

Waterloo Civil Rights Survey and Historic Marker Final Report

Prepared for
The City of Waterloo
and
The Waterloo Heritage Preservation Commission

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Northeast Civil Rights Study Area



KBBG Radio

Tredwell Tourist Home

Fullilove
School of Music

Fields Home

Northeast Triangle Survey Area

Furgerson #1

Knights of Pythias

0 150 300ft

Milton F. and Vaeletta L. Fields House — 726 Sumner Street



1892 — Born in Saint Louis.

1918 — Law degree from the State University of Iowa and joined the Army.

— Served in France during World War I until the Armistice in November.

— One of ten African American soldiers selected for postgraduate work in Europe.

1920 — Married Vaeletta London a graduate of the State University of Iowa (teaching degree).

— Moved to Waterloo.

1922 — Milton was refused service at a Waterloo restaurant and took legal action.

1921 — Founded the local Chapter of the NAACP.

— Worked hard to bring Black professionals to Waterloo.

1928 — Setup a law practice and moved his office to the second floor of the Haffa Block .

— Encouraged Dr. Furgerson to settle in Waterloo.

— Through the years he represented client against restrictive covenants.

— Represented the Furgerson family against the Rose Hill Neighborhood Protective Association in their purchase of home at 705 Beech Street.





1931 — Milton and Vaeletta moved to 726 Sumner Street.

— Milton and Vaeletta's social service lives focused upon advocacy and leadership through the NAACP at the local and state level.

Early 1940s — Fields, Furgerson, and Judge William Parker establish the Black Hawk Savings & Loan Association.

1945 — The Fields moved to a larger house a block away 816 Sumner.

1950 — Milton Fields passed away.

Dr. Lee B. and Lillian (Lily) Furgerson Family House — 705 Beech Street

1998 — Lee Furgerson was born in Texas.

1902 — Lillian (Lily) Williams was born in Des Moines.

Early 1920s — both Lee and Lily attended the University of Iowa.

1925 — Lee received his medical degree and married Lily.

1927 — Furgersons moved to Waterloo.

1928 — Attorney Fields and Dr. Furgerson officed on Haffa Block second floor.

1929 — The Furgerson Family bought their first house at 705 Beech Street.

The Rose Hill Neighborhood Protective Association opposed the family moving into the White neighborhood.

Attorney Fields represented the Furgersons in their successful efforts to counter the covenant.

1930 — Black dentist W.C. Willis and his wife were living with the Furgersons on Beech Street.

Both Furgersons were active in leadership of the NAACP.

1944 — The Furgerson family moved a few block north to 600 Cottage Street.



Dr. Lee Furgerson



By 1948 — Lee Furgerson had moved his medical practice to 513 Lafayette Street and worked with Milton Fields in the establishment of a black-owned savings & loan association.

1948 — Lee Furgerson (49) was serving as President of the Black Hawk Savings & Loan when he died.

1952 — Lily Furgerson became the first Black teacher in the Waterloo School system.



Dr. Lee Furgerson family while living on Beech Street

Elizabeth (Lizzie) and Harvey Fullilove House Fullilove School of Music —720 Sumner Street

1894 — Lizzie Sanders was born in Holmes County, Mississippi.

Harvey Fullilove had studied at the American Music Institute in Chicago.

Lizzie's first formal music lessons where taught by Harvey Fullilove.

Lizzie studied music through the Chicago University Extension School of Music.

1917 — Lizzie and Harvey married and came to Waterloo.

Although Harvey worked as an Illinois Central welder/car repairman he also wanted to teach music.

1929 — Lizzie and Harvey opened the Fullilove School of Music in the DAV Building downtown.

1932-1942 — Lizzie Fullilove was a instructor at a music studio downtown at 620 Lafayette Street.

By 1942 — Lizzie attempted had integrated her studio classes.

1950 — Fulliloves purchase a lot north of East Donald Street to build a house but were face with severe opposition to moving into the “white neighborhood”

After neighborhood resistance and a cross burning near the proposed house lot the Fulliloves decided to purchase a lot at 720 Sumner Street.

1952 — They built the house on Sumner Street.



1964 — The Fullilove School of Music was still located in the DAV Building (Disabled American Veteran Building) at E. 5th and Lafayette Streets.

Mid-1960s— After Harvey died (1965) Lizzie moved the Fullilove School of Music to her basement at the Sumner house.

1985 — Lizzie Fullilove died at the age of 90.



Lizzie Fullilove specialized in string instruments

B.F. Tredwell Tourist Home — 928 Beech Street

1939 — The Tredwell Tourist Home was first listed in the *The Negro Motorist Green Book*.

1941 — Mrs. B.F. (Effie) Tredwell's tourist home still listed at 709 Logan Street.

1941 — Benjamin Tredwell, Effie's husband built a new family home at 928 Beech Street.

— Benjamin was one of the first Waterloo Black residents to build their own house.

1967 — The house remained listed in the *Green Book* until its final publication after the enactment of the Civil Right Act.



KBBG-FM Radio — 527 Cottage Street

1931 — Jimmie Porter born in Mississippi.

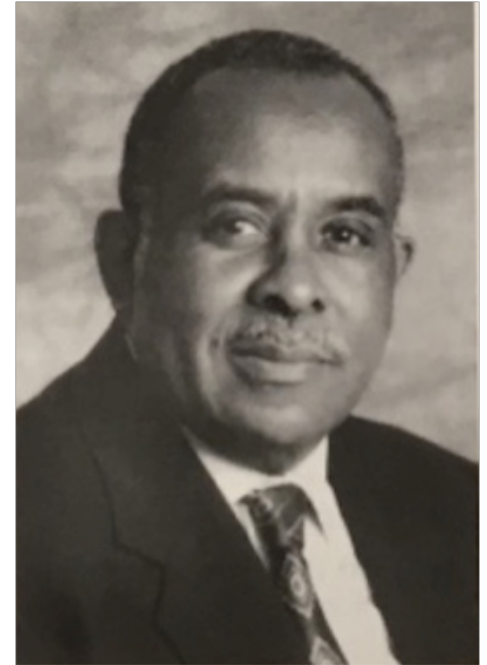
— As a boy Porter had worked in the cotton fields but around the age of 9 was taken in by a family cousin and given the opportunity to go to school.

1948 — Porter at age 17, came to Waterloo in search of the promised land, “and only found the land.”

— Porter worked for John Deere and then 1977 the Rath Packinghouse.

— Became active in the United Packinghouse Workers of America and later became the Vice President of the union.

— A man of vision and hope Porter saw the radio as the most accessible means to empowerment within the African American community.



1977 — Porter’s vision was realized as he built an African American owned and operated FM radio station that was non-commercial, public-affairs programming oriented, and community focused.

— KBBG first started broadcast with 10 watts from the basement studio at 527 Cottage Street.

By 1980 — KGGB FM 88.1 was broadcasting at 10,000 watts.

2007 — Jimmie Porter died and his wife Louise (Lou) continued refining his legacy.

Black Knights of Pythias, Furgerson Lodge #5— 244 Ash Street

1929 — Dr. Lee Furgerson was “grand medical examiner,” and Milton Fields was grand attorney for the Black Knights of Pythias.

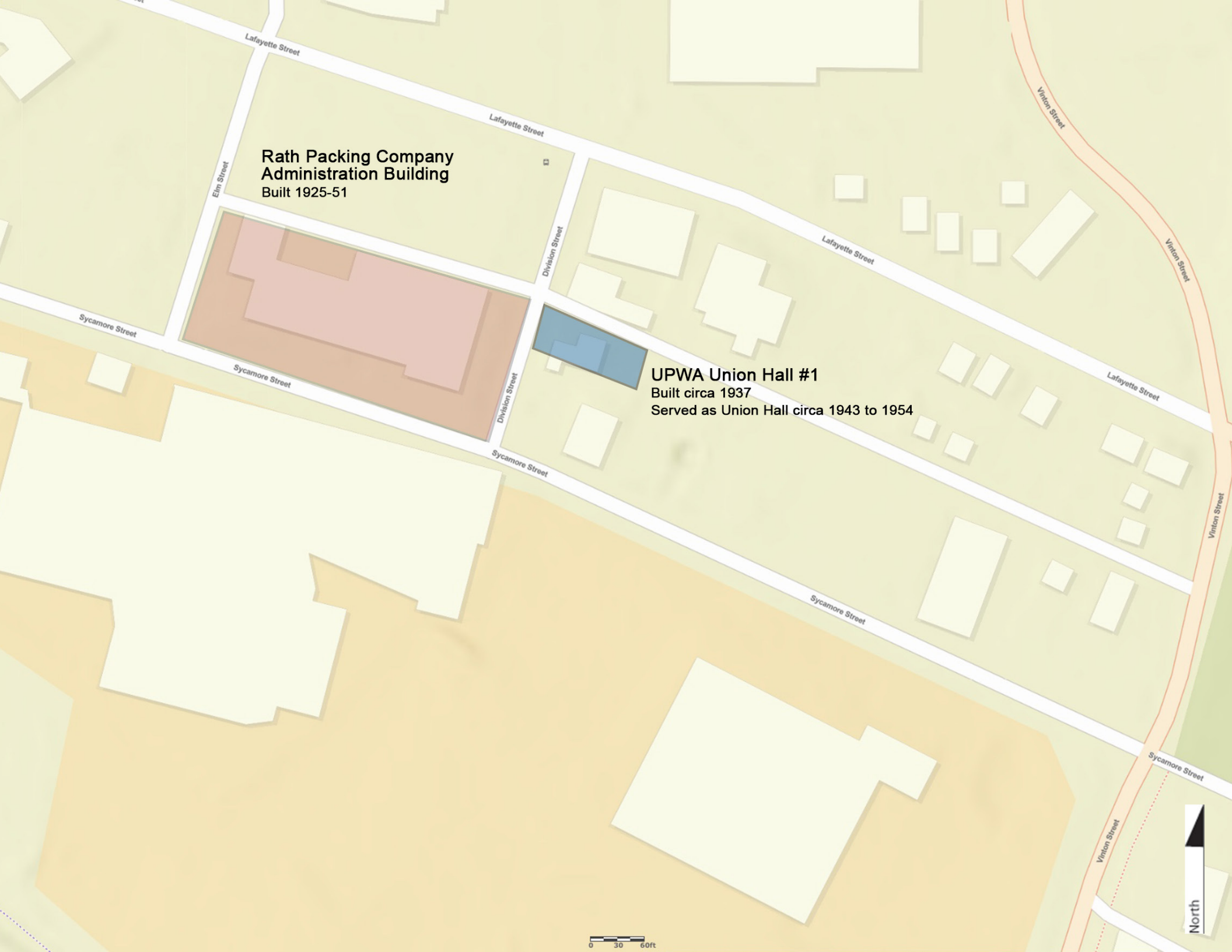
1960 — Built in 1960 as a rug cleaning plant, the Black Knights of Pythias lodge building is significant as an agent of empowerment within the Black community providing fraternity, civic engagement, and philanthropy.

1965 — James Jackson, a graduate of East High School, active in the NAACP and member of the Black Knights of Pythias became the first Black man to be elected to the Iowa General Assembly.

— Membership provided a freedom from insecurity and a sense of identity with a larger group taking united action.

— The Black Knights of Pythias lodge, though constructed relatively recently, is the only remnant of those kinds of organizations located in the Northeast Triangle.





**Rath Packing Company
Administration Building**
Built 1925-51

UPWA Union Hall #1
Built circa 1937
Served as Union Hall circa 1943 to 1954

0 30 60ft

North

United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA)

Local 46 Union Hall — 210 Division Street

— Significant for the Civil Rights and social history role it played in the union organization and worker empowerment at the Rath Packinghouse plant.

— UPWA Local 46 nurtured local leadership within Waterloo's African American community. Such as Anna Mae Weems and Jimmie Porter.

1940s — Unionization efforts begin after the passage of the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 and the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, and enabled new packinghouse unions under the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).



1943 — City directories list 210 Division Street as a union hall.



1948 — Local 46's most significant strike.

— Lasting repercussion of the 1948 strike supported union brotherhood over the division of race lines.

— The union leadership worked with the NAACP in support of strong/permanent civil rights measures throughout the city.



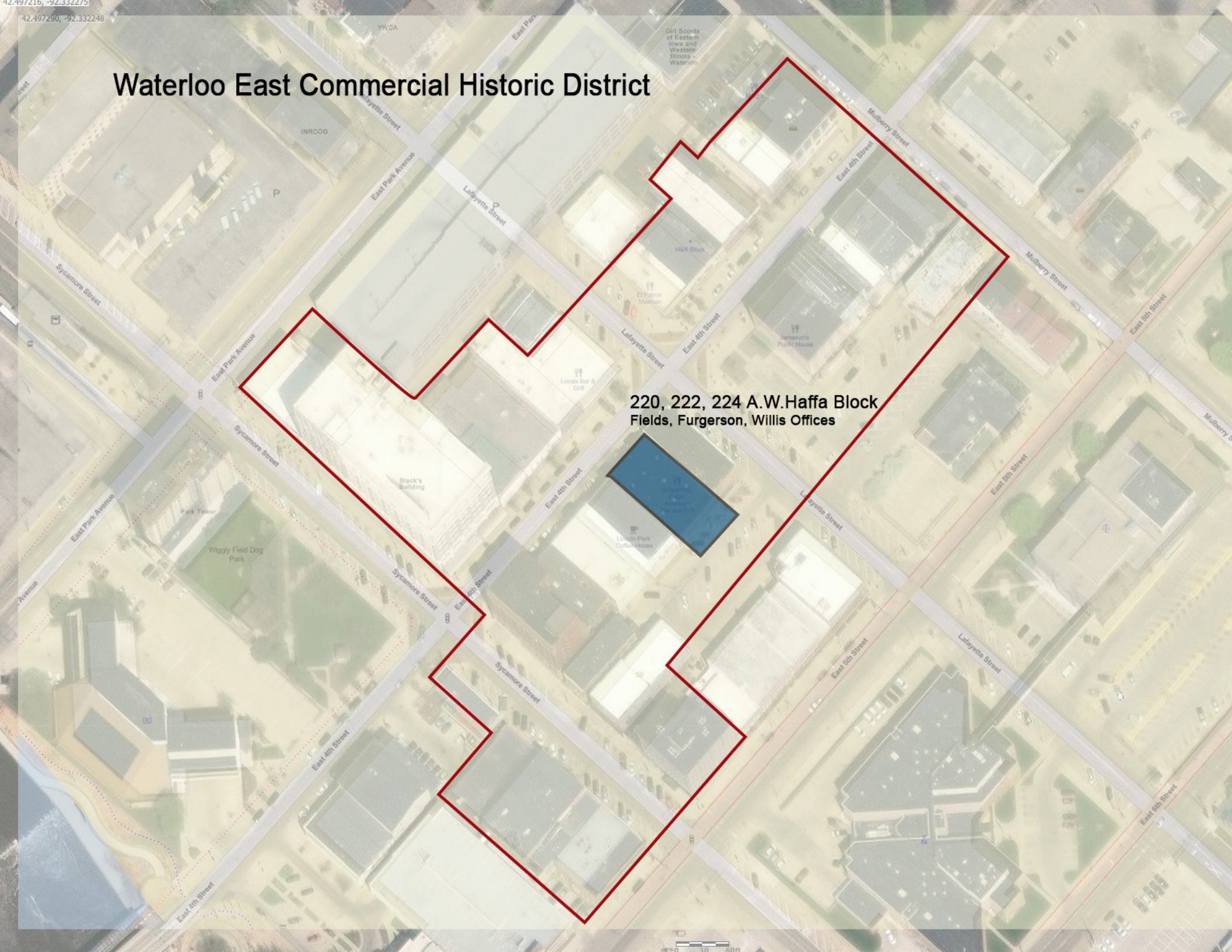
National Guardsmen stand watch outside the offices of UPWA Local 46 in Waterloo in the wake of the violence sparked by Chuck Farrell's shooting.

— The union prioritized women's rights, particularly for Black women in the plant, for which Anna Mae Weems rose to prominent leadership in the early 1950s.

July 1954 — New union hall was built at 1651 Sycamore Street.

Waterloo East Commercial Historic District

**220, 222, 224 A.W.Haffa Block
Fields, Furgerson, Willis Offices**



A.W. Haffa Block — 220-222-224 East 4th Street

Waterloo East Commercial Historic District

Victorian commercial building, built in 1913, associated with the lives of significant early Black professionals.

— Dentist Walter C. Willis (Practiced here: 1928-1933)

1927 — Upper floor provided office space for early Black professionals attorney Milton Fields, and Dr. Lee Furgerson, both graduates of the University of Iowa.

— Attorney Milton F. Fields (Practiced at the Haffa Block: 1927-1943)

— Dr. Lee B. Furgerson (Practiced here: 1927-1943)

By 1928 — Fields and Furgerson were joined by Walter C. Willis a dentist that studied at Macalester College in Saint Paul, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Michigan.

— Five years later, Willis moved to Detroit.

1943 — Fields and Dr. Furgerson moved their offices in to the third floor of a commercial building a few blocks away on Lafayette Street.

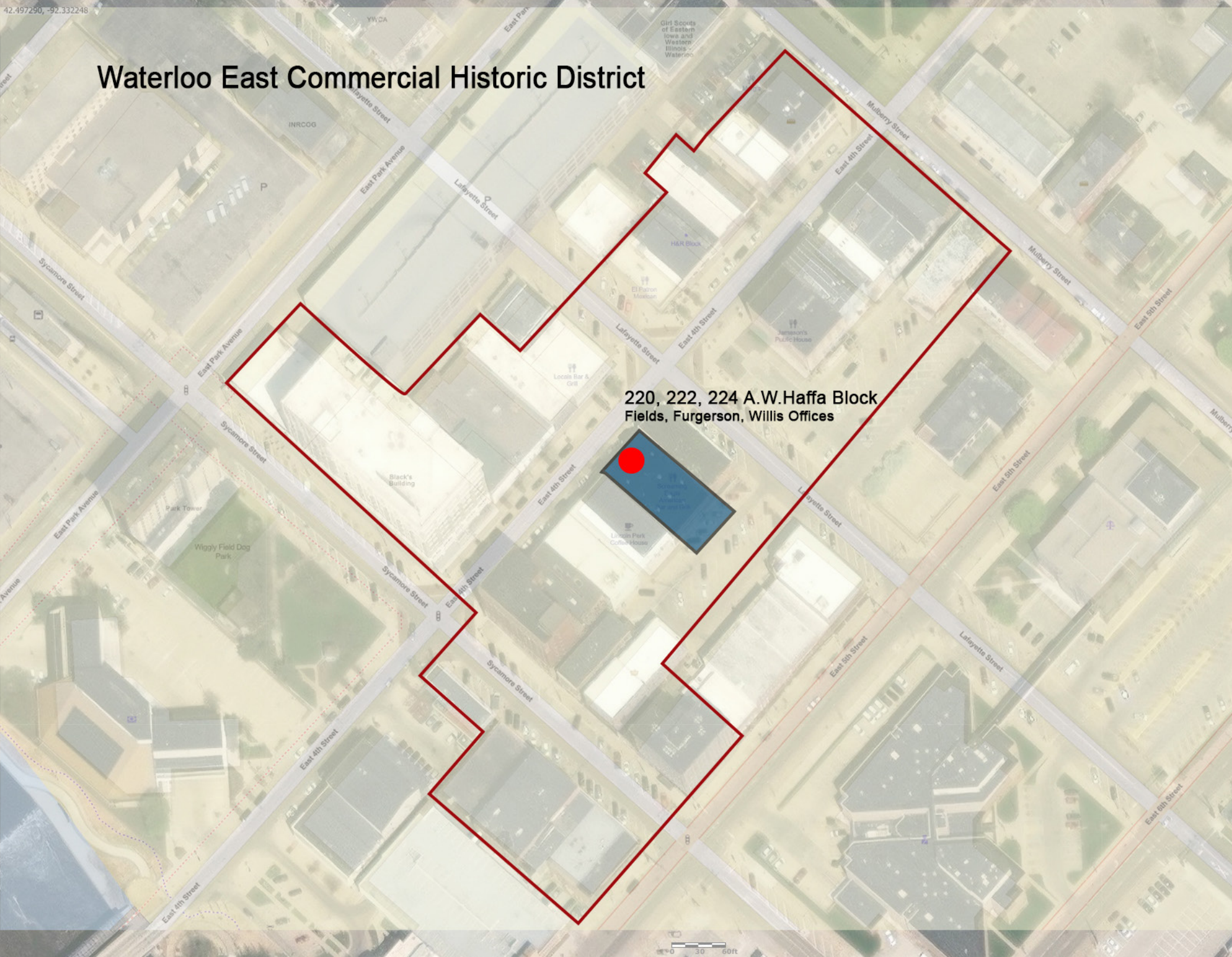
— At their new location Fields, Furgerson, and Judge William Parker were part of a group that founded the Black Hawk Savings & Loan Association to encourage home ownership within the Waterloo Black community.



Northeast Civil Rights Study Area



Waterloo East Commercial Historic District



**220, 222, 224 A.W. Haffa Block
Fields, Ferguson, Willis Offices**

936 ONEIDA STREET

FURGERSON-FIELDS PARK

Honoring Waterloo civil rights advocates

Attorney Milton Franklin Fields served Waterloo residents and businesses in civil and criminal cases in his private legal practice. He also organized the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and supported the student-led fight to end racial discrimination in Waterloo public schools.

In 1927, after being recruited by Attorney Fields, Dr. Lee Burton Furgerson became one of the first Black doctors in Waterloo and the only practicing Black doctor at the time. In addition to his medical practice, Dr. Furgerson was also a contributor to the *Iowa State Bystander*, the first African American Newspaper west of the Mississippi.

Mrs. Lillian (Lily) Furgerson, Dr. Furgerson's wife, brought her own talents, especially in caring for Waterloo's children, as the City's first Black teacher.

These two local champions for civil rights were members of Waterloo's campaign for racial equality in the city. They were joined by many others in the hard work of extending civil rights to Black residents citywide. The success of these wide community efforts brought greater fairness in hiring and employment, in teaching and academic achievement, in housing and transportation, in policing, and in financial services including lending.

With the support of the larger community, the Black Hawk Savings and Loan Association was formed in 1947, at a time when banks did not often loan money to Black folk to buy homes or build businesses. Furgerson and Fields were two of six Black inaugural board members of the S&L.

Provided by the City of Waterloo Historic Preservation Commission
through an African American Civil Rights Grant from the National Park Service.

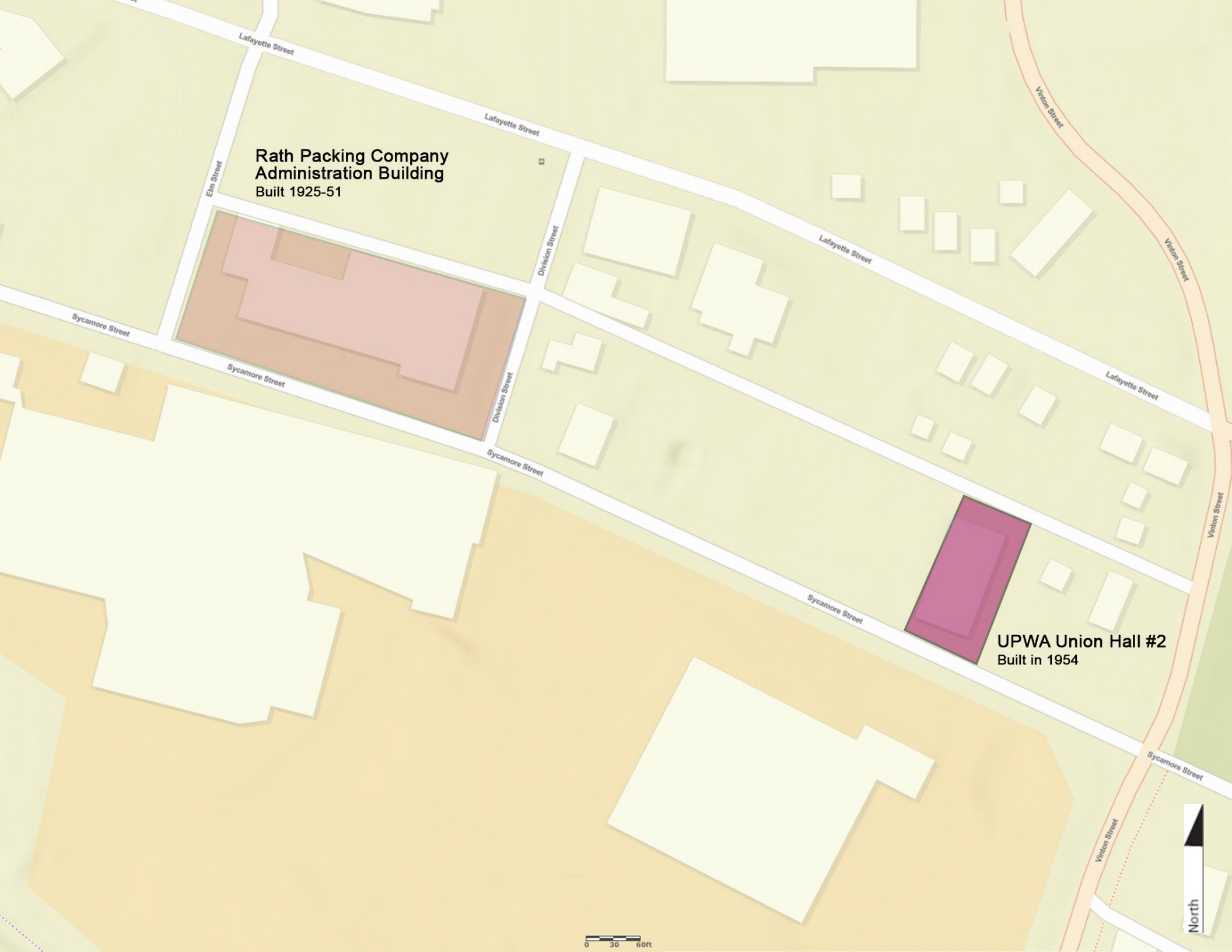


**Rath Packing Company
Administration Building**
Built 1925-51

UPWA Union Hall #1
Built circa 1937
Served as Union Hall circa 1943 to 1954

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**Rath Packing Company
Administration Building**
Built 1925-51

UPWA Union Hall #2
Built in 1954

0 30 60ft

North

Northeast Civil Rights Study Area

