

CHASING THE NORTH STAR:

The Search for Black Opportunity in Wisconsin, 1850-1860

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In 1850, Oregon, a township south of Madison in Dane County, had a population of only 638. Part of that population was the family of Robert Valentine, a thirty-eight-year old illiterate black farmer who was born in North Carolina. His wife, Lois Valentine, was thirty-seven and was also born in North Carolina. Their children, five boys and two girls, ranged in age from eighteen years to six months. All the children except the two youngest had attended school in the past year. The children's birth places and ages show the family's migration pattern. Between 1834 and 1839, the Valentines and their two children moved to Ohio. Then in the mid-1840s, the family, by then, seven moved to Wisconsin, where the last two children were born. In Oregon Township, the family owned \$800 worth of real estate, perhaps about eighty acres. What happened to the Valentines over the next decade? Did they stay in Dane County? Did they prosper? What about the total black population in Wisconsin during this decade. Where did they live? Where did they come from? Had they found opportunity? By using the 1850 and the 1860 manuscript censuses, this paper will present a picture of black Wisconsin in the decade from 1850 to 1860 (see Appendix C for census usage information).

Even though the numbers were small, some blacks and slaves

had lived in Wisconsin before the area attained statehood. The Ordinance of 1787 outlawed slavery in the Northwest Territory. However, black slaves were introduced into the territory in 1815 at Ft. Crawford and in 1829, into the lead-mining area of Grant County (Phillips "Negro-White Integration" 56). These slaves in the early history of Wisconsin were illegally held in bondage. Legally, when they crossed into Wisconsin they should have been free.

By 1835, the Michigan Territory census reported that twenty-seven of the ninety-one blacks who lived in what the following year would be part of the Wisconsin Territory were slaves. Nine of these belonged to officers at Ft. Crawford and the rest were in the lead-mining area of Grant County. Among the owners in Grant County were Henry Dodge, the first Governor of the Wisconsin Territory, and John Rountree, the founder of Platteville. Both men freed their slaves by 1840 (Cooper 3).

In the 1836 Territorial Census, seventeen slaves were reported as being at Ft. Crawford near Prairie du Chien. The status of these slaves is clear from this 1845 Crawford County coroner's report:

I was once notified that a dead body was lying in the water, opposite Pig's Eye Slough, and immediately proceeded to the spot, and on taking it out, I recognized it as the body of a negro woman belonging to a certain Captain then in Fort Crawford. The body was cruelly cut and bruised; but THE person not appearing to recognize it, a verdict of 'Found Dead' was rendered, and I had the corpse buried. Soon after it came to light that the woman was whipped to death, and thrown

into the river during the night; but no investigation was made, and the affair blew over (Phillips "Negroes in Wisconsin History" 64-65).

During the 1840s, Reverend Edward Mathews, a missionary from England, traveled around Wisconsin, crusading against slavery. He was appalled to find that the 1840 census had reported eleven slaves in Wisconsin and set out to get the remaining slaves in the state freed and to turn sentiment totally against slavery. Reverend Mathews and those who took him in were abused by mobs at Plattville, threatened with tarr and featherings, pelted with eggs at Mineral Point, and banned from entering many western Wisconsin towns. He summed up his diary, and the condition of Wisconsin in the 1840s this way:

Thus I have described the obstacles in Western Wisconsin to the anti-slavery reform. Leading men in the political and religious parties were in favor of slavery; and some of them as I have shown, were slaveholders in defiance of the law. The working classes were chiefly from the south, ignorant and bitterly pro-slavery (253).

Besides the officially reported slaves, in 1840, two black women were owned by the wife of Reverend James Mitchell. This Methodist Episcopal minister sent the two women to the South to be sold (Cooper 4). Also in 1860, the manuscript census listed "slave" as the occupation for Lydia Stell who lived in the house of a farmer named Christopher Noulin, of Oak Grove Township in Dodge County (1860 Census).

Besides slaves, other blacks also lived in frontier

Wisconsin. James Knox Phillips, in his article "Negroes in Wisconsin History," combined and organized scattered information about early blacks in Wisconsin. He said that two blacks set up a trading post at present day Marinette sometime around 1791 and that other black frontiersmen worked as trappers, guides, boatmen, interpreters and leaders among the Indians. At this time, Phillips stated, blacks were not distinguished by their color but blended into the population. Some of them became prominent in their field (62-63).

Phillips also recounted the story of Mary Ann La Buche, "practical nurse of Prairie du Chien." La Buche, a French-Mulatto, was thought to be an excellent nurse and midwife, and in the absence of a physician in the village, took over responsibility for the health of the population. One of her sons became a blacksmith and the others became "substantial" farmers ("Negroes in Wisconsin History" 63-64).

La Buche's family and other families at Prairie du Chien in the early nineteenth century, were the first documented free black permanent settlers in Wisconsin (Phillips "Negro-White Integration" 56). Others followed and by 1850 there were 632 free blacks in Wisconsin (1850 US Census of Population-Manuscript Schedule). Zachary Cooper, in his State Historical Society of Wisconsin booklet "Black Settlers in Rural Wisconsin" recounted some of these people. Moses Stanton founded Chilton in Calumet County in 1845 and built a successful sawmill and grist mill and drew other blacks to

the area. John Riley opened Racine's first barbershop in 1848 (3). But the US Census of Population-Manuscript Schedule lists even more.

Out of the total state population of 305,391, I found 632 people listed as black or mulatto on the 1850 US Manuscripts Census. This is only 0.2% of the total population. Because this black population had recently migrated to Wisconsin, it was young, male and for the most part not born in Wisconsin.

The black population of 1850 was young, the average age being only twenty-two years old. Children fourteen and under made up 35.8% of the population and there were thirty-five children under two years old. And on the other hand, only nine or 1.4% were over sixty-five years old and eighteen, 2.9%, were 60 or older. Figure 1 shows this population distribution. There were thirty-two black people thirty years old. This was the most common age for blacks in Wisconsin. Of the 632, 42.3% were women. Figure 1 also shows the breakdown by sex for 1850 (1850 Census).

Finally, because the black population had recently migrated to Wisconsin, only the very young had been born in the state. Figure 2 shows the inverse relationship between age and being born in Wisconsin. However, 144, or 23.3%, of Wisconsin's blacks had been born in this state. This meant that more of Wisconsin's blacks had been born in Wisconsin than in any other state. Reportedly, 21.7% or 134 had been

born in New York. However, sixty-six of these were probably Indians in Calumet County (Holzhueter 18). The third most popular place of birth was Virginia. Figures 3, 4 and 5 show the places of birth by state and by region for Wisconsin blacks in 1850, with the South meaning all slave states. Wisconsin's blacks in 1850 had been born pretty equally among the three regions, but the Midwest had a slight edge over both the South and the East with 38%. Those born in the Midwest were still children in 1850 as the average age was only 11.3. Their parents had migrated from the East and the South to the Midwest and had had children here (1850 Census).

This newly migrated population, however, was not unlike the total population in Wisconsin in 1850. The total population was also young, averaging only nineteen years of age. In the total population, children fourteen and under made up 41.8% of the 305,391 people. Only 2.4% were sixty or older. The total population was also slightly male dominated as women made up only 46.1% of the population. And finally, only 17.8% of the state's population had been born in Wisconsin but 45.7% had been born in some other state in the country and had migrated to Wisconsin. 36.2% had been born in a foreign country and the remainder did not know where they had been born (1850 Census).

Blacks came to Wisconsin before 1850 for many different reasons. Of course, many slaves tried to escape to free or wilderness areas and by the end of the eighteenth century,

the route north, with the underground railroad, abolitionist helpers and southern sympathizers, became the preferred migration path (Johnson 32).

But even "free" blacks had to leave the South to be free. The fear that the presence of free blacks would create a slave rebellion prompted many states to pass strict laws to rid the South of freedmen. Blacks couldn't travel around freely in southern states and in some places they could only go to the county adjoining the county where they lived. They had to carry their papers at all times or run the risk of being taken for a slave. In some areas, free blacks had to register with the county sheriff of the area they were visiting. By 1835, most southern states either restricted or all together prohibited free blacks from immigrating (Johnson 32). Also by 1835, most southern states either required that a slave owner obtain legislative or judicial permission to free slaves or prohibited the act all together. The few states that allowed manumission, forced the now free blacks to migrate out of the state. By 1850, only Delaware, Missouri, and Arkansas allowed the freeing of slaves and manumitted blacks to remain in the state (Berlin 138).

However as figure 3 showed, about one-third of all 1850 Wisconsin blacks had been born in the East. Whether or not these blacks were the children of Southern blacks who had moved north is hard to determine. But it is clear that Wisconsin blacks were not all running from the master's whip.

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Leonard Curry, in his book The Free Black in Urban America, 1800-1850, described the conditions of blacks in eastern cities this way:

Huddled in rotten shacks crammed into narrow alleys or on the backs of lots; employed, if at all, in only the most menial occupations; excluded from much of the city's life and activity; harassed and assaulted; mired in perpetual poverty and often unrelieved want; even the poorest stayed, clinging to what little the city grudgingly gave, and daring, against all experience to hope for a better tomorrow (239).

But they did not all stay. 31% of Wisconsin's blacks in 1850 had been born in the East. These blacks, like the whites heading west, were pushing the frontier.

Besides freedom and frontiers, blacks migrated to Wisconsin before 1850 seeking religious and educational opportunities and cheap land. After the opening of the Wisconsin Territory, fertile, arable land was available for one to three dollars per acre (Cooper 26). However, because Wisconsin was a long way to go, most of those that were fleeing the South must have been content to remain in the border states of Indiana, Illinois and Ohio. The total black population in Wisconsin in 1850 was only two thirds of the number of slaves that escaped in 1850 alone. But, some families, like the Valentines, had pushed north to make up a part of Wisconsin's black population (1860 US Census).

The 1850 black population lived in the very southern part of the state, with only fifty-eight, or 9.2%, living in

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counties north of Lake Winnebago (See Map 1). The total population was even more predominately southern, as only 3.2% lived in counties north of Lake Winnebago. The north had not yet drawn people because there was still plenty of rural areas in the southern part of the state. In fact, even though they were concentrated in the south, only 32.9% of the black population was urban (living in cities, towns or townships of 2500 people or more. See Appendix A). Besides those blacks living in Mineral Point, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, Beloit and Indian Lands in Marquette, the black population was scattered in rural townships and small villages in twenty-six of Wisconsin's counties. Overall, sixty-eight different cities, villages and townships had black populations. The state population as a whole was 12.1% urban in 1850. The largest city, by far, was Milwaukee at over 20,000 inhabitants. The urban areas of Beloit and fast growing Janesville made Rock the most populous county in the state (1850 Census).

Still by 1850, blacks had not concentrated into any area or developed a settlement, but had rather blended into the population. There were no black neighborhoods or farm communities in 1850. No blacks were recorded at the Marinette trading post. No offspring of Mary Ann La Buche were found living at Prairie du Chien and the black population there was just a few scattered families. The highest concentrations were in Racine, where fifty-seven blacks made up a little

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over 1% of the city's population, and in Milwaukee.

Milwaukee's 1st Ward had a black population of fifty-one and the 2nd through 5th Wards combined had forty-seven blacks. William Vollmar, in his MA thesis about blacks in Milwaukee, said that even though "a large number of them Åblacksö resided in the 1st Ward, they were by no means restricted to that area." In 1852, 62.5% lived on the East Side in the 1st, 3rd and 7th Wards. 25% lived on the West Side in the 2nd and 4th Wards. The remaining 13.5% lived on the South Side in the 5th and 8th Wards (Vollmar 25). Even the blacks living in Milwaukee had not created their own community in 1850 (See Map 2).

Even though demographically the blacks had blended into the population, in terms of opportunity and economics they had been left behind. Of the black workers in 1850, 31.6% were farmers. These sixty-seven farmers were joined with thirty-six barbers and day laborers, fifteen cooks and eleven waiters to make up over three fourths of the black work force. But blacks weren't limited to these professions; table 1 lists the twenty-eight different occupations that were entered for black males over fifteen on the 1850 manuscripts. Using Leonard Curry's occupation classifications and index of occupational opportunity (I.O.O.), I calculated that Wisconsin blacks in 1850 had very limited occupational opportunity (259). The low classification contained 65.6% of working black males but the

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high class contained only 25%. On a scale of 0 to 1, 0 meaning no opportunity, or all members engaged in very low skill jobs and 1 meaning high opportunity or all members engaged in artisan, entrepreneurial or professional jobs, 1850 Wisconsin black's I.O.O. was 0.3 (see Appendix D). The labor force of the state as a whole was 52.3% farmers. But this statewide labor force also contained many white-collar workers: bankers, dentists, editors, professors, surgeons, chemists, lawyers, etc. In the total population, 54.1% of working males were employed in the high classification type jobs. As a result, the state wide I.O.O. was 0.6 in 1850, twice as high as the black labor force's. Over 160 different titles were used for the occupations of the total population and blacks were excluded from all but 28 and from all the white-collar jobs (1850 Census).

This job exclusion was probably partly a result of the high illiteracy rate among blacks in 1850. 30.1% of black men over twenty years old were illiterate. The state percentage was only 3.5% of men over twenty. Of Wisconsin blacks born in the South, 35.5% were illiterate. These illiterates were probably former slaves and were prevented from going to school and possibly prohibited from learning to read and write. Only 40.0% of Wisconsin's illiterate blacks were born in the South. Figure 6 shows the percentages for the other regions. So, the South was not the only place where blacks grew up without the ability to read and write

(1850 Census).

Unfortunately, Wisconsin may have also been one of these places. Of those blacks born in Wisconsin, 50% over twenty years old were illiterate. And things didn't look too promising as only 40.7% of black children between five and twenty had attended school in the last year, as opposed to the state average of 52.7% (1850 Census).

The job exclusion and illiteracy rate probably resulted in a lower standard of living for the blacks. This can be seen by looking at the real estate figures. Only fifty-eight black households, out of the total 220 households, reported owning any real estate. Blacks owned \$32,735 worth of real estate in Wisconsin in 1850. This was 0.1% of the total value of owned real estate in the state even though they made up 0.2% of the population. The average amount owned was \$564.40, but the average for all the black households, including those who reported owning nothing, was \$148.80 and the average for each person was \$51.80. The total state averages were \$495.22 per family and \$93.42 per person.

Adult blacks in Wisconsin in 1850 were migrants. Some were exiled from their home states. Some were pushed out by restrictive laws. Some were enticed west by the frontier. But they chose to come to Wisconsin, looking for freedom and opportunity. Demographically they were similar to the general state population. No pronounced black areas or characteristics seemed to set them apart. However, they had

less in several areas of life : less opportunity, less education, less wealth. How did these adverse conditions affect the black community over the next ten years? Did opportunity improve? Let us look at black Wisconsin in 1860 to find out.

After ten years, what were the Valentines up to? By 1860, the family had moved north to Newark Valley, Adams County, a township with a population of 118. Robert Valentine, still a farmer, owned real estate worth \$2000 and personal estate worth \$600. He and Lois had one more child in 1853, Nancy, to bring the family up to ten members. Fredrick, the oldest, was still unmarried at twenty-seven, and lived with his parents. He worked as a farmer and possessed \$450 worth of real and personal estate. The next three oldest children had moved out of the house. Susan, the second oldest, was now also twenty-seven, married to Leonard Manley, a farmer from North Carolina, and lived next door to her parents. The remaining four children were under seventeen and, except John who at sixteen years old worked on the farm, attended school. Also living with the family now was Nancy Bedman, a forty year old black woman born in North Carolina, possibly Lois's sister (1860 Census). The Valentines seem to have done very well over the ten-year period. But what about the rest of the blacks?

Out of the total state population of 775,620, I found 1089 people listed as black or mulatto in the 1860 Manuscript

Census. This is only 0.1% of the population, a sharp decrease from a standing of 0.2% of the population in 1850. The black population was still very young, the average age was about twenty years old. 41.0% were children fourteen years old and younger, and there were seventy-three infants under two years old. Only eleven people, 1.0%, were over sixty-five and thirty-five, 3.2% were sixty years old or older. Figure 7 shows this still bottom heavy population. Of the 1089, females made up 43.4%. Figure 7 also shows the sex division for 1860. Figure 8 compares the age distribution of Wisconsin blacks in 1850 and 1860.

324 of the population, 29.8%, had been born in Wisconsin. Figure 9 shows the inverse relationship between age and being born in Wisconsin for 1850 and 1860. Many others had been born in Virginia, New York, Ohio, Illinois and Indiana. Figures 10, 11, and 12 show the places of birth by state and region for 1860 Wisconsin blacks. Still, the majority, 54.0%, of Wisconsin blacks had been born in the Midwest or Canada. And still it was mainly the children who had been born here. Evidence of new migration was still visible 10 years later (1860 Census).

During the 1850s, blacks came to Wisconsin for the same reasons that they had been coming before 1850: in search of freedom, opportunity and land. But there were added reasons for black immigration to Wisconsin after 1850. Cooper said that the Fugitive Slave Act, which allowed slave catchers to

cross state lines to capture run away slaves, pushed some border-state blacks farther north and westward, into Wisconsin (4). After the act was passed in 1850, no black person was safe, even in the North. In 1854, Joshua Glover, an escaped slave, was found in Racine and imprisoned in Milwaukee. A group of men freed Glover and helped him to Canada and the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled the Fugitive Slave Act unconstitutional. Leon Litwack stated that by 1856, more than 200 so-called fugitives in the North had been arrested and only twelve of these had won their cases before the commissioner. Also, an estimated 20,000 of the North's blacks fled to Canada between 1850 and 1860 (249). The fact that catchers could and did find who they were looking for probably prompted more northward immigration.

Besides the slave act, Cooper stated that "enactment of restriction, disfranchisement, and denial of public education for blacks in border states" pushed blacks farther north (4). The 1857 Dred Scott Case effectively took away the blacks' citizenship. Litwack showed how Ohio felt about black settlement. Southern Ohioans rioted against the settling of 518 freed slaves (69). In 1850, an Ohio convention delegate said that he supported excluding blacks from schools if it would discourage black immigration (116). Border state blacks pushed north looking for opportunity.

By 1860, the black population of Wisconsin had also pushed northward, to include the lower two thirds of the

state and Douglas and Bayfield Counties. In all, forty-three counties had black people. The total population lived in about the same region, leaving the northern one third, except for Douglas and LaPointe (present day Bayfield and Ashland Counties) free of settlement (See Map 3).

The whole state had become more urbanized. For Wisconsin, the census of 1860 listed thirty urban areas, areas with more than 2500 inhabitants. But still only 38.4% of blacks lived in these areas. Besides the cities they lived in in 1850, blacks made up part of the population of Whitewater, Oshkosh, Portage, Madison, Janesville, Fond du Lac, Plattville, La Crosse, Kenosha and Manitowoc. The rest of the population was scattered among the rural townships or villages in the state (See Appendix B). The state population as a whole was 20.2% urban in 1860. Milwaukee, at 45,286 people, was a full 5.8% of the state population. Madison, Fond du lac, Racine, Janesville and Oshkosh, all had populations over 5000 (1860 Census).

By 1860, the black population had scattered but also black communities had appeared. The concentration of blacks in the seven county southeast section (Rock, Walworth, Jefferson, Waukesha, Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha) was still high, 40.2% of the black population. But this figure had decreased from the 1850 percentage of 42.9. The number of blacks in Jefferson had remained the same and the number in Milwaukee had actually decreased (1850 and 1860 US Census of

Population-Manuscript Schedule).

Besides concentrating less in the Southeast, blacks also pushed northward. By 1860, 15.7% of blacks lived in counties north of Lake Winnebago, an increase of 5.5 percentage points from the 1850 figure. And in all, forty-three of Wisconsin counties contained a black population in 1860. There was also a shift within the counties, as people moved to new, less populated townships. In 1860, 110 rural townships contained a black population, a huge increase from sixty-two in 1850. And the average population of the townships that blacks lived in decreased from an average of 1058.2 people per township in 1850 to an average of 987.3 people in 1860. The Valentines are evidence of this as they had moved from Oregon in Dane County, which by 1860 had a population of 1259, to Newark Valley in Adams County which had a population of 118. Also, the concentration of blacks within each community decreased from 9.3 in 1850 to 8.8 in 1860. This change was mainly due to the decrease in urban areas, which went from 34.7 black people/area to 29.9 black people/area. The black concentration decreased from 6.8 people/area to 6.1 people/area in rural areas.

Even though the percentage decreased, at the same time that blacks were dispersing, some were also grouping together as black communities appeared. The Valentines lived in such a community. Newark Valley's population was 17.0% black, or twenty black people out of the total population of 118.

Living near the Valentines were John Joyce, a twenty-three-year old tenant farmer born in Illinois, and his family. Joyce's wife was Margaret, a twenty-four-year old North Carolinian, and they had a three-month old son named John. Also living close by was the family of Isaac Collins. Collins, a fifty-year old farmer born in Virginia, and his wife Sarah from Tennessee, had five children who ranged in age from two to fourteen years old (1860 Census). These three families, with the Valentine daughter and her family, made a small black farming community that has been overlooked by black rural Wisconsin historians.

In the 1860 census, ten townships had more than one black farm family, and four of these townships had communities of four or more black farming families. These four communities were in Waukesha, Waukesha County; Newark Valley, Adams County; Forest, Bad Ax (present day Vernon) County; and Trimble, Pierce County. Besides these, Beetown, Grant County, though in 1860 only the two Shepard families lived there, became an important black farm community and eventually grew to the population of about 100 inhabitants (See Cooper 20).

Trimble Township had a population of 403, twenty-two of whom were black. Four of these black families made up the fifteen member farming community. Madison Roberts, a forty year old born in Virginia, and his family of four were part of this community. The Washingtons, a family of six from the

east, and Armistead and Rebeca Steele also lived near by. Garner and Andrew Bennet also farmed in the township. The largest of the communities was in Bad Ax County. Cooper stated that the six families at Cheyenne Valley in Vernon County lived on rich farmland. These families "prospered from the begining" and by 1860, two of the farmers were some of the wealthiest farmers in the township, based on size of farmland and value of livestock (5-6). Cooper concluded from this that acceptance by the white community and eventual success combine to show that there was a lot of opportunity for the blacks willing to work hard (27).

Phillips, in his 1968 article "Negro-White Integration in a Midwestern Farm Community" argued that the early black pioneer farmers of Cheyenne Valley were "relatively prosperous," owned the land they farmed and lived interspersed with white farmers (55). However, the 1860 US Manuscript Census shows that only three of the farmers owned any real estate and the other three men were labeled "tenant farmers" in the Agricultural Census. Only two of the farmers owned personal and real estate valued at equal to or above the state average of \$380.21 (1860 US Census of Population-Manuscript Schedule). And by the household visited number, the census taker visited all six of these black households close together. Their numbers were 1133, 1132, 1131, 1126, 1092, and 1091. Whether this means that they lived next door to each other is dubious, but there is reason to doubt

integration (1860 Census). Even though blacks moved with the rest of the population to settle new, less populated regions, they also started to consolidate together.

In 1860, 23.5% of the 388 black workers in Wisconsin were farmers or farm laborers. There were seventy-two barbers, fifty-two day laborers and forty-eight servants. Table 2 lists all forty-two professions entered for blacks in 1860, using Curry's classification system. A few blacks broke out of the menial labor jobs (note the dentist), but barbers, cooks, waiters, day laborers, servants and whitewashers made up 54.9% of the work force. Most black workers still had little opportunity in the job market as the I.O.O. was only 0.2.

50% of the black illiterate of Wisconsin were born in the South, 27.8 in The Midwest, 22.2 in the East. Figure 13 shows illiteracy by region and by Wisconsin. Twenty black people born in Wisconsin were illiterate. However, only forty-three of those born here were twenty years old or more, and qualified to be illiterate by census standards. So, 46.5% of blacks born in Wisconsin who were eligible to be noted as illiterate, were illiterate. For the future, only 43.0% of black children five-twenty years old had attended school in the last year.

The high illiteracy rate was reflected in real estate and personal estate figures for 1860. Blacks owned \$60,206 worth of personal property and \$129,446 worth of real estate.

This was 0.1% of the state's personal, 0.06 % of the state's real estate, and an average of \$174.15/person. The total state average was almost twice that figure at \$380.21/person (1860 Census). The average wealth (real estate plus personal estate) was \$564.44/black male over twenty years old. Lee Soltow found that the state average was considerably higher at \$1500/male over twenty years old (5).

The history of blacks in Wisconsin goes back to the earliest settlements. Slaves and free blacks both have played a part in Wisconsin's history. But the face of mid-19th century black Wisconsin was very different than what we see today. In 1850 and 1860, the black people of Wisconsin were recent migrants. Like their white counterparts, they came to Wisconsin looking for land at the edge of the frontier. They blended into the state population, increasing in number but decreasing in the state percentages over the decade. They pushed north and out to rural areas, and even formed some farming communities. However, even though demographically they matched the state wide pattern, economically they were left behind. A higher illiteracy rate, and a lower wealth average, index of occupational opportunity, high-achievement occupation average, and children in school average show that opportunity sought is not opportunity found. And things did not improve over the decade as both the index of occupational opportunity and real estate percentages decreased over the decade. But opportunity not sought is never found. And some who searched,

like the Valentines, found what they were looking for.

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Table 1. 1850 Occupations of Wisconsin black males over 15

A. LOW OCCUPATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT	Number
I. Unskilled	
day laborer	36
farmers without real estate	35
sailor	5
farm laborer	1
II. Semiskilled	
whitewasher	6
lumberman	2
miner	2
fisherman	1
III. Personal Service	
barber	36
waiter	11
servant	2
clothes cleaner	2
B. MEDIUM OCCUPATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT	
IV. Transportation	
porter	2
teamster	1
V. Food Service	
cook	15
C. HIGH OCCUPATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT	
VI. Artisan	
blacksmith	4
mason	2
tanner	2
carpenter	1
butcher	1
cooper	1
engineer machinist	1
VII. Entrepreneurial and Merchant	
farmers owning real estate	32
grocer	4
saloon keeper	3
VII. Professional, Scientific, Clerical, Artistic	
musician	2
UNCLASSIFIED	
padler	1
lemster	1
Total	212

Source: Data compiled from 1850 US Census of Population-Manuscript Schedules. Categories taken from Curry 259.

Table 2. 1860 Occupations of Wisconsin black males over 15

	Number
A. LOW OCCUPATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT	
I. Unskilled	52
day laborer	31
farm laborer	16
farmers without real estate	3
sailor	
II. Semiskilled	15
whitewasher	6
miner	3
mill worker	2
lumberman	2
well digger	2
gardner	1
stove factory worker	
III. Personal Service	72
barber	48
servant	4
waiter	1
clothes cleaner	
B. MEDIUM OCCUPATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT	
IV. Transportation	2
porter	2
teamster	1
carriage driver	1
steward	
V. Food Service	24
cook	3
baker	
C. HIGH OCCUPATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT	
VI. Artisan	7
blacksmith	3
carpenter	2
mason	2
shoe maker	1
cooper	1
engineer machinist	

Table 2. 1860 Occupations of Wisconsin Black Males over 15
(continued)

VII. Entrepreneurial and Merchant	
farmers owning real estate	44
saloon keeper	5
grocer	1
restauranter	1
toy shop	1
product dealer	1
merchant	1
VII. Professional, Scientific, Clerical, Artistic	
musician	4
clerk	2
interpreter	1
dentist	1
UNCLASSIFIED	
degnarian	1
Total	370

Source: Data compiled from US Census of Population- Manuscript Schedules. Categories taken from Curry 259.

APPENDIX A: USING THE US CENSUS OF POPULATION-MANUSCRIPT SCHEDULES

Scrolling through the microfilms of the U. S. Manuscript Census is at times both frustrating and rewarding. To find black people you must sift through the masses of whites enumerated, watching for "B"s for black or "M"s for mulatto in the color column. Besides the occasional microfilmed hand that makes a cipher of members of the population, after finding blacks, decoding the census enumerator's handwriting can turn into a game. Sometimes finding readable words and matching these letters to letters in unreadable words is the only way to decode the entry. After decoding, you wonder whether the entry is correct: did the enumerator spell the name correctly? is this a real resident or are they just passing through? was the person too embarrassed to say that they were illiterate? but most of all, was this really a black person? In 1850 and 1860, "black" and "mulatto" were not explained to the enumerators. For the 1850 census they were told that "when enumerating colored persons to write 'B' or 'M'" in the space and to leave the space blank for whites. In 1860 it seems that no instructions about color were given at all (Negro Population 207).

Some enumerators went beyond their duty by entering "Indian" or "H.B." (half breed) on their sheet and adding these into the white population numbers. The enumerator for

Berlin Township, in Marquette County listed Talbut Pricher, his wife Rozina and daughter Louisa as "H.B." Since these three were added into the white and not the black population totals, it seems that the enumerator wanted to show that the family was of mixed white and Indian descent (1850 Census).

Most enumerators, however, were not as exact. John Holzhueter, in his unpublished manuscript "Negro Admixture Among the Brotherton, Stockbridge, and Oneida Indians of Wisconsin," examined this problem in Calumet County's census. He said that it is likely that all of the 122 colored people listed for Calumet in 1850 were actually Indians because he found their surnames often on tribal records. Also, he said that even though John Marygold, the enumerator for Calumet in 1860, listed 716 mulattos, the census office in Washington added these to the Indian total. This is because Marygold thought that "mulatto" meant a mixture of any two races (18).

Besides sometimes being unreliable in recording color, the census was also, no doubt, sometimes inaccurate in recording numbers as well. In 1860 Rock County, A.J. Harris, his wife, two children and a possible boarder, are listed as living both in the 2nd and the 4th Wards of Janesville. Between the two enumerations, Mr. Harris lost his real estate, valued at \$2000, with no gain in personal property; Mrs Harris and her son Halleo aged a year; the boarder, John Smiley, aged three years and went from being a waiter to having no profession (1850 Census).

Other repeats seem likely but overlooked people are certain. In 1850, Collins Black, a thirty-three-year old mulatto laborer, was listed in the manuscript for the village of Fort Atkinson in Kenosha (present day Jefferson County). However, the official count forgot him, as there are no blacks listed for the village (1850 Census). Also, just like trying to count the homeless today, trying to count all those people in transit or without homes was difficult.

So, is the census totally unreliable in the study of blacks in Wisconsin in the 1850s? Of course we have to be careful about the conclusions made based solely on it but the census can provide a lot of information for a comparably small error exchange. Because more research is needed to refine the numbers and names for the black population, this paper sticks to those listed as black or mulatto on the manuscripts.

After going through the counties that had reported black citizens and recording each black person's statistics, I created a data base for each the 1850 and the 1860 censuses. First I wrote a data list that listed all the names and column numbers for each variable. The variables included occupation, real estate owned, age, sex, name, whether illiterate etc. Then, using fixed format entry and following the columns I had set up, I made a data file. Using a program that made sense out of the data file, I could access any information I needed. Cross-referencing two variables was especially helpful in creating this picture of black

Wisconsin. A machine-readable copy of my data file and SPSSX program file is available at the Area Research Center, UW-Eau Claire.

APPENDIX B : 1850 LOCATION AND POPULATION OF BLACKS IN WISCONSIN

COUNTY	TOWNSHIP	TTL POP	BLACK POP
Brown	Depere	799	1
	Green Bay	1924	28
	Howard	567	1
	Kankanlin	704	1
	Lancing	209	9
	Marrinette	243	3
	Washington	171	2
		-----	-----
		6215*	45
Calumet	District 36	1743	122
Chippewa	Chippewa	615	1
Columbia	Ft Winnebago Village	1175	17
	Portage Prairie	603	1
		-----	-----
		9565*	18
Crawford	Black River	84	2
	Prairie du Chien	1302	14
		-----	-----
		2498*	16
Dane	Madison Village	1525	6
	Montrose	372	2
	Oregon	638	9
	Rutland	759	9
		-----	-----
		16639*	26
Dodge	Burnett	726	11
	Hubbard	874	1
		-----	-----
		19138*	12
Fond du Lac	Fond du Lac	2014	3
		-----	-----
		14510*	3
Grant	District 24	7062	26
	Harrison	764	1
	Jamestown	666	1
	Paris	391	1
	Plattville	2171	1
		-----	-----

		16169*	30
Iowa	Mineral Point	2547	27
	Pulaski	181	1
		-----	-----
		9525*	28
Jefferson	Milford	728	1
	Watertown Village	1451	1
		-----	-----
		15317*	2
Kenosha	Ft Atkinson Village	334	1
	Kenosha City	3455	18
		-----	-----
		10734*	19
LaFayette	Belmont	325	7
	New Diggings	1752	1
	Shullsburg	1678	4
	White Oak Springs	453	2
		-----	-----
		11531*	14
LaPoint	Fond du Lac Village	16	6
	(present day Superior, Wisconsin)	-----	-----
		489*	6
Marquette	Green Lake	725	2
	Indian Lands	2864	2
	Kingston	536	1
		-----	-----
		8641*	5
Milwaukee	Franklin	1176	10
	Greenfield	1995	1
	Milwaukee	1351	2
	Milwaukee City		
	First Ward	6017	51
	Second Ward	4873	7
	Third Ward	4143	14
Fourth Ward	2451	24	
Fifth Ward	2577	2	
		-----	-----
		31077*	111
Portage	Plover	451	1
		-----	-----
		1250	1
Racine	Dover	839	2

Firkus

	Norway	751	6
	Racine	780	3
	Racine City	5107	57

		14973*	68
Richland	District 26	903	1

		903	1
Rock	Beloit	2732	6
	Janesville East	1487	14
	Johnston	1271	2
	Turtle	1005	1

		20750*	23
St Croix	Buena Vista	258	1
	Falls St Croix	204	4

		624*	5
Sauk	Adams	502	1

		4371*	1
Sheboygan	District 16	1804	7

		8379*	7
Walworth	La Grange	1050	1
	La Fayette	1048	1
	Sugar Creek	1227	1

		17862*	3
Waukesha	Brookfield	1854	15
	Eagle	816	2
	Genesee	1289	1
	Oconomowock	1216	2
	Waukesha	2313	25

		19258*	45
Winnebago	Algoma	702	2
	Neenah	1413	11
	Winnebago	1625	7

		10167*	20

Source: Compiled from the 1850 US Manuscript Census

Search for Black Opportunity

APPENDIX C : 1860 LOCATION AND POPULATION OF BLACKS IN WISCONSIN

COUNTY	TOWNSHIP	TTL POP	BLACK POP
Adams	Newark Valley	118	20

		6497*	20
Bad Ax	Forest	262	38
	Franklin	918	1

		11012*	39
Brown	Green Bay Northward	1516	14
	Lawrence	614	3
	Wrightstown	463	1
	Preble	560	1

		11797*	19
Crawford	Prairie du Chien	2399	27

		8071*	27
Columbia	Ft Winnebago	447	9
	Leeds	1111	1
	Portage City		
	First Ward	734	2
	Third Ward	378	6
	Fourth Ward	1129	1

		24445*	19
Dane	Blue Mounds	809	3
	Madison City		
	First Ward	2133	2
	Second Ward	1424	4
	Third Ward	1664	14
	Fourth Ward	1427	10
	Mazo Manie	372	2
	Middleton	1317	2
	Vienna	749	1

		43992*	38
Dodge	Fox Lake	1467	4
	Hubbard	2811	8
	Lowell	2061	1

Firkus

	Oak Grove	2024	1
	Waupun Village		
	Southward	866	4

		44499*	18
Door	Sevastopol	200	1

		2948*	1
Douglas	Superior	534	4

		828*	4
Dunn	Eau Galle	358	4
	Menomonie	966	14

		2723*	18
Eau Claire	Eau Claire Village	1061	9

		3164*	9
Fond du Lac	Calumet	1455	3
	Fond du Lac City		
	Second Ward	1024	12
	Third Ward	1037	6
	Fifth Ward	599	1
	Ripon City		
	First Ward	1070	6
	Second Ward	956	9
	Taycheedah	1466	11
	Waupun	791	10

		34155*	58
Grant	Beetown	1482	15
	Lancaster	1971	10
	Plattville	2862	7
	Potosi	2081	2
	Potosi Village	653	2

		31207*	36
Green Lake	Brooklyn	963	3
	Green Lake	1243	16
	Kingston	456	2
	Markesan Village	460	2
	Marquette	477	2
	Princeton	1492	4

Search for Black Opportunity

		12631*	29
Iowa	Arena	1295	7
	Clyde	611	1
	Mineral Point	1199	23
	Wyoming	622	1

		18998*	32
Jackson	Black River Falls		
	Village	571	4

		4171*	4
Jefferson	Jefferson	2009	1
	Koshkonong	2025	1

		28771*	2
Juneau	Lisbon	982	1

		3704*	1
Kenosha	Bristol	1370	6
	Kenosha City		
	First Ward	1563	18
	Paris	1088	1

		13516*	25
La Crosse	La Crosse City		
	First Ward	999	13
	Second Ward	1108	17

		12194*	30
La Point	Bayfield	358	1

		358	1
La Fayette	Belmont	735	2
	Center	1917	4
	New Diggings	1689	1
	Shullsburg	2491	13
	Willow Springs	843	6

		18141*	26
Manitowoc	Manitowoc Village		
	Second Ward	1048	4

Firkus

		22385*	4
Milwaukee (a)	Milwaukee	45286	110
		45286	110
Monroe	Adrian	341	1
	Sparta	615	2
		8398*	3
(a) From Vollmar who didn't break the list down			
Oconto	Marinette	474	3
	Oconto Village		
	Eastward	456	1
	Peshtigo	566	2
	Stiles	654	12
		3600*	18
Outagamie	Appleton		
	Second Ward	1072	4
	Third Ward	544	4
	Freedom	690	2
		9588*	10
Pierce	El Paso	93	5
	Prescott City		
	Second Ward	689	4
	Oak Grove	370	2
	Trimbelle	403	22
		4698*	33
Portage	Plover	898	3
		7504*	3
Racine	Caledonia	2438	27
	Dover	1110	1
	Mt Pleasant	1818	10
	Norway	971	14
	Racine		
	First Ward	1002	4
	Second Ward	1339	1
	Third Ward	2541	57
	Fifth Ward	1221	8

Search for Black Opportunity

	Raymond	1274	1
	Yorkville	1285	7
		21340*	131
Richland	Richland	1075	2
	Willow	448	7
		9739*	9
Rock	Avon	908	1
	Beloit	776	1
	Beloit City	4090	21
	Harmony	1128	1
	Janesville		
	First Ward	1744	12
	Second Ward	1792	41
	Third Ward	1026	1
	Fourth Ward	3141	3
		36692*	81
Sauk	Dellona	558	1
	Ironton	952	3
	Washington	708	9
	Westfield	719	7
	Woodland	386	15
	?	?	1
		18894*	36
Shawano	Richmond	220	40
	Shawano	71	3
	Waukechoa	89	2
		829*	45
Sheboygan	Sheboygan		
	Second Ward	1699	4
		26848*	4
St Croix	Hudson	380	3
		5393*	3
Trempeleau	Gale	780	1
		2550*	1
Walworth	Darien	1590	5

Firkus

	Delavan Village	1549	6
	East Troy	1718	1
	Elkhorn Village	1080	8
	Geneva	1184	9
	Geneva Village	1103	6
	Whitewater	1006	6
	Whitewater Village	2740	15

		26506*	56
Waukesha	Eagle	1282	8
	Ottawa	1075	1
	Waukesha	1456	20
	Waukesha Village	2076	4

		26849*	33
Waupaca	Mukwa	963	1

		8855*	1
Waushara	Plainfield	837	3
	Springwater	443	1

		8772*	4
Winnebago	Neenah	314	16
	Neenah Village	1296	4
	Oshkosh		
	First Ward	1570	9
	Second Ward	1383	1
	Third Ward	1181	4
	Fourth Ward	1337	5
	Fifth Ward	616	2
	Rushford	1651	9

		23769*	50
Wood	Grand Rapids	1002	1

		2429*	1

Source: Compiled from the 1860 US Manuscript Census

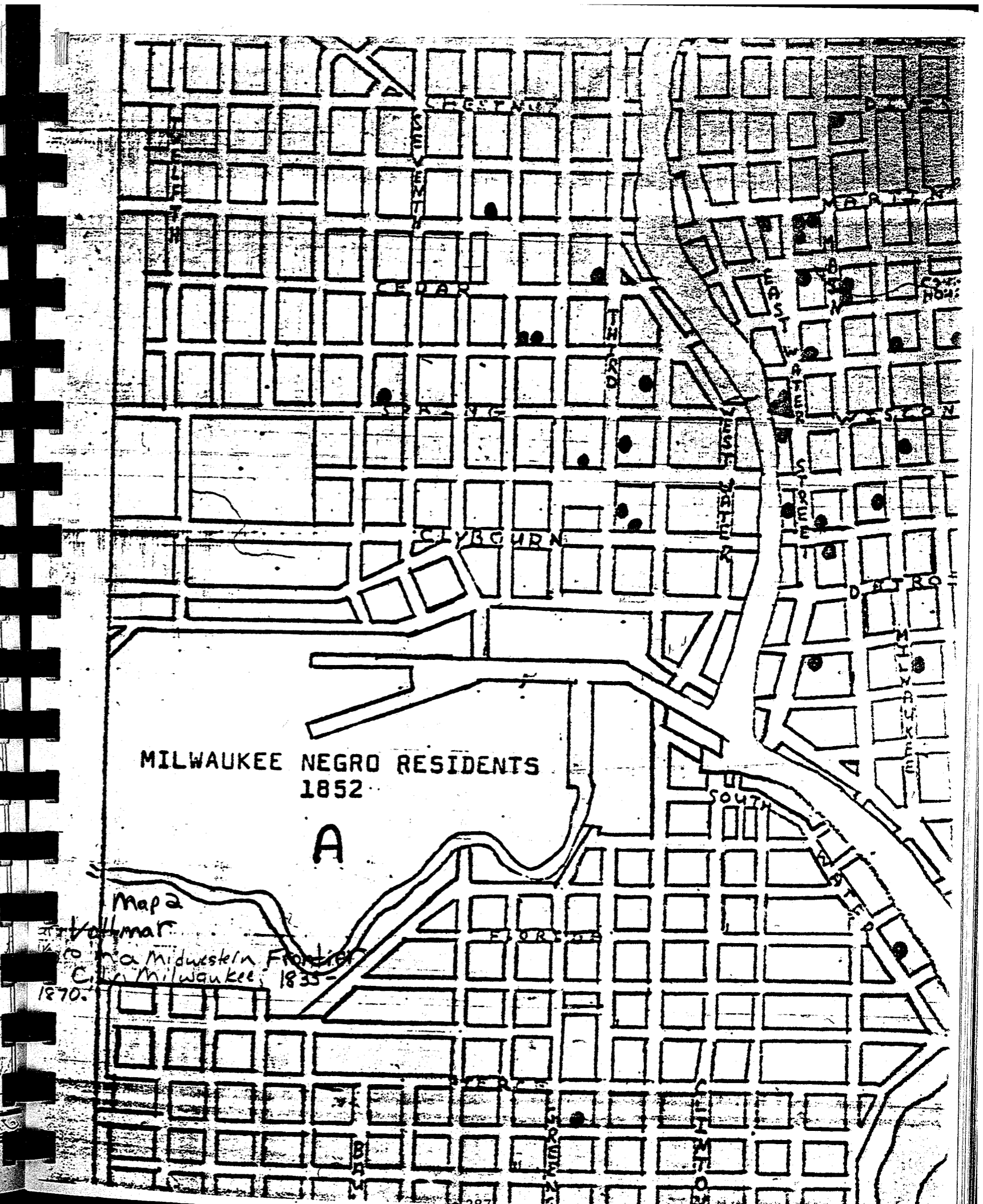
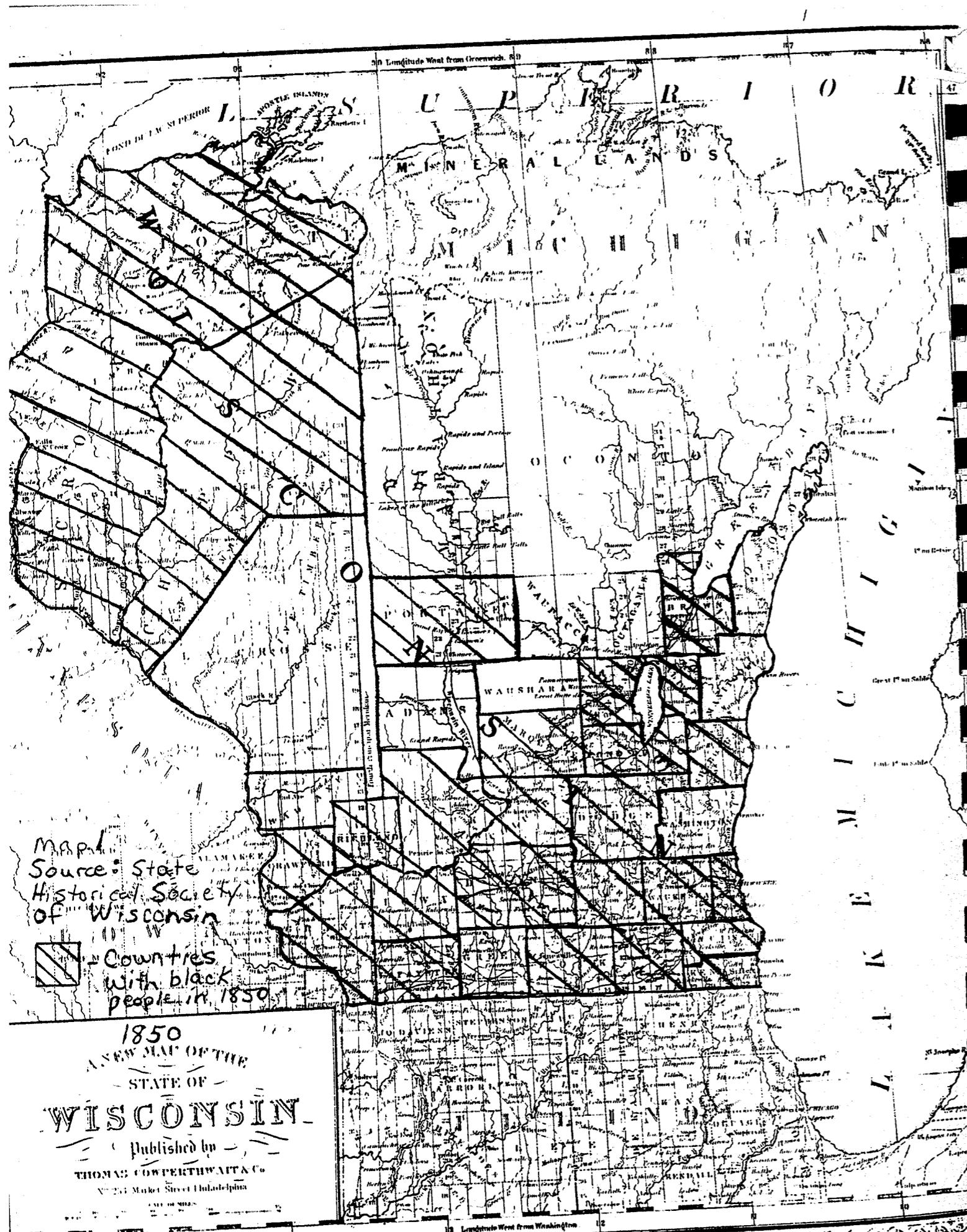
Search for Black Opportunity

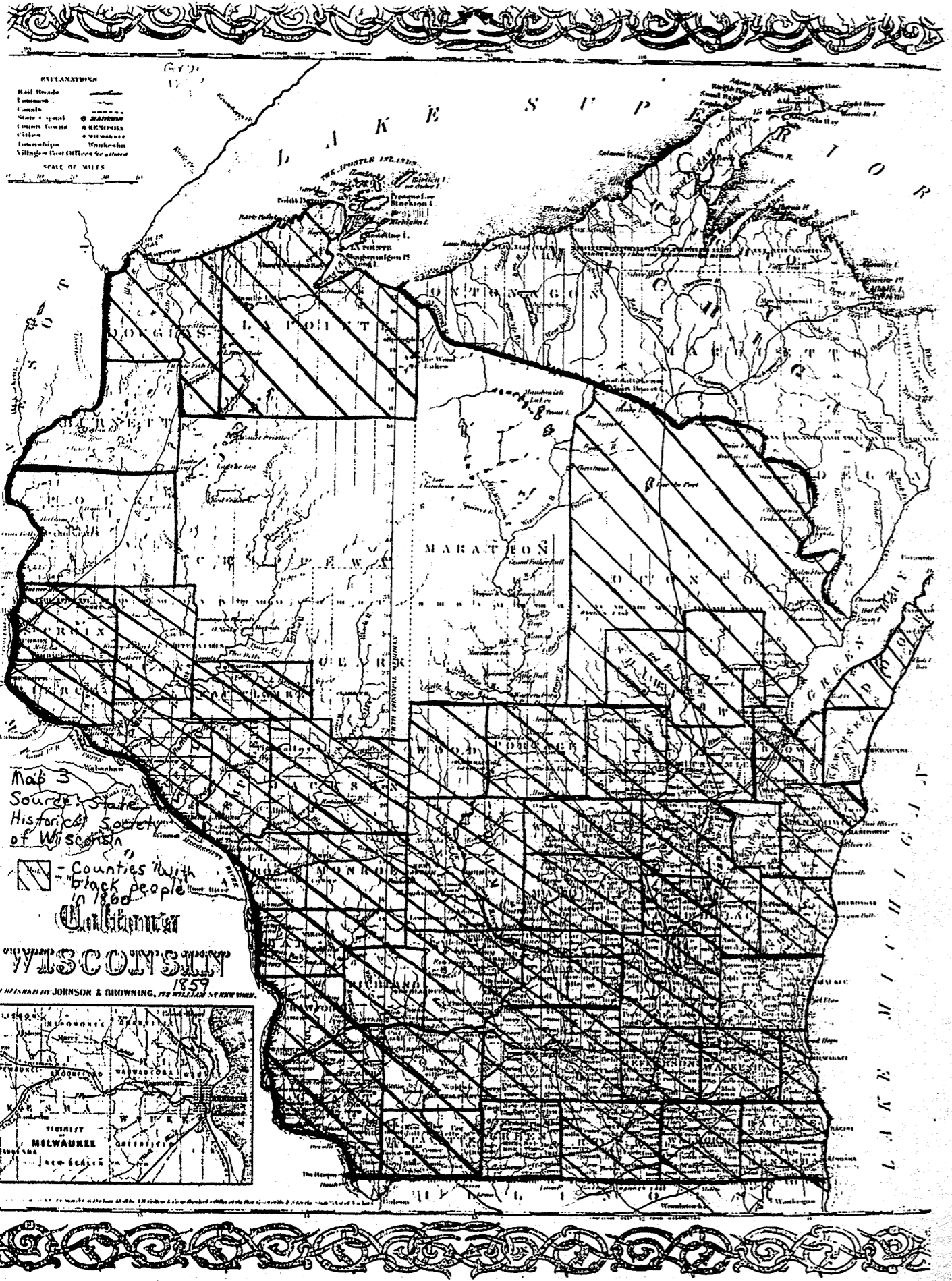
APPENDIX D: CURRY'S INDEX OF OCCUPATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

To determine the I.O.O., first find the percentage of the labor force in each of the three major categories that Curry has set up: high, medium, and low occupational achievement.

$$I.O.O. = \frac{C \text{ Class } \% - A \text{ Class } \% + 100}{200}$$

200





Source: 1850 US Census of Population-Manuscript Schedule

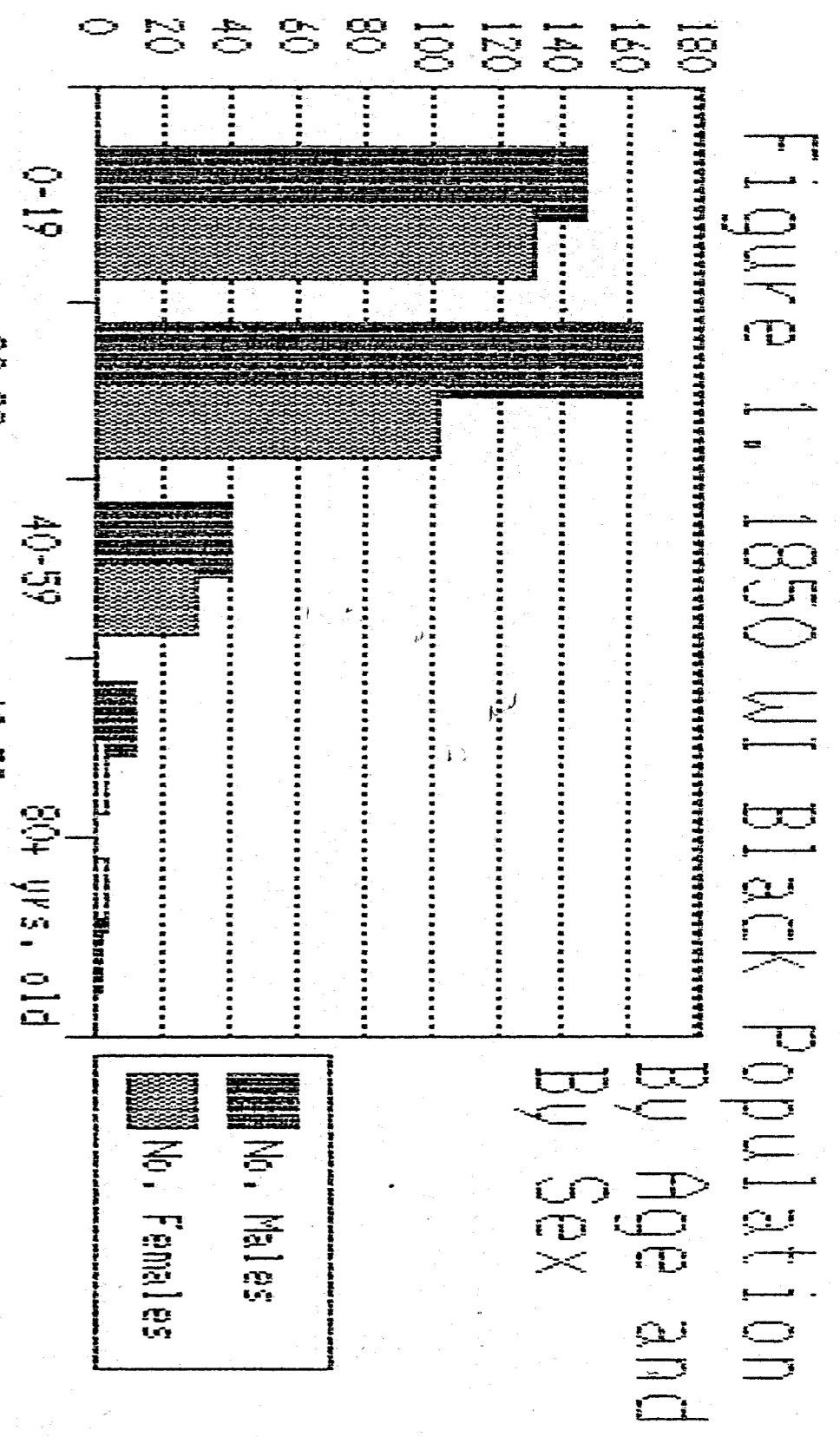
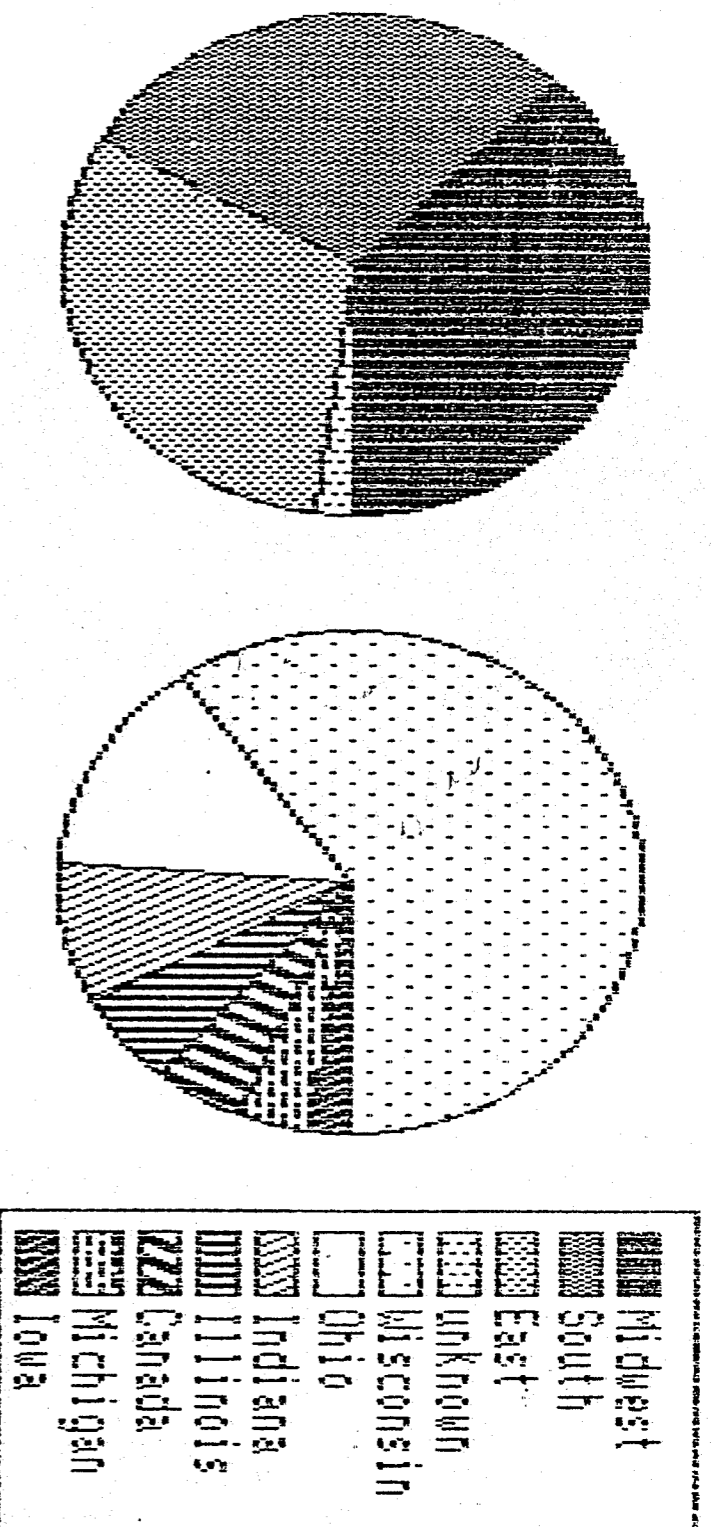
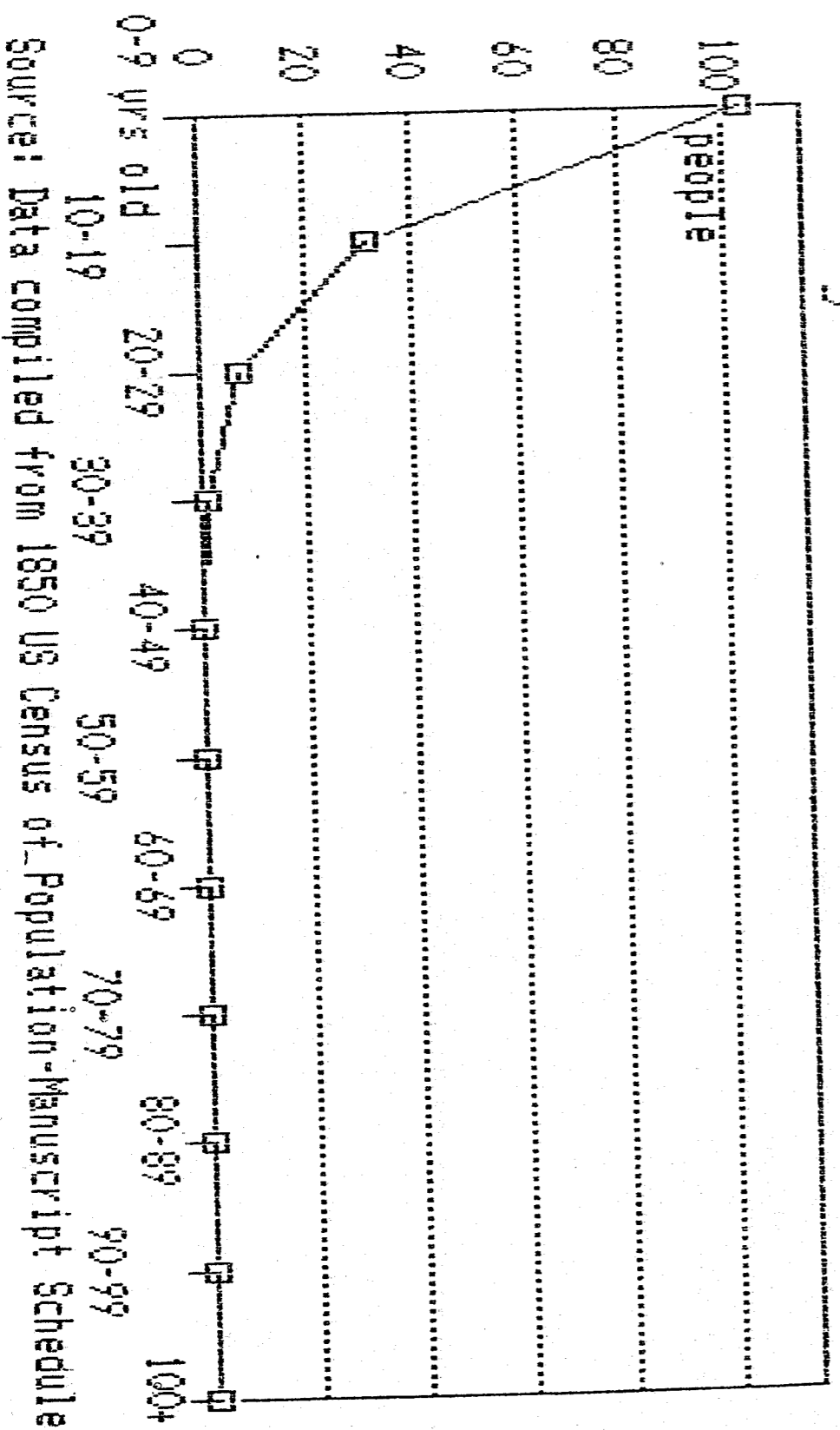


Figure 3. 1850 Black MI Birth Places



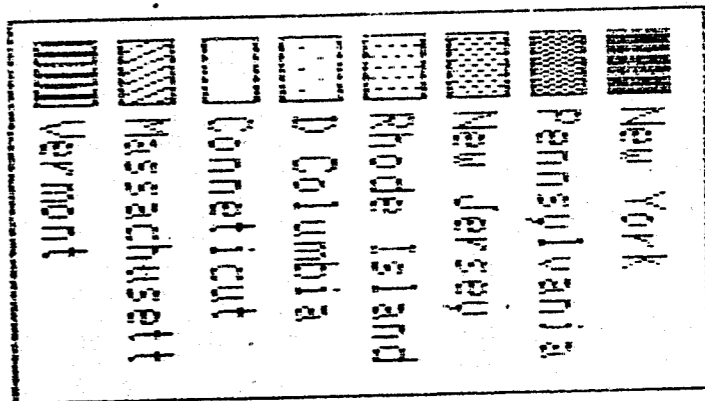
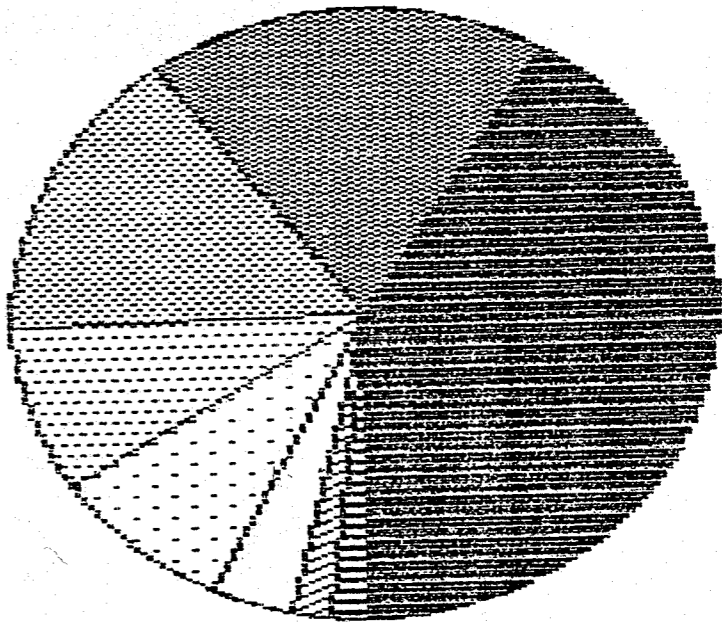
Source: Data compiled from 1850 US Census of Population-Manuscript Schedule

Figure 2. 1850 Blacks Born in MI



Source: Data compiled from 1850 US Census of Population-Manuscript Schedule

Figure 5. 1850 Black MI Birth Places

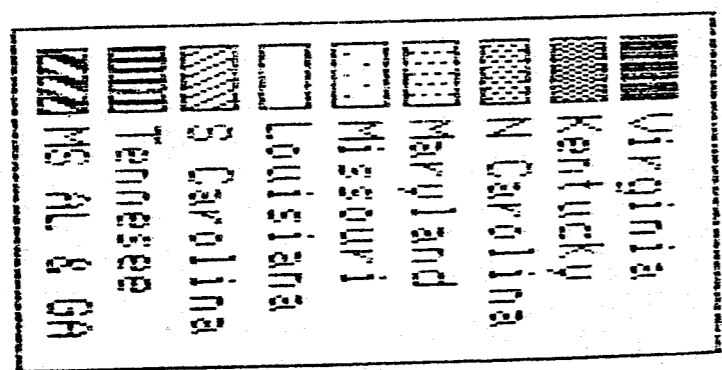
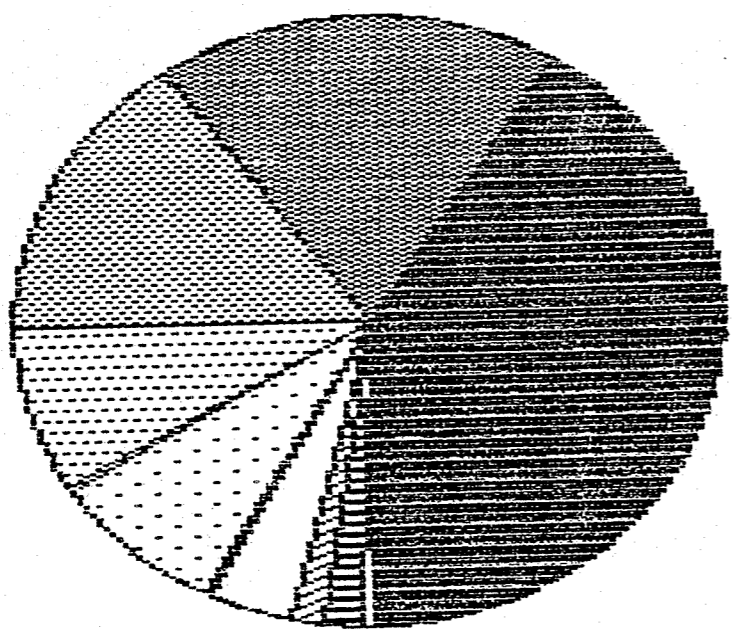


By State

in East

Source: Data compiled from 1850 US Census of Population-Manuscript Schedule

Figure 4. 1850 Black MI Birth Places

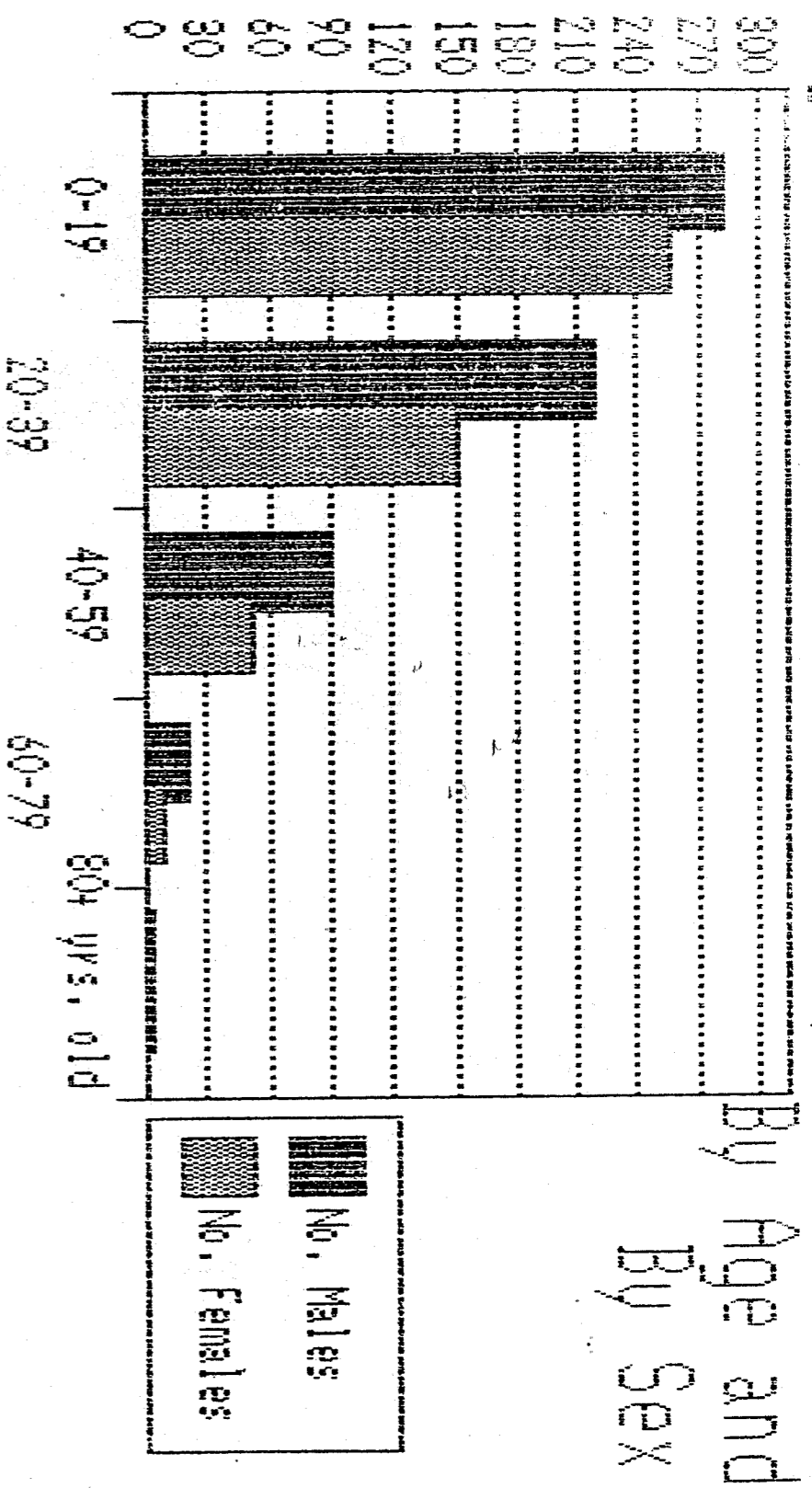


By State

in South

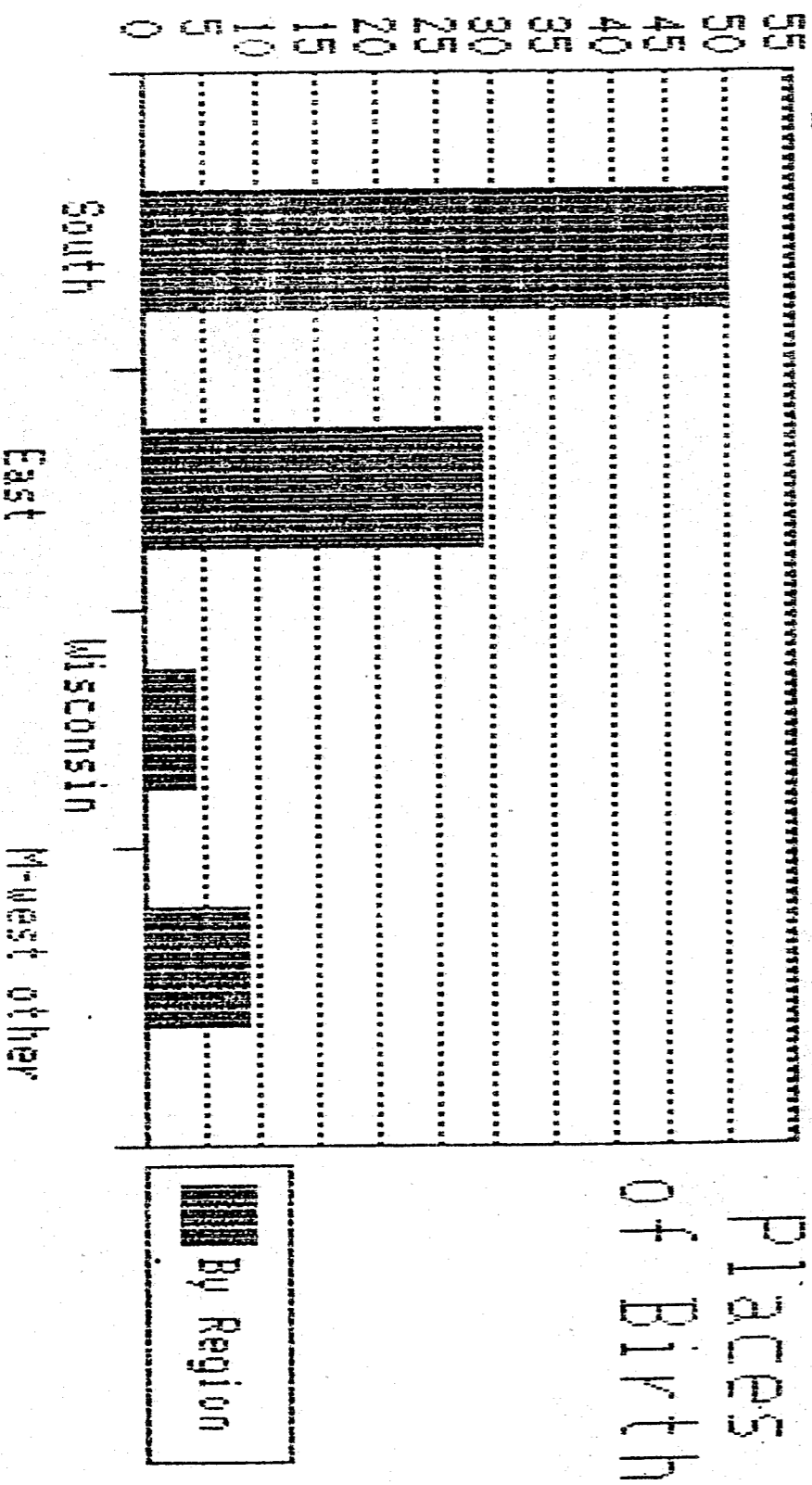
Source: Data compiled from 1850 US Census of Population-Manuscript Schedules

Figure 7. 1860 MI Black Population



Source: Data compiled from 1860 US Census of Population-Manuscript Schedules

Figure 6. 1850 Black MI Illiterates



Source: Data compiled from 1850 US Census of Population-Manuscript Schedules

Figure 9. 1850-60 Blacks Born in MI

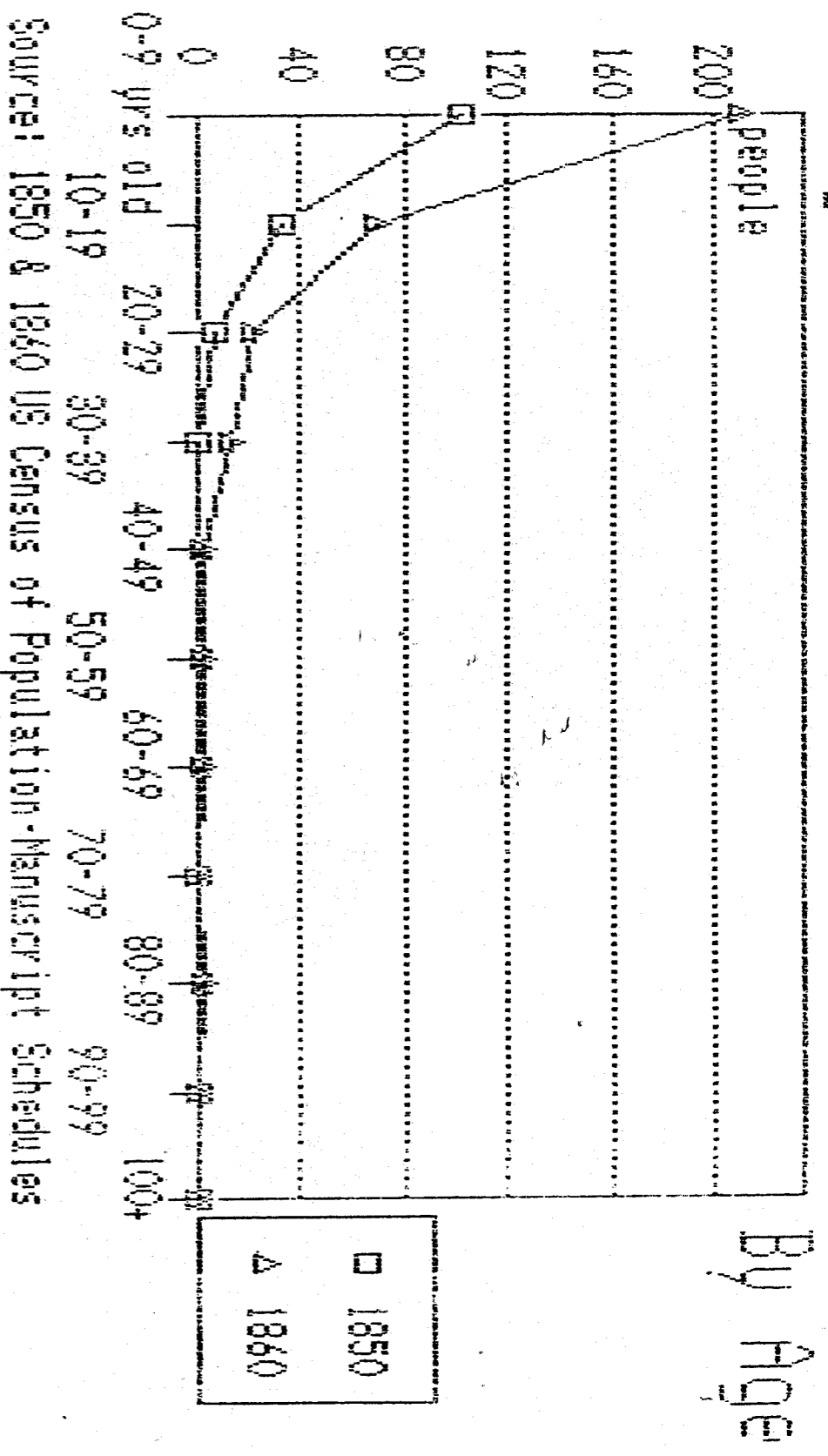


Figure 8 1850-60 Black Population

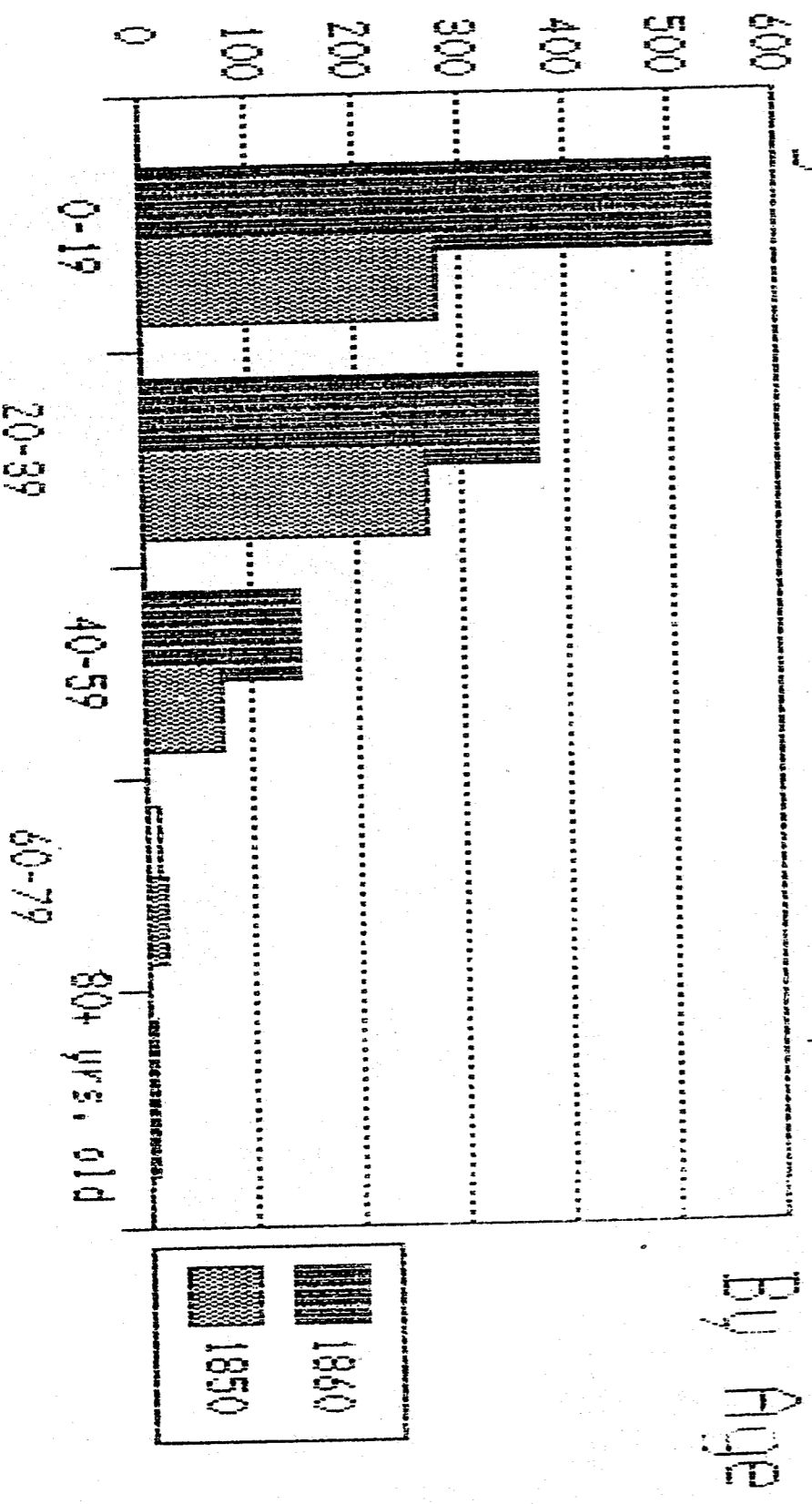
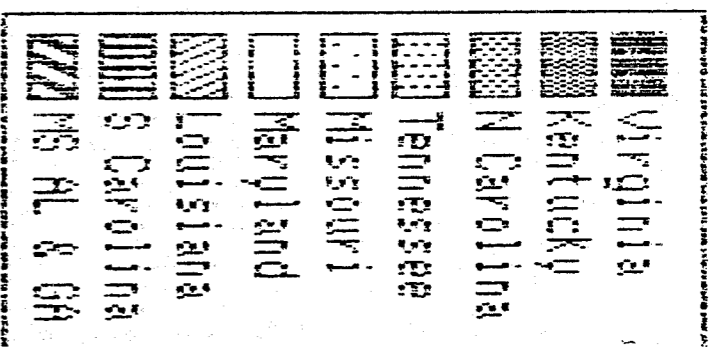
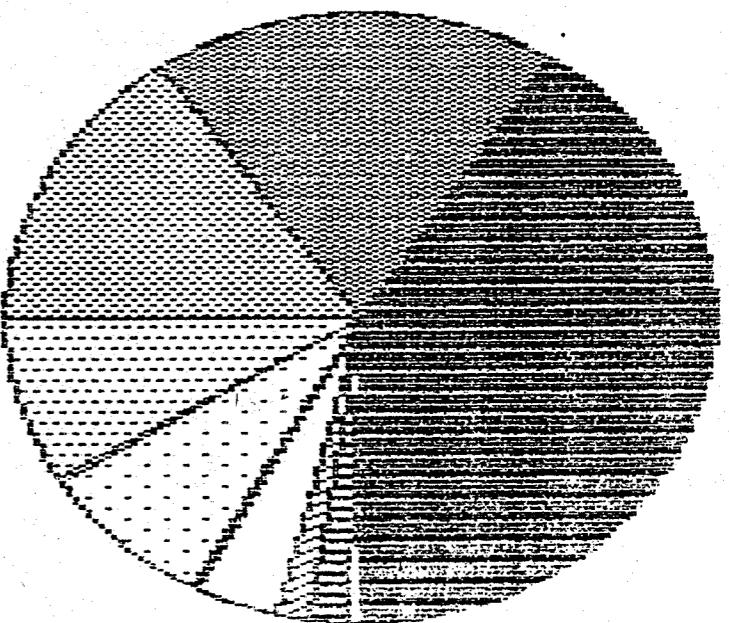


Figure 11, 1860 Black MI Birth Places

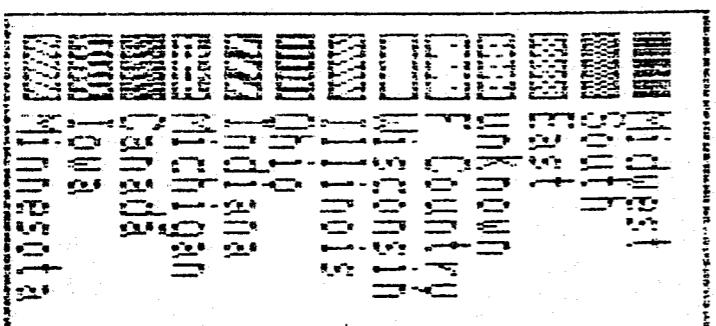
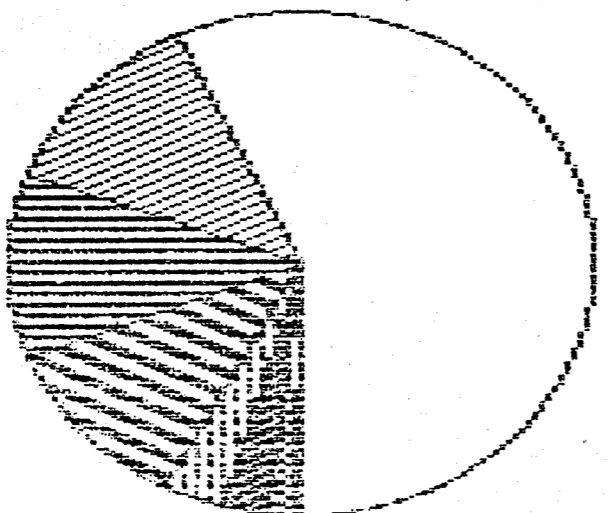
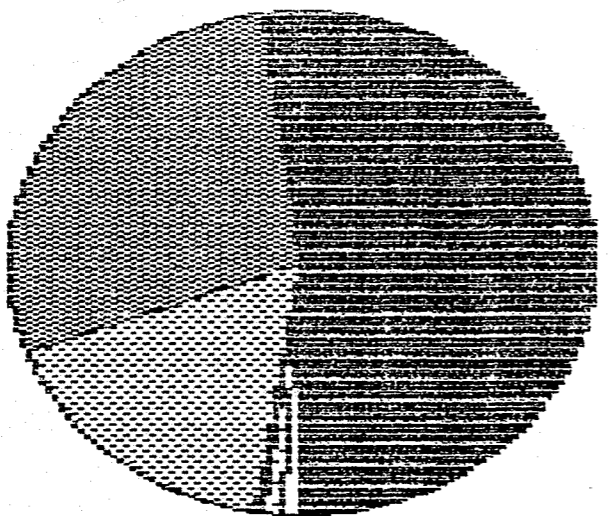


By State

in South

Source: Data compiled from 1860 US Census of Population-Manuscript Schedules

Figure 10, 1860 Black MI Birth Places



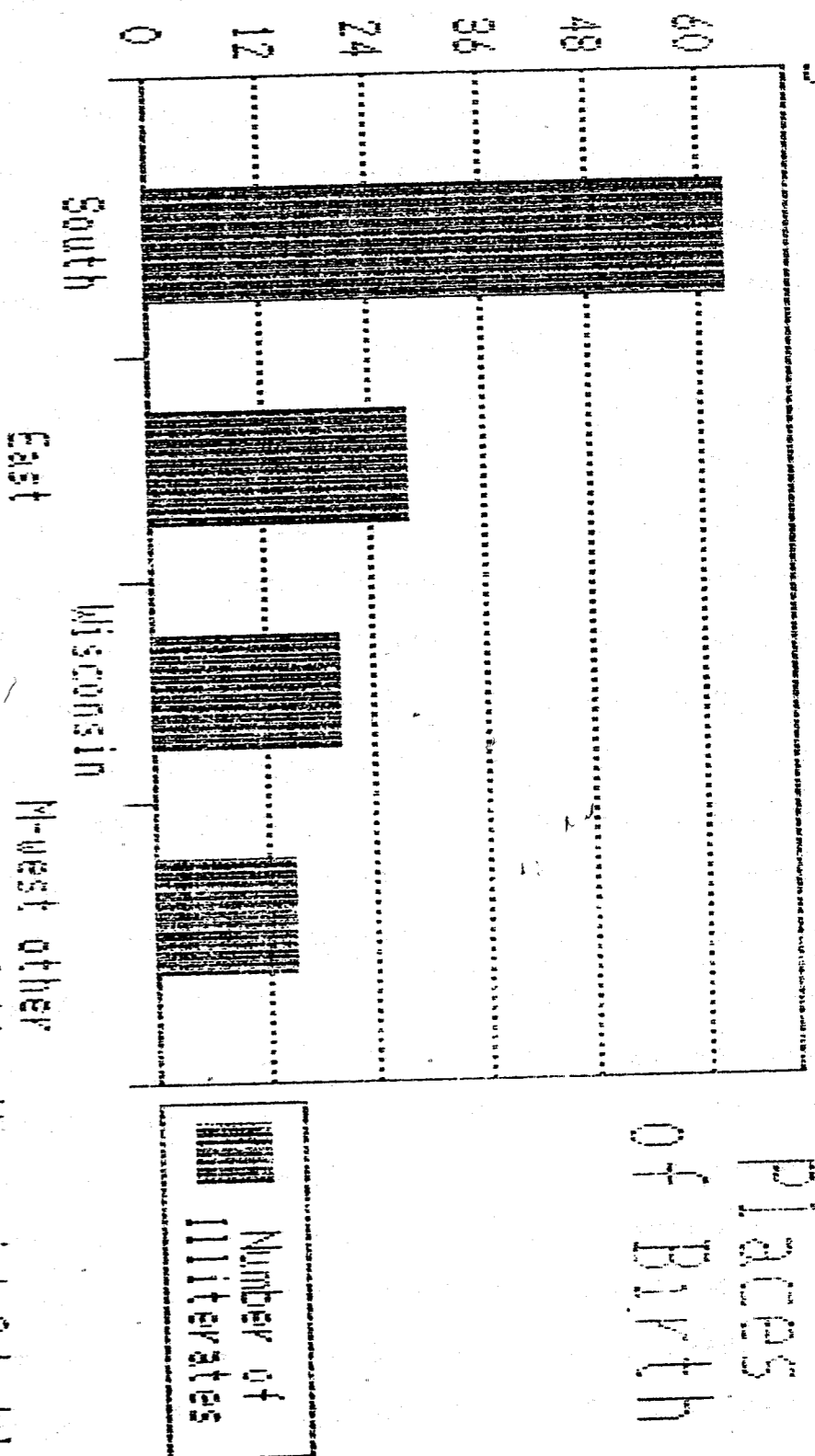
By Region

By State

in Midwest

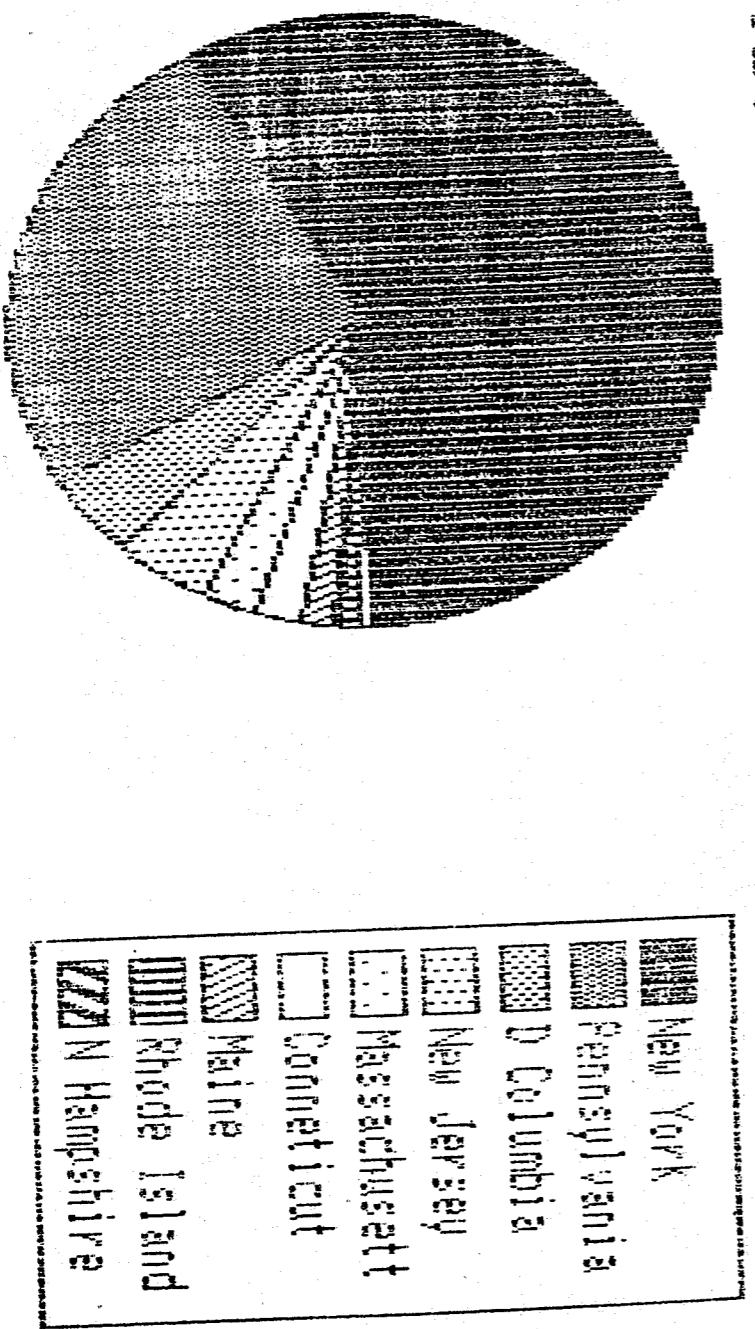
Source: Data compiled from 1860 US Census of Population-Manuscript Schedules

Figure 13, 1860 Black WI Illiterates



Source: Data compiled from 1860 US Census of Population-Manuscript Schedules

Figure 12, 1860 Black WI Birth Places



Source: Data compiled from 1860 US Census of Population-Manuscript Schedules