Race relations in Atlanta, from 1877 through 1890, as seen in a critical analysis of the Atlanta City council proceedings and other related works

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RACE RELATIONS IN ATLANTA, FROM 1877 THROUGH 1890,
AS SEEN IN A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ATLANTA CITY
COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS AND OTHER RELATED WORKS

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BY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Slavery, as an institution, laid the foundation upon which prejudice was built. It was during the time of slavery that certain detrimental, pejorative and stereotyped character features were to be fastened to the Negro, and in a parasitical fashion were to drain him forever of the dignity, manhood and pride that other races were to enjoy. Try as he might have, to escape the chains of bondage, he soon discovered that the Emancipation Proclamation extended to him freedom in a legal sense, but in a more profound and real sense, his soul was enslaved by a race of men who, although tasting defeat, were not willing to succumb to those whom they had deemed inferior.

Reconstruction, if taken literally, means a rebuilding of something which once existed. Reconstruction, to most white southerners, held not only this connotation, but also encompassed others which foreshadowed the destiny of the black man. Rejoice as they might have over the great emancipation, they soon discovered that not only were the edifices of a proud south being rebuilt, but the soul of a man was also being rebuilt - the soul and life strings of a black man.

Racial discrimination became a subtle practice at which
most white Southerners were most adept; one reason being that they had received formal indoctrination under the skillful tutelage of their parents, who were, owing to their experience during the days of slavery, masters of the despicable game of manipulating the life strings of persons they considered almost sub-human.

Just how does one race proceed in subjecting another race to its will? There was no difficulty involved in establishing this contract. The Negro learned through experience that opposition meant physical or economical reprisal, therefore his consent was a matter of self preservation in the face of superior retaliatory forces.

This, then, is the setting for the period under discussion in this paper. Reconstruction was ending and a new era was dawning. This was the era which witnessed the growth of the so called "Jim Crow" laws which cropped up everywhere, in order to let the Negro know his "place." In many instances there was no specific law to govern a particular action, but through traditional practices it was more of an understanding between the two races that certain things were taboo. Legally the Negro had no place to go to get a redress of his grievances, therefore, he assumed the traditional role of appearing to be docile and satisfied, but whenever he could he regurgitated the shame and frustration which society heaped upon him from birth until death.

Atlanta was no exception as far as the rule went for a general picture of "Southernism" in the period beginning
in 1877 and ending in 1890. Atlanta Negroes were not spared the sweeping indignities thrust upon their brothers of color everywhere in the South.

There have been general studies made of race relations in the South, but mostly for later periods and very few, if any, deal exclusively with one city. The value of this research is that it helps to present a better picture of what life was like for Negroes as they strove to obtain some of the basic necessities for civilized living. Perhaps because of the emphasis placed upon education for this period more information is to be found in this area. Ever present problems were those of health, relief and providing health facilities for the general population. In analyzing petitions presented to the Atlanta City Council, the traditionally held theory that Negroes never took an interest in helping themselves is refuted. This study purports to show how the legal rights of the Negro were ignored and consequently how he was most definitely the victim of discriminatory practices.

The preponderance of information in this paper was sifted carefully from the Atlanta City Council Minutes. It was not always easy to discern the meaning of ordinances, petitions, resolutions, reports or various other material found in the proceedings. In many instances there was much that the casual observer would miss, because the intent of much of the proceedings is shrouded in a paternalistic cloak which bears the insignia of the "see no evil," "do no evil," and "hear no evil" clan, but if examined in minute detail one
finds that the beautiful cloak is covered with holes, which fortunately the light of time has penetrated.
CHAPTER II
PUBLIC EDUCATION IN ATLANTA

Education in Atlanta in the year 1877, was not a new innovation, for various types of educational facilities had existed since the days when Atlanta was known as Terminus. The significant feature of the educational system in 1877 was the fact that the schools were open to all classes of people—free of charge. They were public schools supported by the city, county and state.

This public school system was inaugurated in 1872. It is most probable that no step in the city's progress was so freely discussed or widely approved, as the system of public education. Even though the system was begun full blown in 1872, its origin may perhaps be traced to the fall of 1869, to Dr. D. C. O'Keefe and Dr. S. H. Stout, whose unceasing efforts to try and get a public school system started in Atlanta, led to the adoption of a resolution to that effect.2

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Under the stipulations of the resolution, a committee was appointed, consisting of Mayor W. H. Hulsey, Dr. O'Keefe and E. R. Carr. This committee prepared and presented, to the City Council, an elaborate report on November 19, 1869. On the 26th of November several resolutions were adopted, among which the following was found:

Resolved, That the said Board of Education shall at as early a day as practicable, report to the Council, plans of three public school-houses, with specifications and estimates of the cost of the same.¹

On February 1, 1872 the Superintendent of the Board of Education, for Atlanta, made his first report. In this report, the fact is mentioned that the Board assumed control of two colored schools, which were prior to this action, supported chiefly by and under the almost exclusive control of Northern Missionary Societies - the Storrs School, which was located on Houston Street, and the Summer Hill School, in the Southeastern part of the city. The terms of agreement between the Missionary Societies and the Board of Education were that the buildings were to be given to the Board free of rent. The Board was suppose to control the appointment of teachers and assume the entire support and control of the schools; including teacher salaries, curriculum and instruction, and to provide for these two schools in general as they would for white schools. This arrangement led to a difference between the two, relative to the appointment

¹Ibid., p. 8.
of teachers to the Storrs School. The difference was settled for 1872 by allowing the Missionary Association to make the appointments. As may be later seen, in this discussion, the problem was intensified because Negro teachers were not the first teachers to be placed in Negro schools. To insure a certain type of indoctrination, white teachers were placed over Negro children.

In formulating an outline of what the public school system would consist of and how it would operate, there was a special heading: "Of the Schools for Colored Children." The statement that, "the school houses herein recommended to be built at an early day, are intended exclusively for the use of white children," left no doubt about the position of the Committee regarding the erection of school houses for Negro children. The committee felt that Negro children were receiving sufficient aid from the Freedman's Bureau and voluntary contributions from various sources, and certainly the wants of the white children were most pressing, so they reasoned.

The perpetual problem of the educating of the races has always been surrounded by controversy: mainly, because

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2. Report of the Committee on Public Schools to the City Council of Atlanta, Georgia (Atlanta: Economical Book & Job Printing House, 1869), p. 11.
some Caucasians have sought to maintain the idea of racial superiority, by instituting separate facilities for Negroes and Caucasians. The annual report of the Committee on Public Schools, for 1877, expresses most succinctly, the feeling of most Caucasians toward education:

The cause of education is prospering throughout the world except in Africa and Georgia. The new State Constitution in that respect is not as liberal as the one of 1868, but the power of public opinion will not permit the legislature seriously to abridge the scanty privileges of education now furnished by the State. Our former slaves will soon be better educated than many of their masters were a few years ago; and the rising generation of colored people will fill positions that will be denied to uneducated whites. The world is governed by mind; the mind varies at the height of its powers only by education. Anyone who prefers that his own shall be the ruling race in this or other countries is in favor of educating our children as the means to this end. The most powerful and most prosperous people in the world encourage the highest in education. And the best investment that any nation, State or City can make is in educating its children. It is ignorant to increasing the population without a corresponding increase in the expenses of supporting that population: because a single educated man may have the power of many uneducated men.

In 1872, with the exception of the three school houses which were built for white children, Ivy Street, Crew Street and Walker Street Schools, the others were in makeshift buildings.

In July, 1878, a petition, to try and establish a school for Negroes, was presented to the Council. The men responsible

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2 Atlanta Public Schools, First Annual Report . . .

1872, p. 12.
for this initial action, D. H. Beatie and Dr. T. S. Howell, were constantly fighting for Negro rights. They suggested that either the proposition of the American Missionary Association, who controlled the Storrs School House on Wheat Street, be accepted or that a house should be rented independently for school purposes. The Board seemed to favor the renting of a house, maybe because of previous encounters with the Society.

In 1879 in a report from the Committee on Public Schools there were listed three grammar schools for Negro children. These schools were probably makeshift schools, which were either established in houses or churches, for in 1880, a special and joint committee was appointed to report on the erection of a "Colored School Building." It was again to the credit of Dr. T. S. Howell, a member of the Board of Education, that the issue was brought to bear upon the members of the Council. Dr. Howell, "addressed the Council in behalf of the pressing need and propriety of immediately beginning the erection of the Colored School Building." The Committee reported that they had investigated the matter of building the school house for colored children and had conferred with a committee from the Board of Education. They admitted to the necessity of such a building and recommended an

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1 Proceedings, January 5, 1880, p. 298.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., July 19, 1880, p. 409.
appropriation of thirty five hundred dollars.¹

After the passage of two months without any action being taken toward the erection of the school for Negroes, Beatie, with special permission, addressed the Council upon the importance of immediate steps to begin the erection of the "School House for colored children."² This entire matter was referred to the School Committee. During the same month, before the Committee had a chance to return a decision on the matter, Councilman Ellis, "resolved, that a check for $2,000 be and the same is hereby ordered to passed up chargable [sic] to the Contingent Fund in favor of the Board of Education. This amount being additional to the amount already appropriated."³

During the three months, which passed between Councilman Ellis' resolution and Mayor Calhoun's Valedictory Speech, the building of the Negro school was commenced, as is evidenced by a reference in the Mayor's speech:

During the past year we have erected on Fair Street a very handsome eight-grade school house, with all the modern appliances, at a cost of about $15,000, which in a great measure supplies the long felt want of room for the white children of the city. We have also in course of erection, on the corner of Houston and Butler Streets another building of the same size for colored children, which I trust will soon be completed, and then all the children may revive the benefit of our free school system.⁴

¹Ibid., August 2, 1880, p. 411.
²Ibid., October 2, 1880, p. 433.
³Ibid., October 18, 1880, p. 441.
⁴Ibid., January 3, 1881, p. 467-69.
According to the report submitted by the Committee on Public Schools, for 1879, there were fourteen teachers in colored schools, six of which were Negroes; the other eight were undoubtedly white. On January 17, 1881, a resolution was offered by Councilman Knapp "looking to the education of a certain number of persons for teachers in the Colored Schools." This resolution was tabled.

E. R. Carter, author of The Black Side, has stated that William Finch, a Negro, and one time member of the Atlanta City Council, was the originator of the plan to have public schools for Negro children. He was also, according to Carter, the first to agitate as to white teachers teaching Negro children, while Negro teachers were virtually ignored.

The issue of the hiring of Negro teachers was also discussed by the State School Commissioner of Georgia in a report to the General Assembly:

I would further suggest that the Normal Department of the Atlanta University might receive aid and be useful in this way for the benefit of the Colored people if it is thought by the General Assembly, that we can begin, at this time, to make similar provisions for raising up a supply of colored teachers.

Even though this statement was made, it was also

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1Ibid., January 17, 1881, p. 492.
2E. R. Carter, The Black Side (Atlanta, 1894), p. 27.
specified that no specific recommendation was being made about the charge of the education of Negro children, and that it could be safely left for the future. In order to show the sensibility of maintaining the status quo the following statement was presented:

In Charleston, Nashville and Memphis the Board of Education, in obedience to the popular demand, have taken charge of the Colored schools, which are always separate from those of the white children. Many of the teachers in these colored schools are Southern-born gentlemen and ladies, whose social position has not been compromised by the acceptance of their places. The result of this action is to encourage in a marked degree, a return of that good feeling between the colored people and the Southern whites, which had been so rashly and indiscreetly interrupted by the tuition of those whose non-acquaintance with the characteristics of the two races so long resident together, disqualifies them, in part, to teach the colored people.

It may be clearly seen, then, that the statewide appearance of public school teaching personnel was predominantly white. Atlanta was not the exception, but the rule.

The Board of Education, on January 3, 1887, presented a report, which in two cases distinguished whether the teachers were Negro or white:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLORED SCHOOLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer Hill School - (160 Martin Street)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(White Teachers)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mrs. E. N. Longan</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>$500</th>
<th>153 Whitehall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. H. L. Harvey</td>
<td>Third Grade</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>64 Georgia Ave.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
Mrs. E. L. Cunningham  Second Grade  400  87 Clarke St.
Miss F. Harvey  First Grade A  400  64 Georgia Avenue
Miss E. Agricola  First Grade  400  105 East Hunter

Houston Street School (Houston Street) (Colored Teachers)

L. Hershaw  Principal  $600  142 Ira
Mrs. J. Turner  Seventh Grade  350  162 Butler
Miss G. B. Mitchell  Sixth Grade  315  49 Boulevard
Miss C. E. Monroe  Fifth Grade  325  110 Pine
Miss R. Morehead  Fourth Grade  300  137 Houston
Miss A. D. Badger  Third Grade  300  18 Clifford
Miss E. M. Pope  Second Grade  300  291 Calhoun
Miss N. Baber  First Grade A  300  321 Wheat
Miss M. Hankerson  First Grade B  300  214 Fort
Miss K. Nelson  Supernumerary  159 E. Cain

Mitchell Street School (Mitchell Street)

W. Hill  Principal  $600  182 Congress
Miss H. Coles  Seventh Grade  350  15 Hull
Miss I. M. Clark  Sixth Grade  325  161 Markham
Miss J. M. Tboke  Fifth Grade  325  214 Foundry
Miss K. E. Short  Fourth Grade  325  188 Clarke
Miss W. E. Crawford  Third Grade  300  12 Chapel
Miss C. C. Thomas  Second Grade  300  Decatur, Ga.
Miss M. F. Pullin  First Grade A  300  75 E. Tatnall
Miss M. W. Baker  First Grade B  300  75 Humphries

It is most significant that all of the Negro teachers listed as teaching in the Houston Street School and the Mitchell Street School, with only three exceptions, graduated from Atlanta University. The majority of the Atlanta University graduates received their degrees in the years beginning in 1880 and ending in 1887 when the report was published. There were two persons who graduated in 1873 and 1878.\(^1\) The three persons not found to have graduated from Atlanta

\(^1\)Myron W. Adams, General Catalogue of Atlanta University (Atlanta: The Atlanta University Press, 1918), pp. 17, 18.
University were Miss Tboke, Miss Crawford and Miss Baker. Atlanta University played an important role in supplying the local as well as the state community with qualified teachers once the idea of Negro teachers teaching Negro pupils became acceptable.

There was quite a difference in the salary scale for whites and that for Negroes, which is shown in the following figures:

### SALARIES OF WHITE PRINCIPALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys' High School</td>
<td>$1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls' High School</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivy Street School</td>
<td>1,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew Street School</td>
<td>1,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walker Street School</td>
<td>1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marietta Street School</td>
<td>1,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Street School</td>
<td>1,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calhoun Street School</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SALARIES OF WHITE TEACHERS (in white schools)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>425</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>475</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>525</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>550</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>575</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>625</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>750</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>752</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>846</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fact that there was a discrepancy in the salary schedule for white teachers and that for colored teachers, was a point of contention with Negroes. Negro teachers saw the unfairness involved in the pay scales, but would not have felt it so keenly if more accommodations were provided for the

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2. Ibid.
education of the children of the colored citizens of Atlanta.¹

The transition from white to Negro teachers was completed by 1888, as a committee report indicates:

Four brick rooms have been added to the Colored school at Summer Hill. That school is now a full graded grammar school and is officered as are all of our colored schools, by colored teachers.²

By 1889 twenty seven Negro teachers, as compared with ninety three white teachers, were employed by the Atlanta Public School System.³

In 1887, it was a matter of interest that the General Assembly of Georgia passed a resolution which was to suspend any future appropriation to Atlanta University until the administration decided to cease teaching white children there.⁴ Many of these children were the children of the instructors who taught at Atlanta University.

It was a little after this, that the State lawmakers felt that it was necessary to define specifically how race was to be treated in Georgia schools. Section 1, Paragraph 1, Article VIII of the State Constitution of 1887 stated:

"There shall be a thorough system of common schools for the education of children in the elementary branches of an English education only, as nearly uniform as practicable, the expenses of which shall be provided by

¹Carter, op.cit., p. 236.
²Proceedings, January 2, 1888, p. 468.
³Ibid., January 7, 1889, p. 701.
taxation or otherwise. The schools shall be free to all children of the State, but separate schools shall be provided for the white and colored races.\(^1\)

Another act, in this connection, was passed, which also defined the State's attitude toward integration in any of the state supported schools. This act granted admission to all the "common schools" of the state, to children between the ages of six and eighteen years of age. The only stipulation was that the schools were to be attended on a segregated basis and any teacher receiving or attempting to teach in an integrated atmosphere would not be allowed any compensation out of the Common School Fund.\(^2\)

In order to correlate its rules and regulations with the prerequisites of the state, the Atlanta Board of Education in its annual report of 1887 discussed the subject of a Normal Class. The purpose of this Normal Class was to help teachers to become more proficient in their subject areas. All white teachers were required to attend, but there were not any established for colored teachers. At this time there were Negro teachers employed by the Atlanta Public School System, but under the subject of Normal Class the statement was made that "when Colored Teachers are employed, there shall be separate Normal Classes as well as in the schools."\(^3\)

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 25.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 17.

\(^3\)Proceedings, January 3, 1887, p. 229.
There was a constant need to build new schools for both colored and white children, but by far more schools and better schools were provided for the white population. In 1881, $6,664.10 was spent to erect a school building for the Negroes who lived in the district north of the Georgia Railroad.¹ The need for more schools for Negroes was not abated by this new school as was pointed out by Mayor English in an annual message to the General Council.²

A comparison of the white schools and the colored schools, as to value, shows that there was no such thing as "separate but equal."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walker Street</td>
<td>$22,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivy</td>
<td>$20,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew</td>
<td>$20,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marietta</td>
<td>$25,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>$18,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>$8,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Hill</td>
<td>$4,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayne Street</td>
<td>$1,500.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only was the Hayne Street School very cheaply constructed, but it was, as found in a resolution by Councilman Beatie, collapsing at its base.³

In May, 1882, Councilman Beatie made a plea for more facilities for Negro education. His suggestion was that the city sell the land where the powder magazine once stood and with the proceeds, purchase a lot on which to build a school

¹Ibid., January 2, 1882, p. 666.
²Ibid., pp. 660, 662.
³Ibid., p. 667.
⁴Ibid., April 3, 1882, p. 737.
house for colored. He further added that the new school should resemble the Gate City colored school house in construction, design and cost.¹

Addressing the Council, on January 1, 1883, Mayor English gave a detailed report of the operation of the Atlanta Public School System for 1882. In this report the Haynes Street School was not mentioned and was replaced instead by the Mitchell Street School.² This still left Negroes with only three schools, all of which were grammar schools. The pressing need for more schools for colored was still being felt as was revealed in a petition, in September of 1884, of "L. H. Cargile for additional school room for colored children in 3rd ward,"³ and in Mayor Hillyer's Annual Report of 1886, in which he was very emphatic in stating that the school problem was very important, and especially the fact that the colored schools were very overcrowded and that there were four hundred colored children enrolled who could not get seats. He made the suggestion that another school be erected for colored children, to be located somewhere between the old rolling mill and Spring Street.⁴

Even though the Negro school population number was much smaller than that of the whites, an examination of a Board

¹Ibid., May 15, 1882, p. 763.
²Ibid., January 1, 1883, pp. 61-66.
³Ibid., April 3, 1882, p. 737.
⁴Ibid., January 4, 1886, p. 730.
of Education Report of January, 1887, reveals the vast inequity in the Negro schools ability to accommodate students as compared with the whites. In this report it is noted that there was a total of 6,402 pupils admitted to the various schools and out of the number applying, few if any white children, failed to be admitted; but there were about six hundred colored applicants who failed of admission. In two of the white schools a double session was instituted in the first two grades, but in all three colored schools there was a double session. It was suggested in this report that an eight room grammar school be built for Negroes.

Two new petitions appeared in February, 1888 for the building of two colored schools. The first was one filed by "C. Jenkins, et al for school building for Colored Children in 2nd ward," and the second by "J. M. Miller, et al for colored school building in 5th ward." Action was finally taken on one of these petitions in January, 1889, when Committee reported that, "a lot has been purchased in the Fifth Ward on which will be erected a brick school house for colored children, this year." In 1889, the Gray Street School, for colored children was built. Its value, according to the Board of Education Report for 1889, was $2,500 for the lot.

1 Ibid., January 3, 1887, p. 221.
2 Ibid., February 6, 1888, p. 509.
3 Ibid., February 20, 1888, p. 520.
$15,750 for the building and $1,600 for the furniture, making a total of $19,850. ¹ This school was the first to approach, in value, the white schools.

It is true that the need for more schools for Negroes was of paramount importance, but there was also a need for Negro representation on the Board of Education, or at least there were those Negroes who felt this to be true. On December 5, 1887, there was filed with the Council a petition of "Colored Citizens of 4th ward for representation on the Board of Education."² The petition was received, filed and completely ignored by the Council; at the same time they voted four new members to the Board of Education, "being that the terms of four members had expired."³

¹Ibid., January 6, 1890, p. 240.
²Ibid., December 5, 1887, p. 419.
³Ibid., p. 420.
CHAPTER III

THE CARRIE STEELE ORPHANAGE

Mrs. Carrie Steele Logan, a slave, freed by the Emancipation Proclamation, possessed humanitarian instincts which led to the establishment of an orphanage for Negro orphans. Mrs. Steele, as she was known in the year 1888, was a literate, native Georgian, who had worked at the Union Depot in Atlanta for quite a while. She was without a mother very early in her life, and because of this, there developed within her heart a deep compassionate feeling for all who were in a similar situation. She was constantly plagued by the sight of abandoned Negro babies, who cried out because of the hunger pangs they were forced to endure. Not only were there babies left at the depot, but Negro children of various ages, dirty and unkept, were to be seen wandering around and about the tracks of the station.

1 Carter, op. cit., p. 35.
3 Murphy, op. cit., p. 88.
Mrs. Steele resolved to do something about the existing situation. She became very adamant and persistent in prod-
ding the Atlanta City Council for land to build her orphanage upon. Her first petition was for a free license to sell books "to aid an orphan asylum for colored children."\(^1\) The peti-
tion was granted and in 1889, presumably after she had sold many books and obtained a reasonable amount of capital, she petitioned for "donation of 4 acres of land for colored or-
phans homes."\(^2\) This petition was referred to the Relief Committee, but failure to respond brought to the Council another petition of, "Carrie Steele for 4 acres of alnd at the stockade to build colored orphan's home."\(^3\) The Council's reply was adverse, but after the passage of a month the Coun-
cil mysteriously decided to change the report to favorable.

Mrs. Steele realized many obstacles in trying to es-
tablish the home for colored orphans, for until 1889 in At-
lanta, little or no public assistance had been given to Ne-
groechildren.\(^4\) This was not the case for white orphans.
There were several homes not only for orphans, but for mothers without fathers for their unborn. In 1889, a resolution was adopted which stated that Mrs. Steele had contracted with the city, wherein she was granted the right to use and occupy a

\(^1\)Proceedings, March 5, 1888, p. 528.
\(^2\)Ibid., January 8, 1889, p. 9.
\(^3\)Ibid., February 18, 1889, p. 27.
\(^4\)Miller, op.cit., p. 84.
portion of the Poor House property, with certain conditions, for a period of ten years. This contract as a result of the resolution, would extend for ninety-nine years.\(^1\) The resolution was immediately amended to provide "that the orphans of Atlanta have preference in being cared for in said institution."\(^2\)

The Relief Committee approved of Mrs. Steele's venture and indicated that they hoped "it would prove a blessing in behalf of those to whom its work was directed.\(^3\) After the approval, the City's Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds was authorized to sell a small frame building on the stockade farm, known as the "pest house" to Mrs. Steele for ten dollars, to be used for her orphans home.\(^4\) The Stockade Committee recommended that she be allowed to use the building only temporarily and that the city could have possession of the building upon thirty days notice.\(^5\)

During the time Mrs. Steele was petitioning the City Council for land to build her orphanage, she quit her job, adopted several of the children and took them into her home on Wheat Street. This practice soon saw her house overcrowded

\(^1\)Proceedings, November 18, 1889, p. 190.
\(^2\)Ibid.
\(^3\)Ibid., January 6, 1890, p. 207.
\(^4\)Ibid., June 2, 1890, p. 377.
\(^5\)Ibid., August 18, 1890, p. 422.
and her supply of money dwindling. To raise funds to further her orphanage. She successfully wrote a book, a short history of her life, in which she made the following statement:

It is appointed to me in my old age to accomplish what I believe to be great and glorious work, and one that shall live long after my poor, frail body has dropped into the dust whence it came.

Because she was so well respected by both colored and white people in Atlanta, she solicited financial aid to erect the orphanage, which cost five thousand dollars. The concrete realization of her dream was on June 20, 1892, when the home was dedicated. A hospital and a school house were later additions to the orphanage.

The orphanage catered to a variety of children, with quite a range of personalities, backgrounds and reasons for being in the institution. Examples of the inmates are: a boy who had taken stamps from a post office, a girl accused of arson, children whose fathers were in the penitentiary and handicapped children. The orphanage served as a sort

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1 Miller, op.cit., p. 84.


3 Carter, op.cit., p. 36.

of reformatory, in the absence of a state reformatory for Negroes. It sought to save many children from following in the footsteps of their parents.¹

Mrs. Steele's dedication, loyalty and firm commitment to the cause of the orphanage, helped to alleviate a part of the suffering of Negroes in need during the latter part of the 1880's and later. The home was instrumental in teaching reading, domestic work, farm work and instructing the children in the art of praying.²

¹Ibid.
²Carter, op. cit., p. 36.
CHAPTER IV

HEALTH CONDITIONS, RELIEF AND HEALTH FACILITIES

During the period 1877 through 1890, practically all cities, Atlanta's size or larger, were constantly besieged with health problems and the problem of administering relief to the poor. January 4, 1877 found the City of Atlanta faced with hard times. Unemployment, severe weather conditions, scarcity of wood and fuel in general and the continued snow caused untold suffering among the "poor class."\(^1\) Applicants for aid thronged the Mayor's office to obtain relief. The majority of the persons seeking relief were women and girls. Many Negroes were there and presumably received equal attention.\(^2\) The second day after it became known that free wood was being distributed by the city for all, three-fourths of the applicants were Negroes. Many white persons felt that quite a few of the Negro applicants were not in dire need, but were "free loading."\(^3\) This was the prevailing situation at the beginning of this period of study.

\(^1\)The Daily Constitution (Atlanta), January 4, 1877, p. 4. Title varies. Hereafter cited as Atlanta Constitution.

\(^2\)Ibid., January 5, 1877, p. 4.

\(^3\)Ibid., January 6, 1877, p. 5.
The Board of Health served as an advisory board to the City Council prior to 1879, when it became for the first time an effective agency in the city's governmental affairs. Many difficulties which arose stemmed from the Board's lack of authority to enforce the city's sanitary ordinances by itself; rather it had to rely on the Council and the Marshal to carry out its recommendations. Before 1879, there was also a tendency to rely upon the city's fine natural drainage and its lofty elevation.¹

In a report of April 1, 1878, the Board of Health called the attention of the Mayor and the Council to several places in the city, which they felt were in a "wretched" condition and perhaps conducive of producing sickness. They urged the importance of the city taking necessary precautions before the beginning of summer. The Council was reminded of previous notifications which they had ignored.² In the summer of 1878 it was yellow fever that aroused the fear in Atlanta. Emergency measures were at once instituted by the Council, to keep the fever away from the gates of the city.

Whether or not the emergency actions of the Council had any effect in turning the yellow fever epidemic from Atlanta is not known. The Mayor's annual message for 1879 stated that only two cases occurred in the city, and those were persons who already had the fever before being brought to Atlanta.

² Proceedings, April 1, 1878, p. 29.
This statement was made despite the fact that thousands of refugees from the ravaged Mississippi Valley sought safety in Atlanta. The Mayor firmly believed that this demonstrated another proof of the security of Atlanta from epidemics, but the Ordinance Committee in its annual report saw it somewhat differently. "During the excitement caused by the yellow fever epidemics in the west," it said, "the Council took measures to insure the cleanliness of the city. Our streets and yards were probably never cleaner than in the past year."¹

Health problems mounted in 1882, when in the summer and spring the city was a haven for the dreaded small-pox. As usual, the highly contagious disease was nurtured in the dens of filth and poverty, and the race to be hit the hardest was that of the Negro. The Board of Health buried itself tracking down the cases. A building owned by a Mrs. Frank on Decatur Street was condemned as a nuisance and recommended by Councilman Ryan, to be torn down and removed at once.²

The disease moved so swiftly through the populace that more small-pox guards were needed. The Council was petitioned by A. Thompson and others, to be able " to swear in several colored and white men as small pox guards at $1.00 per day."³ The victims of the pox were housed in the pest house which

¹Ibid., January 6, 1879, p. 120.
²Ibid., April 17, 1882, p. 149.
³Ibid., June 5, 1882, p. 767.
was accessible only when small-pox appeared among the poor. This institution was provided for by the legislature in an act of February 5, 1866, in the midst of a raging state wide epidemic.\(^1\) Atlanta, however, had preceded the fact, for the Council minutes for November 17, 1865, record a motion appropriating an unspecified amount of money for the construction of "two suitable houses for small-pox hospitals," and mention a week later the employment of a physician and the removal of all cases of the disease to the pest house. The stipulation of two pest houses was indicative of a segregated plan as was later indicated in Council Proceedings of January 12, and 27 of 1866.

In a report made by the Board of Health for 1882, it is noted that in the Atlanta area there were approximately forty-two hundred and fifty children, or more, attending the schools. There were two white children in attendance who came from a family in which a young man died from small-pox. There were others living on an adjoining lot where another death occurred. Houston Street School, which had over five hundred children, was separated from what was commonly called, "Cameron Black," by a plank fence only. In this block three cases of small-pox occurred. From the corner of Butler and Houston Streets, not a stone's throw from the school, another case of the disease developed. Twenty-one children, belonging to this Negro

school, from six different families, were under quarantine for three weeks.\(^1\) It was remarkable that the Board was able to say that "not one child, white or colored belonging to the Public Schools of Atlanta has had small-pox."\(^2\) Perhaps this statement was valid in view of the fact that an effort was made to have public school children vaccinated.

During the progress of a house to house vaccination visit by corps of physicians and for a month after its cessation, a great many cases of suspected sickness were reported to the Board. None, however, were discovered to be small-pox until April 3, 1882, when a case was found in a "honorable resort" for Negroes - resident and transient - known as the "Beaver Slide" on Ivy Street. The victim of the attack was Myra Tate, fourteen years of age. She had never been vaccinated, and the disease developed in the confluent form. It was subsequently ascertained that she had contracted the disease from infected wearing apparel belonging to an occupant of the house where she lived. The occupant had just arrived from Chattanooga, Tennessee, where the disease was then prevailing. This case was immediately removed to the small-pox hospital, and the next day - April 4, 1882 - all sixteen residents of the house, after thorough vaccination, were taken to the quarantine station just outside the city.

\(^1\) Proceedings, January 1, 1883, pp. 74-76.

\(^2\) Ibid.
limits and near the small pox hospital.¹

The area where Myra Tate lived, "the Beaver Slide" was a row of shacks on the eastern side of Ivy Street in the block just north of Decatur Street. Prior to the Civil War, this was a very respectable community, but it had degenerated into a slum area for low class Negroes. It was composed of restaurants, fish stands, refreshment stands and sleeping quarters; on the corners, defining the area, were whisky saloons. It was also a famous area for Negro criminals to seek out.² The Board of Health was always concerned with condition there, because if an epidemic could be spread certainly it was there.

Also located in the "Beaver Slide" was the Willingham Building, which occupied the corner of Decatur and Ivy Street. The building was declared dangerously infected and ordered closed by the Board of Health. The second floor of the Building, which was used as a Negro hotel, supplied some of the most troublesome cases with which the Board dealt. The owner of the building was a colored woman, Sarah Parris, who later sued the city for removing some of her property from the building.³ She was later paid $185.15 for the items removed.⁴ Negroes suffered, at their pest house, because of poor

¹Ibid.
²Eugene Mure Mitchell, Queer Place Names in Old Atlanta (Atlanta Historical Bulletin No. 5, Atlanta: Atlanta Historical Association, April, 1931) I, 29.
³Proceedings, January 1, 1883, p. 76.
⁴Ibid., July 7, 1884, p. 426.
facilities and most of all because of a lack of competent and professional care. The Council was petitioned by S. Wylie and others "for permission to supply guards and nurses to their colored friends stricken with small-pox."1

The majority of white persons who contracted the disease were not taken to the pest house for whites, but were quarantined at their homes in the city. The total number treated in the hospital was thirty-four, nine of which were white and the remaining twenty-five were colored. The total number treated in the hospital was thirty-four, nine of which were white and one colored. There were sixty-nine persons confined at the quarantine station, fifty-three colored and sixteen white. The first case of this outbreak occurred December 14, 1882; the last one occurred March 15, 1883.2

In 1884 there was no epidemic to contend with, just the usual causes of death, mainly consumption and pneumonia, which many Negroes died from annually.3 In 1885 the deadly killer, cerebro spinal meningitis, held an unwelcome and unusual place in the Board of Health records for the year.4 Throughout the period the unchallenged killer of Negroes was consumption.

Health problems were magnified by the high death rate

1Ibid., January 5, 1883, p. 92.
2Ibid., January 7, 1884, pp. 287, 288.
3Ibid., January 5, 1885, p. 521.
of Negroes. While the Negro population of Atlanta, from 1877 through 1890, represented proportionately, only approximately forty per cent of the total population, each year the death rate was at least one and a half per cent higher for them than for white persons. What were the reasons for this situation?

The Mayor of 1882 pondered the situation and made certain relevant observations:

A casual observer even cannot fail to be impressed with the great disproportion in the death rate of the two races. The statistics of the whole country invariably sustain the melancholy fact that the mortality of the negro is excessive. A sufficient explanation of this circumstance is not difficult... their hygienic surroundings are of the poorest. As a rule they live in the least salubrious portions of the city, in the meanest and most illly ventilated houses. They have scant fare in meagre variety, and unsufficient clothing, and in addition to these predisposing causes of disease they are as a class, credulous and superstitious, and partly for this and partly for other reasons they do not receive adequate medical attention at the time of sickness.¹

There was much truth in this statement. The situation had not changed in 1886 and Mayor Hillyer found himself in the same predicament as his predecessors, that of trying to legitimately reason why the Negro mortality rate was so noticeably higher than that for white persons. He also reasoned that environment was an important factor. He felt that the contaminated wells and the fact that many Negroes lived on what he termed "the lower levels" of the city, accounted partially for it.²

¹Ibid., January 1, 1883, p. 77.
²Ibid., January 4, 1886, p. 731.
In reviewing literature, written a decade later, other reasons were put forth which tend to refute former ones. They were presented in a report given at Atlanta University. The report stressed the point that the excessive death rate of colored people was not due to disease caused by environment. It further stated that if poor houses, unhealthy localities, bad sewerage and defective plumbing were responsible for their high death rate there would be no hope of reducing the rate until either the colored people became wealthy, philanthropic persons erected sanitary houses, or municipalities made appropriations to remove these conditions. The chief reason, it was held, that the death rate was so high was that the economic conditions of the colored people were so very low.¹

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<td>423</td>
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Negro Total for Ten Year Period: ...
White Total for Ten Year Period: ...

²Proceedings, January 2, 1882, p. 670.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid., January 1, 1883, p. 77.
⁵Ibid., January 7, 1884, p. 289.
⁶Ibid., January 5, 1885, p. 544.
⁷Ibid., January 4, 1886, p. 756.
### Table

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<tr>
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<td>1,315</td>
<td>1,341</td>
<td>1,391</td>
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Negro Total for Ten Year Period: 7,309
White Total for Ten Year Period: 5,330

While the Board of Health was responsible for the general health and cleanliness of Atlanta and her citizens, the Relief Committee of the City Council controlled the actual administration of municipal medical attention to the needy. This took the form of providing city physicians, a temporary pest house, recommending appropriation to private facilities and, in 1885, providing for a Warden of the Poor.

From 1877 to 1885 the city physicians were used as investigators of relief claims in order to diminish the number of persons who were not legitimate in their claims. Because it was difficult to keep city physicians for any length of time and the persistence of complaints from the citizens of Atlanta about the poor service rendered by the city physicians, the office of the Warden of the Poor was established in 1886, but was provided for in an ordinance on January 19, 1885.

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2. Ibid., January 3, 1888, p. 452.
3. Ibid., January 7, 1889, p. 690.
4. Ibid., January 6, 1890, p. 222.
5. Ibid., January 5, 1891, p. 527.
The first Warden of the Poor to be appointed by the Relief Committee, was Reverend J. P. Lee.\(^1\) The Warden was to investigate all applications for relief or free license and either approve or disapprove aid to the applicants. The new Warden was not sympathetic with the conditions of the poor and felt no compassion for suffering humanity in his midst. He rather felt that men were what they wanted to be and a mere change of one's mental status would wrought a change in one's physical status.

The new Warden proceeded to reduce the granting of free licenses to Negroes to a very small number, although there did not seem to be a reduction in the number granted to white persons; in fact there was a noticeable increase. The Warden expressed the feeling that, "it might be well to grant none. Give free license to a cobbler and the shop will be filled with cobblers."\(^2\) He further stated that "free license does not elevate, it degrades. If the applicant is afflicted as most of them claim to be, he will not succeed; hence, the license will do him no good."\(^3\) This statement was directed at Negroes, because quite a number of them applied for free cobblers license between 1877 and 1885. The last free cobbler's license was granted to a Negro named Cheeves in 1885.\(^4\)

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\(^1\)Ibid., January 2, 1888, pp. 438, 439.
\(^2\)Ibid.
\(^3\)Ibid.
\(^4\)Ibid., March 2, 1885, p. 583.
After the Warden took charge, petitions for this type of license, on the part of Negroes, ceased. Examples of the type of person the Warden spoke of as applying for the licenses may be seen in the following Council decisions:

Moses Brown a one legged colored man was granted free cobbler's license.\(^1\)

Tom Scott col^d^ for free cobblers license, he being a cripple.\(^2\)

Before the advent of the Warden of the Poor, the city physicians were authorized by the city authorities to give rations to any person who could present a legitimate certificate from the ward physician stating that he was in need of rations, which consisted of one pack of meal and two pounds of meat.\(^3\) It is not known what was given them during the Warden's administration.

Atlanta, it is true, was faced with its share of relief and health problems, but its major problem, during the period being discussed, was providing facilities for the treatment of the sick. There was not in existence, at any time during this period, a city hospital. There were in existence a series of privately owned hospitals, supported partially by the city through annual appropriations.

The necessity for a city hospital was reiterated year

\(^1\)Ibid., March 19, 1877, p. 467.

\(^2\)Ibid., February 17, 1879, p. 155.

\(^3\)Ibid., January 6, 1879, p. 118.
after year by the men who occupied the office provided for
the mayor of the city. The most distressing and disheartening
feature of the private hospitals, at least to most Negroes,
was the fact that the hospitals refused to treat them. Many
Negroes were either treated privately or died from lack of
care.

Atlanta's oldest existing hospital, St. Joseph's Infirmary, had its inception in 1880, when two "Sisters of
Mercy" came to Atlanta from Savannah and established an in-
stitution for the sick and afflicted. This hospital served
all persons regardless of creed or nationality.¹ There is no
mention of race; most likely this is where the line was drawn.

Occasionally the Atlanta Medical College treated colored
persons, this is indicated in various petitions. The City
Council chose to ignore a petition of Dr. E. A. White, in
which attention was called to a sick Negro at the Medical
College. Dr. White asked the Council to furnish him with
food and a nurse as he felt unable to supply him any longer.²

Even though the Benevolent Home, another private hos-
pital, was not the oldest institution of this type in Atlanta,
it was among the oldest. The movement to establish it was
started in January, 1874 by a group of interested women. It
was originally called the Atlanta Benevolent Association with

¹Franklin K. Garrett, Atlanta and Environs, A Chronicle of His People and Events (New York: Lewis Historical

²Proceedings, March 21, 1881, p. 521.
its professed objective being, to provide a temporary "home for destitute and helpless women and children," to aid women and girls who were unemployed and give instruction in industrial arts. In March, 1881 the property and management of this institution were turned over to a board of trustees, with Henry H. Tucker serving as president. At this time the name of the institution became the Atlanta Hospital and Benevolent Home. Its program was revived and a hospital and home department were established. 1

It was indicated by Mayor Calhoun, in his Valedictory Address of 1881, that the Benevolent Home catered exclusively to whites. He expressed the desire to see charity extended to all the "destitute sick" of the city, regardless of color. He saw this as the only alternative if a city hospital were erected for the use of all persons. 2

Councilman Pinson, on February 7, 1881, resolved that the city accept the proposition of the Benevolent Home to give the city usage of five rooms to be detached from the main building and feed all patients for seventy-five dollars per month, with the city supplying a nurse. 3 The Relief Committee accepted the proposal with the stipulation that it be without a nurse. 4

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1E. Y. Clarke, Atlanta Illustrated (Atlanta: Jas. P. Harrison & Co., 1881), pp. 100, 101.
3Ibid.
It was not because of a necessary lack of space that people of color were denied treatment in the Benevolent Home, but most apparently to maintain a separation of races in what could have been a social situation. The validity of this statement is upheld by another statement made by Tucker: "every white patient, whose care fell on the city, has been sent to us, and we have received every one of them and have always had room for more."\(^1\)

On January 7, 1884, through a resolution by Councilman Gray, an attempt was made to establish some type of care for the sick of the colored population. Arrangements were to be made with the Central Ivy Street Hospital, to care for those of "the Colored population who were in condition to merit attention in a charitable institution during the year."\(^2\)

Even though the hospital was to care for colored patients, white patients were to receive care there also. This was made clear in a recommendation by the Relief Committee. They recommended that

\[
\text{the sum of } \$125.00 \text{ per month for the year 1884, beginning March 8th to donated to the Central Ivy Street Hospital on condition that they receive for board and treatment all colored patients sent by the City Authorities. The acceptance of any part of this sum shall be construed as an agreement to the conditions herein specified.}^3
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While deciding what appropriations should be made to

\(^1\text{Ibid., January 1, 1883, p. 667.}\)
\(^2\text{Ibid., January 7, 1884, p. 308.}\)
\(^3\text{Ibid., January 7, 1884, p. 308.}\)
the private hospitals, it was suggested that one hundred and twenty-five dollars per month be paid to the Central Ivey Street Hospital for the care of colored patients not numbering more than ten, and fifty cents a day for those in excess of that number. The Mayor and the Relief Committee could send white patients to the hospital, with the consent of the Council to pay seventy-five cents a day for their care. This measure was put to a vote and it was vetoed by the Mayor and Councilmen who had a change of heart.

A report of the number of colored patients who had been treated in the hospital and other details of operation was made in January of 1886. The hospital had received one hundred and forty-five colored patients of this number, sixteen died; one hundred and sixteen were discharged and thirteen remained in the hospital. The cost for the care of the patients was twenty-five cents per day excluding fuel, bedding, servants, medicine and other miscellaneous expenses. With the expenses, the hospital stated that it would be put in terrible financial straits if it were not for the aid of the paying white patients and contributions from ladies of the city.

Ivy Street Hospital was not established on a permanent basis, but had to be renewed annually by the Council. Councilman Middlebrooks resolved that the same arrangements which

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1Ibid., March 2, 1885, p. 581.
2Ibid., January 4, 1886, p. 743.
had been made during the year of 1885 should continue until
the City Council of 1886 had a chance to act in the matter.¹
Shortly thereafter, Councilman Middlebrooks, through a reso-
lution suggested that one hundred and twenty-five dollars per
month be paid the hospital for the first three months of the
year, for the treatment of colored patients sent them by the
Mayor and Relief Committee.² According to this statement on-
ly those persons sanctioned by the Mayor or Relief Committee
could be treated there. This situation, although better than
nothing, left much to be desired in providing for the health
of the general colored population.

The hospital continued to be supported by the city un-
til in July, 1888 its temporary status was specifically de-
ined in a Relief Committee report. This report recommended
that the amount of one hundred and twenty-five dollars per
month contracted to be paid to the Central Ivy Street Hos-
pital for the care of colored sick during the year 1887, and
continued without contract for the beginning months of 1888
would be discontinued after July. After that month no city
patients, white or black were to be sent to the Ivy Street
Hospital, by any branch of the city government.³ The reasons
for this were that the management of the hospital was changed

¹Ibid., p. 724.
²Ibid., February 15, 1886, p. 20.
³Ibid., July 16, 1888, p. 602.
and it became a private hospital not desirous of city patients. After the Ivy Street Hospital closed its doors to Negroes, they were without any type of hospital facilities. It was at this time that a series of petitions appeared, which were in some measure indications of the Negro plight. On February 4, 1889, a petition of "W. M. Turner and others to have a Colored Physician appointed to wait upon the Colored sick paupers,"\(^1\) was referred to the Relief Committee, which in turn referred it to the Board of Health on February 18, 1889.\(^2\) Without hospital facilities and having to depend on the white City Physicians, Negroes were feeling the pangs of discrimination and sought refuge in receiving aid from a doctor of color.

The petition to have a Negro physician appointed was shuffled from one committee to another and then the Board of Health received it and simply returned it to the Council with the endorsement that the matter in question "comes within the exclusive province of the Mayor and General Council."\(^3\)

On January 7, 1889, the Relief Committee recommended building a hospital in Atlanta. Under the heading "General Considerations," a suggestion was made concerning "white and black patients." It was, most succinctly, stated in

\(^{1}\text{Ibid.},\ February\ 4,\ 1889,\ p.\ 12.\)

\(^{2}\text{Ibid.},\ February\ 18,\ 1889,\ p.\ 23.\)

\(^{3}\text{Ibid.},\ May\ 20,\ 1889,\ p.\ 73.\)
section six that there should be equal provisions made for the two races. It was felt that the wards for each should be as widely separated as possible and separate entrances established to the main building. If the hospital occupied a corner lot it was thought that the entrance for colored patients and visitors should be on one street in order that race prejudice might not impair the usefulness of the hospital.

Atlanta, finally, was to have a city hospital. Mr. Hirsch, on January 6, 1890, resolved that the Mayor appoint a special committee of three, from the General Council, and ten citizens, to be known as the "Committee on Building a Hospital." The name of the hospital was to be the Henry W. Grady Hospital of Atlanta.

1 Ibid., January 7, 1889, pp. 671, 672.
2 Ibid., January 6, 1890, p. 277.
Segregation of the races in Atlanta, from 1877 through 1890, was not reserved exclusively for the living, but was extended to the dead. While the institution of slavery was in existence, there was a part of the city cemetery maintained for the interment of the bodies of the slaves. In 1877, Councilman Gray resolved that the city authorize and instruct the City Sexton to remove all bodies from the portion of the cemetery west of the Confederate Grounds. This area was known as "slave square." The removed bones or bodies were to be reinterred in "Colored pauper grounds," without any distinguishing features except for those who originally had head boards. It was further stated that the land made available through the removal of the bodies was to be divided into lots which were to sell for not less than fifty dollars each.\footnote{Ibid., April 2, 1877, p. 474.} As a result of this action, the Cemetery Committee was able to realize over two-thousand dollars worth of property.\footnote{Ibid., January 7, 1878, p. 569.}
From its early beginnings, until the fall of 1884, Atlanta possessed one cemetery, with the exception of family graveyards and churchyards. Oakland Cemetery was designated simply as the "City Cemetery," until 1876. To this cemetery were moved the remains of pioneer Atlantans, who died prior to 1850. After the Civil War the bodies of thousands of soldiers who died for the Confederate cause, were collected with great care and interred in Oakland Cemetery.

In order to maintain separation of the races in Oakland Cemetery, in 1882, an ordinance was passed which was to prohibit the City Sexton from burying or allowing to be buried, any colored person or other persons on the grounds which were set apart and used for interring white persons. This ordinance was to repeal any conflicting laws or parts of other laws.

In January of 1883, a resolution by Councilman Day attested to the need for more space for the burial of Negroes. It was resolved, that since the portion of Oakland Cemetery originally used for burying colored paupers was exhausted, the Sexton was authorized and directed to appropriate numbers 404, 405, 406 and 407, which were lying in a body on

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1Garrett, op.cit., II, 71.
3Proceedings, February 20, 1882, p. 710.
the South side of Monument Street. All of this property was at the extreme end of the cemetery.¹

In 1884 the Cemetery Committee recommended that the City should take immediate steps to enlarge the cemetery or provide more room for burial purposes. They proceeded to recommend that a portion of the cemetery be set apart and divided into lots to be sold to colored citizens.² In March of the same year, a motion was adopted for the appointment of a special committee of three members of the Council. They were to report to the Council as soon as they possibly could, about suitable locations for cemeteries for white and colored citizens.³

The Cemetery Committee submitted a report on January 5, 1885, which announced, "the inauguration of West View Cemetery under private enterprise."⁴ Listed among the provisions was the requirement that separate ground should be set apart for the sale of lots to colored people.⁵

West View Cemetery consisted of five hundred and eighty -two acres, which were owned by the West View Cemetery Association. It was located in the south west portion of the city, about three miles from the center. The location of the

¹Ibid., January 15, 1883, p. 94.
²Ibid., January 7, 1884, pp. 266, 287.
³Ibid., March 12, 1884, p. 353.
⁴Ibid., January 5, 1885, p. 546.
⁵Ibid.
cemetery is particularly interesting, because it was a historical spot where the battle of Ezra Church took place on July 22, 1864, during the Civil War.¹

The first notation of the South View Cemetery appeared in the form of a petition. The Association which owned the cemetery wanted permission to be allowed to bury paupers, at the price of one dollar and seventy-five cents per grave.² The Cemetery and Relief Committee ruled adversely on this proposition, because it had formerly contracted with West View Cemetery Association for the burial of all paupers.³ The South View Cemetery was owned and operated exclusively by Negroes.⁴

Complications were to develop when the West View Cemetery Association objected to the city contract with the South View Cemetery Association to bury colored paupers in South View Cemetery.⁵ The Relief Committee had changed its mind and decided that it would support the burial of colored paupers in South View Cemetery.⁶

By 1889, the pattern was firmly established and the

²Proceedings, August 16, 1886, p. 105.
³Ibid., September 6, 1886, p. 110.
⁴Carter, op.cit., p. 23.
⁵Proceedings, May 7, 1888, p. 556.
⁶Ibid., May 21, 1888, p. 565.
Council had decided not to sell any more lots in Oakland Cemetery. The Cemetery Committee made an explanatory statement about the three cemeteries:

Oakland Cemetery is controlled by the city government and is superintended by a sexton who is elected by the Council, to whom he is accountable for his acts. The sexton has charge of a squad of hands sufficient to attend all burials and to keep the grounds and shrubbery in good condition.

West View Cemetery is owned by an association of gentlemen who sell burial lots at reasonable figures. White persons can purchase lots here to suit any taste or purse. The whites who are buried at the city expense are laid to rest here.

South View Cemetery is the property of colored persons, where their dead are buried. Those able to purchase lots can do so, and those unable to do so are buried here at the expense of the city.¹

By 1890, Atlanta had grown and prospered to the extent that it required three cemeteries—one the pride and joy of Atlanta's aristocrats, Oakland Cemetery, which was originally patterned after New York's Woodlawn Cemetery, and the other two, West View and South View, were for the paupers and general population, of both races, in Atlanta.

¹Ibid., January 7, 1889, p. 700.
CHAPTER VI

PROTECTION OF THE NEGROES' CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

The Police Department

Atlanta, originally, was guarded by one man, who was referred to as a marshal. This title continued after the City Charter was drawn up, but the nature of the duties changed. The marshal became a tax collector. There was a gradual increase of deputies, who were under the control of the marshal. By the end of the Civil War the number had increased to twenty, with four being elected from each ward.\(^1\) This police organization was under the control of the Mayor and City Council, and by this arrangement exercised a powerful and corruptive influence in every city election. It was a highly disorganized, inefficient and in general, inadequate body, which was unable to supply sufficient police services to the City of Atlanta.\(^2\)

The City Charter of 1874 was to completely reorganize the system of policing.\(^3\) The city had outgrown the essentially

\(^1\) *History of the Atlanta Police Department* (Atlanta: The Atlanta Police Department, 1898), pp. 19-23.

\(^2\) Martin, op.cit., II, 75.

\(^3\) *Georgia Laws, 1874*, "Local and Private Laws of Georgia" (Savannah: Estill Public Printers, 1874), II, 72.
frontier-type law enforcement agency, and in its place a regularly constituted and uniformed police force was established.\(^1\) This Charter provided for an independent administrative board which would control the police department. The body met and proceeded to construct the department according to their views.\(^2\)

Like the Police Department, the facilities for housing prisoners were very poor. Atlanta's oldest police station was a one-room log cabin that stood on the east side of Pryor, near Alabama Street. It was conveniently referred to as the "little lock up" and was located on the side of a very high embankment. This jail was used primarily before the Civil War as a detention house for run away Negroes.\(^3\) After the Civil War, there was an indiscriminate method used in arresting Negroes. This eventually caused a housing problem. In 1866, a policy was adopted which led to the leasing of the convicts to contractors on public works. The law was changed eight years later to allow the convicts to be leased by private individuals and in 1876 another change was made, which went into effect in 1879, providing for leasing the convicts to three companies for a period of twenty years. The companies

\(^1\)Garrett, op.cit., I, 891-92.
\(^2\)Ibid.
were organized principally by political leaders and business men of the state who contracted with the state for the convicts and in return the state was to receive five hundred thousand dollars. Most of the convicts were Negroes.  

It is not difficult to understand the type of corruption that could develop from such a system as the convict lease system. It was a vicious corruptive circle involving many persons. The more convicts arrested, the more to lease to the companies; the more men leased to the companies, the more revenue for the city and state. As the years passed, the number of arrests increased throughout the state. In Atlanta there was a definite disproportionate number of arrests of Negroes; after all Negroes represented only about forty percent of the population in Atlanta, but nearly 57 per cent of the criminal population. Beginning in 1885, the Police Committee published an annual report of the number of persons arrested, their sex and race.

There were those who saw much good in the convict lease system. It was argued that the "farming out plan" was necessary by virtue of the fact that the condition of the Negro had changed; that along with freedom and political rights he was invested with penitentiary privileges. The system was credited with helping to relieve the burden of taxes from the

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1E. Merton Coulter, A Short History of Georgia (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1933), pp. 393-94.
The following chart gives the results of the reports of the Police Committee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White Males</th>
<th>White Females</th>
<th>Colored Males</th>
<th>Colored Females</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>2,158</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>2,359</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>5,646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>2,446</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>2,645</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>6,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>2,237</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>2,370</td>
<td>776</td>
<td>5,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>2,343</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>2,718</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>6,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>3,164</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>3,228</td>
<td>1,218</td>
<td>7,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>4,195</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>4,531</td>
<td>1,313</td>
<td>10,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>5,221</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>5,521</td>
<td>1,715</td>
<td>12,837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>21,761</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,767</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,372</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,797</strong></td>
<td><strong>54,700</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Others believed that the greatest of evil would emanate from such a treacherous system. The Knights of Labor unsuccessfully petitioned the City Council to not accept or recognize any bids for work where the labor was to be performed by convict labor. They did not remit in their efforts to protect the ordinary laborer from the abuses of the convict leasing.

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2. Proceedings, January 5, 1885, p. 536.
3. Ibid., January 4, 1886, p. 760.
5. Ibid., January 2, 1888, p. 462.
7. Ibid., January 6, 1890, p. 230.
8. Ibid., January 5, 1891, p. 538.
9. Ibid., April 5, 1886, p. 35.
system. They even tried to have the City Charter amended, but failed. The Council was, indeed, happy with the system because as a result of it they were to realize tremendous sums of money and in turn paid out little for the upkeep of prisoners.

Negroes were stereotyped as being criminal in nature, morally weak and mentally insipid; therefore, they were arrested for quite a variety of things. The principal causes of these arrests were drunkenness, loitering, disorderly conduct, idleness and suspicion. The most prevalent cause of arrest was drunkenness. A local newspaper speculating on the cause of so many Negroes being arrested, rationalized that it was not because of the desire of the police force or white citizens to prosecute Negroes, but because Negroes loved litigation.

Many Negroes were unable to pay the fines that were imposed and as a result were sent to prison and to work gangs. The Police Department in 1880 called for a more rigid enforcement of the vagrancy law and asked that all idle vagabonds, both white and black, be put to work or asked to leave the city.

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1Ibid., May 6, 1889, p. 62.


3Atlanta Constitution, January 10, 1877, p. 4.

4Proceedings, January 5, 1880, p. 295.
In 1886, the demands for building a house of correction became more demanding. Mayor Hillyer suggested that an arrangement be made which would provide for a division and separation of all persons committed, into two or more classes according to youth, sex and grade or character of offense.¹ In 1890, as indicated in a Police Department report, hardened criminals, white and black, male and female, were placed at the stockade and were only separated according to sex and color. Small children, most of the time, Negro children, were sent to the stockade for trivial offenses, but were forced to come in contact with old and experienced offenders.²

In 1890, the Commissioner of Public Works received what was probably the first suggestion for a county police force. It was stated that there was never trouble in the heart of the city, but always near or outside the city limits, and such neighborhoods as the one in which Clark University and the East Tennessee shops were located, should have been under police surveillance. It was further pointed out that Negroes swarmed at their, so called "suburban resorts" and drank and fought and gambled all day. There was thought to be danger to life and property in that neighborhood and murder or rape or any offense of that sort could not be promptly followed up.³

¹Ibid., February 15, 1886, p. 19.
²Ibid., January 5, 1891, p. 509.
³Garrett, op.cit., II, 209.
A new police headquarters opened on March 25, 1893 and its first occupant was Charley Mason, an eighteen year old Negro, arrested for larceny. Negroes were again to start another period playing the role that was generally ascribed to them by the majority race, that of criminal.

The Atlanta Police Department during the period under consideration, was a reflection of the society which spawned it and invested it with all the prevailing prejudices and biases of the time. Negroes could not escape the prison walls or the chain gang; they were defenseless against any testimony made by a white person and they could be convicted of anything from highway robbery to talking too loud or because of looking strangely at a white person. As Dr. Shearer, a white man, from South Carolina so aptly concluded, the criminal courts meted out even justice in but one instance, in the case of Negro vs. Negro.  

Voting

While it is true that the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were of tremendous value to the Negro when it came to defining his civil rights, they were, nevertheless, merely pronouncements which were flagrantly ignored. The Amendments, on paper, were indicative of a society which was striving to

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1Ibid., p. 281.

2W. E. Burghardt DuBois, Some Notes on Negro Crime Particularly in Georgia ("Atlanta University Publications," No. 9; Atlanta: Atlanta University Press, 1904), p. 49
be just in its dealings with its newly emancipated wards, but if we consider the prevailing economic and psychological nature of the Negro's dependence upon the white man, it is at once evident that his margin of political freedom is extremely narrow.¹ Negroes were intimidated in various ways and if they failed to be submissive, they were many times putting their signature to their death certificate.

Politicians vied for the Negro vote and oftentimes were successful - if they were able to cajole the Negro leader into getting other Negroes to support them. In 1877, Judge Daniel Pittman, candidate for office of ordinary, was rumored to have given liquor to Negroes on election day. Coming to his own defense, the Judge placed the blame for the malicious stories on his enemies. When questioned as to the validity of an accusation that many Negroes voted who had not paid their taxes, Judge Pittman admitted to the truth of this statement and gave an explanation in which he pointed out that he made the discovery that many Negroes did not pay their taxes for 1876. Ironically the discovery was made on election day; he immediately attempted to stop them and have their votes challenged, but was abruptly stopped by his opponent, Judge Hammond. Because he felt that he could defeat Judge Hammond on any grounds, he withdrew his complaint and consented not to challenge the votes. All of this took place in the

presence of the managers.¹

An example of the efforts expended by these two politicians to obtain the Negro vote may be seen in an article published by the Atlanta Constitution.

There was more of an effort made by these rival candidates to control the Negro vote than we have ever noticed at an election before. Every darkey who came up was surrounded forthwith, and each side exhausted every effort to vote him. The consequence was that the colored vote was pretty well divided and although a large number were polled it is difficult to say which side obtained the majority.²

Mayor English acknowledged some of the inadequacies in Atlanta's system of registering voters. He felt that it was not a good system and suggested some reforms; he felt that the city government should provide for opening the registration books in each ward, in order to relieve voters of the inconvenience of travelling to City Hall from many areas remote from the city. It was also recognized that less than one half of the voting population controlled the city's affairs.³ There may have been many persons who voted, but their votes were perhaps confiscated. A civic minded Negro, Augustus Thompson, who was a candidate for the Atlanta City Council, questioned the existing system of voting and petitioned the Council to allow him to station a man at each ward poll to see the votes counted when the polls closed and, also to keep

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¹Atlanta Constitution, January 9, 1877, p. 4.
²Ibid., January 4, 1871, p. 4.
³Proceedings, January 2, 1882, p. 670.
tally of the votes. This petition was referred to the Election Committee, which completely ignored it.

Even though Negroes were struggling with the chains of "Jim Crowism," it is significant that there were those among them who were willing to risk the danger of an attack on their lives and possibly their property in an effort to become a part of the government which represented them. The first mention of a Negro becoming a candidate for the City Council, in this period of study, was found in the aforementioned petition of Augustus Thompson. Thompson had been in Atlanta for only ten years when he made his bid for office. He did not possess a formal education, for it had been denied him under the existing laws of slavery, before the Emancipation Proclamation. He was well respected in Atlanta by both races for his qualities of industry and leadership. He was instrumental in organizing the Odd Fellows of Atlanta, which was a fraternal organization desirous of aiding in bettering the conditions under which Negroes were forced to live.²

The election returns show that Thompson received more votes than one of the white candidates, but not enough votes to win.

Councilman 3rd Ward
S. Hallande . . . . . . 691 votes

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¹Ibid., November 15, 1880, p. 447.
²Carter, op.cit., pp. 71, 72.
³Proceedings, December 6, 1880, pp. 458, 459.
In 1890, a full slate of Negro candidates offered to compete with white candidates for all available Council positions. In reviewing the number of votes cast for Negroes, it is most noticeable that there were only either 315, 317, or 318 votes cast for the Negroes running, whereas, in 1880 there were 585 votes cast for Augustus Thompson. The decline in the number of Negro voters is questionable, but no less questionable than the decline in the number of white voters also. In 1890 the white registration was 4,165, while the Negro registration was 587.¹

The following is a listing of the candidates and the number of votes they received in the City election of 1890:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mayor</td>
<td>Hon. W. A. Hemphill</td>
<td>2,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alderman</td>
<td>Hon. Frank P. Rice</td>
<td>2,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alderman</td>
<td>A. J. Shropshire</td>
<td>2,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alderman</td>
<td>Willis Murphy, col.</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alderman</td>
<td>T. P. Moyer, col.</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councilman</td>
<td>Joshua Tye</td>
<td>2,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Ward</td>
<td>J. W. Palmer, col.</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councilman</td>
<td>N. C. Sawtill</td>
<td>2,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Ward</td>
<td>J. D. Pender, col.</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councilman</td>
<td>Arnold Broyles</td>
<td>2,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Ward</td>
<td>L. L. Lee, col.</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councilman</td>
<td>C. E. Murphy</td>
<td>2,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Ward</td>
<td>H. H. Crumbley, col.</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Martin, op.cit., II, p. 96.
Councilman : J. D. Turner 2,093
5th Ward : C. McHenry, col. 318

Councilman : A. L. Holbrook 2,089
6th Ward : R. J. Lovingwood, col. 317

CHAPTER VII

OTHER AREAS INVOLVING RACIAL STRIFE

Regulation of Hotel Porters

The Negro labor force was concentrated in certain areas. The Atlanta City Directories from 1877 through 1890 indicate that Negroes were either carpenters, draymen, barbers, hackmen, porters, domestic servants or street help. These areas by no means represent all Negro workers of the period, but takes in about three-fourths of the Negro labor force. From time to time the Atlanta City Council found it necessary to regulate these workers in order that they would abide by certain laws.

On September 1, 1879, Colonel L. P. Grant and others petitioned the Council to pass an ordinance prohibiting hotel porters from entering the passenger depot except by permission of the authorities in charge.\(^1\) That same month an ordinance was passed "to regulate Porters of Hotels and others in the General Passenger Depot."\(^2\) The ordinance read as follows:

Sec. 1. The Mayor and General Council do ordain: That it shall not be lawful for any person or persons to enter the General Passenger Depot in said city in the capacity of Porter or Porters for any Hotel and Boarding

\(^1\)Ibid., September 1, 1879, p. 228.
\(^2\)Ibid., September 15, 1879, p. 237.
cause except with the consent of the Railroad Authorities in charge of said Depot and that any person violating this Ordinance shall be tried by the Recorder or other property authority and upon conviction shall pay a fine of not exceeding one hundred dollars or be imprisoned not exceeding thirty days.

Sec. 11. Be it further ordained that any person or persons entering said General Passenger Depot and violating the rules governing the same or obstructing the business of the railroad companies interested there in may be ordered out the Police Officer in charge and upon refusal to go shall be arrested and tried for a violation of this section and upon conviction shall be punished as provided in the first section hereof. Provided said rules shall be such as are reasonable and which said Mayor and General Council shall have approved.

This ordinance remained in full force until 1883, when Councilman Day resolved, "that the ordinance adopted by the Mayor and General Council Sept. 15th 1879 in reference to hotel porters be, and the same is hereby suspended until further order of this body." This resolution was adopted and another resolution was presented which upheld the original ordinance.

Parks

Atlanta did not have a park in 1877, but McPherson's Barracks between the city and West End was used as a Sunday afternoon gathering place for Atlantans. The Barracks was the setting for band concerts and parades that were attended by immense crowds from the city. It was a place where the "laboring class" could get rid of their feelings of frustration.

1Ibid., January 15, 1883, p. 94.
2Ibid., February 5, 1883, p. 102.
They particularly enjoyed the military spectacles and the rare music played by the bands. Negroes, who were attracted to the glittering bayonets and flashing brass buttons, would crowd around the parade grounds.¹ Although this was an enjoyable place with varied entertainment, it could not meet the needs of a park.

Mayor Angier, in his annual message for 1877, spoke of the need for a park. In 1879 the plea was again made. In 1882 land was donated by Colonel L. P. Grant for the purpose of a park.² In December of the same year, the Public Buildings and Grounds Committee submitted a report which recommended the acceptance of a bid by Mr. Jones and McQuire to erect a barbed wire fence around the park.³ While there is no explanation as to who or what the barbed wire was supposed to keep out, it is true that there were many stray animals wandering about, especially cows.

Grant Park was to be situated at the eastern end of Georgia Avenue in the southwestern part of the city. The original gift of land contained one hundred acres, the city later added forty more acres by purchase.⁴

The City Council received a petition which requested

¹Atlanta Constitution, May 16, 1877, p. 4.
²Proceedings, October 16, 1882, pp. 32, 33.
³Ibid., December 4, 1882, p. 45.
⁴Ivan Allen, Atlanta From the Ashes (Atlanta: Ruralist Press, 1928), p. 27.
that the Grant Park Commission have a policeman detailed for
the protection of property and preservation of order at the
park, and also to have an ordinance framed prescribing penal-
ties for misconduct. This ordinance, containing the regula-
tions for governing the park, was submitted on June 2, 1884.
The Commissioners were given the power, with Council super-
vision, to protect the city's property, enforce order, permit
or prohibit public meetings, picnics, games or assemblages of
persons for any purpose, on the park grounds.

As the city population grew in number, it was generally
condeded that one park could not be of adequate service to the
people of Atlanta. In 1889 the city property known as Maga-
zine Hill upon which was also located the Davis Street School,
was suggested as a possible site for a public park. The sug-
gestion was acted upon favorably by the Park Committee. Real-
izing that even the facilities of this park were inadequate
and particularly because of transportation problems at that
time, it was resolved by Alderman Hemphill, that the Park
Committee should "investigate the propriety of establishing a
park on the northside of Atlanta." They were also authorized
to receive donations of land and money for such purpose.

It is not specifically stated whether or not these

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1 Proceedings, May 5, 1884, p. 381.
2 Ibid., June 2, 1884, p. 395.
3 Ibid., June 17, 1889, p. 85.
4 Ibid., September 2, 1889, p. 143.
parks served both races of if they were exclusively white, but Mayor Glenn in 1890 spoke of the beauty of Grant park and alluded to its serving all the people of Atlanta. In literature of a later date, it is specifically stated that Atlanta, in 1919, had neither a high school for Negroes nor a recreation spot. Booker T. Washington Park was the first park to serve Negroes. It is a deductive assumption that Atlanta did not allow Negroes to frequent the city parks during the period under study.
CONCLUSION

After careful compilation of the material herein presented, there is one statement which may be made with a certain degree of certainty - segregated practices were evident on every level of government, in all aspects of human life, even though they were to be obscured in a legalistic manner.

That the races existed together in the Atlanta society according to the rules established by the majority race - can not be disputed. The Negro feared death and therefore kept his "place." The state of race relations, in this period, was most definitely based upon an unwritten contract which was sanctioned by Caucasians and thrust ruthlessly upon the Negro.

The foundation was being carefully laid, upon which future segregationists could build. Because a man's skin was of another color, there was little compassion for the suffering he was forced to endure. In an effort to maintain an idea, many were sacrificed to death because of poor hospital facilities or no facilities at all in the case of the Negro. There were, however, those of the majority race who made concerted efforts to alleviate the situation.

The paternalistic attitude hovers over the Atlanta City Council Proceedings. Whenever independence or equality was
sought, the Negro was either recognized as a possible threat to "White Supremacy," and ignored or dealt with in a most ambiguous manner.
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