

RAMSEY COUNTY  
**History**  
*A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society*

The African-American  
Community and the Cuba  
Pageant of 1898

Page 15

Winter, 1999

Volume 33, Number 4

*Timber, Steel, Law, Politics*

*St. Paul's Pioneering Lawyers—Page 4*



*The signing of the Briand-Kellogg Pact in Paris on August 27, 1928. Frank B. Kellogg is seated at the table. This copy of a painting of the historic event is from the Minnesota Historical Society. See article beginning on page 4.*

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# RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 33, Number 4

Winter, 1999

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## A Message from the Editorial Board

The winter issue of *Ramsey County History* opens with a fascinating account of how some pioneering lawyers who were involved in cases relating to the timber and steel industries helped shape and change the practice of law and politics in Minnesota. Written by Samuel H. Morgan, a retired St. Paul attorney, this article ranges from President Theodore Roosevelt persuading Frank B. Kellogg and Cordenio A. Severance to represent the government in key anti-trust cases in the first decade of this century to the great 1962 election recount involving incumbent governor Elmer L. Anderson and his challenger, lieutenant governor Karl F. Rolvaag.

David Riehle's article examining the reaction of the African-American community in St. Paul to the fighting in Cuba in 1898 reminds us that the struggle of African-Americans in Minnesota to obtain full civil rights didn't begin in the 1960s. By using information culled from the pages of St. Paul's articulate and influential African-American newspaper, *The Appeal*, Riehle demonstrates that the decision to go to war with Spain in 1898 brought out complex reactions from the local African-American community. What Riehle finds in the coverage of the pageant in *The Appeal* is clear-cut ambivalence as to the meaning of the war for the civil rights of African-Americans in St. Paul.

*John M. Lindley, Chair, Editorial Board*

## '300 Afro-American Performers'

# The Great Cuba Pageant of 1898: St. Paul's Citizens Support the Struggle for Civil Rights

Dave Riehle

More than 100 years ago the United States went to war with Spain after the battleship *USS Maine* sank in Havana harbor. What actually caused the explosion that scuttled the *Maine* has been intermittently debated, but never resolved. The four-month-long official war quickly receded to a blip in American memory, along with the brutal pacification of the Philippines by American soldiers that followed in 1899. Mark Twain's searing denunciation of U.S. "pirate-raids in . . . the Philippines"<sup>1</sup> was not reprinted for decades.

While the complex forces that contended in and around the war were quickly forgotten in the United States, they remained a smoldering memory for many Cubans and Filipinos in the century that followed. Left in American popular consciousness are Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders charging up San Juan Hill, Admiral Dewey's squadron, the legacy of soldiers' statues standing silently in countless city parks and village squares throughout this country, and not much else. Perhaps one benefit of the observation of the centennial of the Spanish-American War will be a renewed awareness of the many elements that intersected so intensely a century ago.

At the end of the nineteenth century, political and social forces in the United States seemed to have combined to relentlessly drive back the advances African-Americans had made following the Civil War in personal and political freedoms. Two decades after the federal government's abandonment of Reconstruction in 1876, Jim Crow legislation codified segregation in nearly all spheres of life. Legislation and extra-legal terrorism<sup>2</sup> were the means for disenfranchising many southern blacks. With the Supreme Court's 1896 decision in *Plessy vs Fer-*



General Antonio Maceo, the "Afro-American" revolutionary known as the "Bronze Titan" and still revered in Cuba as a national hero. From the June 18, 1898, edition of *The Appeal*. This and other illustrations with this article are from the Minnesota Historical Society's collections.

guson upholding segregated schools in Louisiana, it was clear to many observers of racial politics that inequality was ordained as national policy.

Each setback was chronicled with burning indignation by St. Paul's outstanding African-American newspaper, *The Appeal*.<sup>3</sup> As African-Americans all across the country sought ways to resist and reverse this counter-revolution, the active and well-educated leadership of the St. Paul African-American community collaborated in efforts to develop new national civil rights organizations and created their own locally based initiatives.<sup>4</sup>

The United States' declaration of war against Spain in April, 1898, initially offered a glimmer of hope to beleaguered

African-Americans. Cuban patriots had begun a renewed struggle for independence from Spain several years prior to the declaration of war. To see the United States ostensibly intervening on the side of the predominantly Afro-Cuban population in their battle for democracy and independence implied to some, and not only to blacks, that the American government might again champion the cause of American citizens of African descent. However, some white supremacists, such as the widow of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, condemned the war as an expedition on behalf of the "miserable mulatto race" of revolutionary Cubans.<sup>5</sup>

African-American hopes for change and progress were extinguished over time, as invading Americans brought their white racism along with them to the relatively integrated society of Cuba, and U.S. armed forces crushed the independence movement in the Philippine Islands.<sup>6</sup> But at first there was almost euphoria as African-Americans in St. Paul and elsewhere embraced all things Cuban with great enthusiasm, expressed in a variety of ways in almost every issue of *The Appeal*.

- Mrs. J.Q. Adams hosted a "Cuban tea" at her home with 75 present.<sup>7</sup>
- The "Santiago Glee club" presented a concert program by talented African Americans at St. Paul's Mozart Hall.<sup>8</sup>
- An advertisement asked "Will We C-U-B-A- Masquer at the Party?"<sup>9</sup>

African-Americans focused great enthusiasm and admiration on the figure of the great Afro-Cuban revolutionary, Antonio Maceo.<sup>10</sup> Known as the "Bronze Titan," Maceo, still revered in Cuba today as a national hero, as he has been for this entire century, was the second-in-command of the Cuban army of independence. The image and example of Maceo sank deep roots into the African-Ameri-



UNCLE SAM—I CAN'T LET SPAIN LOAD THE LITTLE FELLOW DOWN LIKE THAT.

The Cubans' plight, as seen by *The Appeal* in its October 22, 1898, edition.

can community. Looking at a front-page portrait of "General Antonio Maceo," with his clearly African features, in the June 18, 1898 issue of *The Appeal*, one can almost feel an electric current.

From that time forward "Maceo" has been a familiar given name for African-American males, although entirely absent from the non-Hispanic white community.<sup>11</sup> For example, two outstanding St. Paul union leaders, Maceo Finney and Maceo Littlejohn, were both born at the turn-of-the-century. Even the female "Maceola" made an appearance.<sup>12</sup> For years, advertisements appeared in Twin Cities African-American newspapers for the "Maceo Club" in Minneapolis.

According to Cuban-American writer Jose Yglesias, "Maceo was not and is not known by Americans, but he was known by blacks in the terrible Reconstruction years, particularly by Southern blacks who had few safe opportunities to express their pride in themselves. They named their boys Maceo and gave it the

American pronunciation: May-see-oh. This was a secret pleasure and today there are American blacks who do not know how they came to be named Maceo."<sup>13</sup>

While elected African-American office holders in the South were being steadily eliminated through disenfranchisement of African-American voters, others who held office by federal appointment were removed by lynching and mob violence. In February, 1898, a white mob assaulted and burned the U.S. post office at Lake City, South Carolina. Postmaster Frazier Baker and his infant child were burned alive in the fire and his wife and daughter were shot and maimed by the attackers.<sup>14</sup> African-American postmasters, appointed by Republican administrations, were particular targets for white retaliation, not only as holders of important positions in the community, but also because the post offices served as the distribution points for Northern black newspapers, which exposed and

condemned the crimes committed in the mounting assault on African-Americans.

Attorney Frederick McGhee chaired a large community protest meeting held at St. Paul's Pilgrim Baptist Church shortly after in response to this assault.<sup>15</sup> Those in attendance passed resolutions denouncing the murders and calling upon the federal government to identify and prosecute the perpetrators. The meeting bitterly condemned the government's failure to intervene against lynching, even when, as here, a federal institution was directly assaulted.<sup>16</sup> *The Repeal* reported on March 26:

Since the 4th day of March, 1897, 149 Afro-American<sup>17</sup> citizens have suffered cruel deaths at the hands of Southern mobs, [and] not one of the participants as been apprehended or punished by the government . . . Frazier B. Baker died bravely at his post in the performance of his duty as a man and an officer of the government he served, which was duty bound to protect him.

The protest meeting condemned the "temporizing and subservient policy of the administration" in refusing to act and called upon President McKinley to seek legislation giving "colored citizens and colored officials of the United States the fair and equal protection of the laws." To that end, *The Appeal* reported, a call was adopted for a "state-wide convention of Afro-Americans" in the near future.

The resulting American Law Enforcement League of Minnesota proclaimed that "we are tens of millions of people with heart enough, with brain enough, and with arms long and strong enough—if the forces they represent be combined—to move the world."<sup>18</sup>

"We have resolved," the League said in a statement distributed to the delegates of a national Baptist convention in Kansas City that year, "that Jim Crow must go, that inferior accommodations with first class fare [are] unjust and discriminating; that the recent revision of its Constitution by the Legislature of Mississippi, disenfranchising Negroes; that the 14th and 15th Amendments be enforced both in letter and in spirit . . ."

The officers of the organization whose names were attached to the statement included African-American attorney W. R.

Morris, J. Q. Adams, Frank Wheaton (who would be elected to the Minnesota Legislature in November), and thirty-two-year old recording secretary Charles James (who a year later would begin a long and remarkable career as a Minnesota union leader).

In November of 1898 African-Americans in St. Paul carried out an astonishingly ambitious project designed to raise funds for the League which identified their cause with the war in Cuba, and, more subtly, with its subtext, the struggle of a people of African descent for their freedom and independence.<sup>19</sup> Written and managed by Mrs. Cora Pope, the wife of an African-American U.S. Army veteran, the production placed hundreds of talented African-Americans on stage to sing, act, dance, cakewalk and declaim in a pageant of solidarity with Cuba and freedom. At its climax Frederick McGhee delivered a speech in the character of General Maceo who "recounted the wrongs of his country, and called upon his followers to avenge them."<sup>20</sup>

To achieve the widest support and acceptance within the entire community, and no doubt to enhance the success of the fund-raising goals, the organizers sought broad endorsement from wealthy families in both Minneapolis and St. Paul, as well as even broader support and participation from the African-American community. The organizers chose to make the supporters of record entirely women.

Supporters were divided into two groups: "Honorary Patronesses" (white) and "Active Patronesses" (African-American) and both, in the usage of the time, were identified by their husbands' names. The two groups composed the elite of their respective communities. The names listed are familiar to those acquainted with the early history of the African-American community: Hilyard, Hickman, Adams, McGhee, and Francis, as well as many others. The white honorary patronesses included members of the Pillsbury, Northrup, Peavey, Lowry, and Weyerhaeuser families.<sup>21</sup>

The program was performed first at the Lyceum Theater in Minneapolis on November 3 and 4, and then at the Metropolitan Opera House in St Paul on the



Frederick McGhee. Photo from *The Appeal*.

evening of November 10. Advertised as "Cuba—A Drama of Freedom . . . benefit of the American League of Minnesota . . . with Music, Art, Drama, Comedy—300 Afro-American performers—Grand, Beautiful, Patriotic," it included a cake walk and the "Marseilles;" "Der Wacht am Rhine" sung in German; Liberty and her maids, and a depiction of a battle in Cuba, among other things.

The program consisted of four acts: the first, a pageant in which Liberty and her maidens carried compassion to Cuba, along with flower girls and women in armor, then sailed to Spain to plead for the island's oppressed subjects. Then, in successive acts, came a depiction of life in Cuba, with scenes of life in the sugar fields, singing and dancing "by Cubans and Negroes" coming home from the plantation fields, the formation of revolutionary conspiracy in the hills led by Maceo, and then the battle of Santiago and the American victory. Finally, delegations of the nations of the world gathered for a celebration of freedom in the new Republic of Cuba. The response to the pageant was so positive that the organizers held several encore performances later in the month.

Clearly the production represented an intersection of many levels of consciousness. Somehow, "Uncle Rasmus" and "Sambo" made an appearance on the

Cuban plantation, along with revolutionary generals Maceo and Gomez. What were presumed to be the liberating power and benign intentions of the U.S. expeditionary force stood alongside McGhee's pointed speech about the righteous vengeance of the oppressed.<sup>22</sup>

The tensions inherent in this melange of disparate artistic, cultural, and political themes emerged soon after in a prolonged debate over the producers' decision to insert the "cakewalk" into the program. Journalist J.C. Reid was the primary critic. In 1899 Reid became the editor of another Twin Cities African-American newspaper, the Minneapolis *Afro-American Advance*, formed out of the merger of two other African-American newspapers, and he forcefully expressed views similar to those he articulated in this debate.<sup>23</sup>

"... the public naturally expected 'intellectual brilliancy' to shine as it did never before in the Northwest," Reid wrote. "And the performers did credit to themselves from the above point of view, with one exception, which caused the whole to pass into history as an unpolished affair."<sup>24</sup>

That exception, Reid said, was the "cakewalk."<sup>25</sup>

"There is no need for outlining the moral, social and intellectual value the public places upon the 'cakewalker,'" he said. "While it enjoys it, its innermost thoughts are: 'all coons are alike.'"

Reid argued that "frivolity" such as the cakewalk only reinforced stereotypes of all African-Americans as an improvident people "who live only to amuse and to be amused." Situating his argument in the recent savage mob assaults on Southern blacks, Reid expressed both a sense that African-Americans had to demonstrate to the dominant white society that his literate and cultured social group—"All of us who are regarded to be lights among us"—deserved to be accepted as equals, and at the same time a bitter frustration at the unanswered murders in the South. In an unmistakable reference to another recent Southern atrocity, Reid's anger boiled over:

"The memory of our brothers who are being butchered daily in the South should ever be green, for the deadly odor of the so-called justified crimes committed in

# The Santiago Glee Club CONCERT PROGRAMME,

Thursday Eve., Sept. 15, 1898.

## AT MOZART HALL,

Cor. Sixth and Franklin Streets, St. Paul.

— In Honor of —

### Mr. C. Herbert Browne, Jr.

#### OPENING—First Part.

1. Song Recital.....Santiago Club Quartette  
Messrs. Louis White, Isaac Jenkins, Wm. E. Harris, Cyrus W. Wilson.
2. Testimonial Address.....Hon. J. Frank Wheaton
3. Soprano Solo—Selected.....Miss Marie Louise Harwell  
Piano Accompanist—Mrs. Thos. R. King.
4. Recitation—Selected.....Master Ralph G. Galloway
5. Cornet Solo.....Master Edward English
6. Soprano Solo—"Only Me".....Little Miss Beatrice Galloway
7. Recitation—"The Polish Boy".....Mrs. I. Norman Jenkins
8. Piano Recital—Selected.....Mr. La Fayette Mason
9. Address—Selected.....Hon. Fredrick L. McGhee
10. Tenor Solo.....Mr. Bradley Walker  
Mr. L. Mason, Accompanist.
11. Trio.....From Grand Opera  
Miss Hattie Shephard and Messrs. Claude Jackson and Allen French, Jr.

#### Intermission—Ten Minutes—Orchestra Numbers.

#### SECOND PART.

1. Recitation—Selected.....Mr. C. Herbert Browne, Jr
2. French Recitation.....Mr. Harry Bryant, Jr
3. Sketch—1 Act.....Laughing Contest a la Comique  
Lord Byron Tyler, Mr. Herbert Browne and Mr. Claude Jackson.

The Club requests and cordially invites all to come if convenient in full dress. Each lady will receive a souvenir. Admission cards may be had of any above represented or at Golden Rule and the Appeal office in St. Paul and Minneapolis. Half price for those under 15 years. The concert will positively begin at 8 p. m. Chartered car for Minneapolis people.

#### THE SANTIAGO GLEE CLUB.

MR. CLAUDE JACKSON.....Musical Director and Secretary  
MR. HERBERT BROWNE.....President and Manager  
MRS. T. RODNEY KING AND MR. L. MASON.....Pianists

#### RECEPTION COMMITTEE.

Mr. Herbert Browne, Dr. Val Do Turner, Mr. Claude Jackson, Dr. Thomas S. Cook, Mr. Delbert Lee, Mr. Philip Hale.

Promenade Concert Until 1:30 a. m. After Regular Program.

MUSIC BY SANTIAGO ORCHESTRA.

Tickets, 50 Cts. - - Children; 25 Cts.

The Santiago Glee Club's concert program presented by African-American singers at St. Paul's Mozart Hall on September 15, 1898. From *The Appeal* for September 10, 1898.

the South is slowly but surely setting the whites of the North against us . . . When the Afro-Americans in the south learns the power of individuality they will not submit to being tied up in bunches and shot to death as they did recently without taking a few white 'friends' along with them to the next world."<sup>26</sup>

Two writers, both women who had participated in the pageant, answered Reid's criticism the following week. Although it could be "vulgarized just as any other form of amusement may be," the cakewalk was described as a "brilliant, grace-displaying art form," and one which white society had adopted at their own social functions. In fact, according to one of the letter writers, Mrs. Frederick McGhee, "refined and cultured" African-Americans had only undertaken to cakewalk after "society people" (whites) with centuries of "morals, education, property and refinement" had done so. "We are all aware that the cakewalk has its associations (but) the writer of this article never knew of its coming into prominence until Mr. W. K. Vanderbilt gave a 'cakewalk' at his home in New York City."<sup>27</sup>

"The cakewalk," Mattie McGhee argued, "has been placed on a standard with other dances, and now that it has, if it is proving such a 'calamity' to the race with which it will forever be identified, we would suggest that a few attacks be made on Mr. Vanderbilt for leading us into temptation."

Besides, she reminded Reid, the whole production was created to "add to the prosperity of the American Law Enforcement League."

"I would add," she concluded, "that the production of 'Cuba' has done more to elevate the colored people in the estimation of the whites in the Northwest than all the combined efforts of the race-loving people of the Twin Cities, for the participants didn't meet, elect officers and resolve, and then dissolve, but then went to work and by their combined efforts gave a performance that has excelled by far any of its kind ever given by those who acknowledge themselves our superior race."

The debate did not end here. Reid replied in the next issue of *The Appeal*

that he was surprised that Mattie McGhee did not agree with him. Even though the participants were "the moral and intellectual lights among local Afro-Americans," Reid said he did not see any difference between a cakewalk by "the colored 400" and those of less prominence. The problem, he said, was that "no white man ever looked at a cakewalk unless he thought of its origin. Our unfortunate ancestors amused their masters in the hated ante-bellum days with the cakewalk . . . It is reasonable to think that when the negro amuses our enlightened peers that everything connected with ante-bellum days darts like lightning through their heart and brain. What we want to do is put down everything that was ever connected with slavery. We want to forget those days and not forever parade them before the public." No progress will come from "imitating the white man" Reid argued, or by "grinning, joking and closed eyes. We will have to create our own examples if we expect to be an honored and respected race."<sup>28</sup>

Reid then closed by suggesting that it was "imprudent" of him to continue his debate with women, and that further discussion should be among males. His suggestion was answered promptly in *The Appeal's* next issue by Mattie McGhee, who told him that she felt "able to hold her own" in the discussion, and was quite willing to carry on with the debate on. However, in view of Reid's expressed reluctance, Frederick McGhee volunteered to participate in a public debate.<sup>29</sup>

The heated debate went on in subsequent issues. Reid's other opponent in the original exchange, a high school student named Marie Armstrong, upbraided him for dismissing her as a mere school-girl. Even though she was "simply a student," there was no doubt on her part that she also could "hold her own without appealing to the legislature."<sup>30</sup>

Finally, in early February Reid and McGhee agreed to argue the question "Is the Cakewalk Detrimental to the Afro-American?" before a large crowd at Bethesda church in Minneapolis. After both men had spoken, the nine judges appointed for the occasion decided that McGhee had presented his view in a

more able manner and awarded the contest to him.<sup>31</sup>

No further public debate seems to have occurred. The underlying issue, of course, was not and could not be resolved. Whether to accommodate to the dominant white society or to organize independently could be stated, abstractly, as clear alternatives. In life, such a differentiation was infinitely more complicated. Reid's and McGhee's arguments each palpably contained elements of both. In a microcosm they expressed the same dilemma personified in the two African-American poles of attraction and opposition of that time, W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington. Frederick McGhee himself was far from being an accommodationist of the Washington type, and in fact was a key collaborator of DuBois's in organizing the Niagara movement, the forerunner to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

It would be presumptuous in the extreme to attempt to pass judgment on the choices made by these African-American leaders a hundred years ago. Under relentless political, economic, social and psychological pressures, they sought to survive and find a way forward within the circumstances in which they found themselves. The people who organized and participated in the Great Cuba pageant by and large accepted the values of the dominant society as legitimate, with the exception of the sea of irrational race prejudice in which they always were immersed. Stripped of political rights and reduced to virtual peonage in the South, isolated from a hostile or indifferent labor movement, and existing only in relatively small numbers in northern cities, it often must have been hard for many African-Americans to see any possible amelioration of their status other than to seek grudging acceptance from the white elite. Even so, the veins of another tradition of racial independence always ran through this pattern of conciliation and accommodation. Thus the existence of St. Paul organizations such as Nat Turner Lodge No. 2 of the Knights of Pythias, the John Brown Memorial Association and the Toussaint L'Overture Dramatic Club all testified to another awareness.

The fate of others in the African diaspora was never far away from the consciousness of African-Americans, and an awareness of the centuries-old legacy of struggle had deep roots. Consequently, from the middle of the nineteenth century into at least the late 1930s, the anniversary of the 1837 emancipation of African slaves in the British West Indies was commemorated every August in St. Paul, and undoubtedly elsewhere, as well. Similarly it is hardly necessary to mention the numerous acknowledgements of the revolutionary self-emancipation of Haiti.<sup>32</sup>

Not for the first or last time, developments from beyond the borders of the United States gave African-Americans in Minnesota new hope, and showed them the possibility of hitherto unconsidered allies. Just as the colonial revolutions following World War II gave renewed impetus to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, the struggle of a predominantly African people in the Caribbean in the 1890s aroused new confidence, energy, and determination in African-Americans in the United States at perhaps the nadir of their existence following the Civil War. The inspiration of the Afro-Cuban revolutionary struggle had unmistakably galvanized the unprecedented effort that was the Cuba pageant. At a time when the entire African-American population of St. Paul was probably less than 2,000, organizing and rehearsing more than 300 performers on stage, and hundreds or thousands more in the audiences, was an amazingly successful accomplishment.<sup>33</sup> It seems evident that the activities of the American Law Enforcement League, and the earlier Minnesota Afro-American League, founded in 1892, especially as expressed in the person of Frederick McGhee, must have contributed to the body of experience drawn on in the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1910, and its predecessor, the Niagara Movement, in which McGhee played a large part.<sup>34</sup>

The Cuba pageant has been forgotten for a century.<sup>35</sup> Even though it is ultimately only an episode in the history of a people and a city, the story is a tribute to the creativity and tenacity of those who

saw the opportunity to intervene in a new situation in order to advance their own interests and who had the audacity and ability to carry it out.

## NOTES

1. Philip S Foner, *Mark Twain Social Critic*. New York: International Publishers, 1975, p. 344.

2. John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom, a History of Negro Americans*, 3rd ed., New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1968, pp. 324–343.

3. *The Appeal*, published from 1885–1923, also published editions for Chicago and Louisville, Ky. From 1887–1922, it was edited by John Q. Adams. See David V. Taylor, “John Adams and the Western Appeal: Advocates of the Protest Tradition,” unpublished master’s thesis, U. of Nebraska, 1971.

4. Earl Spangler, *The Negro in Minnesota*. Minneapolis: T.S. Denison & Co., 1961, pp. 78–79.

5. *Appeal*, April 23, 1898, p. 2.

6. Adams editorialized later that “There was no color barrier in Cuba until the Americans came. With them they brought their hellish color-prejudice and there has been trouble ever since.” *Appeal*, July 12, 1902, p. 2.

7. *Appeal*, September 3, 1898, p. 3.

8. *Appeal*, September 10, 1898, p. 3.

9. *Appeal*, February 2, 1899, p. 4.

10. Antonio Maceo Grajales, born in 1845 to a Venezuelan mulatto and an Afro-Cuban woman, fought for Cuban independence from Spain and abolition of slavery beginning in 1868. After landing in Cuba with a liberation force primarily composed of Afro-Cubans, Maceo was killed in battle with Spanish troops on December 7, 1896.

11. A black political organization in Dallas, Texas, the Progressive Voters League, was led in the 1930s by Antonio Maceo Smith. See Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier, African Americans in the American West 1528–1990*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998, p. 232.

12. For “Maceola” see *The Helper*, St James AME Church Bulletin, July 9, 1916 (Eva Bell Neal papers, Minnesota Historical Society). For an example of the white people’s unfamiliarity with the given name “Maceo,” see *St. Paul Pioneer Press* July 30, 1945, where Mr. Littlejohn is recorded as “Macy. O. Littlejohn” (“Negro Group Hears Report”).

13. “Marti in Ybor City,” by Jose Yglesias, in *Jose Marti in the United States: The Florida Experience*, ed Louis A Perez.

Tempe: ASU Center for Latin American Studies, Arizona State University, 1995.

14. *Appeal*, March 26, 1898, p. 1.

15. McGhee, described by W.E.B. Du Bois as “brilliant,” was a key participant in the formation of the Niagara Movement, the predecessor to the National Association of Colored People. David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. DuBois, Biography of a Race, 1868–1919*. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1993.

16. Here and two paragraphs below, *Appeal*, March 26, 1898, p. 1.

17. From the mid-1880s Adams and *The Appeal* used the term “Afro-American” in lieu of “Negro” or “colored.” Others did as well. See: *Appeal*, March 28, 1914, p. 2, “Afro-American Right Word.”

18. Here and three paragraphs below, *Appeal*, September 17, 1898, pp 3–4. For Charles James, see David Riehle, “When Labor Knew a Man named Charles James—The Lost Story of an African-American Who Lead the St. Paul labor movement,” *Union Advocate*, December 22, 1997, pp. 9–13.

19. A front page cartoon in the October 22, 1898, *Appeal* depicts “Cuba” as a small, ragged, dark-skinned figure clearly intended to suggest African heritage. “Cuba” is being loaded down with a huge bundle labeled “debt” by Spain. The caption reads, “Uncle Sam—I can’t let Spain load the little fellow down like that.”

20. *Pioneer Press*, November 11, 1898, p. 8.

21. *Appeal*, November 12, 1898, p. 3.

22. See *Appeal*, November 5, 10, 12, 1898, *Pioneer Press*, November 6, 10, 1898 and *Globe*, November 9, 1898 for descriptions of the program.

23. See holdings of the *Afro-American Advance*, May 27, 1899–November 17, 1900, at the Minnesota Historical Society.

24. Reid’s argument here and below was made in a letter titled “A ‘Cuba’ Criticism”, *Appeal*, December 3, 1898, p. 4.

25. The “cakewalk” played a major part in introducing syncopation and other elements of African-American music and dance to white audiences. But, presented primarily through the medium of blackface performers in minstrel shows, it became a demeaning and humiliating spectacle in the eyes of many educated African-Americans, for whom assimilation into the dominant culture did not appear totally unrealistic. John Fordham, *Jazz*. London, New York, Stuttgart: Dorling, Kindersley, 1993 pp. 13–142. Langston Hughes and Milton Metzger, *A Pictorial History of the Negro in America*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc. 1963, pp. 252–253.

26. A white riot in Wilmington, N.C. in November, 1898 killed eleven African-Americans and wounded twenty-five. Similar sentiments were expressed by the militant African-American journalist T. Thomas Fortune. An infuriated Fortune told a Washington, D.C., meeting he wished that “for the 30 colored men who were murdered in Wilmington 30 white assassins would fill their graves.” *Cleveland Gazette*, December 24, 1898, p.1

27. Here and three paragraphs below, *Appeal* December 10, 1898, p. 4.

28. *Appeal*, December 17, 1898, p. 4

29. *Appeal*, December 24, 1898, p. 3

30. *Appeal*, December 31, 1898, p. 4

31. *Appeal*, February 9, 1899, p. 4

32. See *St Paul Recorder*, July 22, 1938, urging attendance at an August 4 Emancipation Day picnic hosted by African-American Elks lodges. Such celebrations were reported on annually in the St. Paul press after the end of the Civil War.

33. African-Americans in St. Paul numbered 1,492 in 1895 and 2,263 in 1900. See David V. Taylor, “Pilgrim’s Progress: Black St. Paul and the Making of An Urban Ghetto, 1870–1930,” (Ph.D. diss.), University of Minnesota, 1977, pp 22–23.

34. McGhee died in 1912 in St Paul at the age of fifty-one. He had been legal director of the National Afro-American Council, a predecessor of the NAACP. See Spangler, pp. 68, 86.

35. The only published reference to the Cuba pageant, other than contemporary newspaper accounts, seems to be one paragraph in a short pamphlet published by the Minneapolis Urban League in the 1920s. See Abraham L. Harris, *Negro Population in Minneapolis*. Minneapolis: Minneapolis Urban League and Phyllis Wheatley Settlement House, ca 1927, p. 8.

*Dave Riehle is a locomotive engineer who has written frequently on Minnesota labor history for the St. Paul Union Advocate and other publications. His article on Charles James, an early African-American union leader in St. Paul, was chosen as Best Human Interest Story in 1997 by the International Labor Communications Association.*



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*The four-act pageant presented as  
a benefit for the American League of Min-  
nesota in November, 1898. See Dave  
Riehle's article about St. Paul's African-  
American community and the Spanish-  
American War beginning on page 15.*

## R.C.H.S.

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