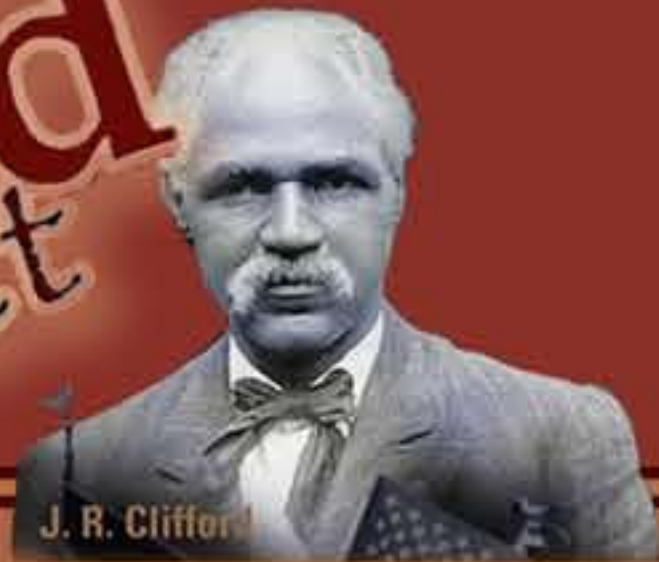


the J.R. Clifford project

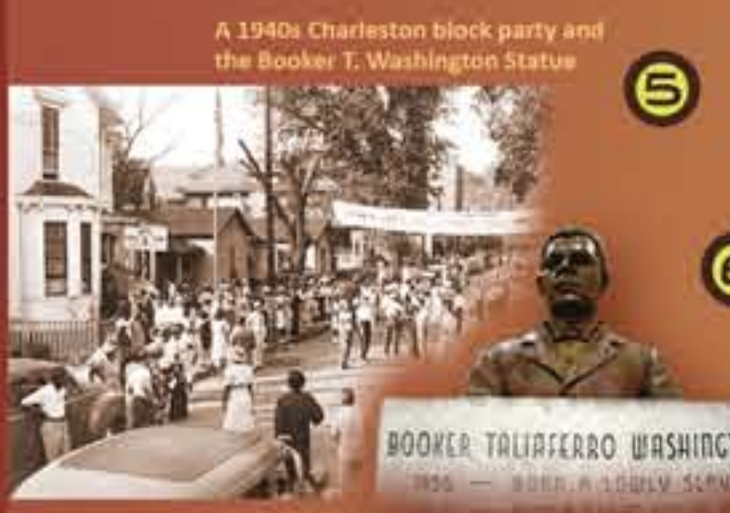


AFRICAN AMERICAN TOUR MAP OF WEST VIRGINIA

At the beginning of the United States Civil War, many people in Virginia's western counties opposed secession from the Union. These men and women risked their lives and fortunes to forge a new legal, political, social, and economic home for themselves and their descendants – the "Mountain State" of West Virginia.

African Americans have lived in what is now West Virginia since the mid-1700s. This map pays tribute to those who have worked tirelessly over many years to challenge racist beliefs and policies to create equality and justice for all people. Their vision, courage, and persistence are exemplified by the life of John Robert "J.R." Clifford (1848-1933), for whom this map is named.

We hope you enjoy learning about these people and events that have enriched America's history.



FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE WORLD...

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE OF WEST VIRGINIA



The state of Virginia included West Virginia prior to 1863.

SLAVERY AND THE CREATION OF A STATE

In 1860, on the eve of the United States Civil War, western Virginia had approximately 3,820 slaveholders and 18,451 African American slaves; while

eastern Virginia had approximately 48,308 slaveholders and 490,308 slaves. Many western Virginians did not support the decision by the Virginia Government in Richmond to join the pro-slavery Confederacy. On June 20, 1863, after two years of military, legal, and political maneuvering by forces loyal to the Union, West Virginia was created from 50 counties that had been part of the state of Virginia;

a slave emancipation clause was included in the new state's Constitution. After the Civil War ended, West Virginia's African Americans obtained many more political and civil rights than was the case in Virginia, although education, and other public accommodations and institutions, were segregated in both states until the 1950s.



Civil War Soldiers



WHO WAS J.R. CLIFFORD?

In the year 1848, a great West Virginian and American, John Robert "J.R." Clifford, was born to free African American parents on a farm in what is now Grant County, West Virginia. At age 15, J.R. joined the United States Colored Troops and fought in the Civil War where, as he proudly later said, he "helped shoot off the shackles of four million enslaved people." After the Civil War, J.R. became a schoolteacher and principal in Martinsburg, as well as a political activist as African Americans exercised their newly-won right to vote.



In 1892, Clifford founded a weekly newspaper, *The Pioneer Press*, devoted to African American advancement and liberty, which circulated nationwide for thirty years. In 1887, J.R. passed the bar examination – the first African American to do so in West Virginia – and began the practice of law, which he continued until his death. J.R. Clifford's intelligence and fearlessness helped him win many legal victories for African Americans, including the 1892 *Williams v. Board of Education*, where the West Virginia Supreme Court ruled that "colored schools" must have the same term and teacher pay as white schools.

THE MODERN CIVIL RIGHTS ERA

In 1954, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. The *Brown* decision triggered a decade of legal and social change in America that culminated in the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

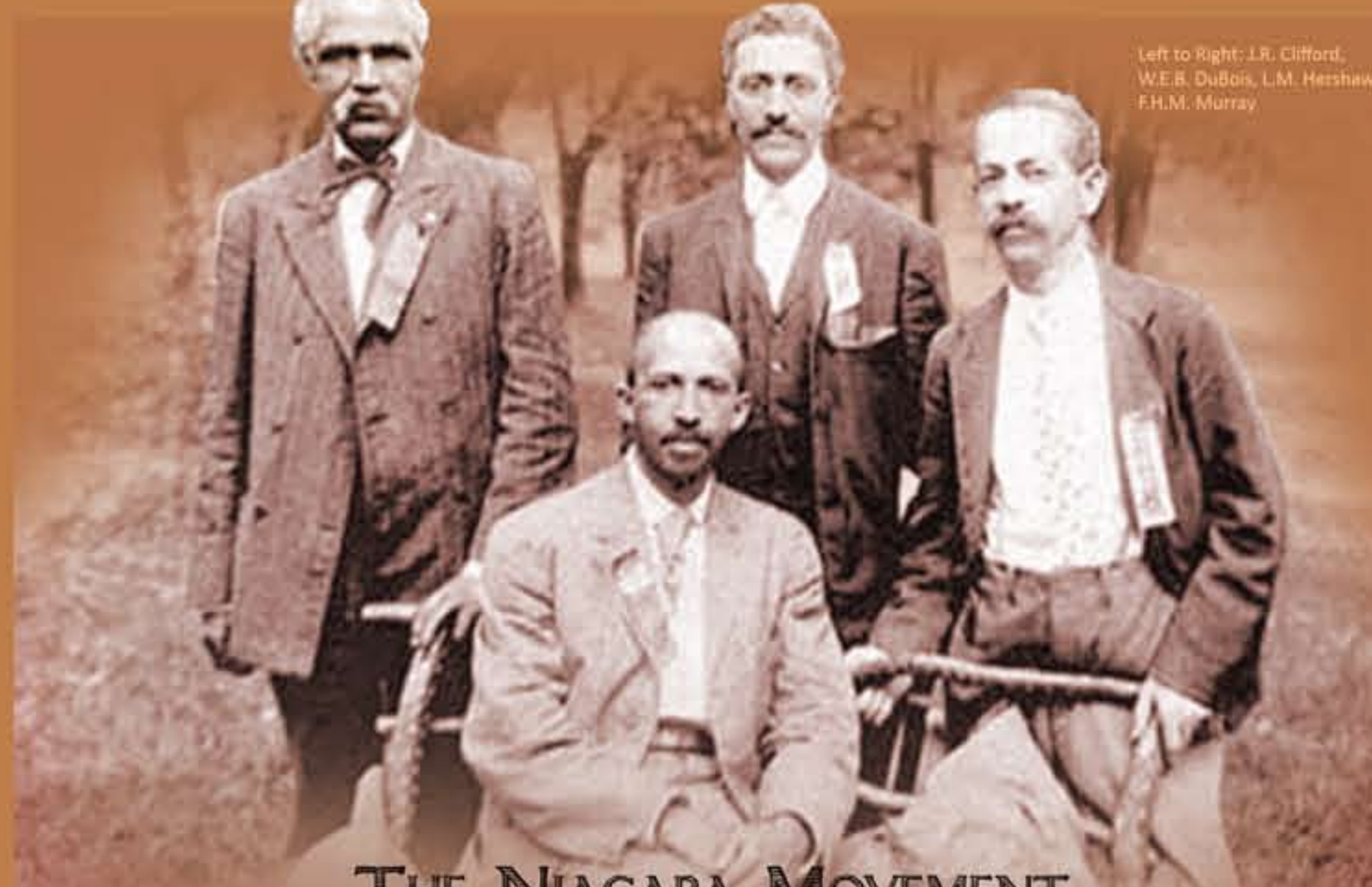
West Virginia's Governor William Marland responded to the *Brown* decision by ordering the dismantling of the State's segregated school system. West Virginia African Americans and their white allies marched and held "sit-ins" at segregated lunch counters and theaters, putting their bodies on the line to break down centuries-old barriers to equality.



(Left) Governor William Marland



West Virginia NAACP



Left to Right: J.R. Clifford, W.E.B. DuBois, L.M. Hershaw, F.M. Morley

THE NIAGARA MOVEMENT

In 1906, Storer College in Harpers Ferry hosted the first American meeting of a new African American civil rights organization – the Niagara Movement. Scholar and activist William E.B. DuBois founded the Niagara Movement to work for full voting rights for all citizens and an end to segregation, challenging the more conservative approach associated with Booker T. Washington. DuBois described the meeting, in which women were important participants, as "one of the greatest meetings that American Negroes ever held." The Niagara Movement was important in the establishment of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The 1906 West Virginia gathering laid the cornerstone of the modern Civil Rights Movement.



EDUCATION

For centuries, Virginia's pro-slavery government was hostile to education for African Americans. Educators like William Davis, Booker T. Washington's first school teacher, who could read and write were in high demand. After the Civil War, racism persisted in a West Virginia constitutional provision prohibiting African Americans from attending school with whites. Despite a segregated school system, generations of African American West Virginian educators, parents, and students achieved great accomplishments in education. African American public school teachers in West Virginia had more advanced degrees than white school teachers; institutions like West Virginia Colored Institute employed prestigious faculty and attracted top students from across the nation.

In 1954, when school segregation was deemed unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*, West Virginia moved swiftly to integrate, and was one of the few segregated states to order full and immediate compliance with the *Brown* decision.

ARTS, HUMANITIES, AND RELIGION

Enforced separation of African Americans for generations under slavery and Jim Crow laws led to strong and creative spiritual and cultural expressions in West Virginia. Scores of "black newspapers" were read by thousands. Lodges and churches were important community resources for developing and sustaining the human spirit and promoting community resilience.

The African American musical tradition flourished in West Virginia, generating nationally famous artists like Johnnie Johnson, Don Redman, Nat Reese, Revella Hughes, and Bill Withers. Other African American West Virginians have made notable cultural contributions, including scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and radio and television personality Steve Harvey.



Recording Artist, Bill Withers



Tuskegee Airmen

COAL MINERS AND RAILROADERS

In the late 1800s, many African Americans moved to West Virginia from the Deep South to work in the state's newly-developing coal mines and railroads. Besides good pay, West Virginia's educational opportunities for African American children were also better, and African Americans were able to vote. Overt persecution like lynching was less common.

In 1910, McDowell County, which mined more coal than any other county in the state, was 30 percent African American, including many business owners and professionals. African Americans were leaders, including J.J. Wren, who became the first African American President of the United Mine Workers of America in 1893. Beginning in the 1940s, mechanization drastically reduced the number of coal mining jobs, and many former miners left West Virginia to seek other employment.



Coal Miner

LAWYERS

For more than one hundred years, African American lawyers and legislators have fought in West Virginia for justice and civil rights, breaking down barriers to equal opportunity. In 1896, the state elected its first African American to the Legislature, Christopher Payne. In the 1920s, attorney Thomas G. Nutter of Kanawha County won prominent anti-racism lawsuits, while Harry J. Capehart of Charleston advocated the passage of early laws to prevent lynching. When bar associations would not admit African Americans, attorneys like James Monroe Ellis of Fayette County helped create the Negro Bar Association, later known as the Mountain State Bar Association. In 1968, attorney Leon Miller of Charleston became the state's first African American judge; in 1994 Irene Berger became West Virginia's first African American woman judge. She was appointed to the federal bench in 2009 – another first. In 1994, Franklin Cleckley became the state's first African American Supreme Court Justice, where he authored more than one hundred published legal opinions.



Irene C. Berger was appointed in 2009 by President Barack Obama as the state's first African American female federal judge.



Harry J. Capehart, a member of the state Legislature from 1918 to 1922, led a successful campaign to enact anti-lynching legislation.



Franklin D. Cleckley, a native of Huntington, became, in 1994, the first African American to serve on the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals.



William H. Davis, Booker T. Washington's teacher, was an independent candidate for Governor of West Virginia in 1890.



Martin Robinson Delany, born in Charles Town in 1812, served as an officer in the Union Army and was an early abolitionist leader.



Elizabeth Simpson Drewry of McDowell County was the first African American woman to be elected to the West Virginia legislature, in 1950.



Memphis Tennessee Garrison was born in 1890 and grew up in McDowell County. She was a prominent educator and civil rights activist.



Minnie Buckingham Harper was the first African American female to serve the state Legislature; in 1928 she was appointed to her late husband's seat.



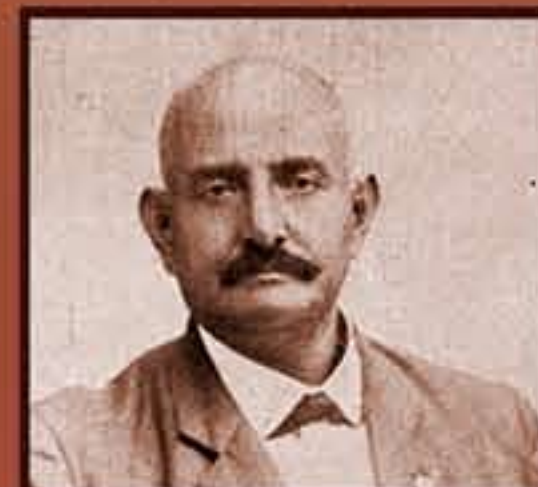
Herbert H. Henderson, an attorney, became known as "Mr. Civil Rights of West Virginia" for his tireless work to secure justice and equality.



Leon P. Miller of McDowell County was the first African American judge elected to office in West Virginia, in 1968.



Dr. Mildred Mitchell-Bateman became Director of the Department of Mental Health in 1962, the first African American woman to lead a WV state agency.



Christopher Harrison Payne, a Monroe County native, was the first African American member of the West Virginia Legislature, in 1896.



Col. George S. "Spanky" Roberts, a skilled pilot from Fairmont, became commander of the 99th Fighter Squadron, Tuskegee Army, in 1942.



Rev. Leon Sullivan was a Charleston minister who achieved national prominence for encouraging businesses to adopt progressive racial policies.



Booker T. Washington's education began in slavery-era Charleston. He was the most famous African American leader between 1880 and 1910.



Carter G. Woodson began an academic career in West Virginia, and became the "Father of Black History Month" which he began in 1926.