

FINAL REPORT OF THE ARCHIVAL AND ORAL HISTORY PHASES

OF THE BUXTON, IOWA PROJECT, PHASE I

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## FORWARD

Part I of the Buxton Project has covered the archival research and oral histories conducted by Iowa State University Professors Dorothy Schwieder, Department of History; Elmer Schwieder, Department of Family Environment; and Joseph Hraba, Department of Sociology. It has consisted of conducting oral interviews, transcribing interviews, indexing interviews, collecting, coding and analyzing census data from Muchakinock, Buxton and Haydock (1895, 1900, 1905, 1915 and 1925), conducting newspaper searches, surveying and collecting official documents and company records, collecting private memoirs, collecting photographs of Buxton and its inhabitants, and corresponding with former Buxton residents unavailable for interviewing. The report that follows provided specific information on the above areas.

In the opinion of the archival and oral history project personnel, the Buxton Project was successful beyond original expectations. Informants proved to be exceedingly cooperative both with their information and pictures. We were able to locate what we believed to be a good cross section of the former Buxton population. We believe this was quite remarkable, considering the fact that Buxton ceased to exist approximately sixty years ago. Former residents are extremely interested in this project and anxiously await a published study. At the same time we discovered a much larger collection of archival materials than we had previously anticipated.

We soon discovered that the Buxton story had a receptive audience in other parts of the country, as well as in Iowa. Numerous presentations were made in response to requests for presentations about Buxton. In

October, 1980, Professors Gradwohl, Hraba and the Schwieders took part in a panel presentation at the regional conference of the National Association of Interdisciplinary Ethnic Studies in Ames. They talked of their individual responsibilities on the project and the project's overall purpose and goal. They were joined on the panel by Dorothy Collier, Des Moines, who talked about her remembrances of Buxton. In June, 1981, Dorothy Schwieder presented a talk on Buxton history and the nature of the Buxton project to the Ames Rotary Club. In December, 1981, Elmer and Dorothy Schwieder presented an illustrated talk on the history of Buxton to the Sioux City Chapter of the NAACP. The same month, Joseph Hraba presented an illustrated talk on Buxton at the Center for the Study of Science in Society and the Center for Coal and Energy Research at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and the State University where Professor Hraba was a visiting professor. In April, 1982, Elmer and Dorothy Schwieder presented a paper on the social and economic activities of black women in Buxton at the Women's History Conference at College of St. Catherines in Minneapolis.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service of the Department of the Interior and Iowa State Historical Preservation Division for making this grant possible. We believe that the history of Buxton as well as the histories of the communities that immediately preceded it and followed it, are viewed as a priceless heritage by many former residents. It has been a distinct privilege for us to have had a part in uncovering that heritage.

Dorothy Schwieder  
Elmer Schwieder  
Joseph Hraba

## AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF BUXTON, IOWA

In 1900 Buxton, Iowa came into existence. For the next twenty-two years, this community would occupy an unusual position in the history of Iowa's coal mining industry as well as providing a unique life style for many black people. In 1900, the Consolidation Coal Company, a subsidiary of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, sent agents into the South to recruit black men for mine work in Buxton. In response, black families migrated to Iowa from Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama and Missouri. Many black families moved to Buxton from neighboring Muchakinock. Five years after its inception, Buxton's population had reached 4,924, making it the largest coal mining camp in the state. Of that number, 2,700 were black and 1,991 were white.<sup>1</sup> For black families who lived there, Buxton presented an unusual opportunity: steady employment for black males, above average wages, good housing and a minimum, if not a complete absence, of racial discrimination. In the words of several former Buxton residents, "Buxton was a utopia for the black man." Buxton also contained many other ethnic groups. Swedes and Austrians dominated the foreign-born, but Buxton also included English, Welsh, Scots, Irish, Germans, Italians and Hungarians. Racial harmony characterized community relations in Buxton. The community survived until the early 1920s when the Consolidation Coal Company shifted its operation to Haydock, site of Mine No. 19. Earlier the Company had relocated some families in Consul.

the site of Consolidation Mine No. 18. During its existence Buxton provided its residents, both black and white, with equal wages, integrated housing, and, according to their own accounts, "a good place to live."

Although Buxton was not founded until 1900, the town that served as its historical antecedent was established in 1873. At that time, two brothers, H. W. and W. A. McNeill, established the town of Muchakinock. The McNeill brothers had organized the Iowa Central Coal Company and needed a community to house their workers and their families.

Two years later, the company organized itself as the Consolidation Coal Company with a capital of \$500,000. In the 1880s, the population of Muchakinock, or "Muchy" as it was popularly called, was estimated between 2,000 and 3,000 inhabitants. In 1881, the McNeills sold Consolidation to the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad for \$500,000. Under its new owners, Marvin Hughitt became the first president and John E. Buxton became the first general superintendent.<sup>2</sup>

The same year the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad purchased Consolidation they initiated a labor policy that was to profoundly effect the history of black-white relations in Iowa. In 1881, company officials changed the method of miners' payment and a strike ensued. In an effort to counter the strike, company officials sent a local businessman, Hobe Armstrong, to Virginia, particularly to the Staunton and Charlottesville areas, to recruit black laborers.<sup>3</sup> Once back in Iowa, the blacks went into the mines and worked alongside experienced white miners. In this way they learned

the mining trade. Consolidation continued the practice of recruiting southern black laborers well into the twentieth century. The practice apparently provided the Company with cheap labor at a time when they were rapidly expanding their operations.<sup>4</sup>

During the nineteen years that Consolidation located in the Muchakinock area, they operated a total of nine mines. Because the mines were located some distance from the camp, Consolidation provided miners' trains to carry workers out to the mine sites. Throughout the nine year period, Consolidation's operation gradually expanded. Between 1881 and 1885, Consolidation employed 500 men and approximately 350 were black.<sup>5</sup> In 1895, the Iowa census listed 3,844 people in Muchy. Of that number, 2,805 were white and 1,039 were black. Although Muchy may have been predominately black in its earlier history, by 1895, it was predominately white. According to the Eddyville Tribune in 1898, Consolidation employed the entire adult male population of Muchakinock.<sup>6</sup>

According to Minnie B. London, a former Muchakinock resident, the town's main buildings were "the company store; a hall [probably a miner's hall]; two colored churches, a Baptist and A.M.E.; two white churches, the Swedish Lutheran and Swedish Methodist; the depot; the home of the Superintendent of mines; four grade schools; small buildings, two in the east side of town and two in the west."<sup>7</sup>

In March, 1898, the Negro Solicitor reported that "Although Muchy is a very small place, we have one grocery store, two restaurants, two saloons, three drug stores, one meat shop, post office, two barber shops, two or three pool rooms, one millinery shop and about three thousand inhabitants."

The community also boasted a band and ball club. The black newspaper, the Negro Solicitor, was published there at least from 1895 to 1900. Muchy also had at least one black lawyer, George C. Woodson. According to the Solicitor, several lodges operated in Muchy, including the Odd Fellows. On March 8, 1898, the Odd Fellows dedicated their new hall; the previous hall had been destroyed by fire. The new lodge was located in the second floor of Cooper's Drug Store, operated by B. F. Cooper, a black pharmacist. The dedication included a banquet at which lodge officials served "beef, pork, chicken, turkey, possum and coon." After dinner, the participants enjoyed dancing to the music of the Fritz Orchestra of Oskaloosa. In general, the view expressed in contemporary newspapers and by Muchy residents indicate that Muchakinock was an integrated community where black residents experienced little discrimination.<sup>8</sup>

Although Muchy residents took part in many social events, the Fourth of July celebration provided the greatest attraction. In 1897, about 1,000 people gathered at the fair grounds near Muchy to celebrate the national holiday. The fair grounds were located on H. A. Armstrong's farm. The Eddyville Tribune noted that Armstrong had amassed quite a fortune as the breeder of blooded horses. Armstrong's farm included "a good half mile track . . . a grand stand, a building for the display of the handwork of the colored people, a baseball grounds, a shooting range and many other features . . . ." <sup>9</sup> Residents enjoyed a free barbecue followed by speeches from George Woodson and other local notables. The Muchakinock Cornet Band provided music and the Muchy ball club won a baseball game against Keb, a neighboring mining community. The local gun club also put on a demonstration. The barbecue and fireworks were provided by Ben Buxton, superintendent

of Consolidation; W. A. Wells, manager of W. A. Wells and Company Store [the company store]; Hobe Armstrong, proprietor of the Muchakinock Thoroughbred Stock farm; and N. P. Herrington, cashier of Consolidation.<sup>10</sup>

Although the Muchakinock mines were not unionized, miners did provide themselves with some mutual economic assistance through organizing a group called "the Colony." Mrs. London remembered that "After a time the Superintendent suggested a Colony, an organization whereby the single men by paying 75¢ per month and the married men \$1.50 per month could have medical attention in case of sickness . . . ." <sup>11</sup> While eighty percent of the dues went to local physicians for medical care, the group spent the remainder to assist with members' burial costs and death benefits.<sup>12</sup>

In 1900, faced with declining coal production in the Muchakinock vicinity, Consolidation purchased 8,000 acres in northern Monroe County and 1,600 in southern Mahaska County. The Company then moved their operation from Muchy and initiated the new community of Buxton. The move took place in October, 1900, with the first houses constructed that month. Four years before the move to Buxton, John E. Buxton resigned as general superintendent of Consolidation and his twenty-five year old son, Ben, succeeded him.<sup>13</sup> J. E. Buxton had come to Iowa in 1868 from Middletown Springs, Vermont. He immediately went to work for the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad as a tie buyer. Following the formation of Consolidation Coal Company the company hired Buxton as general superintendent. His son, Ben, remained as general superintendent from 1896 until 1909. In that year, the younger Buxton retired from his position with Consolidation and moved to Chicago. Ben Buxton named the town after his father.<sup>14</sup>

The town of Buxton grew rapidly. The Company helped to build homes for workers, most of which were five or six rooms. Rent for the company homes was \$8 per month.<sup>15</sup> Houses were located on one-fourth acre lots. The houses had two rooms upstairs and either three or four rooms downstairs. The main downstairs rooms were kitchen, dining room and front parlour. Some homes had a summer kitchen added in the rear, which constituted the fourth room downstairs. All the houses were plastered and had wainscoting.<sup>16</sup> All former residents interviewed agreed that company houses were well maintained and frequently painted. Many residents stated that their families planted gardens and kept a few chickens, thus supplementing their food supply. According to a plat map of Buxton, the company laid out fifty odd blocks in the town. It is not known how many houses were actually built or how many blocks were populated. Many families who lived in company houses added front porches and back summer kitchens.<sup>17</sup> The Iowa State Bystander, a newspaper published by blacks for black residents in Iowa, reported in June, 1901, that the Company was building 150 additional houses. John E. Baxter, former Buxton resident, estimated that in the first decade of its existence, Buxton contained approximately 2,000 homes.<sup>18</sup>

An outhouse, small coal shed, and cistern were located in each backyard. The coal shed stood close to the alley so that delivery wagons could drive up the alley and unload the coal without coming into the backyard. Each house had a cistern and gutters and drain pipes to catch rain water. The Company erected a large water tower which provided additional water for the cisterns.<sup>19</sup>

In locating the Buxton camp, Consolidation officials had apparently paid particular attention to selecting an area with good drainage. Clayborne Carter recalled that many houses were located on high ground. This was not the case in many other Iowa coal camps. Carter's views were echoed by a state sanitary engineer who surveyed the Buxton camp in 1919.<sup>20</sup>

From the standpoint of topography, Buxton Camp is nicely located. The site is rolling so that good drainage is provided. Practically all of the houses are on the sidehills or the uplands, those on the lowlands being batch houses or smaller houses.<sup>21</sup>

Not all blacks who moved to Buxton, however, lived in company houses. Several families purchased small farms near Buxton and then built their own homes. The men worked in the mines but also earned additional money by raising potatoes which they sold in Buxton. These families included the Sampson Johnson, John Chapman, West Wood and J. H. Bates families and Mrs. Kate Jewett.<sup>22</sup> Former Buxton resident Gertrude Stokes remembered that her parents owned twenty acres on the outskirts of Buxton where her father, Minor Waites, did some farming. In addition, he mined coal occasionally but his primary work was custom farming. She recalled that he had horses and "he made most of his money by going around plowing for the neighbors and planting corn and doing little odd jobs." She added that her mother also worked: "She used to carry passengers places . . . we had a horse and two seated carriage. She used to carry passengers backward and forward from Albia, backward and forward wherever they wanted to go."<sup>23</sup>

Along with company houses, Consolidation also began building homes for their managers. The Bystander reported in November, 1901, that Superintendent Ben C. Buxton's "beautiful residence" was almost completed.<sup>24</sup>

Ida Morgan, daughter of E. M. Baysoar who served as general superintendent for Consolidation from 1909 to 1913, lived in this home for four years. She recalled that the home had four bedrooms and three baths with both front and rear stairs. The house had central heating (with steam heat) and electricity.<sup>25</sup> Approximately one year after Buxton's home was finished, the Bystander noted that W. A. Wells, manager of the Monroe Mercantile Store had moved into his new residence in Buxton. The home was also equipped with electric lights and steam heat.<sup>26</sup> According to Mrs. Morgan, Wells was married to a sister of Ben Buxton.

As more families moved into Buxton, the number of businesses also increased. In June, 1901, the Bystander reported that workmen had completed the foundation for B. F. Cooper's drug store, located just north of Buxton proper in a suburb called Coopertown. The Bystander also noted that the foundation had recently been completed for the African Methodist Church. In July the Buxton correspondent for the Bystander reported that "Our city is a bustling little place. There is plenty of work, plenty to eat, our people dress well and everybody is happy." A short time later, the same correspondent wrote: "Every day brings us people from the 'old town.' In a short time poor 'Muchy' will be no more." In November, 1901, the By-stander reported that Buxton had been supplied with a public telephone station. Apparently the migration continued heavily throughout the first year as in January, 1902, the Bystander reported that "A great many people are coming to our city -- every train brings in newcomers."<sup>27</sup>

In addition to Coopertown, Buxton also contained several other suburbs. East Swede Town and West Swede Town were located on the east and west borders of Buxton proper. These sections were apparently settled in early 1900

and contained primarily Swedish families. According to John Baxter, East Swede Town "was a town in itself with a school, blacksmith's shop, Emil Larson's Grocery and a Swedish Church." Most of the miners in the two suburbs owned their own homes although they worked for Consolidation as coal miners. A fourth suburb was Hayes Town, located near the east edge of Buxton. Here the homes were owned by a Mr. Hayes and included a meat market, drug store and livery stable.<sup>28</sup> Gainesville added yet another suburb, located north of Buxton proper. By October, 1902, Gainesville contained a drug store, livery stable, the Hartman Dye Works, a barber shop and a store. One year later, Gainesville had added a meat market and a shoe store.<sup>29</sup>

The major addition to the business life of the town was the Monroe Mercantile Company erected by Consolidation in the spring of 1901. Company officials boasted that the store was the "largest department store west of the Mississippi." At its peak, it employed more than 100 people. The store contained departments for clothing, shoes, hardware, furniture, groceries in addition to a pharmacy and a hay and grain section. A soda fountain provided a gathering place for many of the residents. On the second floor, the company store sold phonographs and records and Clayborne Carter recalled that "Here the boys would loaf and have the girls play the records." An undertaker also occupied one section. The undertakers did the embalming at the home of the deceased but maintained a large stock of caskets at the company store. In addition, they provided a hearse and carriage for the mourners at the time of the funeral. The company store purchased name brand canned goods and other products from Chicago in carload lots. The store took clothing orders from Buxton residents to be constructed by

tailoring firms in Chicago.<sup>30</sup> Miners paid for their purchases through the check-off system. Under this arrangement, before every pay, the Company business office totalled the miners' purchases (from the store, Armstrong's Meat Market and house rent) and deducted these charges from the miners' wages.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the company store, Buxton also contained many other businesses. Hobe Armstrong's Meat Market was located only a short distance from the store. Also located nearby was a bank, operated by the Buxton family. In addition Buxton contained a tobacco shop, millinery shop, drug stores, beauty shops, livery stables, bakery, restaurants, hotels and barber shops. Women found their shopping needs simplified as merchants operated wagon routes through the community, taking and delivering orders at the front door.<sup>32</sup>

From its beginning, both local residents and outsiders regarded Buxton as a prosperous coal mining town. In comparing the living standard of Buxton residents with residents of other Iowa coal mining communities, Buxton residents do appear to have lived more comfortable lives. In 1910, a visiting newspaper editor quoted a black Buxton miner as saying that he had worked for Consolidation for twenty-nine years and "I have made at least \$1,000 every year I have been with them. Many other miners have done as well as I . . . ." <sup>33</sup>

Buxton's economic prosperity stemmed primarily from its affiliation with the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. Because Consolidation was a subsidiary of the Chicago and Northwestern, the railroad purchased all coal taken from the Buxton mines. The railroad needed coal year round so the mines operated twelve months each year. In contrast, the majority of Iowa's

coal mines did not operate full time. Most mines sold their coal locally with people using coal primarily for fuel for heating homes and businesses. The result was that the demand for coal greatly declined during warm weather. The non-railroad mines, in turn, shut down in April and did not reopen until the following October. In the meantime, these miners were forced to look for other employment. In some cases, miners worked as railroad section hands or as farm helpers; many miners, however, simply remained unemployed for the summer months.<sup>34</sup> Because Buxton miners did not experience the usual summer layoffs, they made more money than many other Iowa coal miners. According to the Iowa state census of 1915, Buxton miners averaged between \$600 and \$650 during 1914. That amount contrasts with incomes of coal miners from Beacon, Cincinnati and Seymour (where most miners were not associated with railroad mines) who averaged \$450 in 1914.<sup>35</sup>

As Buxton continued to grow, attention was given to the outdoor recreational needs of its citizens as well as to the appearance of the town. The Bystander reported in April, 1902, that Buxton was soon to have a beautiful park. The work was being done by the Buxton Cornet Band under the management of William Resby. The Bystander noted that Superintendent Ben Buxton is "heartily in the park scheme and is building a grand band stand." Known as the Buxton Island Park, the site served as the location for Saturday night band concerts. The park was lighted with gasoline lamps, carrying 500 candle light power.<sup>36</sup>

In 1903, Buxton residents learned that they were to become the recipients of one of the most unusual institutions ever to be located in a coal mining camp. In November, the Consolidation Coal Company announced that it was contributing \$20,000 for the erection of a YMCA in Buxton. The

announcement was greeted with great enthusiasm. Plans called for the three story building to measure 59 by 114 feet and to be located southwest of the company store. The first floor would contain rooms for YMCA officials, secretary's office, reading room, game room, library, writing room, kitchen, class rooms, gymnasium and large bath department. The second floor plans called for a large assembly hall (purported to seat between 800 and 1,000 people) and other smaller rooms. The third floor was to be devoted to lodge purposes. The rents from these organizations would be used for building maintenance.<sup>37</sup>

Although the YMCA was later used for social events by both blacks and whites, the Bystander accounts clearly indicate that it was regarded as a facility for the black people of Buxton. The Bystander wrote that the building will be "devoted to the uses and under the management of colored men."<sup>38</sup> Minnie B. London also remembered that the "Y" was built "expressly for the colored miners . . . ." She added that when the black men "seemed reluctant to take advantage of the opportunity the Supt. indicated that he would turn it over to the white people. Our people, after reconsideration, pledged co-operation and then a very efficient secretary in the person of L. B. Johnson was engaged."<sup>39</sup> In 1910, a visiting newspaper editor estimated that from 300 to 600 black youths used the facilities daily. That same editor noted that a white YMCA did exist, but it was only one room above the post office. Clayborne Carter recalled that the white "Y" did not survive long because it did not have a permanent secretary.<sup>40</sup>

By 1904, Buxton had clearly developed into a sizeable community that had attracted attention throughout the state. Articles on Buxton appeared regularly in local newspapers such as the Albia Republican and the Eddyville

Tribune as well as in the Lovilia and Oskaloosa papers. These newspapers expressed the view that Buxton was predominately, if not totally, a black community. In December, 1900, for example, the Albia Republican reported that Buxton's population was totally black.<sup>41</sup> The Iowa State Bystander, however, provided the most extensive coverage of Buxton. From 1900 on, the Bystander viewed Buxton in a twofold manner: (1) it was primarily a black community and (2) it was an ideal place for blacks to live. From 1900 to 1915, the Bystander carried hundreds of stories on Buxton, all of which concentrated on the activities of blacks. In August, 1902, J. L. Thompson, editor of the Bystander, traveled to Buxton. In his report, he noted that Buxton contained approximately 2,000 people of whom about 1,700 were black. He stated that 125 new homes had been built, adding that "[the blacks] have complete control of this town." He wrote:

The two constables are colored, the justice of the peace is colored, the only meat market is owned by Mr. H. A. Armstrong, the large, beautiful hotel is owned by Mr. Anderson Perkins, who is postmaster at Muchakinock, the two restaurants are owned by colored people, the two barber shops owned by colored men. The postmistress, Miss Anna Willis, is one of the most highly respected young ladies of the town. The only band is the famous Buxton Colored Band of 31 pieces, the finest of its kind in Iowa, led by Professor A. R. Jackson, colored. There are five colored clerks in the large company store: Mr. W. H. London, A. R. Jackson, A. E. London, John T. Washington and Mr. Jones from Centerville. The largest drug store is owned by our good and genial friend, B. F. Cooper and he is doing a good business. The only saloon and billiard hall is owned by a colored man, Mr. Gaines . . . . The electrical engineer that runs the electric plant is a colored man, Mr. Abe Hart, and he knows his business.

The two blacksmiths are colored. The company carpenter is colored, Mr. Ben Tate. There are several colored men owning valuable tracts of land and building a nice house.<sup>42</sup>

In 1905, a typical account appeared in the Bystander, written by Rev. H. W. Porter: "Buxton is in all particulars superior to the mining camps we have read of. It is a town inhabited by men and women who are looking forward to the better things of life. The schools and churches and the YMCA bespeak progress."<sup>43</sup> Later that same year the Bystander wrote that Buxton was "indeed a great sight to see and well worth any person's time and money to visit it. The people are courteous, gentle, manly to meet and do all in their power to make one feel at home . . . . We have visited this town and call well recommend it as a good place for an honest and industrious man to go who wishes to make good wages." The same editor had written a year earlier that credit for the community must be given to Ben Buxton, W. A. Wells and N. P. Harrington, "for they have made Buxton what it is today."<sup>44</sup>

From its inception, however, Buxton contained many ethnic groups other than blacks. Swedes and Austrians were most prominent, but the community also included Hungarians, Welsh, English and Irish. Because most people moved from Muchakinock to Buxton in 1900, the composition of the Muchakinock population gives some indication of Buxton's early ethnic composition. Table I shows the number of foreign-born in Muchakinock in 1895.

Although early accounts of Buxton, particularly articles published in the Bystander, emphasize only the black population, both foreign-born and native-born whites were a significant part of Buxton's population from the first year of settlement.

Table I

## Birthplaces of Foreign-born Residents of Muchakinock, 1895

	Number	Percent of Total Population
England	110	2.9
Wales	78	2.0
Scotland	37	1.0
Ireland	49	1.3
Sweden	178	4.6
Germany	24	0.6
Austria	30	0.8
Hungary	25	0.7
Russia	1	0.0
Bohemia	1	0.0
Canada	5	0.1
Holland	1	0.0
Norway	8	0.2
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Total	547	14.2

Source: Iowa State Census (1895). Manuscript Population Schedules for East Des Moines and Harrison Townships, Mahaska County.

The fact remained, however, that Buxton was a good place for blacks to live, both economically and socially. From its inception Buxton's black residents both male and female, took part in a variety of social and literary activities. In October, 1902, the young people of Mt. Zion Baptist Church organized a literary society known as the Paul Dunbar Society. The group met every Monday night. The following February, the Buxton correspondent noted that "the Buxton ladies are progressing . . . . The latest organization is the Ladies' Industrial Club. They have regular weekly

meetings, each lady bringing some kind of work, they exchange ideas, assist each other and so on -- then they lunch!" In January, 1906, the Buxton women formed the organization, the True Reformers, described as a secret society. The group provided entertainment for Buxton residents during the Christmas season. Also sometime in Buxton's early history, black women organized a chapter of the Federated Black Women's Club of America. In April, 1907, the latter group and the Ladies Industrial Club passed resolutions approving the efforts of the Buxton Ministerial Alliance to close the saloons on the outskirts of Buxton. Yet another women's group was the Sweet Magnolia Club which was active in 1907.<sup>45</sup>

Black men in Buxton followed the same pattern as black women: they became a part of organizational life. The most obvious male activity took place at the YMCA. The young men formed basketball and tennis teams and played residents from outside communities. In February, 1906, the young men formed the Literary Society at the YMCA. Buxton contained many lodges with the Odd Fellows appearing to be the most popular and most well attended. In the early years of Buxton, male residents formed the Buxton Christian Workers' Alliance. In 1908, they sent delegates to attend the state temperance convention in Des Moines. A major commitment was to the temperance movement. Apparently the group disbanded after a time because in January, 1911, the town's ministers and deacons were again meeting to form a Christian Workers' Alliance. During the same month, young men at St. John's African Methodist Church organized a Young Men's Forum "where young men can meet on Sunday afternoon and discuss different topics and spend a pleasant hour socially." Buxton men also engaged in political activity. In April, 1908,

Buxton residents formed the Buxton Republican Club. The pages of the By-stander were filled with articles on the Republican Party and the activities of Buxton members in that organization.<sup>46</sup>

The penchant of Buxton residents to join organizations and take part in community affairs paralleled the activities of Midwesterners in general. In his study of small town life in the Middle West, Main Street on the Middle Border, Lewis Atherton writes that small town residents began to "participate in a national trend toward organizational activities in the late nineteenth century." In fact, by the first decade of the twentieth century this behavior was so obvious that Atherton describes it as the "twentieth century cult of joining." Atherton believes that this development took place because people were increasingly unable to identify with the community at large. As towns grew larger and population became more mobile, people joined organizations to give themselves the feeling of still belonging. Where people had previously belonged to the total community, after 1900, they were increasingly facing a fragmentation of social life and thus joining a myriad of organizations. Women began to join the Federated Women's Club of America, garden clubs, child study clubs and literary societies. The Women's Christian Temperance Union was organized in the 1870s, but continued to be an extremely popular group after 1900. Men joined church groups, the Rotarians and other service clubs and also invariably formed booster clubs in their individual communities. Altogether Americans everywhere, became a nation of joiners. Buxton residents would indeed be a part of this organizational life.<sup>47</sup>

Not only did Buxton's black women take part in organized groups, but they also made presentations and participated in debates. One of the most popular female speakers was Miss Daisy Lee, described as an elocutionist.

Miss Lee made presentations at many 4th of July programs and school events.<sup>48</sup> Buxton women sometimes took part in debates with current interest topics. In January, 1910, the night school at the Mt. Zion Baptist Church presented a debate on the topic: "Resolved: That women should not be educated equally with men." The affirmative was presented by two men, but Emma Simmons and Emma March presented the negative position. Apparently the women were successful in convincing the judges that women were not inferior to men because the women won the decision. Later the same year the Mutual Benefit Literary Society met and debated the topic: "Resolved, That higher education for women is a detriment to the home." In this case, the two women debaters, Mrs. William Baily and Mrs. Ray did not win.<sup>49</sup>

Along with entertainment offered by organizations, Buxton residents experienced a wide variety of community social activities. In August, 1908, the Bystander noted that Buxton had a movie theater. The show was presented by Langlois Entertainers in the Buxton Opera House located on First Street. The Bystander boasted that it was the only theater in the state managed by blacks. Minstrel shows were also presented frequently at the Opera House.<sup>50</sup>

The YMCA, however, served as the center of social activities in Buxton. Not only did lodges hold meetings in the "Y," but many special events took place there. In August, 1908, the YMCA Lecture Committee, consisting of Rev. A. L. Demond, pastor of the First Congregational Church and editor of the Buxton Gazette; Dr. E. A. Carter, chief physician for Consolidation; and R. G. Porter proudly announced that the year's lecture series would give people of Buxton "a rare treat." For \$1.50 per person residents could purchase series tickets and hear among other programs, the Royal Hungarian

Orchestra, the Gamble Concert Company, and the Appolo Quintette and Bell Ringers. The series presented monthly programs.<sup>51</sup>

The YMCA also presented educational offerings. For a number of years in Buxton's early history, the YMCA offered night school to young men in the community. In the fall of 1908, the night school fall term opened on October 5th with an educational day and a noted speaker. A few months later, the Bystander noted that the YMCA had recently installed an Iowa Traveling Library and that the "books were doing good service in the community."<sup>52</sup>

Within Buxton itself, many black people played prominent professional, social and educational roles. Dr. E. A. Carter was perhaps the most visable among Buxton's black professionals. Carter was born in Charlottesville, Virginia on April 11, 1881. He came to Muchakinock with his parents in 1882 where his father worked as a coal miner. His parents were ex-slaves. Carter graduated from eighth grade in Muchakinock in 1895 and then attended Oskaloosa High School. He graduated from there in 1899 and then enrolled at the University of Iowa. Carter earned his way through college by waiting tables at local hotels and by lighting furnaces. In the summers, he worked in the Buxton mines. He received his medical degree in 1907. He returned to Buxton and was employed by Dr. J. S. Henderson as assistant physician and surgeon for Consolidation. He then served as first assistant to Dr. Burke Powers, head physician for Consolidation in 1910. Late he was appointed to work with Dr. Ralph Early, formerly of Burlington. Dr. Carter played a prominent role in Buxton's social and educational life. In 1910, he was affiliated with the YMCA, serving as a member of two committees, Boy's Work and Education. Frequently Dr. Carter spoke to school groups, church groups and YMCA members on the importance of temperance. He remained in Buxton until 1919 when he moved to Detroit.<sup>53</sup>

A second black professional in Buxton was George Woodson. Woodson was born in Wytheville, Virginia, where both parents were ex-slaves. He first attended the Petersburg Normal University at Petersburg, Virginia where he graduated in 1890. A few years later, he entered Howard University where he received a law degree. He graduated at the head of his class in 1895, receiving the class medal for oratory.<sup>54</sup> Woodson then came to Muchakinock where he practiced law until 1900 when he moved to Buxton. While living in Mahaska County (Muchakinock), Woodson served as vice-president of the Mahaska County Bar Association. Woodson soon became active in the Republican Party, attending both county and state conventions as a delegate from Muchy. In January, 1898, Woodson ran for the position of file clerk in the Iowa Senate. He was defeated by only one vote.<sup>55</sup> Later Woodson ran unsuccessfully for County Attorney of Mahaska County. After moving to Buxton, he was nominated by the Republicans as a candidate for state representative but did not win the election. In 1901, he organized the Iowa Negro Bar Association with headquarters in Des Moines. Later in 1925, he organized the National Negro Bar Association. He served as the first president of both groups. Woodson remained in Buxton until 1920 when he moved to Des Moines. Like Dr. Carter, Woodson was an extremely popular public speaker and frequently spoke at school functions, the YMCA and church gatherings. He died in Des Moines in 1933.<sup>56</sup>

Minnie B. London was also a highly visible black professional person in Buxton where she taught school and later served as principal at Buxton school No. 2. Mrs. London was born Minne B. Robinson in Lexington, Missouri. As a young woman she moved to Muchakinock, where she had a sister, Mrs. Jennie Brooks. There, Miss Robinson taught school. She later married

W. H. London of Muchy. The Londons had two children, Hubert and Vaeletta. Both children graduated from the University of Iowa: Hubert became an M.D. and Vaeletta majored in English. Hubert practiced medicine in Buxton for a time and then relocated in Des Moines. Vaeletta first taught school in Petersburg, Virginia and then settled in Waterloo where she resides today. Mrs. London taught in Buxton until Consolidation relocated in Haydock. She taught there until 1929 or 1930 and then moved to Waterloo to live with her daughter.<sup>57</sup>

At the same time that many black Buxton residents were active within their communities, many black residents were also active outside their communities. Rev. A. L. De Mond, pastor of the First Congregational Church, traveled regularly about the state attending temperance meetings. In the summer of 1909, Rev. De Mond was invited to deliver one of the principal addresses at the National Convention of Congregational Workers in Birmingham, Alabama. His wife, also took part in activities outside the community. In 1909, Mrs. De Mond edited the Iowa Colored Woman in Buxton.<sup>58</sup>

By 1910, at the end of its first decade of existence, Buxton had become a full fledged community. Although census figures are not available for 1910, the Albia Republican reported in February of that year that the town's population was 4,000 and that Consolidation with four mines, employed 1,000 men.<sup>59</sup> Within the first decade, community life had taken shape. The YMCA served as social headquarters for the community as well as providing leadership and guidance for young black male residents. In 1910, the YMCA had been expanded to include a swimming pool. The pool was housed in a small building located adjacent to the large YMCA. In December, 1910, the By-stander proclaimed "You ought to see that big swimming hole the boys of the

"Y" have -- and right in the house too, with a steam pipe in it so the water can be made warm for winter swimming." The company store as well as the many smaller shops and markets continued to provide Buxton residents with ample goods and services. And Buxton was keeping up with the times: In November, 1910, the Bystander noted that the YMCA was offering an automobile class twice weekly and it had attracted around twenty-five young men. Moreover, by 1911, Buxton had attracted a black dentist, Dr. Linford Willis, so residents no longer had to travel to Albia or Des Moines for dental work.<sup>60</sup>

Educational and religious facilities had also become well established. The black residents of Buxton had four churches: St. John's African Methodist Church, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, the First Congregational Church (which met in the YMCA), and the Church of God.<sup>61</sup> In 1910, the Bystander mentioned two churches for the first time: Bethel Mission, also known as the Second African Methodist Church, and the Second Baptist Church. Former residents recall that Buxton also contained two white churches, a Methodist and a Baptist. Clayborne Carter, a former Buxton resident, recalled that at one time Buxton contained an Episcopalian Church.<sup>62</sup>

Buxton's educational system had also taken shape. By 1910, Buxton had three schools: Fifth Street School, Eleventh Street School and Swede Town School. Mrs. London wrote that each were two story buildings of four rooms. Each school hired four teachers, a total of twelve. In October, 1910, the Bystander reported that the public schools in Buxton contained 669 pupils. Mrs. London and Clayborne Carter remembered that a combined grade and high school was constructed in Buxton early in the community's history. It was located east of the Fifth Street School and contained two years of

high school During its second year of occupancy, in October, 1907, the combined school burned down.<sup>63</sup> Former residents recall that the schools in Buxton proper were integrated while the school in Swede Town was composed primarily of white children. In September, 1910, the Bystander announced that school would begin September 9th and listed the teachers: School No. 3 hired all white teachers while Schools No. 1 and No. 2 had both black and white teachers. School officials held graduation ceremonies in the YMCA along with a program marking the end of the school year. The children presented plays, pageants, drills and musical events.<sup>64</sup>

In 1910, Buxton was still considered a "black man's town." When Stanley Miller, the Mt. Pleasant Free Press editor visited there in 1910, he wrote that "It is absolutely the colored man's town." At the same time it was evident that Buxton had acquired a rough reputation throughout the rest of the state. In his report on his Buxton trip he wrote: "You have heard of Buxton; your impression of it is very unfavorable, I'll gamble on it. When you hear of this town, it is a shooting scrape. Some bad [black] gets drunk, shoots a respectable negro in the leg and possibly through the body and kills him and the telegraph reports it as a race riot at Buxton." Miller continued that "I feel that I was particularly fortunate when the chance to visit the town came Friday."<sup>65</sup>

Miller provided his readers with a lengthy report on the appearance of Buxton and the activities of its residents. He noted that the company houses were painted blue-black and houses painted other colors were privately owned. He wrote that there were few principle streets in the town and "there is no system of street working. The streets mostly travelled wind through the town in any direction which offers the line of least resistance."

Miller added that "There are a good many business houses in the town, but there is no business section. You will find a grocery store or a drug store, or a furniture store nearly anywhere, and it is usually surrounded by residence."<sup>66</sup>

Miller's description of Buxton underscored the fact that Buxton was not an incorporated town. Residents were able to locate businesses anywhere because of a lack of zoning ordinances. Without incorporation, Buxton had no municipal government, no law enforcement structure, and no maintenance staff or equipment to provide upkeep for roads and streets. The Company apparently maintained a few major streets within the town but many went unattended. Buxton had no police force although the company hired two security officers to look after the safety of the company property. Apparently Monroe County officials assigned one deputy sheriff to maintain the peace in Buxton. Consolidation maintained its property such as the company store while individual property owners managed on their own. Buxton contained no sidewalks in the residential areas but company officials or homeowners did put down cinders to form paths furnished by the power plant.<sup>67</sup> Although there were no municipal ordinances regarding liquor, the Camp was started under the arrangement that liquor would not be allowed on company property, which in effect, covered all of Buxton proper. This did not prevent residents from purchasing liquor in adjacent areas. Reuben Gaines, Jr., a long time resident of Buxton, remembered that on many evenings during warm weather, men gathered on the hillside just north of Buxton proper (on land owned by his father, Reuben Gaines, Sr.) gambling and drinking throughout the night.<sup>68</sup>

In 1911, Buxton experienced a series of fires. On February 21st, a fire of unknown origin started in the company store, the Monroe Mercantile Company. The fire totally destroyed the store and its contents. Company officials immediately converted the YMCA into a store and it was "business as usual." The company soon announced plans to rebuild. Four months later two more buildings burned in Buxton: the Bethel Mission and the Standard Drug Store. The Bystander commented that some residents believed the fires had been intentionally started.<sup>69</sup>

Consolidation immediately announced plans to rebuild the company store. Less than one month after the fire, store manager R. R. McRae had blueprints for the new building. The structure was to be one story and would measure 162 by 120. Sliding steel doors would be placed between each department to provide fire protection. Skylights would provide interior light. By April 21st, the Bystander announced that construction of the store was underway.<sup>70</sup>

In October, 1911, the Bystander reported that the new company store was ready for business. Employees totalled eighty-five. The Bystander proudly noted that "There is no finer department store in the capital city," and that the company was continuing its policy of hiring black workers: eighteen of the eighty-five employees were black. The Bystander singled out E. C. Strong, a black man who was the company's longest employee. Strong managed the teamsters and supervised all deliveries. Clayborne Carter remembered that the new store even had a window decorator from Chicago.<sup>71</sup>

Company officials eagerly pointed out the new store's modern features. The facility contained an elevator-escalator system as well as a central bookkeeping system. With the latter, the store had a single cashier located

in an elevated area in the rear of the store. Wires stretched from this office to various sales places on the main floor. Clerks placed money in cylinder shaped containers and by pulling a chain, propelled the container to the cashier's office. The cashier recorded the sale, made change and returned the container to the sales floor. Odessa Booker, a former Buxton resident, recalled that as a clerk in the company store, she was so short that she had to stand on a box to reach the chain.<sup>72</sup>

Throughout the early years of Buxton, Consolidation Coal Company played a visible paternal role in the lives of Buxton residents. At Christmas, Consolidation and the company store provided every child in Buxton with a present and candy. Jessie Frazier, a former Buxton resident, remembered that the company provided each family with a turkey at Thanksgiving. At the same time, the company provided presents for each of the scholars at the town's different Sunday Schools. Buxton typically celebrated the 4th of July with parades, concerts, speeches and races. The company store provided the food for the traditional July 4th barbecue. In 1911, the Bystander noted that the company had provided pork, beef and mutton for barbecuing. In 1911, the company also provided the Buxton Band with a new location for their concerts. The site was located between the company store buildings and H. A. Armstrong's meat market.<sup>73</sup>

The most visible group sponsored by the company was Buxton's ball team, the Buxton Wonders. The Buxton Wonders were the pride of the community; many local observers regarded the Wonders as a professional team. According to Dorothy Collier, the Wonders were an all black team during the early years of Buxton and then later also contained some white players. The

team traveled extensively throughout the state and hosted visiting teams from Chicago, St. Paul and Kansas City. Consolidation erected a grandstand on the edge of town where the Wonders played their home games. Dorothy Collier remembered the excitement of attending a Wonders' game and watching her father, George Neal, play with the team. Her mother, Mrs. Neal, would sometimes rent a surrey from the local livery stable and drive the family to the ball game. Mrs. Collier recalled "That was a big day. On the day they would play the viewing stand would be just loaded. Papa was such a clown, he would cartwheel around the bases, rather than run." According to Herman Brooks, a member of the Wonders for several years, Consolidation paid for the uniforms and provided traveling funds for the team.<sup>74</sup>

The company also provided some assistance to workers in case of accident. Although no records are available to know if the company aided all accident victims, the Bystander reported in August, 1911, that "Too much cannot be said in behalf of the management of the Monroe Mercantile Company for the very generous way they have taken care of its employee, Mr. W. P. Lewis, during his recent illness." The company provided food for the family during Lewis's absence from work and hired a woman to assist Mrs. Lewis with her household work "so that she can give her husband her best attention during the day."<sup>75</sup>

The company also supported, but did not underwrite, the medical plan subscribed to by Buxton residents. The practice existed in Iowa's coal camps that coal operators hired one or more doctors to provide medical care for miners and their families. If the coal camp was close to a larger town, then some operators made arrangements for miners to go there for medical treatment. By paying a fee of \$.50 or \$1.00 per month, not only the miner, but his entire family was guaranteed medical treatment. This

also included prescriptions and there was no limit on office calls.

Apparently the only cost not covered by the plan was that of delivering babies. The doctor, although initially contacted by the coal operator, received the monthly fees directly from his clients. This medical system was practiced in Buxton where the company maintained a staff of three to four doctors at all times.<sup>76</sup> The presence of doctors in the camps and the existence of the medical plan provided Buxton residents with excellent medical care. In fact, coal camp residents undoubtedly had better medical care than residents of most small towns in Iowa.

Throughout 1911 and 1912, Buxton continued to grow. George Lewis opened a "grocery, queensware, glassware and notion store" in Coopertown in November, 1911. The following month, the Monroe Mercantile Company opened a new seventeen room hotel. In December, the YMCA announced the completion of several remodeling projects: the buildings had been rewired for electricity and the gymnasium had the floor lengthened and the ceiling raised. In May, 1911 the Bystander announced that Buxton had a new paper, the Buxton Advocate. The next year, the Buxton Hotel opened its doors, owned and operated by Reuben Gaines, Sr. The building was advertised as "strictly modern being equipped with steam heat" and containing fifteen rooms as well as two bathrooms.<sup>77</sup>

At the same time, the YMCA continued to provide social activities, educational opportunities and physical recreation for the town's young residents. Each fall, the "Y" offered night courses for Buxton residents. In 1913, they organized a Bible study class. On Sunday afternoons, the "Y" offered special programs, usually featuring a local speaker such as Dr. E. A. Carter. The "Y" also organized a glee club for young men. In 1913,

the "Y" announced that both football and basketball teams had been organized and that each team was holding practice sessions. "Y" officials also organized a Boy Scout troop. Many adult groups also used the "Y" facilities. The United Mine Workers of America held their monthly union meetings there and women attended lodge meetings there.<sup>78</sup>

Fourteen years after its founding, however, Buxton appeared to be entering a new phase. In 1914, Buxton miners experienced considerable unemployment because of a drop in coal demand. Coal miners throughout the state experienced the same decline. In June, 1914, the Bystander reported on Buxton:

After a long lay-off, the mines have started up work again. We hope that the mines will run regular. This has been a very hard year on us. This spring lots of men have been out of work, so that makes it hard on all of our societies and churches. Lots of our best men and women are leaving, going to the cities to work.<sup>79</sup>

The same year Consolidation began the policy of relocating Buxton residents in other Monroe County coal camps. In August, 1914, the By-stander noted that some Buxton residents had moved to Consol, the site of Consolidation Mine No. 18. Consol, also owned and operated by Consolidation, was located approximately eighteen miles southwest of Buxton in Wayne Township. The following year several Buxton businessmen moved their operations there. In January, 1916, the Bystander noted that a Buxton resident had moved three Buxton houses to Mine No. 18.<sup>80</sup>

By 1915, Buxton had also experienced a change in racial composition. The census taker of 1915 listed 4,518 people residing in Buxton; of that

number, 2,680 were white and 1,826 were black.<sup>81</sup> By 1915, Buxton had ceased to be a community with a black majority. From a preliminary review of census and interview data, it appears that white residents tended to remain within the Buxton community for longer periods than blacks. This persistence might have been due to the fact that more white families than black families owned their homes which often included a small acreage of ten to twenty acres. As labor problems developed and as miners experienced some unemployment because of the relocation of Consolidation to different mines, white miners were no doubt better equipped to deal with economic dislocations. Since they owned their homes they did not pay monthly rent and with a small land base they raised chickens, pigs and a few cows in addition to planting a large garden. These pursuits led to major savings in food costs. The majority of black residents, however, did not own their own homes so they were more dependent on coal mining wages. Thus, when labor problems developed or the miners experienced other types of layoffs (such as in 1914) black families appeared more prone to seek work elsewhere. Many of the blacks interviewed had, along with their families, left Buxton by 1912 or 1914.

By 1915, the foreign-born composition of Buxton had also changed to include more foreign-born groups than had been present earlier:

Table II  
Birthplaces of Foreign-born Residents of Buxton, 1915

	Number	Percent of Total Population
England	39	0.9
Wales	30	0.7
Scotland	18	0.4
Ireland	10	0.4
Sweden	86	1.9
France	38	0.8
Belgium	9	0.2
Germany	37	0.8

Table II - (continued)

Italy	86	1.9
Austria	207	4.6
Hungary	7	0.2
Russia	9	0.2
Bohemia	2	0.0
Canada	2	0.0
Holland	27	0.6
Norway	5	0.1
Lithuania	1	0.0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	613	13.7

Source: Iowa State Census (1915). Manuscript Population Schedules for Bluff Creek Township, Monroe County.

The following year Buxton suffered an economic setback when the area experienced several fires. In October, 1916, fire destroyed Mrs. B. F. Cooper's grocery store in Coopertown. Without either a water supply or fire extinguisher, local residents were unable to put out the blaze until it had burned more than one-half of the businesses in Coopertown. Buildings destroyed included the Buxton Hotel, the Cooper Drug Store, a grocery store, Masonic Hall, several lodge halls, the Buxton Cigar Factory, the Grandberry Tailor Shop, an amusement hall. The fire also burned several private residences. In total, local residents estimated the loss to be around \$14,000. Because of the lack of an adequate water supply, business people had only been able to insure their businesses for one-sixth of the total value. Another major fire was reported in February, 1917, when the

J. W. Neely Grocery Store and Dance Hall burned to the ground. In June, 1917, lightning struck the bakery shop and residence of J. B. Lucas, destroying that building along with a neighbor's garage.<sup>82</sup>

In 1918, the exodus from Buxton appeared to be in full swing. The mines around Buxton were almost worked out and Consolidation was expanding its operation at Consul, Mine No. 18, as well as preparing to open an additional mine, No. 19, at Haydock. Haydock, also known as Bucknell, was located a few miles southwest of Consul. Like Buxton, these towns were owned by Consolidation Coal Company. Haydock was named after the town in England where the company superintendent had been born and raised.<sup>83</sup> Many Buxton residents did move to Consul and Haydock while others departed for major cities both in and out of Iowa. In March, the Bystander reported that Dr. C. G. Robinson, "one of Buxton's best physicians, leaves this week for Chicago where he intends to make his future home." The same article noted that many members of St. John's African Methodist Church had left Buxton in the last three months. One year later, Dr. Willis and his family moved from Buxton to Des Moines where the dentist resumed his practice.<sup>84</sup> By the summer of 1919, Buxton was in a rapid state of decline.

In August, Charles S. Nichols, an Iowa State College professor of sanitary engineering, visited Buxton and reported that the camp's population did not exceed 400. He noted that there were several hundred houses uninhabited, "many of them in such condition as to be uninhabitable. Many are being torn down and salvaged." He described the camp as generally in a state of decay:

It is reported that in years past the Camp was regularly organized, with local authorities who maintained general sanitary order in the Camp. In its present condition, such organization, if any still exists, has become lax in its operation. Yards and streets are littered and grown to weeds; no system of garbage or rubbish removal is in vogue; and the residents are of such disposition that most of them will not attend to such matters themselves. As a consequence, large quantities of litter and rubbish are evident, the privy vaults are full, and garbage has been dumped in back yards and in alleys. The inspection was made after continued dry, hot weather, and the odors were extremely unpleasant, more particularly in the sections more thickly settled.<sup>85</sup>

Nichols added that the water supply was "not particularly satisfactory." He noted that the Company pumped water from a wooden tank into individual cisterns. Because the cisterns were not filled until they were nearly empty, he believed that they became stale and "as they are seldom, if ever cleaned, there must be an accumulation of materials in them." Nichols also noted that the pond located in the southwest part of the Camp had been condemned several years earlier both for water supply and for gathering of ice for domestic use.

According to Reuben Gaines, Jr., and Clayborne Carter, the company continued relocating Buxton residents throughout 1919, 1920 and 1921. By December, 1922, all miners had been moved from Buxton. In effect, Consolidation had moved Buxton residents to Consul and Haydock, much as they had earlier moved their employees from Muchakinock to Buxton. Company officials had moved most of the Buxton houses to Haydock and sold the remaining ones. Reuben Gaines, Jr. recalled that these houses sold to the public for \$100

for a five room house and \$125 for a six room house. Some Buxton business structures were purchased by neighboring residents and moved to new sites while others were torn down.<sup>86</sup>

In 1923, Consolidation moved its headquarters from Buxton to Haydock. The company apparently believed that their coal operation there would be of some duration as they built more permanent houses and even planted trees. Although Haydock remained an active coal mining town for only a few years it did attract a large population. In 1917, only four houses existed there, but by the early 1920s, it had become a thriving coal community. By 1927, former residents estimate its population at 6,000. The community contained approximately 900 houses. Most of the homes were five room with poured concrete foundations. Company foremen had homes with basements, furnaces and sidewalks. Each home had a cistern which was filled by company workmen. The town included a wide array of businesses including Armstrong's Restaurant which was managed by C. W. Armstrong, son of Hobe Armstrong. Haydock also had a grade school and a white school with a staff of seventeen teachers. In 1927 the mines closed down and the population soon began to disperse.<sup>87</sup>

Consolidation Coal Company maintained their offices in Haydock until 1925. On November 23, 1925, the stockholders of Consolidation held a special meeting in Haydock to consider the sale of Consolidation to Superior Coal Company, an Illinois corporation. The stockholders voted in favor of the sale with the clear intent that this move brought about the "immediate and complete dissolution of Consolidation Coal Company." The sale included all property of Consolidation in Iowa including all land, coal rights, coal deposits, buildings, mine and railroad tracks and all cash on hand. They

then voted that all money from the sale as well as the remaining assets of the Consolidation be divided up among the stockholders. The sale price was \$747,629.30.<sup>88</sup>

The reasons behind the sale of Consolidation are not entirely clear. According to Company correspondence, Consolidation was concerned about higher tax assessments levied by Monroe County officials in 1925. In fact, Monroe County had assessed the Company tax penalties of more than \$10,000 for both 1923 and 1924. A settlement was reached between Consolidation and Monroe County officials whereby Consolidation paid slightly more than \$5,000 for both 1923 and 1924. In 1925, Consolidation officials expressed concern that Wayne Township officials, where Haydock was located, had fixed the valuation of the Consolidation capital stock for taxation purposes at \$30,000 for that year. This meant that Consolidation would pay property taxes of \$1,600. This action apparently angered company officials as they believed that other mining companies were paying lower taxes and therefore local tax authorities were discriminating against Consolidation. Company officials considered several options including transferral of Consolidation's property to the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad and transferral of Consolidation's place of business outside Monroe County. Officials finally decided to sell the property to the Superior Coal Company.<sup>89</sup>

The Superior Coal Company continued to operate in Iowa for two years. Its major operation was located at Haydock. In 1927, the Company experienced labor problems and shut down the mines. In that year, the entire national bituminous coal industry was rocked with a strike. The usual method of

determining wages between the United Mine Workers of America and the coal operators had broken down. The strike began on April 1, 1927 and continued throughout the year. Because of the labor dispute, Iowa's coal production was the lowest in over thirty years. It is not clear if Superior continued to operate in the Haydock vicinity after 1927.<sup>90</sup> Within a short time, Haydock, like Muchakinock and Buxton before it, had turned into a deserted town with the population scattering widely throughout the Middle West and the Northeast.

By 1920, Buxton had become almost a ghost town. But for the previous twenty years, it had served as the community with the highest black population in the state as well as the site of the state's most modern and largest coal mining operation. Buxton had also served, according to interviews with black former residents, as a virtual utopia for their people. It remains in their memories as an almost idyllic place to live. Interviews with black former Buxton residents indicate that they experienced little, if any, discrimination from company officials or other Buxton residents. They recall that the company treated all workers equally in regard to wages and housing and that it was a time when they lived without racial prejudice. They describe social and economic relations between whites and blacks in Buxton as "harmonious." In general, black informants recall that social and educational institutions were integrated. The churches were segregated in Buxton but black informants believe that that condition resulted from black and white preferences, not from racial prejudice.<sup>91</sup>

One former Buxton resident compared her life in Buxton to "life in an oasis." Marjory Brown remembered that as a child, she knew nothing of the discrimination that lay outside the community. Her parents stressed education and culture. Her father worked as a hoisting engineer with Consolidation. This meant that he and his family enjoyed a considerable measure of prestige in the community and that he also earned a higher salary than coal miners. She recalled never having lived in a house that did not have a piano and a carpet on the floor. Her mother put a freshly starched white cloth on the dining room table every day. When she was ten, following the death of her mother (her father had died one year earlier), Mrs. Brown went to live with her grandparents, also Buxton residents. Like her parents, her grandparents valued education and encouraged their family to constantly improve themselves. Every evening as they gathered around the dinner table, her grandfather quizzed her and her brother about what they had learned that day. She remembered:

Now that didn't mean that you learned to wash dishes; but what did you learn, what did you see, what made it an interesting day? What did you read and what did you learn? And if you said nothing, if you hadn't learned anything, if you sat there dumb, then he would tell you how you were wasting your life. Life meant you should learn. And I thought all the people did that . . . .<sup>92</sup>

The Iowa State Bystander consistently reflected the image of Buxton as a utopia for black people. The Bystander provided extensive coverage of Buxton's activities always lauding the economic and educational achievements of black residents. In October, 1905, for example, the Bystander proclaimed in a headline: "Buxton, the colored Man's Mecca of Iowa."<sup>93</sup>

For many years, the Bystander hired a Buxton resident to serve as local correspondent for the paper. Between 1900 and 1912 the Bystander provided extensive coverage of Buxton activities and personalities. In 1903 and again in 1907, the Bystander published souvenir editions on Buxton in which they included numerous pictures of people and buildings as well as providing detailed physical and social descriptions of the town. The By-stander editors clearly believed that Buxton was an exceptional place for blacks to live.

The concept of Buxton as an utopia was not shared by all white residents. Many white informants stated that they believed Buxton was a good place to live because of above average wages and good housing, but few regarded it as an ideal community. Many white interviewees recalled that social events such as roller skating and dancing were segregated with blacks holding their skating and dancing parties on certain nights and whites meeting on alternate nights. In general, the white former residents do not perceive Buxton as a totally integrated community although most agreed that there was no racial strife and in general, race relations were good.

Interviews with former Buxton residents indicate that intergroup relations formed a pattern of public integration and private separation. There was integration in virtually all public places and pursuits, although some respondents recall some public places as the home territory of one group. The main "Y" is an example since that was built and maintained primarily for black people. The two distinct Swede towns, East Swede Town and West Swede Town, also illustrate that point. In general, white families

were more apt to live on the outskirts of Buxton (where they owned their own homes) than were blacks. There is little evidence of interracial intimacy and friendships between blacks and whites beyond childhood.<sup>94</sup>

In comparing the life style of blacks in Buxton with blacks who lived in other parts of Iowa, there is striking contrast. In Iowa's major cities like Des Moines, Waterloo and Dubuque, blacks were denied employment in many areas and frequently were restricted to living in certain parts of these cities. Blacks who left Buxton and moved to other Iowa cities commented that they experienced a "rude awakening." Vaeletta Fields and her husband, Milton, moved to Waterloo in the 1920s. The first black families had arrived in Waterloo in 1911, moving there from the South. Black males had been hired as strike breakers by the Illinois Central Railroad when white workers had walked out protesting wage cuts. The blacks quickly built shanty type homes close to the railroad tracks and lived there for many years. Certain services in the community were shut off to them such as undertaking. For many years white undertakers in Waterloo would not handle black corpses. Gradually black families began to supply their own people to handle these services.<sup>95</sup> Mr. Fields had received a law degree from the University of Iowa and he had little difficulty attracting black clients. He did soon discover, however, that they frequently had little money to pay their fees. Mrs. Fields discovered that it would be necessary for her to work also. Although she had graduated from the University of Iowa with a degree in English she knew that the Waterloo Public Schools would not hire her as a teacher. She went to work as an elevator operator and then later as a cleaning woman in the women's rest room of the local telephone company. She related that the Waterloo Public Schools hired the

first black person as teacher in 1952.<sup>96</sup> Black men who had formerly worked as miners in Buxton went to work in meat packing plants, assembly plants, and as janitors and day laborers.

Black miners who left Buxton and desired to continue as miners frequently discovered that not all Iowa coal operators welcomed them. Some Iowa coal fields remained non-integrated into the 1920s. Apparently this condition was based on the feeling of local residents and views of the coal operators. Residents in Seymour stated that no blacks resided in Seymour during the years that coal mining was an active industry there. A retired coal miner has stated that no blacks were allowed in Bussey.<sup>97</sup> In 1909, Ogden underwent severe labor strife when 160 black miners from Buxton arrived to take jobs there. Prior to 1909, the Ogden fields had been all white. Local white residents expressed extreme hostility toward the blacks and within several months, the black miners returned to Buxton.<sup>98</sup> In some coal camps, such as Zookspur (located several miles south of Madrid) black families were congregated together and relegated to one area of the camp.<sup>99</sup>

Blacks experienced similar, if even worse conditions, in other parts of the country. In 1900, about 900,000 blacks lived in the north; the remainder lived in the southern states. During the 1880s and 1890s, southerners devised Jim Crow laws. The result was that southern blacks were not only denied legal and voting rights but were also excluded from most occupational groups and experienced extremely poor living conditions. Many southern black males worked as share croppers after the Civil War. According to Fred A. Shannon in his book, The Farmer's Last Frontier, share cropping provided the black male and his family with barely enough income

to survive and no opportunity to advance themselves. In fact, given the particular credit system used by country store keepers in the South (the crop-lien credit system), black share croppers were not only kept at the lowest poverty level but they found it extremely difficult to break out of the poverty cycle.<sup>100</sup> In addition, southern blacks continually faced intimidation and violence. Between 1900 and 1914, white mobs had lynched over 1,000 blacks in the south. Around 1900, many southern blacks began to emigrate to northern cities. There they found somewhat better economic opportunity but they still faced extensive discrimination in employment, housing and education. Major cities soon developed black ghettos where many blacks felt trapped and held little hope of ever getting out.<sup>101</sup>

Once relocated in urban centers in the northeast, black families often discovered that to survive, the wife had to work outside the home. According to Elizabeth Pleck who studied the work habits of both Italian and black women in urban areas in the late 1800s and early 1900s, black women and their families often lived in "desperate poverty." She discovered that black married women experienced a rate of employment from four to fifteen times higher than immigrant wives. Sometimes this was due to the husband's low income and other times to the fact that the black man could find no employment. In fact, in the urban Northeast during this period, Pleck noted that "Most black husbands not employed as unskilled laborers were servants and waiters and elevator operators; in sum, low-wage jobs, paying almost half what one made in skilled labor." Laundry and domestic service accounted for the major types of employment for black married women. Many black women also took in boarders to add to the family income.<sup>102</sup>

According to interviews with black women who lived in Buxton, few of their mothers had worked outside the home and few, if any, took in boarders. They remembered that the income earned by their fathers provided the family with a good living and there was no need for their mothers to be employed. In fact, many women remembered having fine furniture, stylish and quality clothing, and living a most comfortable life style. Many women also remember that their mothers participated in many club activities and had considerable leisure time.<sup>103</sup>

The activities of black women in Buxton stand in sharp contrast not only to black women in the Northeast but also to other coal mining women in Iowa. Because many Iowa miners earned only a meager wage working in the mines, many mining wives took in boarders to earn money. The usual fee was \$1.00 per week per boarder. For that amount, the woman fed the boarder, washed his clothes, packed his daily lunch and provided him with a place to sleep. Many women kept three or four boarders in addition to raising a family of their own. This was not the case with black women in Buxton. In fact, not only in the area of family income, but also in the areas of housing, shopping facilities, social activities and religious functions, Buxton offered mining families a clearly superior life style to what they might have experienced in most other coal mining camps.<sup>104</sup>

Finally, several misconceptions regarding Buxton should be corrected. First, it appears that since the demise of Buxton there has been a tendency to over-estimate the town's population. Many historical references to Buxton state that the community contained anywhere from 6,000 to 9,000 people.<sup>105</sup> That was clearly not the case. Buxton's highest population was in 1905 when it was just under 5,000. By 1915, it had dropped to 4,518.

Although census figures are not available for 1910, there is no reason to believe that the community had grown by 1910. Second, the perception that Buxton was a predominately black community does not appear to be true. Some former residents have estimated that blacks accounted for up to eighty percent of Buxton's total population. In 1905, Buxton contained 790 more blacks than whites. Thus, blacks accounted for 54.8% of the total population. By 1915, the racial balance had shifted so that whites outnumbered blacks by 854. In that year, then, blacks accounted for 40.4% of the total population. Buxton, like most other coal mining camps, contained a wide diversity of ethnic groups other than blacks.<sup>106</sup> Third, it should be noted that although this study has focused on Buxton, and most historical interest has centered there, in reality, this community was really a series of communities. Only by looking first at Muchakinock and later at Haydock, is it possible to view the entire experience. All the towns shared major characteristics. The Consolidation Coal Company had major operations at all three communities and so all were company towns. It is presumed that the company followed the same hiring practices in all three communities. Both Muchakinock and Buxton were perceived as being predominately black communities. It is also believed that Haydock had a sizeable black population. Buxton and Haydock were constructed in such a way that the company apparently believed that they would be fairly permanent communities. And, the three communities shared a common population: Many people moved from Muchy to Buxton; in turn, the second generation of these families moved on to Haydock.<sup>107</sup>

Regardless of blurred perceptions, however, the story of Buxton, Iowa has continued to live on in the minds of former residents. For many years after the town faded away, former residents came back each summer to hold

a reunion on the town's site. Some who attended estimate that the reunions attracted several thousand people each year. The memories of Buxton will continue to live on wherever former residents and their descendents have settled. For black people, in particular, the town's demise was a sad affair. Perhaps Marjory Brown stated it best when she said: "Buxton was something else. You can imagine how we grieved for it."<sup>108</sup>

## Notes

1. Iowa State Census (1905). Manuscript Population Schedules for Bluff Creek Township, Monroe County. The persons listed as either black or white account for only 4,691 out of a total of 4,924. In the 1905 census of Bluff Creek Township, there were 204 persons who did not have race listed and 29 who were listed as "yellow." The latter designation is difficult to understand as there were no persons of Chinese ancestry in Bluff Creek Township. A possible explanation is that the census taker was trying to make a differentiation between people that he perceived to be black or mulatto. It should also be noted that Bluff Creek Township did not include at least one suburb of Buxton -- Coopertown. That section was located just over the county line in Mahaska County. Therefore, the total population of Buxton might be slightly higher than is indicated by the Bluff Creek Township figures. It is our opinion, however, that the residential population in Coopertown was low and would not significantly alter the 1905 Buxton population figure.
2. Hubert Olin, Coal Mining in Iowa (Des Moines: The State of Iowa, 1965), pp. 44-46.
3. Minnie B. London, "As I Remember." Privately published memoirs (Waterloo, Iowa, 1940), p. 1.
4. Olin, Coal Mining, p. 49.
5. Ibid.
6. Iowa State Census (1895). Manuscript Population Schedules for Harrison and East Des Moines Townships, Mahaska County; and Eddyville Tribune, September, 1898.

7. London, "As I Remember," p. 2.
8. Negro Solicitor, March 1898.
9. Eddyville Tribune, 15 September 1898.
10. Negro Solicitor, July 1897.
11. London, "As I Remember, p. 3.
12. Olin, Coal Mining, p. 49.
13. Consolidation Coal Company Minutes, Vol. II, June 30, 1896.
14. Olin Papers, Volume VI, Folder 1. Deposited at the Iowa State Department of Museum and Archives.
15. Olin Papers, Volume III, Folder 1. Script written by John E. Baxter, Ottumwa, Iowa, for presentation at Buxton Association in Des Moines, September 1, 1963. Mr. Baxter was a former resident of Buxton.
16. Olin Papers, Volume III, Folder 2. Letter from Clayborne Carter to Hubert Olin, February 26, 1963. Mr. Carter was a brother of Dr. E. A. Carter and a former resident of Buxton.
17. Interview with Dorothy Collier, former Buxton resident, Des Moines, October, 1980.
18. Iowa State Bystander, 21 June, 1901; and Olin Papers, John E. Baxter. It should be noted that almost immediately after the founding of Buxton, the camp was unionized by the United Mine Workers of America. The Union officials, particularly John Reese reacted exuberantly over the move since Buxton was the largest coal camp in the state. Buxton remained unionized through the early 1920s.
19. Collier Interview; and Olin Papers, Clayborne Carter.
20. Olin Papers, Clayborne Carter.
21. Charles Nichols, Housing Conditions: Iowa Coal Mining Camps (Des Moines: State Printing Office, 1919), p. 20.

22. Bystander, 15 August, 1902.
23. Interview with Gertrude Stokes, former Buxton resident, Cedar Rapids, July, 1981.
24. Bystander, 15 November, 1901
25. Interview with Ida Baysoar Morgan, former Buxton resident, Peru, Illinois, July 2, 1981.
26. Bystander, 15 November, 1902.
27. Bystander, 21 June, 1901; 19 July, 1901; 29 November, 1901 and 3 January, 1902.
28. Olin Papers, John E. Baxter; Interview with Alex Erickson, former Buxton resident, Pershing, June, 1981.
29. Bystander, 17 October, 1902; and 16 October, 1903.
30. Olin Papers, Clayborne Carter
31. Olin Papers, John Baxter.
32. Olin Papers, Clayborne Carter.
33. Albia Republican, 8 March, 1910.
34. Dorothy Schwieder, Black Diamonds: Life and Work in Iowa's Coal Mining Communities, 1895-1925. Forthcoming from Iowa State University Press, pp. 88-89.
35. Iowa State Census (1915). Manuscript Population Schedules for Bluff Creek Township, Monroe County; Cincinnati, Appanoose County; Beacon, Mahaska County; and Seymour, Wayne County. It should be noted here that Bluff Creek Township did not include at least one suburb of Buxton -- Coopertown. That section was located just over the county line in Mahaska County. Therefore, the total population of Buxton might have been slightly larger than indicated by the 1915 census figures.

36. Bystander, 25 April, 1902; and 19 June, 1903.
37. Bystander, 27 November, 1903.
38. Ibid.
39. London, "As I Remember," p. 2
40. Albia Republican, 10 March, 1910; and Olin Papers; Clayborne Carter.
41. Bystander, 21 December, 1900.
42. Ibid., 29 August, 1902.
43. Ibid., 24 February, 1905.
44. Ibid., 17 November, 1905; and 19 August, 1904.
45. Ibid., 24 October, 1902; 6 February, 1903; 5 January, 1906; 5 April, 1907 and 10 May, 1907.
46. Ibid., 2 February, 1906; 31 January, 1908; 13 January, 1911 and 10 April, 1908.
47. Lewis Atherton, Main Street on the Middle Border (New York: Quadrangle/ New York Times Book Co., 1975), pp. 245-49.
48. Interview with Marjory Brown, former Buxton resident, Waterloo, August, 1980.
49. Bystander, January 7, 1910; and 16 December, 1910.
50. Bystander, 14 August, 1908; and 8 January, 1909. It is not clear why the Bystander wrote that the theater was managed by blacks. Former residents remember that the Langlois Sisters rented the building and managed it themselves.
51. Bystander, 14 August, 1908; and 8 January, 1909.
52. Ibid., 8 January, 1909.
53. Ibid., 16 December, 1910; 30 December, 1910; 13 January, 1911; and Olin Papers, Clayborne Carter.

54. Olin Papers, Volume VI, Folder 1. Copy of newspaper article, from the Wytheville, Virginia Enterprise, December, 1898.
55. Oskaloos Times, 15 January, 1898.
56. "Editorial," Annals of Iowa XIX (1939): 159-60.
57. Interview with Vaeletta Fields, former Buxton resident and daughter of Minnie B. London, Waterloo, July, 1981.
58. Bystander, 2 July, 1909.
59. Albia Republican, 10 February, 1910.
60. Bystander, 23 December, 1910; 25 November, 1910; and 10 February, 1911.
61. London, "As I Remember," p. 2.
62. Collier Interview; and Olin Papers, Clayborne Carter. Buxton also contained a Swedish Lutheran Church.
63. London, "As I Remember," p. 3; Olin Papers, Clayborne Carter: and Bystander, 21 October, 1910.
64. Collier Interview; London, "As I Remember," p. 3; and Bystander, 6 September, 1912.
65. Stanley Miller, "As Others See Buxton," Mt. Pleasant Free Press, December, 1910.
66. Ibid.
67. Olin Papers, John Baxter.
68. Miller, "As Others See Buxton;" and Reuben Gaines, memoirs of Buxton, untitled, unpublished manuscript, 1980. p. 52.
69. Bystander, 3 March, 1911; and 23 June, 1911.
70. Ibid., 17 March, 1911; and 21 April, 1911
71. Ibid., 20 October, 1911; and Olin Papers, Clayborne Carter.
72. Interview with Odessa Booker, former Buxton resident, Des Moines, June, 1981.

73. Bystander, 21 December, 1909; 23 December, 1910, 7 July, 1911; and 9 August, 1911.
74. Collier Interview; and Interview with Herman Brooks, former Muchakinock and Buxton resident, Chicago, July, 1981.
75. Bystander, 25 August, 1911.
76. Olin Papers, Volume VI, Folder 2. Letter from Marion Carter, daughter of Dr. E. A. Carter. Miss Carter now resides in Detroit; Collier Interview; Brown Interview; and Interview with Mattie Murray, former Buxton resident, Des Moines, July, 1981.
77. Bystander, 24 November, 1911; 8 December, 1911; 15 December, 1911; and 13 September, 1912. In addition to the Buxton Advocate, Buxton had several other newspapers including the Buxton Breeze, Buxton Advocate and the Buxton Eagle. A few xerox copies of several newspaper issues are included in the Olin Papers. At the present time there are no known copies of any of these papers.
78. Bystander, 24 October, 1913; and 15 July, 1912. It is known that Buxton had a basketball team as early as 1907. See picture collection.
79. Bystander, 26 June, 1914.
80. Bystander, 1 January, 1916.
81. Iowa State Census (1905, 1915).
82. Bystander, 10 October, 1916; 29 June, 1917; and 16 February, 1917.
83. Olin Papers, Clayborne Carter
84. Bystander, 8 March, 1918; and 29 August, 1919.
85. Nichols, Housing Conditions, p. 20-21.
86. Gaines, "Memoirs," p. 52; Olin Papers, Clayborne Carter.

87. Des Moines Register, "Only Vague Outlines Remain of Thriving Town in 1927," no date. Newspaper clipping in possession of Mary Church, Gillespie, Illinois. Mrs. Church is a former Buxton resident.
88. Consolidation Coal Company Minutes, Volume II. Stockholders special meeting, November 23, 1925.
89. Consolidation Coal Company Records, Volume II. Correspondence between F. W. Sargent and Nye Morehouse, Assistant General Solicitor of Consolidation.
90. Des Moines Register, "Only Vague Outlines Remain;" and Biennial Report of the State Mine Inspectors, 1928 (Des Moines, State of Iowa, 1928), p. 3.
91. Most blacks in Buxton had moved from the South so they were actually aware of the difficulties experienced in states like Virginia, Tennessee and Alabama. In fact, the parents of many Buxton blacks had earlier arrived in Muchakinock in 1881. Many in this first wave of black Muchy residents had experienced slightly less than twenty years of freedom after having been slaves. Once relocated in Iowa, many blacks wrote to family members and friends still in the South telling them to "come up to God's Country." Interview with Jesse Frazier, former Buxton resident, Des Moines, September, 1979.
92. Brown Interview.
93. Bystander, 20 October, 1905.
94. Interview with Archie Harris, former Buxton resident, Lovilia, July, 1981; and Erickson Interview.
95. Jane Cornelius, "The Blacks in Waterloo," unpublished paper, Iowa State University, 1973.
96. Fields Interview.
97. Erickson Interview.

98. Schwieder, Black Diamonds, see Chapter 6.
99. Interview with Catherine McClelland, former Zookspur resident, Madrid, November, 1972.
100. Fred A. Shannon, The Farmer's Last Frontier, Vol. V, The Economic History of the United States Series, ed. Henry David (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1945), see Chapter 4, "Land and Labor in the New South."
101. Mary Beth Norton, A People and a Nation, Vol. II (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), pp. 589-90.
102. Elizabeth H. Pleck, "A Mother's Wages: Income Earning Among Married Italian and Black Women, 1896-1911," A Heritage of Her Own, eds. Nancy F. Cott and Elizabeth H. Pleck (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), pp. 368-74.
103. Olin Papers: Marion Carter. Miss Carter particularly noted the social activities of her mother, Rose Carter.
104. Schwieder, Black Diamonds, see Chapter 3 and 4.
105. See Olin, Coal Mining, Nichols, Housing Conditions and Beverly Shiffer, "The Story of Buxton," Annals of Iowa 37 (Summer, 1964).
106. Iowa State Censuses (1905 and 1915). Bluff Creek Township, Monroe County.
107. No effort has been made to check persistence of Muchakinock, Buxton and Haydock residents. It is known from interviews, however, that some families had members that lived in all three communities.
108. Brown Interview.

SUMMARY OF ORAL HISTORIES ON  
BUXTON, IOWA

1. Gus Holm

This man had been a Swedish immigrant into Buxton, where he lived and worked as a miner. He was 77 years old at the time of the interview. He reported on mining, particularly the job of a miner, and described ethnic and race relations in Buxton. He mentioned some prostitution in Buxton on payday.

2. Jeanette Adams

Jeanette Adams was born in 1898 in Muchakinock, Iowa. Her family was part of the migration of black miners and their families from Virginia to Muchakinock and Buxton. She reported on her childhood experiences in Buxton, including schooling, home life and the social community among blacks in Buxton. Her family lived on a small farm on the outskirts of Buxton.

3. Marjorie Brown

Marjorie Brown was born in 1904, and spent much of her childhood in Buxton. She talked about her father, Big Bill Lee, who was chief engineer at the Buxton mines. She gave detailed descriptions of her home and the social community among blacks in Buxton. She is one of the few respondents who dwelled on the social stratification in Buxton and the social distance between different classes of people there.

## 4. Ada Morgan

The father of this woman succeeded Ben Buxton as superintendent of the mines at Buxton. She moved to Buxton at age nineteen. Her remembrances of Buxton were confined to those of the superintendent's house and a small circle of friends. There was apparently great social distance between her and the common people of Buxton.

## 5. Mattie Murray

Mattie Murray was born in Muchakinock, Iowa in 1899. Her family had migrated from Virginia to Iowa. She reported on daily life in Buxton, especially that in her own home. She also mentioned credit at the company store, the condition of company houses, the names for different parts of Buxton, and terms for home-made liquor in Buxton.

## 6. Mary Allison

Mary Allison came to Buxton when she was nineteen years old. Her husband was a local farmer, and thus the perspective behind her recall of Buxton is that of peddling farm produce in Buxton. She knew and recalled many of the prominent people in Buxton.

## 7. Donald Gaines

He was born in Buxton in 1917, and his brother was a prominent businessman in Buxton. He recalled the history of his family, particularly the life of his brother Reuben in Buxton. He also mentioned other business people in Buxton.

## 8. Clifford Lewis

Clifford Lewis was born in 1908 on a farm near Buxton. His family had been in Monroe County since 1852. His father sold farm produce to people in Buxton, and he recalled his father giving meat to black miners on credit during strikes. Mr. Lewis gave a good physical description of Buxton.

## 9. Wilma Stewart

Wilma Stewart was born in Buxton in 1909. She spent her childhood in East Swedetown, and thus gave a detailed description of life among the Swedes in Buxton.

## 10. Arch Allison and George Klobnak

These two men were interviewed together, but Mr. Allison had more experience with Buxton. He recalled in detail the physical setting of Buxton, mining, and the underlife of Buxton among the bootleggers. Mr. Klobnak was part of the Slovak community in and around Buxton, and he recalled the social activity among the Slovaks, including their three-day wedding ceremonies.

## 11. Mr. Stein

This man and his father conducted business in Buxton for a very brief period of time. His interview centered on life as a Jewish merchant in Ottuma, Iowa, and his philosophy of life that emerged from these experiences.

## 12. Hucey Hart

Mr. Hart was born in Buxton in 1906. He recalled with rich detail work in the mines, the physical setting of Buxton, company houses, and miners' strikes.

## 13. Jacob Brown

Mr. Brown lived in Buxton from 1910 to 1925. He was a very good informant, who recalled work in the mines, company houses, the YMCA, the physical setting of Buxton, the social community among blacks and the food consumed in Buxton homes. He also mentioned race relations in Buxton.

## 14. Lara Wardelin

Lara Wardelin was born in 1900 in a town near Buxton. She recalled the physical setting of Buxton, including the company store and the YMCA, her family life and the social activity in Buxton.

## 15. Susie Robinson

Susie Robinson came to Buxton when she was 11 years old, having lived earlier in Muchakinock, Iowa. Her family migrated from West Virginia to Iowa. She recalled many things about Buxton, including the physical setting, the social activity, the schools, the control parents exercised over their children, the clique of Muchakinock people in Buxton, and the changes in Buxton over time.

## 16. Robert Wheels

Robert Wheels lived in Buxton from 1906 to 1924. He recalled working in the mines, schools, social activity, and the Buxton Wonders. He was known as Preach Wheels.

## 17. Vaeletta Fields

She was born in 1895 in Muchakinock, Iowa. She recalled members of her family in Buxton, schools, the physical setting of Buxton, social activity in Buxton, and compared blacks from Buxton with those from Mississippi in Waterloo, Iowa.

## 18. Herman Brooks

Mr. Brooks was born in 1887 in Muchakinock, Iowa, and moved to Buxton when he was between 14 and 15 years of age. He recalled in detail much about Buxton, and this included his role as a player on the Buxton Wonders. He also mentioned race relations in Buxton.

## 19. Leroy Wright

Mr. Wright was born in 1905, and lived in Buxton from 1912 to 1917. His family, like so many of these informants, was part of the migration from Virginia to Iowa. He recalled with detail virtually all things asked of him about Buxton.

## 20. Charles Lenger

Mr. Lenger lived in Buxton from 1909 to 1921. He recalled the Slovak community in and around Buxton, other white ethnic groups in Buxton, his neighborhood near West Swedetown, the Swedetown School, and the Langlois sisters who ran the local movie. There was reference to race relations in the interview.

## 21. Helen Duke

Helen Duke was born in 1905 in Albia, Iowa, and lived in Buxton until 1917. She recalled race relations in Buxton, social activities, company houses, and family life.

## 22. Helen Clay

She lived in Buxton during its demise, and thus gave a good physical description of Buxton in its last years. She also mentioned the schools in Buxton and race relations there.

## 23. Walter and Mildred Gardner

The Gardners recalled Buxton from the perspective of farmers who sold farm produce to people in Buxton. They recalled the physical setting, and gave an account of the changes in Buxton over time. They mentioned groups of black women picking greens in roadside ditches outside Buxton.

## 24. Gertrude Stokes, Agnes Walker and Nine Bragg

These three women were interviewed together, and together recalled many details about Buxton. Social activities, housing, utilities, race relations, and the migration of people out of Buxton were all mentioned.

## 25. Archie Harris

Mr. Harris lived in and around Buxton nearly all of his life. He recalled with detail the physical setting of Buxton, mining, social activities in Buxton, the underlife there, and race and class relations in Buxton.

## 26. Odessa Booker

Odessa Booker was born in 1901 in Arkansas, and recalled her migration to Buxton. She mentioned many things about Buxton, including death benefits to miners' families, prices and the company store, and the daily routine for women in Buxton.

## 27. Lester Beamon

His father was blinded in the mines, and was forced to beg in Buxton. Mr. Beamon also recalled race relations, social life in Buxton, parental discipline at the time, and home remedies.

## 28. Harold Reasby

Mr. Reasby was born in 1908 in Buxton, and recalled much about Buxton. His father ran a lunch wagon in Buxton, and this business was described. Mr. Reasby also recalled race relations in Buxton and how those changed over time.

## 29. Alex and Agnes Erickson

The Ericksons were superb informants, and their special contributions were their recall of the Swedes in Buxton, race relations in Buxton, the miners at work, and the sports facilities in Buxton.

## 30. Albert and Vera Fisher

Vera Fisher recalled life in Swedetown in Buxton. She lived there from 1906 to 1923.

## 31. John Pernot

Mr. Pernot visited Buxton only occasionally, and thus had limited recall of life in Buxton.

## 32. Mike Onder

Mr. Onder moved to Buxton in 1906, when he was three years of age. He was a special informant, with knowledge of the Slovak community in Buxton and of the black community there. He reported that there were two distinct Buxton Wonder teams over time, and knew about the underlife of Buxton.

## 33. Naomi Ambey

Naomi Ambey moved to Buxton in 1921, and most of her recall was limited to the life of her family.

## 34. Marvin Franzen

His father was caretaker for the Ben Buxton's house, and thus Mr. Franzen gave us the best account of that house.

## 35. Bessie Lewis

Bessie Lewis not only could answer all questions about Buxton, but also she provided us with unique information. She described Muchakinock, the migration of people from Muchakinock to Buxton, the fact that the company numbered the first 100 houses in Buxton, and that black people from Baltimore were considered rowdy by black people from Virginia in Buxton. She also recalled the white ethnic groups in Buxton and offered her judgments on why people found life in Buxton to their liking.

## 36. Adolph Larson

Mr. Larson came to Buxton in 1905, when he was 16 years of age. His special contribution included a description of the Swedish community in Buxton and the Buxton Bottling Works, which he once owned.

## 37. Sister Sofranco

Sister Sofranco gave a rich description of her family and the larger Slovak community in and around Buxton.

## 38. Dorothy Collier

Mrs. Collier provided a description of many facets of life in Buxton, including the company store, company houses, social activities among blacks, and family life in Buxton. She also mentioned midwifery, race relations, home remedies and schooling in Buxton. She lived in Buxton from 1906 to 1926.

## 39. Nellie King

Nellie King was an unique informant. She is white and was married to a well-known black man in Buxton. She gave a good description of the black community there, and the treatment of blacks outside of Buxton. Since her husband was a player for the Buxton Wonders, she could give a good account of that ball team.

## 40. Eleanor Sojaka

Eleanor Sojaka gave an account of the Slovak community in and around Buxton. She is a co-author of a history of Lovilia, Iowa, which is only a few miles West of the Buxton site.

## 41. Earl Smith

Earl Smith lived in Buxton from 1908 to 1928. His breadth of knowledge about Buxton was at least equal to any other informant. He talked at length on every point asked in the interview guide. He extensively described the physical setting of Buxton.

## 42. Paul and Mary Jackson

Both Jacksons spent their childhoods in Buxton. They recalled the physical setting of Buxton and the amicable nature of race relations there. Mr. Jackson also reported on the underlife in Buxton.

## 43. Elmer Buford

Mr. Buford remembers a broad range of Buxton history, including childhood play, work in the mines, the shopping facilities in Buxton, social activities there and the underlife of Buxton. He described details on the plat map of Buxton.

## 44. Emma Starks

Mrs. Stark's father was a leader in the Slovak community in and around Buxton. Thus, much of her interview centered on a description of this Community. There was frequent mention of the informal mutual aid among Slovaks, and their holidays were described.

## 45. Karl Kietzman

Mr. Kietzman was born in 1901 in Buxton, and spent nearly all of his younger years there. He described virtually all facets of Buxton history asked of him. His unique contribution is that he is the only living relative of Hobe Armstrong known to the research team. Thus, he was asked about Mr. Armstrong in some detail.

## 46. Albert Cox

Mr. Cox had only second-hand knowledge of Buxton, and his true value to the research was to have identified informants with more intimate knowledge of Buxton.

## 47. Harvey Lewis

Mr. Lewis lived in Buxton from 1913 to 1920, and then his family lived many years on a farm near the Buxton site. His family was part of the Welsh community in Buxton, and he recalled mining, social activities, and race relations in Buxton.

## 48. Clara Jones

Clara Jones lived in a small mining camp two miles from Buxton, and visited her grandmother in Buxton twice per month. Her recall of Buxton was thus limited, but she gave an account of downtown Buxton and going shopping and to the movies.

## 49. Erwin Olsasky

Mr. Olsasky was prominent in the Slovak community in and around Buxton. His contribution centered on a description of this community, but also included a physical description of Buxton and his account of race relations in Buxton.

## 50. Oliver Burkett

Mr. Burkett was born in 1917 and spent much of his childhood in Buxton. His family was part of the migration from Virginia to Iowa, which he recalled. Mr. Burkett gave a rich and detailed account of daily life in his home, including the routine of his parents, children's chores, and the preparation and

consumption of food at home. The company house was described in the course of this larger accounting.

51. Walter Plum

Mr. Plum worked in the Buxton mines as a company man from 1909 to 1919. He gave an excellent description of work in the mines there, as well as one of Buxton as a physical place.

52. Mrs. Barnes

She moved in and out of Buxton more than once. She recalled physical things about Buxton, peddling in Buxton by local farmers, and made comments about race relations in Buxton.

53. Emmanuel Blomgren

Mr. Blomgren has spent his entire life in and around the Buxton site. His health confined his contribution greatly to these oral histories.

54. Carl Goodwin

Mr. Goodwin was born in 1894, and worked much of his life in mining in and around Buxton. He could compare Buxton with conditions in other mining camps. He was also familiar with the union organizing in the coal fields of Iowa. He also provided physical descriptions of Buxton, and commented on race relations there.

55. Clyde Wright

Mr. Wright was part of the migration from Virginia to Iowa, at least his family was part of that history. He also stayed in the coal industry long after the demise of Buxton. Thus, he was able to recount many things about Buxton history.

## 56. Joe Rebarchak

Mr. Rebarchak and his family peddled farm produce in Buxton in his younger years. He recalled Buxton from this perspective, and told about the Slovak community in and around Buxton.

## 57. Lou Walraven

Mr. Walraven was born in Oskaloosa in 1888, and thus could recall Muchkinock as well as Buxton. He was a miner in the area and ran a small business in Crickett, outside of Buxton.

## 58. Andrew Smith

Mr. Smith was born in Muchakinock in 1892, and he and his family were members of the Slovak community in and around Buxton. He recalled much of that community, including the custom for old women to dance around a new bride and warn her of the hardships in the life ahead.

## 59. Charles Taylor

Mr. Taylor worked as a miner at Buxton, and recalled those years of work. He described the physical setting of Buxton, and commented extensively on social life there. He also mentioned race relations in Buxton.

## 60. Lola Reeves

Lola Reeves was born in Davenport, Iowa, in 1893, and raised in eastern Iowa. She was a school teacher in Buxton, and recalled that Buxton was the first place that she had lived with black people like herself. She noted that the consequent change in her social life was tremendous.

## 61. Andy Antolek

Mr. Antolek and his family were members of the Slovak community in and around Buxton. He recalled that community, of course, and his work in the mines. He recounted how he evolved from mining into farming.

## 62. Mr. Larson

Mr. Larson had lived in East Swedetown and recalled the Swedish community in and around Buxton. He had worked for the company store and recalled many details of that operation.

## 63. Pete Karpan

Mr. Karpan was one of the few Croatians to have had contact with Buxton. His contribution was to set Buxton into the larger context of mining in south central Iowa, including the roles of different ethnic groups in that industry.

## 64. Mr. Mellnick

Mr. Mellnick was part of the Slovak community in and around Buxton. His recall centered on that community and his work as a miner.

## 65. Mike Bodner

Mr. Bodnar was a member of the Slovak community in and around Buxton. He worked in mining in the area nearly all of his life, and had extensive knowledge of Buxton and a good perspective on what it meant.

66. Mr. Stoffloski

He had been part of the Slovak community in and around Buxton, and contributed to the history of that community.

67. Steven Onder

Mr. Onder was part of the Slovak community in and around Buxton. Because of his age, he had only limited recall of Buxton.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF HISTORICAL MATERIALS  
COLLECTED AND SURVEYED FOR THE BUXTON PROJECT

Biennial Report of the State Mine Inspectors, 1880-1927. Des Moines; State of Iowa. These reports list the mines operating in the Muchakinock, Buxton, and Haydock vicinities between 1880 and 1927. They give the name of the mine, type, number of employees, location and superintendent. The reports also include lists of injured and killed miners and reasons for accidents. Occasionally the mine inspectors added comments on the composition of the coal camps, appearance of mines and other pertinent data. No attempt was made to duplicate this material as it is readily available at the following locations: Iowa State University Library; Iowa State Geological Survey, Iowa City; and Iowa State Museum and Archives, Des Moines.

Birth Records, Bluff Creek Township, Monroe County, 1904-1905. These records contain parents' names, race, number of children born to this mother, place of birth, legitimate or illegitimate birth, mother's place of birth, mother's age, occupation, name of attendant (doctor or midwife). Xerox copies of these birth records are included in the collection.

Consolidation Coal Company Records. The Chicago and Northwestern Railroad's headquarters in Chicago contain meager records on the operations of the Consolidation Coal Company operations in Muchakinock and Buxton. Their total holdings consist of two ledger books that contain minutes from business meetings of the board of directors of the Consolidation Coal Company. The minutes are sketchy and in most instances contain little more than the names of directors, notice of elections, and order

of business. Some information was obtained on the management of the company store and on reasons for the sale of Consolidation to Superior Block Coal Company in 1925. The railroad has failed to maintain any company records of employees, wage rates, wage disputes, types of employees hired, manager-employee relations or policy making apparatus. Xerox copies of pertinent information from these records is included in the collection.

Correspondence. During the duration of the grant, letters have been received from people all over the United States expressing interest in the project. Some people voluntarily included remembrances in their letters. In other cases, the principal investigator wrote back and asked the person to answer some specific questions about their lives in Buxton. The following are letters received from former Buxton residents which contain information on their lives in Buxton:

Mr. Claire Pates, Stanhope, Iowa

Mrs. Marjorie Miller Shaw, Silver Springs, Maryland

Mrs. Christine Johnson, Los Angeles, California

Mrs. Ida Morgan, Peru, Illinois

Mrs. Vaeletta Fields, Waterloo, Iowa

Mrs. Mary Church, Gillespie, Illinois

Mrs. Charles Lenger, Oskaloosa, Iowa

Mrs. Mary Bridges Jensma, Kellogg, Iowa

Mrs. Doris Cranston, Eddyville, Iowa

Mrs. Lucile Rhodes

Farrell, Jane A. Survey of advertising and fashion copy contained in the Iowa State Bystander from November 11, 1896 to December, 1921 with particular attention to Buxton. These findings indicate the type of clothing advertised by Buxton stores and show how clothing designs, materials and costs changed from 1896 to 1921.

Federal Manuscript Census (1900). Manuscript Population Schedules for East Des Moines and Harrison Townships, Mahaska County (Muchakinock). The census contains the following data on each person: name, age, sex, race, occupation, months employed, relation to head of household, mother of how many children, number of children living, date of immigration, years in United States, years in Iowa, birthplace, birthplace of father, birthplace of mother, civil conditions, number of years married, home ownership, and number of farm buildings. The census for East Des Moines and Harrison Townships have been coded in their entirety and computer cards are presently being punched. It will not be possible to complete this phase, however, before the project ends. Also, it is not possible to estimate the number of entries in this set of data. All census data -- coding sheets, computer cards and printouts -- will be a part of the collection. It was necessary to code all data for East Des Moines and Harrison Townships because people living in unincorporated communities like Muchakinock are not identified as residents of those communities. Rather, they are identified as residents of the township. It was therefore necessary to code all residents of these two townships to insure that we had all residents of Muchakinock in 1900.

Gaines, Reuben, Jr. Memoirs. Shortly before his death in 1981, Reuben Gaines, Jr. of rural Albia wrote his life story, much of which was located in Buxton. Gaines's account, fifty-four pages long, contains material on all phases of life in Buxton and contains much specific data such as names of individuals and dates for construction of buildings. A copy of his memoirs are included in the collection.

Iowa State Bystander. The Bystander began publication 1894. The newspaper contains articles of interest to blacks in Iowa as well as providing excellent coverage of blacks involved in politics, business and social activities. The Bystander provided excellent coverage of Buxton from its beginning until approximately 1912-1914. It continued coverage after that time but it appears to be somewhat spotty. The Bystander provides the most complete and systematic coverage of black society in Buxton of all sources located. Extensive notes were taken of many Buxton newspaper items and are included in the collection.

Iowa State Census (1895). Manuscript Population Schedules for Harrison and East Des Moines Townships, Mahaska County (site of Muchakinock). The census includes the following data on each person: name, age, sex, race, occupation, place of birth, religion, birthplace of father, birthplace of mother, right to vote and civil condition. The censuses for both Harrison and East Des Moines Townships have been coded in their entirety and computer cards have been punched for each entry. The information has been entered on a disc in the Iowa State University Computer Center. Census entries total 3,844. Census coding for 1895, 1905, 1915 and 1925 was done by Joyce Bruce, Mary Jane Graves,

Mornetta Skipper, Pamela Bruce and Donnie Graves, all of Des Moines and all members of the Buxton, Iowa Club. The Club was formed in the mid-1970s to gather and disseminate the history of Buxton. All census materials collected -- coding sheets, computer cards and printouts -- will be a part of the collection.

Iowa State Census (1905 and 1915). Manuscript Population Schedules for Bluff Creek Township, Monroe County (site of Buxton). The censuses include the following data on each person: name, age, sex, race, occupation, earnings (for 1915 only), years in United States, years in Iowa, place of birth, months unemployed (for 1915 only), religion, birthplace of father, birthplace of mother, right to vote, civil condition, home ownership, value of farm/home, years of college and years of general education. The censuses for Bluff Creek Township in 1905 and 1915 have been coded in their entirety and computer cards have been punched for each entry. The information has been entered on a disc in the Iowa State University Computer Center. Census entries total 4,924 for 1905 and 4,518 for 1915. All census materials collected -- coding sheets, computer cards and printouts -- will be a part of the collection.

Iowa State Census (1925). Manuscript Population Schedules for Bluff Creek Township (Buxton) and Wayne Township (Haydock), Monroe County. The census includes the following data on each person: name, age, sex, race, occupation (not listed as specific occupation but rather each occupation is lumped under one of six categories; miners are included under Category F: Laborer Unclassified), wage loss, years in United

States, years in Iowa, place of birth, month unemployed, religion, birthplace of father, birthplace of mother, right to vote, civil condition, home ownership, value of farm/home, years of college, and years of education. The census for both Bluff Creek Township and Wayne Township have been coded in their entirety. The information has not been entered on computer cards, however, due to lack of time. The 1925 census included approximately 3,072 cases. All census data -- coding sheets, computer cards and printouts -- will be a part of the collection.

London, Minnie B., "As I Remember." Memoirs of Mrs. London published in January, February, and March, 1940 for the Howard Newspaper Syndicate. The Syndicate, located in Des Moines, was a black organization. The memoirs consist of eighteen pages, typed and double spaced. They include Mrs. London's remembrances of both Muchakinock and Buxton, including social activities, lists of businesses and personalities.

Lund, Emil, Iowa-Konferensens of Augustana-Synoden Historia. A six page history of the Swedish Lutheran Church that was originally located in Muchakinock and later moved to Buxton. The account includes names of pastors and some members. Karin Cleven of Madrid translated the account into English. The translation is also included in the report.

Olin, Hubert Papers. Deposited at the State Historical Museum and Archives in Des Moines. Materials collected by the late Dr. Olin on all phases of Iowa's coal mining industry. Includes substantial data on Buxton

including numerous correspondence between Dr. Olin and former Buxton residents; newspaper accounts of Buxton and Buxton residents; biographical information on J. E. Buxton, Ben Buxton, Hobe Armstrong, George Woodson, Dr. E. A. Carter and others; information from former Buxton residents as to social, educational, and economic activities in Buxton; photos of Buxton residents and buildings. Most Buxton materials in the Olin Papers have been xeroxed and included in the collection.

Muchakinock Scrapbook. This scrapbook is in the possession of Robert Smith, rural Bussey. It is undated and unsigned, but contains several hundred clippings from the Negro Solicitor, a paper published at Muchakinock. It also contains clippings from the Oskaloosa Times, Eddyville Tribune and Albia Republican. Most of the clippings include date of publication. The clippings cover social events in Muchakinock and give biographical material on major residents such as George Woodson and Hobe Armstrong. Extensive notes were taken from the scrapbook and are contained in the collection.

Newspaper Accounts of Buxton and Haydock. Several accounts have been located which are especially helpful in denoting specific details about Buxton and Haydock. Personnel at the Albia Public Library supplied the following: Oskaloosa Daily Herold, "The History of Muchakinock," September 14, 1968. Ottumwa Courier, "Muchakinock: Wild Coal Town Now a Dump," March 5, 1979

Ottumwa Courier, "Buxton a Big, Tough Coal Town," April 2, 1979.

March Church, Gillespie, Illinois sent the following:

Des Moines Register, "Only Vague Outlines Remain of Thriving Town in 1927 (Haydock)," no date.

Donald Gaines, rural Albia, provided the following:

Buxton Eagle, "As to Saloons in Buxton," April 27, 1905. This is a lengthy article which not only contains criticism of the saloons in the Buxton vicinity, but also strongly criticizes the Consolidation Coal Company for what it terms "repressive" measures in Buxton.

Robert Smith, rural Bussey, provided the following:

Oskaloosa Daily Herold, "Buxton Wonders, Best Area Baseball Team Ever," no date.

Photos. Approximately 140 photographs of Muchakinock and Buxton subject matter have been collected. As many photos, as possible, have been identified. Approximately ninety photographs (the most significant and the most comprehensive) have been copied and attached to this report. The total collection includes photos of homes, businesses, schools, farms, churches and residents. All photographs collected will be included in the collection. Dorothy Collier, former Buxton resident, was extremely helpful in locating and identifying photos.

Recent Newspaper Articles. During the past two years there have been numerous articles published in local and regional newspapers dealing with both the history of Buxton and the Buxton Project. These are as follows:

Ames Tribune, "ISU Historians Mine for Coal Town's Secret," 20 July, 1981.

The Iowa Stater, "ISU Researchers Resurrect Buxton Settlement,"  
March, 1981

Des Moines Tribune, "Digging for Clues to Buxton's Past," 24 July, 1981.

The Iowa Bystander, "Plans Outlined for Buxton Restoration, Field  
Trips," 11 June, 1981.

Des Moines Register, "They Treasure Memory of Buxton," 1 June, 1980.

Sioux Falls Argus Leader, "Defunct Town Subject of Research," 14 June, 1981.

Des Moines Register, "Life in the 'black town' of Buxton," 18 October,  
1981.

Iowa State Daily, "Researchers Study Mining Town," 16 July, 1981.

Sanborn Fire Maps of Muchakinock. In 1895 and 1900 the Sanborn-Perris Map Company Limited made plat maps of Muchakinock. These maps include all buildings in the communities during those years. The buildings are coded as to building materials, size and color. Xerox copies are included in the report.

Video Tape. "You Can't Go Back to Buxton." Thirty minute program presented by Iowa Public Broadcasting Network, Des Moines. Filmed in October and November, the program was aired over IPBN in November, 1979. It has been aired several additional times. The program presents a limited history of Buxton and interviews with five former Buxton residents.

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- Rye, Stephen. "Buxton: Black Metropolis of Iowa." Annals of Iowa, 41 (Spring, 1972).
- Schwieder, Dorothy. Black Diamonds: Life and Work in Iowa's Coal Mining Communities. Forthcoming from Iowa State University Press, 1983.
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- Shiffer, Beverly. "The Story of Buxton." Annals of Iowa 37 (Summer, 1964).
- Swisher, Jacob. "Mining in Iowa." Iowa Journal of History, 43 (October, 1945), 305-366.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Rise and Fall of Buxton." Palimpsest, 26 (June, 1945), 179-192.

## DESCRIPTION OF METHODS, PHASE I

1. Oral Interviews. Project personnel first constructed an interview guide that listed questions to be asked of informants (see attached copy of interview guide). Second, they began seeking names of former Buxton residents who would be responsive and knowledgeable about Buxton's history. Dorothy Collier, a former Buxton resident, provided many names of former Buxton members who lived in Des Moines. Project personnel also talked with business leaders in Albia and members of the Monroe County Historical Society to obtain names of former Buxton residents who lived in the Albia area. Once contacts had been made with the former Buxton residents who had first been identified, they, in turn, had names to suggest. In total, seventy-four people were formally interviewed. Most people interviewed lived in Des Moines or the Albia vicinity. Informants were also interviewed in Pershing, Bondurant, Ames, Newton and Chicago and Peru, Illinois. Each informant was asked to fill out a release form (see attached release form).

Originally, project personnel had hoped to locate and interview considerably more people than the final seventy-four. We discovered, however, that many people contacted had lived in Buxton only a few years and could remember few details of their lives there. Some people contacted had been born there but had moved away when they were four or five years old. These people did not remember any facts about Buxton. As the project moved along, project people decided to interview only people who had lived in Buxton for longer periods of time or people who had lived there as adults. We discovered, in effect, that some of the best informants were those who had remained in the Buxton area and continue to live there today.

Contacts were made with former Buxton residents who lived out-of-state but in most cases it was not possible to interview these people. No doubt some of them (such as Marion and Lawrence Carter of Detroit) would have provided excellent information, but project funds did not allow for extensive out-of-state travel.

Once the interview had been completed, the tapes were turned over to one of the graduate students working on the project. She transcribed the tapes. Next, project personnel audited and indexed the interviews.

2. Census Data. Collecting census data proved to be far more time consuming than originally thought. Beginning in June, 1981, three members of the Buxton, Iowa Club were hired on an hourly basis to code data from the Iowa State Censuses of 1895 (Muchakinock), 1905 (Buxton), 1915 (Buxton), and 1925 (Buxton and Haydock). They were supplied with coding legends for all categories on the census: name, age, sex, race, value of home, years of college, years of public school education, occupation, earnings the previous year, years in United States, years in Iowa, place of birth, months unemployed, religion, relation to household, birthplace of father, birthplace of mother, right to vote, civil condition, and home ownership. The coders' jobs were to copy all information from these censuses onto Fortran coding sheets (these consist of sheets with 80 columns across and 24 columns down). It is estimated that coding sheets now total approximately 800 accounting for a total of approximately 19,000 cases.

Coding the census information presented many problems that were not anticipated originally with the result that far more time was required to accomplish the work. The census of 1905, recorded on individual cards,

had originally been stored in a tunnel located between the Iowa State Museum and Archives building and the state capitol. At one point the tunnel flooded, obliterating the information on many cards. At the time Museum personnel saved as many cards as possible, but they were forced to throw away a large number where information had been eradicated. Later the remaining cards were micro-filmed. The individuals coding the 1905 census data found it necessary to do a great deal of checking and cross-checking before actually recording the census data. Also, some of the cards were badly smeared and difficult to read. Coding the 1905 census took an inordinate amount of time but there appeared to be no alternative since 1905 was a particularly crucial year.

Archive personnel also discovered much to their dismay that Buxton was started in October, 1900. That meant that the federal census takers, who made their rounds in the summer of 1900, included nothing on that community. This made the state 1905 census even more valuable. To compensate for the lack of 1900 federal census records on Buxton, it was decided to include census records on Muchakinock, a coal camp owned by the Consolidation Coal Company and located in Mahaska County. In early 1900, the company had determined that it would abandon its mines in the Muchakinock area and relocate its operation in northern Monroe County. This had precipitated the founding of Buxton. The result was that many Muchakinock residents relocated in Buxton. Because of that fact it was believed that the Muchakinock census records could shed light on the earliest population of Buxton. It was then decided to include the coding of Muchakinock from the state census of 1895 and the federal census of 1900.

It appears at this point that use of the census data is unlimited. It will enable researchers literally to reconstruct the human element in Buxton. The census data should prove to be invaluable to dozens of social science and historical researchers interested in community, industrial, ethnic, economic, and minority history.

3. Newspaper Surveys. Most area newspapers (Lovilia, Albia, Eddyville and Oskaloosa) provided periodic coverage of Buxton. The most comprehensive coverage, however, was provided by the Iowa State Bystander. The Bystander was surveyed from 1896 to 1921 regarding all items on Buxton and Muchakinock. Notes were taken of the most important social events, major disasters, and opening and closing of businesses including biographical material on major personalities. Through a systematic survey of the Bystander notes, it should be possible for future researchers to determine far more about the social composition of Buxton than we have been able to do during the past two years.

4. Photographs. Each informant was asked if he or she had any pictures of Buxton or Buxton residents. They were also asked if they had any friends or relatives who might have such photographs. In most cases, these people were reluctant to let the photos pass out of their hands. Elmer Schwieder then constructed a camera support and base for taking copies of photographs which could be taken into private homes. This made it far easier to obtain photos. Copies of all photos collected during the project are included in the collection.

## BUXTON PROJECT INTERVIEW GUIDE

TIME AND LOCATION DATA

1. Date
2. Place
3. Time
4. Others present (if any)
5. Buxton Club member present (if any)

BACKGROUND DATA

1. Age, date of birth, place of birth
2. Gender
3. Residence prior to Buxton
4. Date moved to Buxton
5. Length of time in Buxton
6. Place of residence after leaving Buxton
7. Names of both parents
8. Names of children (if any)

OCCUPATION

1. Number and which family members worked outside the home
2. What type of occupation they held
3. Length of employment in Buxton
4. If interviewee was a miner:
  - a. age when first worked in mine
  - b. length of time spent in mine (average work day, number of years, any slack seasons).
  - c. names of mines where employed
  - d. jobs held, responsibilities in mine
  - e. wages
  - f. union membership (see also section on Buxton community)
  - g. illnesses or injuries that were mine related
  - h. satisfaction or dissatisfaction with job

HOUSING

1. Private or rented housing
2. Company house
3. Size and location of residence
4. Facilities (plumbing, heating, lighting)
  - a. how was garbage disposed of?
  - b. did any homes have telephones?
  - c. were there homes with basements?
5. Garden facilities
6. Conditions (number of children, sleeping arrangements, boarders, etc.)
7. Have interviewee sketch floor plans, furnishings in their house

BUXTON COMMUNITY

1. Number and types of churches
2. Lodges or other voluntary associations; church and union membership and participation
3. Type and nature of community stores
  - a. what kinds of goods were purchased at company or other stores? What goods were made at home?
  - b. what goods were purchased in nearby communities?

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

1. Number of schools
2. Classes or courses taught
3. Remembrance of teachers or other students
4. Adequacy of school building, playgrounds, etc.

ETHNIC DIVERSITY

1. Different ethnic groups living in Buxton
2. Interaction between groups
3. Any evidence of separation or discrimination?
4. Race and background of friends and neighbors
5. Interracial families?

MEDICAL FACILITIES

1. Hospital facilities
2. Doctors (company or independent?)
3. Midwives (if present or used)
4. Medical care for miners

LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES

1. Y.M.C.A. and its activities
2. Dances, celebrations or other special occasions
3. Holidays
4. Musical band concerts, orchestra, etc.
5. Family entertaining
6. Sports (Buxton Wonders baseball, etc.)

HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES

1. Daily routine of family members
2. Division of labor
3. Food preparation, preservation:
  - a. did you can foods (jars or crocks)
  - b. did you make or buy cheese, butter, etc.?
4. Talks from parents how to behave, how to live life
5. Did the family ever travel outside of Buxton (when and where?)
6. What holidays were celebrated and how?

DISHARMONY

1. Strikes or lockouts
2. Juvenile delinquency
3. Law and order problems
4. Drinking
5. Rough parts of town
6. Law enforcement: police, jail, courts, etc.

ETC.

1. Any photographs?
2. Relatives buried in Buxton cemetery? (get names and relationship)

COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF BUXTON

1. Seemed to be a period of great satisfaction
2. Mainly good, with some small discomforts
3. Just a place to live and work
4. Dissatisfied, not sorry to move

EVALUATION OF INTERVIEWEE

1. Sensitivity
2. Uneasiness
3. Cooperation
4. Interest
5. Openness
6. Rememberance of details

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title: Buxton, Iowa

Purpose: To reconstruct the heritage of Buxton, Iowa

Procedure: Social Scientists and Historians from Iowa State University will interview you in your own home about your recollections of Buxton.

Benefits: This study will help establish a historical record of Buxton, Iowa.

Confidentiality: Your interview will become a part of the information collected from many individuals who lived in, or have had some contact with Buxton, Iowa. It will become a part of a permanent, special collection about the community.

Any information or data used in oral or written statements will give you full credit in footnotes, references, or other citations when such data is a direct quote of your interview.

YOU MAY WITHDRAW CONSENT AND DISCONTINUE PARTICIPATION AT ANY TIME. YOU MAY DELETE OR OMIT ANY PORTION OF YOUR INFORMATION THAT YOU DO NOT WANT TO HAVE QUOTED.

ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE REGARDING THESE PROCEDURES WILL BE ANSWERED.

---

I have read the above statements and I voluntarily agree to participate.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
                     Please Print

Date: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
           Month          Day          Year

Thank you very much



Figure 1. The "little" Y.M.C.A. and the "big" Y.M.C.A.  
Courtesy: Dorothy Collier



Figure 2. Sunday Morning on First Avenue.  
Courtesy: Donald Gaines

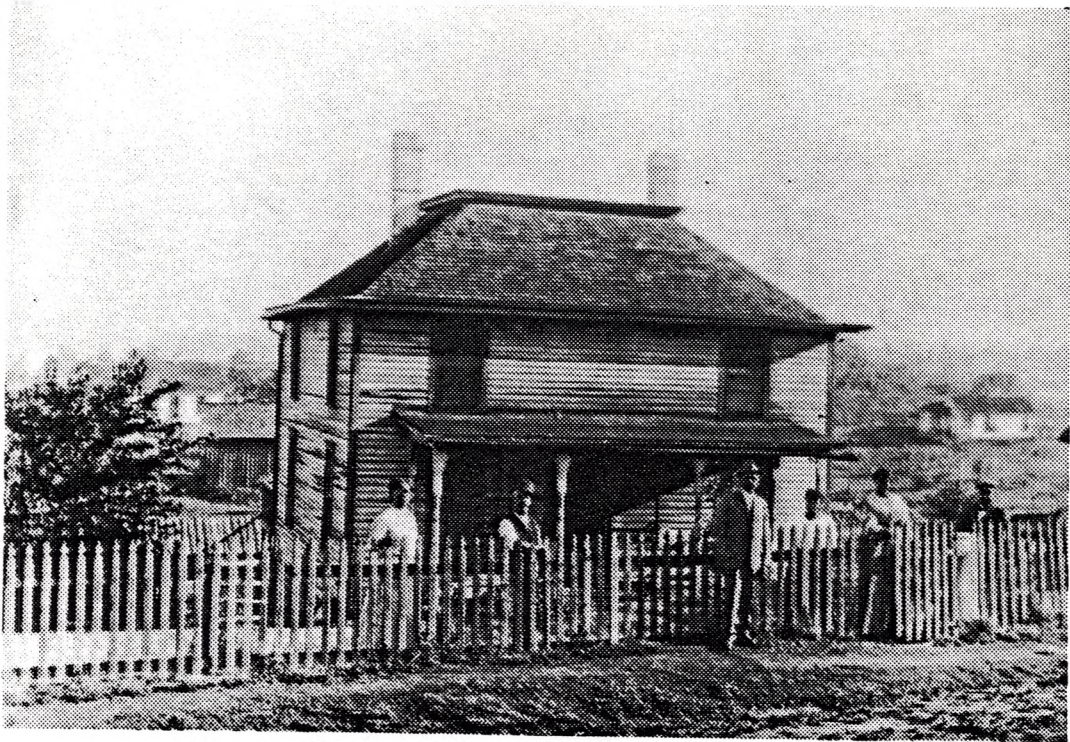


Figure 3. One of the Larger miner's homes. Family unidentified.  
Courtesy Donald Gaines.

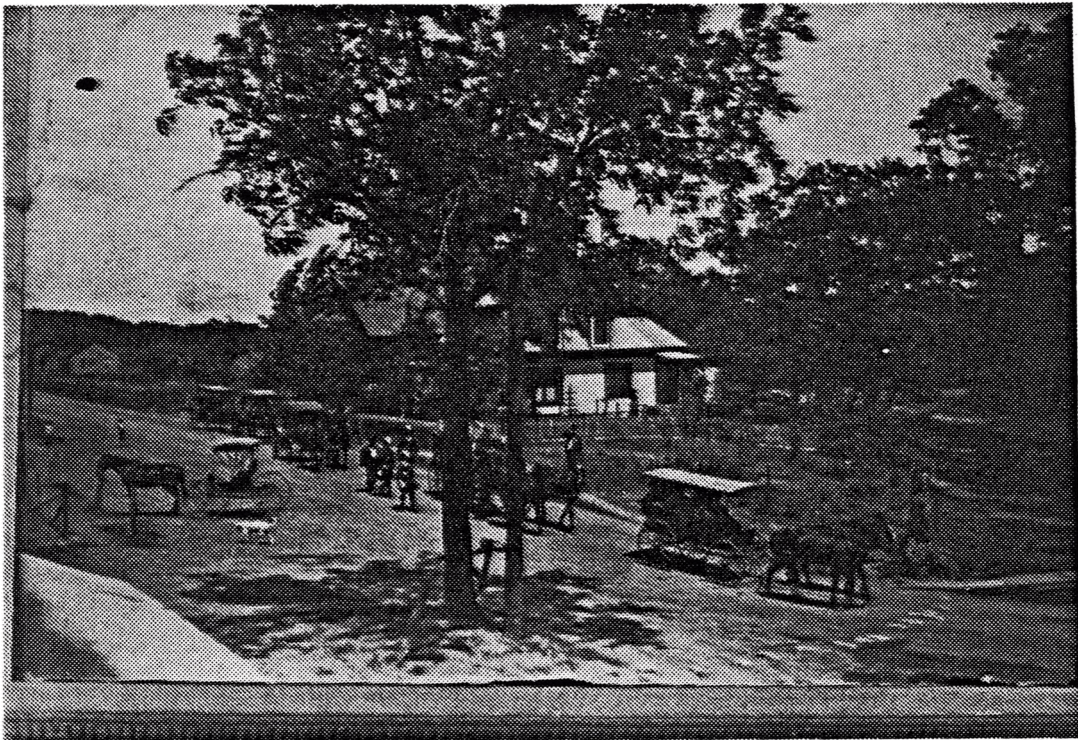


Figure 3. Lodge Procession.  
Courtesy: Donald Gaines



Figure 5. Home of Mr. and Mrs. Parris.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives



Figure 6. Consolidation Coal Company Office.



Figure 7. Consolidation Coal Company, Mine No. 12. Picture shows coach cars used to transport miners to outlying mines.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

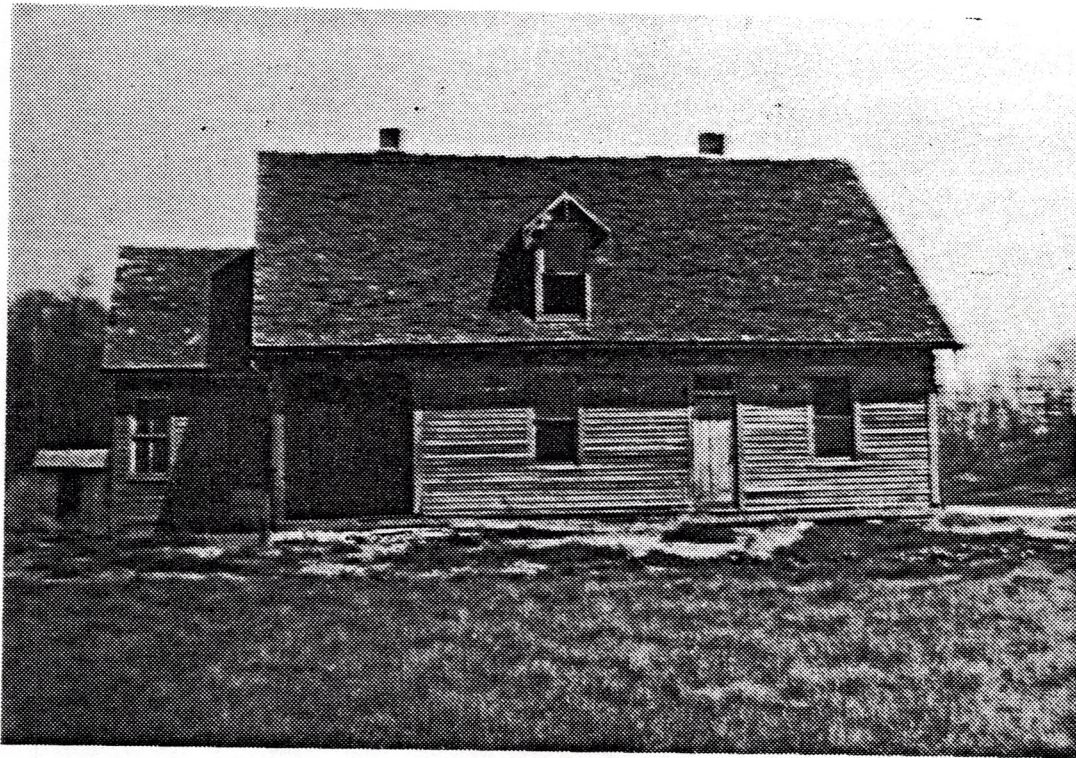


Figure 8. Home of Mr. and Mrs. Hobe Armstrong, Muchakinock, Iowa  
Courtesy: Dorothy Schwieder



Figure 9. The High School at Buxton Iowa. Burned October, 1907  
Courtesy: Dorothy Schwieder

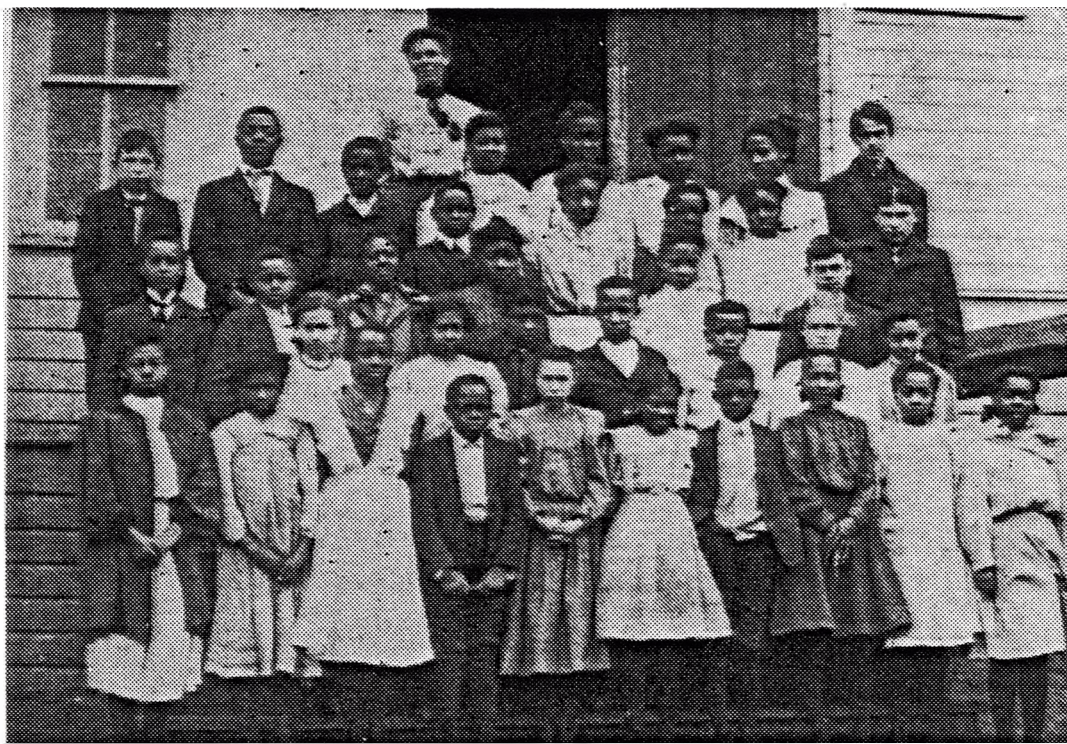


Figure 10. The 6th grade class, School number 2. Minnie B. London,  
teacher.  
Courtesy: Dorothy Schwieder

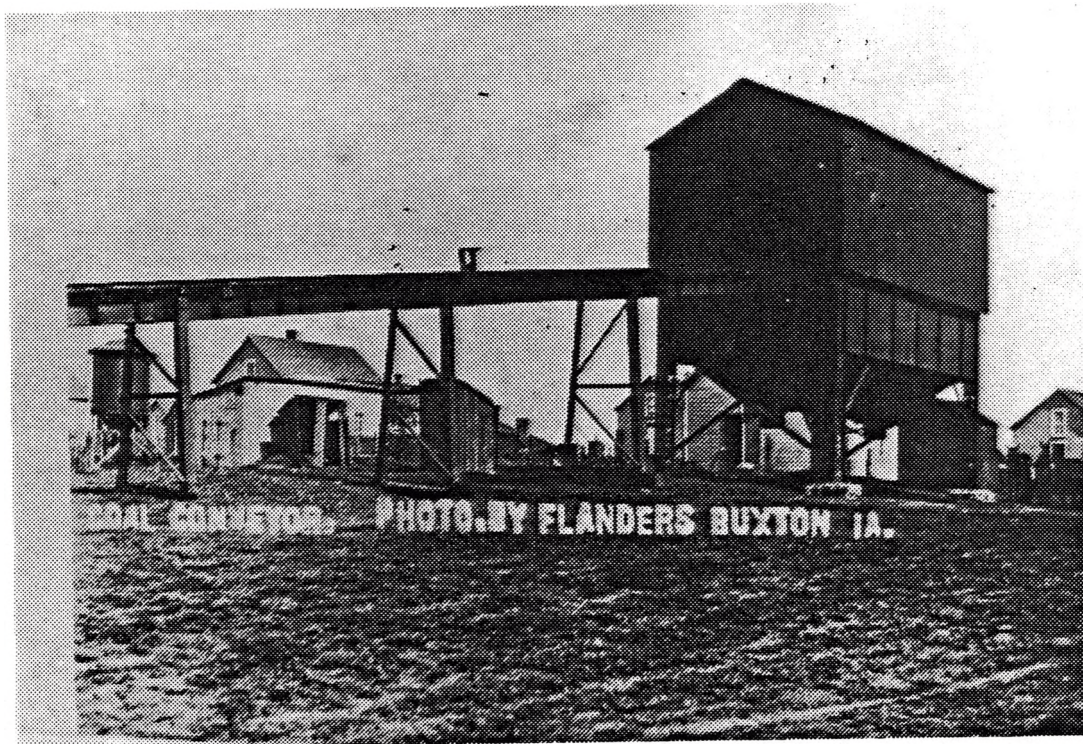


Figure 11. Coal Conveyor, Consolidation Coal Company.

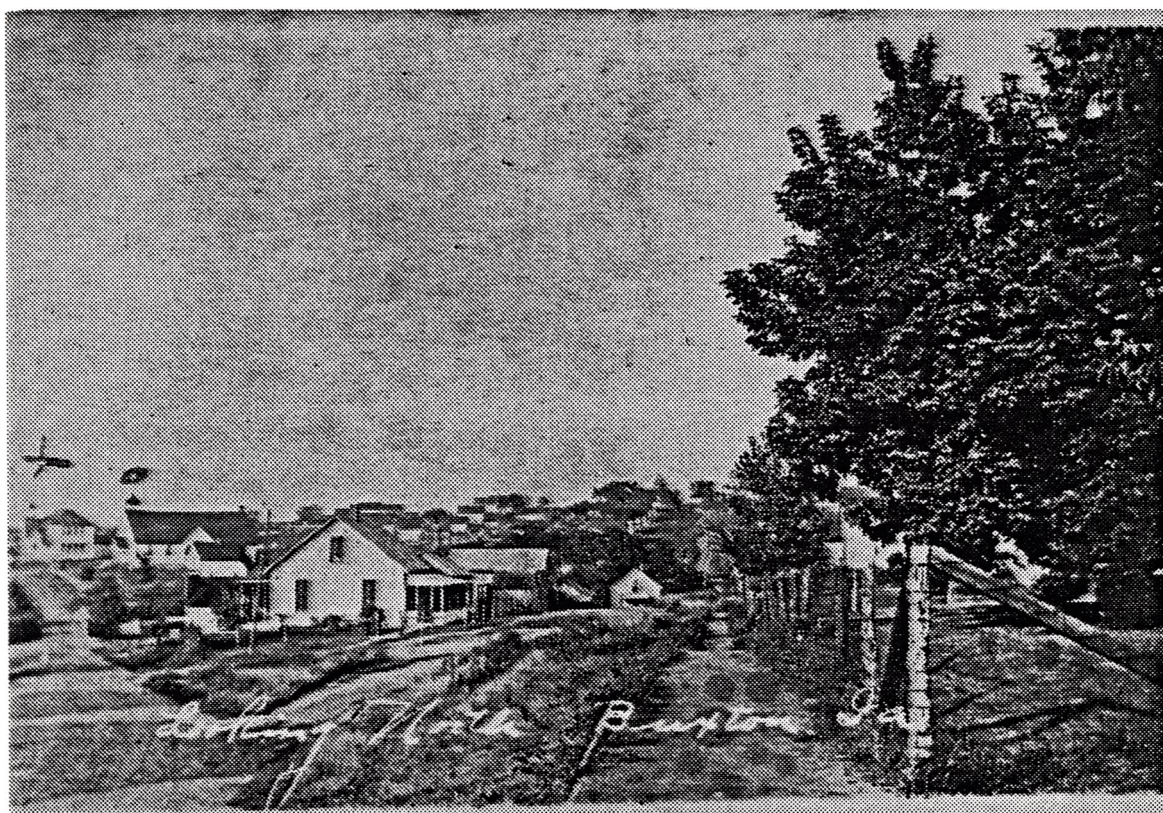


Figure 12. Looking North in Buxton, Iowa.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives

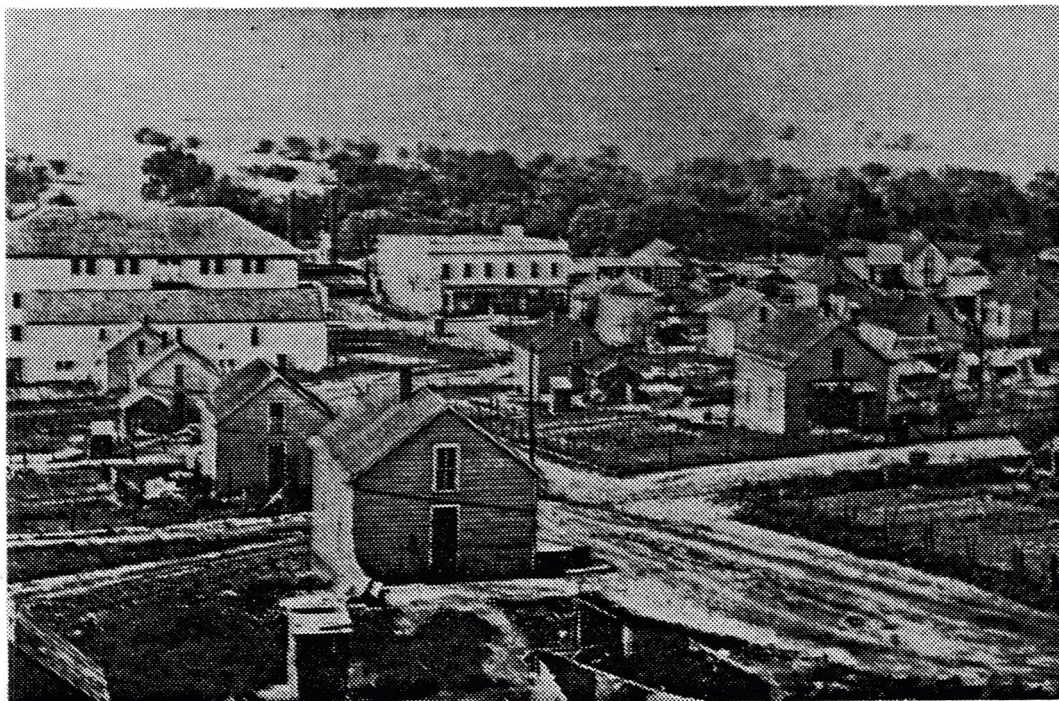


Figure 13. Downtown Buxton. First Company Store in background. "little" Y.M.C.A. and "big" Y.M.C.A. on left. Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

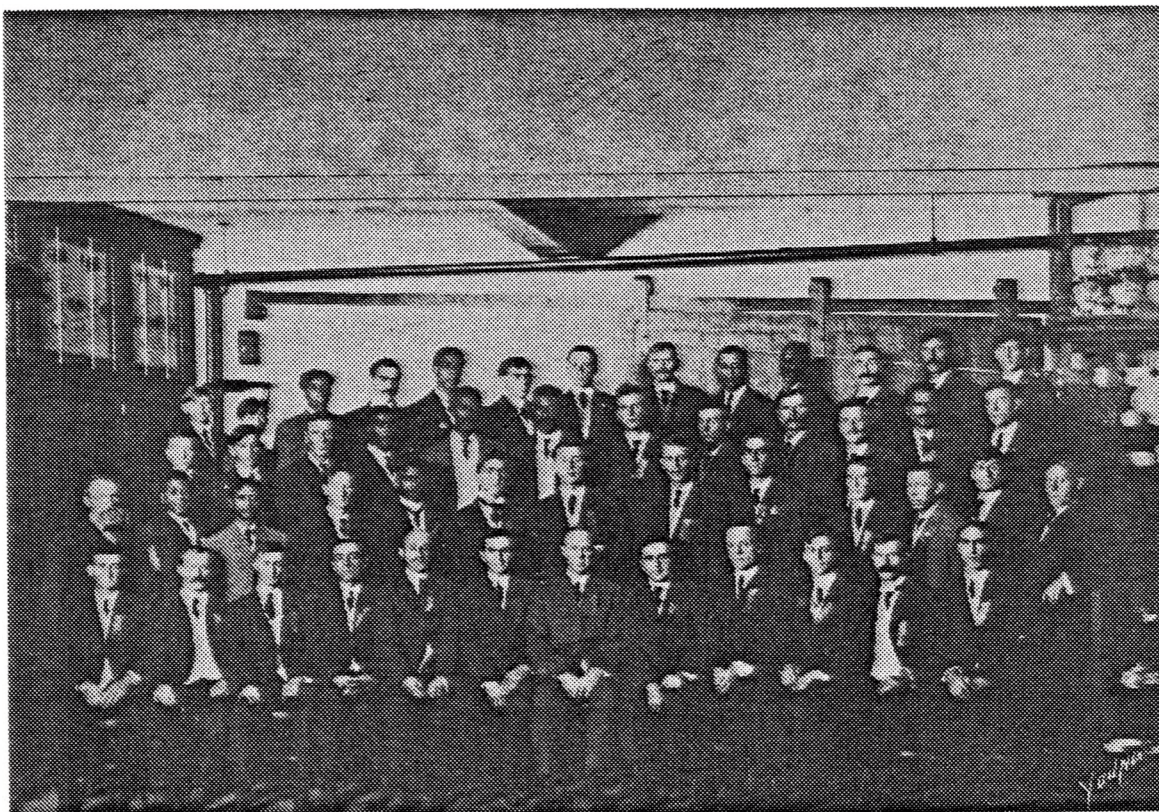


Figure 14. Male Employees of the Company Store in Buxton. Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.



Figure 15. Overall view of Buxton from coal chute hill.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.



Figure 16. View of company housing, including a two-story home.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.



Figure 17. Foundation of White House Hotel, circa. 1960.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

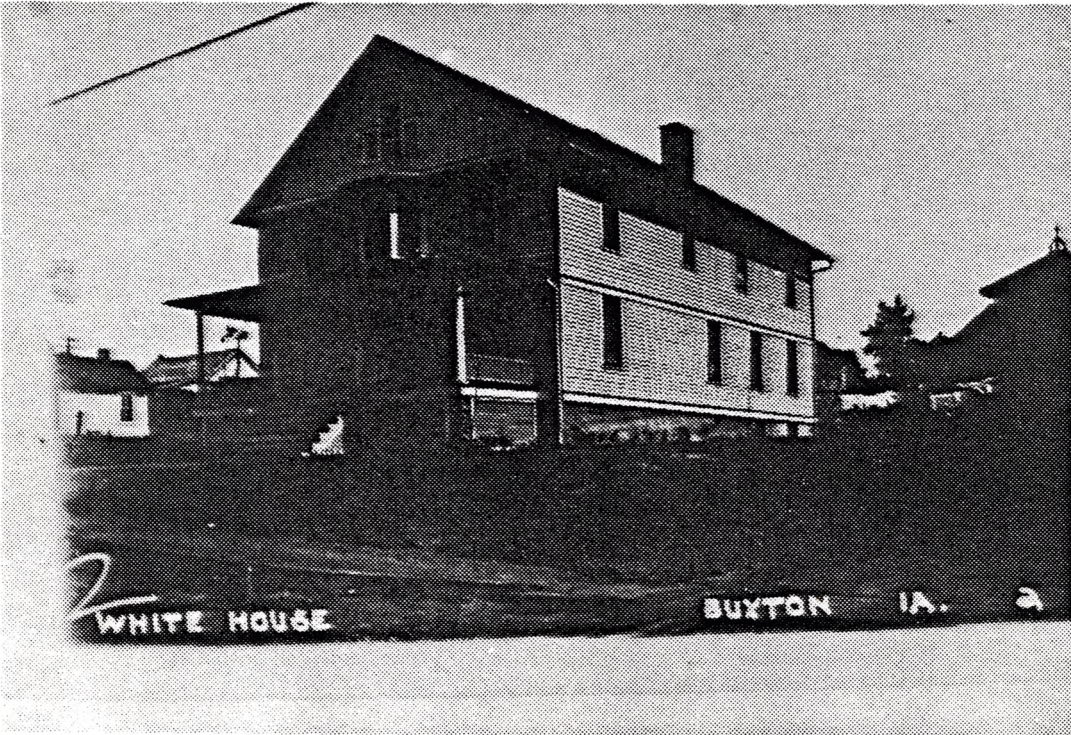


Figure 18. The White House Hotel in Buxton.

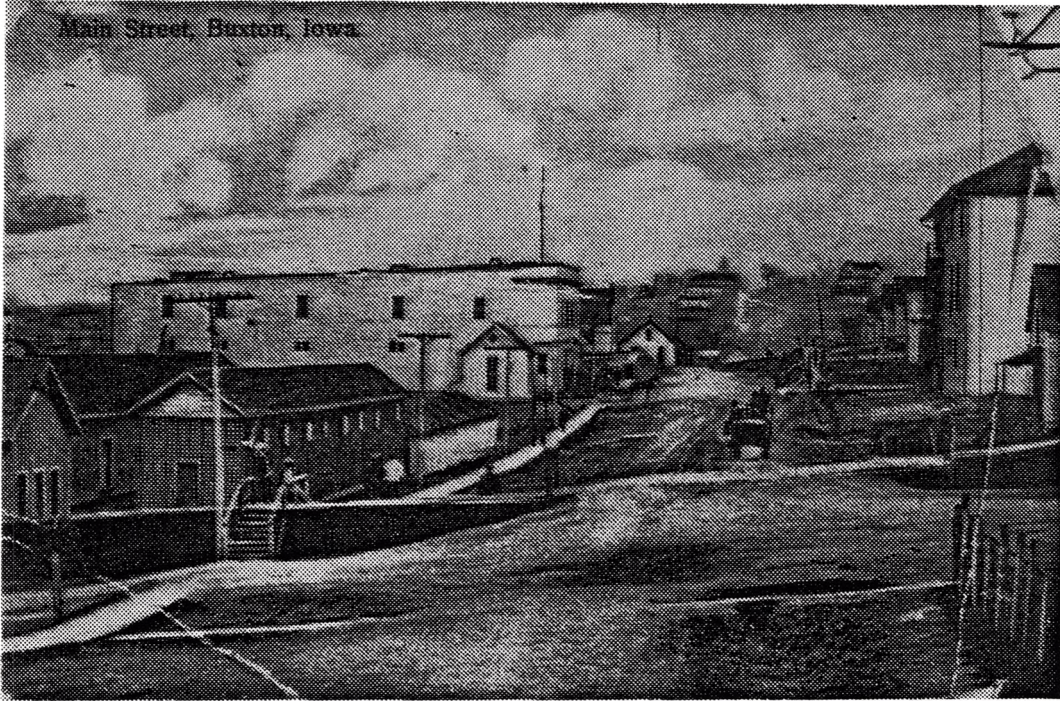


Figure 19. Main Street, Buxton. First company Store in background.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.



Figure 20. The home of Dr. E.C. Carter.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.



Figure 21. St. John's African Methodist Episcopal Church



Figure 22. St. John's African Methodist Episcopal Church  
Courtesy: Dorothy Schwieder



Figure 23. Mt. Zion Baptist Church.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

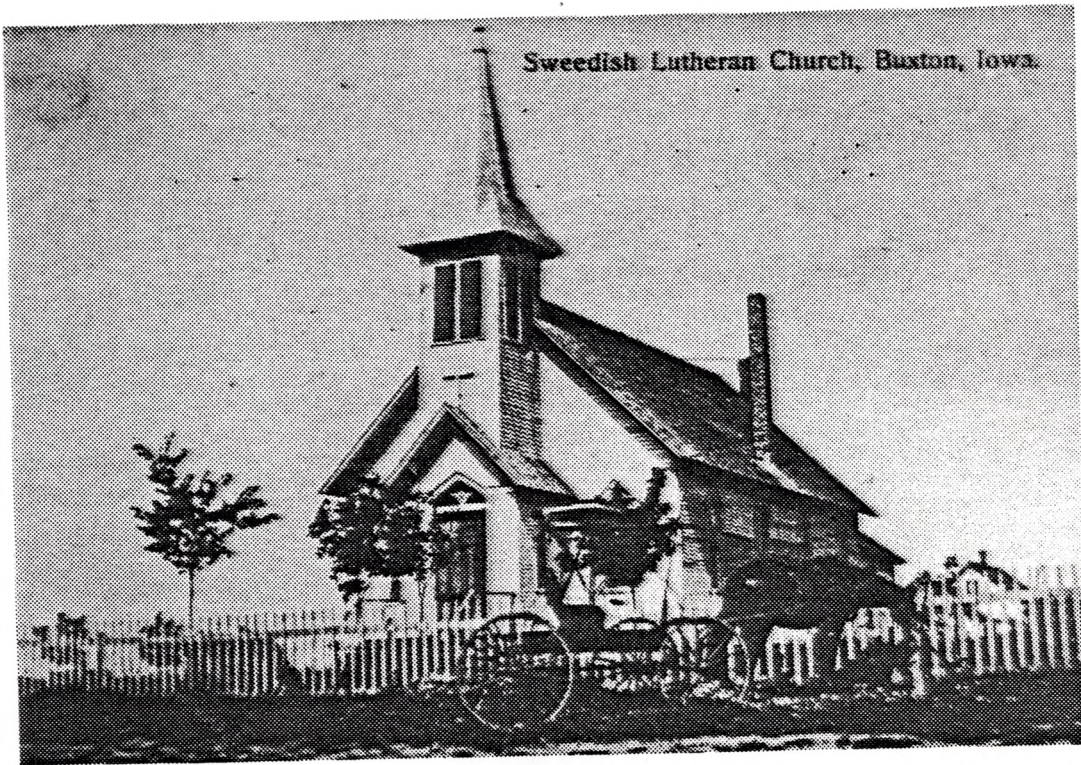


Figure 24. Swedish Lutheran Church.

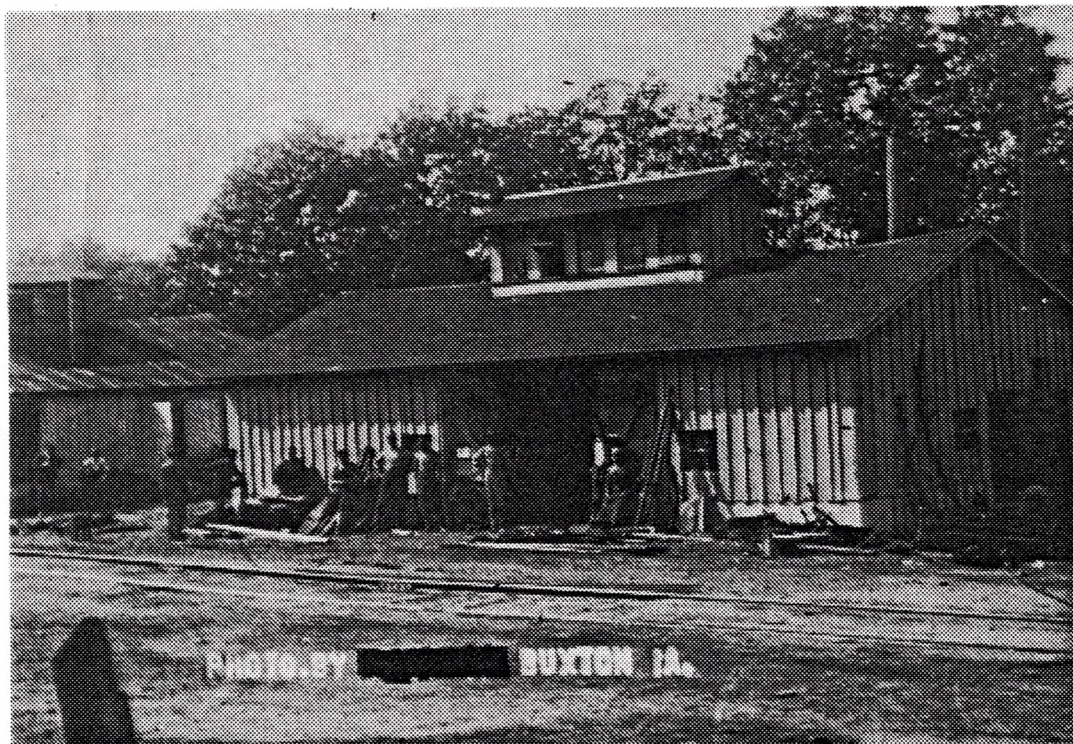


Figure 25. Blacksmith Shop.  
Courtesy: Herman Brooks.

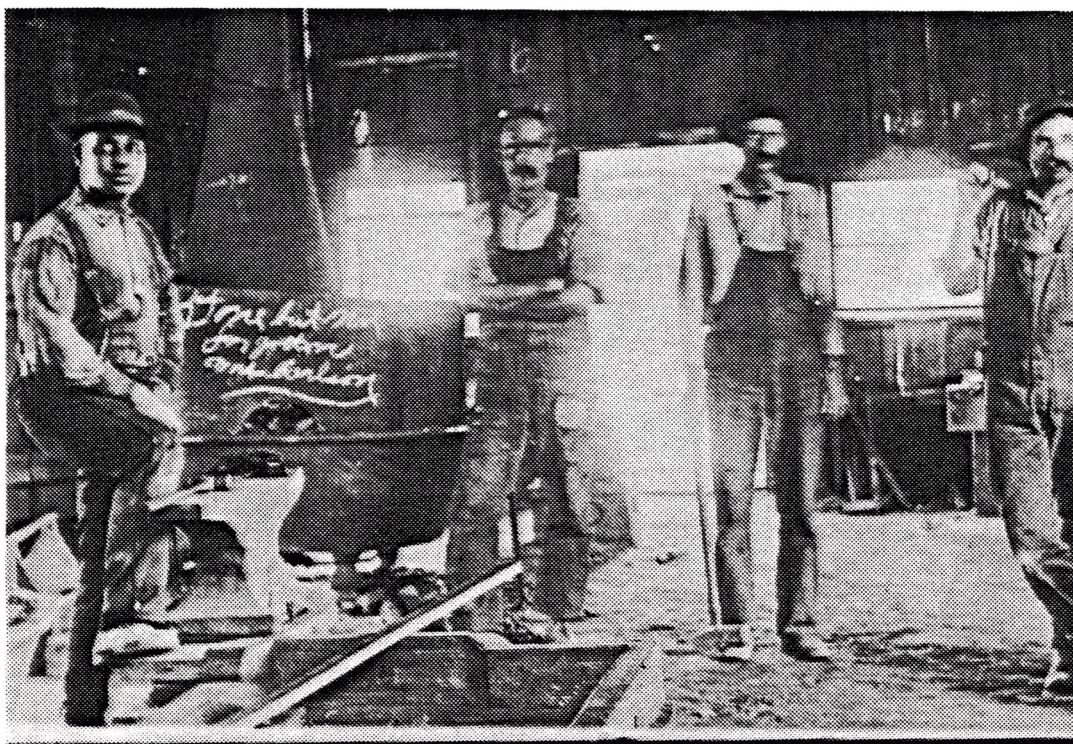


Figure 26. Interior of Blacksmith Shop. Persons unidentified.  
Courtesy: Herman Brooks.

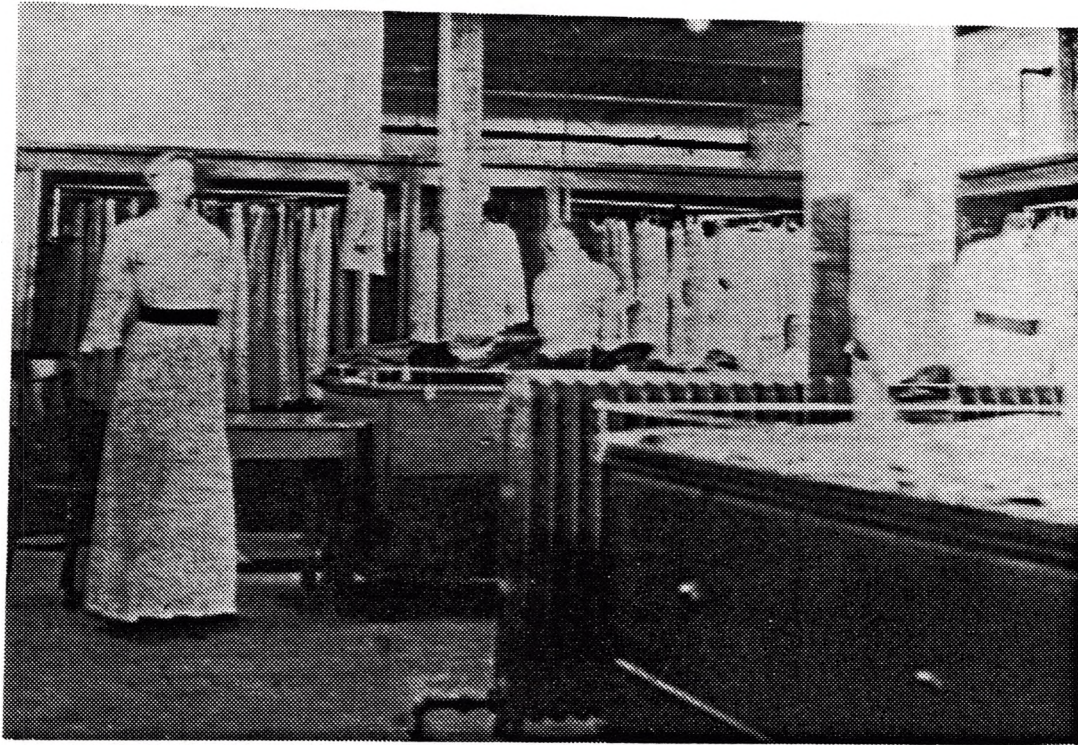


Figure 27. Interior, Company Store, Ladies ready to wear department.  
Courtesy: Dorothy Schwieder.



Figure 28. Interior of Company Store, Monro Mercantile Company.  
Courtesy: Dorothy Schwieder.

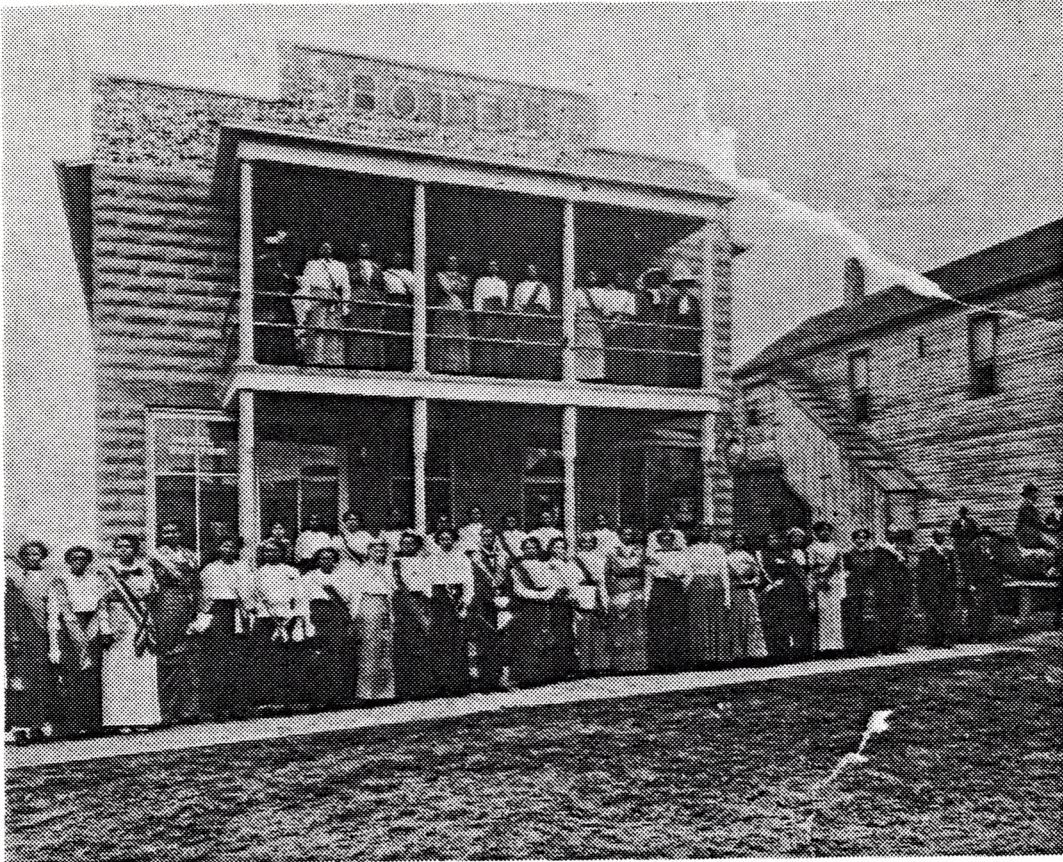


Figure 29. Hotel Buxton.  
Courtesy: Donald Gaines.

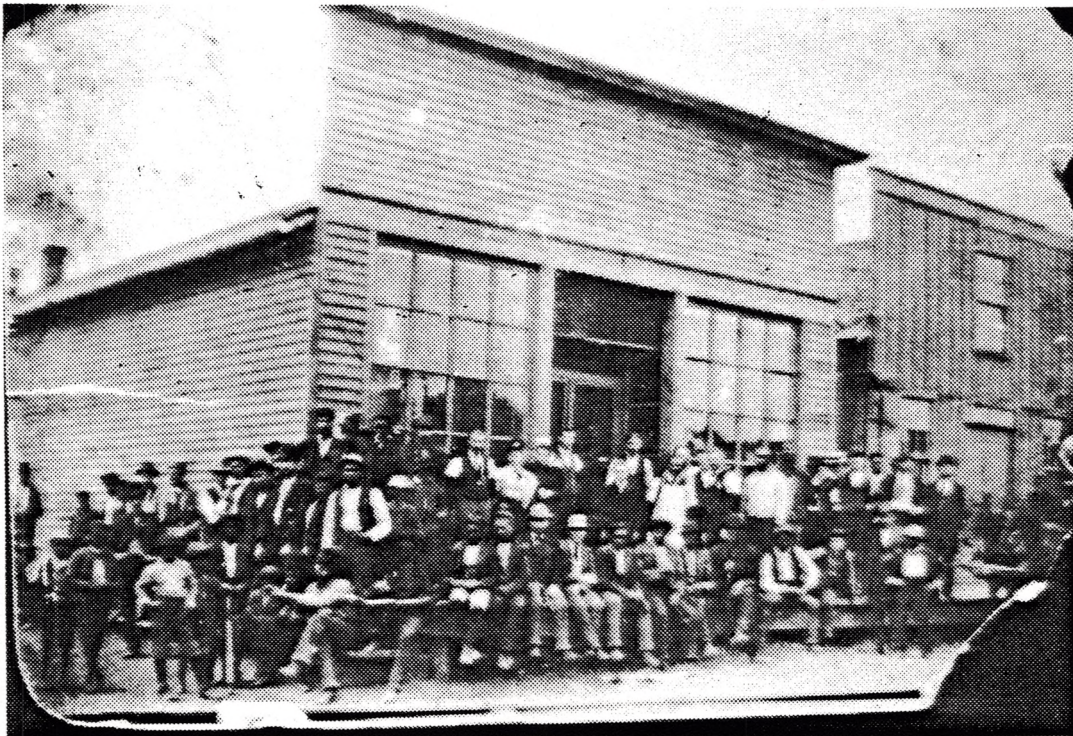


Figure 30. The Company Store at Muchakinock, Iowa.  
Courtesy: Dorothy Schwieder

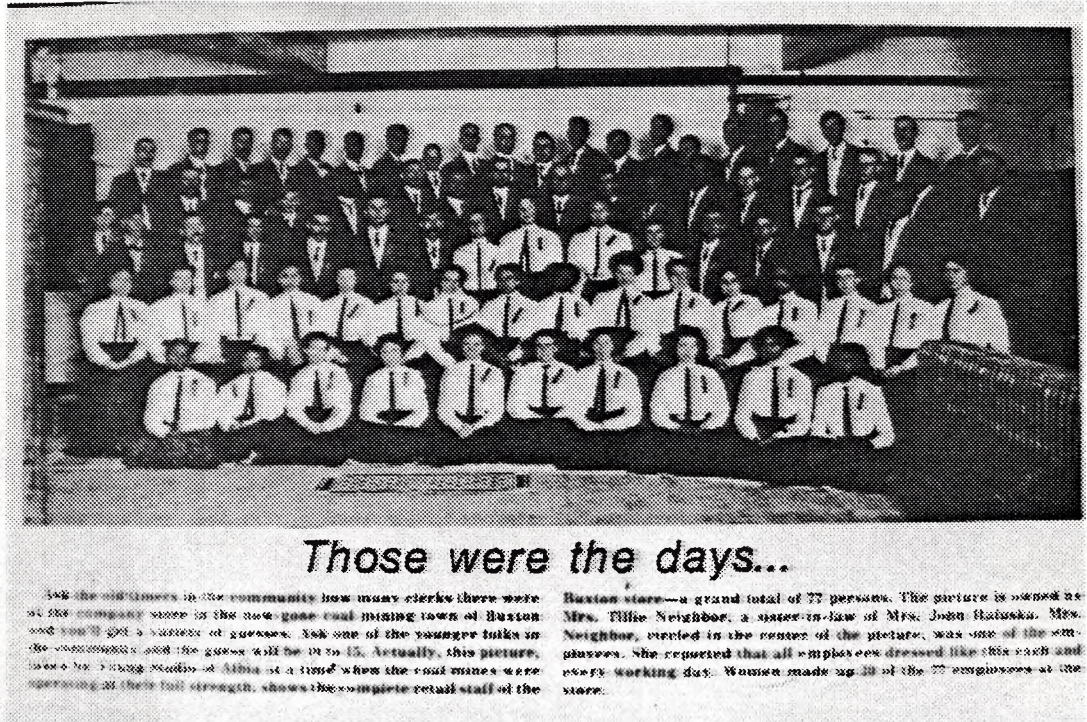


Figure 31. "Ask the old timers in the community how many clerks there were at the company store in the now-gone coal mining town of Buxton and you'll get a variety of guesses. Ask one of the younger folks in the community and the guess will be 10 to 15. Actually, this picture, taken by the Young Studio of Albia at a time when the coal mines were operating at full strength, shows the complete retail staff of the Buxton store - a grand total of 77 persons. The picture is owned by Mrs. Tillie Neighbor, a sister-in-law of Mrs. John Haluska. Mrs. Neighbor, circled in the center of the picture, was one of the employees. She reported that all employees dressed like this each and every working day. Women made up 30 of the 77 employees at the store".

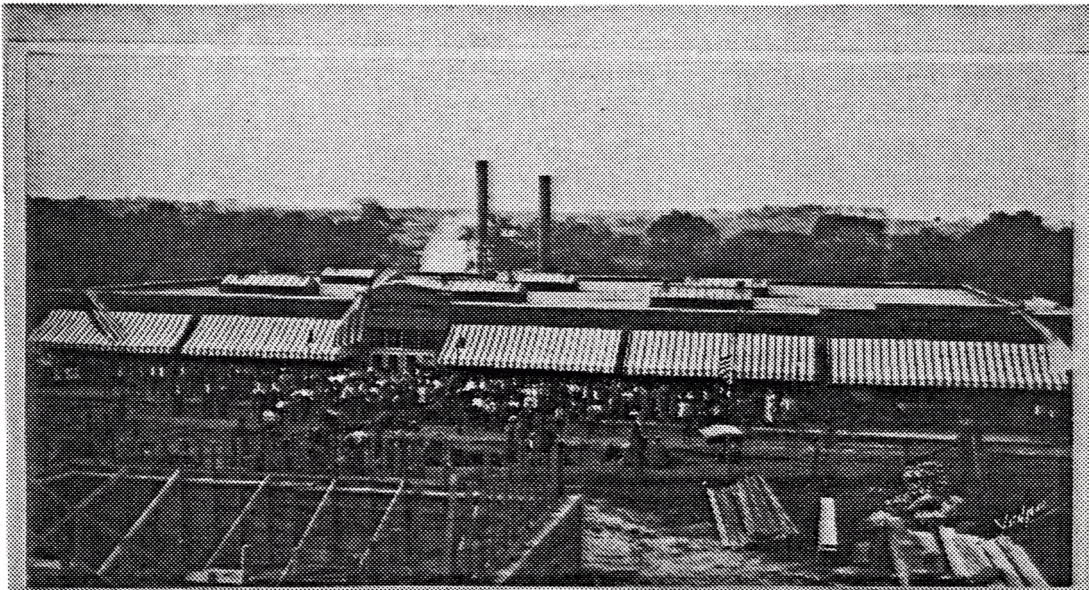
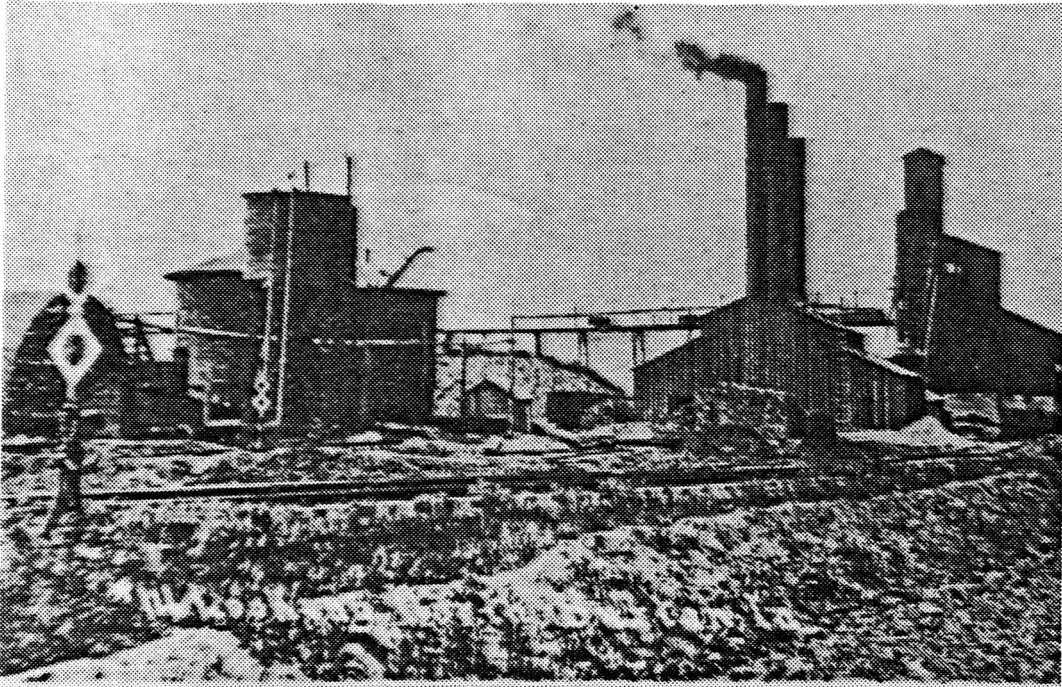


Figure 32. Taken at the opening of the New Monroe Mercantile Company. Foreground; White House Hotel, under construction. Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.



Mine No. 14, Buxton

Figure 33. Mine No. 14.  
Courtesy: Dorothy Schwieder.

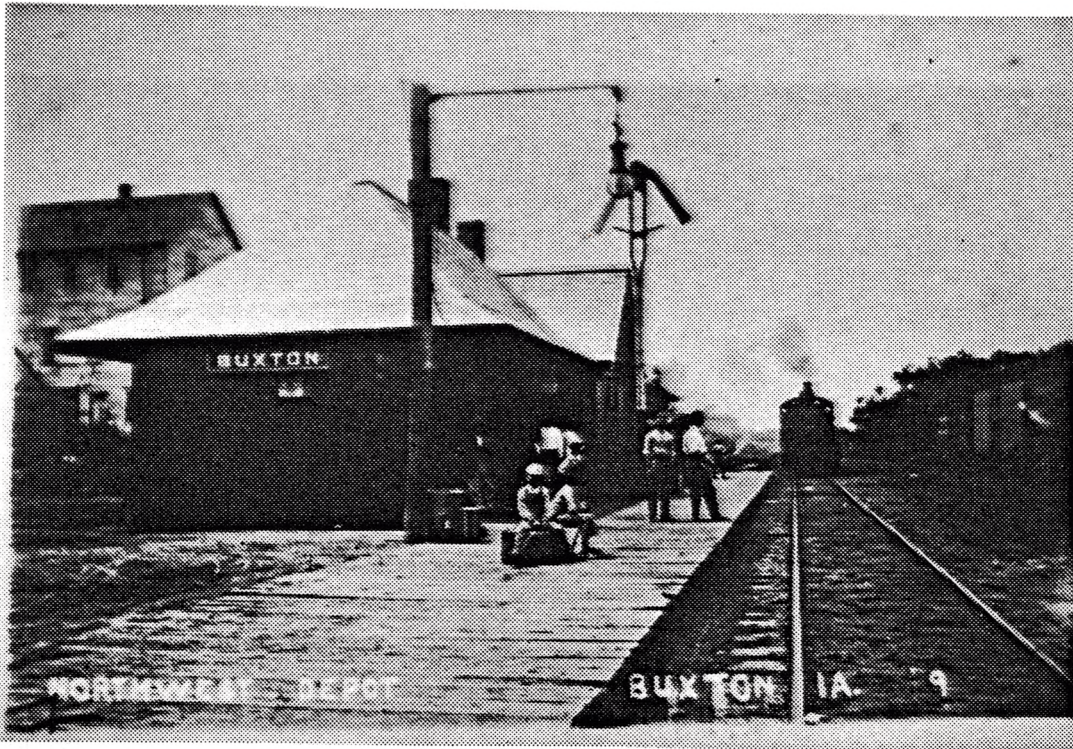


Figure 34. Depot of the Chicago and Northwestern Rail Road.

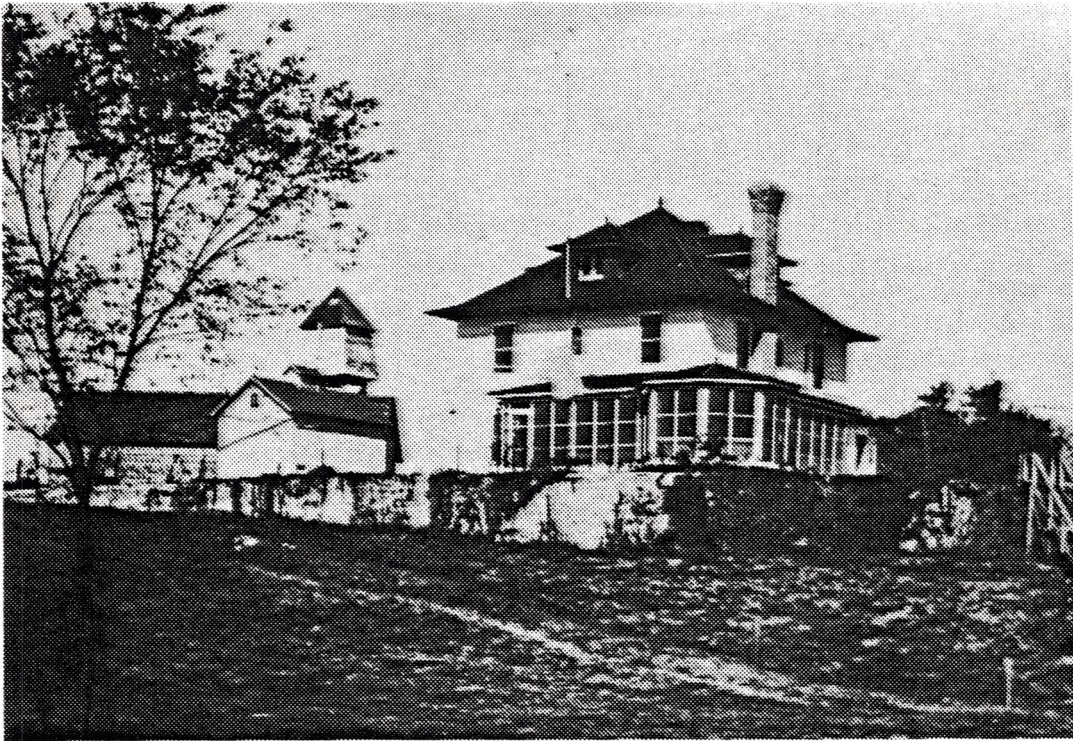


Figure 35. Home of Mine Superintendent E.M. Baysoar. Home had electric lights, steam heat and three bathrooms. Courtesy: Ida Morgan.



Figure 36. Buxton from Water Tower.

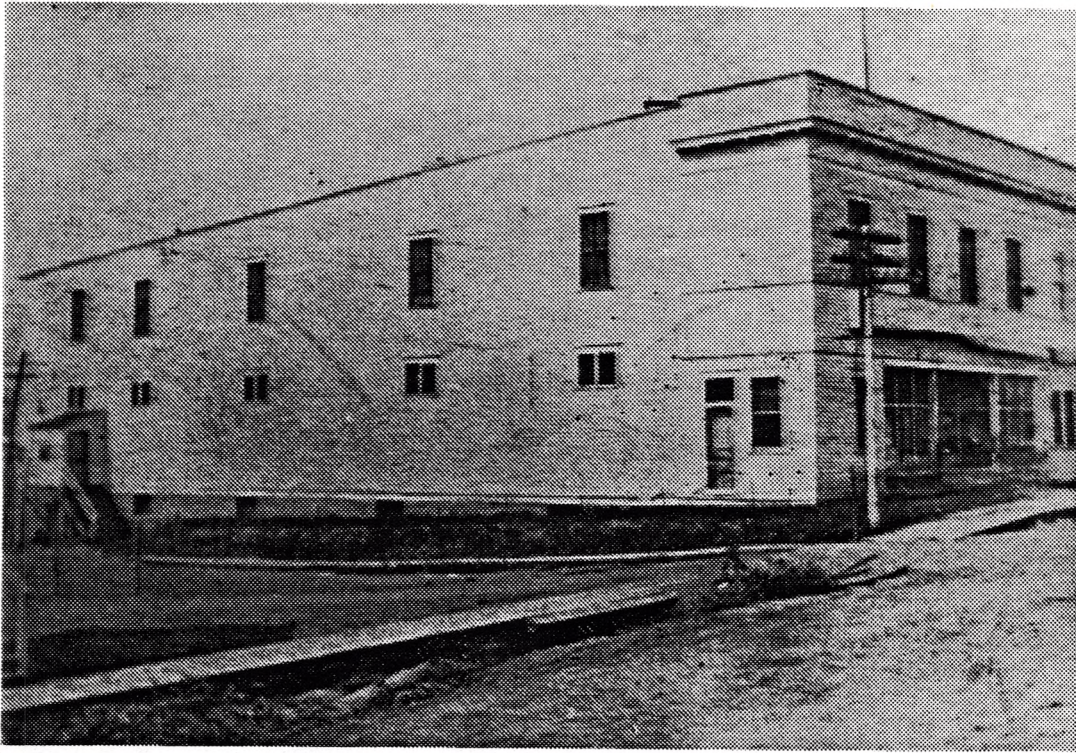


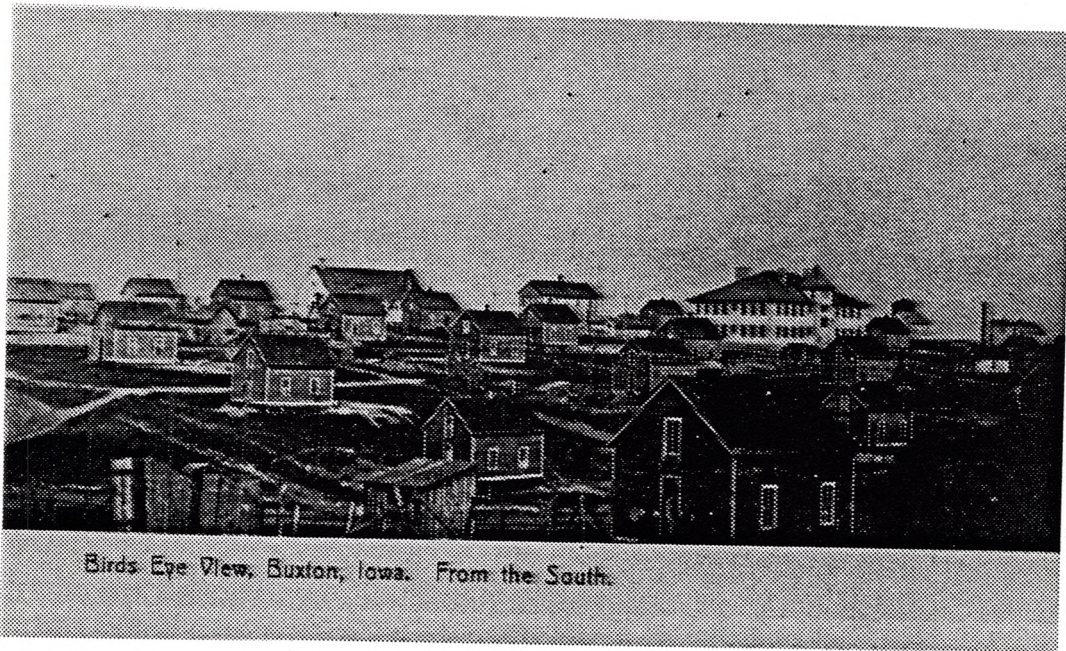
Figure 37. The first Company Store. Burned February 11, 1911.  
Courtesy: Dorothy Schwieder



Figure 38. Buxton Bank in new company store building. L to R., Olive Naddy,  
T.R. Cole, Evelyn Cochran.



Figure 39. Panoramic view of Buxton.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.



Birds Eye View, Buxton, Iowa. From the South.

Figure 40. Birds Eye View, Buxton Iowa, from the South.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

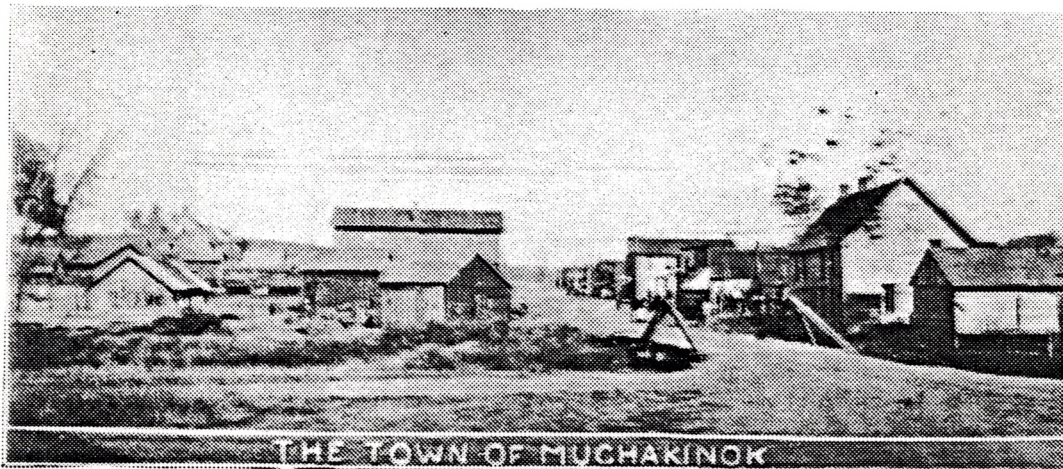


Figure 41. The town of Muchakinok.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.



Figure 42. Mine No. 12, after explosion and fire.  
 Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

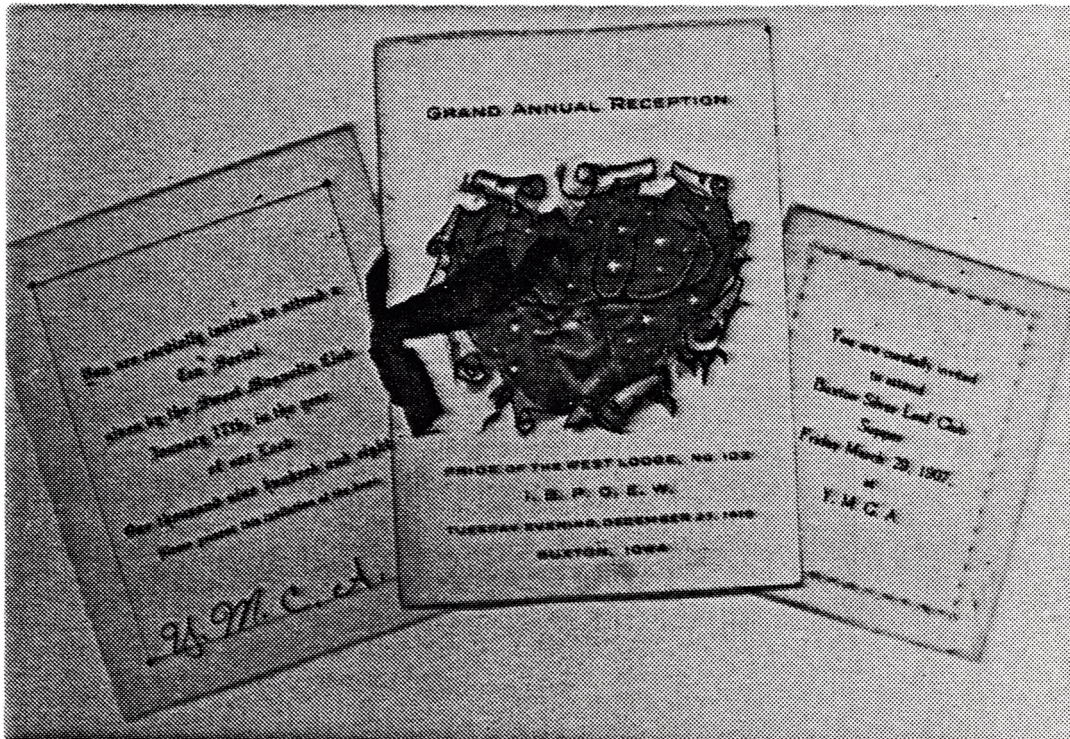


Figure 43. Organizational Invitations, Buxton Social life.  
 Courtesy: Dorothy Schwieder

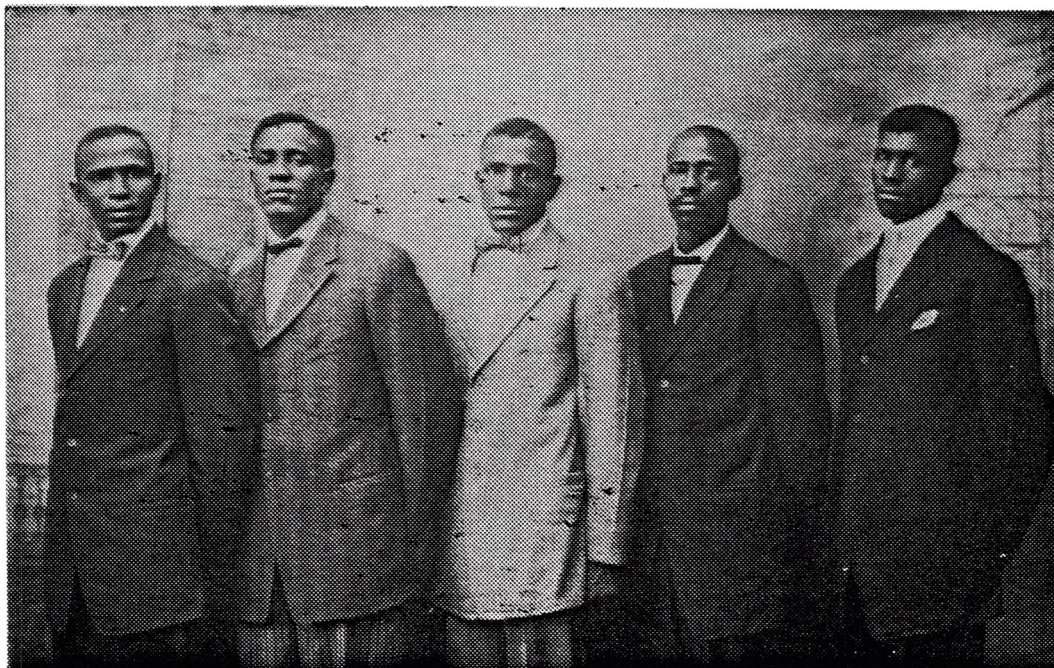


Figure 44. The Carter Brothers. L - R. Dr. E.A. Carter, Clayborn Carter  
Clinton Carter, David Carter, Lawrence Carter.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.



Figure 45. Church Ladies Organization. a, Rosa Qualls, b, Linda  
Walker, c, Alice Neal other persons unidentified.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.



Figure 46. Elementary School Class, 5th. Street School. 4th row, 4th from left, Dorothy Collier, others unidentified.  
 Courtesy: Dorothy Collier.



Figure 47. Ice Cream Social on lawn of J.W. Neeley, circa. 1900. a-Bell C. Watkins, b- Rose Warren Carter, c- Mrs. Fields. Others unidentified.  
 Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

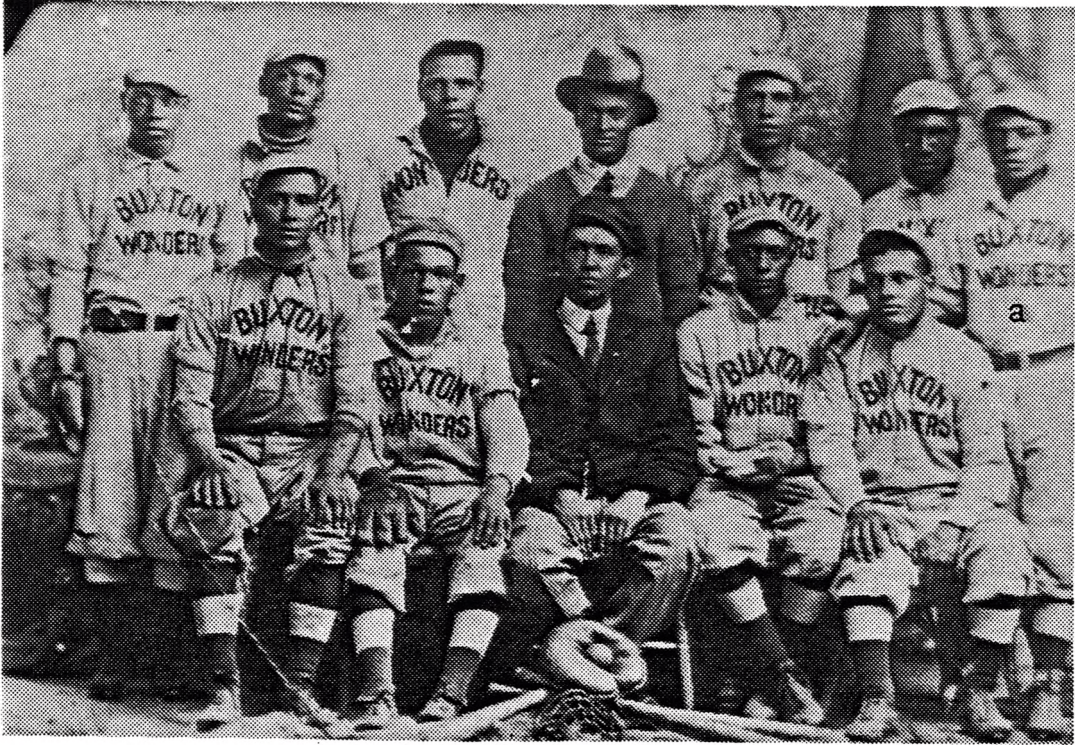


Figure 48. The Buxton Wonders, baseball team. a- George Neal, others unidentified.

Courtesy: Dorothy Collier.



Figure 49. The Buxton Wonders.

Courtesy: Dorothy Collier.

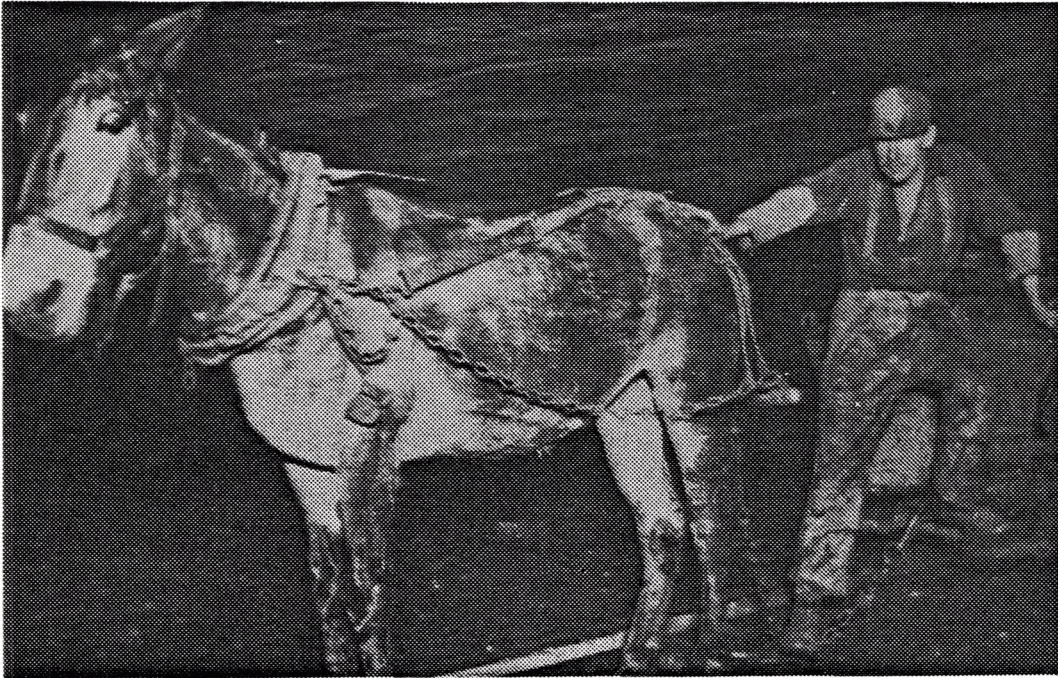


Figure 50. Mule Driver, showing control of mule by "riding the chain" and holding on the harness strap.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

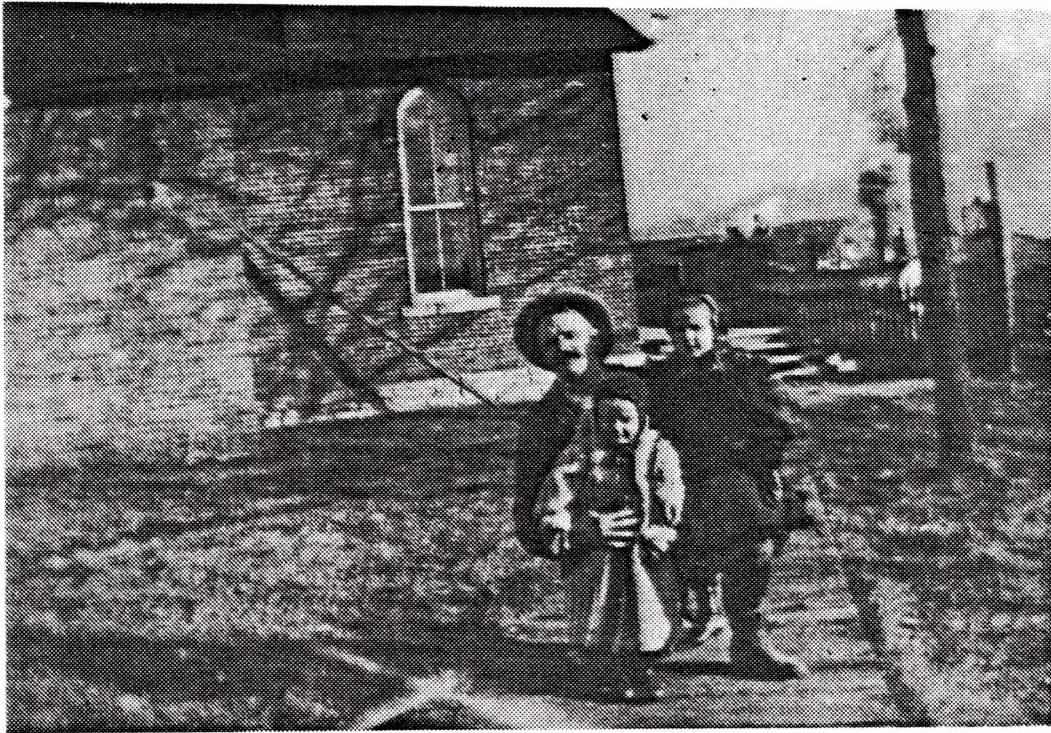


Figure 51. Ben Buxton and Family.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

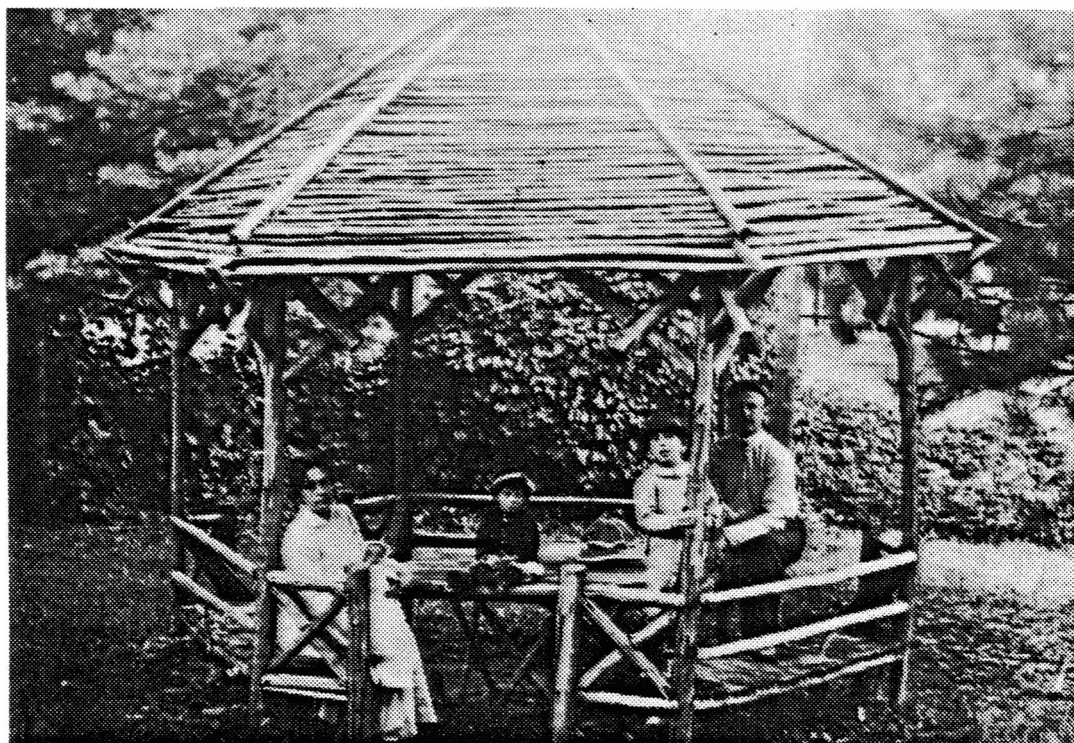


Figure 52. Family of E.C. Buckingham, manager of the Company Store.  
Courtesy: Dorothy Schwieder

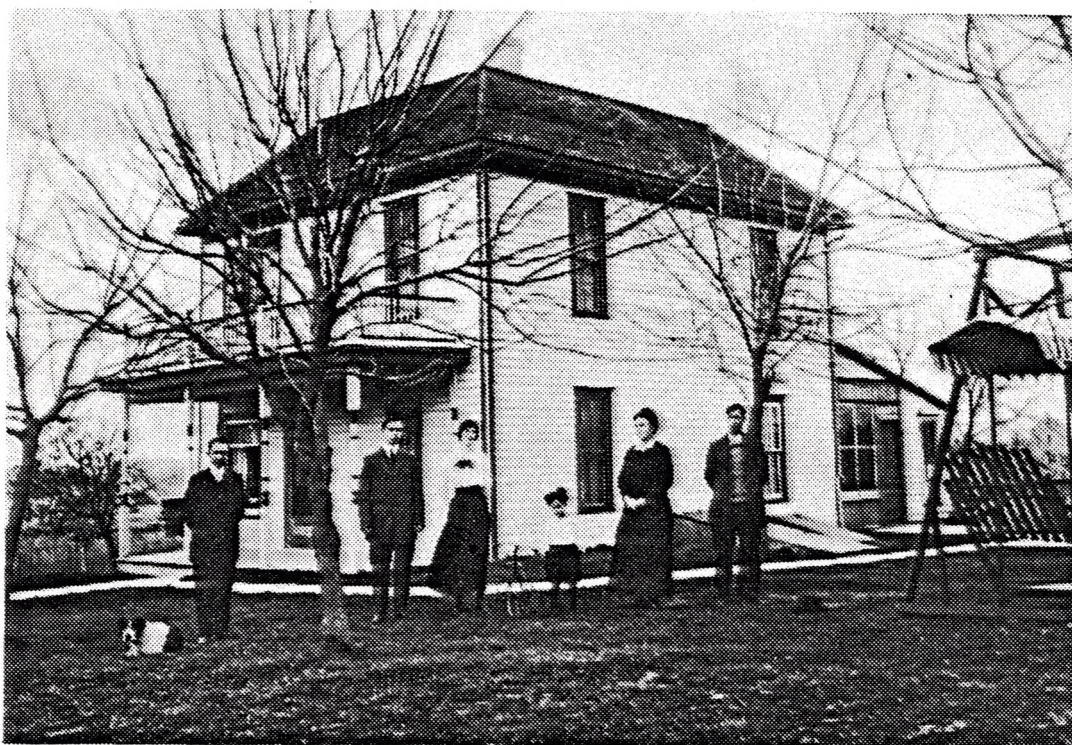


Figure 53. The John Baxter family. L-R. John Jr., Leon, Ann Armstrong,  
Ann's son, Leonard, Lottie Armstrong Baxter, John Baxter.  
Courtesy: Dorothy Schwieder.

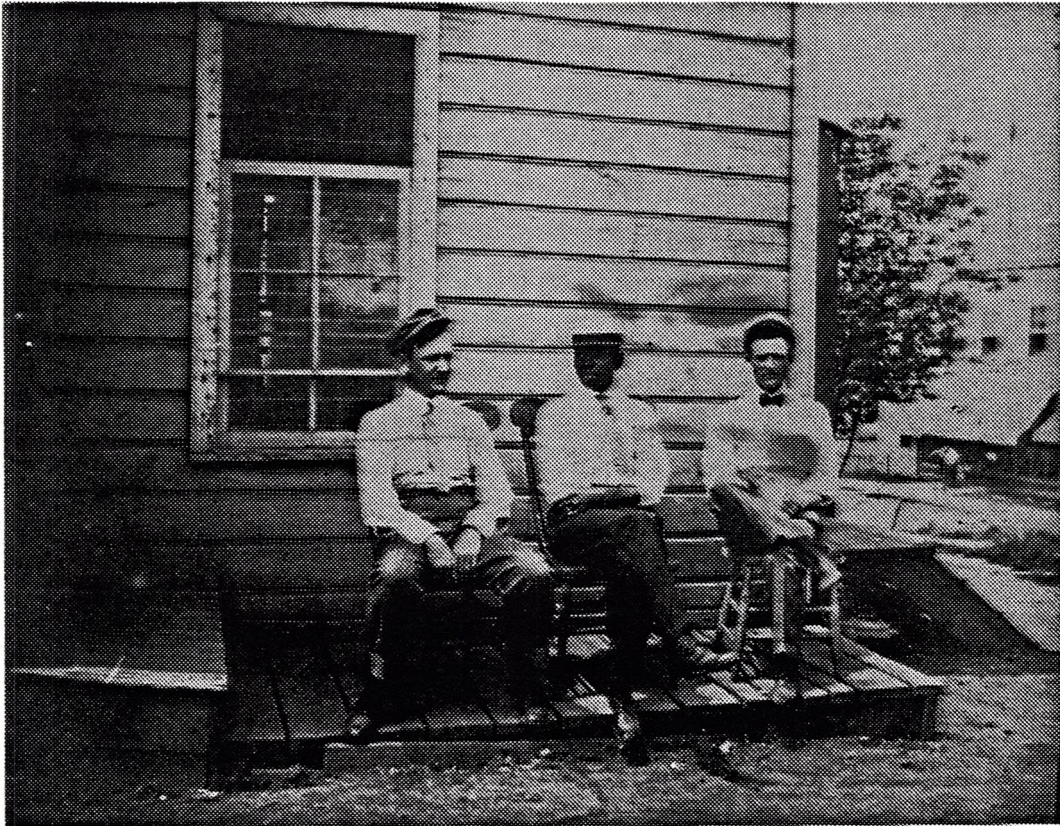


Figure 54. Center person, Dr. E.A. Carter, outside his office. Others unidentified.

Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.



Figure 55. Dr. E.A. Carter, wife, Rose Warren Carter, and sons.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

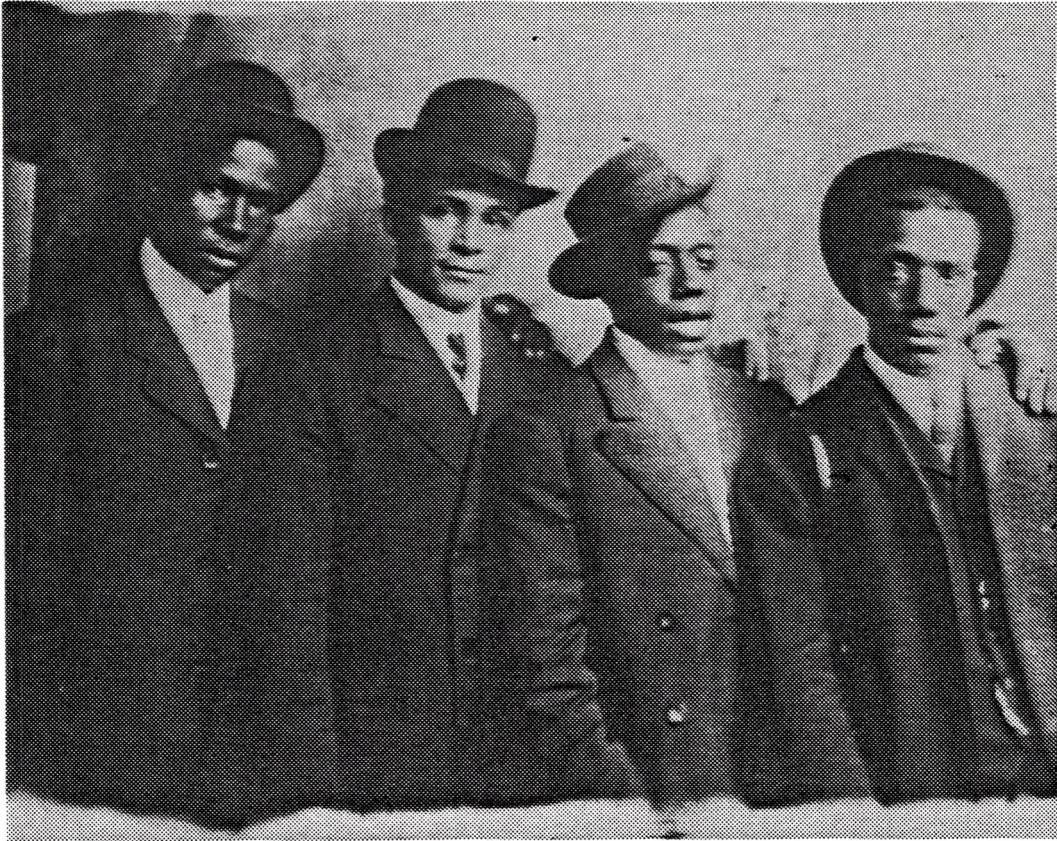


Figure 56. L -R. Unidentified. John Drake, Dr. Linford Willis, James Spears, (attorney).  
 Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

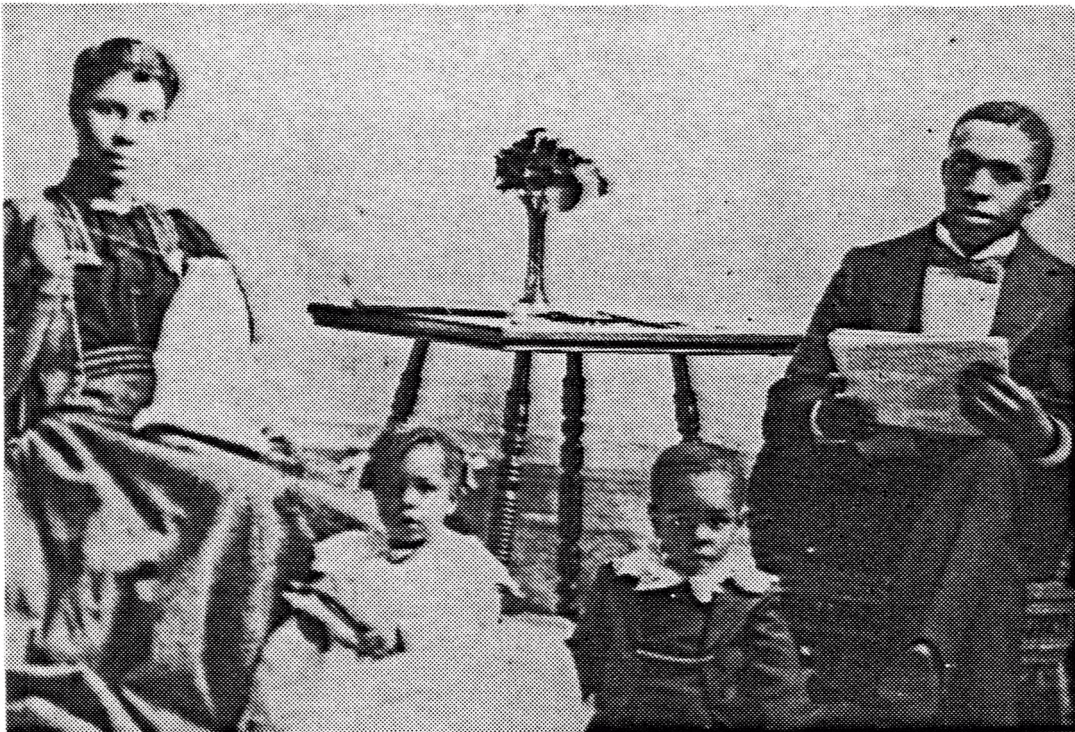


Figure 57. The London family. L-R. Minnie E. London, Vaeletta, Hubert and W.H. London, circa. 1900.  
 Courtesy: Vaeletta Fields.



Figure 58. Vaeletta London Fields.  
Courtesy: Vaeletta Fields.

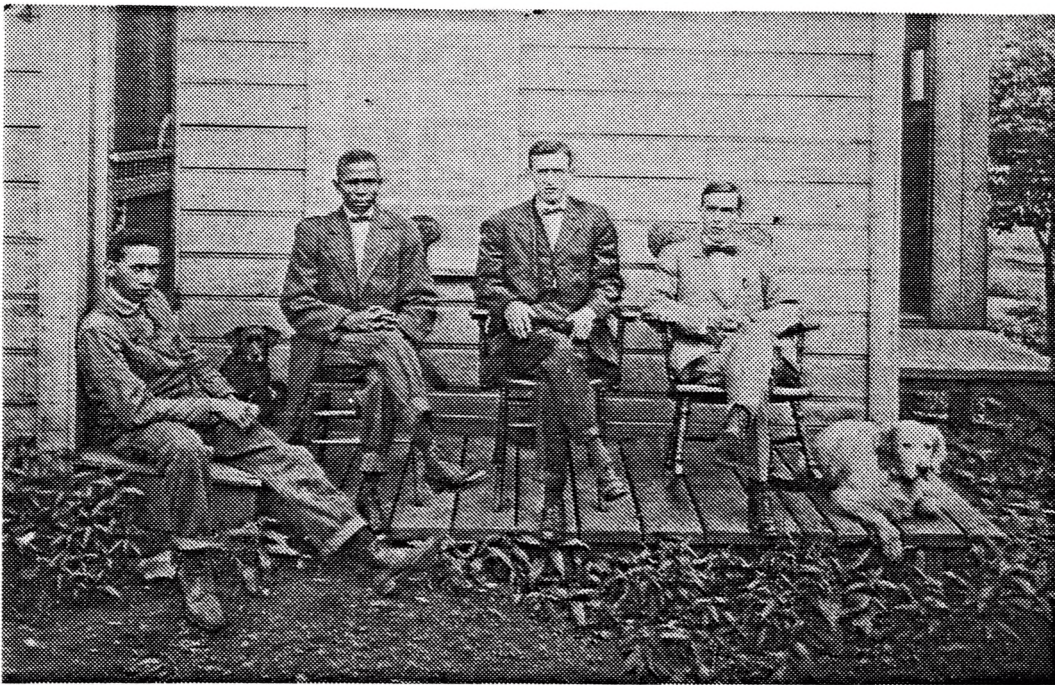


Figure 59. L-R. Jim Warren, Dr. E.A. Carter, Dr. Powell, Dr. Gray.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

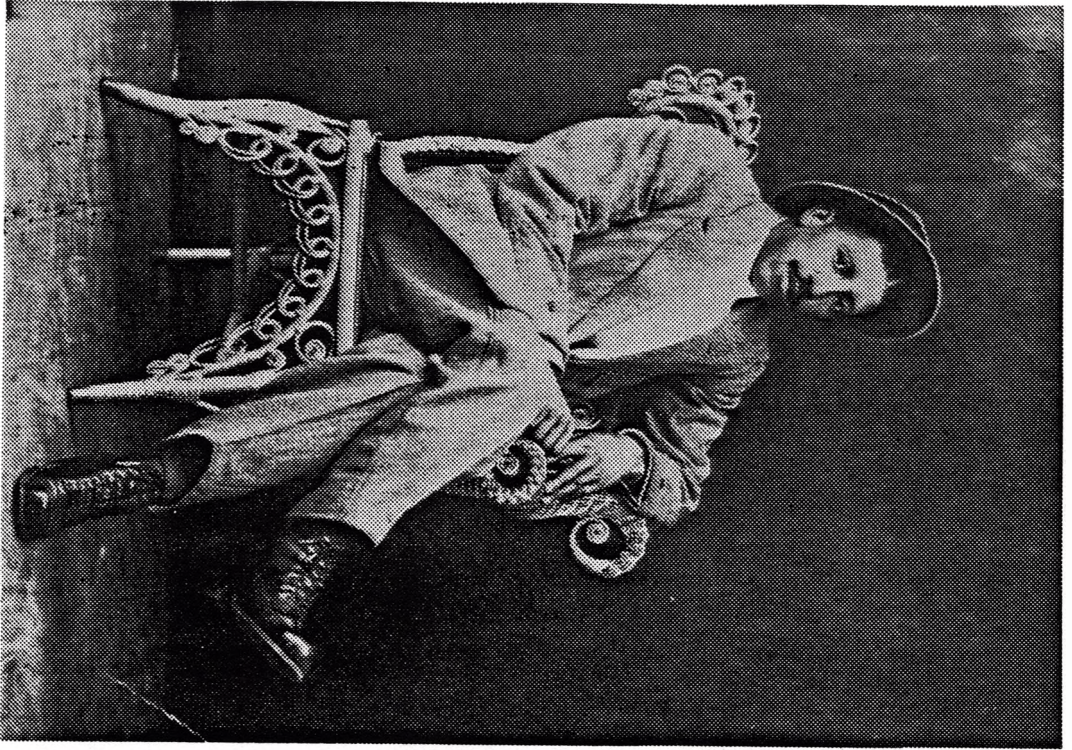


Figure 60. Leonard Walker.  
Courtesy: State Museum and  
Archives.



Figure 61. George Woodson  
Courtesy: State Museum and  
Archives.



Figure 62. Picture unidentified. Shows the formal dress of Buxton women. Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

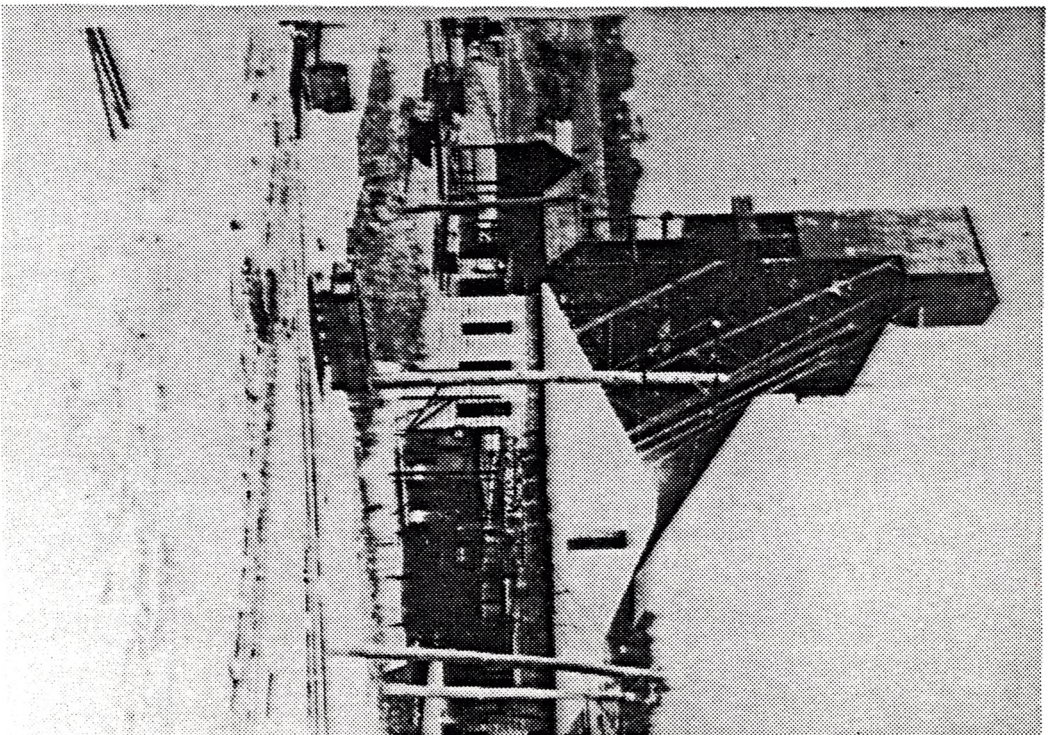


Figure 63. Nine No. 19. Bucknell. Also known as Haydock. State Museum and Archives.

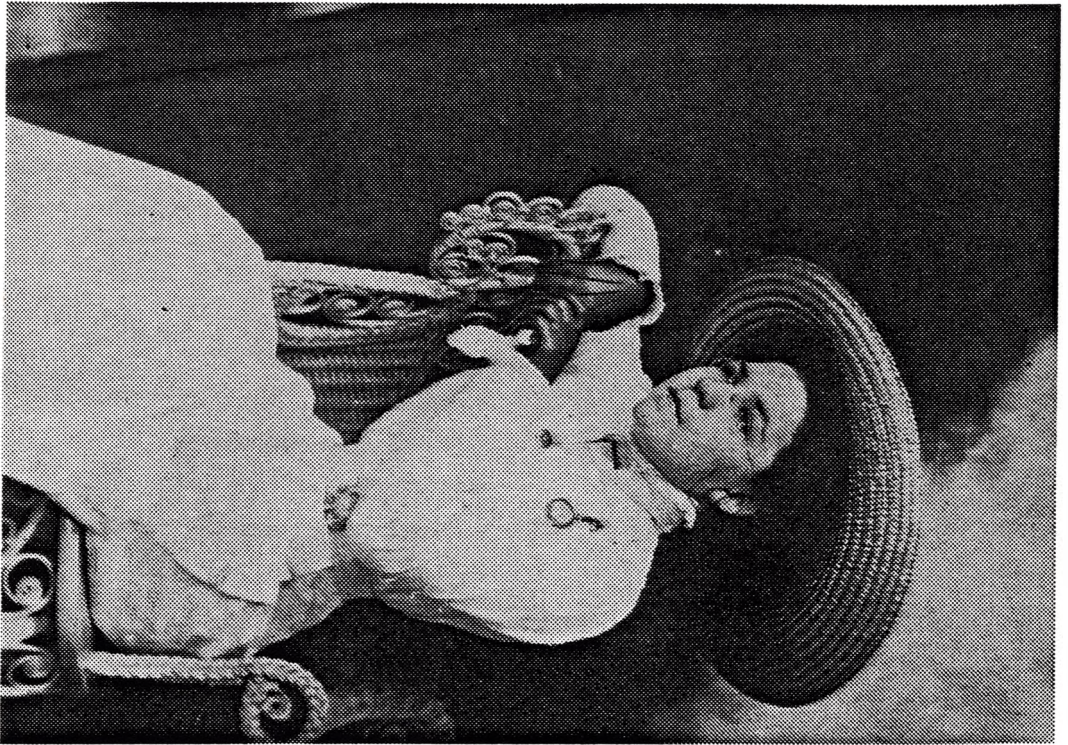


Figure 64. Lottie Armstrong Baxter. Daughter of Hobe Armstrong. Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.



Figure 65. Dr. Edward A. Carter. Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

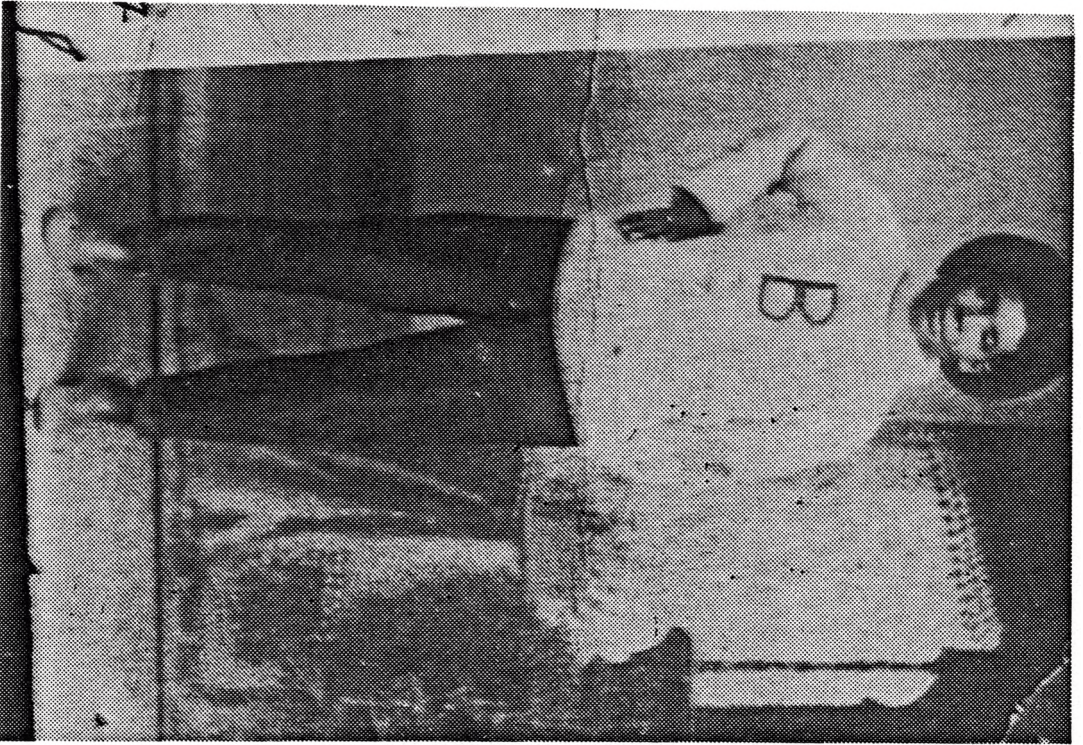


Figure 66. Herman Brooks.  
Courtesy: Herman Brooks.

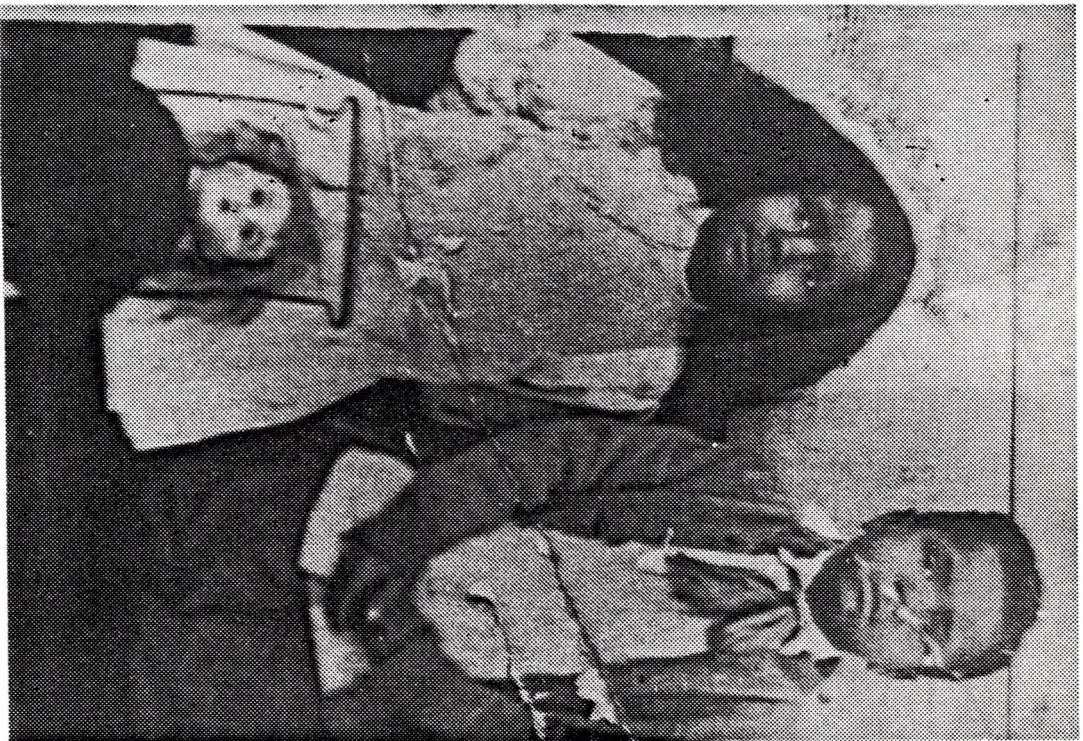


Figure 67. Children of Mr. and Mrs. George  
Neal. Dorothy, age 4, and  
Harry, age 5.  
Courtesy: Dorothy Collier.

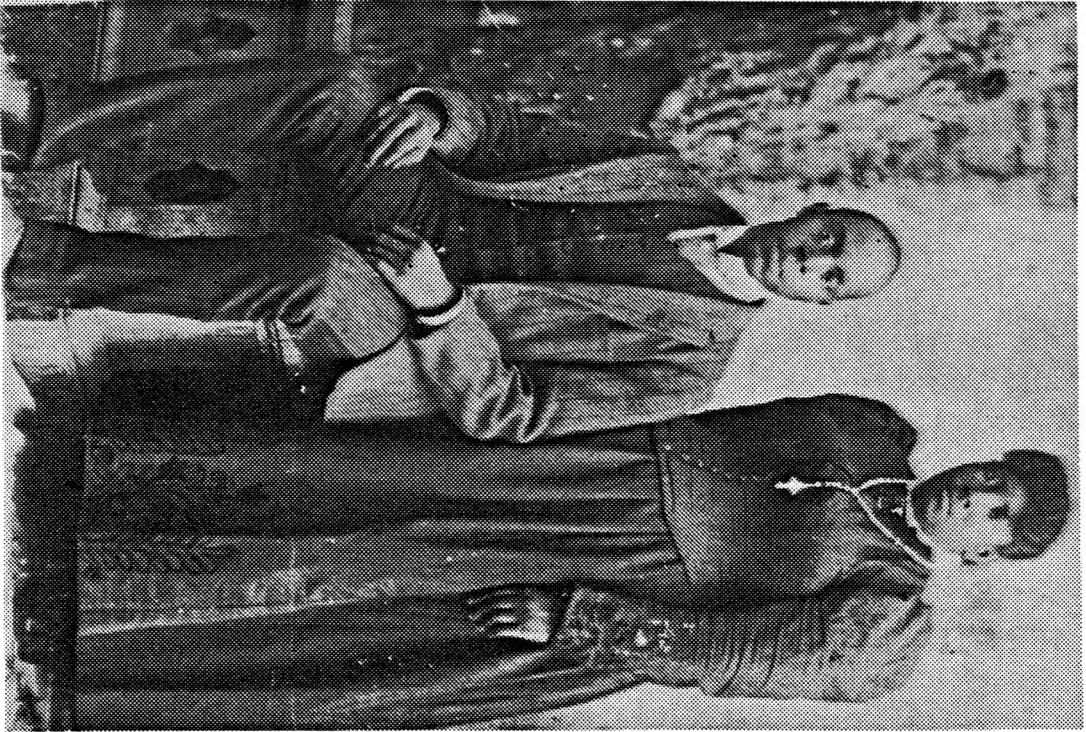


Figure 68. Mr. and Mrs. Hart. Parents of  
Ilucey Hart.  
Courtesy: Dorothy Collier.

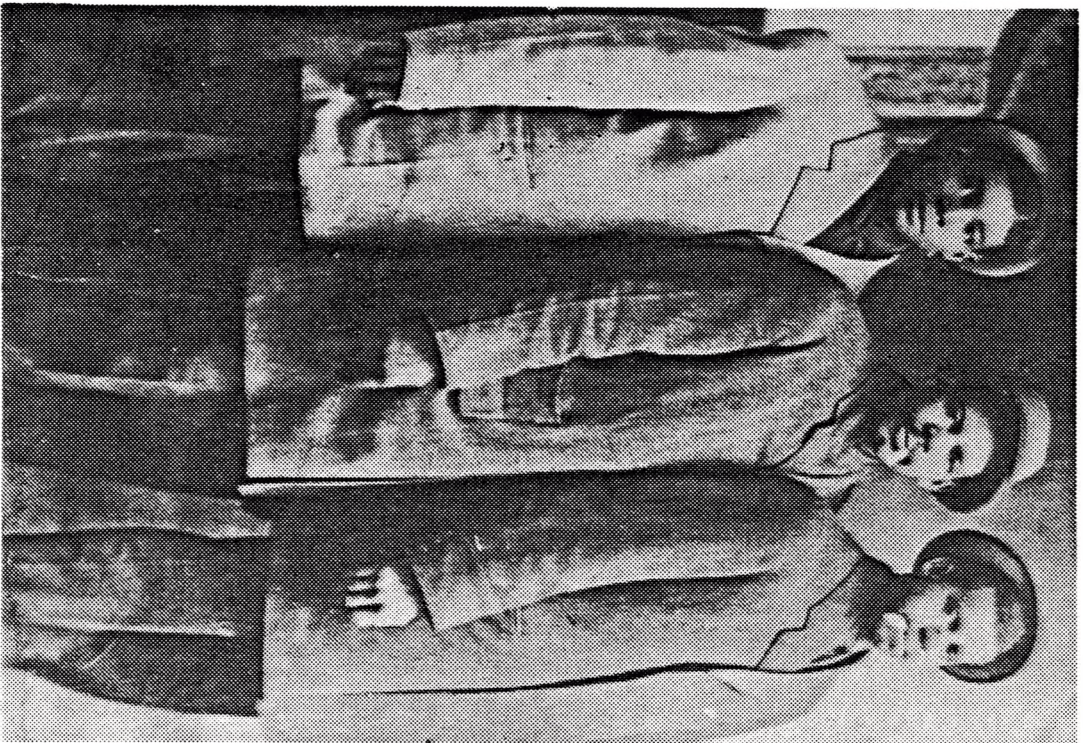


Figure 69. Left Herman Brooks, others  
unidentified.  
Courtesy: Herman Brooks.



Figure 70. Minnie B. London.  
Courtesy: Vaeletta Fields.



Figure 71. Minnie B. London.  
Courtesy: Vaeletta Fields.



Figure 72. B.F. Cooper  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.



Figure 73. Ruben Gaines, Sr.  
Courtesy: Donald Gaines.



Figure 74. Magnolia and Priscilla Sears.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

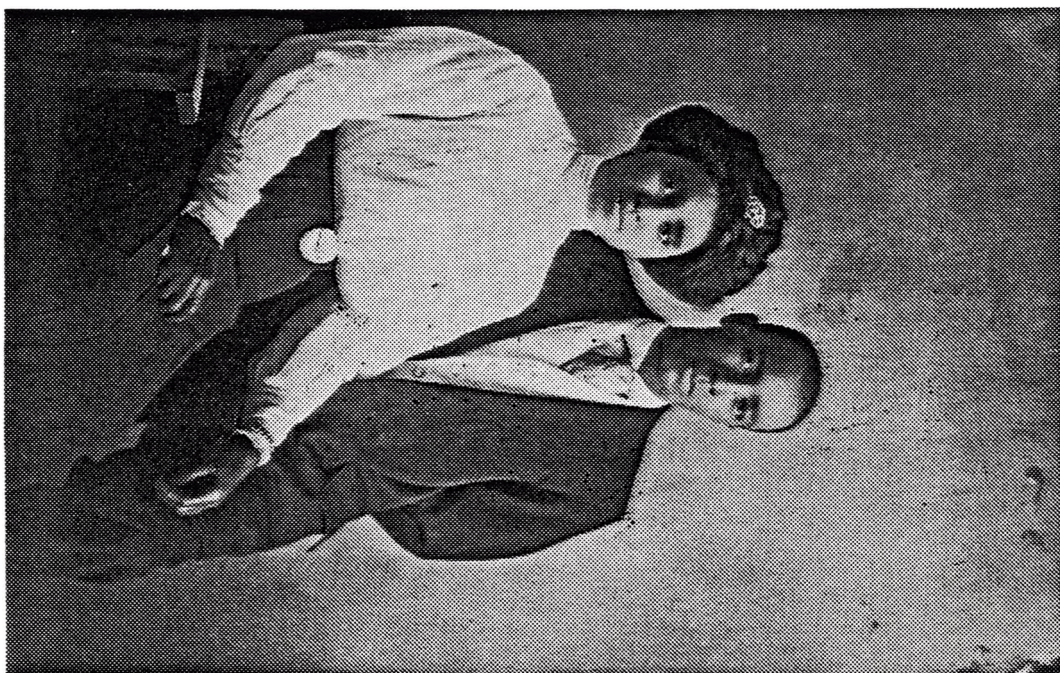


Figure 75. Payton and Neet Reaves.  
Courtesy: State Museum and  
Archives.



Figure 76. Lodge Officers. Unidentified.  
Courtesy: Herman Brooks.

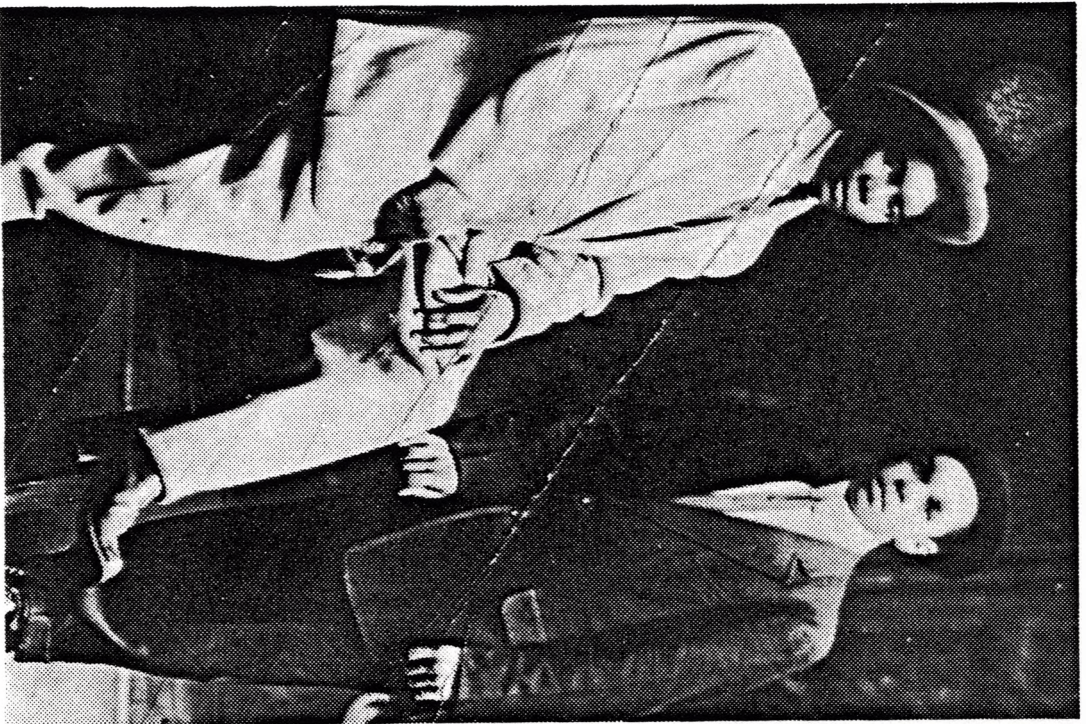


Figure 77. Left, unidentified. R. Hubert  
London, son of Minnie B.  
London.  
Courtesy: Herman Brooks.

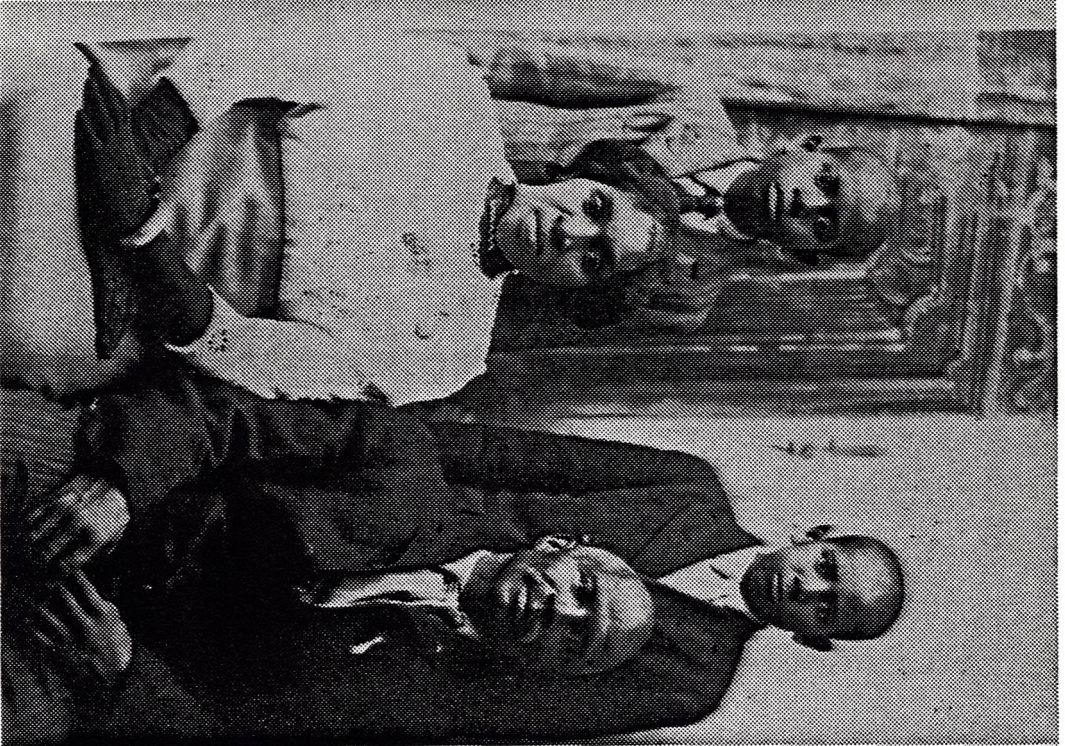


Figure 78. Mr. and Mrs. Horace Brown,  
Horace Jr. and James.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.



Figure 79. Ed. Jones Sr.  
Courtesy: State Museum and  
Archives.



Figure 80. George and Alice Neal, Harry and Dorothy. Parents of Dorothy Collier.  
Courtesy: Dorothy Collier.

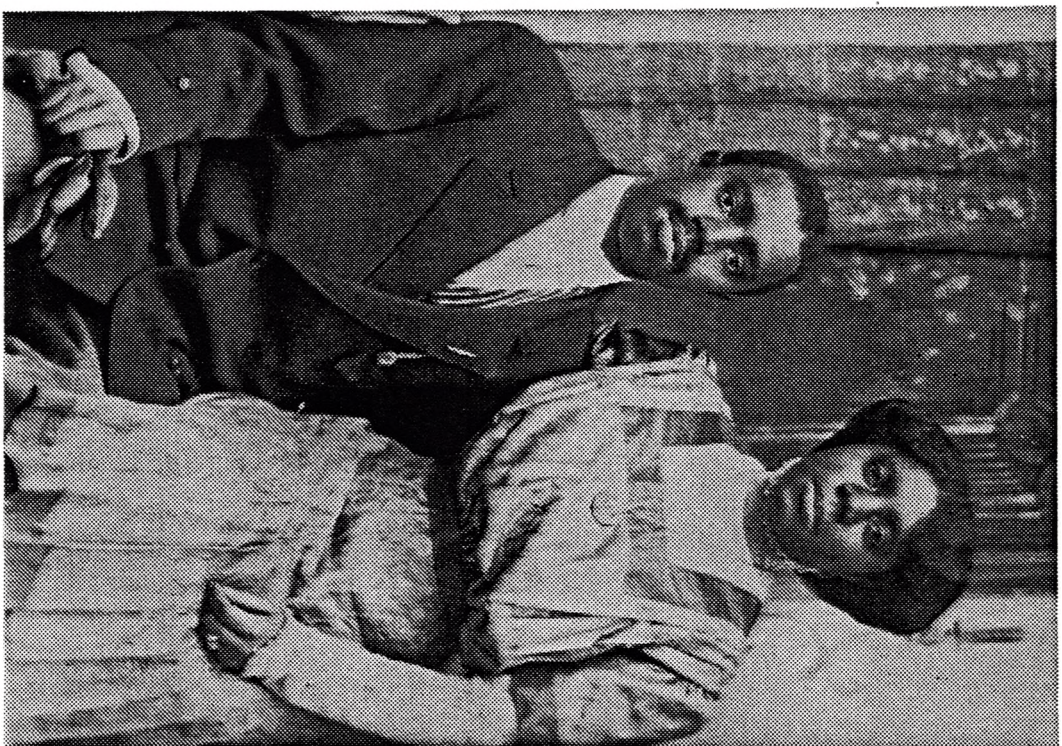


Figure 81. Baxter and Grace McDonald.  
Crlica, 1905.  
Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

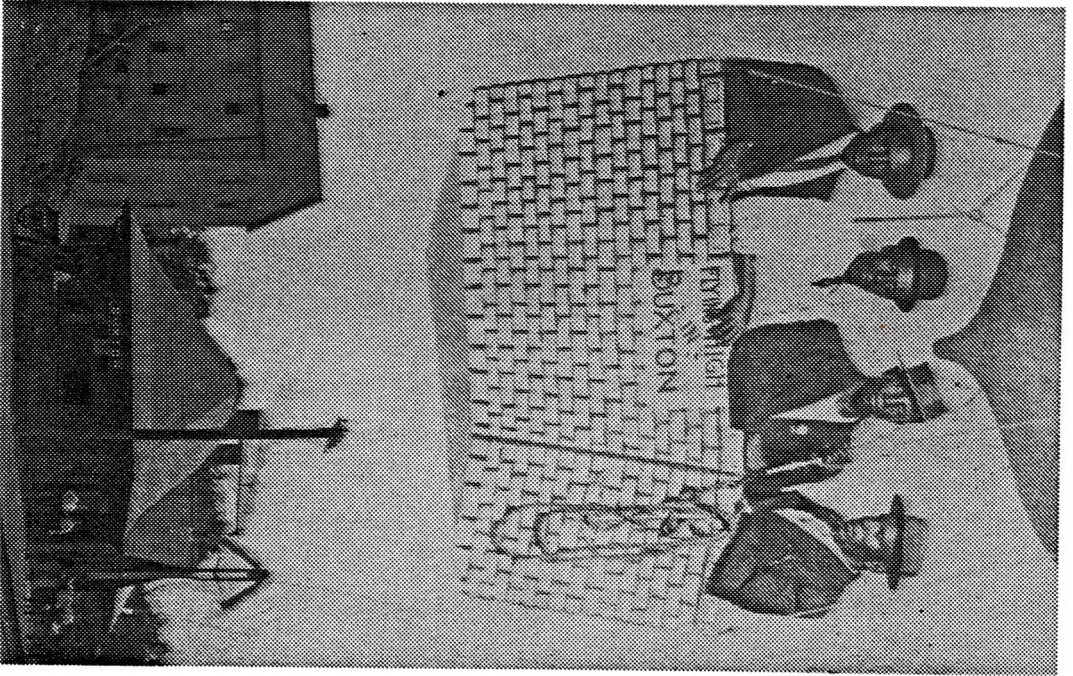


Figure 82. The Carter Brothers. Perkins  
Hotel left of station.  
Courtesy: State Museum and  
Archives.

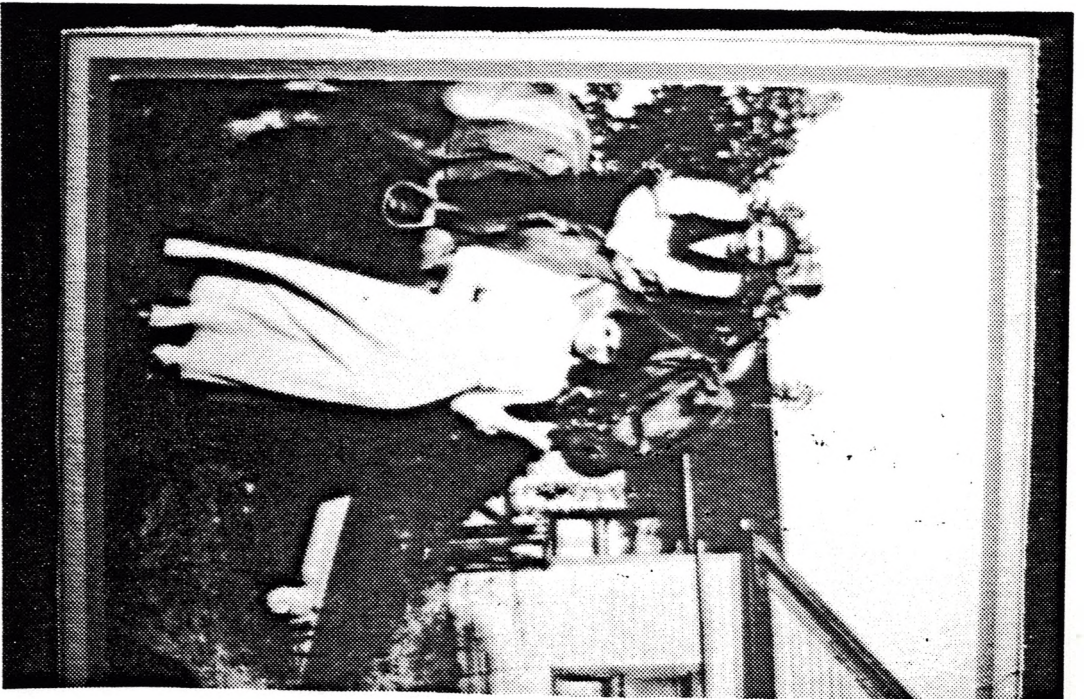


Figure 83. Nilton and Vaeletta Fields.  
Courtesy: Vaeletta Fields.



Figure 84. Y.M.C.A. Basketball team of 1907.  
Courtesy: Herman Brooks.

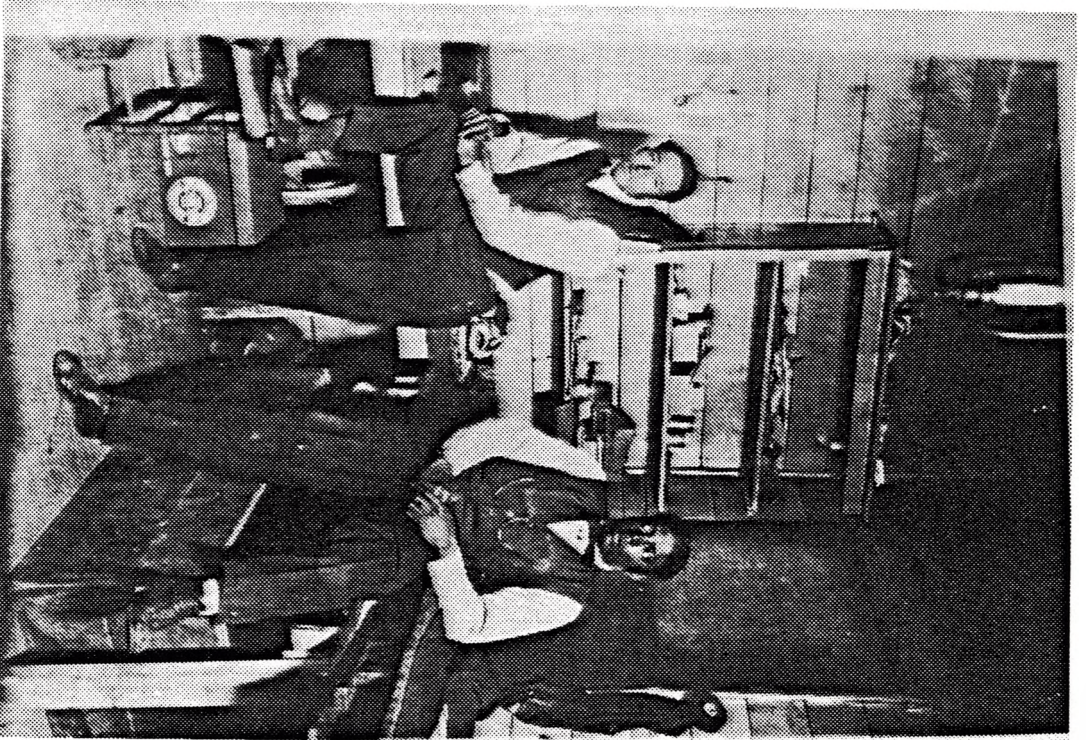


Figure 85. Tailor Shop in Buxton. Left unidentified. Right, George Neal.  
Courtesy: Dorothy Collier.

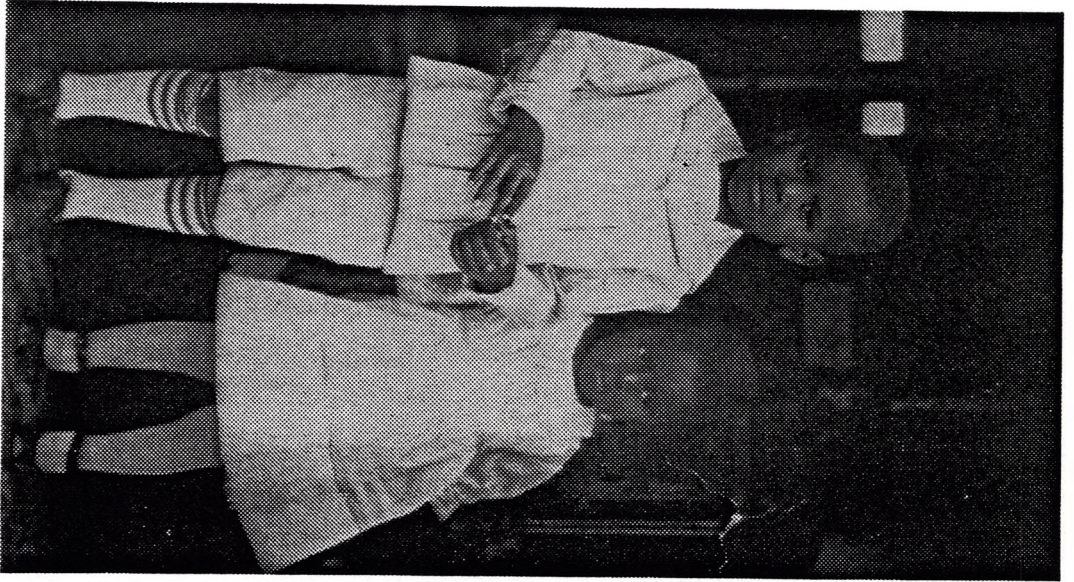


Figure 86. Russell and Doris Carter.  
Children of Mr. and Mrs.  
Clinton Carter, circa. 1917.



Figure 87. Announcement of Buxton Picnic. Over the years many picnics, meetings and other programs have been held in Des Moines, as well as other locations. This announcement is typical of these endeavors.  
Courtesy: Dorothy Collier.

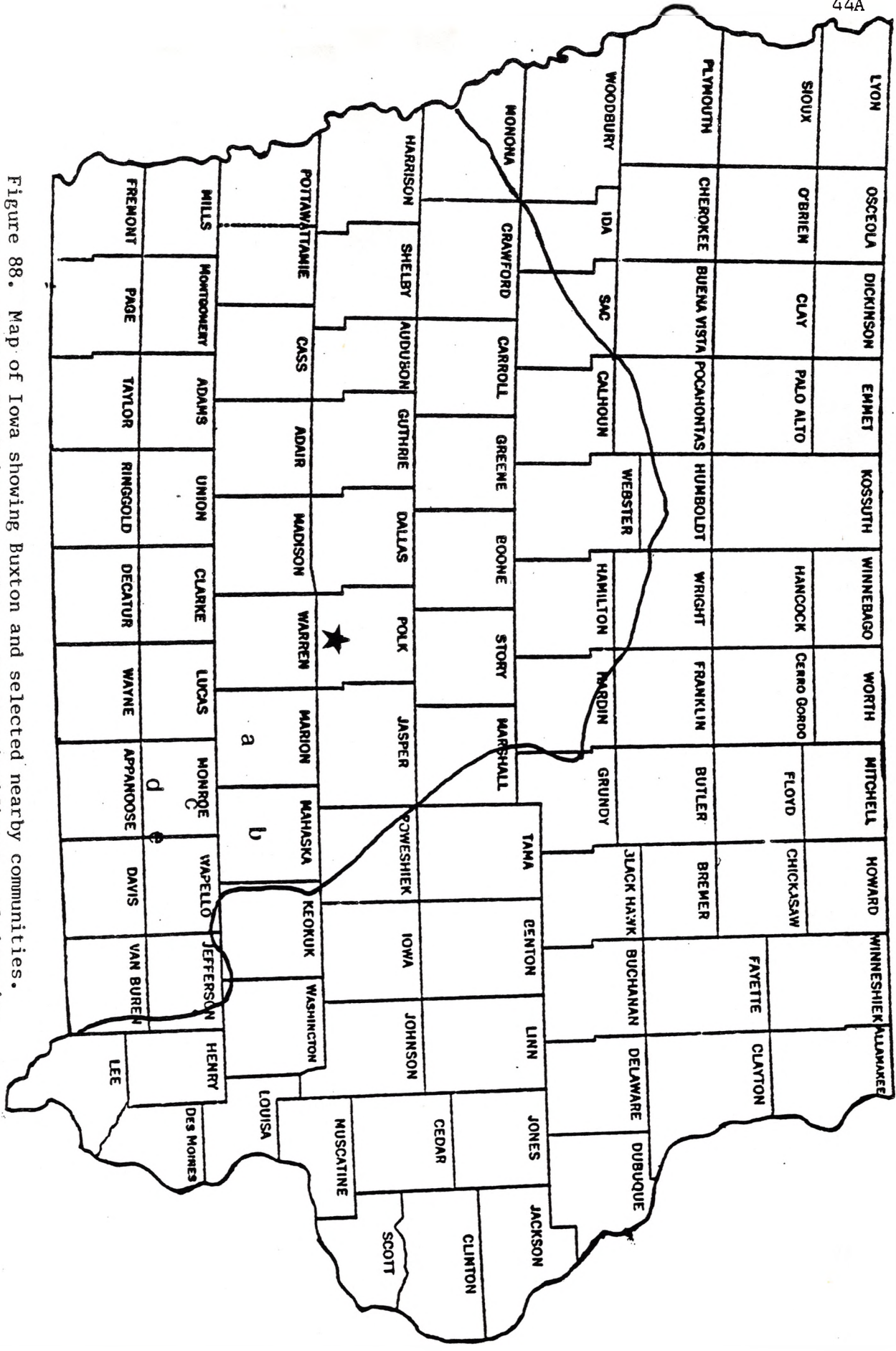


Figure 88. Map of Iowa showing Buxton and selected nearby communities.

Star = Des Moines.

Note: Iowa's significant coal deposits

lie below solid black line.

- a = Knoxville
- b = Oskaloosa
- c = Buxton
- d = Albia
- e = Ottumwa

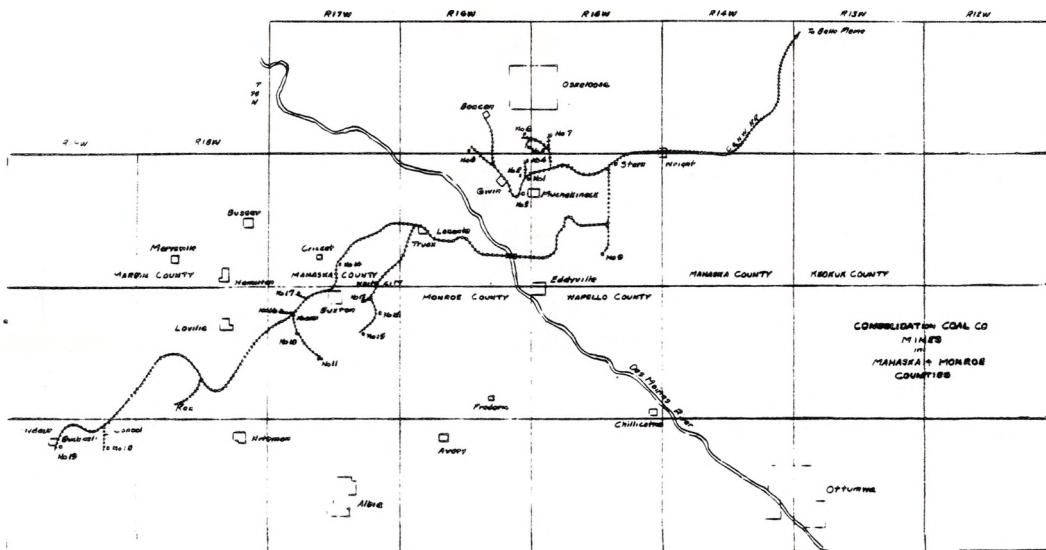


Figure 89. Consolidation Coal Company Mines in Mahaska and Monroe Counties. Map shows rail road lines, mine numbers of outlying mines and nearby coal camps. Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.

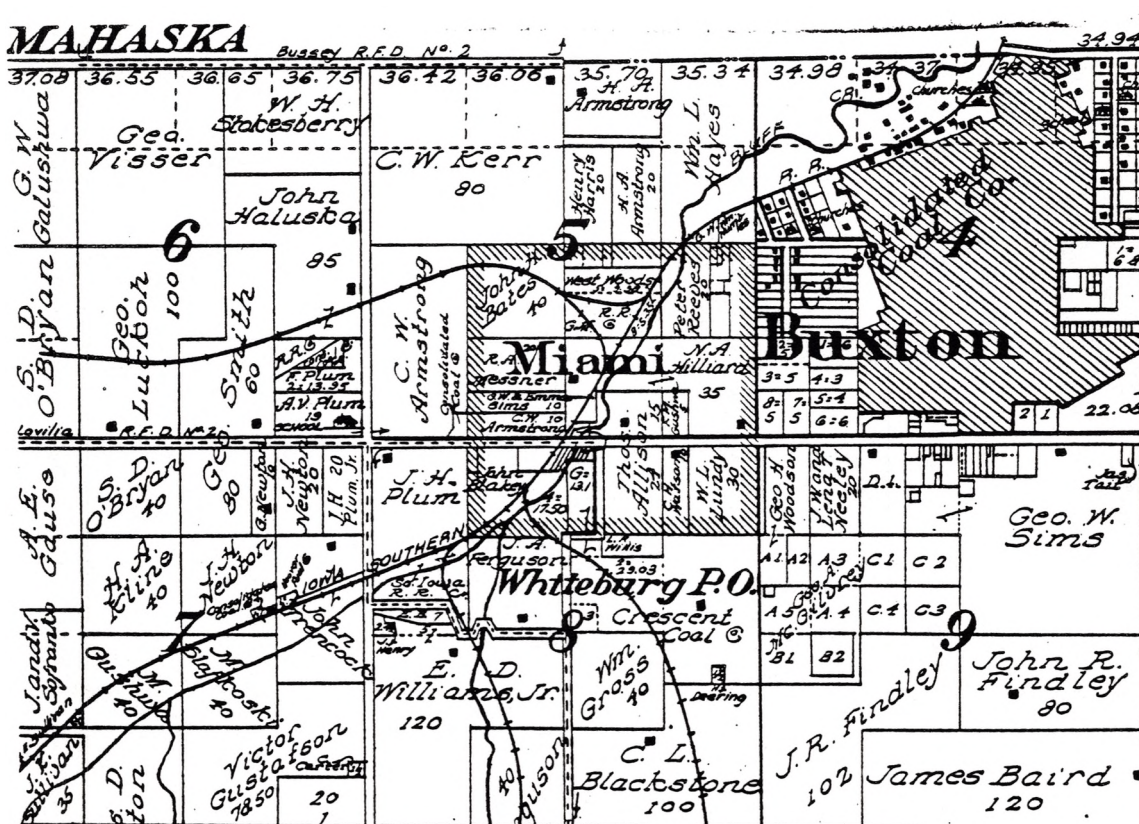


Figure 90. Township map of Buxton and surrounding territory. Courtesy: State Museum and Archives.