. That’s what I’d call them, they were little shacks....no inside plumbing; they had like a public bathhouse on the property ... So my mother spent most of her time trying to find a place for us to move. I think we lived in that place about three months. And then she found a house over on ... Douglas Street.”⁸²

Ellenor married Thomas Moore in the 1950s, and they “had one of the houses over there on California Street, which is facing the park [Kurtzman] over there, now. ... that park was just all open field when we got married. But there was a row of houses.”⁸³ They later lived in the four-plex that Ellenor’s husband Thomas Moore built in the 1950s kitty-corner from Morning Star Baptist church on the corner of Butte and Douglas (at 704 E. Butte Street), which housed the Moore family in two of the units while they rented out the other two. According to Thomas and Ellenor’s son, Thomas Moore Jr., Moore also owned or managed “a couple more houses behind [i.e. south of]” the four-plex that he rented out: one of the families he rented to early on was the Dorseys, whose daughter, Ellenor Louise, Thomas Moore ended up marrying.⁸⁴ Other Black-owned residences in the immediate vicinity of the Moores’ and Morning Star included Ray Henry’s four-plex, which was right across the street. Community members also recall “Mr. Mitchell’s duplex” as being in the neighborhood.⁸⁵

Also in East Pasco during the 1950s was the family of Katie Barton. In 1951 they lived at 610 S. Owen Street. Their Owen Street house “had no foundation...basically... a trailer” onto which they “built the house ... knocked out a wall of the trailer and built the house. The kitchen, a bedroom and a living room on to the trailer at the house, with no foundation and with part of the trailer still being there.” It was condemned and demolished during Urban Renewal in the late 1960s, and the family moved “about two blocks up” to 525 S. Elm.⁸⁶ When Barton’s family lived on Owen Street, the Miles family lived not far away. They moved to Pasco around 1951, and as the Reverend Jeannette Sparks (née Miles) recalled, “Daddy bought the property on the corner and two houses for—because he put his mom in one house, and our house was on that upstairs/downstairs on the corner of 712 on Douglas Street there...off A

⁸¹ Interview with Mae Fite.

⁸² Interview with Ellenor Moore.

⁸³ Interview with Ellenor Moore.

⁸⁴ *Pasco’s African American History*.

⁸⁵ Morning Star Church Interview with Pastor Albert Wilkins, Dr. Dallas Barnes, and Mr. Webster Jackson; *Pasco’s African American History*.

⁸⁶ Interview with Marion Keith Barton.

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Street on Douglas...712 South Douglas." Jeannette continued to live at 712 S. Douglas after she married (she was still there in 2018), and other family members lived nearby, including her "husband's auntie ...[the] Smiths. Uncle Dave and Aunt Clement. They lived there. They lived, they got that big house next street over from me over there."⁸⁷

A few blocks away was the Vanis (Sr.) and Idalee Daniels family, "seven kids and one niece," who in September 1951 bought a house at 611 S. Beech Ave. The Daniels purchased their home on contract from a Mrs. Jensen after local banks wouldn't give them a mortgage.⁸⁸ Prior to buying their house, they "stayed a couple of weeks on Douglas," where "a guy ... called ... Radio... had started to build a house. He allowed people to put trailers on his property. ...My uncle had a house, my great-uncle had a house, and between the two trailers and the two houses, they were able to house us until my dad could find a place. And he found a house... that was like a couple of blocks from Douglas there on Beech Street."⁸⁹ Also nearby was the family of Rev. Wilkins, current pastor of Morning Star Baptist Church. Wilkins remembered "living next-door to the [MS] church [then on Butte and Wehe] in '53, '54, '55."⁹⁰ Wilkins' East Pasco neighbors may have included Milton (Sr.) and Josephine Smith Norwood, in whose home New Hope Missionary Baptist Church was organized in 1953.⁹¹

Several years later, around 1955, the Rambo family moved to Pasco. Daughter Rhonda later said that all she remembered her mom talking about from that early period was "the house on east Pasco, saying how bad the sandstorms would be. When the front door—screen door would be just blocked with sand and tumbleweeds, basically. That's what I remember her talking about, living on the east side of town in that home that she stayed in. It was an apartment complex she stayed in... Right around A Street, what is now A Street. Very dirty and dusty over there." The Rambos subsequently "lived in Navy Homes [until 1960-62] over there, off of ... Court....That's where most the families started out, in those homes. And eventually my dad saved up enough money to purchase the home [ca. 1960-62] that we're in now...the family home, is on [1715 W] Clark Street." At the Rambos' W. Clark home "the Robinsons lived up the street."⁹²

Around the time the Rambos arrived, Black-occupied dwellings in East Pasco included that of Othal Hawthorne Lakey, Pastor of the St. James Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, who ca. 1956 "live[d] at [the] corner of Butte and Wehe" (the same intersection that housed Morning Star Baptist ca. 1948-56). Also in the neighborhood was Rose Allen, who remarried in the mid-to-late 1950s and recalled that she and her new husband,

"rented a house at first. And then we saw the house that we bought, we purchased, over on Lewis Street. At the time before, it was a veteran's hospital...it was a house, a regular house, right on Lewis Street. And that's where we moved from going over to the west side....it was on the corner directly across the street from the East Side Market and ...And then across the

⁸⁷ Interview with Reverend Jeannette Sparks.

⁸⁸ *Pasco's African American History*.

⁸⁹ Interview with Vanis and Edmon Daniels.

⁹⁰ Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

⁹¹ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, "Cultural Awareness: Pasco's Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco's Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet]," sec. Religion. "Church Finds New Hope."

⁹² Interview with Bryan and Rhonda Rambo.

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street, the school [then when urban renewal bought that place] ...I managed to buy me a house up off of 20th across from Robert Frost School.⁹³

Not far away, in the 1950s and 60s was Duke Mitchell's great uncle Willy Daniels, who Mitchell remembered during his childhood "just lived down the street on Douglas Street there in east Pasco, from Morning Star Baptist Church."⁹⁴ Next door to Morning Star at the same time was the church's pastor, who ca. the late 1960s during Urban Renewal "was relocated over on 14th.... Across from Pasco High."⁹⁵

During the 1960s, identified Black-American residences in East Pasco included "the Harris dwelling" at 1225 East Clark, where in August 1960, "a white man, rather tall" murdered four people, three of whom were Black and lived at the home.⁹⁶ They also included the home of Mrs. Leona Banks, who lived at 731 S. Wehe Street when she died (at the age of 59) in the final days of 1960, and of Wally Webster, who moved to Pasco in 1962 and lived at 725 Hugo St. South near "A Street going towards Sacajawea Park." As Webster recalled, that's where his "uncle, not only had he built a business with three entities in it [Jack's Pit and Grill], he also had built an apartment building on the hill up there that had three or four apartments in it. The one apartment, he built especially for himself to live in. So I lived with him.... He left here after Urban Renewal purchased his property, and went to California," and the apartment building was subsequently demolished. Not too far from Webster's abode was the home of Artis and Bernice Miles, who lived at 727 S. Douglas from 1964 through at least 1979 (possibly building a new house at that address in 1972). Artis and Bernice's daughter, the Rev. Jeanette Sparks (née Miles), lived nearby on the "corner of A and Douglas Street" for some time. Many other families likely lived nearby: Bernice Miles was honored in the community "as a mother of twenty children." Also nearby was Virginia Crippen's property, which she'd had since the late '40s, "a building" on A Street, where "she lived in one portion and [her restaurant] the Chicken Shack was on the front."⁹⁷

Other Black residents of the Tri-Cities settled in East Pasco in later years. Gordon Guice, "was born in Parkside [homes] ... across from the courthouse" in west Pasco in 1952, and subsequently moved "up the street to the Navy homes . . . right there on 4th—4th and 1st, on the corner right there, where the Boys & Girls Club is now," where they lived "until 1966, and then we really moved on up, and we moved to East Pasco. We had a house. So we moved into East Pasco in 1966, Owens Avenue... Vanis [Daniels] lived two doors down, across the street from us."⁹⁸ Dallas Barnes arrived in Pasco (as a child) in 1952 and also lived first in west Pasco, not far from Navy Homes, before moving to East Pasco, where the Barnes family had a home at 1704 E. Alton Street. One block down at 1803 E. Alton lived the family of Mr. and Mrs. Dave Butcher.

⁹³ Interview with Rose Allen.

⁹⁴ Interview with David (Duke) Mitchell.

⁹⁵ Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

⁹⁶ "Deeper Motive Sought in Pasco Murders"; McKay, "57 Years Later, Unsolved Pasco Quadruple Murder Still Lingers"; Schurk, "Pasco Police Examine 1960 Murder Case"; "Pasco Murderer Sought by Police"; "Boy Holds Clew in Four Murders."

⁹⁷ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, "Cultural Awareness: Pasco's Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco's Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet]," sec. Conclusion. Interview with Wally Webster; "Mrs. Banks' Funeral Set"; Interview with Reverend Jeannette Sparks; Holschuh and Harris Environmental Group, "Survey of Historic Properties Associated with the African American Experience in East Pasco."

⁹⁸ Interview with Gordon Guice.

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The Sparks family also migrated from west Pasco to east, moving ca. 1971 from Navy Homes to a house they bought on Elm Street (likely 125 S. Elm).⁹⁹ The home of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Green was likely nearby—they lived at 627 S. Elm in 1970, when their daughter was crowned queen of the Afro-American Art Festival.¹⁰⁰ The extant residence at 705 S. Douglas Ave was reportedly constructed that same year (1970), and was occupied by a member of the Gix family, Castuiller Gix, from at least 1972-1979.¹⁰¹ Members of the extended Gix family included Aubrey Johnson and his parents, who occupied that same address as early as 1948. Not far away in 1970 were Mr. and Mrs. James Pruitt, who lived that year at 110 N. Beech when Mr. Pruitt was hired as assistant police community relations director for the City of Pasco.¹⁰² The family of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Morrison lived at 307 N. Front in 1973.¹⁰³



During this period Black Americans also likely occupied some of the residences built by contractor, and community member, Webster Jackson. Jackson built several single-family homes in East Pasco at 607 S. Sycamore, 515 S. Sycamore, 624 S. Douglas, 119 S. Owen, and 123 North Elm, as well a duplex at 623 S. Owen. He also built an 8-unit apartment building at 315 W. Bonneville, several blocks west of the railroad tracks.¹⁰⁴ The East Pasco residence that was located at 319 S. Idaho Street was also likely occupied by Black family prior to September 1970, when it was sold for removal by the City’s Urban Renewal program to the United Black Youth, Inc of Pasco, which planned to use it as a teen center.¹⁰⁵ In the meantime, the youth group “organiz[ed] a temporary teen center in another house at 316 S. California.”¹⁰⁶

In addition to the mainly single-family houses identified above, sources document several multi-family residential properties associated with Black Americans. These were for the most part “trailer courts” (often consisting of a motley assortment of trailers, cabins, shacks, outbuildings, etc.) at unspecified East Pasco locations. Such uncharted trailer courts included those operated by Mrs. Wright, Mr. Ely, Bud Walker, and Aretha and Robert Dillon, as well as the Gateway Trailer Park owned (in 1955) by Chester Young.

Figure 15. *Tri-City Herald*, September 30, 1970.

⁹⁹ Interview with Bobby Sparks; “Cookies in the Park.”
¹⁰⁰ “Afro-American Queen.”
¹⁰¹ Holschuh and Harris Environmental Group, “Survey of Historic Properties Associated with the African American Experience in East Pasco.”
¹⁰² “Pasco Job Offered to Black.”
¹⁰³ “Death of Pasco Youth Blamed on Karate Punch,” *Tri-City Herald*, 1973, scrapbooks, City of Pasco Parks Department.
¹⁰⁴ Jackson to Hagen, “Black Pasco History and Historic Sites,” January 29, 2021; Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.
¹⁰⁵ “Blacks Buy Home for Teen Center.”
¹⁰⁶ “Black Youths Hurry Incorporation.”

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Trailer courts owned by Mr. and Mrs. Haney south of East Lewis between Oregon, Hagerman and Idaho Streets, covered “a whole block,” while the Lola James’ trail court was located “on Front Street” at 820 S. Oregon.¹⁰⁷ Later low-cost, low-quality housing came in the form of places like the Lincoln Terrace housing development, a Central Labor Council project constructed in 1970. The East Pasco community recalled the development as dangerously lacking in fire escapes and emergency exits, and one resident reported “grass grew up through her floor.”¹⁰⁸

A few members of the Black community also lived west of the railroad tracks in Pasco. But, for the most part, just barely, they were clustered “next to the train tracks...As far east as west Pasco went.” This Black beachhead was tightly circumscribed. Webster Jackson, who lived there in 1950, couldn’t “recall any Black Americans or black people living past that First street.”¹⁰⁹ The west Pasco cluster grew around a Sutton-Coleman family foundation: Gladys Sutton and the Rev. Samuel Coleman—both from the few Black families that had come to Pasco prior to 1920—married in 1927 and bought property “on the corner of First and Shoshone” (“between 1st Street and the railroad track”) in the 1930s. After spending time in Seattle, Olympia, and elsewhere attending college, he began “pastoring” and working in the building trades. The Colemans “built a home on their property in Pasco in 1943” and in 1944 returned to live there. That year they also built the Negro Pentecostal Church on their west Pasco tract, and Rev. Coleman “ran his church until 1949.” The Colemans also built and operated “Coleman’s Cabins” and “had a cafe in town, too,” all on the west side of the railroad tracks at 118-128 W. Shoshone. They “refused to buy property on the east side of the tracks on principle.” The Colemans subsequently “evangelized from state to state, but Pasco remained [their] home base until [Gladys] death in 1976. Rev. Coleman continued to live in their home on the corner of First and Shoshone until his death a few years later.”¹¹⁰

One of the earliest Black neighbors of the Colemans was Gladys Sutton Coleman’s mom Theodocia S. Kennedy, who in 1940 lived with a lodger (Eddie Nelson) at 129 W. Bonneville. By 1946, Theodocia had remarried and was known as Mrs. McCauley. She died that year after being “severely burned in a fire at her home.”¹¹¹ Other early neighbors included Lucille Sommers, who in 1940 lived next door to Theodocia S. Kennedy at 125 W. Bonneville, as well as Elijah McCauley and his lodger Ike Walter, who then lived across the street at 124 Bonneville (rear). Sommers, who’d been in Pasco since at least 1935 lived “in a modest home on Chase Street [now 20th Ave.] on her property” (where she’d also established her “Chase Street Chicken Dinner Restaurant”). Her “11 acres of almost unimproved property” (which sat “squarely in the path of Pasco’s westward advance”) was located “at the corner of Lewis and 20th Streets.” Reportedly she also “owned property ... at several other locations,” and when she died at the age of 64 in 1956 her estate, which she willed to a local Catholic Church, was “valued at about \$25,000.”¹¹²

Also in the immediate vicinity in 1940 was James Clyce, at 119 N. 1st, and two married couples, the Esmonds and the Moores, at 305 and 307 N. 1st Street, respectively. Not far away were two men, Scott

¹⁰⁷ Interview with James Pruitt; Interview with Virginia Crippen; “Youth Disarmed.”

¹⁰⁸ “Pasco Residents Criticize Housing.”

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

¹¹⁰ Taylor, Coleman, Reverend and Mrs. Sam (Oral History); Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 14; Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

¹¹¹ “September Fire Victim Succumbs in Seattle.”

¹¹² Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 14; “11 Acres Willed to Catholic Church.”

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Banks and Glen Holland, and a widow, Marie Ortego, who rented rooms on North Tacoma Avenue.¹¹³ In 1945, Mrs. Geneva E. Brocks, lived in a home on First Street, where the Church of God in Christ was founded that year.¹¹⁴ Other early neighbors included Webster Jackson's family, which came to Pasco in 1950. They settled first "on Tacoma Street... right next to the railroad track... it was kind of like a little shack of a triplex, I guess you would call it. It wasn't no triplex, it was—because there was only just one room and a bathroom ... Tacoma and Sylvester." The Jacksons—Webster and his "mother and father [and] ... two aunts and uncles"—were crowded in their N Tacoma St. dwelling, and "not very long after ... moved to Parkside Homes," which was "just to the west side of 1st Street." A few years later Dallas Barnes and his family settled nearby. Arriving in 1952, they settled first "in west Pasco next to the train tracks," "on that first street off of [Lewis]—on the side of the railroad tracks." There they lived with Barnes' aunt. In her house apartment if-you-will type-thing. She had rooms that she rented to some of the workers at Hanford, and we stayed in one of the rooms there when we first got here." Soon, "may be within a few months, no more than a year. ... it wasn't that long ... [they] moved from her house to an apartment right across the street ... in west Pasco still next to the train tracks."¹¹⁵ Down the street from the Barnes family, at 107 W. Sylvester (Sylvester and First) lived the Ernace and Anna Bee Beasley family, at a property they purchased prior to 1955. The Beasleys built a new concrete-block residence on their property in 1958 and raised eleven children there. Family members continued to own and occupy the house in 2018.¹¹⁶ Other Black residential properties nearby included an apartment building owned by Ray Henry (the Newborn Apartments) and another owned by Roy Howard (located on Shoshone and First streets).¹¹⁷

A significant component of the west Pasco Black-American residential cluster comprised of Navy Homes and Parkside Homes. These multi-family developments originated as housing for military personnel during the Second World War—"Parkside was Army, Navy Homes was Navy"—and bounded the small Black community along the west side of the railroad tracks. Navy Homes "was all the way down the end of 1st Street," at the north end, and extended west to 4th Street ("straight across the street" from the Chinese Garden restaurant / Court St). Parkside Homes was "just to the west side of 1st Street (and Margaret St)," "a block east of the courthouse." As Reverend Albert Wilkins put it, "that was as close to the west side as you gonna get."¹¹⁸

Along with Riverside Homes, a.k.a. Riverview (Pasco's third wartime federal housing development for military personnel, located near the Columbia River), Navy and Parkside Homes comprised 545 housing units of slightly varying design. Parkside, completed in 1943 saw its first tenants moved in mid-June of that year. It was designed as "temporary emergency housing" intended to "have about 10 years' life." Parkside consisted of "apartment groups, generally comprising three apartments to a

¹¹³ United States and Bureau of the Census, *16th Census, Population, 1940*.

¹¹⁴ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, "Cultural Awareness: Pasco's Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco's Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet]," sec. Religion.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Dallas Barnes; Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

¹¹⁶ Holschuh and Harris Environmental Group, "Survey of Historic Properties Associated with the African American Experience in East Pasco."

¹¹⁷ Morning Star Church Interview with Pastor Albert Wilkins, Dr. Dallas Barnes, and Mr. Webster Jackson; *Pasco's African American History*.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.; Interview with Donald Bell, Sr.; Interview with Bryan and Rhonda Rambo.

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Figure 16. Parkside Homes, 1943

member put it, “your first low-rent place.”¹²² Indeed, Donald Bell Sr., who was born in 1958 and grew up in Navy Homes, recalled the development as “predominantly African American.”¹²³ In addition to the aforementioned Fites, Rambos, Guices, Sparks, Bells, and Jacksons, there were numerous other unidentified families whose “Black children living in Parkside Homes and elsewhere west of the railroad tracks attended Longfellow and Captain Gray Elementary schools.”¹²⁴ Rhonda Rambo recalled “that’s where most the families started out, in those homes.”¹²⁵

Beyond the railyard-hugging cluster bounded on the northwest by Navy and Parkside Homes, only a few Black residences in Pasco were west of the train tracks.

In the years after Sommers’ death, several other Black American families acquired homes west of 4th Avenue. These included the Rambos, who by

building.”¹¹⁹ Built in 1945, Navy Homes contained “231 family units.”¹²⁰ These were “duplex, triplex and fourplex buildings” and were also built as “temporary structures.” However sometime after 1948 were “classed as permanent structures.” Around that same time the housing projects were opened to occupants besides the families of veterans (to whom they’d been restricted after the war) and management of the units was transferred to the Pasco Housing Authority. Parkside Homes was eventually dismantled—the last three structures were removed in February 1961, but the Navy Homes endured.¹²¹

These multi-family residential complexes served as starter housing for many of the Tri-Cities Black residents: as one community



Figure 17. Navy Homes, May 1959 (reprinted from Meyer, “A Study of the Development of the Tri-Cities”)

¹¹⁹ “Trailers in the Sun.”

¹²⁰ Meyer, “A Study of the Development of the Tri-Cities, Pasco, Kennewick, and Richland, Washington,” 41–42.

¹²¹ “Pasco Housing Confab Is Held”; “Housing Project Hearing Is Set”; “Federal Rentals Will Be Boosted”; “Sale Points War Years.”

¹²² Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

¹²³ Interview with Donald Bell, Sr.

¹²⁴ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Education.

¹²⁵ Interview with Bryan and Rhonda Rambo.

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the early 1960s “saved up enough money to purchase” a house at 1715 W. Clark Street that they subsequently occupied for decades. Daughter Rhonda Rambo remained there in 2018, and recalled that in the early years another Black family, “the Robinsons lived up the street.”¹²⁶ Some years later, in 1972, Aubrey Johnson bought a house some distance north of the Rambos, at 1719 N. 17th Ave. Johnson, as he recalled, “had just got a settlement from Franklin County when I got my foot crushed and I think they gave me \$4,000 or something like that ... when I got my money, I took half of it out and went and bought me a car and then I took the other half of the money and I went and bought me a house.” Johnson still owned the house when he was interviewed in 2018.¹²⁷

The Black Community

Many of the Black workers who had come to work at Hanford left after the war, but other migrants moved to and settled in the Tri-Cities during the postwar period. They joined earlier arrivals who’d stayed, as well as the few longstanding Black Pasco families like the Suttons and the Colemans. Together they forged a community to serve and sustain the Black population in the midst of the aggressively hostile dominant White Tri-Cities society.

Postwar migrants came, as before, from the southeast, but also from other places like WWII production centers where populations were shifting with the end of the war. In 1946 or '47, Ed Martin came from Jacksonville, Florida (and stayed until he died, at the age of 71, fifteen years later).¹²⁸ In 1948, “Tom Jackson left Arkansas ... and settled with his family in Pasco. Tom and Lula Jackson remained in Pasco,” raising their sons, Joe and Webster there.¹²⁹ Marion and Katie Morgan Barton arrived that same year, with Marion traveling from Texas first to take a job at Hanford, and 30-year-old Katie joining her husband “several months” later.¹³⁰ Also arriving in 1948 was Virginia Crippen, a Texas-born single woman who’d been working in the shipyards in Portland during the war, and James Pruitt (originally from Mississippi), rode a bus to the Tri-Cities from Los Angeles.¹³¹ Tennessee-native Virgie Robinson and her husband Richard, meanwhile, came to Pasco from western Washington in the late 1940s.¹³²

Community Institutions and Organizations

With the wartime and postwar influxes, and the associated establishment of a substantial Black population, the Black community began building its own autonomous institutions. These included religious, social, cultural, recreational, and political organizations. Primary among them were churches.

Across the country, “historically, many of the social activities for Blacks in America have been tied to the Black church,” and the Tri-Cities was no different. In fact, many of “the first social gatherings in Pasco were also associated with religious worship.”¹³³ Indeed, the establishment of Black churches in Pasco in many ways marked the advent of that community as a distinct entity. And as churches were

¹²⁶ Interview with Bryan and Rhonda Rambo.

¹²⁷ Interview with Aubrey Johnson.

¹²⁸ “Edward Martin Services Held.”

¹²⁹ Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 10–11.

¹³⁰ Shu-Chen, “Katie D. Morgan Barton (1918-2010) •.”

¹³¹ Interview with Virginia Crippen; Interview with James Pruitt.

¹³² Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 11.

¹³³ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Social.

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established, and grew, congregations moved to different quarters. Most churches had multiple locations over time and their presence thus suffused the Pasco historical landscape, mapping a primary component of the Black community.

The Sutton and Coleman families helped build the foundations of Black religious organization in the Tri-Cities. Reportedly the Colemans had tried to establish a church and Sunday school room for the Black community in Pasco as early as 1936.¹³⁴ Finally on March 7, 1944, the *Spokane Chronicle* reported that “The Rev. S.L. Coleman, pastor ... announced all preliminary surveys have been completed” for “construction of the new Negro Pentecostal church ... underway at First and Shoshone streets.”¹³⁵ Like many other aspects of the Black community, Coleman’s “creation of the first black church in Pasco” was driven, in part, by White Pasco’s exclusion of Black Americans. Reportedly “seven white ministers and one leading white female resident asked the Reverend Samuel Coleman, one of a handful of black residents in Pasco before the war, to build a church because, they argued, there was not enough room in their churches for blacks.”¹³⁶

Nonetheless, when the Colemans “began constructing the new church on the west side of town,” city officials and businesspeople tried to entice, and then coerce, them into re-locating to East Pasco. Mayor E. S. Johnston

“told Coleman that if he built his church on the east side of town, the city would provide the water and electricity at no cost. In addition, local real-estate agents offered Coleman lots on the east side of town for five dollars each. After Coleman refused to construct the church on the east side of town, the Pasco City Council, in an effort to make the costs for the church prohibitive, changed the city code to require one toilet for every 15 people in a building, instead of one toilet for every 60 people, the previous requirement. But no plumber in town would install the church’s toilets, so Coleman had to hire someone through the National Urban League (NUL) office in Portland. Eventually, Coleman’s persistence, along with threats of legal action by Seattle’s NAACP office and Portland’s Urban League office, resulted in the completion of the church on the west side of Pasco.”¹³⁷

Two other Black churches began the following year, originating in the homes of early community members. When “Elder W.J. Jones established the Church of God in Christ in 1945. The church was located in the home of Mrs. Geneva E. Brocks on First Street,” just west of the tracks.¹³⁸ Around the same time, Morning Star Baptist Church “began with a small group of singers meeting in the homes of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Williams and Mr. and Mrs. Luzelle Johnson” on Front Street, just east of the tracks. As Velma Ray (a.k.a. Mrs. Joe Williams) recalled, “we practiced singing and it got spiritual ... We started having prayer meetings and conversations about starting a church.”¹³⁹ Soon, “news of the singing spread and the Reverend J. L. Stewart and his wife Cozetta joined the group. The church was formally organized in the spring of 1946 in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Luzelle Johnson. People from

¹³⁴ “35-Cent Price Buys Some Wool.”

¹³⁵ “Build Negro Church.”

¹³⁶ Bauman, 127-128.

¹³⁷ Bauman, 127-128.

¹³⁸ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Religion.

¹³⁹ “50 Years of Spiritual Harmony.”

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Pasco, Walla Walla, and Spokane took part in the establishment ceremonies. The church grew and was moved from the Johnson’s home into a building on west Lewis Street. Services were held there until the Reverend Stewart donated land at Butte and Wehe for the construction of a new facility” in East Pasco.¹⁴⁰

By mid-November 1947 the new Morning Star facility at 703 S. Wehe was “almost completed.”¹⁴¹ In the case of Morning Star, Black residents joined together to build community foundations not only metaphorically but literally: “people in the community volunteered their time to build the church ... founder, Luzelle Johnson, said 75 to 100 people donated their hard work to the project. The group borrowed money from the National Baptist Home Mission Board. ‘We had such a little amount of money that we paid back about \$25 a month on what we borrowed,’ Johnson said. ‘After we paid for about a year, they said ‘you’re scuffling so hard we’ll give you the rest.’”¹⁴²

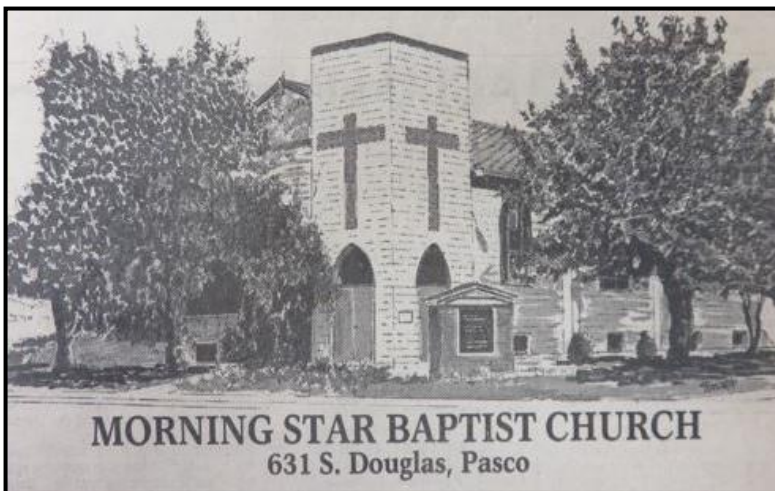


Figure 18. Morning Star Baptist Church, 1986 sketch

The following January, the Spokane *Spokesman-Review* reported that “three new churches have been established by Negro congregations” in Pasco, and from these institutional foundations the Tri-Cities Black community continued to build.¹⁴³ The Church of God in Christ outgrew the Brocks house and “moved to a location on the corner of Helena and Main” (521 Main) in East Pasco. Residents recalled the Church of God in the same vicinity in the 1960s, “off of A Street ... [on] that street that there’s only partially of it left on east side ... the church was there.”¹⁴⁴ The Morning Baptist Church, meanwhile, continued to grow so rapidly that in 1953, not six years

after completion of its new East Pasco facility on the corner of Butte and Wehe, the congregation built a new church several blocks east, at the corner of Butte and Douglas. With a construction cost of \$45,000, the new concrete-block Morning Star church at 631 S. Douglas was one of the “big jobs” among 1953 “building permits for new construction in Pasco.”¹⁴⁵

Black American residents soon organized other congregations as well. In April 1950, the Saint James Christian Methodist Episcopal congregation dedicated a prominent new edifice, (probably at “Owens

¹⁴⁰ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Religion; Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

¹⁴¹ “Play Jury Due from Audience.”

¹⁴² “Tri City Church Focus: Morning Star Baptist Church (Newspaper Clipping)”, “50 Years of Spiritual Harmony.”

¹⁴³ “Action Planned in Pasco Area: W.S.C. Survey, Council to Help Solve Boom Problem.”

¹⁴⁴ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Religion. Interview with Bryan and Rhonda Rambo.

¹⁴⁵ “Building Permits Reach \$195,796,” *Spokane Chronicle*, September 2, 1953.

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Avenue and Butte Street” where it was before the 1970 completion of “a new St. James Christian Methodist Church, [at] North Owens Ave and George St,” 1809 E. George Street) and in 1953 “New Hope Missionary Baptist Church was organized in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Norwood, Senior.” Like Morning Star and the Church of God, New Hope occupied several locations over the years. New Hope “services were held in various homes” and then in a location on Beech Street and subsequently “in the East Pasco Elks Club until a building was constructed in 1955 under the pastorage of the Reverend M.L. Williams.” The 1955 New Hope church was several blocks east of Morning Star Baptist, on the corner of Butte and Waldemar Streets (630 S. Waldemar).¹⁴⁶

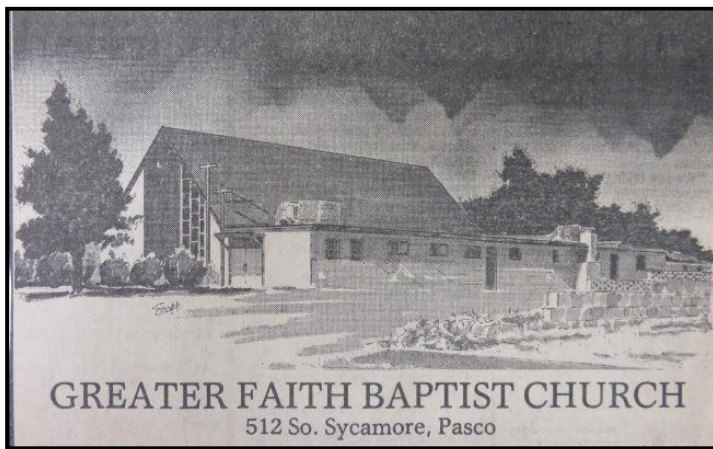


Figure 19. Greater Faith Baptist Church, built 1961 (sketch, 1986)

Within three years of completion of the New Hope church on Butte and Waldemar, East Pasco residents had organized at least two other churches as well. One of the new churches began when “the pastor of the Pasco Church of God on Court Street and the district pastor, Reverend Rundell decided to establish a sister church [i.e. the East Pasco Church of God] based on interest expressed by church members. The Reverend Olds was to serve as pastor until a permanent replacement could be identified. The church met at 113 South Oregon Street in an empty restaurant owned by a Mr. White. The church relocated several times until settling ... at 217 North Douglas Street in 1970.”¹⁴⁷

At the same time, the Reverend R.J. Gholar organized the Greater Faith Baptist Church “in a building on South Oregon Street. Services were later moved to the Reverend Gholar’s store front located on [1119 ½ East] Hagerman Street.” On June 4, 1961, Greater Faith dedicated a new Modern church, which “The Reverend Gholar . . . designed and built,” at 512 South Sycamore Street.¹⁴⁸

Black churches functioned broadly as community organizations as well as religious entities, and from their solid church foundations Pasco’s Black residents built other institutions as well. Unlike churches, these organizations rarely erected substantial buildings of their own, but they nonetheless formed a critical part of the community’s institutional infrastructure. Some of these organizations served social and recreational purposes. These included musical groups like the “Pasco Negro navy band” and the NAS Jive Bombers, as well as the Christian Travelers and Heavenly Harps—both Pasco gospel groups featuring James Pruitt.¹⁴⁹ They also included athletic organizations, especially baseball teams. Baseball was popular among youth and adults alike. As Vanis Daniels recalled “it was so many kids

¹⁴⁶ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Religion; Interview with Reverend Jeannette Sparks. “Church Finds New Hope”; “Pasco NAACP Elects Sunday”; “Center Delayed”; “Dick Gregory Due in Pasco.”
¹⁴⁷ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Religion.
¹⁴⁸ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, sec. Religion.
¹⁴⁹ “New Navy Depot Seen by Throng”; Denfeld, “Pasco USO Club for Area Soldiers”; Interview with James Pruitt.

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Figure 21. Christian Travelers Gospel Singers, Pasco

School field, which at that time was where the present City Hall east parking lot and the Parks and Rec gymnasium are located.” Sometimes funded by the players themselves—supplemented by “a few dollars in gate receipts”—and sometimes sponsored by local Black businesses like Avery’s (see below), the teams constituted community organizations in multiple ways. Some residents played on these teams for decades. For example, C.J. Mitchell, Jr., who came to Pasco from Texas in 1947 as a sixteen-year-old, was a short stop and first baseman from the 1940s - 1960s before becoming a “Hall of Fame” coach and umpire. Some longtime Negro league players were also instrumental in developing other baseball leagues in the area. Vanis Daniels, Jr., for instance, along with his brother Edmon, was known as the “founder of

Little League baseball in Pasco,” and Edmon Daniels would later be the “Northwest Regional Baseball Administrator/Commissioner.”¹⁵¹

around here we’d make up sometimes three baseball teams, it was that many kids. We had no paved streets...no sidewalks no curbs no gutters no sewer no lights no nothing,” but they figured a way to play baseball.¹⁵⁰

Negro baseball leagues bloomed at different times and different places in the United States between 1920 and 1960, and became a part of local culture with the early 1940s advent of the Tri-Cities. A Black baseball team developed at Hanford in wartime—the Hanford Eagles, (see figure 6)—and a variety of Black baseball teams played in the area over the years. Early teams included the Pasco Panthers, “made up of players from East Texas,” as well as the Pasco Merchants (1940s-70s) and the Pasco Blues (1950s-70s). In the absence of facilities in East Pasco, “most of their home games were played at the Pasco High

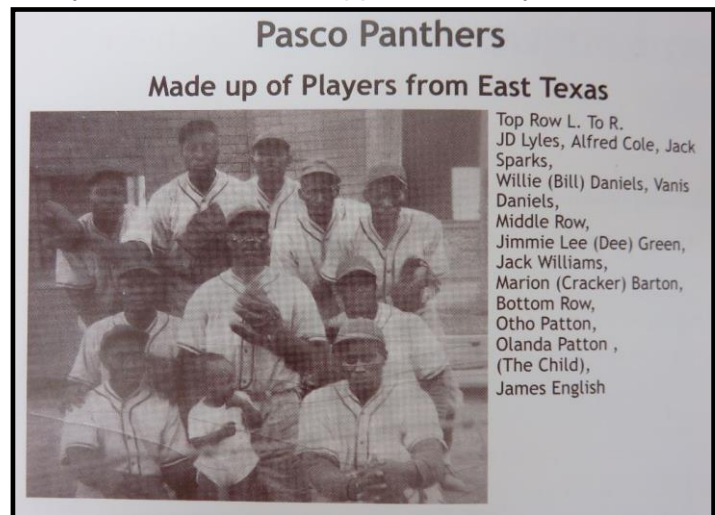


Figure 20. Pasco Panthers, ca. early 1950s (reprinted from O’Neil, “Negro League Baseball”)

¹⁵⁰ Pasco’s African American History.

¹⁵¹ O’Neil, “Negro League Baseball and Its Impact on Social Change in America [Program Pamphlet]”; Morning Star Church Interview with Pastor Albert Wilkins, Dr. Dallas Barnes, and Mr. Webster Jackson.

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Building Community, and Kurtzman Park

Baseball teams and musical groups offered possibilities for community social and public life, opportunities that were in short supply in the context of the segregated and discriminatory landscape of the postwar Tri-Cities: prohibited from many public spaces, and isolated from others by virtue of being segregated into a destitute, underdeveloped neighborhood —on the wrong side of a big, busy industrial railroad and highway corridor—Pasco's Black residents, who for the most part lacked adequate housing, struggled to find even just a space in which to gather. To this end, one of the biggest early community organizing efforts focused on developing a public park in East Pasco, so that people in the Tri-Cities only Black neighborhood had space to interact, and children had a place to play.

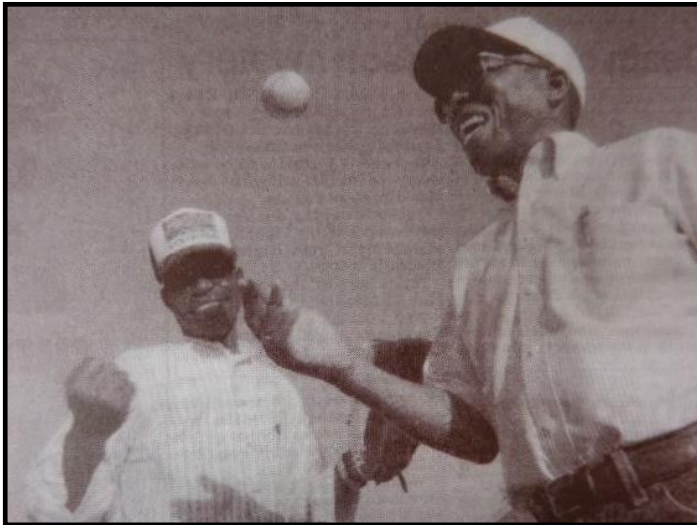


Figure 22. The Daniels brothers, Vanis Jr. and Edmon, ca. 2000 (reprinted from O'Neil, "Negro League Baseball")

During the 1940s, in the absence of such a space, neighborhood children played on nearby vacant lots. Foremost among them was a large undeveloped lot owned by the Kurtzman family, for whom one of the additions underlying East Pasco, i.e., Kurtzman's Addition, was named. Local children recalled playing especially in the expansive, undeveloped Kurtzman tract, which included "a swale in the northwest corner" that they called the Lizard Hole.¹⁵² The Kurtzman lot was big enough it could hold a makeshift baseball diamond, which neighborhood kids eventually roughed out. Brothers Edmon and Vanis Daniels moved to Pasco to join their parents—who'd come in the early '40s to work at Hanford—in 1951 (when Vanis was 13 or 14), and they found, as Vanis put it, that

"we didn't have any place to play ... then we started making our own baseball diamonds in vacant lots and things. And as the lots would be developed, they would—well, naturally, they'd run us out because there wasn't enough room for us to play. So one evening, we didn't have any place to play baseball and we wanted to play baseball. Two blocks from my house, where I grew up at was Well, actually, it's a block and a half. But it was just a vacant field. And we took shovels, a bunch of my friends and me, and we went out there and we cleared all the tumbleweeds out, took the shovels and kind of levelled it off, and started playing baseball."¹⁵³

As Vanis recalled, they subsequently lobbied the Kurtzman family to turn their makeshift ballfield into a park for East Pasco. One day when the Daniels boys were playing

"a lady named Rebecca Heidelbar happened to come by there and see us. I don't know exactly what period of time, how long we'd been playing there. And she stopped and asked us if we had

¹⁵² Morning Star Church Interview with Pastor Albert Wilkins, Dr. Dallas Barnes, and Mr. Webster Jackson.

¹⁵³ Interview with Vanis Daniels.

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a park that we could play in. We told her no. ... And she went to the courthouse, found out who the land belonged to where we were playing. She helped us to draft a letter to Mr. Kurtzman, which she found out lived in Seattle and ask him to donate enough land for us to have a baseball diamond. Well, it took him the better part of six months to answer us, but ... He got back to us and told us that ... He would donate six acres of land to the city if they named the park after him.”¹⁵⁴

True to his word, on May 1, 1953, H. Allan Kurtzman deeded a five-acre parcel, the southwest corner of his much larger vacant tract, to the City of Pasco, with the deed specifying “the property herein conveyed is for park purposes only.”¹⁵⁵

After Kurtzman deeded the park land to Pasco, residents watched hopefully as the city commenced planning for park development. But it quickly became clear that the city would not invest in a park space in the Black neighborhood, just as it had long refused to invest in other basic East Pasco civic infrastructure (like paved streets, streetlights, water, and sewer, etc.). While the Franklin County engineering department completed initial grading of Kurtzman Park in late 1953, and city officials announced that “the east part of the five-acre site will be prepared for a ballpark and the west side for other recreation activities,” despite the Allan Kurtzman’s stipulation, the City of Pasco did little to develop the park thereafter.¹⁵⁶

At first, it seemed the city might intend to develop the park in good faith. In June 1953, the month after Kurtzman deeded the parcel to Pasco, the city council officially “named the new park, Kurtzman Park after the donor of the land, A.H. Kurtzman, Seattle, former resident of Pasco, and his father, Fred Kurtzman, one of the founders of the city.”¹⁵⁷ The next month, the city park board requested “\$8,000 in funds in its 1954 budget for development of Kurtzman Park in East Pasco,” to help pay for “the first part of the program for development of the new park.”¹⁵⁸

But even as the park board professed plans for developing Kurtzman, it hinted they might not be carried out, and this fact rapidly became readily apparent. After some preliminary grading work in late 1953, the city completed little further work on Kurtzman, and by August 1954 it was defending itself in the face of public demands that the city council “explain the delays on the park project.”¹⁵⁹

Kurtzman, it seemed, had been added to the long list of civic infrastructure that the city would not provide to Pasco’s Black neighborhood. When “Mayor Harry V. Custer ... assured members of the Tri-City human relations committee that the city wants to get Kurtzman Park on the east side completed as soon as possible,” he also “outlined some proposals for water, sewer, and street developments in that part of the city. ... The mayor and Councilmen Del Avery and Cecil Combs also discussed water and sewer extension problems on the east side. ... Street problems were another subject of consideration.” Councilman “Combs explained that the difficulty in getting service extended to some parts of the area

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Vanis Daniels; Interview with Vanis and Edmon Daniels.

¹⁵⁵ “Statutory Warranty Deed (H. Allan Kurtzman to City of Pasco).”

¹⁵⁶ “Kurtzman Park Grading Done in East Pasco”; “County Will Rent Grader.”

¹⁵⁷ “Street Oiling Job Awarded.”

¹⁵⁸ “\$8000 Is Asked for Park Work.”

¹⁵⁹ “Pasco City Council Working to Speed Park Development.”

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was that not enough people could be signed up to pay the necessary front footage charges.”¹⁶⁰ This was a familiar line of argument in Pasco, which essentially held that the impoverished Black neighborhood could not be improved because it was impoverished and unimproved. And as with parks, City officials would not prioritize building basic infrastructure in the Black neighborhood that needed it, but would instead devote itself to the White areas that already had it: Mayor “Custer pointed out that all revenue available to the city for streets was being spent on maintenance.”¹⁶¹

To the Black community that developed in Pasco during the Second World War, this was by now a powerful familiar pattern: they’d heard the city make excuses and false promises about investing in basic civic infrastructure in East Pasco for over a decade. Anyone familiar with local practices would likely have held little hope that the city would fulfill its obligation to develop Kurtzman Park. In light of this evident and enduring discrimination, the Black community and its allies forged ahead to create a public neighborhood space, and place for its children to play on their own. Building the park required funding and labor, and the community began to tackle both of these tasks shortly after Mr. Kurtzman deeded the property to the City of Pasco.

Community fundraising efforts, which entailed a multi-pronged campaign and the participation of an array of local organizations, began making news even as the city purported to be moving forward with initial park development. The July 1953 Water Follies boat festival gave a portion of its proceeds “toward the development of Kurtzman Park in East Pasco,” and in the fall the local Kiwanis Club authorized “a donation of \$300.”¹⁶² In September 1954 the East Side Improvement Association also “sponsor[ed] a dinner Saturday night at the new Labor Temple in Pasco to raise funds for development of Kurtzman park.”¹⁶³ By December the Tri-City Human Relations “committee had raised a total of \$1,782 for development of the park on Pasco’s east side and said that to date \$1,452 had been spent.”¹⁶⁴ While local leaders of both Black and White organizations worked to raise funds in their adult realms, Pasco’s children also joined in the effort. For some local youth, on Halloween in 1954, “solicitation of funds for Kurtzman’s Eastside park took the place of the usual tricks or treat operation on Halloween.”¹⁶⁵

As an array of Pasco residents worked on fundraising, others recruited the volunteer labor needed to complete the park. As early as April 1954, regional newspapers featured public calls for “volunteer workers [who were] sought to launch the development of the Kurtzman Park in East Pasco.”¹⁶⁶ Over the next year progress on the park was slow, and in October 1955 the Tri-City Human Relations Committee announced hopefully that “the development of Kurtzman Park would be completed next year, “ adding that “the city council ha[d] agreed to spend more money on the park next year. The money is expected to be available in May.” However, judging from period newspaper coverage, the city said, or did, little more on the subject in subsequent years.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁰ “Pasco City Council Working to Speed Park Development.”
¹⁶¹ “Pasco City Council Working to Speed Park Development.”
¹⁶² “Water Follies Take Is \$3000.” “Kiwanis Group Gives \$300 to Park Project.”
¹⁶³ “Club Dinner Tonight Will Benefit Park.”
¹⁶⁴ “Tri-City Racial Problems Shake Junior College Plans.”
¹⁶⁵ “Park Fund Gets \$222 at Pasco.”
¹⁶⁶ “Parks Are Planned.”
¹⁶⁷ “Park Project to Get Money”; “East Pasco Residents Wrathful.”

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By this point the Black community of East Pasco was moving past the City's racist inaction and had commenced developing the park with its own hands. The collective construction effort in the face of the City's stalling features prominently in community memory. As Vanis Daniels put it, "we didn't even have a park. And when the park was built, the city didn't build the park. The community built the park."¹⁶⁸ Other community members like Morning Star Church's Rev. Albert Wilkins, Dallas Barnes, and Webster Jackson echoed this refrain: when it came to "Parks. [They] didn't really have any until we ... until we built Kurtzman Park.....the community built that park."¹⁶⁹ It was, in the words of James Pruitt, "a community involvement project," it was "the black men that put that park together that was given to us."¹⁷⁰ Black women of course worked on the project too, often in less visible and less recognized ways. Edmon Daniels described how "the mens of the community...[his] father, uncles, cousins, just mens of the community, put the park in," but also "remember[ed] one Sunday, the ladies, they got together and cooked up some food and got a big picnic for all the guys that was working."¹⁷¹ Histories of Kurtzman note especially the critical work of Virgie Robinson, who "came to Pasco in 1949 from Seattle and ... was instrumental in getting Kurtzman Park in Pasco completed and was its first director."¹⁷²

The park construction process reflected, and fortified, the collective Black community in Pasco and the Tri-Cities, and once completed Kurtzman became its center. It served thereafter as both the literal and figurative center of the community. Aubrey Johnson recalled how the park, as process, product, and place, anchored the Black American community:

*"to the community, Kurtzman Park was kind of like a volunteer-type situation. Of course we didn't have a park. And so when that was put in, it even brought our community together even more because of the camaraderie that they had built ... I can remember them putting in the trees around the park and help dig the lines they had around there for water. When we were kids, Mom would tell us, go down to the park. We'd go down there and play, so it was like a safe haven. I remember there was a lady across the street, Big Irene, and the Butchers lived over across the street. Then there was California Street ...and Wehe, they intersect. And they intersect right in front of the park and there was a row of houses there and I could probably name you everybody that lived in those houses. We would go there and we could stay there all day long and our parents didn't have to worry about us, because that was a safe haven and that's where all the kids would go. So it was a very important place for us."*¹⁷³

Rickie Robinson put it simply that "the focus of our activities as kids in east Pasco was Kurtzman Park. That was the spot."¹⁷⁴

Adults, too, gathered in Kurtzman, East Pasco's only dedicated public space. In the words of Bobby Sparks—who had in Pasco "a huge, huge extended family. The Miles, the Davises," etc.— "the community, when we get together at Kurtzman Park, I mean, it was like a family reunion. Everybody was there."¹⁷⁵ It became not only a casual children's play area and adult social space, but also the

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Vanis and Edmon Daniels.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with James Pruitt.

¹⁷¹ Interview with Vanis and Edmon Daniels.

¹⁷² Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 11.

¹⁷³ Interview with Aubrey Johnson.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Rickie Robinson.

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Bobby Sparks.

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center of organized public life, of celebrations and special occasions. Donald Bell Sr. “remember[ed] being at Kurtzman Park, every year there was some type of celebration going on down there,” recalling especially, “because so many being from the South, that Juneteenth there was a big thing.”¹⁷⁶ Juneteenth stood out, too, in Gordon Guice’s memory of community events:

“Juneteenth was a big one . . . that’s when the slaves got their rights and stuff. And we always celebrated and it was a big deal down at Kurtzman Park. We would have basketball tournaments against Yakima, the black people from Yakima. We’d invite people from Richland. There wasn’t many people in Kennewick . . . But it was mostly Juneteenth and barbecues. And then back then, east side would play against Navy Homes in sports. Because there were a lot of black people in Navy Homes, where I grew up. You could just see them walking down the street, and we would meet and have these big baseball tournaments and stuff like that. But official stuff, it was Juneteenth.”¹⁷⁷

While it doggedly built its own, and only, public space, the Black community also continued to pressure the city to erect basic park infrastructure at Kurtzman (and basic infrastructure in East Pasco more generally). In 1958, George Heidlebaugh, an attorney for the “East Side Citizens’ committee” served the City of Pasco with a “redress of grievances” which forcefully reiterated the residents’ request that the City commit to four things, i.e., “construction of a sanitary sewer system in east Pasco; to gravel and pave all residential streets in east Pasco; to construct a grade crossing over the railroad tracks to link Court street with North Oregon avenue and to provide comfort stations at Kurtzman Park.” Pasco Mayor Raymond Hicks responded that “all the requested improvements would be impossible since insufficient taxable property exists in east Pasco to finance it,” or, in other words, yet again, that the impoverished Black neighborhood would not be improved because it was impoverished and unimproved.¹⁷⁸

Faced with ongoing refusal by the City to fund further improvements, the Black community continued to work together to build and buttress its community center. In 1959, residents began to erect a building that physically embodied their efforts, the Kurtzman Park Youth Center. Like the park itself, construction of the Youth Center depended almost exclusively on volunteer labor and community contributions, and it would be some four years (early March 1963) before concrete-block “walls . . . constructed by volunteer workers” were up, “work. . . made possible by donation of cash and materials by Tri-Cities residents.”¹⁷⁹

On Saturday March 2, 1963, a crew of some “20 volunteer workers toiled away . . . until darkness fell,” raising the walls of the Youth Center. The volunteer “crew, which included four block-layers, was led by Luzell Johnson, Thelmer Hawkins, and Wilbur Wright.” Although “contributions of cash and building material [were] still needed to complete the center” (and were “being solicited by the Lower Columbia YMCA”), “bricklayer and sometimes contractor” Thelmer Hawkins, indicated that the community hoped to have the center completed by early that summer, with “a library, craft room, and multi-purpose room” inside the building.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Donald Bell, Sr.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Gordon Guice.

¹⁷⁸ “East Pasco Residents Wrathful.”

¹⁷⁹ “Walls Put Up by Volunteers”; “Building Dedication Set in Pasco”; “Unsung Volunteers Teach Pasco’s ‘Ghetto’ Children.”

¹⁸⁰ “Progress Made on Kurtzman Park Youth Center.” “Walls Put Up by Volunteers”; “Building Dedication Set in Pasco”; “Unsung Volunteers Teach Pasco’s ‘Ghetto’ Children.”

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But it would end up being another year before volunteers were able to open the center: the necessarily slow, unfunded volunteer process was further delayed when the building was vandalized a year later, right before opening. In March 1964, “vandals ...destroyed small trees and did extensive damage to the Youth Center Building in Kurtzman Park.” In the face of this latest anti-Black attack, however, the Black American community forged ahead. In the summer of 1964, the Youth Center began hosting “recreation programs, tutoring of students during the summer months, and adult meetings.”¹⁸¹ Indeed, within weeks of the center’s opening, “the summer enrollment at Kurtzman Park, always higher than in other parks, jumped to a new high. The week of July 13-17th, 1,800 children were signed in.”¹⁸²



Figure 23. Erecting the walls of Kurtzman Park Youth Center, Tri City Herald, March 2, 1963.

The Youth Center at 500 S. Wehe Avenue immediately established itself as the center of the Black community and a core institution for community support and assistance. It did so despite the fact that it remained, by many standards, unfinished and inadequately equipped. As the center began an ambitious slate of programs that first summer, newspapers reported that inside “the furnishings are crude basics, a barrel with a board across the top serves as a study table in one of the classrooms. The one large room had to be petitioned [sic] off with large pieces of cardboard to give the teacher and pupil some semblance of privacy.” A year-and-a-half later the center was still in need of “wood, insulation, and paint to finish one of the rooms.” Meanwhile, the building was “kept clean by the donated services of the Dependable Janitor Service with the aid of many of the older students.”¹⁸³ Despite these ongoing obstacles, the Youth Center immediately embarked on an impressive array of projects that involved—and shaped the lives of—thousands of people. The programing was first led by Virgie Robinson, who was center “manager” from ca. 1964-66, and then by Mrs. Lozie S. Barnes (“manager” ca. 1967-69) and Mrs. Delores Groce (“supervisor” ca. 1970-75, during which time the address was listed in city directories as 333 S. California Avenue).¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ “Vandals Spoil Park Property”; “Youth Center Is Opened”; “Unsung Volunteers Teach Pasco’s ‘Ghetto’ Children.”

¹⁸² “Recreation Pioneer Views Pasco Growth.”

¹⁸³ “Unsung Volunteers Teach Pasco’s ‘Ghetto’ Children”; “Cash On Hand for Park Work.”

¹⁸⁴ R.L. Polk and Co., *City Directory: Tri-Cities, Washington* as transcribed in Holschuh and Harris Environmental Group, “Survey of Historic Properties Associated with the African American Experience in East Pasco,” 90.

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Under the guidance of these dedicated Black women, the Youth Center became one of the most important institutions in the history of Pasco’s Black community. It facilitated programs for thousands of people, young and old, many of whom had rarely had a public space open to them, much less a supportive and welcoming one that cared about their needs. Alone and in conjunction with other organizations, it ran, hosted or otherwise supported youth tutoring and adult education and training programs; formal and informal sports programs and leagues; handicraft programs; checkers tournaments; dances; music classes; talent shows; special events; guest speakers of various stripes; political candidate meet-and-greets; and civil rights organizing meetings and actions, while facilitating others, like swimming lessons and free or reduced-price pool passes. In this way, it became, from the start, not only a Youth Center, but an East Pasco—and Black American—community center writ large. Aubrey Johnson limned this truth in a 2018 interview: “when we had our little meetings and stuff, we would have them there in the Kurtzman Building. Hey, we’re having a meeting on voting or whatever it was, and we would go up there to the Kurtzman Building... It played a real big part because I played there for years as a kid and then after as an adult, Kurtzman Park still was a big thing for me. We’d go down there, and they’d have Juneteenth, and the Fun Day, and baseball.”¹⁸⁵

Kurtzman also facilitated access to opportunities elsewhere. The initial 1964 tutoring program was so successful that in 1965 in addition to the program’s Youth Center home, classes were taught at Whittier School and at Navy Homes.¹⁸⁶ In the late 1960s, in conjunction with the Franklin-



Benton County Community Action Committee (CAC) (with funding from the Office of Economic Opportunity), it helped coordinate transportation to swim classes for Kurtzman kids (as well as for those around Navy Homes).¹⁸⁷ The CAC and its director Wally Webster also worked to secure “free or half-price swim tickets for poor Pasco youth,” who were disproportionately Black children in the Kurtzman Park and Navy Homes neighborhoods.¹⁸⁸ Nor was programming limited to the summer, but continued during the schoolyear. By the Delores Groce era (beg. 1970), programming extended to Navy Homes as well as Kurtzman, and Kurtzman boasted longer daily open hours than any of Pasco’s other parks.¹⁸⁹

Figure 24. Kurtzman Park, Tri-City Herald, June 21, 1961.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Aubrey Johnson.

¹⁸⁶ “Tutoring Project Deadline Today”; “School Help Projects Get Under Way.”

¹⁸⁷ “Swim Classes Start Monday.”

¹⁸⁸ “Pasco Calls Special Meet on Pool Tickets for Poor.”

¹⁸⁹ “Recreation Directors.”

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Figure 25. Kurtzman Park, Tri-City Herald, July 26, 1964.



Figure 26. Kurtzman Park Youth Center, Tri-City Herald, July 26, 1964.



Figure 27. Kurtzman Park, Halloween 1969
"Rocket, 4, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dave Butcher, 1803 E. Alton St." Tri-City Herald, October 31, 1969.

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Cookies in the Park

Gingerbread cookies were offered to pre-school age youngsters at Kurtzman Park, Pasco, this week during a "tea" sponsored by the Pasco recreation department. Here, Carol, 3, and Steve, 5, children of Mr. and

Mrs. M. B. Sparks, 125 S. Elm St., were offered a cookie by Mrs. Bailey Groce, recreation supervisor. Mrs. Groce baked the cookies for about a dozen 3, 4 and 5-year-olds.

Figure 28. Carol (3) and Steve (5) Sparks, Kurtzman Park Youth Center, Tri-City Herald, April 30, 1970.

Completion of the Youth Center, like the park that preceded it, cemented Kurtzman as the Black community core—both physically and metaphorically—and a base from which to continue ongoing community and civil rights work. Indeed, the Youth Center itself became a civil rights institution, and the successful construction of Kurtzman stood as a prominent pivotal, tangible, and enduring civil rights victory. When asked years later if he'd been "directly involved in any civil rights efforts?" Vanis Daniels responded "yeah...It was like, see, we didn't even have a park," and recounted the role he played in securing and developing Kurtzman.¹⁹⁰ Meanwhile, when an interviewer asked Aubrey Johnson to recount "some of the notable successes of the [civil rights] movement," Johnson responded first and foremost that "the successes was Kurtzman Park."¹⁹¹

As quickly as it did for children, the Kurtzman Park Youth Center became a crucial base—offering both support and space—for adults in the neighborhood, and for the Tri-Cities Black community more broadly. First and foremost, it served as a base for the community's multi-pronged civil rights work. This work involved many different efforts. And it began immediately, commencing that July with a highly visible direct action aimed explicitly at local and national civil rights—the aforementioned July 1964 "freedom march" to City Hall.¹⁹² Thereafter, Kurtzman Park became the base for Pasco civil rights protests. Shirley Miller, a White woman who lived in Richmond and helped with civil rights efforts in the

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Vanis and Edmon Daniels, interview by Robert Franklin (Hanford Oral History Project at Washington State University Tri-Cities, May 7, 2018), Hanford Oral History Project, Washington State University Tri-Cities, <http://hanfordhistory.com/items/show/2035>.

¹⁹¹ Interview with Aubrey Johnson, interview by Robert Franklin, April 9, 2018, Hanford Oral History Project, Washington State University Tri-Cities, <http://hanfordhistory.com/items/show/2040>.

¹⁹² "Rally Ties Up Traffic," *Spokane Chronicle*, July 25, 1964.

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Figure 29. Kurtzman Park supervisor Delores Groce (far right), Tri-City Herald, June 13, 1971.

Tri-Cities, and her son Andy recalled that the CORE and NAACP marches in this period would start “in east Pasco. Kurtzman Park...[and] after we left Kurtzman Park ... through the underpass ... And then we went up usually to where that other park [i.e. Volunteer Park] was and the courthouse. And then we’d go back to Kurtzman Park.”¹⁹³

It also served as a center for a wide array of other, less explicitly civil rights, efforts that were nonetheless aimed at empowering and uplifting the Black community. Among such efforts were events like a June 30, 1964, 8 p.m. “Meet the Candidate” session where “most of the 17 candidates for the city council offices [were] on hand” to discuss their positions with East Pasco residents.¹⁹⁴ Other efforts included things like an “old fashioned Labor Day picnic.” In keeping with the Labor Day intent, the celebration was “to show appreciation for the Higher Horizon program this year to help train persons to get jobs.” The Rev. F.A. Allen, of nearby Morning Star Baptist Church, “spokesman for the sponsoring East Pasco Self-Help Cooperative,” detailed festivities that would begin at 10 in the morning with a youth choir “car caravan forming on Lewis Street near 10th Avenue. It will go through downtown Pasco to Kurtzman Park.” The picnic that followed would feature speaker The Rev.

William H Ritchey, Superintendent of the Walla Walla District of the Pacific Northwest Methodist Conference, “who has an active interest in the building trades and is a semi-skilled craftsman in several.”¹⁹⁵

Other Community Organizations

As the Kurtzman Park story suggests, the Black community worked to address the many common critical issues it faced via a variety of local organizations. In early 1947, the Negro Community Health Council planned to “take the census of the Pasco Negro population . . . Their aim is improve the health, recreational and educational facilities of the group.”¹⁹⁶ Around the same time, East Pasco residents joined the newly-established City of Pasco Human Relations Committee en masse—early participants included Katie Barton, Joe Bush, Lucinda Cloy, Vanis and William Daniels, Charles Evans, J.W. Fields, Thelmer Hawkins, Leola Haythorne, the Reverend E.M. Howard, the Reverend and Mrs. Bert Jackson, Thomas Jackson, Iola James, Luzell Johnson, Charles McClough, James Pruitt, Elzena Rollins, Billy Williams, and Napoleon Wilson. The Committee “expressed many concerns about life in East

¹⁹³ Interview with Andy and Shirley Miller, interview by Robert Franklin, June 26, 2018, Hanford Oral History Project, Washington State University Tri-Cities, <http://hanfordhistory.com/items/show/2048>.

¹⁹⁴ “‘Meet Candidate’ Session Set,” *Spokesman-Review*, June 30, 1964.

¹⁹⁵ “Group Plans Labor Day Picnic Fete,” *Spokesman-Review*, September 3, 1966.

¹⁹⁶ “To Open New Church.”

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Pasco.¹⁹⁷

Two years later, in January 1949, the East Pasco Improvement Association held its second meeting “at the Elm Street Club on South Elm” (i.e., the property owned by John K. and Valentina Reed on Elm and A Streets, 736 S. Elm, and later known as the Kingfish Club). With fifty-one people in attendance, the group “set up a permanent organization” (officers included Lon Leeper, Art Newbourne, and John Reed) and articulated its “immediate goal. . . to work with the city council committee on east side development and with the chamber of commerce to bring low-cost housing to the area.”¹⁹⁸ Among “the group’s first priorities was to get water lines installed in the area, as East Pasco residents were hauling their water.”¹⁹⁹

Other local organizations followed, some led by members of the Black community, some by White residents who worked in conjunction with the community on pressing issues. Primary among the latter was the Tri-Cities Committee on Human Relations. Formed in January 1951 by Florence Merrick, “Pasco’s only practicing woman lawyer,” along with her husband Ivan, as well as by Lydia Pearce (also an attorney) and her husband James, the committee strove “to combat racial discrimination, promote positive race relations, study existing problems, and find methods of improving living conditions in East Pasco.”²⁰⁰ The “first meetings were held in the Franklin County Courtroom and Judge B. B. Horrigan was the first president.” The “first action of the committee was to obtain the services of Dr. Warren Banner of the National Urban League to make a detailed survey of racial problems in the Tri-Cities, which he did, finding them rife . . . His findings were published and publicized and furnished to libraries and social and governmental entities.” While working in Pasco, “there were no good living accommodations open to Dr. Banner himself, so he was given board and room by Reverend and Mrs. Rudolph Anderson of the Methodist Church, members of the committee.”²⁰¹

The Tri-Cities Committee on Human Relations worked actively for over ten years (“dissolv[ing] into the newer and expanded Youth Center group” in late 1964) and “met once a month, at the courthouse, in private homes and offices, churches and at the Pasco Hotel for dinner meetings, trying to attack all the problems at the same time but with primary emphasis on opening up places of public accommodation.” Also the Committee worked closely with the State Board Against Discrimination “in its formative years,” and was “instrumental of getting a branch office in Pasco.” It also worked with the Family Society of America and “formed a spin-off organization called the Tri-City Committee on Human Resources.” Subsequent subcommittees also became Black community organizations in their own right, including the East Pasco Youth Center committee (formed 1961) and the Higher Horizons committee, “which eventually obtained their grant from the United States Department of Labor and it was organized with offices in the old Whittier School, and tutoring, in the summer of 1965 [1964], in the new Youth Center, with Women’s Clubs of the area furnishing lunches and milk for the children.”²⁰²

¹⁹⁷ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Politics; Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 9.

¹⁹⁸ “Better Housing Club Aim”; “Proprietors of Club Sue Owner for \$30,500.”

¹⁹⁹ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Politics; Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 9.

²⁰⁰ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Politics.

²⁰¹ Merrick, “A Condensed History of the Tri-City Committee on Human Relations.”

²⁰² Merrick.

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Tri-Cities residents often worked cooperatively with national organizations to address local concerns, and these organizations themselves became important community institutions. As early as 1943, Black workers sought the assistance of the Spokane and Seattle chapters of the NAACP, as well of the NAACP national headquarters, in addressing the segregated busing practices and other racial discrimination at Hanford. By early 1944, through these channels, they'd successfully pressured DuPont to stop segregated busing, and their efforts brought a visit that May from "E. R. Dudley, NAACP assistant special counsel, [who] arrived in Pasco from New York to investigate continued charges of racial discrimination at Hanford."²⁰³ At the same time, they formed their own NAACP chapter, and "by the end of 1944, the Hanford branch of the NAACP boasted 292 members."²⁰⁴

Pasco residents also sought NAACP assistance in fighting discriminatory policies and practices during the war. When the City of Pasco tried to prevent the Rev. S.L Coleman from building his Negro Pentecostal Church on the west side of town in early 1944, Coleman worked with "Seattle's NAACP office and Portland's Urban League office," who made "threats of legal action," and successfully resisted the attempted banishment of his church to East Pasco. Both of these national organizations were critical early Black community institutions in the Tri-Cities. In 1948 Pasco residents started their own local NAACP chapter. The "new Tri-Cities branch had 180 black and white members. The branch focused on improving housing and living conditions." The local NAACP "branch had no office or regular meeting space," and focused its early efforts on "attempts to increase employment opportunities for blacks in Pasco and at registering voters."²⁰⁵ With the National Urban League (NUL), not only the Portland office but also the Seattle affiliate, as well as officials from the national headquarters, assisted area efforts. In 1947, at the behest of "black residents, the Pasco attorney Florence Merrick asked the Seattle affiliate of the National Urban League to study racial discrimination in the Tri-Cities. The League agreed," and in September 1948 "sent the investigator Charles P. Larowe to the Tri-Cities."²⁰⁶ The NUL conducted further investigations, "requested by civil leaders in the Tri-Cities," in October 1951, when it sent "Warren M. Banner, director, department of research and community projects of the National Urban League," to study the situation.²⁰⁷

In confronting the struggles of the postwar period, the local Black community also worked with other national organizations. The American Civil Liberties Union, for instance, wrote to Washington Governor Monrad Wallgren and State Attorney General Smith Troy in August 1948 calling upon state officials to probe "Jim Crowism in the Tri-City." Noting generally that "Negro segregation is practiced in the area where the Hanford atomic project brought a population boom," the ACLU further specified that, "the city authorities of Pasco have adopted a concerted plan of action whereby all Negroes are to be completely removed from the city. The officials have resorted to wholesale arrest; they have refused to provide sewage disposal and water to the Negro community, which has been segregated, and have then threatened condemnation for the failure to comply with sanitation and health regulations."²⁰⁸

Other Black residents worked with the national, collaborative United Service Organizations (USO), to

²⁰³ Bauman, "Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950," 125.

²⁰⁴ Bauman, n. 23.

²⁰⁵ Bauman, "Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950," 128, 130.

²⁰⁶ Bauman, 130.

²⁰⁷ "Tri-City Area Gains in Negro Population"; Merrick, "A Condensed History of the Tri-City Committee on Human Relations."

²⁰⁸ "Jim Crowism Charge Denied"; "Probe Is Sought on Jim Crowism in Tri-City Area"; "Jim Crowism Charge Brought."

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provide recreational space, and programming, for their community. A new USO clubhouse—that “followed the federal standard design”—opened at the north end of Pasco’s Volunteer Park in November 1943 to serve military personnel in the area, and in 1944 it began operating as an explicitly integrated club, “one of only three integrated clubs in the nation.” At the Pasco USO “the races shared the snack bar, movies, and other events,” but “the club [did] not allow interracial dancing.” This policy “left the problem of finding black dance partners.” Local Black residents worked with the Army Women's Auxiliary Corps (WAC) and “resolved this problem. The NAS made a strong commitment by providing transportation for WAC dance partners from the Walla Walla Army Airfield (WWAAF) to Pasco USO events. Also the popular black NAS band, the Jive Bombers, performed at Walla Walla dances.”²⁰⁹ Prior to the 1943 opening of the integrated clubhouse, the USO had “rent[ed] two buildings on lower Lewis Street for service recreation centers. One center served white and the other black servicemen. ... in late 1941 when the black troops rotated out, ... their recreation center ceased operations.”²¹⁰



Figure 30. Establishment of Pasco Negro VFW Post, Spokane Chronicle, February 1, 1950.

Former military personnel themselves formed local chapters of other national organizations. In 1950, “at the institution of a Negro VFW post” in Pasco (first commanded by Bruce Ashford), “the national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Clyde Lewis of Plattsburg, NY, visited,” and “gave the obligation to the units officers.”²¹¹ Tri-cities Black residents were also involved with national fraternal associations, like the Elks. As noted above, the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church held services “in the East Pasco Elks Club until a building was constructed in 1955.” The Elks (BPOE), however, strictly prohibited Blacks from joining into the 1970s, and Black men had established their own national Elks association (IBPOEW). In Pasco, Ray Henry remembered the “Elks being set up here, musta been about '47, '48, and the Masons about the same time,” and in May, 1962, the Black American Elks organization, “the Improved Benevolent Protection Order of the World, (ELKS), received their Charter to form Columbia Basin Lodge. The Elks were formed to improve the way of life of its members and the community through education. Through their existence, many local students benefited from their annual Scholarship Program ... The first Exalted Ruler was Clarence Tremble. He was followed by: Arthur Dorton, Esther Brown, Vanis Daniels and Leon Quirarte.”²¹²

Economic and Commercial Enterprises

Eventually, businesses developed to meet the basic needs of Pasco’s Black residents. The Black business sector comprised restaurants (as well as bars or nightclubs), grocery stores, and barber

²⁰⁹ Denfeld, “Pasco USO Club for Area Soldiers.”

²¹⁰ Denfeld.

²¹¹ “Commander Visits.”

²¹² Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Religion; Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, sec. Social; Henry, Henry, Ray. December 8, 1972.

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shops, and beauty salons.

Restaurants and bars or nightclubs constituted the most significant Black businesses in Pasco. Such establishments offered not only physical sustenance but also space for socializing and community interaction. In a testament to how they interwove with the local community, many of these establishments were known simply by the name of the proprietor. Prominent among them was "Virginia's chicken and BBQ restaurant," (a.k.a. the Montana, the Chicken Shack Café), established by Virginia Crippen after she moved to the Tri-Cities in 1948 and found that "there was no place for blacks to eat." It was one of the early Black-owned eateries in Pasco. In light of the fact that "the bank wouldn't lend you no money," Ms. Crippen used the "little money" she had saved to "make it the best [she] could," opening up "on A Street, east Pasco," ("right here on the corner before you go across the tracks...On A Street") because she "didn't have no other choice. . . they didn't allow the blacks to have business no place else." Working mostly by herself—she "was the cook and the bouncer"—Virginia offered both take-out and dine-service ("nothing but chicken and BBQ") at her restaurant, which was frequented by "Spanish and white. And black."²¹³ Virginia "lived in one portion and the Chicken Shack was on the front. She didn't start serving chicken until maybe 10:00 or 11:00 at night and would go all night because of folks that went to the tavern and everywhere else that would go there after hours."²¹⁴

Others included a café built by Joe Williams, who arrived in 1943, near his house "on Front Street" as well as, in 1948, "a café being operated in the home of Buck Bell in southeast Pasco," where it "was transferred . . . after Bell's Montana Café was closed previously."²¹⁵ These were soon joined by a variety of other establishments, some of which were strictly restaurants while others offered alcohol as well. In an interview for the Hanford Oral History Project, Virginia herself recalled several of her fellow restauranteurs. They included a woman named Sally, whose café ("Sally's"), unlike Virginia's, also "sold lunches. . . . she had pies and everything. She had good food." As Wally Webster recalled, during the 1960s Sally's was "across the A Street, down further [from Virginia's] in almost like a private home...and that's where you went and got all the barbecue. I mean, this lady would barbecue for days."²¹⁶

Virginia Crippen remembered as well "Miss Haney," who ran "Haney's Place" (a.k.a. the Caterpillar Café, a combination café-poolhall-tavern located at the Haneys' trailer court), and also "Tommy's," i.e., Thomas Moore's "restaurant, cocktail lounge, and everything" called the Poulet Palace. Moore's "club," which he purchased in Dec. 1949, was west of the tracks on First and Lewis St., next door to the M & M, "downtown by the underpass. It was a beautiful place, a brick—a hotel and a downstairs restaurant, very nice place." Across the street from Tommy's Poulet Palace was an establishment that James Pruitt remembered as "the only place Black people could go in 1948"—likely the place described in a September 1948 source as a "restaurant on Pasco's main street between the RR station and the business center" that "draws most of its business from Negroes."²¹⁷ This restaurant was likely Pasco Lunch, an employee of which wrote "a free verse poem" (reprinted in 1949 in a term paper titled, Pasco, From Sagebrush to Atoms) called "Landscape: Pasco, Washington." The "poem" described:

²¹³ Interview with Virginia Crippen.

²¹⁴ Interview with Wally Webster.

²¹⁵ Interview with Joe Williams; "Warning Issued to Pasco Camps."

²¹⁶ Interview with Wally Webster; Interview with Virginia Crippen.

²¹⁷ Interview with Virginia Crippen; Interview with James Pruitt; "Jim Crow Rule Losing Ground"; Interview with Benny Haney.

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“Pasco -- Main Street -- Sewer for Hanford, Hanford Washington, greatest war project, construction etc. in the U.S. Now municipal street cleaning department. Dirty streets; drunks; ragged, barefoot children -winter, wines, bums. Winos, men drunk 24 hours a day on fortified wine every day all reeling. Gamblers run the town, bums obscure it. Cars, businesses, dentists, restaurants, beer halls -- \$26,000 this year, \$200 last year. Sputum and vomit and blood thick over the sidewalk, find blowing dust from sagebrush desert without cessation. Streets, windows dirty - filthy. Great Columbia River off Main Street and parallel, rear -- high, black and fabulous. Navy planes of Pasco Navy Base drowning the air. Cars. Cars. Little Pasco Depot. Arm bands, DuPont, on men at depot say anybody with suitcase, grab you, say "Are you for DuPont? Are you for Olympic Commissary?" hustle you off ... men out the South swamp ... illiterates ... hillbillies ... poor white trash ... for DuPont, for Olympic ... for Hanford. Herd them ... Herd them ... into Pasco Lunch, by the depot, with niggers for breakfast: used to give them 75¢ breakfast. Couldn't get them out. They went to sleep, legs on tables, wouldn't budge: Most of them foodless, moneyless, made the trip across the U.S. to Pasco on a promise. On \$5 and a promise of Paradise - to doom at Hanford. Get them out of Pasco Lunch; now giving them only coffee and doughnuts. Get them out ... 35,000 Mexicans coming in. Day and night, 50,000 beings in 5 square miles at Hanford. DuPont war project. Crowd them in. Pasco, coming by train. Day and night. Knife in back. Pasco jail full -- emptied steadily- -- cause too big a feeding problem. Winos borrowing dollars - living well. Death. Crime. Squalor. Pasco Main Street: sewer of Hanford, greatest war project in the U.S.”



Figure 31. West end of Lewis Street Underpass, ca. late 1940s (reprinted from Emerson, *Lewis Street Underpass*)

Also prominent among early Black eateries was the aforementioned “Lu” Sommers’ “Chase Street Chicken Dinner Restaurant.” Mrs. Sommers, “who lived in a modest home on Chase street on her

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property,” after having moved from her 1940 residence on Bonneville Street, did quite well with her restaurant, which “was a locally popular eating spot.”²¹⁸ Other residents recalled places like Norse’s Tavern (which the Haneys opened on their property, south of E. Lewis near Oregon and Hagerman streets, where “Iola James had a restaurant”), and Rose Allen’s cousin’s “store over there on 4th Street (4th and Clark). James Pruitt recalled that the store “was selling sandwiches and things like that, and it didn’t really do too good.”²¹⁹ Black people could also get food at Wilkie’s In & Out, “a restaurant there on Lewis and Wehe.” As Mae Fite recalled regarding Wilkie’s, “we would get out of school, we would go there, and all the white kids could go inside and get their food, but all of us African Americans, we had to stand in the window and get ours. ... that was the way it worked.”²²⁰ (see figure 55)

The Coleman family, too, at one point, had a food business—“Coleman’s Café and BBQ Sauce.”²²¹ So, too, did the Robinson family, i.e. Virgie and Richard, who operated the Queen Street Diner, also known as “The Squeeze In,” so nicknamed because it was located in a trailer on the Robinson property (“a piece of property over in East Pasco, just adjacent to the railroad tracks there on Queen Street”) and, “you know, you could only get so many people in a trailer.” Richard Robinson, whose “thing was Texas fried chicken,” “along with being a culinary artist ... was also a carpenter ... He found an overturned trailer and pulled it up onto the property. It had been abandoned. He ... fixed it up and made it into a restaurant.”²²² Velma Williams Ray also ran a restaurant. After Hanford reduced its workforce in the late 1940s, she “began operating a café in Pasco and raised thirteen children there.”²²³ There was also what Virginia Crippen called Jackson’s Tavern, “a nice little tavern. He built it. It was nice and had a restaurant in it. It was really nice.” Jackson’s (a.k.a. Jack’s Grill and Pit, Jack’s Pit and Grill, or Jack’s Bar and Grill) was opened by Ed Jackson in 1955 in the building he built, which had three separate storefronts in which he “housed three businesses. One was a restaurant, the other one was a pool hall, and the other one was a beer tavern.”²²⁴



Figure 32. Velma Williams Ray family, Christmas 1953.
 Tri-City Herald, September 26, 1993.

As noted above, some of these establishments served only food, while others functioned as both bars and restaurants, with varying emphases on different aspects of the business. Sometime after purchasing his initial restaurant-bar business, Thomas Moore “left from the Poulet Palace and went over and opened up a pool hall,” which he operated into the 1960s. Residents likewise remember places like the Apex as a bar or night club. So, too, Avery’s (a.k.a. The Club, on A St. in East Pasco at the east end of Lewis Street underpass), a “juke joint” that sponsored the

²¹⁸ Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 14; “11 Acres Willed to Catholic Church.”
²¹⁹ Interview with James Pruitt; Interview with Wally Webster; Interview with Benny Haney; Morning Star Church Interview with Pastor Albert Wilkins, Dr. Dallas Barnes, and Mr. Webster Jackson. Interview with Rose Allen.
²²⁰ Interview with Mae Fite.
²²¹ Taylor, Coleman, Reverend and Mrs. Sam (Oral History).
²²² Interview with Rickie Robinson.
²²³ “Black Migration: World War II and Work at Hanford Forever Changed Demography of Tri-Cities.”
²²⁴ Interview with Virginia Crippen; Interview with Wally Webster; Interview with James Pruitt.

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Pasco Merchants baseball team.²²⁵ They recall other places in the same way, like, later, the Paradise Inn Tavern (at 2115 East Lewis), built by Webster Jackson's construction company ca. 1972 and owned by Webster and his brother Joe Jackson.²²⁶

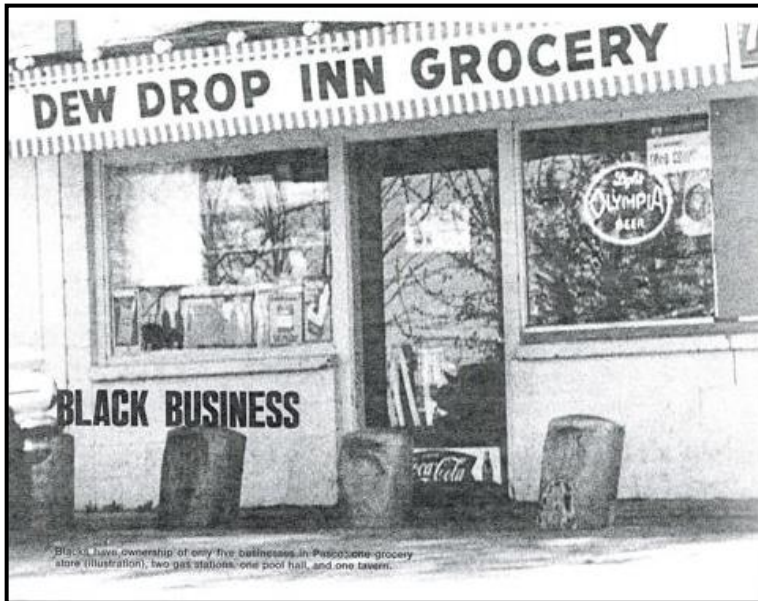


Figure 33. Dew Drop Inn, 1968.

(reprinted from WSU Black Students Union, "Pasco, Washington")

There was also J.D.'s (a.k.a. J.D. Evans' Dew Drop Inn, "a little hole-in-the-wall" likely named after the legendary New Orleans music venue), which some recall as an "after hours club" or "night club" (J.D. also at some point had a grocery store of the same name), as well as, perhaps most famously, Johnny and Valentina Reed's Kingfish Supper Club (which operated on Elm and A Streets from 1946-1964).²²⁷ Reed's "was like an after-hours club," where "they could dance," but "it had barbecue and chicken, too." Reed "had a lot of white customers," Virginia Crippen recalled, "but blacks went, too."²²⁸ The Kingfish garnered a certain notoriety in August 1960, when "a white man, rather tall" murdered "four people at a home at 1225 East Clark" (three of the victims, two women and one man, were Black and lived

at "the Harris dwelling" on E. Clark). The killer reportedly first met his victims earlier that evening at the Reeds' club. The murders remain unsolved.²²⁹

At the other end of the prominence spectrum were the numerous informal nightlife sites that operated inconspicuously from time to time in people's homes. In a 1948 mass raid of homes in East Pasco—part of a pattern of police harassment and "wholesale arrests" of the Black community—the City reported finding "seven gambling establishments where gambling was in progress, and in some of which liquor was being sold."²³⁰ In the same vein, in 1962 "fourteen homes in East Pasco were raided, 22 persons arrested, and a large quantity of whisky, wine and beer was seized by 15 officers of the

²²⁵ Interview with Benny Haney; Interview with Virginia Crippen; Morning Star Church Interview with Pastor Albert Wilkins, Dr. Dallas Barnes, and Mr. Webster Jackson.

²²⁶ Jackson to Hagen, "Black Pasco History and Historic Sites," January 29, 2021; Morning Star Church Interview with Pastor Albert Wilkins, Dr. Dallas Barnes, and Mr. Webster Jackson; Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, "Cultural Awareness: Pasco's Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco's Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet]," sec. Economics.

²²⁷ "Valentina Reed Obituary"; Morning Star Church Interview with Pastor Albert Wilkins, Dr. Dallas Barnes, and Mr. Webster Jackson; Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, "Cultural Awareness: Pasco's Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco's Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet]," sec. Economics; Interview with Bryan and Rhonda Rambo; Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 11; Interview with James Pruitt.

²²⁸ Interview with Virginia Crippen.

²²⁹ "Deeper Motive Sought in Pasco Murders"; McKay, "57 Years Later, Unsolved Pasco Quadruple Murder Still Lingers"; Schurk, "Pasco Police Examine 1960 Murder Case"; "Pasco Murderer Sought by Police"; "Boy Holds Clew in Four Murders."

²³⁰ "Probe Is Sought on Jim Crowism in Tri-City Area."

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State Liquor Control Board and police [18 officers total] Sunday night. Confiscated were 250 pints of whisky and wine and 330 cans of beer.” After the raid, “nine of the 22 persons arrested were held in the city jail in lieu of bail ranging from \$750 on liquor charges to \$50 for vagrancy.”²³¹

Within the Black community, these informal casinos and drinking establishments were sometimes referred to as “Cotch balls.” According to community-member Bobby Sparks, “these little places boomed up in East Pasco. When all the other bars and things closed, the Hanford workers would come out late at night and they could gamble and hang out at the cotch ball and have dinner and all kind of other activities went on at the cotch balls.”²³² Like many of the Black-owned restaurants and bars, these places often hosted an interracial clientele: as community members recalled of their neighborhood, “there were also a few places where illegal activities such as gambling and prostitution were offered. This provided social activities for some segments of Pasco society including individuals living outside the East Pasco community.”²³³

Restaurants, bars, and nightclubs were the largest component of the Black business sector, but Black residents also operated and patronized an array of other enterprises to make a living and meet the needs of the community. These included a variety of retail establishments. J.D. Evans’ businesses included “a small grocery store” for a period, called J.D.’s or the Dew Drop Inn Grocery, which stood “right there by the underpass” into the 1980s (in 1984 it was “the longest surviving Black owned business in East Pasco”).²³⁴

Several other stores were located nearby in different periods, some in the Black-owned Matrix Building constructed in 1970 at 200-208 S. Wehe (now known as 1512 E. Columbia), a “multi-purpose mini-mall with black-owned businesses including a laundry, record shop, etc.”²³⁵ (see 1970 image below). Not far away was Barnes Meat Market, a butcher shop located just south of Lewis at Wehe (in the extant white building at 1414 E. Columbia, just west of the Matrix building). On the north side of Lewis, in a strip mall (extant) on the corner of its intersection with Oregon, was the Brown Dot, another Black-owned store. Sources provide little detail on the Brown Dot, and even less on several other East Pasco businesses remembered by community members (of which we know only their names), e.g., the Tin Top.²³⁶ There was also at least one Black-owned business in Richland, i.e., Judson Phillips’ “tailoring business near what [was in 1994] Seattle State Bank.” Due to discrimination by realtors and sellers in Richland, “a real estate broker bought the land ... on which he located” for Phillips.²³⁷

Beauty salons and barber shops also constituted a significant component of the Black American business sector. As residents recalled, “beauty salons and barber shops were areas where Blacks gathered for social interactions as well as hair care,” and these businesses often functioned as informal institutions in Black American communities. In East Pasco, “Alzenia’s Hair Salon and a beauty salon operated by Genevieve Newborne were located on Main Street.”²³⁸ Newborne’s salon may have been

²³¹ “Liquor Raid Closes Net on Suspects.”

²³² Interview with Bobby Sparks.

²³³ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Social.

²³⁴ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, sec. Economics; Interview with Reverend Jeannette Sparks.

²³⁵ “Pasco Laundromat Damaged by Bomb.”

²³⁶ Morning Star Church Interview with Pastor Albert Wilkins, Dr. Dallas Barnes, and Mr. Webster Jackson.

²³⁷ Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 11.

²³⁸ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-

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in more than one location over the years: Virginia Crippen recalled that “Mrs. Newborne had a nice beauty shop on Oregon Street in east Pasco.” (Oregon parallels Main). Crippen also remembered another beauty “business owner named Lillian”—“her and her husband had a barber shop on Oregon Street.” Lillian later “started building a business, but she didn’t finish it. She left and went to California.”²³⁹ Other Black women did hair professionally in their own homes, like Gordon Guice’s mom, who ca. the early ‘60s “went to Columbia Basin College ... and she got a cosmetology license and she done black hair with the old irons on the stove. She done all the black ladies’ hair...she done it in our kitchen. In our kitchen.”²⁴⁰

The commercial sector of the Black community also included a wide variety of other enterprises over the years. Several service stations were associated with the community in one way or another, with the earliest being Don Hammer’s “76 Union Station down on 4th Avenue at the Dodge place,” where James Pruitt “was the first black man to run a service station” (Pruitt “would run the station at night”).²⁴¹ Later, the East Pasco Self-Help Cooperative Association built a four-bay Texaco service station on an 8-acre tract on the corner of E. Lewis and Wehe, breaking ground on what the Association intended to be “the first phase of their development program” in the fall of 1967.

Plans for the full development program on the site included “a shopping center with various departments including a beauty and barber shop, hardware store, drug store and cafeteria, with each department to be used as a training site for Negro residents in East Pasco.”²⁴² The enterprising Thomas Moore ran an automotive-related business after his Poulet Palace and pool hall properties, establishing Tommy’s Auto Salvage (a.k.a. Tommy’s Steel and Salvage, 904 S. Oregon St.) in 1969 after he “worked eight years for Chuck Ackerblade in the scrap business, two dollars an hour. . . just to learn the business.”²⁴³

In addition to Moore’s light-industrial endeavor, which he operated for over 30 years, the Black community boasted several building-trades or materials companies. These included Joe Williams, builder, who arrived in 1943 and lived in Pasco on Front St. in a house he built, who also built a café nearby, as well as numerous houses on “Orange Street.” In the face of obstructive red-lining by local lenders, Williams started a mortgage

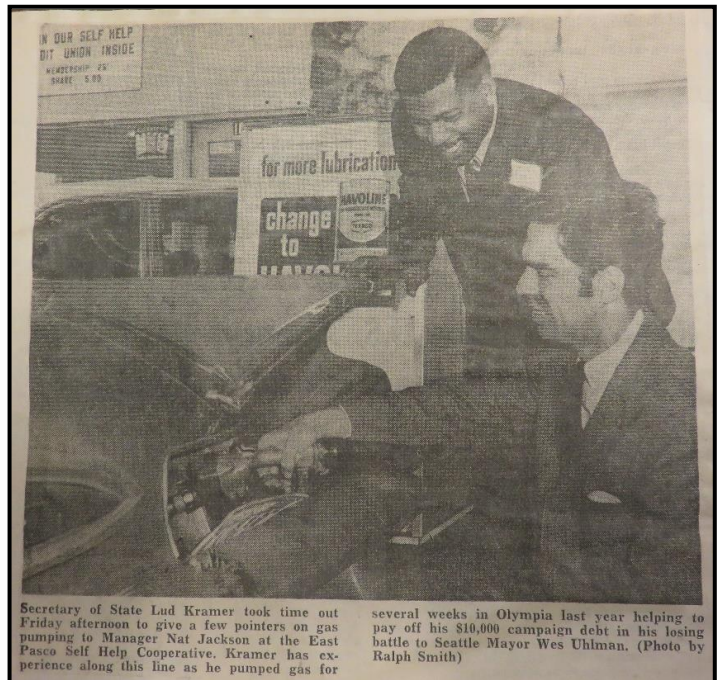


Figure 34. East Pasco Self Help Cooperative Texaco station, Tri-City Herald, February 15, 1970

1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Social.

²³⁹ Interview with Virginia Crippen.

²⁴⁰ Interview with Gordon Guice.

²⁴¹ Interview with James Pruitt.

²⁴² “Self-Help Unit Breaks Ground in East Pasco”; Morning Star Church Interview with Pastor Albert Wilkins, Dr. Dallas Barnes, and Mr. Webster Jackson.

²⁴³ Interview with Thomas Moore.

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company and eventually owned 7 houses in Pasco.²⁴⁴

They also included Webster's Construction Company, started by Webster Jackson, who came to Pasco as a high schooler with his family in 1948 and "was the first black person that completed a four-year apprenticeship program in carpentry" through the carpenters' union local. Webster's Construction built homes and commercial buildings in Pasco, including houses at 607 South Sycamore, 515 South Sycamore, 624 South Douglas, 119 South Owen, and 123 North Elm; a duplex at 623 South Owen; an 8-unit apartment building at 315 West Bonneville; and the aforementioned Paradise Tavern at 2115 E. Lewis.²⁴⁵ Other Black businesses associated with the building trades included the Butcher Lumber Yard in earlier years as well as, much later, J and B Sparks Electric, started by Bobby Sparks (who along with his 13 siblings grew up in the Tri-Cities and completed the "IBEW electrical apprenticeship program" after graduating from the University of Washington in 1982).²⁴⁶

Given the dearth of adequate homes in the East Pasco, the Black business community tried to meet housing needs. Several business owners also established rental properties. Indeed, from the earliest days residential rentals were perhaps the biggest component of community commerce. Ray Henry, who came to Pasco in 1943, remembered trailer courts as the first Black businesses in Pasco. S.L. Coleman was involved in the business by February 1947, when he petitioned the city council, "stat[ing] he has three trailers he would like to place on five lots; feels that he should not have to take out a trailer camp license."²⁴⁷ Less than a year later, some 19 "Trailer-camp operators catering to Negro customers" who "represented 13 camps on Pasco's east side" met with city officials about their operations.²⁴⁸ Residents would later remember numerous trailer court businesses in East Pasco, including those operated by, Mrs. Belton, Mr. and Mrs. Haney ("Mrs. Haney... owned a whole block right there on Oregon Street. She had little cabins on there, she had trailers, and all that stuff on there."), Mrs. Wright, Mr. Ely, Iola James ("on Front Street in East Pasco" at 820 S. Oregon), Bud Walker, and Aretha and Robert Dillon.²⁴⁹ Among those operating in 1955 was also the Gateway Trailer Park, owned by Chester Young.²⁵⁰ Other people who had residential rentals invested in apartment buildings. Thomas Moore and Ray Henry both owned four-plexes near Morning Star Baptist Church, and residents also recalled "Mr. Mitchell's duplex." Ray Henry owned an apartment property in west Pasco (i.e. the Newborn Apartments), as did Roy Howard, whose apartments were located on Shoshone and First streets.²⁵¹ Until at least 1948, the Colemans also operated Coleman's Cabin Camp on their property at Shoshone and First.²⁵²

²⁴⁴ Interview with Joe Williams.

²⁴⁵ Jackson to Hagen, "Black Pasco History and Historic Sites," January 29, 2021; Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

²⁴⁶ Morning Star Church Interview with Pastor Albert Wilkins, Dr. Dallas Barnes, and Mr. Webster Jackson; Interview with Bobby Sparks.

²⁴⁷ "Pasco City Council Minutes (Feb. 4, 1947)"; "Pasco City Council Minutes (Feb. 18, 1947)"; Morning Star Church Interview with Pastor Albert Wilkins, Dr. Dallas Barnes, and Mr. Webster Jackson.

²⁴⁸ "Increased Fires Listed in Pasco."

²⁴⁹ Interview with Vanis and Edmon Daniels. Interview with James Pruitt; Interview with Virginia Crippen. Henry, Henry, Ray. December 8, 1972.

²⁵⁰ "Youth Disarmed."

²⁵¹ Morning Star Church Interview with Pastor Albert Wilkins, Dr. Dallas Barnes, and Mr. Webster Jackson; *Pasco's African American History*.

²⁵² "Pastor to Close His Cabin Camp"; "Action Delayed in Cabins Case."

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Together these various Black commercial establishments and economic endeavors helped constitute East Pasco as an autonomous community. As Aubrey Johnson put it,

"We was a village; we were a family. That was a highlight of my life, living in east Pasco until the '70s when it was Urban Renewal came in and removed, replaced. I mean, everything to me was east Pasco. At one time, there was four groceries stores in east Pasco. There was a dry cleaners and there was Kitty's Grocery Store, the East Side Market, there was the Tin Top and there was JD's. There was two-night clubs, there was Norse's and King Fish supper club. I think there were probably about eight cafés: it was Squeeze-in Diner, Bobby's and Rays, Haney's Café, Big Mikes, there was a café at the tavern, there was Belgian's Pool Hall, there was Avery's Café, there was a little record shop. It was like everything, basically, that we needed was in east Pasco, other than—we went uptown to buy clothes and stuff like that."²⁵³

III. Civil Rights, Integration, and the Changing Racial Landscape of the Tri-Cities, 1960s-70s

Local civil rights efforts began with the advent of the Tri-Cities and its Black community and continued to build in the postwar period. As elsewhere in the region, the Black community "engaged more successfully in civil-rights activism after 1945, partly because they felt that their sacrifices during the war had proven that they were first-class citizens."²⁵⁴ During and after the war, local residents focused their work on the numerous fundamental realms—political, economic, educational, social—of the region's systemic structural racism. The Tri-Cities variant of "Jim Crowism" that they fought included discrimination in employment (affecting jobs, benefits and wages and perpetuated by bosses, workers, and unions); discrimination in housing and residential infrastructure (incl. water and sewer and garbage and mail, etc., services); exclusion from restaurants, bars, and other food service and social establishments as well as from stores; discrimination in medical care; discrimination in real estate and property rights; discrimination in banking and credit; discrimination in voting and other civil rights; discrimination in schools, and parks, and paved streets; excessive arrests; segregation; and systematic police brutality.

During the wartime boom, across Washington, the Black community and "white supporters of civil rights" began lobbying "for a state fair employment practices law to reduce discrimination in the workplace. The Washington Federation of Labor, continuing organized labor's animosity toward Black Americans, opposed the legislation for five years and successfully diluted it, yet the bill passed in 1949."²⁵⁵

Early Tri-Cities Civil Rights Efforts

The statewide wartime efforts reflected local civil rights work in military and manufacturing centers across Washington, Hanford, and the Tri-Cities prominent among them. In the fall of 1943, Black workers contacted the Spokane branch of the NAACP decrying the segregated busing practices at Hanford. The Spokane branch president, the Reverend Emmett B. Reed, raised the issue "to state

²⁵³ Interview with Aubrey Johnson.

²⁵⁴ "Lesson Twenty-One: African Americans in the Modern Northwest."

²⁵⁵ "Lesson Twenty-One: African Americans in the Modern Northwest."

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officials, including the governor and the director of public services, as well as to officers of the regional and national NAACP, about what he described as 'an attempt on the part of certain elements to impose upon our State ... Jim Crowism.' Members of the Seattle NAACP's Legal Redress Committee met with Governor Langlie in an unsuccessful attempt to convince him to force Pasco and DuPont to stop segregated busing." The effort initiated by Hanford workers became part of a growing national campaign for civil rights when "Thurgood Marshall, special counsel at NAACP headquarters in New York, recognizing the national implications of challenging the Jim Crowism of a federal defense contractor, wrote state and federal officials demanding an end to segregated buses. Four months later, DuPont stopped the practice."²⁵⁶

The busing integration campaign gave rise to the Tri-Cities' first NAACP chapter, formed at Hanford in 1944. By the end of the year "the Hanford branch of the NAACP boasted 292 members." The group immediately began efforts to document, expose, and put a stop to segregation and systemic racism in the region. In May 1944 national NAACP assistant special counsel E. R. Dudley "arrived in Pasco from New York to investigate continued charges of racial discrimination at Hanford. Dudley noted that though the practice of segregated busing had been 'cleaned up,' there was still extensive discrimination at Hanford. ... Dudley also found that Pasco businesses discriminated against blacks." The NAACP subsequently "decided to launch another fight at Hanford and to tackle Jim Crowism in Pasco as well. The association saw segregation at the federal government-controlled Hanford Site and the surrounding federally dependent Tri-Cities communities as nationally significant."²⁵⁷

Their Tri-Cities campaign was multi-pronged. Counsellor Dudley, "along with the Reverend Emmett B. Reed of the NAACP's Spokane branch and J. M. Hines and C. B. Smith, members of the newly formed NAACP Hanford branch, met with Pasco city officials to demand the end of segregation in the city." The group "next held a mass meeting at Hanford, attended by several hundred Black workers, to discuss the problems at Hanford and the work of the NAACP. In addition, Dudley and the leaders of the Hanford branch met with officials from the Army Corps of Engineers, DuPont, and the Olympic Commissary Company to air their grievances." Both Pasco city officials and federal representatives demurred, with the Pasco mayor suggesting a compromise, "such as persuading a few businesses to desegregate." One Army Corps official responded, "that he could do nothing about segregation because it was the corps' official policy but he would try to address some of the other forms of discrimination, such as hiring practices." However, no changes were made. Representatives from DuPont and Olympic meanwhile "demonstrated even less support." In the course of these initial efforts, the war ended and the Hanford branch of the NAACP "was defunct by the late summer of 1945, because most of its members left the area at the end of the war."²⁵⁸

As population shifts closed the Hanford chapter of the NAACP, the region's Black community continued working from its base in Pasco, and in 1948 residents founded a Tri-Cities branch of the association.²⁵⁹ That April, the west coast regional director of the NAACP, Dr. Noah Webster Griffin, visiting from San Francisco, gave a lecture on "Citizenship," in which "Griffin pointed out that the bad living conditions of

²⁵⁶ Bauman, "Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950," 125.

²⁵⁷ Bauman, n. 23, 125-27.

²⁵⁸ Bauman, n. 23, 126-27. "When the Pasco mayor suggested a compromise ... Dudley informed him that the only compromise acceptable to blacks "would be one where all Jim Crow signs were removed and Negroes permitted fully and without segregation or discrimination to participate in all public facilities and accommodations."

²⁵⁹ Bauman, 130.

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the colored people in Pasco demand the best thinking not only on the part of the association itself but also of any intelligent group in the city wanting to see orderly growth.”²⁶⁰ The local branch of the NAACP, which in this early period “had no office or regular meeting space,” “focused on improving housing and living conditions” as well as working “to increase employment opportunities for blacks in Pasco and at registering voters.” After these late 1940s efforts, branch activity waned for a time before being revived in the early 1950s by E.M. McGee (and subsequently led by Thomas Jackson, Reverend Bill Wilkins, Lloyd Pounds, Reverend H.P. Hawkins, Reverent Floyd Bullock, Egar Hargrow, and Norman Moor, who was president in the early 1980s). Under McGee’s leadership the “purpose and aims of the N.A.A.C.P. were ... to improve the political, educational, social, and economic status of minorities, and to eliminate racial discrimination.”²⁶¹

Tri-Cities residents also undertook post-war civil rights work through the ACLU and the Washington State Board Against Discrimination. In 1948, after they reported to the ACLU about the segregation, discrimination, and wretched living conditions in the region, the organization’s officers “called upon state authorities to investigate alleged ‘Jim Crowism’ in the tri-city (Pasco-Kennewick-Richland) area.”²⁶² At the same time (ca. 1947-49), realizing that their employment opportunities were limited, some Black workers braved possible recriminations and notified the newly formed Washington State Board Against Discrimination (WSBAD) about the situation at Hanford. Members of the WSBAD met with the complainants as well as with representatives of the Atomic Energy Commission, which had replaced the MED as the federal agency overseeing America's atomic arsenal, and the General Electric Company, the new primary contractor for the site. ...Persuaded by the board to improve minority employment practices, General Electric soon began to hire Blacks as scientists and for other white-collar positions. Employment discrimination at Hanford, though, remained a problem that Black Americans would challenge throughout the early years of the cold war.²⁶³

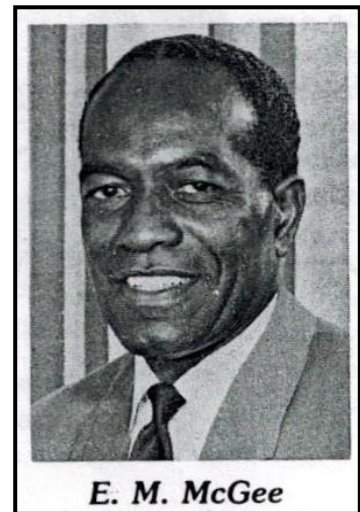


Figure 35. 1950s Tri-Cities NAACP president E. M. McGee

In the chaotic 1940s, much of political work in the Tri-Cities focused simply on documenting and exposing local conditions. In the spring of 1947, “Pasco’s Negro community health council” took a “census of the Pasco Negro population” aiming to “improve the health, recreational and educational facilities of the group.” Washington State College (through its Pasco field office) joined the documentation effort that fall, and the following summer “faculty and graduate students from the college began to conduct surveys of local residents as well as research on other aspects of life in Pasco and Kennewick. One of the primary topics of study was race relations.” Black residents took the opportunity to impress upon the researchers the lack of basic infrastructure and the systemic discrimination it reflected and anchored: they “overwhelmingly listed water supply and service as the most significant problem facing the city and racial discrimination as the second greatest problem” and they cited “the

²⁶⁰ “Lecture Given on Citizenship.”

²⁶¹ Bauman, 130; Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Politics.

²⁶² “Probe Is Sought on Jim Crowism in Tri-City Area”; “Jim Crowism Charge Denied.”

²⁶³ Bauman, “Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950,” 128.

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lack of adequate housing [as] the most important reason for the unrest among the Black population."²⁶⁴

They also stressed that the Black community in Pasco generally "were treated unfairly" and that "the black migration to work on the Hanford project had helped the country." In their efforts to document and expose the conditions to which they were subjected, Black residents worked with other local entities as well. In 1947, "because of complaints made to her by black residents, the Pasco attorney Florence Merrick asked the Seattle affiliate of the National Urban League (NUL) to study racial discrimination in the Tri-Cities. The league agreed and sent the investigator Charles P. Larowe to the Tri-Cities in September 1948." Merrick's request was not the only one the NUL heard from the area, for while he was there "Larowe also investigated complaints of employment discrimination against blacks at Hanford."²⁶⁵

As residents attested to the myriad issues facing the Black community, they also sought to address them through new organizations aimed expressly at local conditions. Speaking at a January 1948 meeting with WSC faculty, Pasco and Kennewick city officials, and other community leaders, "Carlton Smith, Pasco negro businessman," emphasized that "race feeling in the area is high and there is an urgent need of an interracial council here."²⁶⁶ Community members were working to form such a group even as Mr. Smith spoke: around this time the Pasco Human Relations Committee and the East Pasco Improvement Association were formed. These groups "expressed many concerns about life in East Pasco," and immediately began work to improve basic living conditions, with one of the first priorities being "to get water lines installed in the area, as East Pasco residents were hauling their water."²⁶⁷ They also sought to "work with the city council committee on east side development and with the chamber of commerce to bring low-cost housing to the area," and pushed for "restaurants and other establishments to cater to Pasco's Negro residents."²⁶⁸

The Black community also worked individually to secure the rights and resources denied it. As noted above, "owning property was virtually impossible for Blacks." While some residents worked to change this situation, others tried to circumvent it in order to secure homes and livelihoods and to serve the Black American community. These activities were, necessarily, clandestine, but sources do provide a glimpse into their operation. They tell us, for instance, that "J. D. Evans financed and bought his night club, the Dew Drop Inn, by having his white lawyer buy the property for him. Similarly, in Richland, a real estate broker bought the land for Judson Phillips, on which he located his tailoring business near what is now [1994] Seattle State Bank."²⁶⁹ Other clandestine efforts to fight discrimination were more spontaneous, and symbolic. At Hanford, for instance, where the portable toilets were one of the only integrated places, "white workers ... occasionally placed Whites Only signs on them. On at least one occasion, some black workers 'overturned one of these buildings, along with its white occupant, who was not physically injured but was, of course, morally disorganized.'"²⁷⁰

²⁶⁴ Bauman, 129.

²⁶⁵ Bauman, 129-30.

²⁶⁶ "Action Planned in Pasco Area: W.S.C. Survey, Council to Help Solve Boom Problem."

²⁶⁷ Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 9; Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, "Cultural Awareness: Pasco's Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco's Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet]," sec. Politics.

²⁶⁸ "Better Housing Club Aim."

²⁶⁹ Hayes and Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers*, 11.

²⁷⁰ Bauman, "Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950," 126.

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The 1949 Hazel Scott Case and Civil Rights in the 1950s



Figure 36. Hazel Scott, 1947.

In 1949 Hazel Scott pulled Tri-Cities racial discrimination to the center of the national stage. A famed singer and jazz pianist, the Trinidad-born Scott, who was married to Adam Clayton Powell Jr. (New York’s first Black U.S. Congressman, elected 1945), “was snowbound at Pasco” that February while traveling from Pendleton, Oregon, to Spokane on a concert tour. At 1:30 in the afternoon, Scott—who “had not eaten for a long time previously and was hungry and tired.” She entered a restaurant owned by Harry and Blanche Utz (located in the Pasco Greyhound bus depot). Together with her assistant, she sat down at the lunch counter, where the waitress, “the cashier and Utz all told Hazel

Scott and a companion, Mrs. Eunice Wolfe, that they would not serve them because they were Negroes.” As she later recounted, “when they were refused service, Scott told Wolf, ‘come on, we’re going to the police

station. Around the corner and up the street we went, where I looked into a pair of the coldest green eyes I have ever seen in my life and when I told what had happened he said, ‘Are you going to get out of here or am I going to run you in for disturbing the peace?’ Scott went to her hotel room, called her agent, and said ‘I want the following things in the following order: a hot bath, a hot drink, and a lawyer.’”²⁷¹

With the support of the NAACP, Scott subsequently filed a federal civil liberties violation lawsuit (represented by William Roe, Gonzaga law professor and member of the Spokane Interracial Council). And she won. The lawsuit reverberated around the nation—with papers like the *Chicago Defender*



Figure 37. Hazel Scott (in Mae West’s 1943 film “The Heat Is On”)

lauding it as an “action which will redound to the benefit of all of us who are discriminated against because of our color.” In Washington, Scott’s case helped propel development of state civil rights laws. Historian Dwayne Mack has credited it specifically with inspiring people to “pressure the Washington state legislature to enact the Public Accommodations Act,” which it did in 1953.²⁷²

Individual struggles to secure rights and access resources continued to span a spectrum, ranging from prosaic, largely invisible everyday

²⁷¹ “Hazel Scott, Negro Artist, Scores in Pasco Racial Suit.” Bauman, “Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950,” 130. Caldron, Stabile, and Strait, “Biography: Scott, Hazel.” Some sources suggest Scott had just gotten off a military plane because she just come from “performing for US servicemen in Alaska.”

²⁷² Caldron, Stabile, and Strait, “Biography: Scott, Hazel”; “Civil Liberties Are Issue in Case.”

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forms of resistance, to more concerted efforts to better one’s position, to pathbreaking noncompliance with the color line. Often, these overlapped, as in the case of high school student Webster Jackson, who wanted to be a skilled tradesman, a pipefitter. Until that time, most Black American union members had been confined to the laborers’ union, Laborers’ Local 348. Determined to pursue his dream despite this, Jackson “applied for an apprenticeship at the local pipefitters union in Pasco, but as soon as he walked out the door [of “the plumbers and steamfitters union hall here in Pasco”] he saw the secretary toss his application into the trash. Instead, he became the first black to complete a four-year apprenticeship with the local carpenters’ union and worked as a carpenter for eight years.”²⁷³ Jackson, as noted above, eventually started his own construction company and built numerous residential and commercial buildings in Pasco.

Other community members also focused on obtaining the skills and education denied to them, often via the vocational-technical school that opened in 1946 “to train workers for the Hanford Nuclear Reservation.” The school, which “used space formerly occupied by the Pasco Naval Air Station that had been decommissioned after the end of World War II,” began operating as Columbia Basin College, a junior college, in September 1955.²⁷⁴ In addition to education and skilled employment, Black residents also sought leadership positions from which to affect community change. When Thomas B. Jackson ran for city council in 1957, he became “the second Negro in Pasco history to file for election to the council.”²⁷⁵



In some cases, Black residents’ fight to break the chains that bound them was more literal: in the late 1950s, Geither Horn’s struggle to overturn his 1935 murder conviction, and subsequent life sentence, gained traction. In March of 1958, Horn “a Negro and one-time exhibition boxer and hobo,” “returned to Pasco’s Franklin County superior courtroom” where he testified about how police coerced his confession in 1935 while he “was held in the Franklin County jail for 60 days without legal advice,” charged with “the murder of an unidentified transient whose body was discovered near the Pasco city dump. ... Horn told the court he was taken to the cemetery for three nights in a row and threatened before an open grave with being buried alive if he did not confess to the murder.” Horn’s testimony, and “plea for freedom” was subsequently

Figure 38. Geither Horn, 1959, upon being freed after he was wrongfully imprisoned for 24 years. Tri-City Herald, June 21, 1959.

²⁷³ Pihl, “Black Tri-Citians Reflect on Struggles, Progress”; Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

²⁷⁴ Gibson, “Philosophical, Legal, and Social Rationales for Appropriating the Tribal Estate, 1607 to 1980.”

²⁷⁵ “Close Contest Seen for Pasco Positions.”

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“reviewed by the state supreme court in early May.” In June “federal judge Gus Soloman of Portland granted him a habeas corpus writ. Judge Soloman said Horn had not had a fair trial” and agreed that Horn “was denied due process of law in his trial.” Horn was immediately released from jail.²⁷⁶

In addition to an expansive array of individual endeavors, the ongoing efforts of the Tri-Cities Black community in the 1950s included organizing new groups to address different aspects of the local situation. Prominent among them was the Tri-Cities Committee on Human Relations—founded in January 1951—which grew out of the East Pasco Improvement Association.²⁷⁷ The Tri-Cities committee was headed by Florence Merrick, a White female attorney, who led the group’s efforts “to combat racial discrimination, promote positive race relations, study existing problems, and find methods of improving living conditions in East Pasco. One of the first acts of the new committee was to have Dr. Bonner, from the Urban League, make a study of the Tri-Cities.”²⁷⁸ This study Dr. Bonner, who directed the NUL’s department of research and community projects, was completed in October 1951.²⁷⁹



Figure 39. Florence Merrick, *Tri-City Herald*, August 26, 1960.

A few years later, working with existing Black community organizations like the NAACP, the Tri-Cities Committee on Human Relations (led by local White professionals) helped achieve a significant victory for civil rights in the form of education access. In the early 1950s, Chamber of Commerce and school district officials in both Kennewick and Pasco were competing to secure a Tri-Cities junior college for their cities.

When Kennewick officials made their case to the state board of education, the Tri-Cities Committee on



Figure 40. Columbia Basin College, 1963.

Human Relations intervened, citing “practices of segregation and discrimination they said were traditional in Kennewick.” The group sought “assurances that there would be no discrimination in the event that the proposed junior college” was located there. Pasco NAACP president E.M. Magee, a Black man who knew firsthand the menace of Kennewick “traditions,” was more unequivocal, opposing outright “establishing a junior college in Kennewick because of what he terms the town’s past practices and habits

²⁷⁶ “‘Lifer’ Claims Threat Used in Confession”; “Plea Won”; “Man in Prison Awaits Release.”

²⁷⁷ Interview with James Pruitt.

²⁷⁸ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Politics.

²⁷⁹ “Tri-City Area Gains in Negro Population.”

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regarding the exclusion of Negroes.”²⁸⁰ Their efforts to ensure a junior college accessible to the Black community succeeded: in September 1955, Columbia Basin College, “the 10th junior college in the state,” opened in Pasco on the site of the existing vocational-technical school (originally opened in 1946 using “space formerly occupied by the [decommissioned] Pasco Naval Air Station).”²⁸¹

Individual and collective civil rights campaigns, of course, often coalesced, as was the case in 1957, when Katie Barton’s teenage daughter tried to attend a dance—“supposedly open to all local teenagers”—at the Kennewick Social Club. Mrs. Barton, came to the area from Texas and “prior to moving to the Tri-Cities, [she] had envisioned a friendly atmosphere in the north. The harsh bigotry of her newly adopted hometown shocked her. She stated that the relationship between blacks and whites in Texas was reasonably harmonious, and blacks were not hated by whites,” like they often were in the Tri-Cities. Since her 1947 arrival, she’d actively fought discrimination, and the exclusion of her daughter did not go unchallenged.²⁸² Soon “a group of Richland high school students” was protesting “the barring of Negro students from the club’s regular teen-age dances,” and organized “a boycott by teen-agers of Monday night youth dances.” They reached out to the Tri-Cities Committee on Human Relations to build support. The Committee subsequently pushed local officials to clarify the legality of the race-based exclusion, asking “Benton County Prosecuting Attorney Maloy Sensney to decide if the club is a private club, or a public accommodation facility,” and, “if he finds the club is a public accommodation place,” the requested “Sensney to enforce a law that forbids discrimination in public places,” - the 1953 Public Accommodations Act which was passed in the wake of the Hazel Scott case.²⁸³

The community began broadening the boycott campaign as it gained momentum. While it worked to stop discrimination against schoolchildren, the Tri-Cities Committee additionally “asked a boycott of any activities that violate the nondiscrimination law.”²⁸⁴ As they identified and targeted particularly discriminatory entities and events, community members also reported them to appropriate authorities like the Washington State Board Against Discrimination (WSBAD), which was advising the newly-established U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (created by the 1957 Civil Rights Act, the first federal civil rights legislation since Reconstruction, which authorized it “to investigate discriminatory conditions and recommend corrective measures”).²⁸⁵ The next year the Board investigated a complaint by Mrs. Robert Piggee about Pasco’s “Hamilton self-service laundry,” where “Negro customers were segregated into a separate washroom from the white clientele and ... she was denied the use of a machine in the room customarily reserved for white people.” It ultimately “issued a compliance order to permit Negroes and whites equal use of all washing machines and facilities.”²⁸⁶

The WSBAD subsequently traveled to the Tri-Cities to hear testimony on racial discrimination there, the results of which it forwarded to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The Civil Rights Commission report that followed “said conditions for the Negro population in the state ranged from ‘relatively good’ in the Seattle area to ‘near servitude’ in the Tri-Cities. Among other things, the report said, ‘in Pasco and Kennewick rigid bars against Negroes reminiscent of those which prevail in the deep southern states

²⁸⁰ “Tri-City Racial Problems Shake Junior College Plans.”

²⁸¹ Gibson, “Philosophical, Legal, and Social Rationales for Appropriating the Tribal Estate, 1607 to 1980.”

²⁸² Shu-Chen, “Katie D. Morgan Barton (1918-2010) •.”

²⁸³ “Boycott Asked When Negroes Are Barred.”

²⁸⁴ “Boycott Asked When Negroes Are Barred.”

²⁸⁵ “Civil Rights Act of 1957.”

²⁸⁶ “Firm Told to Stop Practice.”

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seem to be the norm.” Specifically, “local negroes are deprived of decent housing, including apartments, and of the opportunity to utilize recreational facilities ‘by various stratagems and practices.’” One of those stratagems continued to be simple dishonest denial: Kennewick City Manager Hansen responded to the report by saying “he knows of no discrimination against Negroes in Kennewick, adding that many Negroes work in the city and that none of the stores, to his knowledge, pursue discriminatory policies. ‘We have no racial discrimination here (in Kennewick),’ Hansen concluded.”²⁸⁷

The 1960s in the Tri-Cities, Western Center of the Civil Rights Struggle

The damning 1959 report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights marked a period of intensification of political activity nationally, and in the Tri-Cities in particular. After the initial 1959 report, more national scrutiny, and protest, followed. In April 1960 the Civil Rights Commission listed the situation in Pasco and Kennewick (and especially the “ghetto-like conditions” in East Pasco) as the first item “on the debit side of the ‘racial discrimination ledger’ in Washington.” The Tri-Cities earned pre-eminence with regard to racism in the state because “minority races” faced discrimination in “jobs, housing,” etc., and, moreover, “management, labor unions, and the community [were] responsible for these conditions.”²⁸⁸

On April 30, 1960, two weeks after the Commission’s findings made news, the Pasco chapter of the NAACP, with support from the University of Washington chapter, organized “a peaceful demonstration against Pasco’s hiring policies.” Carrying signs that read “Pasco discriminates in city employment, Jim Crow must go, end race bias, time for a change, Jim Crow-shame on Pasco, dusty streets-dusty excuses,” etc., demonstrators “marched west on Clark Street from NAACP headquarters at the Pasco Labor Hall [on the corner of First and Clark]. Led by E.M. McGee, Pasco NAACP president . . . the group circled a block in the Pasco business area and returned to the Pasco city hall. The marchers walked back and forth in front of the city hall . . . following the demonstration, members marched back to the labor hall where they ate picnic lunches and heard a talk.” Organizers also produced and distributed a leaflet that noted, among other things, “that not one Negro among Pasco’s 1,400 Negroes works in a Pasco store, bank or office or holds a position with the city. ‘No wonder East Pasco is a slum,’ it added.”²⁸⁹

Community members continued to call attention to the area’s intense workplace discrimination in the wake of the Pasco City Hall protest. The local NAACP, for its part, kept documenting discrimination—that July, for instance, there were “no Negroes are employed by Pasco city. Two, including one boy, are employed in grocery stores, but no Negroes are employed in the post office, banks, loan companies, or schools of Pasco. No Negroes even live in Kennewick.” And the organization promised further demonstrations in Pasco and Kennewick “against discrimination in city employment and poor streets in east Pasco until something is done to rectify the situation.”²⁹⁰

True to its word, in mid-August the NAACP held a second protest march, in the Pasco business district, against “discrimination in employment of Negroes here.”²⁹¹ The following year, the NAACP’s regional

²⁸⁷ “Tri-City Report Called Unfounded.”

²⁸⁸ “Probe Says State Has Racial ‘Bars.’”

²⁸⁹ “NAACP Pickets Hit Bias at Pasco.”

²⁹⁰ “Pasco Race Unit to Stage Protest.”

²⁹¹ “Negro Unit Sets Big Protest March.”

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field secretary, the Rev. Ellis H. Casson, traveled to Pasco, which he cited “as one of the worst cities for minority groups in the state so far as employment opportunity is concerned.” During his May visit, Rev. Casson spoke at a banquet of the Pasco NAACP branch, held in the Labor Hall, where he noted “opportunity for the Negro here is less than in Mississippi, Georgia and other areas of the deep South.” In Pasco, said Rev. Casson, “most doors to employment are closed ... no persons from the negro or other minority race are employed in a department store, or a Pasco City or Franklin County office, despite the fact 1,500 negros live in Pasco and contribute to the community’s economy.”²⁹²

In May 1962 these ongoing efforts prompted “the State Board Against Discrimination to request a federal investigation of employment practices there.” The Board, which held an all-day meeting in Pasco that month, requested the federal probe hearing testimony “that many Negroes, willing and able to work, are forced to go on public welfare rolls because of racial discrimination by Tri-City employers and unions ... that only five or six unions out of 34 locals in the Tri-City area admit Negroes to membership. ... that the City of Pasco employs no Negroes as firemen or policemen and that no Negroes work as school bus drivers or school cafeteria personnel,” and that, according to Franklin County commissioners, “no Negroes are employed by the county.” The WSBAD subsequently “directed its own staff to gather facts on the cost of public assistance to the Pasco area, the number of unions that do not have Negro members and the number of city, county, and state agencies in Pasco that have no Negro employees.” It also asked the President’s Committee on Equal Opportunity “to send members of its staff to Pasco to examine current practices of unions and employers.”²⁹³

The Civil Rights Commission Report for 1962 that followed was scathing. It focused in part on the formation of non-white ghettos in Washington and noted that “the entire Negro population of the Tri-Cities is centered in a ghetto-like area of East Pasco which is regarded as a no-man’s land by financial institutions.” Richland had only “five Negro families,” and Kennewick had none. One Black family, the Howard’s, tried to make a home in Kennewick in 1961. However, they “moved out of town after their home had been set afire three times.”²⁹⁴ Martha Howard later described “what happened. Her husband Walter were working at the cemetery, and right across the street, the people lived. So he got acquainted and the peoples gave him the home. They gave him a home, but the people didn’t want him to live over there. So in order for them not to live over there, somebody just set the house on fire and burned it down. By them, hadn’t been able to get insurance and everything, so there wasn’t nothing left for them but to get out of there.”²⁹⁵ Other residents recall the details a bit differently, but the event itself—and the threat of violence in enforcement of racial segregation it represented—was seared into community consciousness. Aubrey Johnson heard “it was a Caucasian lady ... and she had a black lady, name was Martha Walker, I believe, that worked for her. She gave her house.” Johnson remembered “it was next to Colers’ grape field,” and he learned well the intended lesson of the act: “they burnt that house down so that no black people could live over there.”²⁹⁶

In May 1963, the WSBAD conducted a ten-day investigation of discriminatory practices in the Tri-Cities. In the course of its investigation, which had been requested by Gov. Albert D. Rosellini, the Board held hearings in the Benton County Public Utility District Building, where it heard testimony from people like the Rev. W.D. Jones, who relayed his experience trying “to take out a license to operate a fish market

²⁹² “Bias Strong in Pasco Is Charge.”
²⁹³ “Federal Probe Asked on Pasco Employment.”
²⁹⁴ “‘Ghetto’ Reported”; “Bias in Housing Claimed in City.”
²⁹⁵ Interview with James Pruitt; Daniels, Interview with Cornelius Walker.
²⁹⁶ Interview with Aubrey Johnson.; Interview with James Pruitt.

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in Kennewick” and described an occasion on which “he was stopped at night by a Kennewick policeman and told his presence in the town was not appreciated.” Kennewick City Councilman Grover Christian affirmed that this practice was common: “a young policeman, whom he did not identify, told him a couple of years ago he would stop any Negro he saw in the town at night.” Meanwhile “Josephine Purdimo, a Negro,” testified that “it was impossible for a Negro in the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union in the Tri-Cities to get a job as a waitress or cook.” Bill Hennings, of Pasco, “a white member and housing chairman of the Pasco branch of the NAACP, and Ed Critchlow, Richland attorney,” also addressed the Board, as did Katie Barton, who said “we are not satisfied in East Pasco and will not be thrown into a ghetto to live. All are accepted except Negroes. We do your dirty work but have no equal opportunities.”²⁹⁷

Two days after the WSBAD hearings, on Saturday, May 18, the NAACP held an “anti-segregation demonstration in Kennewick” led by Jack Tanner, Pacific Northwest President of the NAACP, who labeled Kennewick “the Birmingham of Washington.” This comment Tanner made at the very moment Birmingham was dominating national headlines as the nation’s racist epitome.²⁹⁸ Tanner’s comment, in context, was damning.

The WSBAD report that followed was no less so. It identified Kennewick

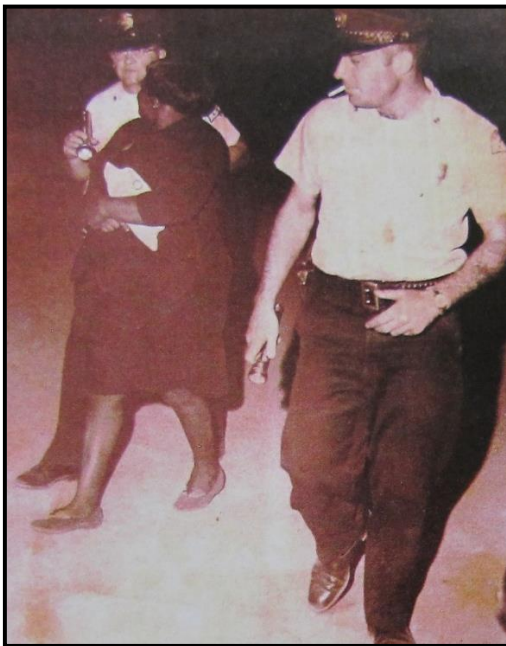


Figure 41. Labor Day “vice raid in East Pasco,” 1963.

“as a ‘sundown town’ where Negroes must leave after dark. ... [and] said undisputed findings showed there was not a single Negro living in Kennewick while 1,200 of them were bottled up in what it called ‘a distinct racial ghetto’ in nearby East Pasco. No Negroes were found enrolled in the Kennewick public schools nor employed in the school district, city, Benton County, state or federal offices in Kennewick, the board said. The city councilman who related this information was later criticized at a secret meeting of the council, the board said. The board also said an official of the Kennewick Housing Authority refused to testify after telling an investigator ‘I’m not going to get mixed up in any damn nigger problem.’... The anti-discrimination board recommended the city establish a human relations commission to administer a civil rights ordinance covering jobs, housing, and public services.”²⁹⁹

Despite some two decades of extensive documentation of the profound, enduring systemic racial discrimination in the Tri-Cities, local officials responded to the 1963 investigation and its findings in much the same way they’d responded to earlier attempts to address the region’s structural racism, i.e., by denying it existed and continuing to perpetrate its constitutive practices. When the Washington State Board Against Discrimination documented Kennewick as a

²⁹⁷ “Kennewick Probe Told”; “Discrimination Charged, Denied”; “Tri-City Racial Hearing On”; “Kennewick ‘Ban’ of Negroes Cited.”

²⁹⁸ Momodu, “The Birmingham Campaign (1963) •.”

²⁹⁹ “Discrimination Charged, Denied”; “Charge Kennewick as ‘Sundown Town’”; “Kennewick ‘Ban’ of Negroes Cited.”

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“sundown town” and its findings made headlines across the region, local officials acted surprised. Kennewick “Police Chief O.C. Lincoln said he knew of no such practice,” while other Kennewick authorities responded that the city “would rather accentuate the positive.” The *Tri-City Herald* and other civic leaders went further. Together they “challenged [the] state agency’s report that major discrimination against Negroes existed here. The newspaper said in an editorial ‘Kennewick has been inexcusably injured and abused by the Washington State Board Against Discrimination.’ Mayor Lawrence Scott added the report presented ‘their side and no one else’s.’”³⁰⁰

While civic spokesmen denied the discrimination ravaging the Black community and obstructed efforts to expose and ameliorate it, many of their colleagues continued the very practices for which the region had become notorious. On Labor Day weekend, local police and agents of the state attorney general’s office conducted another “vice raid in East Pasco. The raid, which resulted in more than a dozen arrests, . . . stirred up a furor at City Hall and among integration groups in the area.”³⁰¹ As news of, and anger about, the raid broke, Pasco Mayor Ted Van Hoy took a 10-day vacation. In his absence the City Council passed an ordinance aimed at expanding local voter registration—i.e. “provid[ing] two temporary registration points for voters registration, in the Courthouse and the Masonic Temple, and provid[ing] for the city to pay six solicitors from each major party to go door to door to register voters.” A furious Van Hoy “lashed out at the City Council” upon his return, saying the ordinance “pays for politics” and staunchly opposing it, “ostensibly on budgetary concerns.”³⁰²

The Labor Day 1963 raid continued to be a focal point for anger about ongoing discrimination in the Tri-Cities, and Jack Tanner met with “Negro leaders” in Pasco about it during another trip to the area that November.³⁰³ A few days after that meeting, on Nov. 22, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Since the previous June, President Kennedy had been pushing “for a comprehensive civil rights bill, induced by massive resistance to desegregation and the murder of Medgar Evers.” After Kennedy was killed “President Lyndon Johnson pressed hard . . . to secure the bill’s passage.” On July 2, 1964, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The act

*“prohibit[ed] discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. Provisions of this civil rights act forbade discrimination on the basis of sex, as well as race in hiring, promoting, and firing. The Act prohibited discrimination in public accommodations and federally funded programs. It also strengthened the enforcement of voting rights and the desegregation of schools. . . . Passage of the Act ended the application of “Jim Crow” laws, which had been upheld by the Supreme Court in the 1896 case Plessy v. Ferguson, in which the Court held that racial segregation purported to be “separate but equal” was constitutional.”*³⁰⁴

After the Civil Rights Act of 1964

As the “nationwide racial revolution reached into Washington state,” the Tri-Cities continued to stand-out as a notorious bastion of Jim Crowism, and a focal point of the struggle for civil rights. In January,

³⁰⁰ “Kennewick Probe Told”; “Discrimination Charged, Denied”; “Kennewick Cited in Racial Report”; “Race Report Called Unfair.”

³⁰¹ “East Pasco Raid Report Delayed”; “Official Receives Report on Raid”; “Bias Claims Discounted.”

³⁰² “Pasco Mayor Raps Ordinance.”

³⁰³ “Bias Claims Discounted.”

³⁰⁴ “Legal Highlight: The Civil Rights Act of 1964.”

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1964, when state civil rights leaders discussed recent developments and their plans for the coming year, they emphasized that “after Birmingham, Gov. Rosellini issued an executive order on civil rights; the State supreme court gave the go-ahead for the State Board Against Discrimination to handle housing complaints,” which would facilitate achieving one of their primary goals, i.e., “eliminate ... the distinct racial ghetto in east Pasco.”³⁰⁵ Shortly thereafter the WSBAD established “civil rights units” “designed to improve relations among the races and help Negroes obtain jobs and housing.” The “rights advisory councils” focused on the two priority areas in the state, King County/Seattle and the Tri-Cities.”³⁰⁶

WSBAD priorities reflected the ongoing work of Tri-Cities residents, who continued to focus broadly on discrimination in the area while specifically targeting employment as well as segregation and infrastructure issues. In July 1964, the Black community led “the first of several racial demonstrations planned for the Tri-Cities”: “marchers gathered at Kurtzman Park, where Wallace Webster, a Negro organizer of Congress on Racial Equality in the Tri-City area, urged demonstrators to mourn the racial situation in Mississippi,” while working locally for change (“Webster also spoke on the need for more membership in CORE and said a demonstration will be held Monday in Richland.”) Protesting “racial discrimination in the city’s hiring practices [and] ... inferior teaching and inadequate facilities at Whittier School in the Negro section,” the demonstrators, according to the local paper some “150 persons—about half of them white—congregated at the Pasco City Hall’s parking lot after a 10-block ‘freedom march’ from Kurtzman Park.” Participants had to keep to sidewalks during the march due to “the refusal of Pasco Police Chief A. L. McKibbin to issue them a parade permit for a street march.”³⁰⁷

In the months that followed, much of the community’s civil rights work focused on segregation, and degraded infrastructure and education, at Whittier School. While Pasco schools were “90 percent white” (where Black Americans made up 8.5% of students), Whittier’s student body was “98 percent Black.” The deeply segregated, deteriorated school, “the oldest in the school system,” was “a place where it is impossible for a student to get a proper education.” As James Pruitt recalled, “Whittier School over there had rats and roaches and they had no place to put the food. The food was on the floor out there with roaches and everything else crawling through it.”³⁰⁸ Finally in July 1964, the City of Pasco purchased property for a new school, acquiring “10 acres in east Pasco about four blocks from the present Whittier School for a new grade school site,” but the real estate deal didn’t resolve the issue: even as the school board announced its purchase of the tract four blocks “north of” Whittier it warned that it “may be as many as seven years before the new school can be built.”³⁰⁹

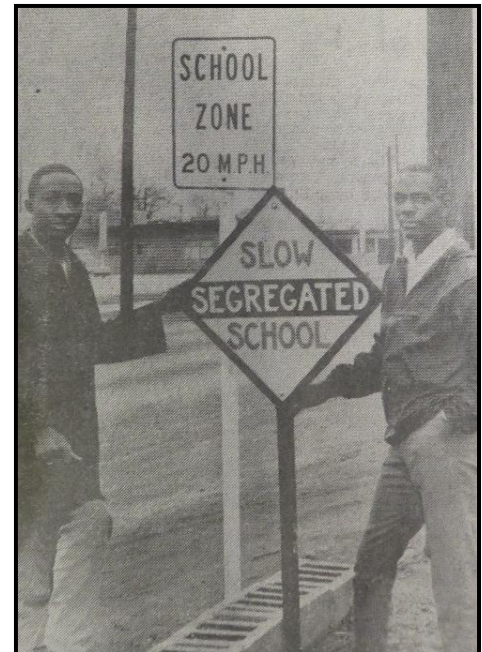


Figure 42. “Segregated School” sign installed near Whittier Elementary, 1964, *Tri-City Herald*, Jan 10, 1986

³⁰⁵ “Civil Rights Faces Tough Year.”

³⁰⁶ “Civil Rights Units Formed in Two Areas.”

³⁰⁷ “Rally Ties Up Traffic.”

³⁰⁸ Interview with James Pruitt.

³⁰⁹ “School Site Is Acquired”; “School Site Is Purchased”; “Segregation at E. Pasco School Hit”; “2 Pasco Negro Groups Differ

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The Black community thus kept working on behalf of its children. The East Pasco Improvement Association “officially requested an investigation” and, through spokesman Thomas Jackson, urged construction of “a new school located so that Negro students attending would be in the minority.” At the same time “a group of parents in the Negro district,” led by Columbia Basin College student Wallace Webster, circulated petitions charging “segregation, discrimination, and deprivation of educational opportunities,” and submitted them to the school board petitions that pushed for action “so that the balance of Negroes to white students would be more in line with other schools.” They also called attention to ongoing segregation at Whittier by physically marking it on the city streets, installing “signs reading ‘entering a segregated school zone’ at either side of the school” in 1964.³¹⁰

In the face of persistent work by the Black community, including “the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Congress on Racial Equality, ministers, and members of the East Pasco Improvement Association,” the School District agreed to apply for a federal grant funded by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare “to study racial problems connected with Whittier Elementary School.”³¹¹ Less than two months later, the school board voted to close Whittier “under the federal anti-defacto segregation regulations.” Pasco groups approving the closure included the Chamber of Commerce, the Pasco Ministerial Association, the Eastside Improvement Association, the Congress on Racial Equality, and the Tri-City Advisory Council to the Washington State Board Against Discrimination. The City demurred on building a new, integrated school and instead “instituted a policy of busing for integration purposes. The children from the predominantly Black east side of Pasco were transported to schools throughout the district, with the exception of Edwin Markham Elementary School which is located out in the rural area.”³¹² Whittier itself still continued to be used to house various community programs and associated offices until it was demolished in the 1970s.

About 131 elementary school children from East Pasco subsequently endured the daily burden of riding a bus, round trip, to schools in other neighborhoods. At these schools, Black students were a distinct, often persecuted minority. The faculty and staff were completely white. In fact, the entire Pasco school district had only one black staff person in 1965. While busing, and the lack of a nearby school, dispersed the children of the community, school integration helped strengthen the Black community by “mov[ing] Black children toward an avenue of equal educational opportunities,” and “since 1965, the percentage of Blacks graduating from Pasco High School has continually increased.”³¹³

With Whittier closed, parents and others working for social justice focused on improving educational situations for the students who were now spread across the district. Key to this effort was getting Black staff and teachers into the schools. The school district began to recruit Black teachers in 1966. Among them was Mildred Wynette Harrison, the first Black elementary teacher, and Moses Turner, the first

on School Issue”; “More East Pasco Signers Needed”; “Board Studies Pasco Petition Charging Bias”; “Pasco Will Discuss Segregation Charge.”

³¹⁰ “School Site Is Acquired”; “School Site Is Purchased”; “Segregation at E. Pasco School Hit”; “2 Pasco Negro Groups Differ on School Issue”; “More East Pasco Signers Needed”; “Board Studies Pasco Petition Charging Bias”; “Pasco Will Discuss Segregation Charge.”

³¹¹ “Pasco Will Discuss Segregation Charge”; “Racial Study Funds Sought.”

³¹² Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” Education; “Board Votes for Closure of Whittier Grade School.”

³¹³ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” Education; “Board Votes for Closure of Whittier Grade School.”

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Black high school teacher. With ongoing civil rights work, another “four Black teachers were hired in 1968.” That year the district hired 6 “certificated” Black teachers and 8 staff, including “Clarence Alford the first administrator. Others included Virgie Robinson as home visitor, and Tom Jackson, attendance officer [hired] in 1966. In 1969, Dorothy Webster began teaching at Pasco High School, and in 1970 Joan Turner was appointed to the school board, followed two years later by Ellenor Moore.”³¹⁴

Combating racial inequity in education was just one of the many civil rights efforts of Tri-Cities Black Americans and their allies fought in this period. They also tackled the spectrum of discrimination and oppression in specific, local campaigns in a broad rights and justice context. This connected the local Black community together within the Tri-Cities and connected them to the surging civil rights and social justice efforts of Black Americans across the country. As Shirley and Andy Miller recalled, “a lot of the marches that we went to in Pasco were to support what was happening in the South...and to build support.”³¹⁵

The issues in the Tri-Cities mirrored those nationally: as Dallas Barnes put it, “it was all plugged into the national concerns: better jobs, better educational opportunities, better job opportunities, type thing. The regular things that people was concerned about—equal employment, equal housing, equal educational opportunities.” When the Tri-City Chapter of the Congress on Racial Equality sponsored “a civil-rights demonstration protest” in Kennewick, in July 1965, and the Tri-City Chapter of the NAACP met at Pasco Labor Hall to discuss co-sponsorship, planning for the event made the regional news. Other groups continued the work of documenting and exposing ongoing discrimination. A few months later, the Richland Human Rights Commission (established in 1964) issued its first annual report, which, despite recent improvements (Richland’s Black population had “grown from about 30 families a year ago to 50” in September 1965), emphasized that “there can be little doubt that discrimination still exists in the city, especially in housing and employment.”³¹⁶

Collaboration with both national organizations and leaders linked this local context with civil rights work across the country. For example, Julian Bond, “a very prominent civil rights leader” who helped found the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, visited the Tri-Cities in the course of his civil rights work, and in a September 1966 event—sponsored by the Public Concerns Committee of the Community Unitarian Church of Kennewick—prominent Civil Rights spokesman James Meredith, “the first Negro to attend and graduate from the University of Mississippi,” spoke at the Pasco Theatre on “Racial Peace in America.” In a visit the following summer, Samuel C. Jackson, of the U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission (established 1965), expounded on the great gap between such “racial peace” and the ongoing infamy of the local area: the Tri-Cities, said Jackson “still constitute the ‘Mississippi of the North’ in the eyes of most Negro college graduates of the South and the rest of the nation.” Jackson, who came “at the invitation of the East Pasco Self Help Cooperative,” urged the Black community to “use every available local, state, and federal law to help speed up the changes necessary.”³¹⁷

³¹⁴ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Education; “ESAA Title VII Workshop: A Black Cultural Experience”; Whitman and Rosenfels, “Study and Evaluation of Racial Tension at Pasco High School.”

³¹⁵ Interview with Andy and Shirley Miller.

³¹⁶ “Commission Views City’s Racial Bars.”

³¹⁷ “Meredith Talk Set at Pasco”; “Official Finds Fault with Tri-Cities’ Race Policies”; Interview with Dallas Barnes.

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The community continued to do just that and fought a multi-faceted civil rights battle. Some community members kept their focus on securing, and desegregating, adequate housing. In addition to actively integrating residential neighborhoods by pushing for opportunities to move their families into White areas like Richland, Black Americans fought ongoing discrimination in housing, and worked to secure basic adequate dwellings. Indeed, Edmon Daniels recalled that, of the numerous civil rights issues, “number one ... for most of them it was housing.”³¹⁸ Others worked on the array of civil rights issues: in the Tri-Cities they existed in every major aspect of society. As Dallas Barnes put it when asked to comment on important civil rights issues in the area, “Well, it depends on which institution we want to start at. Education is always been one, employment has always been one. We’ve got a criminal justice system that has never been ... So the civil rights is front-end on all fronts: education, housing, employment, health...criminal justice... Health... I can’t think of a single public institution, whether it be military, health, criminal justice, politics, any of that, that has a plus sign on it for blacks.”³¹⁹

In 1966, the local struggles for equality of opportunity in education and housing coalesced in a fight focused on discrimination in housing, and other realms, against Black students at Columbia Basin College (CBC). On behalf of the students, the Tri-Cities chapter of the Congress on Racial Equality requested an investigation by the WSBAD, reporting “that the school housed Negro athletes in a motel on the fringe of the East Pasco Negro ghetto more than five miles from campus” and that “several Negro athletes have been dismissed from the school’s teams for ‘bad attitude’ which included wearing their hair in the so-called ‘Afro-style.’ The complaint said that students dismissed from teams lost their scholarships and jobs on the campus.” The WSBAD investigated CBC and in March issued findings of “discrimination in the housing of Negro athletes,” making “eight recommendations to the Pasco School Board to administer a nondiscrimination policy at the community college.”³²⁰

The Late 1960s and Early 1970s

After resistance from the Pasco School Board, Superintendent Lewis Ferrari’s immediate response to the WSBAD findings was that the CBC “already has taken most of the anti-discrimination actions recommended,” and further complaints (such as when head football coach Dale Gier pressed the CBC Board of Trustees to do something in summer 1967 he expounded on the near impossibility of finding housing for athletes, to say nothing of decent housing, vowing “I wouldn’t send a dog to live in some of the houses listed”), the WSBAD issued a “precedent-setting order.” The April 1968 order, which came two weeks after Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, “was the first in the state’s history governing an athletic recruiting program.” It’s nine provisions required CBC not only to take specific steps to address housing discrimination but also specified that “all future communications between the college and prospective minority group students shall be in writing; that students offered scholarships shall be told under what provisions they may be cancelled; that the college shall provide a counselor for minority group students; and that the college shall conduct compulsory training in human relations for all faculty and staff.” Despite the historic rebuke from the WSBAD, White administrators remained defiant: College President Dr. Fred Eavelt insisted his signing of the order did “not constitute an admission that any unfair practices were committed.”³²¹ Eavelt’s position didn’t bode well for

³¹⁸ Interview with Vanis and Edmon Daniels.

³¹⁹ Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

³²⁰ “Discrimination Unit Hits School”; “Bias Found in Housing for Athletes”; “Ideas Termed Already Met”; “Anti-Bias Order’s Signing Expected.”

³²¹ “Ideas Termed Already Met”; “Grid Coach Hits Housing Situation”; “Anti-Bias Order’s Signing Expected”; “Precedent Set by

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progress in civil rights at CBC. Nor did the fact that, not a month after the state order, CBC athletes formally requested the WSBAD to reopen the bias investigation there.³²²

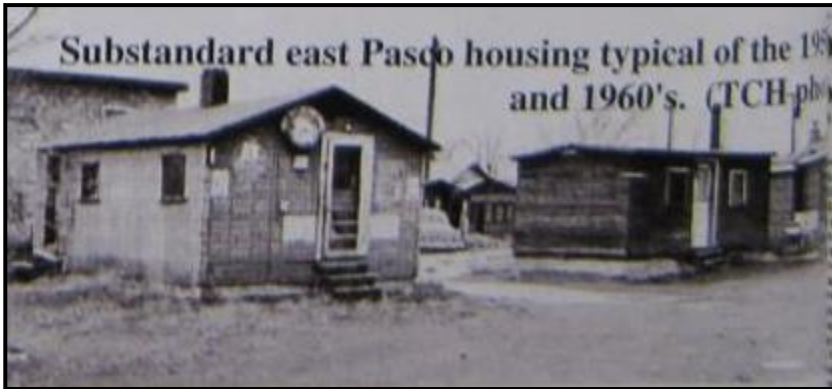


Figure 43. East Pasco "substandard" housing, ca. 1960s
(reprinted from *Pasco Police Department*)

Housing discrimination at CBC was, of course, but a component of the continuing discrimination in housing practiced more broadly in Pasco and the Tri-Cities. Barely three weeks after the state anti-discrimination order, the Washington State Real Estate Commission (working "under the direction of the State Department of Motor Vehicles") issued a damning report identifying

East Pasco as the state's worst slum, the neighborhood with the highest percentage of "substandard housing" of any of the five largest

urban areas. Based on data collected in the preceding months, the May 1968 report showed that near-total residential segregation continued, and indeed had possibly worsened: of the Tri-Cities 2,175 Black residents, some 2,100 lived in East Pasco, where the population was 83% Black. There, fully 55% of the housing was deemed "substandard." By way of comparison, that figure was just 12% for the Tri-Cities as a whole.³²³ Indeed, East Pasco's housing was not only the worst in Washington, but some of the worst in the entire country. In April 1966, Alfred Cowles, WSBAD executive secretary, reported "east Pasco had the worst living conditions, outside of Harlem, of any place within the five states he had worked."³²⁴

Even as their community made headlines for having the worst housing in the state, Black Americans in Pasco continued to fight against further degradation of their neighborhood. In March 1967, the Franklin County Planning Commission denied a permit "for a rendering plant ...next to the Pasco meat packing plant and stockyard after a heavy protest of East Side Negro residents." But this victory proved partial: the next month the Planning Commission approved the plant, to be built by Montana businessman E.A. Hurley, for "a site adjacent to the sanitary fill in east Pasco."³²⁵ Meanwhile, occupancy of the new 104-unit East Pasco Housing Project for low income residents, sponsored by the Central Labor Council, was delayed when a dust storm, in a neighborhood dominated by dirt streets and inadequate water supply, resulted in "dust so thick at the housing project during the storm it was decided to postpone occupancy until the underground sprinkler system could be installed and grass and shrubs planted."³²⁶

In addition to fighting for housing, community members fought against discrimination in employment,

State Order"; "Pact Settled for Athletes at College."

³²² "Basin Athletes Try to Reopen Bias Charges."

³²³ "Finger Points at East Pasco"; "East Pasco, Spokane Are Cited for Substandard Slum Housing"; "Housing Study Pinpoints Negro Area Deficiencies."

³²⁴ "Social Freedom Is King's Legacy."

³²⁵ "Plant Site Given O.K."

³²⁶ "Occupancy of Houses Faces Delay."

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and for decent jobs. They took advantage of federal programs to foster local job training, like the Higher Horizons program, which in 1965 funded a School Board-administered job training program (co-sponsored by the Lower Columbia Basin YMCA). “Aimed at rehabilitation of East Pasco, a predominantly Negro district,” classes for the program were conducted at Columbia Basin College, with training “for jobs as service station attendants, clerks, janitors, machine pressers, nurses aides, assistant cooks or general salesmen.”³²⁷ In addition to training for these modest positions, the Higher Horizons program itself brought a few jobs in program administration. It also brought a prominent new advocate to the Black community, Art Fletcher. He “came to the Tri-Cities ... as director of Higher Horizons”³²⁸ and had a distinguished resume as a Kansas educator and civil rights leader as well as a professional football player for the L.A. Rams and the Baltimore Colts. He was working on his master’s degree at San Francisco State College, when he moved to Pasco from Berkeley, CA.³²⁹ (see figure 44)

Fletcher and other residents also worked to create jobs in the community and integrated doing so into other civil rights projects. Shortly after the 1965 advent of the CBC Higher Horizons program, Fletcher began promoting a proposed “Pacific Northwest Negro cultural center to be built in east Pasco.” The center would be “a recreational park-type facility, containing a park, museum, athletic field, motel, Greek theatre and small shopping center.”³³⁰ The following year, Fletcher founded the East Pasco Self-help Cooperative. The East Pasco Co-op aimed to “establish a neighborhood improvement project and to use the organization as an experiment to demonstrate to others what can be accomplished.” Almost immediately after the Co-op’s establishment, “its members voted to open its own business, they chose an abandoned service station, renovated it, and opened it in September” 1965. Within weeks, “the co-op next took over the management of the Day-care Center administered under the Office of Economic Opportunity, which provided “a badly needed service for the community and a training ground for the five persons employed there.” That daycare was located downstairs in Morning Star Baptist church.³³¹

Soon thereafter, the co-op “applied for—and received—a charter from the state, which will enable the group to create a credit union. A major purpose of the union . . . [was] to provide small business loans with which residents can purchase necessities such as trucks during harvest time.” The co-op hoped as well “to build an East Pasco shopping center with plans calling for a grocery store, meat market and barber and beauty shops.”³³² Fletcher worked hard to raise funds for the shopping center, and in October 1967 the East Pasco Self-help Cooperative Association broke ground “for the first phase of the development program ...drawn up to improve the physical appearance of East Pasco.” The new “four-bay service station” opened in 1968 at 1602 E. Lewis was intended to “make it possible to purchase and pay-off completely the eight-acre tract for the project.”³³³ By early 1968, the Co-op, which “held meetings in the [Morning Star Baptist] church,” boasted “300 members in the Tri-Cities.”³³⁴

Other Black community economic development projects started around the same time. One of the more prominent “black capitalism enterprises” of the period was the Matrix, Inc., for which planning began in

³²⁷ “School Board to Implement Pasco Job Training Project.”

³²⁸ “Culture Center Urged in E. Pasco.”

³²⁹ “Negro Elected”; Washington Secretary of State, “Art Fletcher - Crossing the Color-Line - 1968.”

³³⁰ “Culture Center Urged in E. Pasco.”

³³¹ Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

³³² “Co-Op Idea Called Answer to Racial Problems.”

³³³ “Self-Help Unit Breaks Ground in East Pasco.” “Co-Op Schedules Second Opening.”

³³⁴ “50 Years of Spiritual Harmony.” “East Pasco Co-Op at Work.”

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1966. As Dan Carter recalled, “Dr. Dallas Barnes and some others, we put together a corporation called the Matrix Corporation and built a facility over in east Pasco called the Matrix Building, which is still there. Our idea was to bring employment opportunities, investment opportunities and a rebuilding of the east Pasco community.”³³⁵ With the help of a Small Business Administration loan, the Matrix partners hired McMillin Construction, and in the spring of 1970, under the supervision of job superintendent Hugh Ogburn, builders started erecting the \$140,000 steel-frame mini-mall building at 200-208 S. Wehe (now known as 1512 E. Columbia). Plans for the Matrix Service Center included a laundromat as well as “a beauty shop, a barber shop, a clothing store, ceramic and gift shops, carpet cleaning establishment and a domestic employment service.”³³⁶

Part of the goal of these economic development endeavors was to broaden empowerment of the Black community. As Fletcher put it, “we don’t want to observe democracy—we’ve been doing that for 300 years—we want to participate in it.”³³⁷ This goal it shared with other organizations active at this time in the Tri-Cities, where “many community programs were initiated in the 1960s to address the concerns of minorities, the poor, and the disadvantaged. The Community Action Committee (CAC) started in 1965 and the Community Affirmative Action Program (CAAP) were two products of the new programs under the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). The Community still remembers the strong leadership provided by Leon Harris and Wallace Webster of the C.A.C. These organizations provided services and support which gave the Black community a feeling of control in shaping its future.”³³⁸ By 1970, the CAC had its own headquarters in the Black borderlands east of 4th Avenue, at 429 W Yakima (now Sylvester).³³⁹ That location supplemented the organizations’ East Pasco base, Morning Star Baptist Church. As Webster recalled of the period’s achievements:

“all of that came out of the basement of Morning Star Baptist Church. Reverend Allen was the pastor at that time... if you point to almost any significant accomplishment, the genesis of it came from the spiritual and religious community. ... It functioned as a meeting place... That’s where the people went. I mean, when you wanted to do something, you go where the people are. On Sunday morning, that’s where you’re going to find them, and that’s where you make your point. You convince the pastor that it’s worthwhile, and then they’ll let you get up and make announcements and talk to the congregation where you’ve got a captive audience. That’s how you got your message across. So it was—because you didn’t have a newspaper or TV channel or radio station or any of those, except for a routine newscast or something. But if you wanted to tell your whole story, you had to go to the church.”³⁴⁰



Figure 44. Wallace “Wally” Webster, 1970

³³⁵ Interview with Dan Carter.

³³⁶ “Pasco Laundromat Damaged by Bomb.”

³³⁷ “East Pasco Co-Op at Work.”

³³⁸ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Politics.

³³⁹ “CAC Role in Pasco Protests Legal, Say OEO Officials”; “CAC Board to Review Activities in Pasco.”

³⁴⁰ Interview with Wally Webster.

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Black Americans also sought to empower their community through greater political representation. As noted above, Black residents had run for city council at least twice by 1957.³⁴¹ However, nine years later city government remained exclusively white. In April 1966 “citizens of East Pasco . . . packed the city council chambers to ask that Charles Evans, 31, a Negro, be appointed to the council to fill the vacancy created by the death of Clarence Griggs.” Community members had organized a signature drive before the meeting and were armed with a petition of some “275 names of persons who want Evans to be councilman. In a letter to the council, the Rev. Mr. Allen [of Morning Star Baptist Church] said since 90 per cent of urban renewal plans for Pasco related to property owner or occupied by Negroes, a Negro should be on the council.” Evans, who’d lived in the area for 15 years, worked as “assistant manager of a food store in West Richland,” while his wife Edna worked as “a secretary for the Atomic Energy Commission in Richland.” The council however, chose instead to fortify the all-White power structure of Pasco, voting unanimously to appoint the son-in-law of deceased councilman Griggs’ brother.³⁴²

Other Pasco residents tried to integrate the spheres of local influence by calling attention to discrimination in related realms. Andy and Shirley Miller remembered focusing on “the Elks Lodge...We picketed... they wouldn’t let black people in... everybody was upset about is, at that time in Pasco, so much of the power structure of the community groups—the Hanford groups would all meet at the Pasco Elks Club. And then blacks weren’t welcome to go in... So thereby excluded from—...From the power structure of the community.... the Elks Club.” The effort eventually succeeded: “though it may have [required] legal action, they ended up discontinuing their policy.”³⁴³



Figure 45. Art Fletcher, 1968

While it worked to get some influence over local decisions that directly impacted it, the Black community simultaneously sought to increase its political influence by developing closer relationships with elected state-level officials like the Governor. In a testament to the community’s success in building political networks, Governor Evans in 1966 “asked to visit East Pasco,” and “asked if he might visit with the members” of the East Pasco Self-help Cooperative Association. The Co-op welcomed him, hosting him as the guest of honor at an informal reception at the Morning Star Baptist Church. The “chairman of the East Pasco group,” the Rev. F. A. Allen, “said he doubted that any other Negro organization in the nation had ever received such a request from a governor.”³⁴⁴

The following year the Black community finally won its first local government representation when Art Fletcher became Pasco’s first Black city council member. Fletcher’s victory in the Nov. 1967 municipal elections coincided with his attainment of a state-level leadership position as well: that fall Washington Governor Dan Evans appointed him to the

³⁴¹ “Close Contest Seen for Pasco Positions.”

³⁴² “Negro Loses: Ballot Used in Choosing Councilmen”; “E. Pasco Group Wants Negro Citizen on Council.”

³⁴³ Interview with Andy and Shirley Miller.

³⁴⁴ “Gov. Evans, Jackson Due in Tri-Cities.”

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“newly formed Urban Affairs Advisory Council.”³⁴⁵ Fletcher’s historic election, itself a civil rights victory, gave the community an additional platform for its ongoing struggle. Fletcher himself continued his work without pause, focusing on both his economic development projects—East Pasco Self Help Co-op assets totaled \$175,000 in 1968 and a Spokane program modeled on the Pasco effort was in progress—as well as his political campaigns.³⁴⁶ In the days and months after his election victory, Fletcher took advantage of his newly-elevated public profile to voice community concerns with vigor, focusing especially on “police harassment of Negroes.”³⁴⁷

The next spring, on April 4, 1968, a gunman shot and killed Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis, Tennessee. In the months after the April 1968 assassination of Dr. King, mass unrest rocked urban areas around the nation, and civil rights protest—and white supremacist backlash against it—spread and intensified in local Black communities, Pasco among them. As Duke Mitchell recalled, “those kinds of frustrations and feelings of being second-class citizens and such certainly boiled over. It was just a time of United States history when folks started saying enough is enough and we don’t want to accept this anymore. Some of that was here, too.”³⁴⁸

Locally, the very day King was killed, Columbia Basin College hosted the opening session of a two-day “Police and Community Relations Institute” (speakers included representatives of the U.S. attorney’s office and Pasco NAACP President E.M. McGee). Across town that same afternoon the City of Pasco announced it had been awarded funding for \$1.6 million for “urban renewal.”³⁴⁹ That night, after news of King’s killing broke, Art Fletcher announced “he would enter the race for state lieutenant governor . . . his decision, he said, is part of a general move among Negro leaders to carry the Civil Rights movement forward in the aftermath of King’s death.”³⁵⁰

The Tri-Cities civil rights struggle intensified further in the weeks that followed. The state issued a “precedent-setting” anti-discrimination order to Columbia Basin College in mid-April 1968, and in May came the state report identifying East Pasco as Washington’s worst slum. Meanwhile, civic leaders contemplated additional busing in the Tri-Cities (where “the Kennewick and Richland school districts have few Negro students, while Pasco has more than 500 attending classes”), and Columbia Basin College prepared to host a June seminar on “Disadvantaged Employees” (where speakers included “Pasco’s Negro Councilman Art Fletcher, now Republican candidate for lieutenant governor”).³⁵¹ Then came July, when local civil rights issues came to a head at Kurtzman Park.

By 1968, Kurtzman Park was well established as a primary base of organizing for the swelling civil rights movement in the Tri-Cities. Itself a proud product of a civil rights process, and one of the Black community’s collective bases for ongoing struggle, that tumultuous year the park also became symbolic of one of the most insidious aspects of systemic racism, police brutalizing the Black population.

³⁴⁵ “King’s Slaying Prompts Negro to Seek Office.”

³⁴⁶ “Hillyard Forms Unit to Develop Community,” *Spokesman-Review*, April 8, 1968.

³⁴⁷ “Harassment of Negroes Is Charged,” *Spokane Chronicle*, November 11, 1967; “Negro Wants Re-Education of Policemen,” *Spokesman-Review*, November 11, 1967.

³⁴⁸ Interview with David (Duke) Mitchell, interview by Robert Franklin, March 2, 2018, Hanford Oral History Project, Washington State University Tri-Cities, <http://hanfordhistory.com/items/show/2042>.

³⁴⁹ “Police-Community Relations Viewed,” *Spokane Chronicle*, April 5, 1968; “Grant Given,” *Spokane Chronicle*, April 5, 1968; “\$1.6 Million Grant,” *Spokesman-Review*, April 6, 1968.

³⁵⁰ “King’s Slaying Prompts Negro to Seek Office,” *Spokesman-Review*, April 5, 1968.

³⁵¹ “Advisory Leaders Offer Tri-City Negro Bus Plan,” *Spokane Chronicle*, May 10, 1968; “Special Labor Seminar Slated,” June 27, 1968.

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On Saturday, July 20th, after a problematic police interaction the week before and subsequent arguments between the police and a group of “Negro youth” witnesses, “an estimated 75 to 100 people gathered at Kurtzman’s Park.” Police arrived, sparking a “confrontation” (also termed a “melee,” “disorder,” “disturbance,” and “riot”) in which four “policemen were hurt, none seriously....[and] a patrol car . . . stoned.” On Sunday, carloads of “Richland teenagers” sped “through East Pasco shouting abuses,” and “a meeting was called Monday by the Young Adult Action Movement, a Negro group....About 75 . . . Negroes attended.” That Friday, police made the first arrest “in connection with [the] disturbances,” charging 26 year-old Robert Orange “with two-counts of second-degree assault and one of rioting.” Orange was “co-manager of a migrant aid center [in Pasco] and a leader of the Young Adult Action Movement (YAAM).” Upon arrest he “was held in lieu of \$2,500 bond.”³⁵²

Months of sustained pressure on City officials by the Black community followed, as did major racial unrest and alleged excess force by police—and a state investigation thereof—at Pasco High School.³⁵³ A few days after the Kurtzman Park “disturbance”—“in which fourteen buildings were damaged”—even before Orange’s arrest, community members packed “a heated three-hour city council meeting, at which Negroes accused Pasco police of ‘treating them like dogs.’” With City Manager Horace Manasco warning “the council that Pasco is facing ‘a potentially explosive and dangerous situation,’” the City made the historic move of hiring Andrew Groce, “a young Negro . . . [to help] provide communication between the city manager’s office and Pasco’s 2,000 Negro residents,” who by then composed about 13% of its population. (at the time the “highest percentage of nonwhite population of any city in the state”). Headlines the next day declared, “Pasco Hires Negro, Ethics Shift Favored.”³⁵⁴ The following week, at the request of “Negro Leaders of East Pasco” the City Council met in a closed “executive session” to

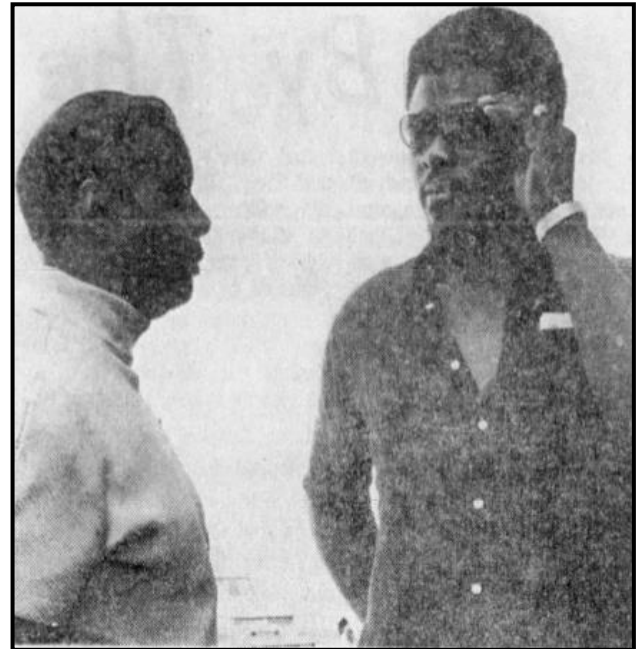


Figure 44. Lawyer, Client Confer, L: Tacoma attorney Jack Tanner, R: Robert Orange, Tri-City Herald, August 12, 1968 1968.

³⁵² “Quiet Returns to Pasco After Disorder,” *Longview Daily News*, July 23, 1968; “Man Arrested in Rioting,” *Spokane Chronicle*, July 27, 1968; “Pasco Area Aid Center Manager Held by Police,” *Spokesman-Review*, July 27, 1968; “Pasco Racial Disturbance Brings Arrest,” *Longview Daily News*, July 27, 1968; 78 Wn.2d 571, THE STATE OF WASHINGTON, Respondent, v. ROBERT ORANGE, Appellant., No. 40809 & 40810 (State of Washington Supreme Court December 17, 1970). Interview with James Pruitt, interview by John Skinner (Hanford Oral History Project at Washington State University Tri-Cities, October 18, 2001), Hanford Oral History Project, Washington State University Tri-Cities, <http://hanfordhistory.com/items/show/2064>.

³⁵³ Winslow Whitman and Isabelle Rosenfels, “Study and Evaluation of Racial Tension at Pasco High School,” Washington State Board Against Discrimination (Olympia, WA, February 20, 1969); “Pasco to Talk in Private with Negroes,” *Spokane Chronicle*, July 31, 1968; “Deficit Woes Face Pasco,” *Spokesman-Review*, August 7, 1968; “Pasco Council Moves to Hold Closed Meets,” *Spokesman-Review*, August 25, 1968; “Conference Due on ‘Urban Crisis,’” *Spokane Chronicle*, September 7, 1968.

³⁵⁴ “Pasco Hires Negro, Ethics Shift Favored,” *Daily Chronicle*, July 25, 1968; “Deficit Woes Face Pasco.”

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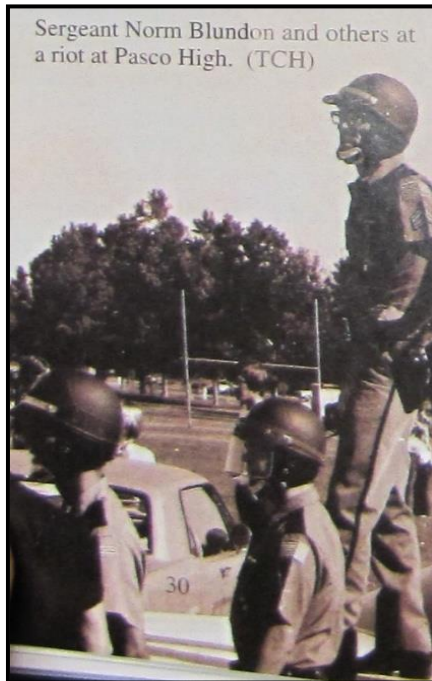
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discuss specific grievances and the “tense racial situation.”³⁵⁵



Sergeant Norm Blundon and others at a riot at Pasco High. (TCH)

Figure 45. Pasco High School,
Fall 1968

The July 20th event occupied the city in multiple ways for months. As the Black community continued its multi-faceted widespread civil rights work, other entities pursued related projects. In August, the Hanford Project’s East Pasco Extension Employment Office, which opened in Whittier School on April 1, started “a new job training program for unemployed, minority-group persons.”³⁵⁶ In September, Art Fletcher led an “Urban Crisis” “Churchmen’s Conference” in Spokane, at which Pasco was the topic.³⁵⁷ The following month brought a roughly two-week period of major racial unrest, a “riot,” and alleged excess force by police (and a state investigation thereof) at Pasco High School.³⁵⁸ Moreover, the *Tri-City Herald*—the daily newspaper read by the entire region—was implicated in the turmoil, with the official report on the Pasco High events noting that community “anger was stimulated by the coverage given these events” in the *Herald*, in which articles from the period were characterized by a thinly-veiled racism and a practice of “repeatedly emphasiz[ing] the race of the participants.”³⁵⁹ Then, on December 9, “the trial of three Pasco Negroes charged with rioting and assault” in connection with the July 20 Kurtzman conflict began in the Franklin County Courthouse. On trial were “Robert Orange, 27, his sister Moseeta, 19, and Frank Washington, 26.”³⁶⁰ As these major autumn events unfolded in the Tri-Cities, students at Washington State University founded the Black Students Union, and began organizing

around issues on campus and in Pasco.³⁶¹

Work continued through the winter, and in February 1969 the state published its extensive “Study and Evaluation of Racial Tension at Pasco High School.”³⁶² A subsequent State Department of Education assessment of segregated schools noted “a slight upward trend in Negro enrollment” in Pasco and a few other “central area” schools, specifying that “only Kennewick received no attention in the state survey. In that city ... there are but eight Negroes among 7,700 students.”³⁶³ Several weeks after the report on “racial tension” at the high school was released, “Pasco City Council approved, after long delay, a fair housing ordinance, but the Kennewick council backed away again.”³⁶⁴ Later that year, “as

³⁵⁵ “Pasco to Talk in Private with Negroes.”

³⁵⁶ “Job Classes Underway at Hanford,” *Spokesman-Review*, August 7, 1968.

³⁵⁷ “Conference Due on ‘Urban Crisis.’”

³⁵⁸ Whitman and Rosenfels, “Study and Evaluation of Racial Tension at Pasco High School”; “Pasco to Talk in Private with Negroes”; “Deficit Woes Face Pasco”; “Pasco Council Moves to Hold Closed Meets”; “Conference Due on ‘Urban Crisis.’”

³⁵⁹ Whitman and Rosenfels, “Study and Evaluation of Racial Tension at Pasco High School,” 37.

³⁶⁰ “3 on Trial in Riot Case,” *Spokesman-Review*, December 10, 1968.

³⁶¹ “Guide to the Racism Workshop Papers and Recordings 1970-1971,” Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries, accessed March 30, 2021, <http://ntserver1.wsulibs.wsu.edu/masc/finders/ua277.htm>.

³⁶² Whitman and Rosenfels, “Study and Evaluation of Racial Tension at Pasco High School.”

³⁶³ “Five Schools Segregated, State Says,” *Spokesman-Review*, January 21, 1970.

³⁶⁴ “Kennewick Housing Rule Still Pending,” March 21, 1969.

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the federal government filed suit in Seattle to force such action by Puget Sound unions [“at request of Asst. Labor Secretary Arthur Fletcher”], the building trades [in the Tri-Cities] voluntarily offered a ‘fair deal’ for minorities workers.” The local unions proposed changes in employment and workplace practices as well as “establishment of an information and training center, probably in East Pasco.”³⁶⁵ Economic development efforts within the community continued as well: in October, 1969, the East Pasco Self Help Cooperative hired a San Francisco consultant to assess how the “Negro undertaking might profitably expand its field of operation,” avowing that it “need[ed] to be financially strong and stable so that it may aid in the education of black youth.”³⁶⁶

Throughout the events of 1968 and 1969, the City pushed forward with its “Urban Renewal” program, which proceeded in Pasco, as it had in cities across the nation, via the dismantling of the Black neighborhood, or “tearing down Black America.”³⁶⁷ Planning for local Urban Renewal had been going

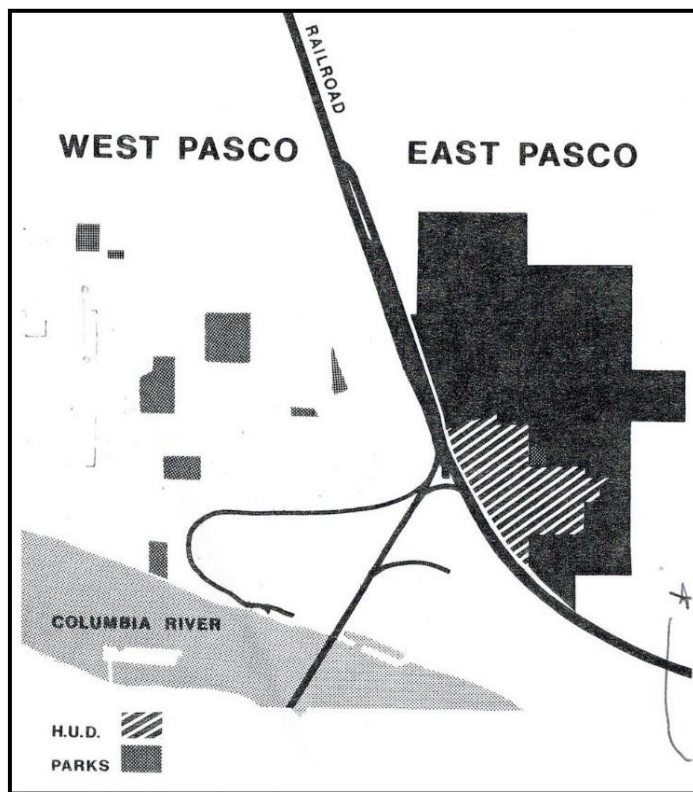


Figure 46. Pasco Urban Renewal (H.U.D.) area map, 1970

on since at least 1962: that November the city council claimed to be “about halfway through our planning stage for urban renewal.” At that point “the Adam Clayton Powell Foundation, a philanthropic organization named for New York’s Negro congressman,” (husband of Hazel Scott at the time of her fateful stop at the Jim Crow Pasco bus depot), offered “that if the city should apply for money to rehabilitate East Pasco, funds would be made available.” To this the City responded that it “would investigate the Powell foundation and its qualifications. Of the East Pasco Negro community, [Councilman] Hendler said, ‘it is a condition we certainly know exists.’”³⁶⁸

Despite these early plans, for much of the 1960s the City was unable to make much concrete progress on the proposed Pasco project, in part because of resistance from the local Black community. Urban Renewal, established by the federal Housing Act of 1949, was even then a notoriously anti-Black program. As author and activist James Baldwin put it in a New York City television interview in 1963, “urban renewal means Negro removal.”³⁶⁹

³⁶⁵ “Employment ‘Fair Deal’ Is Designed,” *Spokesman-Review*, November 4, 1969.

³⁶⁶ “Consultant Seeks Jobs for Negroes,” *Spokesman-Review*, October 27, 1969.

³⁶⁷ Katharine Schwab, “The Racist Roots Of ‘Urban Renewal’ And How It Made Cities Less Equal,” *Fast Company* (blog), January 4, 2018, <https://www.fastcompany.com/90155955/the-racist-roots-of-urban-renewal-and-how-it-made-cities-less-equal>; Brent Cebul, “Tearing Down Black America,” *Boston Review*, July 22, 2020, <http://bostonreview.net/race/brent-cebul-tearing-down-black-america>.

³⁶⁸ “Offer Reported for Urban Plan,” *Spokesman-Review*, November 10, 1962.

³⁶⁹ W. B. Dickinson, Jr., “Urban Renewal Under Fire,” Editorial Research Report, Editorial Research Report, 1963,

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In Pasco, the Black community expressed concerns about Urban Renewal early on. In the spring of 1966, for instance, community leaders protested pursuit of Urban Renewal planning without greater Black political representation. After submitting a Dec. 1967 application, the city was awarded funding for “the \$3.5 million urban renewal plan already approved for East Pasco” in April 1968. Immediately thereafter the City named an urban renewal director and leaders began “looking into a downtown urban renewal plan” totally \$8 million and focused on the “deteriorating area around the railroad tracks” (i.e., the secondary Black neighborhood that extended west from the trainyard).³⁷⁰

Soon, entire blocks of Black homes in East Pasco began to disappear—removed, buildings and their occupants alike. All told, by the mid-‘70s “urban renewal” denuded some 160 acres in East Pasco, 13 entire blocks “in the area west of South Wehe Avenue to the railroad tracks. ...the project cleared this area of all residential structures” but two. By early 1970, the Black community was organizing intently in opposition to the project, pressing the City for answers and “voic[ing] strong opinions against the Urban Renewal Program.”³⁷¹ Community resistance to Urban Renewal centered on both process and product: for many in the community, the actual implementation of the project was coercive and destructive, and the outcome was a far cry from “renewal.” The program itself also rent the community politically as well as physically, with some leaders, like post-1970 project director Webster Jackson, believing that it could improve life in East Pasco—it did bring “some streets in... some curbing in”—and many people opposing “the Urban Renewals” as a program in which “they were removing the blacks out of their homes.”³⁷²

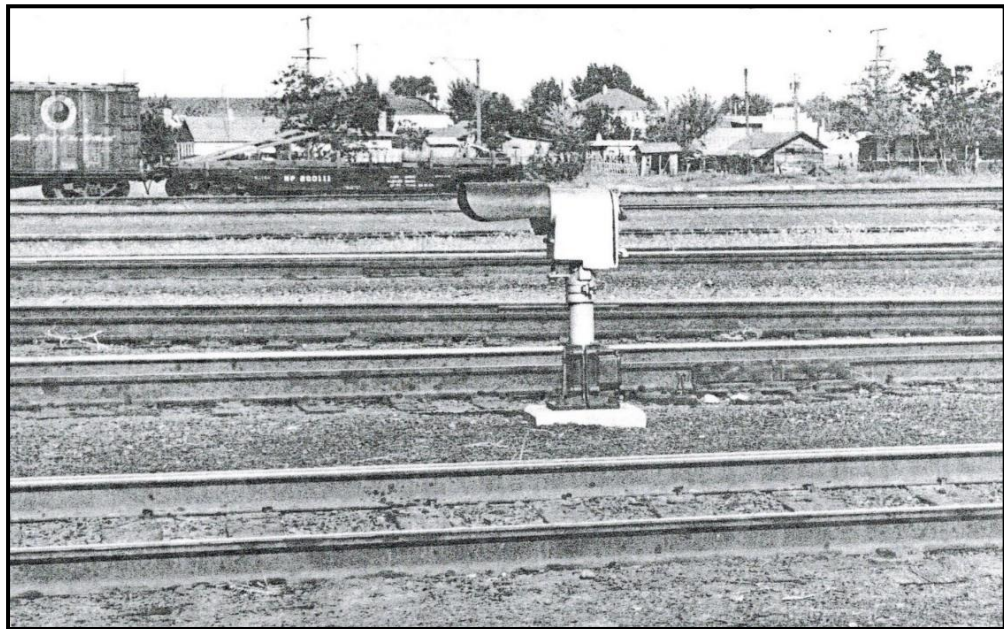


Figure 47. Looking east across the Northern Pacific Railway trainyard into East Pasco, 1970

<http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/cqresrre1963082100>.

³⁷⁰ “City of Pasco, Urban Renewal Project” (City of Pasco, post 1976), Vertical File: Plats, Franklin County Historical Society; “2nd Urban Plan Studied,” *Spokesman-Review*, April 18, 1986.

³⁷¹ “East Pasco Residents Hit Urban Renewal,” January 21, 1970.

³⁷² Interview with Mae Fite, interview by Robert Franklin, April 5, 2018, Hanford Oral History Project, Washington State University Tri-Cities, <http://hanfordhistory.com/items/show/2036>. Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

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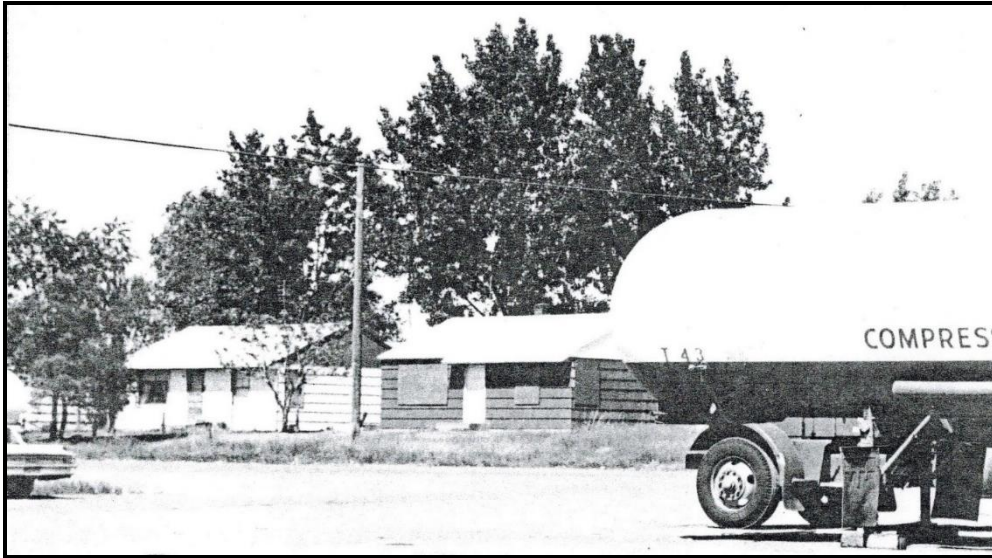


Figure 48. East Pasco houses slated for removal or demolition under Urban Renewal, 1970

Aubrey Johnson remembered the painful period vividly:

"I hated to see it when Urban Renewal came. Because what it did, it removed the black people from the little shacks, they call them, the little homes they had to the projects. And then we lost everything that we had, because all of that was gone. It was just kind of a bad situation. It was supposed to be in the name of interests, the self-help co-op. Art Fletcher, I think, was the guy that came there that just pushed that over on us. We had no representation. When they got ready to open that corridor to Big Pasco, they wanted to grab A Street—not A Street, Oregon Street. That's a throughway from the freeway all the way to the river. Well, black people owned all that property from the railroad over. When I was growing up, we always heard that railroad property is worth no money, okay? So when this redevelopment come in, it wasn't redevelopment; it was reclaim. They came in and the city—you had to sell it. They gave you nothing for it. I was talking to this lady the other day, her mom owned a block of land. I asked, how much did your mom get for that block of land? She said \$18,000. There were no representation, so whatever the city said this is what you get, this is what you take. There was no negotiation. That broke down our whole community, because from Main, Front Street all the way over to Elm Street was all black people lived all through there. When they took half of it away up to Wehe Street and made an industrial area, you couldn't go down and buy any that property six months after they bought it for the same price that they bought it for. The price had escalated so much. It was just a travesty, because it was basically, probably a couple thousand people that lived there and they built a housing project. And I can remember there was only two families that lived there that wasn't black. There was one Hispanic family and one Caucasian family."³⁷³

With wholesale removal of the East Pasco Black neighborhood, many families were impacted, and memories of that moment abound. Community members specifically recall how "over there on

³⁷³ Interview with Aubrey Johnson.

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California Street . . . facing the park [Kurtzman] over there, . . . there was a row of houses,” and “they dismantled and moved all those houses.” after which they “set that up as an industrial area, you know, from the area on over to the railroad tracks.”³⁷⁴ Families whose homes were taken out by Urban Renewal included the Robinsons, who lived on Queen Street “just adjacent to the railroad tracks” from 1947 until “urban renewal came through.” The Robinson place could still be identified in 2018, when Ricky Robinson could “still see some of the trees that were in my backyard at the time.”³⁷⁵ Also condemned and demolished around the same was the Barton home at 610 S. Owens Street, where the family had lived since 1951, as well as Wally Webster’s uncle’s property at 725 S. Hugo Street, where his “uncle, not only had he built a business with three entities in it [Jack’s Pit and Grill], he also had built an apartment building . . . that had three or four apartments in it.”³⁷⁶ So, too the home purchased on East Lewis (on the corner across the street from Whittier School) by newlyweds Rose Allen and her husband in the 1950s, as well as the home of the Rev. F.A. Allen, pastor of Morning Star Baptist, who lived next door to the church until ca. 1970, when he “was relocated” by Urban Renewal.³⁷⁷

On March 6, 1970, as Pasco roiled politically, and urban renewal ravaged East Pasco razing Black residences, two city policemen—who claimed to be serving an arrest warrant on a “domestic complaint” (which was not in their possession)—allegedly forced their way into Robert Orange’s 26 West A Street home. In the course of trying to arrest him, the policemen “sprayed a riot-control chemical...into the faces of children” (“the man’s three- and four-year-old daughters”), injuring their eyes. They also fired a gun at Orange and his brother, who were unarmed. This event triggered, over the next two months, repeated intense “black protests, [and] a boycott of downtown Pasco merchants,” actions which galvanized state authorities into ordering, in May 1970, “an independent investigation of the Pasco Police Department.”³⁷⁸ By the end of the month, Pasco City Manager Max Pope resigned, with Spokane newspapers reporting he’d “been under fire from blacks who demanded his resignation two months ago.”³⁷⁹

The civil rights work that swelled in the wake of police actions at the Orange residence continued to be based on, and in, the

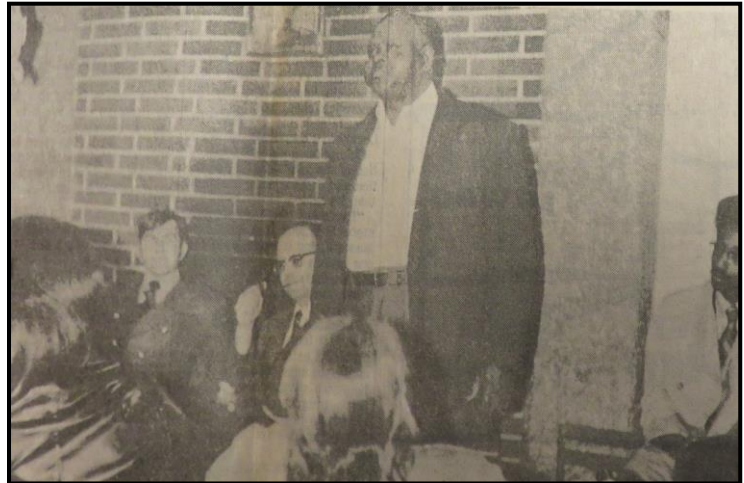


Figure 49. Gilbert Orange, Kurtzman Park Youth Center, Tri City Herald, March 30, 1970

³⁷⁴ Interview with Ellenor Moore, interview by Robert Franklin, March 21, 2018, Hanford Oral History Project, Washington State University Tri-Cities, <http://hanfordhistory.com/items/show/2044>.

³⁷⁵ Interview with Rickie Robinson.

³⁷⁶ Interview with Marion Keith Barton. Interview with Wally Webster.

³⁷⁷ Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

³⁷⁸ “Pasco Police Deny Race Bias,” *Tri-City Herald*, March 17, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society. “Blacks, Council Face Off: Orange Arrest at Issue,” *Tri-City Herald*, March 18, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society; “Pasco Blacks Vote Downtown Boycott,” *Tri-City Herald*, March 31, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society; “Gas Bottle Lands in Orange Home,” *Tri-City Herald*, March 31, 1970, East Benton County Historical Society.

³⁷⁹ “Pasco City Manager Leaves Post,” *Spokesman-Review*, May 29, 1970.

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institutional foundations of the community, places like Whittier School and the Labor Hall, Morning Star Baptist Church, and Kurtzman Park. And protests, and the racist practices they targeted, continued to take place along particular prominent corridors and in pivotal government spaces, like Franklin County Courthouse and Pasco City Hall. These sites hosted a range of abundant activity in this period, and newspapers in the region reported on some of the more major events. One such instance was the March 24, 1970, City Council meeting, at which “more than 100 blacks walked into what was intended to be a closed meeting between [Secretary of State Lud] Kramer and Pasco Officials.” There the group presented the City with six demands, among them “that City Manager Max Pope and police officers Ron Morgan and Glen Butner be removed and that assault charges be dropped against Orange ... and that the director of the urban renewal project be replaced by a black.”³⁸⁰

Six days later at an evening meeting at Kurtzman Park, organized by the East Pasco Neighborhood Improvement Committee, “a crowd of more than 100 ...packed the small Kurtzman Park meeting room.” City Manager Pope attended that meeting, as did City Councilman Sam Hunt and several journalists, which lasted until midnight (“around 10:30 p.m. Pope and news representatives were asked to leave”) and focused on the six community demands. Robert’s father Gilbert Orange spoke, and “received an ovation from blacks at the Kurtzman Park meeting last night when he told the crowd ‘we have been trampled on all the way. Because we want to make a chance for our families we are called troublemakers.’”³⁸¹

That night, someone threw “a soft-drink bottle containing gasoline” into the living room of Robert’s wife Sarah Orange, then living at 400 C South Douglas Avenue (“children were in the home at the time”).³⁸² Another Kurtzman Park meeting of the East Pasco Neighborhood Council (then headquartered at 610 South Owens Street) was planned for the following week. Governor Dan “Evans offered to arrange for a lawyer from the American Civil Liberties Union to attend ... to advise on legal steps involved in filing charges against the city and police officers.”³⁸³ At that April 6 meeting, “about 60 black”

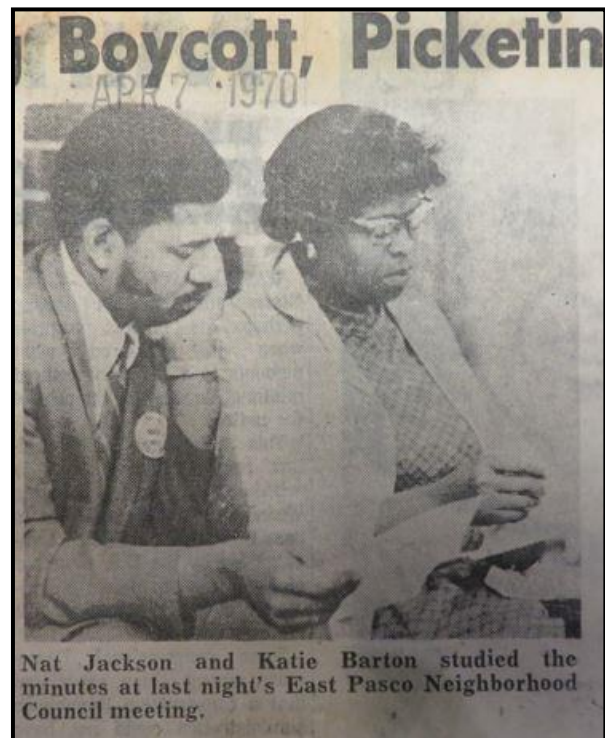


Figure 50. Nat Jackson and Katie Barton, Kurtzman Park Youth Center. *Tri-City Herald*, April 6, 1970

³⁸⁰ “Pasco Blacks Present City with Six Demands,” *Longview Daily News*, March 26, 1970; “Pasco Blacks Set Demand Deadline,” *Daily Chronicle*, March 26, 1970.

³⁸¹ “Max Pope Attends Meet on Demands,” *Tri-City Herald*, March 31, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society. “Pope Changes Mind on Black Meeting,” *Tri-City Herald*, March 27, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society. “Meeting Planned on Demands,” *Tri-City Herald*, March 30, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society. “Pasco Blacks Vote Downtown Boycott.”

³⁸² “Gas Bottle Lands in Orange Home.”

³⁸³ “Success Claimed in Olympia Meets”; Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney C. J. Rabideau to East Pasco Neighborhood Council (Katie Barton, Chairwoman), April 1, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society.

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attendees voted to expand the boycott of downtown Pasco merchants that begun the week before, which would “be strengthened by pickets.”³⁸⁴ The pickets commenced the next day.³⁸⁵

Several weeks later the black community organized another rally and march following a hearing about the Orange case. On Friday, April 17 “Judge Lyle Truax found no probable cause ...to think Pasco policemen Glen Butner, Gerry Miller, and Robert Alger committed any crime during the arrest of Robert Orange March 6” (he “reserved his ruling on the actions of officer Ron Morgan”).³⁸⁶ On Saturday, April 25 “a racially mixed crowd of about 200 attended the Kurtzman Park rally and marched to the city’s downtown business district to dramatize the black boycott of Pasco merchants.” Art Fletcher’s son Paul gave a speech and “following Fletcher’s talk, the crowd marched in two columns to East Lewis street, through the underpass, up West Lewis to North Fourth Avenue, turned north for a block, and then east on West Clark street to city hall. The group paused to sing outside city hall and then retraced its path to Kurtzman Park.”³⁸⁷



Figure 51. Picketing in downtown Pasco, April 7, 1970

³⁸⁴ “Pasco Blacks Plan Shopping Boycott, Picketing,” *Tri-City Herald*, April 7, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society.

³⁸⁵ “Pickets Back Black Boycott in Pasco,” *Tri-City Herald*, April 8, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society.

³⁸⁶ “Truax Clears 3 Officers in Orange Case,” *Tri-City Herald*, April 19, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society.

³⁸⁷ “Pasco Racist, Says Fletcher Son,” *Tri-City Herald*, April 26, 1970.

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Figure 52. Rally at Labor Union Hall, April 16, 1970

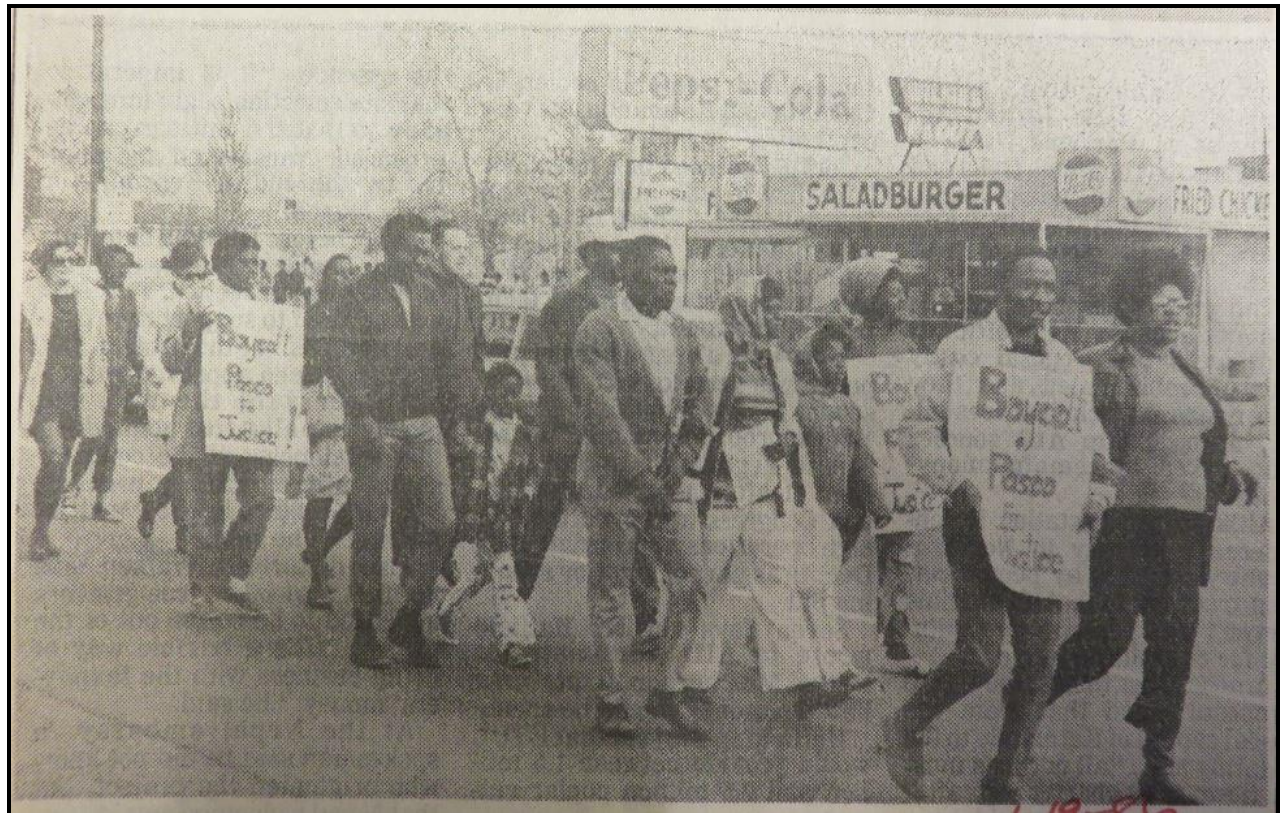


Figure 53. Protest march along Lewis Street, April 25, 1970

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At the behest of Gov. Evans (after pressure from the Black community), the Washington State Board Against Discrimination then investigated the “racial” events in Pasco. Its May report featured twelve recommendations for city actions to rectify the situation. (Among them was “the city should simplify means of gaining access to the accommodations of city parks...improving access by blacks to Kurtzman Park, which is one of the problems which gave rise to the complaint of difficulty in gaining access to park accommodations”).³⁸⁸

In the face of ongoing inaction by the City, Pasco continued to churn. The week of July 6 brought “two nights of disorder and one night of closure by emergency curfew” initiated by a police raid in Volunteer Park (in front of the Franklin County Courthouse). The night after the raid (at which the police arrested and tear-gassed some of the “youth” present)

“hundreds gathered again in the park. The neighboring sheriff’s headquarters was attacked. A score of sheriff’s men and city policemen were injured, a dozen more youngsters were arrested and a few hurt, windows of nearby fur and jewelry stores were broken, autos were damaged and two half-century old spruce trees on the courthouse lawn were set ablaze by bottled gasoline ‘bombs.’ At 1 a.m., Thursday, Pasco Mayor Edward Carter signed a proclamation. ‘I declare an emergency to exist,’ he formally said, ‘and in order to protect the city and its citizens, I must declare the city closed and direct the police to arrest and take into custody all persons upon the streets.’”³⁸⁹

Although contemporary newspaper coverage assured there were “no racial overtones” in the Volunteer Park events, a retrospective article on Martin Luther “King’s legacy” and the “struggle for equality . . . in Pasco” recounted how “the demolition of [social barriers] was speeded by both non-violent demonstrations (such as marches in Pasco and Kennewick) and by violence—such as a July 8, 1970 riot in which two giant spruce trees in front of the Franklin County Courthouse were burned.”³⁹⁰ Meanwhile, one of Black Pasco’s most prominent organizations reeled with fierce in-fighting: in late July the East Pasco Self-Help Co-op called multiple meetings, at Kurtzman Park and the Labor Hall mainly, with Co-op board members and manager Nat Jackson “to discuss the future of the cooperative.”³⁹¹ Then in August someone bombed—on the eve of its opening—the Matrix building, the prominent East Pasco black capitalism venture just up the street



Figure 54. “Riot” in front of the Franklin County Courthouse, Volunteer Park, *Tri-City Herald*, July 8, 1970.

³⁸⁸ “WSBAD Proposals Not Objectionable,” *Tri-City Herald*, May 13, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society.

³⁸⁹ “Need for Parental Control Seen in Pasco Disorders,” *Spokesman-Review*, July 12, 1970, Vertical File: Riots [1970], Franklin County Historical Society.

³⁹⁰ “Social Freedom Is King’s Legacy,” *Tri-City Herald*, January 19, 1986, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society.

³⁹¹ “[?Illegible] Co-Op Chief on Job,” *Tri-City Herald*, July 20, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society. “Co-Op to Meet,” *Tri-City Herald*, July 23, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society.

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from Kurtzman Park.³⁹² Black Pasco buzzed with community and political activity in this period, so it perhaps unsurprising that people were in the midst of a meeting at Kurtzman when the bomb went off at the brand-new Matrix building, just after 9:30 p.m. on Monday, August 24.³⁹³ As Wally Webster recalled “we had a number of meetings in Kurtzman Park that was very tense meetings. As a matter of fact, what used to happen is Carl Maxey from Spokane, prominent civil rights lawyer in Spokane, other lawyers from Seattle, would come to Pasco, because we didn’t have any Black American lawyers here at that time, and help us with civil rights issues. I remember I was having a meeting in Kurtzman Park where it got pretty heated...And somebody set off a bomb. We were all in Kurtzman Park, having a big powwow when that happened, because everybody jumped and ran.”³⁹⁴



Figure 56. Matrix building bombing, *Tri-City Herald*, August 25, 1970

Events in Pasco in 1970 reverberated throughout the region, as Black students at Washington State University continued to organize around Tri-Cities civil rights issues. The Black Studies Department was established at WSU that year (“one of the first black studies programs in the northwest”), and in May 1970, the school’s Black Student Union (BSU) “spearheaded ... protests against racism and, in conjunction with several other radical organizations, presented President Glenn Terrell with eleven demands. Terrell initially rejected the demands which had called for, among other things, a mandatory ten-day workshop in the fall to heighten faculty awareness of racism. 3,000 students protested that decision on May 21, 1970. On May 28, 1970, the Resident Instructional Staff (RIS) approved of two racism workshops, one for the fall of 1970 and one for the Spring of 1971. ... the

first racism workshop took place on October 7-8, 1970 and attracted 20,000 people.” The main workshop literature distributed to these multitudes was a report, titled “Pasco, Washington.” It focused on the “institutionalized racism, in government, business, and other facilities controlled by whites” that prevailed in Pasco—conditions “in many respects, that are not unlike those of the South”—and the racial tension “caused by bad living conditions, police oppression, and the Council’s own inaction and insults to the Black community.”³⁹⁵ Among the specific conditions documented in the pamphlet was that, at the time of its publication, “Blacks have ownership of only five

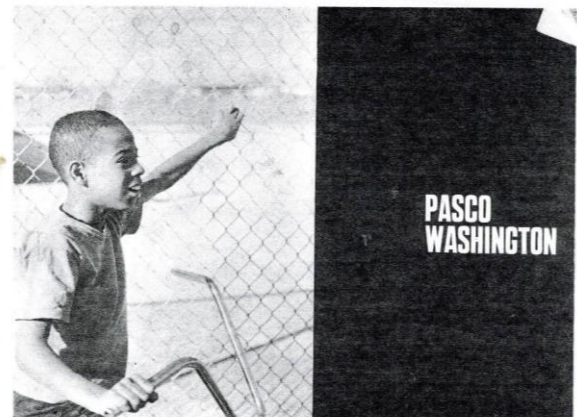


Figure 55. “Pasco, Washington,” a report published in Oct. 1970 by the Black Students Union at Washington State University

³⁹² “Pasco Laundromat Damaged by Bomb,” *Tri-City Herald*, August 25, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society.

³⁹³ “Pasco Laundromat Damaged by Bomb.”

³⁹⁴ Interview with Wally Webster, interview by Robert Franklin (Hanford Oral History Project at Washington State University Tri-Cities, June 20, 2018), Washington State University Tri-Cities, <http://hanfordhistory.com/items/show/2057>.

³⁹⁵ “Guide to the Racism Workshop Papers and Recordings 1970-1971.”

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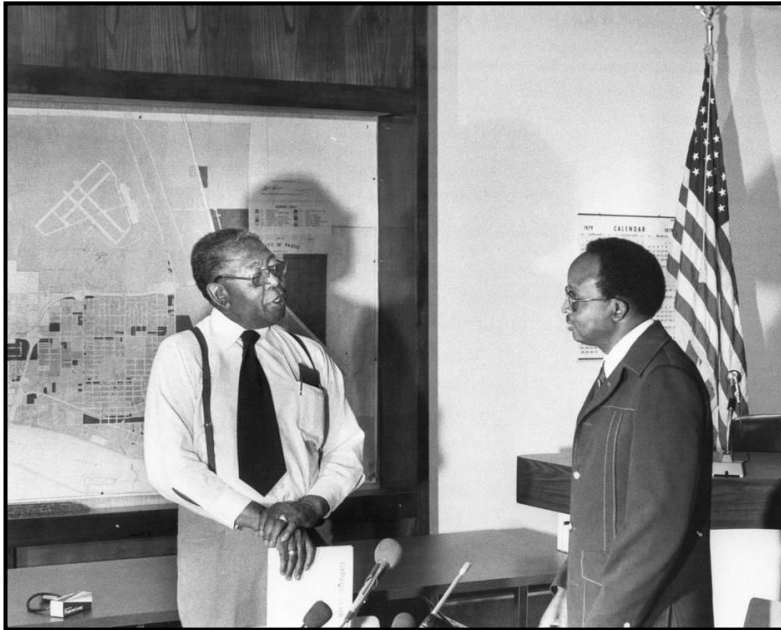


Figure 58. Pasco City Councilman and Mayor pro-tem Bill Wilkins and Pasco NAACP president Rev. Ralph Bullock, May 17, 1979 (City of Pasco Planning Department files)

businesses in Pasco: one grocery store, two gas stations, one pool hall, and one tavern.”³⁹⁶

As it carried out the intense civil rights struggle of this period on multiple fronts, the Black community in the Tri-Cities area built supportive political, social, cultural, and educational organizations at the same time as it worked to dismantle systemic racism and the damage it inflicted daily. As a primary component of this work, Black residents continued to pursue community political representation and influence in varied ways. In 1970 C.J. Mitchell “became the first black man to serve on Columbia Basin College’s board of directors,” and the following year Nat Conley became the



Figure 57. Soul Sisters Action Committee president Rita Horton, Tri-Cities Herald, Jan. 27, 1970

first Black patrolman in the Pasco Police Department.³⁹⁷ On May 5, 1971, Katie Barton became the second Black resident, and first Black woman, to serve on the city council when she was appointed to the position to replace Art Fletcher, who’d been appointed assistant Secretary of Labor by President Nixon in 1969 after making history when he became the Republican candidate for Washington Lieutenant Governor in 1968 but lost the general election that November. Barton was joined in the fall by Bill Wilkins, who was elected councilman in 1971 and subsequently “served as City Councilman until his death in October, 1981.”³⁹⁸

In addition to traditional political channels for civil rights work, community members worked on a variety of social, cultural, and educational projects. In the

³⁹⁶ Black Students at WSU [Black Students Union?], “Pasco Washington (Pamphlet on East Pasco)” (Archives of Morning Star Church: Washington State University, October 1970). “Guide to the Black Studies Department Records 1970-1981,” Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries, accessed March 30, 2021, <http://ntserver1.wsulibs.wsu.edu/masc/finders/ua299.htm>; “WSU Paper Irks Pasco City Council,” *Spokesman-Review*, October 16, 1970.

³⁹⁷ Kristi Pihl, “Black Tri-Citians Reflect on Struggles, Progress,” *Tri-City Herald*, February 14, 2011. Officer Rigo Pruneda and Allen, Sgt. Dave, eds., *Pasco Police Department, 1910-2010: 100 Years of Service* (City of Pasco Police Department (?), 2010), 32.

³⁹⁸ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” pamphlet, ca 1984, sec. Politics; “Art Fletcher Starts Work in State Post,” *Spokesman-Review*, February 4, 1969; “Art Fletcher Said Eying Capital Post,” *Spokesman-Review*, March 14, 1969; “Art Fletcher Is Appointed to Labor Job,” *Spokane Chronicle*, March 14, 1969; “Art Fletcher Named to Federal Labor Post,” *Longview Daily News*, March 14, 1969; “Art Fletcher Said Eying Nixon Post,” *Spokesman-Review*, March 14, 1969.

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late 1960s, organizers started holding Black American beauty contests “to encourage cultural awareness among young Black women of the Tri-City area,” and by 1978 the contests had grown into the Black Junior Pageant (established that year by Ricky and Rosalyn Robinson). Their explicit goals were “to motivate self-awareness, personal development, self-esteem and promote desires for higher education.”³⁹⁹ Young people in the Tri-Cities participated in these pageants and also established their own organizations. By 1970 at least two different Black American youth organizations were actively pursuing ambitious projects. That January, for instance, the Soul Sisters Action Committee met at “Kurtzman Park Community House.” Presided over by “newly elected president” Rita Horton, “the group of teenagers is interested in projects which benefit the community...the Soul Sisters are attending a ceramic class and are making plans to sponsor some record hops. According to their advisor, Norma Holt, the girls are attempting to locate some black bands so that they might have a dance with live music.”⁴⁰⁰ Later that year, the United Black Youth, Inc of Pasco, bought—for removal (from the City’s Urban Renewal Program)—the East Pasco residence that was located at 319 S. Idaho Street. The youth group planned to use it as a teen center once they got it moved, and in the meantime “organiz[ed] a temporary teen center in another house at 316 S. California.”⁴⁰¹



Figure 59. Afro-American Art Festival queen Wanda Green, Feb. 1970

Other cultural events organized by the Black community included things like “The Festival of Afro-American Arts,” that in 1970 opened on a February “Sunday with a program at Morning Star Baptist Church. Workshops, guest speakers and a drama group will present aspects of black culture during the week-long observance.” The Festival started with ceremonies featuring “Rev. Floyd Bullock,” pastor of a Church on “Owens Street, Rev. James... New Hope Baptist,” and speakers from Columbia Basin College. It featured, among other things, “a performance by the Afro-American Players of Yakima at Pasco High School Auditorium ...and a drama workshop ... conducted by Dr. Alphonso Sherman and Dr. Edward Jones at Pasco Community Center,” and culminated with the crowning of neighborhood teen Wanda Green as Festival Queen and an “Images of Soul” festival talent review, followed by a dance, at the Pasco Union Hall at 204 W. Clark Street.⁴⁰²

As Black Pasco throbbed with activity in this period, some leaders dreamed of a bigger facility for the community, which conducted its many group activities from a handful of core sites, including Kurtzman Park, Whittier School, the union hall, and Morning Star Baptist Church. By 1969, planning for a new community center was well underway, and that November proponent Wally Webster reported that “land near Kurtzman

³⁹⁹ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Social.
⁴⁰⁰ “Soul Sisters Elect,” *Tri-City Herald*, January 27, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society.
⁴⁰¹ “Blacks Buy Home for Teen Center,” *Tri-City Herald*, September 30, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society. “Black Youths Hurry Incorporation,” *Tri-City Herald*, August 13, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society.
⁴⁰² “Afro-American Arts,” *Tri-City Herald*, February 5, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society. “Afro-American Queen,” *Tri-City Herald*, February 12, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society; “Soul-Show Location Changed,” *Tri-City Herald*, February 13, 1970, Vertical File: Blacks, East Benton County Historical Society.

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Park is already available” for the East Pasco Community Center. Project organizers, including the East Pasco Neighborhood Improvement Association and the Tri-Cities Community Action Committee (of which Webster was executive director), as well as other East Pasco civic leaders like the Rev. William Vaughn, “propose[d] to build on Central Labor Council land adjacent to Kurtzman Park. Labor donated the land to the city, with the stipulation [in an echo of the original 1953 Kurtzman deed] that it be developed during 1969.” It would be another three years before organizers “got some \$440,000-\$450,000 to build” and workers broke ground on the project, and in November 1975—six years after the property was deeded to Pasco—the East Pasco Neighborhood Facility, on the north edge of Kurtzman Park, opened to the public.⁴⁰³

By the time the Black community broke ground for its Neighborhood Facility, gradual integration and rapid “Urban Renewal” had transformed East Pasco and its borderlands. These processes signaled the end of an era for the Black American neighborhood and the community it embodied. As the 1960s wore on, the Tri-Cities slowly became less segregated, a process that proceeded through both major events,

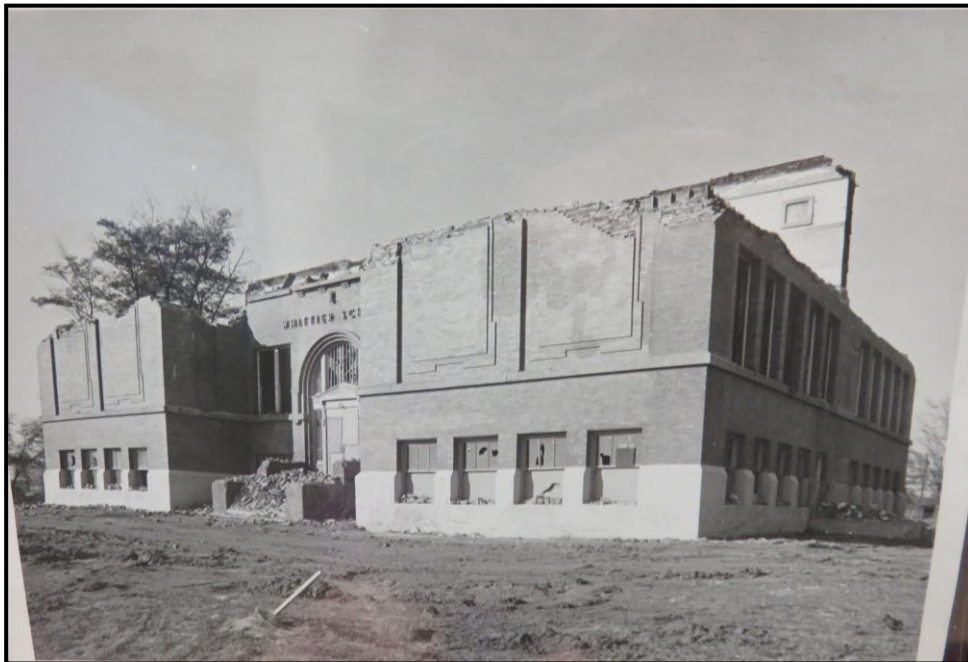


Figure 60. Demolition of Whittier School, 1979
(Franklin County Historical Society collections photo)

like the 1965 closure of Whittier School, and minor ones, like families successfully procuring housing west of 4th Avenue in Pasco or occasionally in Richland (and even, eventually, a handful in the notorious white-supremacist “sundown town” of Kennewick). De-segregation proceeded slowly until the late 1960s, when urban renewal began mass displacement of Greater East Pasco’s Black families. By the end of the first Urban Renewal program in 1976, hundreds of people had been forced to find other places to live.

In their new neighborhoods, they were a small minority, as they were, increasingly, in the Tri-Cities generally: rapid regional population growth in subsequent decades was not mirrored among Black Americans, who as a result became a smaller portion of the local population. The community’s commercial properties also increasingly vanished: “as the isolation of the Black community disappeared

⁴⁰³ “East Pasco Facility Plan Gets Support,” *Spokesman-Review*, August 9, 1969; “Pasco Center Gets Sponsors,” *Spokane Chronicle*, November 15, 1969. Ralph Hayes and Joe Franklin, *Northwest Black Pioneers: A Centennial Tribute* (BON Marché, 1994), 11. Interview with Wally Webster.

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so did most of the Black owned businesses."⁴⁰⁴ So, too, many of its core institutions, like Whittier School, which was demolished in 1979. Thereafter, remaining core sites like Kurtzman Park and Morning Star Baptist Church continued to be the religious, cultural, and/or institutional heart of the Black community but they were no longer its physical center. Indeed, increasingly, as the 1970s wore on, the social and cultural community itself was no longer a physical community, no longer a Black neighborhood, or the Black neighborhood, of the Tri-Cities.

⁴⁰⁴ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, "Cultural Awareness: Pasco's Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco's Centennial, 1884-1984) [Pamphlet]," sec. Economics.

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Section F: Associated Property Types and Registration Requirements

There are four primary property types in Pasco associated with Tri-Cities Black American history: 1) **Social, Cultural, and Religious Institutions** - properties that are directly associated with Black American organizations or institutions; 2) **Commercial and Economic** - properties associated with the commercial or economic lives of the Black community; 3) **Residential** – single or multi-family dwellings that housed community members; and 4) **Racism and Civil Rights** – resources that are specifically tied to aspects of anti-black policies or practices and/or the struggle against racial discrimination.

Together, they encompass much of the Black community’s activities, its life, labors, passions, and priorities in the period from the 1940s to the early 1970s. That era encompassed three distinct periods of development that frame the overall historic contexts identified in the MPD: 1) Making the “Mississippi of the North”: WWII and The Advent of the Segregated Tri-Cities and its Black Community, ca. 1940-45; 2) The Tri-Cities’ Black American Community in Postwar Pasco, 1940s-70s; and 3) Civil Rights, Integration, and the Changing Racial Landscape of the Tri-Cities, 1940s-1970s. The living and working conditions, and the activities and associations, of the Black community discussed in these contexts are the basis of the property types outlined below. Criterion A is the primary relevant criterion for most of the properties in these four categories.

Together, the four property types provide a physical foundation for understanding the history of the Black community of Pasco and the Tri-Cities area as a whole, however the MPD is restricted to the community of Pasco. But although these broad categories encompass most resources historically associated with the community, extant Pasco resources do not tell the full story of the Tri-Cities’ Black American community and its architectural development. For instance, a number of the properties associated with the segregated Tri-Cities Black community—which was restricted, for the most part, to East Pasco—are not in Pasco proper. This is especially true for civil rights properties: where some sites that are significantly associated with anti-black practices and the struggle against them might be located in Richland and Kennewick, the Tri-Cities communities that long excluded Black people.

Due to this exclusion, when examining the built environment, most resources associated directly with the Black experience are located in Pasco. From the beginning, locating properties associated with the Black community were the antithesis of study. Potential resources included boxcars, trailers, and shacks; impermanent, impoverished structures that weren’t intended to, and did not, last. Made wretched by systemic racism from the start, the Black built environment in Pasco subsequently became the target of the City’s “urban renewal” program.” Pasco’s urban renewal began in 1968 and over the ensuing years dismantled and razed thirteen entire blocks in the Black heart of East Pasco, eradicating “all residential structures west of South Wehe Avenue to the railroad tracks” (on the south side of E. Lewis Street) as well as many others in the neighborhood (Webster Jackson, who worked for the Urban Renewal program, estimated that the program eradicated “half, if not more” of the Black community’s homes). Elsewhere, major landmarks of local Black history have also been demolished, including Whittier School, and the East Pasco Co-op complex, and the Greyhound Bus Depot, the NP Passenger Depot, the Parkside and Navy Homes, and “the Green Bridge” over the Columbia (which was scraped by Tommy’s Steel and Salvage). Most recently (in 2020) Tommy’s Steel and Salvage has been lost. Others, like the New Hope Baptist Church (which burned in 2002), have been destroyed by accident.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰⁵ Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, “Cultural Awareness: Pasco’s Black Community (in Celebration of Pasco’s Centennial, 1884-

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These lost properties were where much of Black Pasco’s life happened, and/or were associated with significant themes in local Black history.

General Integrity Considerations:

All Pasco resources related to Black history may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criteria “A” due to their direct association with this historic context. The applicable Area of Significance for these resources is Black Ethnic Heritage. In addition to the area of significance, properties must retain sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register.

Extant Black American historical properties in Pasco are rare. This fact is crucial to keep in mind when evaluating a property’s eligibility for registration in the NRHP. It is especially important to take it into account when evaluating integrity. Physical characteristics should ideally be sufficiently intact to convey the property’s historic associations, but the seven specific aspects of integrity—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association—should be assessed in the context of other surviving resources related to the history of the local black community. Note that few, if any, of these rare historic resources are unmodified.

Integrity of location is usually essential, and that is true in the case of historic Black American heritage properties in Pasco. However, at least one of the resources identified in the context, i.e. the house originally located at 319 S. Idaho Street and sold for removal in 1970 by the City’s Urban Renewal program to the United Black Youth, Inc of Pasco (which planned to use it as a teen center) may still be extant after having been moved. In that particular case, the move itself is significantly associated with important themes in Pasco’s Black American history, as is the building’s life thereafter (and, probably, before as well). Integrity of location is thus not in every case a necessary prerequisite for eligibility among these resources, and must be evaluated on an individual basis.

Design, or consciously created elements like form, plan, style, and proportion which, in combination, determine a property’s basic appearance, is also an important aspect of integrity. Design is present in buildings both modest and grand, and eligible properties should be sufficiently intact so as to convey their essential historic appearance. Ideally, properties should retain basic form, roof, patterns of fenestration, and major features such as porches. Many of these properties, however, were modified in the course of time and changing use as needs dictated, and resources allowed. Modifications to design that occurred during the period of significance reflect those evolving uses and associations, and do not necessarily irredeemably compromise the integrity of the resource.

Due to Urban Renewal, setting is an aspect of integrity that is rarely intact for Black American historic resources in Pasco. The historic Black neighborhood of East Pasco, and the satellite Black cluster immediately west of the railroad tracks (north of W. Lewis and east of N. 4th), has been heavily modified, with much of it razed since the historic period. Moreover, Pasco has undergone dramatic growth since the historic period, and thus many of its local environs have been substantially altered. While integrity of setting remains relevant in evaluating these resources, loss of setting should not in itself render a property ineligible.

1984) [Pamphlet],” sec. Religion; Interview with Reverend Jeannette Sparks. “Church Finds New Hope.”

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Materials must be given less weight in evaluating Black American historical resources in Pasco than other aspects of integrity, especially in relation to residential structures. A substantial portion of surviving historic-period properties in East Pasco appear to have been re-sided with a variety of materials. Changes in cladding alone are insufficient to render these resources ineligible. Likewise, the installation of new sashes or doors in original fenestration patterns does not, on its own, necessarily render a resource ineligible. Modifications may cover original materials that are still extant, and/or may themselves date to the period of significance. Even where materials have been substantially modified, properties may be able to convey their essential historic character and significance. The rarity of this entire class of resources and the altered condition of most extant properties are critical considerations for assessing integrity of materials and the implications thereof for eligibility.

Workmanship, the physical evidence of the craftwork of a culture or group, is generally not a critical aspect of integrity for this group of resources. A few resources, like the Morning Star Baptist Church or the Kurtzman Park community center and the Labor Hall, may have been built to community specifications, and/or are known to have been built by community members. Pasco’s Black population included people who worked in the building trades (like Joe Williams, Thelmer Hawkins, and Webster Jackson), and there may be extant resources that they and others in the community worked on, i.e., that reflect or embody the workmanship of Black community members. This connection would contribute to a property’s significance if it contained identifiable features constructed in part by Black carpenters, masons, or other tradespeople.

Feeling relates to the ability of a property, as a whole, to convey a sense of its historic self. Feeling is a significant aspect of integrity for Pasco’s Black American resources and should be carefully considered when evaluating them for NRHP eligibility. One way of assessing integrity of feeling is by asking whether the historic resident of a house, or member of a church congregation, or a businessperson or employee, or civil rights demonstrator (or discrimination victim) would recognize the property if they saw it in its current condition. If a property is eligible, the answer to this question should be yes. If the answer is no, the property may be ineligible. A property’s historic function, such as a residence, and the continuity of that function into the modern period also factor into and contribute to a property’s integrity of feeling, i.e., the property’s “expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.”⁴⁰⁶

Integrity of association refers to the link between a property and significant historic events or people. As with feeling, integrity of association requires that a property be sufficiently intact to convey its historic character. The close-knit nature of Pasco’s Black community, and the multitude of functions a particular property may have served, provides a strong associative meaning to these places. Here, physical changes, unless rendering the property utterly unrecognizable, do not necessarily diminish its associative meaning. If a property is eligible, it should be able to convey its historic associations. If it cannot, the property is probably ineligible.

When assessing each of these seven aspects of integrity, it is important to keep in mind that changes over time often reflect the evolution of the Black community. As the associated contexts make clear, Pasco’s Black residents often worked in low-paying jobs and lived on limited incomes. Thus, modifications to existing buildings were often needed to accommodate changing situations. These

⁴⁰⁶ Quaide, “Section VIII.”

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included removal and reconstruction of outbuildings, construction of additions, enclosure of porches, replacement of siding materials, etc. However, if changes were completed during the historic period these are not considered a detriment to the resource.

1) Social, Cultural, and Religious Institutions Resources

Description:

Community institution properties in Pasco are those whose buildings provided space for group activities of Black American community. They were generally relatively large buildings, often churches or labor halls, with ample meeting space for various group events. These buildings offered important independent group spaces for Black Americans living in an oft-hostile environment.

Some communal buildings were built according to the needs of the Tri-Cities' Black American population. As in other places, Black residents of Pasco first occupied residential properties and then, as the population grew, they constructed buildings like churches, community centers, and labor halls to provide space for group meetings and activities. Such was the case in Pasco with the Morning Star Baptist Church at 703 S. Wehe (completed fall 1947) and subsequently at 631 S. Douglas (completed in 1953) as well as other churches (like Greater Faith Baptist, extant at 512 S. Sycamore Street and surveyed in 2019); the Kurtzman Park Youth Center (constructed 1959-64) and the Laborers' Union Local 348 Masonry Labor Hall (designed by Carroll Martell, Spokane architect, and built by Walter G. Meyer & Son of Spokane in 1952-53, 204 W. Clark), which replaced an older labor hall.

More frequently, Black American community groups gathered in existing buildings that primarily served other purposes, like people's homes (where Morning Star and other churches first started) or commercial buildings (like John Reed's "Elm Street Club on South Elm"—the Reed property at 736 S. Elm later known as the Kingfish Club—where the East Pasco Improvement Association held its second meeting in January 1949, or the "empty restaurant owned by a Mr. White" at 113 S. Oregon Avenue, where the East Pasco Church of God first met in the late '50s). A few buildings of this property type may have been downtown commercial blocks that rented space to Black American groups or individuals—research for this project indicates, for instance, that the Morning Star Baptist Church occupied a "building on west Lewis Street" ca. 1946 before moving to a new location in East Pasco. Specific addresses, construction, and ownership details of these properties are at this point not known, and nor is their current status. Other properties were built to serve the needs of groups of White Pasco residents, like the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks (which into the 1970s prohibited Black people from joining), became associated with the Black American population when Black organizations started to use them. Such was the case with the East Pasco Elks Club, where New Hope Baptist Church briefly held services before constructing a building at its current location, 630 S. Waldemar, in 1955.

Note that in some cases, Black associated institutions met in rotating venues. The Tri-Cities Committee on Human Relations (active from 1951-1964) for instance, met first "in the Franklin County Courtroom" and subsequently "met once a month, at the courthouse, in private homes and offices, churches and at the Pasco Hotel for dinner meetings." Likewise, the local NAACP "branch had no office or regular meeting space" (though sources indicate that at one point "NAACP headquarters [was] at the Pasco

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Labor Hall” on the corner of First and Clark). In such cases a property’s association with an organization isn’t always evident. In many cases, the address or property most associated with Black institutions was not recorded. In other instances, the location of institutional spaces was only generally identified, as with the Negro Pentecostal Church at the Coleman property on First and Shoshone, or the aforementioned East Pasco Elks Club, located, we can presume, in East Pasco. Finally, many of those addresses that are recorded in project documentation refer to properties that are no longer extant, and whose historical appearance and attributes we cannot ascertain. Note that some thirteen blocks of southeast Pasco were razed in the course of Urban Renewal after 1968, including most of the area between S. Wehe and the trainyard, where many Black associated properties were located.

Known extant historic-period buildings within this property type include both the Morning Star Baptist Church and Kurtzman Park Youth Center. Both are modest but substantial concrete-block buildings on corner lots in southeast Pasco. Both were built by Black groups to serve the needs of the community, and both were located in the Tri-Cities’ only historic Black residential neighborhood. Neither has been modified to the point of destroying integrity. Visual assessment of buildings in the immediate vicinity of other historic Black institutional properties such as the Greater Faith Baptist church, Pasco Labor Hall at the intersection of First and W. Clark, or Mr. White’s restaurant at 113 S. Oregon. Further research and survey work may reveal the exact location of other institutional buildings.

Significance:

Institutional or organizational properties are locally significant under Ethnic Heritage for their association with one of the three Black American history contexts identified in this MPD, i.e., 1) Making the “Mississippi of the North”: WWII and The Advent of the Segregated Tri-Cities and its Black Community; 2) The Tri-Cities’ Black American Community in Postwar Pasco; and 3) Civil Rights, Integration, and the Changing Racial Landscape of the Tri-Cities. The majority of these property types should thus be considered for listing under National Register of Historic Places Criterion A. Most known, extant institutional resources date to the second and/or third context periods.

Areas of significance for Criteria “A” vary within limits: properties of this type are all associated with Black American community institutions, be they social, cultural, recreational, or religious. Particular areas of significance for properties of the institutional type depend on the use of the particular building, as well as its history and the history of the group or groups associated with it. Numerous buildings—Morning Star Baptist Church, Kurtzman Park Youth Center, the Labor Hall, etc.—housed several Black American community institutions at different times, and therefore fall into overlapping subtypes within this property type.

Black institutions—social, cultural, recreational, political, religious—formed the core of the black community that developed in Pasco and the Tri-Cities. In many ways, the Black community was defined by the institutions it created and maintained, as well the activities it conducted in and through them. Indeed, in Pasco as elsewhere, the presence of institutions like Black churches, baseball teams, and civil rights organizations marked the development and endurance of a Black community, a collective presence and purpose that cohered and reflected an autonomous local population. They subsequently served as the social, recreational, religious, and political backbone of the community, vessels for community members’ many, varied activities.

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The primacy of community institutions is also reflected in the spatial character of the community: for much of the historic period, Morning Star Baptist Church and other churches, as well as Kurtzman Park, formed the physical center of the Black community. Churches, the laborers’ union, civil rights and self-help groups, etc., and the many activities they hosted bound the local Black community together, and at the same time they often connected it to Black Americans elsewhere, undergirding a web of relations that stretched from Seattle to New York City. Black community institutions were central in the lives of many Black individuals and also a key platform for local leaders, many of whom played leadership roles in multiple community organizations and numerous other sectors simultaneously. Purpose-built institutional buildings, also symbolized the achievement and respectability of the Black community in a city, and a nation, that oft sought to deny it both.

Religious properties were among the most important community institutions. Their significance derives not only from their religious status but from the larger role they played in the development of Black Pasco—the Tri-Cities’ Black community and the heart of regional Black life even after segregation eased. Institutional properties provided community spaces where Black people could freely go to spend time and join forces with friends and associates, places that were safe from prejudice and oppression. Buildings that hosted group activities are important physical testaments to the presence of a distinct Black American community and to the determination of its members to create a collective existence. They attest to the collective character of the Black experience during the establishment, entrenchment, and subsequent dispersal (and proportional decline) of Pasco’s Black community, from the 1940s into the 1970s. Crucially, they also are an important reflection of the context of that community’s existence. Most, if not all, of the Black community’s organizations and institutions focused on “racial uplift” and combatting racism in its many forms. All Black institutions were thus in some sense political, even if all they did was offer a forum that encouraged and welcomed Black public life.

Registration Requirements:

In order to qualify for listing in the NRHP, community institution properties must be associated with the history of Black organizations in Pasco, with group activities of the local Black community, or with institutional entities involved in Black issues. Organizations of this sort include religious congregations, social and recreational organizations (like musical groups, baseball teams, and the Kurtzman Park Youth Center cohort), fraternal orders (like the Black American Masons and Elks), civic and neighborhood groups (like the East Pasco Improvement Association and the various Human Relations committees), state and federal agencies and institutions (like the Washington State Board Against Discrimination, Washington State College, and the Community Action Committee and Community Affirmative Action Program of the federal Office of Economic Opportunity), local or regional chapters of national organizations (like the USO, the VFW, the NUL, the ACLU, the NAACP, and CORE), union locals (namely Laborers’ Local 348), self-help groups and business organizations (like the East Pasco Self-Help Cooperative), educational institutions (like Whittier School and Columbia Basin College), and political organizations (which, in the context of profound and systemic racism, included most if not all Black American-associated institutions). Sites of informal community group activities, like restaurants and nightclubs that welcomed black customers, could also be a type of community institution property.

Note that some properties of this type are also representative of other property types and may be eligible in multiple categories. Most obviously, political organizations were also civil rights entities. But there are other possibilities for overlapping eligibility as well. For example, the East Pasco Self-Help

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Cooperative was both a community institution and a Black-owned business entity (and other Black-owned businesses functioned as informal community institutions). Some properties might also be eligible in multiple categories because they contained a series of the Black communities associated endeavors over time. For instance, the Sutton-Coleman family complex at First and Shoshone featured, over time, a church, residences, and business enterprises (e.g. cabin/trailer camp, café, BBQ sauce manufacture, etc.). It was also, simultaneously, associated with civil rights in multiple ways. Many group meetings and activities also occurred in people’s homes, which as a result may qualify as institutional properties as well residential properties.

Social, Cultural, and Religious properties may be associated with the lives of people, like Art Fletcher, who are significant in the Black history of Pasco and/or beyond (Criterion B). If nominated under criteria B, these resources should be directly associated with the significance of the individual and should fall within the Period of Significance as defined by the MPD and within the three context areas.

Some properties may also be eligible for architectural reasons under Criterion “C” and will fall within the basic tenants of the criteria as an example of a resource embodying the distinctive characteristics of its type, period, or method of construction as articulated within a deeper context discussion and comparative analysis.

2) Commercial and Economic Resources

Description:

Commercial and economic properties in Pasco are those whose buildings were associated with businesses that were owned or operated by Black Americans or, more rarely, that housed businesses that—unlike most in the Tri-Cities—commonly employed Black workers and/or welcomed Black patrons. Such resources might be housed in commercial and/or residential buildings, and could range in size, materials, and stature from rough, humble dwellings from which people conducted businesses (sometimes in detached outbuildings or attached additions—like Virginia’s Chicken Shack—and sometimes right in their homes, like the numerous covert catch ball locations) to multi-storefront, purpose-built edifices like Wally Webster’s uncle’s tri-partite endeavor (Jack’s Pit and Grill, with restaurant, pool hall, and tavern components) to multi-story brick main street commercial blocks like Thomas Moore’s Poulet Palace “on First and [W.] Lewis St., next door to the M & M, “downtown by the underpass. It was a beautiful place, a brick—a hotel and a downstairs restaurant, very nice place.”

Some commercial buildings were constructed according to the needs of Black owners and businesspeople. These buildings reflect the success of Black business owners and the specific requirements of the businesses. Few of these are known to still exist: the only extant example identified in the course of this study is the steel-frame Matrix Inc. mini-mall building constructed in 1970 at 200-208 S. Wehe (now known as 1512 E. Columbia), which was built in East Pasco to house a planned laundromat as well as “a beauty shop, a barber shop, a clothing store, ceramic and gift shops, carpet cleaning establishment and a domestic employment service.” More frequently, Black entrepreneurs purchased, or rented, or leased space in, existing buildings, or ran their businesses from makeshift locations wherever they could establish them.

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Buildings associated with the economic history of Pasco’s Black population are part of this property type as well. Very few businesses in Pasco hired Black employees or welcomed Black patrons: pervasive, profound discrimination in employment and services was one of the defining features of the local area. Several sources mention exceptions to this rule, and such enterprises are significantly associated with Pasco’s Black heritage. For example, the two Chinese restaurants in town—Frank’s Grill (run by Frank Ng on West Lewis Street, where Webster Jackson’s mother “and her sisters, all three of them,” worked) and Chinese Gardens (established 1953-55 and extant, and still in business, at its historic location at 1520 N. 4th Ave., across from Navy Homes)—and Don Hammer’s “76 Union Station down on 4th Avenue at the Dodge place,” were noted for hiring Black workers, and sources suggest that Pasco Lunch catered to a black clientele.⁴⁰⁷ Other Pasco places that commonly employed Black citizens or welcomed Black patrons have not been identified. Sources, and the history documented in this MPD, suggest that in the deeply segregated, discriminatory Tri-Cities, there weren’t many such establishments, but others may be revealed by further research.

The historic physical location, appearance, and evolution of many properties of this type remains unknown, as does their current status. It is clear that they represented properties across a physical spectrum—mostly in modest buildings but sometimes in more substantial quarters—and that they concentrated in East Pasco but that some were just over the tracks along the west side of the railyard (in the Black borderlands east of 4th Ave.) and a very few, like Mrs. Sommers’ Chase Street Chicken Dinner Restaurant, were farther west in Pasco. They also represented a range of historical associations, mostly small owner-operated businesses but occasionally more substantial Black-owned enterprises or, very rarely, properties owned by White or Chinese-American people.

In many cases a property’s association with Pasco’s Black commercial and economic history isn’t readily evident. In most, the address or property most associated with a given Black business was not recorded in the sources reviewed for this project. In still other instances, the location of commercial spaces was only generally identified. Finally, many of those addresses that are recorded in project documentation refer to properties that are no longer extant, and whose historical appearance and attributes we cannot ascertain: some 13 blocks of East Pasco were razed during late 1960s-early 1970s Urban Renewal, including the East Pasco commercial district, such as it was, in the blocks south of E. Lewis immediately east of the railroad tracks. Much of the mixed-commercial Black borderlands cluster immediately west of the tracks, on the north side of W. Lewis (east of 4th Ave.) has also been razed. Two blocks on the north side of W. Lewis immediately west of the tracks were completely demolished between 2012-2019.

Known extant properties of this type are exceedingly rare. Outside of residential rental properties, only three extant Black-owned or operated commercial properties have been identified to date. These include the Kingfish Club which stands on the corner of Elm and A Streets (736 S. Elm) where it operated from 1946-64, the Matrix building constructed in 1970 at 208 S. Wehe (now known as 1512 E. Columbia), and the Barnes Meat Market building at 1414 E. Columbia (immediately west of the Matrix building). Tommy’s Steel and Salvage, which was reportedly the oldest surviving Black business in the Tri-Cities when it was surveyed in 2019, was demolished in 2020.

Visual assessment of buildings in the immediate vicinity of identified historic Black commercial

⁴⁰⁷ Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

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properties like Lucille Sommers' chicken dinner restaurant at the intersection of 20th and W. Lewis indicates that these properties may be extant. Further research and survey work may reveal the exact location of these and other Black commercial buildings, and whether they still stand. Also known to be extant is one of the few businesses that may have commonly employed Black citizens (even though it wasn't Black -operated), i.e., Chinese Gardens, established between 1953-55, and still in business, at 1520 N. 4th Ave. (across from Navy Homes).

Significance:

Under the MPD these resources are locally significant under Ethnic Heritage for their association with one of the three Black history contexts identified in this MPD, i.e., 1) Making the "Mississippi of the North": WWII and The Advent of the Segregated Tri-Cities and its Black Community; 2) The Tri-Cities' Black Community in Postwar Pasco; and 3) Civil Rights, Integration, and the Changing Racial Landscape of the Tri-Cities. The majority of these property types should thus be considered for listing under National Register of Historic Places Criterion A. Most known, extant institutional resources date to the second and/or third context periods.

Black commercial and economic properties were often visibly associated with the Black community: a Black business sector thrived during the heyday of that community, serving both that community and Pasco's population more broadly. The Black business sector also functioned as a focal point of the local community, a space run by, welcoming to, and supportive of, Black residents. The community cohered around Black-owned businesses, which were concentrated in industries that met the day to day needs of the community, i.e., food service and hospitality, hair salons, residential rentals, etc.

Commercial and economic properties thus reveal much about the economic conditions confronted by Pasco's Black community, and how those conditions evolved over time. Some businesses were based in Black community members homes, and thereby reveal multiple aspects of the community's past. They also indicate much about the skills, background, and activities of community members. Black businesses thrived when the Tri-Cities' Black population was concentrated due to being strictly segregated and excluded from most Tri-Cities services and spaces. They withered with desegregation and integration, which coincided with the Black population in the Tri-Cities becoming dispersed, as well as proportionally smaller and less prominent.

Several White-owned or Asian-owned properties and businesses were associated with the history of Pasco's Black population as well. Few businesses in Pasco commonly hired Black employees, or welcomed Black patrons. In the deeply discriminatory Tri-Cities, these properties housed businesses that were important to the economy and the dignity of the Black American population, and were themselves significantly associated with that population.

Registration Requirements:

In order to qualify for listing in the NRHP, commercial and economic properties must be associated directly with the history of Black business enterprises in Pasco, or with the economy of the local Black community either as workers or consumers. Enterprises of this sort include Black-owned or operated businesses like barber shops, clubs, and restaurants. These enterprises were sometimes situated in Black-owned properties. They also include businesses that regularly employed Black workers, or that

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employed prominent members of the Black community. Also eligible are properties that were a component of community members’ economic efforts, like rental or investment properties. Finally, businesses that catered to the Black community could be included in this property type.

Some properties of this type are also representative of other property types, and may be eligible in multiple categories. For example, as noted above the East Pasco Self-Help Cooperative was both a community institution and a Black-owned business entity (and other Black-owned businesses functioned as informal community institutions). Some properties might also be eligible in multiple categories because they contained a series of Black associated endeavors over time. For instance, the Sutton-Coleman family complex at First and Shoshone featured, over time, a church, dwellings, and business endeavors (e.g. cabin/trailer camp, café, BBQ sauce manufacture, etc.). It also, simultaneously, was associated with civil rights in multiple ways. Many businesses were home-based and, like boardinghouses or residential rental properties, may qualify as both commercial and residential properties. Commercial properties often contained living spaces as well as spaces for businesses and, sometimes, group activities of the Black community.

Commercial and economic related properties may be associated with the lives of people who are significant in the Black history of Pasco and/or beyond (Criterion B). If nominated under criteria B, these resources should be directly associated with the significance of the individual and should fall within the Period of Significance as defined by the MPD and within the three context areas.

Some properties may also be eligible for architectural reasons under Criterion “C” and will fall within the basic tenants of the criteria as an example of a resource embodying the distinctive characteristics of its type, period, or method of construction as articulated within a deeper context discussion and comparative analysis.

3) Residential Resources

Description:

Residential buildings associated with Black citizens in Pasco are an important element in the evolution and growth of the city’s Black community. But because anti-Black discrimination in the Tri-Cities was enacted first and foremost through residential segregation and discrimination in housing infrastructure, much of the historic residential infrastructure was composed of temporary, substandard structures like trailers, railroad cars, shacks, and outbuildings that deteriorated or were replaced long ago. Black residences were also the specific focus of Pasco urban renewal demolition programs: one urban renewal official estimated that the program demolished over half of the community’s dwellings.

Whether or not they remain extant, residential buildings used or built by Black Americans were almost universally modest dwellings, generally of one-story—of wood-frame or concrete block construction—and featuring gable or hip roofs. Built first and foremost for function, they had small, simple footprints, with little architectural ornamentation. Despite their diminutive architecture, they often housed large extended families or groups. They reflect broader building trends, methods, and materials of the period as modified by the severe limitations of segregation, poverty, and discrimination in infrastructure and services. Due to these same factors, home ownership was uncommon among Black families, few of

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whom were able to contract for the construction of their own homes or purchase existing dwellings, especially in the 1940s-60s. Black families and individuals often rented or leased houses, or other structures to live in. Many Black individuals lived for periods of time in group residential properties, like boardinghouse “apartments,” or trailer or “cabin” courts, or in the homes of other members of the Black community who rented out rooms or took in family members or other lodgers.

The structures and buildings inhabited by Black Americans, and the neighborhoods where they lived, and, crucially, the associated chronology thereof, provide important information on the residential circumstances—and the history more broadly—of the Black population and the intense discrimination it endured. In the Tri-Cities, in a pattern that reflects the strict segregation and systemic racism that characterized the area, Black citizen’s homes could be found almost exclusively in one area (or two, depending on definitions) throughout most of the historic period – greater East Pasco. Black residential properties in greater East Pasco clustered in two distinct but contiguous sections east of 4th Avenue, i.e., East Pasco proper and its borderlands. The primary Black neighborhood was in East Pasco proper, east of the NPRy trainyard and south of East Lewis Street. A secondary Black residential cluster occupied what we might call the East Pasco borderlands, extending from the west side of the tracks to 4th Avenue, north of West Lewis Street. In the later years of the historic period, a few Black residences were located farther west in Pasco (as well as in Richland and, even later, in Kennewick).

To date a handful of Black residences in greater East Pasco have been formally documented. Known dwellings that have been surveyed, in whole or in part, include 107 W. Sylvester (Beaseley residence) in the borderlands neighborhood and, in East Pasco proper, 611 S. Beech Avenue (Daniels residence), 705 S. Douglas Avenue (Gix-Johnson property/residence) and 727 S. Douglas Avenue (Miles residence). A fourth historic East Pasco Black American residential property, the Moore residence/rental at 704 E. Butte Street.

Some Black associated dwellings that remain in Pasco represent the entrenchment of certain families, as the owners and their kin found ways to sustain themselves economically and moved from one property to another, or expanded and/or improved their real estate holdings and ultimately found enduring residential stability. The Daniels and Beaseley residences both represent second or subsequent Tri-Cities homes where those families were able to settle long-term, as does, possibly, the Johnson-Gix residence. Other residential properties, like those belonging to owners who took in boarders or ran larger, more established residential rental enterprises, are indicative of the housing patterns of, and options available to, shorter term residents and/or Black individuals, as well as the economic strategies and business opportunities availed by Pasco’s Black population. Some properties, like the Daniels residence, represent both of these housing patterns. Still others are modest houses rented by Black citizens, often in extended family units, while they lived in Pasco for varying periods of time.

There are several known extant properties of this type, namely the five surveyed or otherwise documented residential properties noted above. Other Black residential properties are known to have been extant in 2018, when their owners discussed them in interviews for the Hanford Oral History project. These include the Reverend Jeannette Sparks (née Miles) residence at 712 S. Douglas, the Rambo family residence at [1715 W] Clark Street,” and the Aubrey Johnson residence-cum-rental at 1719 N. 17th Ave. They also include the two lone holdouts from the Urban Renewal area. In 2018 Urban Renewal official Webster Jackson reported: “They’re both sitting there today....One is next to—a couple

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of houses from [Morning Star] church. And the other one is down across from Kurtzman's Park."⁴⁰⁸ Many residential properties are known to have been demolished and/or to be no longer extant. These include the many homes destroyed or removed in the primary 13-block urban renewal area, i.e., "all residential structures west of South Wehe Avenue to the railroad tracks" (on the south side of E. Lewis Street) as, in the East Pasco borderlands west of the tracks and east of 4th Avenue (on the north side of W. Lewis Street). They also include Parkside Homes-- the last three structures were removed in February 1961—and Navy Homes, which still exists in name "but those aren't the same houses. They tore those housing down; it's a lot modernized now."⁴⁰⁹

Further research and survey work may identify many more historic Black residential properties in Pasco.

Significance:

Residential properties are locally significant under Ethnic Heritage for their association with one of the three Black contexts identified in this MPD, i.e., 1) Making the "Mississippi of the North": WWII and The Advent of the Segregated Tri-Cities and its Black Community; 2) The Tri-Cities' Black American Community in Postwar Pasco; and 3) Civil Rights, Integration, and the Changing Racial Landscape of the Tri-Cities. The majority of these property types should thus be considered for listing under National Register of Historic Places Criterion "A" and/or "B". Most known, extant residential resources date to the second and/or third context periods.

Residential properties represent these significant historic themes in a number of specific ways. They reveal deeply discriminatory, segregated residential patterns in which Black homes are clustered in one (or two) neighborhood(s) characterized by inadequate, unhealthy, and unsafe infrastructure. The histories of their occupants map the contours of Black migration to the Tri-Cities as well as the area's Black occupational, economic, and civil rights landscapes. In addition to serving as residences for people who worked elsewhere, houses sometimes functioned as home-based businesses, and thereby reveal multiple aspects of the community's past. Residential properties likewise suggest much about the way the Black community lived more broadly, with households often composed of interconnected, multigenerational extended families as well as boarders. Occupants' group activities, sometimes conducted in residential properties, demonstrate that Pasco's Black population forged an autonomous community, taking active roles in their community and its institutions, many of which focused on mutual support, "racial uplift," and combating racism in its many virulent forms. Some residential properties may be specifically associated with these community institutions. For instance, as noted elsewhere in this MPD, several homes served as starting points of Black American churches, the most critical Black community institution in Pasco.

Residential properties may be associated with the lives of people who are significant in the Black history of Pasco and/or beyond (Criterion B). If nominated under criteria B, these resources should be directly associated with the significance of the individual and should fall within the Period of Significance as defined by the MPD and within the three context areas.

⁴⁰⁸ Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.
⁴⁰⁹ Interview with Donald Bell, Sr.

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On rare occasions, some properties may also be eligible for architectural reasons under Criterion "C" and will fall within the basic tenants of the criteria as an example of a resource embodying the distinctive characteristics of its type, period, or method of construction as articulated within a deeper context discussion and comparative analysis.

Registration Requirements (Residential properties)

In order to qualify for NRHP registration as a residential property, a building should have housed Black residents during one of the three context periods identified in this MPD. Properties may have been built, owned, or rented by Black families or individuals. Some properties may have served as boarding houses that contained Black residents.

Some properties of this type are also representative of other property types, and may be eligible in multiple categories. For example, many businesses were home-based and, like boardinghouses or trailer/cabin courts or residential rental investment properties, may qualify as both commercial and residential properties. Commercial blocks often contained living spaces as well as spaces for businesses and, sometimes, group activities of the Black community. Residences that housed prominent leaders of local institutions, like ministers or pastors, might be considered both residential and institutional properties.

4) Racism and Civil Rights Resources

Description:

Pasco's racism and civil rights properties are places that are directly associated with particular aspects of anti-Black policies or practices and/or the struggle against racial discrimination in the Tri-Cities as a whole. They vary greatly: the racism and civil rights property type is the most expansive and diverse property type documented in this MPD. It includes:

- institutional, commercial, and residential buildings associated with civil rights efforts and/or practices;
- properties associated with prominent anti-Black incidents or practices (like the segregated Pasco movie theaters or the Hamilton Self-Service Laundry);
- structures which physically marked the boundaries of segregation and shaped how Black people experienced discrimination (like the Lewis Street underpass or the "old green bridge" spanning the Columbia River between Pasco and Kennewick);
- public spaces like parks that were sites of prominent race-related persecutions or civil rights protests (like Kurtzman Park or Pasco City Hall);
- linear sites or corridors which marked a boundary of segregation or the routes of protest marches (like the NPRy tracks or Lewis Street);

A few buildings and/or sites were themselves built or established as a central component of civil rights efforts. Such properties, like Kurtzman Park and its Youth Center or Columbia Basin College, were the product of community efforts to address and rectify aspects of discrimination against the Black community. In some ways, in the context of profound systemic racism that was expressed especially

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through exclusion of Black citizens from public and private spaces (and through discrimination in everyday infrastructure), all properties developed to serve the needs of the Tri-Cities' Black population (like churches and labor halls, or businesses, or decent homes) constitute this sort of civil rights property. So, too, Black properties developed outside of segregated East Pasco and its borderlands are by definition sites of active civil rights integration efforts. Some properties are civil rights sites in multiple ways: the Coleman complex at First and Shoshone, for instance (which included a dwelling, residential rentals, a café, and a church) embodies an effort to meet the spiritual and earthly needs of the Black community, and its construction west of the tracks was the product of concerted resistance to segregation. Columbia Basin College is another example of a site that is a civil rights property in multiple ways, the Pasco junior college being the product of a civil rights struggle and then a base for ongoing civil rights work and community uplift as well as an entity associated with prominent anti-Black practices.

The institutional, commercial, and residential properties associated with the pursuit of civil rights via serving the basic needs of the Black community are components of the first three property types discussed above, and further details on them can be found in those sections.

Other properties of this type are primarily associated with the broader concerted civil rights struggle. They include public spaces and corridors that were sites of civil rights protests and actions—places like Kurtzman Park or the route of marches therefrom, or the site where activists installed a “Segregated School” sign at Whittier in 1964-65—and official spaces where racist policies and practices were investigated, debated, enacted and/or targeted (like the Franklin County Courthouse or Pasco City Hall), as well as sites marking civil rights processes and developments (like the Pasco Carnegie Library or city pools—integrated exceptions in a Jim Crow town—and the public elementary schools, which had to be formally and actively desegregated in the mid-1960s). They also include a variety of properties associated with racism and discrimination. Such sites range from locations of prominent racialized confrontations (like the July 1968 “riot” in Kurtzman Park); to properties associated with Jim Crow practices (like Hamilton Self-Service Laundry or the Eastside Market where “there was no black or any other ethnic groups that was cashiers until later, after '60-so. Then they finally hired people. But before then, there was no opportunity for working there”); to structures, corridors, and borders that marked the boundaries of segregation and shaped how Black people experienced segregation (like the Lewis Street underpass and the “old green bridge” between Pasco and Kennewick, the railroad tracks and Lewis Street itself, and the corporate limits of the City of Kennewick, which prominently marked the boundaries of white supremacy and the exclusion and persecution of Pasco's Black population).⁴¹⁰

These kinds of civil rights sites compose a spectrum of properties, and their historic physical appearance, evolution, and current condition varies. In addition to the institutional, commercial, and residential properties (that are also civil rights properties) detailed above to date just a handful of racism and civil rights properties associated with Black history in Pasco have been surveyed or otherwise documented. These include a variety of historic civic sites like the Pasco Carnegie Library at 305 N. 4th Street and the Franklin County Courthouse at 1016 N. 4th Street; McLaughlin Middle School at 517 N. 3rd Street (originally constructed as Pasco High School in 1922 and closed and converted to use as Pasco City Hall in 1995) and the Pasco Air Naval Station (“the original location of Columbia Basin

⁴¹⁰ Interview with Mae Fite.

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College”), both of which were detailed as “structures of local historic importance. Many have been demolished such as the Empire Theater (at 219 W. Lewis) and Pasco Drug (at 205 W. Lewis), which were mentioned in a 1980s “Inventory of ‘Old Town’ District.” The appendix to the 1982 survey listed the Bus Depot (built in 1944 at 115 N. 2nd), the Liberty Theatre (at 114 N. 4th), the 1944 Pasco Theater at 517 W. Lewis, and the Elks Club at 214 S. 4th, but made no mention of Black or civil rights history of these properties.⁴¹¹

Other documentation of civil rights properties in the Tri-Cities includes the Franklin County Courthouse and the Carnegie Library, both listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places (in 1978 and 1982, respectively), however never mention any Black history connection. And in 2011 the Lewis Street underpass was the subject of a HABS Level II documentation: the *Lewis Street Underpass (Short Report No. 1100)* focuses on underpass design and engineering of the 1937 structure conveying Lewis Street car and foot traffic beneath the trainyard and fails to note any association with the history of Black community or civil rights.⁴¹²

Civil rights properties can be religious, institutional, recreational, commercial, and/or residential properties. Linear sites like the routes of protest marches, the NP Railroad tracks, Lewis Street are also eligible.

Significance:

Racism and civil rights properties are locally significant under Ethnic Heritage for their association with one of the three Black contexts identified in this MPD, i.e., 1) Making the “Mississippi of the North”: WWII and The Advent of the Segregated Tri-Cities and its Black Community; 2) The Tri-Cities’ Black Community in Postwar Pasco; and 3) Civil Rights, Integration, and the Changing Racial Landscape of the Tri-Cities, 1960s-1970s. The majority of these property types should thus be considered for listing under National Register of Historic Places Criterion A. Most known, extant institutional resources date to the second and/or third context periods.

Areas of significance for Criteria A vary within limits: properties of this type are all associated with particular aspects of anti-Black policies or practices and/or the struggle against racial discrimination in the Tri-Cities. In the context of profound systemic racism that was expressed especially through exclusion of Black people from public and private spaces (and through discrimination in everyday infrastructure), all properties developed to serve the needs of the Tri-Cities’ Black population (like churches and labor halls, or businesses, or decent homes) are in some ways a sort of civil rights property. Particular areas of significance for properties of the civil rights type thus depend on the specific history of the site and uses of particular buildings, as well as the history of individuals or groups associated with it.

Registration Requirements:

In order to qualify for listing in the NRHP, racism and civil rights properties must be associated with the history of Black citizens with aspects of anti-Black policies or practices in Pasco, and/or with the

⁴¹¹ LeCompte, Pasco (Wash.), and Community Development Department, *City of Pasco, Historic Structures Survey*.

⁴¹² Emerson, “Lewis Street Underpass, Franklin County, Washington (Level II Mitigation).”

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struggle against racial discrimination in the area. Given the expansive nature of this property type, there is a wide variety of properties that qualify for listing in the NRHP as racism and/or civil rights properties. Properties of this sort include institutional, commercial, and residential properties as well as sites more explicitly associated with anti-black policies or practices and/ or with the struggle against them.

Many properties of this type are also representative of other property types, and may be eligible in multiple categories. Most obviously, civil rights properties were often associated with political organizations. But there are other possibilities for overlapping eligibility as well. For example, the East Pasco Self-Help Cooperative was a civil rights entity, a community institution, and a Black-owned business entity (and other Black-owned businesses functioned as informal community institutions). Some properties might also be eligible in multiple categories because they contained a series of Black American associated endeavors over time. For instance, the Sutton-Coleman family complex at First and Shoshone featured, over time, a church, residences, and business endeavors (e.g. cabin/trailer camp, café, BBQ sauce manufacture, etc.). It also, simultaneously, associated with civil rights in multiple ways.

Racial and Civil Rights properties may be associated with the lives of people who are significant in the Black history of Pasco and/or beyond (Criterion B). If nominated under criteria B, these resources should be directly associated with the significance of the individual and should fall within the Period of Significance as defined by the MPD and within the three context areas.

On rare occasions, some properties may also be eligible for architectural reasons under Criterion “C” and will fall within the basic tenants of the criteria as an example of a resource embodying the distinctive characteristics of its type, period, or method of construction as articulated within a deeper context discussion and comparative analysis.

Section G: Geographical Data

The geographic area of the MPD is encompassed by the incorporated limits of the City of Pasco, Franklin County, Washington.

Section H: Summary of Evaluation and Identification Methods

The multiple property documentation of the Black Experience in Pasco, Washington, is based on primary and secondary research in an array of repositories as well as fieldwork in the Tri-Cities.

Before this effort, several projects identified and/or documented a few Black historical sites in Pasco and the surrounding region. Specific properties were sometimes identified when they were mentioned in interviews conducted in 1972 for Dr. Quintard Taylor’s WSU Black Oral History Project, or in 2001-02, 2013, and (especially) 2018 for the WSU Tri-Cities Hanford Oral History Project. One property significantly associated with the history of Black Pasco has been the subject of a HABS documentation: the HABS Level II documentation of the *Lewis Street Underpass (Short Report No. 1100)* completed in 2011 focuses on underpass design and engineering and makes no mention of its association with Black

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American history.⁴¹³ A couple properties associated with Black-American history in Pasco (including Lewis Street underpass, Kurtzman Park, and Morning Star Baptist Church) are also documented on webpages on the National Park Service's Manhattan Project National Historic Park website and on Blackpast.org (an "online reference center" devoted to Black American history).⁴¹⁴ Currently there are no known NRHP listings of historic resources associated with Pasco's Black history, and none are HABS/HAER-documented properties that note any association with the Black community.

Within the City of Pasco, past local survey efforts have produced a variety of recorded historic sites. These survey efforts emphasized local history broadly, or specific architectural or development patterns. Although properties historically associated with Pasco's Black community were occasionally included in these surveys, this significant association was often omitted, overlooked, or simply unknown. For example, the *City of Pasco Historic Structures Survey* completed in 1982 documents a number of properties know to be associated with the history of Black Pasco (including the Carnegie Library and the Franklin County Courthouse) and many in the secondary Black community cluster east of 4th and north of West Lewis (the East Pasco borderlands), but does not note any association with the history of the Black community.⁴¹⁵

In 2017, the City of Pasco was awarded two different grants funding documentation of Black history and historic sites. These grants followed closely on the heels of a National Park Service grant to the Hanford Oral History Project for Documenting Black American Migration, Segregation, and Civil Rights History at Manhattan Project National Historical Park (MAPR). The first City of Pasco grant, from the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, funded a 2019 Cultural Resource report that provided some intensive-level survey documentation on several Black resources in Pasco. As part of the project, several of these properties were highlighted in a video produced by the City of Pasco and Tanya Bowers, including Kurtzman Park, Morning Star and Greater Faith Baptist churches, the Daniels' residence, the Moore four-plex, Tommy's Steel & Salvage, and the Lewis Street Underpass.⁴¹⁶ Funding from the National Park Service's Underrepresented Community Grants program, which aims to "increase the number of listings in the National Register of Historic Places associated with communities currently underrepresented, including Black Americans, Latinos, Asian

⁴¹³ Stephen Emerson, "Lewis Street Underpass, Franklin County, Washington (Level II Mitigation)," Historic American Buildings Survey (Pasco, WA: City of Pasco, May 2011).

⁴¹⁴ "Lewis Street Bridge (U.S. National Park Service)," accessed January 12, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/places/000/lewis-street-bridge.htm>; "Kurtzman Park (U.S. National Park Service)," accessed January 12, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/places/000/kurtzman-park.htm>; "Morningstar Baptist Church (U.S. National Park Service)," accessed January 12, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/places/000/morningstar-baptist-church.htm>; Alexis Newman, "Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA (1946-)," in *African American History in the West* (BlackPast.org, n.d.), <http://www.blackpast.org/aaw/morning-star-baptist-missionary-church-pasco-wa-1946>.

⁴¹⁵ Sarah LeCompte, Pasco (Wash.), and Community Development Department, *City of Pasco, Historic Structures Survey*. (Pasco, Wash.: The City, 1982).

⁴¹⁶ Newman, "Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA (1946-)"; "Morningstar Baptist Church (U.S. National Park Service)"; Dana Holschuh and Harris Environmental Group, "Survey of Historic Properties Associated with the African American Experience in East Pasco," Cultural Resources (WA State Dept. of Archaeology and Historic Preservation), April 2019; *Pasco's African American History* (Pasco, WA, 2019), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYnrWollpoU>; Interview with Dallas Barnes, Webster Jackson, Albert Wilkins at Morning Star Baptist Church, Pasco, WA.

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Americans and LGBT Americans,” funded the second phase of the Pasco Black American resources project. This MPD is a component of that second phase NRHP Multiple Property Submission project, which included researching and writing an historic context for Black American history in Pasco and completing an associated Multiple Property Documentation Form and NRHP registration forms for two historic Black Pasco properties.

The first phase of the MPS project involved research on both the history of Pasco’s Black community and on individual properties associated with that community. Research on the history of individual properties and their occupants included site-specific research augmented by relevant information gleaned from research conducted for the MPD. Site-specific research entailed scrutiny of Franklin County records (plat maps, property titles, property tax files, etc.), Pasco city archives (especially that of the Parks Department), building permits, city directories, census records, death and marriage records, Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, historic photo collections and vertical files, historic newspaper collections, assorted documentary collections at local repositories, oral histories of property owners and community members, and private archival collections (like that of Morning Star Baptist Church).

Individual properties were also field inventoried, which entailed taking detailed field notes on, and photographing, the general and specific features of each site’s buildings, structures, and/or landscape elements. Project personnel also prepared location maps and site maps, showing the size of features and the relationship of buildings and structures to each other and to associated landscape elements. Inventory documentation served as the basis for evaluating the style, condition, and integrity (i.e. retention of those features necessary to convey its historical significance) of each site, and for making an assessment of each site’s significance, its association with the historic contexts detailed in the accompanying Multiple Property Documentation.

The Multiple Property Documentation prepared by Dr. Hagen identified three historic contexts and four general property types associated with Pasco’s Black American heritage (see sections E and F of this document). These contexts and property types developed from the results of research in a host of primary and secondary sources on the past patterns and trends that produced Pasco’s Black American properties. Research sources were located in federal, state, county, and local repositories as well as online collections under various auspices. A full list of sources consulted for the project is available in the bibliography below (section I).

Although the MPD relied on dozens of sources, it is especially indebted to period newspapers and to the aforementioned Tri-Cities area Black American history projects. It also benefitted greatly from academic work on the Black-American community in the Tri-Cities and the West that was produced during the postwar period and after. The earliest of these works included three 1949 WSU Master’s theses, i.e., M. Elaine Burgess’ “A Study of Selected Socio-Cultural and Opinion Differentials among Negroes and Whites in the Pasco, Washington Community”; Gordon Rutherford’s “An Appraisal of the Adult Education Implications of a Community Survey”; and James Wiley Jr.’s “Race Conflict as Exemplified in a Washington Town.”⁴¹⁷ Subsequent important projects focused on the Black community

⁴¹⁷ James T Wiley, “Race Conflict as Exemplified in a Washington Town” (State College of Washington, 1949); M. Elaine

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in the region included work by community members, such as an Oct. 1970 pamphlet on East Pasco titled *Pasco, Washington* produced by the Black Students Union at WSU; a ca. 1984 pamphlet produced by the Tri-Cities Ethnic Players, "in Celebration of Pasco's Centennial," titled *Cultural Awareness: Pasco's Black Community*; a 1994 booklet by Ralph Hayes and Joe Franklin on *Northwest Black Pioneers*; and a February 2000 pamphlet on *Negro League Baseball* in the Tri-Cities. These were followed, in 2005, by Dr. Robert Bauman's article in the *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, "Jim Crow in the Tri-Cities, 1943-1950."⁴¹⁸ Together, these works formed a foundation for the MPD.

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Aerial photo of Pasco, 1948, looking west from East Pasco (Lewis Street Underpass in the middle foreground)
(Franklin County Historical Society collections clipping)

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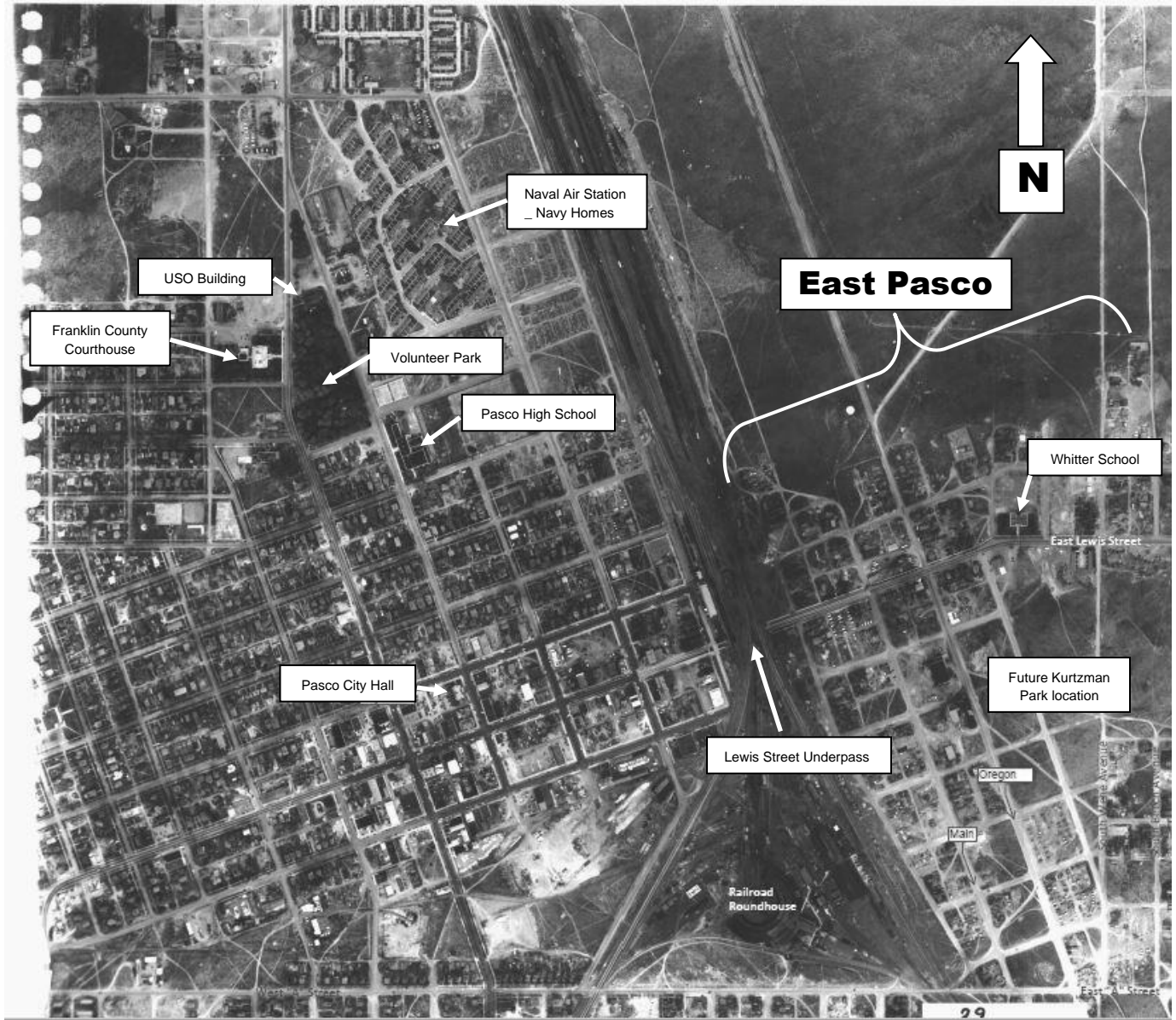
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Aerial photo of Pasco, 1948, with labels (City of Pasco Planning Dept. files)
[“Future City Hall” was at this time Pasco High School, and “Old Pasco City Hall” was Pasco City Hall]

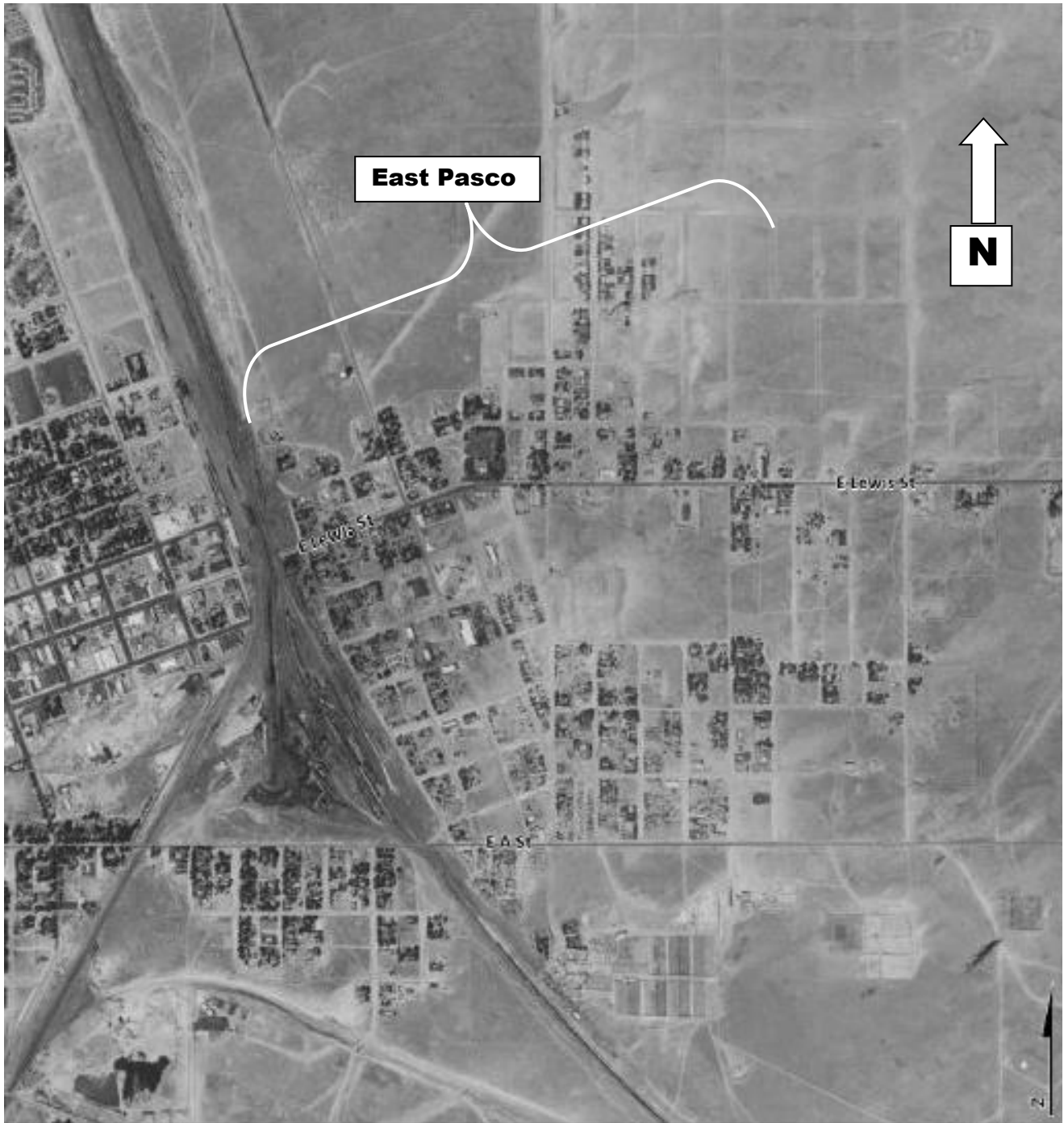
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Aerial photo of Pasco, 1955 (reprinted from Holschuh 2019)

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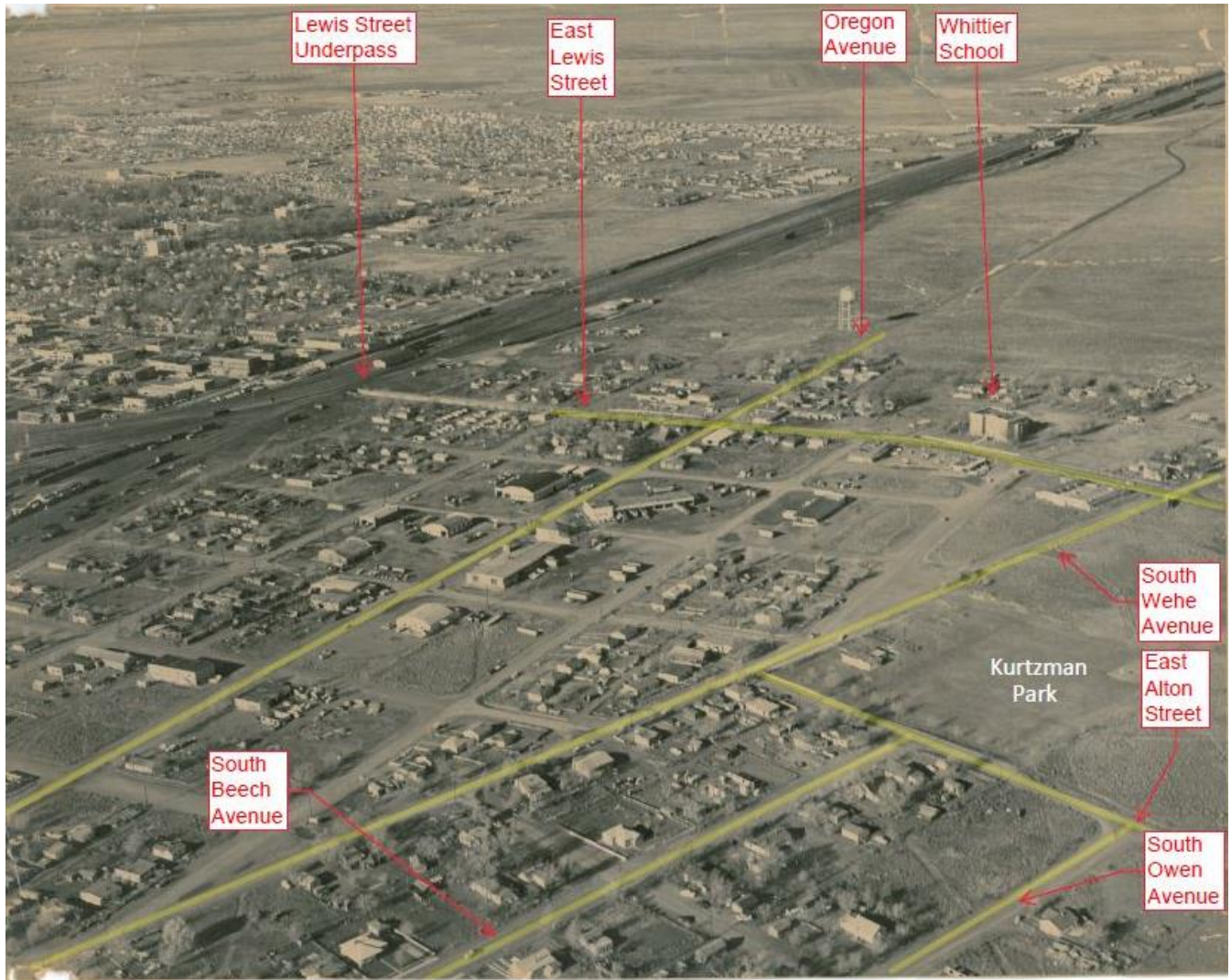
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Aerial photo of Pasco, looking NW from SE Pasco, late 1960s, with labels (City of Pasco Planning Dept. files)