CHAPTER FIVE

Increasing White Intolerance

White intolerance in the United States reached a post–Civil War peak and the Ohio color line became more unyielding and restrictive in the 1920s. After increasing for decades, intolerance reached a benchmark high across the nation at mid-decade. Anglo-Saxon Protestant hostility toward the foreign born, Catholics, Jews, African Americans, and other nonwhites contributed to the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the period 1915–1925. The Klan was highly organized in Ohio, Indiana, and many other northern states, as well as in the South. It successfully recruited Anglo-Saxon Protestants while preaching white supremacy and family values. The 1924 election victories of Klan-endorsed Republican candidates for statewide offices in Indiana were evidence that the Klan viewpoint was popular in the Midwest. Also signaling the high level of intolerance in 1924, the United States Congress passed the Johnson-Reed Act containing the most racially restrictive immigration regulations in the nation’s history. It prohibited immigration from Asia, whose populations were nonwhite, and established quotas permitting relatively little immigration from southern and eastern European countries whose people were largely non-Protestants. Meanwhile, African Americans were lynched and anti-lynching bills failed in the United States Congress when they were filibustered by southern Democrats and rejected by the Republican party. A legal racial caste system was completed in former slave states, and informal racial segregation was a fact in every region of the country during the decade.

Black and white Ohioans were separated more than ever in the 1920s as the color line was further solidified across practically every area of life. Ohio’s long established patterns of racial segregation and discrimination were enlarged to encompass unprecedented numbers of people, locations, institutions, and other aspects of life. The residential segregation of African Americans reached ghetto proportions for the first time in some Ohio cities by 1930. Racial discrimination and segregation were increasingly common in residential housing, schools, and public accommodations, while color bias was still seen in law enforcement and the
print media. White employers and various private organizations continued to bar or discriminate against African Americans. Racial incidents sometimes turned violent as instances of racial harassment multiplied. This mirrored the growth of white intolerance, which accelerated during World War I and continued in the postwar decade.

Intolerant whites in Ohio assumed the credibility of a white supremacy concept, which contrasted a stereotype of whites with superior characteristics and a false image of blacks possessing undesirable traits. Manifestations of the white supremacy thinking ranged from less to more hostile reactions to African Americans. Avoidance of racially mixed company was an example of a passive reaction. Towards the middle of the continuum were innumerable acts of overt racial discrimination or segregation, which were more aggressive, but nonviolent. The most hostile reactions were violent in nature. White supremacy views ran across class lines; consequently, the Ku Klux Klan drew membership from all social-economic classes. This ideology was widespread in Ohio before and after World War I, but this racial and ethnic thinking was lacking in organization until the Klan adopted it. The Klan’s organized conduct affecting blacks ranged from mild to aggressive actions, mirroring that of individual white supremacy adherents in the general public. The most militant white supremacists in and out of the Klan employed violent tactics, rioting, vandalism, threats of violence, and physical harassment. Racial violence was uncommon in Ohio, but belief in white supremacy undoubtedly was the norm in white society. The popular press in Ohio reflected the fact that this was a standard white view. Black stereotypes commonly were used in daily newspaper reporting about African Americans.

During the 1920s white Ohioans still candidly expressed their assumption of white supremacy. For example, the editor of a reputable Cincinnati daily newspaper, writing in reference to immigration restriction legislation, favored the exclusion of Japanese immigrants but was willing to welcome “people from all white lands.” Yet, white Ohioans generally failed to recognize their own prejudice; most of them probably sincerely believed that they were not anti-black. Undoubtedly many white people in the state felt a paternalistic sympathy for blacks that moderated their white supremacy views. An articulate and extraordinarily revealing expression of this attitude of white superiority mixed with paternalism was revealed in a letter of inquiry about the activities of the Columbus Urban League. The author was a middle class white woman residing in Columbus. Her letter was addressed to the local Urban League president, a white man, who was also the pastor of the Columbus First Congregational Church. She wrote:
The Negro problem is one which we should all get together upon as it seems as if it may be a very ugly one to bequeath to our children. I said the other day (thoughtlessly) “The Columbus Urban League is one Philanthropy to which I would not subscribe as the Negroes are spoiled already” but I am open to conviction.

The deepest sympathy is of course due them and I have read many an article by DuBois which wrung my heart, but when I see how his teachings of race equality (that they must stand upon their rights to get anywhere) is putting them on the defensive and wiping the care-free smile from their faces. I cannot help siding with Booker Washington’s theories as being best for their “pursuit of happiness.”

It seems to me there has been a definite propaganda at work along the former lines; whether emanating from their churches or from your League I do not know but I do know the kind-hearted, willing, happy worker has gone and instead we have an imitation of the white race at its worst and a suspicious unkind spirit of rivalry.

Like the letter writer, many whites in Ohio and other states felt genuine concern about the hardships of impoverished African Americans living in the urban North or in the rural South. Surely they were touched by the human difficulties of African Americans caught in urban slums with their deteriorating housing, health threats, and attendant social problems. Undoubtedly these whites recognized that such inequity was a race-relations problem that carried the potential for greater racial friction in future. Paternalistic whites were interested in improving the general welfare of African Americans but objected to efforts meant to bring racial equality because they did not see black people as their equals. The altruistically inclined whites often saw distorted images of African Americans. Certain ethnic stereotypes had evolved over the country’s colonial and national history. For example, African Americans were pictured as big, strong, carefree, happy, willing workers who were especially suited to manual labor. In this stereotypical perception, an affectionate bond between white mistress and black servant was the norm. Also according to this biased view African Americans lacked intelligent views and were easily misguided. In accord with such views whites, including many of those who were relatively sympathetic to blacks, approved a color line etiquette with a wide array of taboos. These ranged from proscriptions against racial intermarriage to rules against entering a white dwelling by the front door.

In writing to the local Urban League president, the white Columbus woman discussed her relationship to two young black women whom she
employed. In that part of the letter she again made remarks rooted in racial imagery that was in common usage among whites of her background. She continued:

I have two colored girls working for me doing the housework and because they are of the best type of their race they have seemed illuminating. They have been up from Louisville two years and when they first came they were so kindly and so cheerful, but I have seen a distinct change in their attitude—towards service—not at all towards me, for I am fond of them and they are fond of me. I have the utmost confidence in their honesty and decency. They are good—I was about to say “Christian girls,” but is it Christian to begrudge service and consider certain tasks beneath one? Christ’s washing of the feet proves not. Of course, their lack of an intelligent view of the matter I make allowance for, but is it right to make them unfit for and discontented with manual labor?

It is really amusing. These girls of mine are big strong healthy girls but they think because I occasionally lie down in the afternoon it is the thing to do so up they go leaving me to the mercy of the telephone and door bell. I have never had white girls refuse to help in housecleaning time and these girls had they followed their natural kindly instincts, would not have done so, but they felt they must “stand on their rights,” so let me work all day alone while they did their regular tasks only and went to their rooms for two hours every afternoon. They used my front door for themselves and their callers until I forbade it and then resented it. To be sure I could give no real reason for not permitting it, but if your Christianity carries you that far does it stop this side of intermarriage?

Moderately biased whites had certain racial expectations. They expected African Americans to be kind, courteous, and service oriented in dealings with whites. Blacks were supposed to be deferential to whites in employers’ homes, on streetcars, and in other public places. Lack of deference was seen as aggressiveness or gratuitous assertion of rights. These whites assumed that blacks naturally would obtain and accept less than whites, for example, smaller incomes and less expensive clothes. Efforts in aid of economic, cultural, and social betterment were perceived as unnatural and objectionable attempts to emulate whites. Generally whites were offended whenever African Americans showed dissatisfaction with the color line. Accordingly, white moderates concluded that the pursuit of equal rights was not in the interest of good race relations. The foregoing letter to the Columbus Urban League president revealed
its author's disagreement with W. E. B. Du Bois' "teachings on race equality" that emphasized protest against discrimination. The letter concluded:

At any rate the comfort of Negro servants is gone with this "chip on the shoulder" attitude. Demanding as they do, equal wages with whites, I feel as if I would never have them again. Is it doing them a kindness to make so many employers feel the same way?

It is not only in household labor that this attitude manifests itself. I only speak of that which I know most intimately. Hearsay evidence is abundant everywhere. Any one who uses the Long Street [trolley] cars can testify that the aggressiveness of the Negroes demonstrates the need of a school of manners and Christian kindliness rather than equal rights.

Have not most of them more money than it is good for them now? My girls spend nearly as much for their clothes as I do and certainly think of little else. They have a superficial smattering of learning which they like to air but their end and aim of existence is to get through "work" and to be "out."

To be sure discontent and unrest are the faults of the age, but is your organization fostering or lessening them? What are you giving the Negroes to take the place of their happiness if you are not giving them the ideal of service? I feel confident you must at least be trying to give them that but what then is the strong influence opposing it?2

The racial comments in this letter were stated in language that was at once forthright and muted. The letter's author was probably more knowledgeable about the views of black ideologues W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington than most whites in the state. Like many other white Ohioans, the letter writer clearly opposed race relations based upon equal rights but otherwise wished African Americans no harm. Also, like so many whites in Ohio, the writer became defensive as race relations changed and racial tensions rose in the state during and after World War I.

White intolerance of African Americans in Ohio remained relatively high in the 1920s after rising significantly during the wartime migration. The growth of the Ku Klux Klan in Ohio paralleled the increased white hostility to blacks. Klan activities were the most organized expressions of white supremacy radicals in Ohio during the decade. In contrast to white moderates, Klansmen advocated further racial proscription and sometimes perpetrated violence against African Americans. The nine-
teenth century Klan was basically confined to the South, but the reincarnated twentieth century Klan also was organized in many northern and western states. The Ku Klux Klan gained membership in Ohio and in other Great Lakes states early in the 1920s. The Klan first began to recruit in Ohio from a base of operations in southwestern Indiana. Klan units were formed in Cincinnati and Springfield late in 1920. A Columbus dentist, Dr. Charles L. Harrod, was the organizer of the Franklin County Klan and was the first “King Kleagle” in Ohio. Harrod’s Columbus office was the Ohio Klan’s principal recruiting headquarters. Busily recruiting in urban and rural areas, Klan organizers obtained members in every region of Ohio. As in other states, Ohio Klan membership was high in large cities including Akron, Dayton, and Youngstown. The Klan was also well entrenched in Ohio’s rural areas, such as Pickaway and Washington Counties on the Ohio River and Butler County on the southwestern boundary with Indiana. The Klan’s large membership made it a significant presence in Ohio. In 1927 the Klan claimed an Ohio membership of three hundred thousand. According to Kenneth T. Jackson’s estimates, Klan membership was higher in Ohio than in any other state excepting Indiana. The number of Ohio Klan members by any estimation, nevertheless, composed a small fraction of state’s white population that totaled 6,331,136 in 1930.

In the nineteenth century, the Ku Klux Klan was essentially a race organization antithetical to African Americans. The twentieth century Klan represented ethnic biases and racial ones. Klan members reacted to the mass immigration of European non-Protestants and to changing race relations in the decades prior to 1920. Consequently, in Ohio and other states, Ku Klux Klan propaganda and activities were anti-foreign, anti-Catholic, and anti-Semitic as well as anti-black. While appealing to prejudices, the Klan attempted to convince potential members that it was engaged in a moral crusade. The Klan pictured itself as the champion of white Protestant family values including support of law and order. There is an extensive literature on the Ku Klux Klan in Midwestern states during the 1920s. Older studies point to the Klan’s nativism, racism, and religious bigotry in explanation of its rise to prominence in the twenties. Newer and often more sophisticated analyses draw attention away from intolerance aspects. They argue that the Klan’s attractiveness came mainly from its identification with traditional values. William D. Jenkins and Leonard J. Moore, respectively, find that Klan members in Ohio and Indiana mirrored the whole spectrum of the white Protestant population. They argue that middle class members of mainstream denominations joined the Klan because they perceived it as a political agent for moral reform on such issues as vice and political corruption. But regardless of
the primary motivation of its members, the Klan used a threatening public rhetoric of religious bigotry, xenophobia, and white superiority. The foreign born, non-Protestants, and African Americans consequently were concerned about the Klan’s growing presence and power in the public sphere.

The Klan’s heritage of violence against blacks made its self-proclaimed law-abiding image seem implausible. The public knew well the Klan’s identification with arson, beatings, and lynching going back to the Reconstruction Era in the South. Evidently to alter perceptions of the Klan as a lawless organization, Klansmen often denied hostility toward African Americans. Although avowedly white supremacist and segregationist, the Ohio Klan protested that it was not unsympathetic to blacks. In order to demonstrate their “love of the Negro,” Klansmen occasionally made dramatic financial contributions to black churches. For example, in December 1923, about forty Klansmen marched into a black Baptist Church at Wadsworth in northern Ohio and gave its pastor a one hundred dollar contribution. Klansmen made a similar demonstration at a black Baptist Church in Cincinnati in April 1926. Such events surely were intended to attract press attention, and they were often reported widely. The New York Times carried the story of the Klan contribution to the black church in Cincinnati.

Ohio Klansmen even presumed to create a separate black branch of the Klan in 1924. Youngstown Klan officials, through a black agent, Paul Russell, organized the Loyal Legion of Lincoln, which was intended to be a national organization headquartered in Youngstown. The Loyal Legion shortly became defunct when Grand Scorpion Russell apparently absconded with funds collected from white Klansmen to finance the organization.

The Ku Klux Klan entered the political arena to gain power and promote its ethnic and racial agenda in Ohio. The Ohio Klan initiated its first intensive political program in 1923. Five Mahoning Valley cities elected Klan mayors that year, and Klan candidates were elected in various other parts of the state. Shortly after the general election in November 1924, Ohio Grand Dragon Clyde W. Osborne claimed that enough Klan candidates won seats in the state House of Representatives and Senate to give the Klan control of the Ohio General Assembly in 1925. Later Osborne more modestly claimed that forty-five members of the House were Klansmen. It appears, however, that there were never more than twenty Klansmen in the General Assembly. Nevertheless, in 1925 Klan state representatives introduced legislation reflecting their organization’s anti-Catholicism, anti-Semitism, and white supremacy attitudes. One of these bills prohibited marriage between whites and
Other such proposed legislation included bills that required all students to attend public schools, thereby disallowing enrollment in Catholic parochial schools, excluded Catholics from teaching in public schools, and required Bible reading in the public schools. These Klan backed bills did not pass the Ohio legislature, excepting the latter, which was vetoed by Governor Vic Donahey.

Occasionally Ohio Klansmen demonstrated their white supremacist views with violence or threats against African Americans. For example, in February 1923 Klansmen in white sheets harassed four black families in Cleves, a very small Ohio River town just below Cincinnati. They fired several gunshots and attached a note to the door of each African American home. The notes warned the families to leave town “by nightfall” and were signed “KKK.” Also in 1923, Klansmen burned “fiery crosses” in the African American section of Urbana. In 1920 blacks were 11 percent of that Central Ohio town’s 7,621 people. The Ku Klux Klan exacerbated racial problems in Ohio, sometimes inspiring violence against blacks and generally exploiting color prejudice; however, it was not responsible for all racial violence or color lines in Ohio during the 1920s. White hostility and racial discrimination existed in Ohio prior to the Klan’s rise and after its fall from prominence. In Ohio and elsewhere the Ku Klux Klan went into decline after a nationally prominent Klan leader was convicted of second-degree murder on the deathbed testimony given by young woman that he savaged and raped. Ohio Klan membership fell rapidly in 1926, and by the end of the decade the Klan was insignificant in the state.

The potential for racial violence in Ohio was substantial through the 1920s as race relations remained tense. Actually racial outbreaks in the state were infrequent during the decade, but they included a classic race riot in the central Ohio city of Springfield. These incidents involved white mobs, lynching threats, criminal allegations against black men, and rumors of anticipated violence. In March 1921 a race riot broke out in Springfield for the third time in the twentieth century. Earlier, in 1904, a Springfield mob lynched a black man, who allegedly killed a white policeman, and destroyed dwellings in a local black area known as the “Levee.” In 1906, another mob in that city burned another African American section following the murder of a white railroad worker. In both riots the state militia was called upon to put down disorder. The 1921 Springfield riot was evidently precipitated when an eleven-year-old white girl was assaulted on March 7. An African American allegedly was seen in the vicinity of the assault shortly before the girl was attacked. The local press ran daily stories about the alleged presence of a black man and about the physical condition of the hospitalized girl. Two days later,
a white mob formed at the jail in response to false rumors that the assailant had been captured. The sheriff told the assembled whites that the capture rumors were erroneous and proved it by allowing some of them to inspect the jail. On the evening of March 10 a second and larger white mob formed in Springfield’s black business district and harassed departing basketball fans who had watched a game played at the African American Center Street YMCA building.\(^{21}\)

The next morning, March 11, it was rumored in Springfield’s black neighborhoods that another mob planned to “burn out the Negro sections” that evening. Many African Americans in Springfield prepared for self-defense against mob action. In this instance the rumors were well founded.\(^{22}\) In an account of the riot, a Springfield correspondent of the Cleveland Gazette reported:

> Every section of the city, in which there were any number of our people, was organized for determined resistance to any mob that might molest them. Former soldiers of the World War were of especial service in forming the backbone of the various organizations. As on the preceding nights, the rioters gathered to carry out their threats but the activity of the police and firemen, who were called upon to assist, kept them from invading our sections of this city where “warm receptions” were awaiting them. While the rioters were being driven from place to place downtown, the only disturbance in our sections was when Pres. B. J. Westcott of the City Commission, City Manager Parsons and Patrolman Cody were fired upon as they attempted to enter the S. Yellow Springs St. district to assure our people that they would be protected. Fortunately, they were not hit. The firing was caused by fear of raids by auto parties. The officials were of course not known at the time the firing was done.\(^{23}\)

Also, during that evening of March 11, Springfield city officials asked Ohio Governor Harry L. Davis to send in the state militia. Shortly, Ohio National Guardsmen arrived in Springfield and order was restored quickly. Subsequently, forty black and white men were fined for participation in the riots, and several were bound over to the grand jury for possessing concealed weapons and one for carrying dynamite.\(^{24}\)

Racial outbreaks comparable to that in Springfield did not occur in other Ohio cities, but racial tension occasionally did become evident in parts of the state. In 1921, for example, it was rumored that whites were preparing to attack African Americans in Newburgh Heights, located just southeast of Cleveland.\(^{25}\) The decennial census showed that
Newburgh Heights was an all-white town the year before. In 1927 the “mob spirit” was fanned to a “fever heat” in Dayton after the death of a city policeman who was killed in a battle between white policemen and certain African Americans resisting arrest. According to a Dayton observer “prejudiced whites and the police made it more or less uncomfortable, for several days, for all our residents of this city.” In response to this situation, leading African American citizens of Dayton, including the local NAACP branch president, publicly expressed their disapproval of crime. In a statement addressed to Dayton’s director of public safety, they declared: “... [W]e stand for law and order.” Subsequently, Roy Freeman was arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced to death for the murder of the Dayton patrolman. However, at a second trial, this black man’s conviction was overturned on the grounds that it was based in part on a confession obtained by means of “third degree” police methods.

Ohio daily newspaper reporting about blacks contributed to the growth of white intolerance during the 1920s. Across the state daily newspapers exhibited disrespect for African Americans through the use of racial identification terms that were degrading or offensive to black people. The Ohio daily press rarely mentioned African Americans except in news about social problems, for instance, in crime stories often with racially inflammatory headlines. While generally presenting an undesirable image of African Americans, the press fostered a stereotype of the black male as dangerous, violent, and immoral. A scholarly survey made in 1920 showed that coverage of African Americans in Columbus’ three major newspapers neglected commendable conduct and gave undue publicity to anti-social behavior, usually under “glaring headlines.” A scholarly study done in 1924 revealed that vice and crime was the theme of 55.7 percent of the items about African Americans in The Columbus Evening Dispatch, The Ohio State Journal, and The Columbus Citizen. It classified some articles in these dailies as “flippant and ridicule of Negroes.” Such reporting surely elevated color awareness in Ohio.

Large and nearly all-black districts formed in Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Columbus as residential segregation increased during the 1920s. While such major black districts did not evolve elsewhere in Ohio during the decade, African Americans were more residentially concentrated and isolated in Dayton, Toledo, and other Ohio cities in 1930. Racial discrimination and economic circumstances still prevented the general diffusion of black populations in Ohio cities. African Americans usually were barred from white residential districts in the state’s cities; consequently, enlarged black populations concentrated in Ohio urban districts housing previously established black neighborhoods. Existing black residential areas expanded and new ones formed on streets and avenues
between old black neighborhoods. In the wake of this trend, all-black neighborhoods were larger and whole urban districts were predominantly black for the first time. In Cleveland, during the 1920s, many new black neighborhoods formed east of East 55th Street, where few African Americans resided during World War I. Meanwhile, west of East 55th Street, Cleveland's old black areas in the vicinity of Central and Scovill Avenues expanded and came together. In 1930 African Americans in Cleveland, with few exceptions, lived in an East Side sector that ran east to west from East 105th Street to the Cuyahoga River and north to south from Euclid Avenue to Woodland Avenue. (See map 3.) In Cincinnati the old African American residential sections in the West End near the river expanded, especially northward into districts that had been predominantly white in 1920. This settlement pattern created a larger predominantly black south to north corridor near the western edge of Cincinnati's river basin. While most African Americans lived in the inner city West End in 1930, there were black settlements in several Cincinnati suburbs. These included a large black middle class section in Walnut Hills. Also, blacks “largely populated” College Hill, Cumminssville, Lockland, and Madisonville, which were low-income suburbs. Commenting on these black residential areas in 1925, Wendell P. Dabney, noted, “Comparatively few live in white neighborhoods.”

In Columbus black population growth during the 1920s largely occurred in the vicinity of the city center and in areas close to manufacturing plants employing African Americans. Five noncontiguous black neighborhoods in Columbus received most of the migrants. They were located in the Southgate Addition and areas near South Seventh Street, West Goodale Street, East Fifth Avenue, and East Long Street. According to J. S. Himes's study of African American life in Columbus, “the greatest numerical and spatial growth of the Negro population took place” in and around old black sections near East Long Street. Himes stated: “Prior to 1910 the foci of Negro settlement in this section were North Third Street, both north and south of East Long Street and North Champion Avenue, north and south of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The migrants entered this community at both these foci and spread in all directions, causing the community to close in upon itself and to develop the solid Negro area we now know.”

The residential segregation of African Americans in urban Ohio was evidenced in 1930 census statistics. Most African Americans were concentrated in four or five of the many census districts in each large Ohio city. Cleveland was divided into 40 statistical areas for census purposes, while there were 26 census wards in Cincinnati and 19 in Columbus. Eighty-seven percent of African Americans in Cleveland were located
in Statistical Areas 20–24. In Columbus, 65 percent of all African Americans lived in Wards 6, 7, 8, and 13. Sixty-three percent of Cincinnati’s black population resided in Wards 15–18. (See map 4.) In smaller Ohio urban centers African Americans also were concentrated in a few census districts. Eighty-one percent of Dayton’s black population resided in Wards 5, 6, and 7. One ward housed 82 percent of the African Americans in Hamilton, a small southwestern Ohio city.33

African American concentrations grew in Ohio’s old urban residential districts because those areas experienced the departure of whites as well as the arrival of blacks. Racial bias undoubtedly affected whites departing racially integrated urban areas. But this residential mobility was a factor in the larger pattern of urban life that evolved in the United States during 1890–1930. In the nineteenth century, urban residents lived within walking distance of manufacturing areas or commercial districts inside city limits. Improvements in public transportation made it possible to work in the old urban center but reside on the city’s outskirts. Prior to World War I, the proliferation of electric trolley cars especially spurred housing construction in areas beyond city centers. The emerging urban

Map 3
Distribution of the Cleveland Negro Population, 1930.

Source: Howard W. Green, Population Characteristics by Census Tracts, Cleveland, Ohio, 1930 (Cleveland: The Plain Dealer Publishing Company, 1931). With permission of The Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.
configuration encompassed an old inner city with newer residential divisions variously located on its edges. The advantages of suburban life were evident to city dwellers, regardless of their ethnicity or color. Experience in the city center involved old buildings, crowding, noise, industrial grime and smoke. In contrast, life in new suburban housing was greener, quieter, and cleaner, while providing greater privacy and social status. Those who could afford costly suburban property moved, while low-income families remained in inner city. Decreasing in size, prewar inner city populations were disproportionately composed of southern and eastern European immigrants and African Americans. The wartime housing shortage inhibited the suburban trend. The movement accelerated in the next decade, driven by the prosperous economy, the mass production of inexpensive automobiles, and the boom in residential housing construction during the 1920s. The exodus of city inhabitants to suburban residences was a well-established pattern of residential mobility in the United States in 1930. It was impelled by various technological, economic, and social factors including racial bias.34
The development of the major black district in Cincinnati's River Basin occurred within the general pattern of urban change in the United States that saw movements from older to newer residential areas. The proportion of Cincinnati's total population residing in the River Basin declined from 64 percent to 20 percent between 1870 and 1930. After the Civil War, Cincinnati's West End residents were mostly members of the city's older white families, some of which were quite wealthy. Near the end of the nineteenth century these families began to move into the city's hilltop suburbs. Subsequently, eastern and southern European immigrants occupied their former residences. In the 1920s these immigrant families followed earlier residents of the West End en masse to the hilltop areas. In turn, blacks and some white hill people from West Virginia and Kentucky entered their vacated old dwellings. Similar demographic changes occurred in other Ohio cities. In Columbus before 1890, the West Goodale Street district residents were of Welsh, Irish, and German origins; although some were immigrants, they were mainly old stock. Once many Italian immigrants settled in the West Goodale Street section, these older white residents began an exodus in earnest, often selling their property to African Americans. Over the course of the war period and the twenties, the predominantly black areas in the West Goodale District became “larger and more solidly Negro.” Also, many Russians, Rumanians, and Italians who lived in separate ethnic districts on Cleveland's East Side moved elsewhere during the 1920s, making residential space for African Americans.

Undoubtedly, racial prejudice was among the motives that gave impetus to the departure of whites from old urban districts in Ohio in the 1920s. In reference to this phenomenon in Cincinnati, local weekly editor Wendell P. Dabney wrote: “In every locality, as Negroes increase, the whites diminish. Before the black invasion, the whites retire and disappear as snow 'neath the rays of the rising sun.” Dabney suggested that whites moved in order to avoid black neighbors. While surely true, this was an oversimplification of the exodus. The whites moved from older residential sections that had been intensively used by different demographic groups. The fact that by the 1920s these areas were already “rapidly decaying” was one causal factor in the movement. Also, by this time many of the white residents of these older deteriorating sections had acquired the financial resources to enable them to obtain better housing in the more prestigious suburbs. Sometimes whites moved to suburbs from all-white inner city neighborhoods. Referring to Columbus in 1922, Urban League official Nimrod B. Allen said, “the desire of white people, with means to live in the fashionable suburban sections, causes sales of homes to Negroes over the protest of their white neighbors who object
to living next to Negroes.” The arrival of African Americans into such older residential areas certainly stimulated the exodus of whites.

The out-migration of whites and in-migration of blacks during the 1920s created predominantly black census districts in Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Columbus. In 1920 Africans Americans were the majority in only one Ohio ward, Cincinnati’s Ward 18, where blacks were just over half the population. In 1930 blacks were 73 percent of the population in Columbus’ 7th ward, 78 percent in Cincinnati’s 16th ward, and 72 percent in Cincinnati’s 18th ward. In Cleveland, African Americans were 72 percent of the people in Statistical Area 23, while that figure was 70 percent in Area 24. Also in 1930, significant black majorities existed in the combined populations of two or more adjacent census districts in each of Ohio’s three largest cities. African Americans were 63 percent of the population in Cincinnati’s Wards 15–18, 62 percent in Columbus’ Wards 6 and 7, and 56 percent in Cleveland’s Statistical Areas 21–24.

Predominantly African American census wards did not form in the less populous Ohio cities, but residential segregation proceeded there on a smaller spatial scale during the 1920s. In these cities, the proportion of blacks grew in those wards where blacks were concentrated in the past. In 1930 African Americans were 40 to 44 percent of the population in Springfield Ward 7, Dayton Ward 7, and Toledo Ward 8. Akron, Canton, Hamilton, and Youngstown each contained one ward where blacks were from 10 to 25 percent of the ward population.

During the 1920s, the unwillingness of whites to reside near African Americans was a constant factor causing the development of major black districts in Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Columbus and further residential concentration of African Americans in Ohio’s other urban centers. Overtly and covertly, whites attempted to confine African Americans to less desirable residential areas and to maintain other places exclusively for whites. Individual whites who owned homes in racially exclusive neighborhoods usually declined to rent or sell them to African Americans. Customarily, white banks would not make mortgage loans to blacks for the purchase of houses in those areas. Realty companies and newspaper advertisements reserved some residential property for whites only. White neighborhood improvement associations campaigned to exclude or remove black residents in their locales. Sometimes, physical harassment and violence were employed to force black families to vacate their recently purchased houses in previously all-white neighborhoods.

Ralph G. Harshman, who was a contemporary observer of Columbus’ housing color line in 1920–1921, said, “. . . [T]here seems to be an
unwritten law which says exactly where they [African Americans] shall reside. And while it does not always work, yet in the majority of cases it is very effective.” Also, according to Harshman, during the years 1919 through 1921, major Columbus newspapers carried many real estate company advertisements indicating that blacks “need not make application as the companies will not sell to them.”44 Local Urban League officer Nimrod B. Allen also witnessed the real estate color line in Columbus early in the decade and commented on issues involving business and institutional properties there. Allen wrote: “The Long Street Improvement Association, composed of white businessmen... uses its influence to keep colored people from purchasing property on this street.”45 He mentioned another East Long Street property issue, this one at 18th Street, where the black Centenary Methodist Episcopal congregation planned to construct a church edifice very close to a new white church (Welch Presbyterian). Allen reported: “There are being put forth strong efforts by the white people interested to prevent the erection of this church for Negroes.”46

Organized campaigns to exclude blacks from white neighborhoods were started in northern and southern Ohio as well as in Columbus during the 1920s. These anti-black efforts existed in Ohio’s major cities and in its smaller ones. White property owners established racially exclusive neighborhood associations in reaction to the presence of new black residents in formerly all-white areas. Some of these residential streets were in inner-city districts encompassing old black neighborhoods where the number of dwellings was insufficient to accommodate local African Americans. But other such all-white neighborhoods were in suburbs whose amenities attracted black and white families that could afford suburban real estate. The white neighborhoods associations were conceived as permanent organizations with central councils and committees. Supported by hundreds of members, these associations adopted formal programs containing strategies to accomplish racial exclusion and raised money to finance their agendas.

In the Cleveland area, white neighborhood associations tried to bar African Americans from the city’s eastern suburbs. During the 1920s Cleveland’s African American residential areas expanded eastward from the deteriorating old Central Avenue black neighborhoods near downtown. Only well-to-do families lived in the black enclaves furthest to the east. But Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights, affluent white suburbs near the East Side, were almost racially exclusive early in the decade.47

White property owners organized when an African American purchased property in the exclusive Wade Park section of Cleveland bordering on Cleveland Heights. Dr. Charles Garvin, who was a physician and
World War I veteran, acquired property in Wade Park during the summer of 1925. The property was purchased by a white person and transferred to Mrs. Garvin, under her maiden name, after the previous owner refused to sell it to an African American. When this transfer became public knowledge, representatives of the Wade Park property owners met with Dr. Garvin and tried to induce him to sell the property. Dr. Garvin refused and stated that he intended to construct a house on the property and live in it. On September 20, 1925, about two hundred Wade Park residents held a meeting for the purpose of preventing the Garvins from occupying their house, which was then under construction. They established a formal organization and elected officers. Various speakers presented information about Dr. Garvin’s purchase and opposed residence in the area by African Americans. Also, a committee was created and instructed to seek the cooperation of Cleveland’s African American leaders in finding a solution to the dispute. Representatives of the Wade Park property owners, African American professional leaders, and the local church federation met two days later. Black attorneys Alexander H. Martin and Clayborne George firmly supported Dr. Garvin’s decision to retain his property and live in his house once it was constructed. A representative of the Federated Churches of Cleveland said that the conferees should consider intelligence and character rather than color as they attempted to resolve the issue. The meeting was adjourned without agreement.

In October the Wade Park neighborhood council formally approved a scheme designed to generally exclude African Americans from the area. Members of the Wade Park association resolved to restrict the sale of property to Caucasians only. The association formed a committee instructed to investigate the backgrounds of potential buyers of land and houses in Wade Park. Residents were requested to remove the “For Sale” signs from their property until the scheme was in operation. Also, it was decided to collect money to be used for the purchase of property in the neighborhood that might be bought by African Americans. The amount to be contributed by each member was set at about one quarter of the annual property tax.

Acting on racial motives, white property owners in Shaker Heights also formally organized in 1925 after Dr. Edward A. Bailey, a physician, and banker Howard Murrell bought Shaker Heights properties on Huntington Drive and Fairmount Boulevard, respectively. Some four hundred property owners established the Shaker Heights Protective Association, which took steps to draft and implement a restrictive covenant against property sales to African Americans. Newton D. Baker, former Cleveland mayor and former secretary of war under
President Wilson, played a leading role in the Shaker Heights Protective Association.50

In 1926 white residents in Dayton founded the West End Improvement Association in reaction to racially changing residential patterns within the Dayton city limits. Dayton’s West End was composed of essentially separate white and black residential areas. Prompted by overcrowding and inadequate shelter in old black neighborhoods, some African Americans sought accommodations elsewhere in the West End. For example, black residents of shack villages called “Tin Can Alley” and “Tin Town” looked for better housing. In response, the West End Improvement Association undertook a program promoting racial segregation in housing and public schools. The association intended to use realtors, creditors, inducements, and threats to accomplish its ends. As a requirement of membership, all white members of the association, some five thousand in number, agreed not to sell, lease, or rent their property to African Americans. In the association’s plan certain streets in the West End were to be designated for whites only or for blacks only, black children were to be removed from Roosevelt High School, and new elementary and junior high schools were to be constructed in black areas. According to the association’s program, real estate dealers who allowed blacks to purchase West End property in designated white areas were to have their names published and to be boycotted by association members. The association also intended to make arrangements ensuring that Dayton’s banks and its loan associations would restrict credit for African Americans seeking mortgage loans. An implicit threat against African Americans was made in the association’s statement that blacks who agreed to the association’s program were to be promised peace and protection. Evidently to appease African Americans, the association advocated the construction of a community center in a black area.51 Some black business and professional men supported the association’s program in exchange for the association’s promise of aid in securing a community house for African Americans, but the black ministers of Dayton made a public statement expressing their opposition to the racially restrictive scheme.52

The West End Improvement Association’s “for white only” meetings were held in Dayton’s Roosevelt High School. The announcement of the association’s meeting on July 13, 1927, read: “Are we going to let the Negro take the West Side? This is for you to decide. Don’t wait until the Negro moves next door! All white residents of the west side should attend this meeting.”53 African American spokespersons in Dayton contacted school officials and protested this practice. Subsequently, the Dayton Board of Education responded to it affirmatively and the association was prohibited from using the high school building for its meetings.54
Sometimes persons who found better housing outside Ohio's black districts were subjected to physical harassment during the 1920s. In Cleveland suburbs angry mobs tried to make black residents leave previously all-white areas. In 1924 white mobs forced the Arthur Hill family to leave their recently purchased home in Garfield Heights. The village mayor refused the Hills police protection on the grounds that the Garfield Heights authorities could not afford to pay for it. He also said that the Hills "had no right to buy such a nice place." The family of Dr. Edward A. Bailey was harassed in a variety of ways after moving into Shaker Heights. The perpetrators attempted to burn the Bailey's garage, threw stones at windows, and fired gunshots at their house. The family chauffeur fired at one of the vandals. When Dr. Bailey sought protection from Shaker Heights officials, a police guard was stationed at the house. The policemen searched members of the family and their servants for concealed weapons every time they left the house and again when they returned. Given this treatment the Baileys left Shaker Heights.

Dr. Charles Garvin and his family faced vandalism and violence as African American newcomers to a racially exclusive area on Cleveland's far East Side. The Garvins moved into their newly constructed Wade Park home on December 31, 1925. Several days later a vandal painted "KKK" in large letters across the front of the house. Cleveland's police department made an investigation following Dr. Garvin's report of the incident. At the end of January 1926, the explosion of a homemade bomb damaged the Garvin house. Following the explosion, Mrs. Garvin observed several men running from the scene. Afterwards, a police detail was assigned to guard the Garvin property.

Meanwhile, Dr. Garvin was appointed as assistant surgeon in the genito-urinary surgery department at Western Reserve University's School of Medicine and at Lakeside Hospital. Early in July a second attempt was made to bomb the Garvin house. Again the police investigated the incident and provided protection. The resulting anguish experienced by the family was expressed by Dr. Garvin's sister, who wrote: "I was worried nearly half to death over the trouble my . . . brother is having. . . . His wife was very brave the first time and may be now, but it is a terrible position to be placed in." Despite the harassment, which eventually subsided, the Garvins remained in their Wade Park home.

Throughout the decade whites occasionally mounted physical resistance when Ohio's neighborhoods changed racially. In 1929 the family of Ozie Benson bought a house in one of Toledo's white immigrant neighborhoods. Once the Bensons moved into the residence, all their windows were broken and an attempt was made to burn their dwelling. The
former owner, a white person, was threatened with mob violence because he sold the property to an African American.\textsuperscript{63}

The segregation of African American students in Ohio schools was greater in 1930 than it was ten years earlier. African American enrollments increased and sometimes became predominant in urban school districts with neighborhoods where blacks were arriving and whites were leaving. Nineteenth century state law still prohibited all-white or all-black schools that were based on public policy. Wholly white schools nevertheless existed across Ohio usually because all children in their districts were whites. While not found in northern Ohio, there were entirely African American public schools in central and southern Ohio. All-black schools, opened earlier, continued to exist in Columbus, Cincinnati, and Dayton during the decade, while new ones were established in Cincinnati and Springfield. Racially integrated public schools increasingly placed black students in separate classes, claiming that the placements were made on the basis of scholastic achievements and not on race. Although racial separation widened, Ohio schools with few exceptions operated within state laws, and students regardless of color were admitted to schools in their districts. Yet racial discrimination was common in Ohio’s racially mixed schools. White parents, students, and teachers harbored prejudiced views of African Americans. Black teachers were not assigned to instruct white students, except in some northern Ohio schools. When schools became predominantly African American, their curricula often were made less academically rigorous.

Racial segregation of public school students widened in all Ohio regions during the 1920s. Throughout the state, schools became predominantly black in school districts that were being densely settled by African American families. In Cleveland, black students were enrolled in 63 of that city’s 142 public schools in 1924.\textsuperscript{64} The other 79 Cleveland public schools undoubtedly were all white. These racially integrated and all-white institutions in Cleveland evidently mirrored the racial characteristics of their respective school districts. Enrollments in some Cleveland schools became predominantly black as racial demographics of school districts changed. For example, practically all of the students attending Outhwaite School and Rutherford B. Hayes School in 1927 were African Americans.\textsuperscript{65} At the end of the decade, almost all black junior high students in Cleveland attended four schools, and most Cleveland Central High School students were African Americans.\textsuperscript{66} Black students became more concentrated in some neighborhood schools, but public schools throughout Cleveland admitted students living in their respective districts regardless of color. In 1930 integrated faculties as well as student bodies still existed in Cleveland schools. Over
100 African American teachers were employed in Cleveland schools, including some predominantly white ones. Yet, as late as 1926, only one black teacher was assigned to a Cleveland school above the elementary level.

Likewise the Columbus public school system was racially integrated during the 1920s when racial separation grew in some of its schools. Black students attended 56 of Columbus' 58 public schools in 1921. The predominantly white schools in Columbus each enrolled at least two African American students. Black pupils were the majority at two Columbus schools in 1921. One of them was located in a school district with boundary lines that had been racially gerrymandered before World War I. Referring to this Champion Avenue School in 1922, local Urban League officer Nimrod B. Allen wrote: "Being in a Negro district it is theoretically not a Negro school but is officered entirely by Negro teachers, with the exception of a manual training teacher, and all the pupils are Negroes. Any white child who lives in that section may attend another school if he wishes. This school has a Junior High Department." Later, another Columbus school became predominantly black as the African American population grew on the city's East Side. The Columbus school board employed black principals and teachers to staff the three schools with large African American enrollments. Consequently, the number of black teachers in Columbus rose from 27 to 58 between 1920 and 1930.

The number of completely separate schools for African Americans grew in central and southern Ohio during the 1920s. All were placed in or near black neighborhoods, were staffed by African Americans, and enrolled black students only. The locations and staffing of these institutions signaled that local school authorities meant them for African Americans. But, black students not residing within the district boundaries of these schools were not required to attend them. Those founded before 1920 included Cincinnati's Douglass School and Harriet Beecher Stowe School, Dayton's Garfield School Annex, and Columbus' Champion Avenue School.

All-black schools existed only in southern and central Ohio and were more common in Cincinnati than elsewhere in the state. Paralleling enrollment growth in Cincinnati's all-black schools, the number of black teachers in that city rose from 83 to 163 between 1920 and 1930. A large school edifice was constructed to accommodate the rising number of black students. The new Harriet Beecher Stowe School building, dedicated in 1923, housed a new all-black junior high school as well as an all-black elementary school. In prior years black students finishing the elementary grades could only enter racially mixed junior high
schools in Cincinnati. Black students seeking admission to Stowe School exceeded its seating capacity shortly after it opened. In 1925 the Stowe pupils in the overflow were taught at the Jackson Colony, a school annex located on West Fifth Street in a nineteenth century school building with seating for 600 students. At that time, Principal Jennie D. Porter supervised 80 teachers at the Stowe School as well as the 23 teachers and the assistant principal at the Jackson annex. In 1925 Stowe School had 3,080 pupils, more than any other Cincinnati school whether black, white, or integrated. Meantime, Principal Francis M. Russell and 31 teachers were in charge of Douglass Elementary School, housed in a main edifice seating 800 pupils and in portable buildings with seats for 180 more. Ostensibly, black students in Cincinnati could choose to attend one of these all-black public schools or a racially mixed school. Meanwhile, Superintendent William J. Decatur and nine teachers conducted vocational and scholastic work at the Colored Industrial School of Cincinnati. This private trade school graduated almost 600 students between 1914 and 1926.74

All-black schools also existed in Dayton and in smaller central and southern Ohio towns and cities during the decade. Some of these schools were based on overtly racial policies that were in violation of Ohio law against school segregation. In Dayton, African Americans were excluded from the Garfield Elementary School building. Starting in the previous decade, Garfield School’s black students and faculty were assigned to a separate annex building.75 In 1925 decisions in Ohio courts found this practice to be unlawful. Subsequently, in 1926, a school bond issue in Dayton provided funds for the construction of an elementary school in a wholly African American school district of that city.76 In central Ohio, the Springfield school board’s policies were in accord with state law until 1922, when it approved an experiment in racial segregation. Only black students and staff were assigned to Springfield’s Fulton Elementary School during 1922–1923. Ohio courts eventually barred this racial policy at Fulton School. In southern Ohio, black schools existed in very small towns with relatively large African American populations. African Americans formed residential concentrations in Lockland and Wyoming, located just north of Cincinnati in Hamilton County. In each of these towns about a fifth of the people were African Americans in 1930. The total population then was 5,703 in Lockland and 3,767 in Wyoming. In 1925, small black schools in these towns employed African American principals and faculty, with six teachers in Lockland and four in Wyoming.77

Increasing racial segregation also occurred within Ohio’s racially integrated schools during the 1920s. In some mixed schools, special classes
enrolled only black children whose families had recently migrated from the South. Southern states generally provided inadequate schooling for African American students. Consequently, a high percentage of the migrant children had not made educational achievements in accordance with their age or grade levels by Ohio public school standards. Apparently, diverse motives influenced the authorities who reacted to the problem of educational retardation among migrant children. Some local school officials made legitimate efforts to raise the educational achievements of the migrant children. Others merely used the situation to rationalize separate classes for black students from the South. Irrespective of motives, their responses to the educational problems of the migrant pupils commonly led to greater racial segregation. At about mid-decade, elementary schools in various Ohio regions started separate classes for black students whose ages and grade levels did not match as required. In southern Ohio, for example, this practice was initiated in Dayton’s Willard School and in Hamilton County’s Woodlawn School in 1924. In northern Ohio, such classes were introduced in Mansfield’s Bowman School in 1925 and in Cleveland’s Outhwaite and Rutherford B. Hayes Schools in 1927.78

The racial attitudes of whites contributed to the widening color divide in Ohio public schools in the 1920s. White reactions to integrated schools usually ranged from hostility to indifference, but some whites supported laws against school segregation. Anti-black biases of many white educators, parents, and children adversely affected race relations in mixed schools. As earlier, there was greater white acceptance of integrated schools in Cleveland than in central and southern Ohio cities. In Cleveland some black teachers taught white students, and a black board of education member voted on citywide school policy issues at the end of the decade. After the number of black students enrolled in Cleveland schools grew substantially, black community activists declared that African Americans were entitled to representation on the city’s board of education. When school board vacancies occurred in October 1926 and April 1929, organized campaigns urged the appointment of an African American to the board. Both of these movements failed, although the latter effort involved several hundred people, black and white. The goal was achieved when Mary E. Martin won a Cleveland school board seat in the general election, November 1929. Mrs. Martin, the wife of attorney Alexander H. Martin, was a graduate of Cleveland’s Central High School and the Cleveland School of Education. Her qualifications for the post included teaching experience in Alabama, Arkansas, and Cleveland schools.79

African Americans, nevertheless, were not fully represented in the
Cleveland Public School system. Further, color bias and hostility to racial integration existed in Cleveland schools. Blacks were underrepresented in Cleveland’s school administration, and with exceptions black teachers were not employed above the elementary level. Color prejudice was expressed in the Cleveland junior high school that employed David Pierce, who was a white teacher and an active member of the local NAACP branch. Black pupils comprised almost 3 percent of enrollment in Pierce’s school; however, his classes were entirely composed of white students. Pierce observed race relations at his school and reported the racial attitudes of its students, teachers, and parents in 1923. He surveyed his classes asking questions, for example, concerning the desirability of mixed schools. He learned that approximately half of the students were “decidedly prejudiced.” The other half “felt the problem required intelligent and thoughtful consideration.” This group included “a small number in favor of equal rights for Negroes.”

Answers given by Pierce’s students revealed that “… colored children were only too frequently snubbed and subjected to insults from their white classmates.” Similarly, Pierce observed that “in some instances” teachers taught racial “antagonism.”

Objections to school integration during the 1920s were even more common among whites in southern and central Ohio than in Cleveland. Commenting on Cincinnati schools in that decade, local black weekly editor Wendell P. Dabney said: “The whites generally favor separate schools. Regarding Negroes as inferior, they deplore any association with them. . . .” A study of racial attitudes in Columbus schools found that opposition to school integration was widespread among white teachers and parents of school age children. In 1920–1921, sociologist Ralph G. Harshman made a survey that included 80 white parents chosen at random. All of those who replied objected to racial integration in the schools. All 20 of the black parents interviewed approved integration. Of the 130 Columbus teachers who responded to Harshman’s survey, only 15 favored racial integration in the schools. The white bias against mixed schools was broad in Columbus and elsewhere in the state, but there was no documented effort to legalize segregated schools in Ohio during the 1920s. Columbus public schools were conducted within the state law prohibiting color line school policies. Harshman observed: “… [T]here is absolutely no restriction in regard to mingling” in racially mixed Columbus public schools.

Racially integrated public schools were still commonplace in Ohio cities in the 1920s; however, demographic trends and other extralegal factors at work during the decade increased the probability that an African American student would be enrolled in an all-black class in a
predominantly black school or in a school composed only of African Americans. Schools that were mainly devoted to African American students often gave greater attention to vocational goals than academic ones. In Cleveland the local NAACP branch president asserted: "... to all intents and purposes Outhwaite and R. B. Hayes Schools are segregated schools with distinctive curricula that [do] not make fair allowance for advancement to Junior High and Senior High in the course of time." Many students advanced from the elementary classes to the junior high program in the all-black Harriet Beecher Stowe School in Cincinnati. The Stowe School, however, was especially well equipped for vocational training. The generally well-appointed Stowe building contained rooms for domestic art, domestic science, catering, laundry, sewing machines, print shop, cabinet making, woodworking, and house construction.

Higher education in Ohio also was affected by prejudice, but racial integration existed in at least a dozen Ohio colleges and universities during the 1920s. They were located in every region of the state. Akron University, University of Cincinnati, The Ohio State University, Ohio University, and University of Toledo were among the public institutions enrolling black students. African Americans also attended private schools, including Case Institute of Technology, Oberlin College, Ohio Northern University, Ohio Wesleyan University, Otterbein College, Western Reserve University, and Wittenberg University. At least one private Ohio college openly maintained a for-white-only policy. The Western College for Women at Oxford was "exclusively for white women" according to information that a college official sent to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. As in the past, African Americans composed the faculty and student body of Wilberforce University near Xenia.

The status of African Americans in Ohio's integrated colleges and universities remained substantially unchanged during the decade, but some color line breakthroughs were made. For example, in 1924 an African American was awarded an electrical engineering degree at The Ohio State University, which previously discouraged African Americans attempting to enter its engineering programs. In 1928 Ohio State University student Bernard Young, Jr. was named managing editor of the Ohio State Lantern. This appointment made Young the first African American to hold such a position on a student newspaper at an integrated university in the United States. An Inter-Racial Council was formed at The Ohio State University. In 1930 its publication, called the Bulletin, carried an article giving an explicit account of race relations across the university. It reported that African Americans were represent-
ed in the football and track programs, but that black athletes felt excluded from the basketball and baseball teams. Excepting in the engineering and medical schools, the faculty exhibited “little prejudice” against black students. While “theoretically” welcome to participate in parties and open houses, the article stated: “The Negro students have made no effort to enter into the social life of the white students.” Some campus organizations admitted blacks, while others did not. Departmental and religious groups were open to all. According to this survey: “Some honoraries, such as Pi Lambda Theta, are closed to Negroes, while Phi Beta Kappa admits them. The same is true of the official student organizations. The Scarlet Mask . . . is closed to both Negroes and Jews.” No African Americans were members of the Inter-Fraternity Council, the Student Senate, the Women’s Student Government Association, or the Men’s Glee Club. African Americans, in small numbers, were members of the YMCA,YWCA, the Women’s Glee Club, and the Choral Society. The article concluded: “Nearly all the colored students live several miles from the University and have to travel by street car. Since they cannot go to their rooms between classes, they flock in large numbers to Pomerene Hall, the Library, and Ohio Union. Some white students have complained of this but the reason is obvious. No dormitories are open to the girls on campus nor to the men in the community. Both of the campus cafeterias are open to all, but the restaurants in the community off campus are closed to Negroes. State Theater does not admit Negroes to its shows.”

Racial discrimination at The Ohio State University received considerable attention from African Americans in the state and nation in 1930. William Bell, a starting tackle on the football team, was not permitted to travel with the team to Baltimore to play in the football game with the United States Naval Academy. Members of the black community charged the university with bowing to racial prejudices of white Southerners in refusing to allow Bell to play in the game. In not taking Bell to Baltimore, The Ohio State University president held: “The university is endeavoring to protect him from [the] unpleasant experience of probable race discrimination manifested in a southern city.” Bell, who was a graduate of Akron’s East High School, eventually was named to the All Big Ten football team and the Associated Press All American team.

Compared to earlier decades, more African Americans were enrolled in and graduated from Ohio’s colleges and universities. In 1928, 250 African Americans were enrolled at The Ohio State University, 64 at Oberlin College, 49 at Western Reserve University, and 40 at the University of Cincinnati. During 1920–1929, Ohio academies were recorded in The Crisis’s annual listing of colleges and universities that
awarded degrees to blacks. These listed Ohio institutions graduated few African Americans per year, often just one person, but in one instance 24 African Americans obtained degrees from the same university in a single year. Several black students at the University of Cincinnati, The Ohio State University, and Western Reserve University earned graduate and professional degrees including M.A., M.D., D.D.S., and LL.B.96

One of these African American university graduates was Cincinnati native Jennie D. Porter. She was the daughter of William Porter, who became remarkably affluent as Cincinnati’s first black undertaker, and Ethlinda Porter, a Cincinnati public school teacher. Jennie D. Porter began a teaching career after graduation from the largely white Hughes High School and the Cincinnati Normal School. Later she enrolled in the University of Cincinnati, where she earned the B.S. in 1923, the M.A. in 1925, and the doctorate in education in 1927. Meanwhile, she was principal of the Harriet Beecher Stowe School.97

Also among the African Americans earning advanced degrees in the twenties was Clay E. Hunter, a Tennessee native, who was reared on his family’s prosperous farm near Yellow Springs in southwestern Ohio. Hunter graduated from Wilberforce University with an A.B. in 1917 and then saw combat in Europe as a second lieutenant, 92nd Division, United States Army. He received the LL.B. from The Ohio State University’s law school in 1923, after which he practiced law in Columbus and then in Cincinnati.98

During the 1920s racial segregation was still more extensive in private churches in Ohio than in public educational facilities governed by state law. In 1920 the institutional lives of black and white church people already were almost wholly separate. African Americans did not attend white churches with rare exceptions. As in the previous decade, some white congregations moved to suburban edifices from church buildings in the vicinity of black neighborhoods, thereby widening the physical gap between themselves and African Americans. For example, old St. Paul’s Church at Seventh and Smith Streets in Cincinnati was vacated by whites and acquired by the black congregation of Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church in 1925.99 A small proportion of Ohio’s black churches were affiliated with white Protestant denominations or the Roman Catholic church. The actual number of these churches increased a bit after 1916.100

Occasionally in Ohio, white Protestants and Catholics devoted new or existing church buildings to Christian work among African Americans. In 1922 Catholic authorities in Cleveland made a separate African American parish called Our Lady of the Sacrament and erected a church building there. White churches which were in proximity to
black residential areas experienced declining memberships as whites moved away. Consequently, new black congregations formed in some existing churches affiliated with white religious bodies. For example, a few old Catholic churches welcomed African Americans. In 1925 the Archbishop of Cincinnati announced that Holy Trinity Church near West Fifth and Seventh Streets was open to African Americans. Similarly, in 1922 the Lutheran Synodical Conference of America founded the “Colored Lutheran Emanuel Church” at Cutter and Betts Streets in Cincinnati.101

In Ohio most black church people and pastors were affiliated with separate African American denominations, mainly the National Baptist Convention and African Methodist Episcopal church. In 1926, 81 percent of Ohio’s black churches belonged to black denominations. Also, black and white clergymen continued to maintain separate professional organizations in Ohio cities during the 1920s. African American pastors composed the Baptist Ministerial Alliance in Cincinnati and the Baptist Ministers’ Alliance in Cleveland.102

Occasionally in the 1920s a black member was included in a white pastors’ association because it was affiliated with a nationwide white denomination containing some separate black congregations. The Reverend Edmund H. Oxley, for example, was a member of the Cincinnati Clericus, an organization of white ministers of the Episcopal Church. The Reverend Oxley was Rector of St. Andrews Episcopal Church, serving an affluent black congregation. A native of Trinidad, West Indies, Oxley possessed outstanding credentials when he came to Cincinnati in 1912. He graduated from Howard University (B.A., B.D., and honorary D.D.), and Harvard University (S.T.B.) and won oratorical prizes at both institutions. While an active minister in the 1920s, Oxley was also a graduate student in the philosophy department at the University of Cincinnati. Racially mixed ministers’ association like the Cincinnati Clericus were rare in Ohio.103

Limited interracial contact also occurred within Ohio’s citywide church federations during the decade. Interracial committees functioned within the Federated Churches of Cleveland and the Toledo Council of Churches. The Cincinnati church federation included an interracial committee and a “Colored Department” with committees that were devoted to African American concerns and that were composed of black members.104

During the 1920s, as in the past, the color line was most divisive in Ohio’s private social life. Blacks and whites were almost wholly separate in the conduct of private social life in churches and other established community institutions. Racial separation was the rule in Ohio’s great
variety of sorority and fraternal associations, social clubs, civic organizations, and women’s clubs, as seen elsewhere in these pages. There still was some mixing of blacks and whites in public life, but racial separation in public accommodations was wider than ever.

The heightened race consciousness of whites affected race relations in Ohio’s public places during the 1920s. Even prior to World War I, public accommodations in Ohio tended to exclude or segregate African Americans. This trend accelerated during the wartime black migration and continued through the following decade. In 1930, outside of black districts, few Ohio public accommodations admitted African Americans on an equal basis. The growth of racial discrimination in public places occurred across the state from Cincinnati to Cleveland. In his brief essay on “Prejudice in Public Places” written in 1926, local black weekly editor Wendell P. Dabney commented on changing white attitudes in Cincinnati. He recalled earlier times prior to World War I when some African Americans patronized a wide variety of Cincinnati’s restaurants, saloons, and theaters. “In late years, however,” Dabney noted, “the prejudice has grown by leaps and bounds until now . . . colored citizens generally receive welcome, consideration or courtesy in but very few places of public welfare or entertainment.” Racial exclusion was practiced at Cincinnati’s principal theaters, all located outside black neighborhoods. Still referring to Cincinnati in 1926, Editor Dabney reported: “There are a number of smaller picture houses on West Fifth Street whose prejudice against admission of colored patrons has been removed by the scarcity of white patrons and consequent diminution of box office receipts.” As in the past, African Americans used streetcars in Cincinnati, but not without occasional experiences of racial friction.

In Columbus public transportation was available to African Americans, but racial discrimination was common in that city’s public places. In 1920–1921, sociologist Ralph G. Harshman interviewed managers and employees of public accommodations in Columbus and observed their public conduct. Regarding racial contacts on East Long Street’s public transport, Harshman noted: “The street car motormen and conductors report there is much dissatisfaction registered by the regular car patrons concerning the mingling that is necessary in the street cars.” In 1922 local Urban League official Nimrod B. Allen made similar observations and explained: “Both the whites and black people use principally the Long Street car and occasionally there has been race friction on this car which if sober judgment had not come into play might have caused serious embarrassment to the city. This race tension is being relieved by automobile busses that are operated on a parallel street and are patronized by a large proportion of white people who live east. The
busses do not discriminate against Negroes."110 However, color lines commonly existed in Columbus' hotels, theaters, restaurants, parks, swimming pools, and other public places. Blacks were welcome in a few of the smaller hotels in Columbus, but Harshman reported: “The leading hotels... namely Deshler, Neil, Southern, Chittenden, Hartman, Virginia, Jefferson, Columbus and Norwich will not cater to Negroes in any regard. The contention of the managers is that they [African Americans] keep the respectable white patrons away.”111 The public and commercial parks in Columbus were open to African Americans; however, blacks who visited them were exposed to racial discrimination, for example, the swimming pools and dance halls were “closed” to black people.112 Columbus’ approximately two dozen motion picture theaters all admitted African Americans. The few motion picture houses located in black neighborhoods did not require racially segregated seating. The other Columbus theaters required black patrons to sit in designated sections, usually in the rear or in the balcony. These sections were conspicuously marked by signs reading “Reserved,” ‘No White Patrons in This Section,’ ‘For Our Colored Friends,’ or just ‘Please.’113 The Columbus vaudeville theaters drew various color lines. Keith’s refused admittance to African Americans, while the Broadway admitted black people on a segregated basis. The Hartman and the Lyceum, the city’s two legitimate theaters, admitted African Americans but required separate seating.114 After observing race contacts in Columbus retail stores, Harshman reported that blacks were “free to enter all the stores of the city with the exception of a few exclusive shops,” but black patrons received less “attention and consideration” than white ones in most Columbus stores owned by whites.115 African Americans were refused service in most of the Columbus restaurants.116 Such flagrant racial discrimination in Columbus’ public places continued through the decade.117

Racial discrimination in public accommodations increased in Cleveland during the 1920s. The color line, however, was less uniform in Cleveland than in Cincinnati and Columbus. Ohio’s nineteenth century abolitionist heritage was stronger and more influential in northern Ohio than in the state’s central and southern regions. In Cleveland, consequently, many whites wished to maintain at least a semblance of racial justice and many blacks were inclined to challenge color lines. Accordingly, Cleveland’s public accommodations more often welcomed blacks than those in central and southern Ohio cities. The color line, nevertheless, grew more extensive in Cleveland during the decade. The racial policies of Cleveland hotels varied. In 1929 a representative of the local NAACP branch observed: “The hotel situation has changed here [Cleveland] with changing terms and management. No hotel admits a
policy of exclusion and yet we have reports of refusals. At the same time we hear of instances where accommodations are afforded without question." Dr. Robert R. Moton, Booker T. Washington's successor as president of Tuskegee Institute, was one person who had difficulty in obtaining satisfactory hotel accommodations in Cleveland. Dr. Moton was invited to speak to the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce in 1923. The Hotel Statler was willing to give him a room provided that he “take his meals in it.” Subsequently, after a protest was made, the Hollenden Hotel accommodated Dr. Moton on satisfactorily terms. Similarly, Jane E. Hunter, general secretary of Cleveland's Phillis Wheatley Association, was refused elevator service in the Statler hotel in 1926. Officials of the Cleveland Community Chest Fund invited her to address them in the Statler's rooms. She refused to use the hotel's freight lift and eventually was allowed to go on the passenger elevator. The hotel manager first ordered all other occupants from the regular elevator and then escorted her to the meeting. According to the Cleveland Gazette the Community Chest officials “expressed heart-felt sympathy when Miss Hunter finally arrived, in tears, in their rooms in the hotel.” Similarly, in 1928 the Cleveland Hotel excluded Dr. James W. Eichelberger, Jr. of Chicago. While preparing to attend the International Council of Religious Education's Cleveland convention, Dr. Eichelberger had made a room reservation. The Cleveland Hotel refused to give him the room when he arrived.

The color line was also uneven in Cleveland's restaurants, theaters, parks, and swimming pools during the 1920s. Racial discrimination was commonplace, but not universal, in Cleveland restaurants at decade's end. Most of the restaurants with color line policies flatly refused service to African Americans. Others discouraged African American patronage by overcharging blacks for food. Some required blacks to pay a service charge not required of white patrons. Racial segregation was practiced in the Stillman, the Allen, and many other Cleveland theaters. Ostensibly the Cleveland municipal parks and swimming pools were open to all regardless of race, but blacks who attempted to patronize the pools, for example, the one at Woodland Hills Park, met violent reactions by white patrons. Color lines still existed in the city's commercial parks. As always, Luna Park refused admittance to African Americans, except on specified days.

In the 1920s there were documented instances of racial discrimination in the public places of smaller Ohio cities, including Akron, Toledo, and Zanesville. Several South Main Street restaurants in Akron practiced blatant racial discrimination. In the windows of these establishments were signs that carried such declarations as "We Cater Only to
White Trade” and “Colored People Served in Sacks Only, Please Don’t Sit Down.” During a given year in Toledo there were dozens of recorded cases of racial discrimination in restaurants, stores and other public accommodations. Racial lines were imposed in Zanesville; for example, blacks were excluded from a new addition to the Greenwood Cemetery in that small city located east of Columbus. Color lines undoubtedly existed in public places in all Ohio population centers during the decade.

In summary, the color line in urban Ohio was more discriminatory than ever in the 1920s, which saw total black population reaching all-time highs in Ohio cities. The twenties experienced the climax of a decades-long nationwide trend of increasing intolerance of people who were foreign born or unlike Anglo-Saxon Protestants. The isolation of African Americans in the larger society was greater than ever in each Ohio region, and this was most clearly evident in patterns of residential segregation from Cleveland to Cincinnati. Exclusion and segregation by color were not absolute, but they were the norm, and black-white contacts in every Ohio region were less common than earlier. Blacks and whites generally took different routes on life’s many avenues, from birth in separate medical facilities to death and burial in separate cemetery allotments. This essentially was an informal and unofficial racial caste system in many respects comparable to the legal ones existing in southern states possessing Jim Crow laws requiring segregation of blacks and whites from cradle to grave. The color line was less uniform in Ohio than in southern states. It was still relatively less unyielding in northern Ohio than in the state’s other regions because Ohio’s nineteenth century regional pattern of black-white relations persisted through the 1920s. Ohio’s color line, unlike the South’s, did not disenfranchise African American voters. The color line was different in important respects north and south of the Mason-Dixon Line; nevertheless, in Ohio as well as in southern states it dictated that blacks and whites lead largely separate lives, undermined the physical and spiritual welfare of many black people, and generally denied African Americans freedom of choice and equality of opportunity in the larger society. The following chapters demonstrate that black Ohioans in local communities became more active and effective in confronting the color line’s effects in the twenties.