



Little Africa

An Early Black Settlement

In Pike County Missouri

By Audrey Jones

The Story of Little Africa

For black Missourians, the 1860s and 1870s brought many changes. The Ordinance to Abolish Slavery in Missouri was completed on January 11, 1865, thereby freeing enslaved Missourians eleven months before the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ended the “peculiar institution” of slavery for good. In 1868, the Fourteenth Amendment granted black Americans citizenship and guaranteed them equal protection under the law and all civil liberties afforded white persons, and the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870 gave black men the right to vote.

These developments ushered in an era of transformation, with many freed slaves celebrating independence, while simultaneously struggling to find jobs, receive an education, and survive in an environment of increasing intolerance and oppression.

The burning of black schools and churches, and the competitive job market drove many black Missourians out of the state. In fact, by 1870, there were fewer blacks in Missouri than there had been before the Civil War.

Beginning around 1880, with the rise in “Jim Crow Laws” which established legal segregation, and continuing through the Supreme Court ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which stated that separate facilities for black and white citizens were constitutional, the passage of discriminatory laws that oppressed African Americans became standard. The turn of the century saw a rise in acts of violence and murder perpetrated by angry mobs living outside the law. These lynchings of black citizens across the United States, including Missouri, were often ignored by those whose job it was to enforce civility and safety within communities. This grotesque streak of violence would continue for decades, and made life as free Americans even more unsettling for black citizens.

The years between 1880 and 1920 show a steady migration from smaller communities within Missouri to larger cities, especially St. Louis, where an already established black community provided the opportunity to receive an education, find jobs, and live with less fear regarding their safety from those still bitter about the Civil War and the new rights given to African Americans.

Census data shows the detail of this population shift and resulting social change. Moberly’s population was 10.6% African American in 1900, and by 1920 it was 6.5%. In 2000, it was 6.7%. Hannibal’s population was 14.5% in 1900 and 8.8% in 1920. By 2000, it was down to 6.6%. Conversely, the city of St. Louis rose from 6.1% African American in 1900 to 9% in 1920. In 2000, African Americans represented 51.2% of the population.

Although they were no longer bound to slave masters, many black Americans still found themselves working as farm laborers. In fact, in 1910, the most common occupation for black men and women in America was “Farm Laborer.”

While the struggle for better paying jobs would continue, black Missourians were making strides in the realm of education. In 1860, 41% of free blacks were illiterate, but in 1910, this number was down to 17.4%. In 1920 it was 12.1% and by 1930 only 8.8% were considered illiterate.

African Americans in Missouri between 1880 and 1920 had many hurdles to success, and the question of their progress versus their oppression can be debated. It cannot, however, be denied that at the turn of the century, black Missourians were more educated than at any other time in their past history. And the twentieth century was destined to bring new challenges, new burdens, and new achievements.

Peno Township, Pike County Missouri. This township is in the northern part of Pike County. Most of this township is hilly and uneven. The township is full of bubbling springs of pure water. From this hilly terrain is a very large cave that passes about 1/4 of a mile long. The roads were made up of dirt and gravel other transportation was the Shortline Railroad.

Frankford the largest town in Peno Township. Just south east of Frankford was a small settlement known to the locals as Little Africa. In this settlement was a church, a school, a blacksmith, a store, and a cemetery (St. Peters Cemetery). The property in 1875 was originally owned by a Frank A. Suda.

By 1924 plat map of Pike County Little Africa as 54 North, Range 3 West, Section 14. Jackson Harris owned the land where the church stood and the cemetery. This is why the cemetery is listed as the Jackson Cemetery. A Oscar Mallory owned both sides of the road where the school was erected. There was a George Hardwood, P.F. Morgan, S.C. Wooten, and a C.L. Reading with land nearby.

Little Africa was a settlement of free colored folk, who lived near each other. They forged ahead to make a better life for future generations. They wanted better education, better opportunities, and at the same time a quiet peaceful home life. Communities like this sprang up all over the state and all over this country. They needed a place to call home without any white folk giving them a hard time. They needed a place of their own. Some were dirt poor while others worked out, as farm labor or whatever job came along. Segregation

was a big part of those times and another reason to have a church and school and other social necessities to form a whole Black Community.

This book is to try and gather as much history and people information and neighbors to give an account of some kind, of this little community and it's existance. This is a part of all of our history no matter the color of our skin. If someone doesn't mention the existance then it's lost forever to those of us trying to preserve this county's history. Or those of us who are trying to preserve our own history.

I am adding as much data as I can and as I collect it. Even though this book is on the shelf new data will be added as we recieve it. I hope this helps someone who has roots here and I also hope that someone adds their history here also.

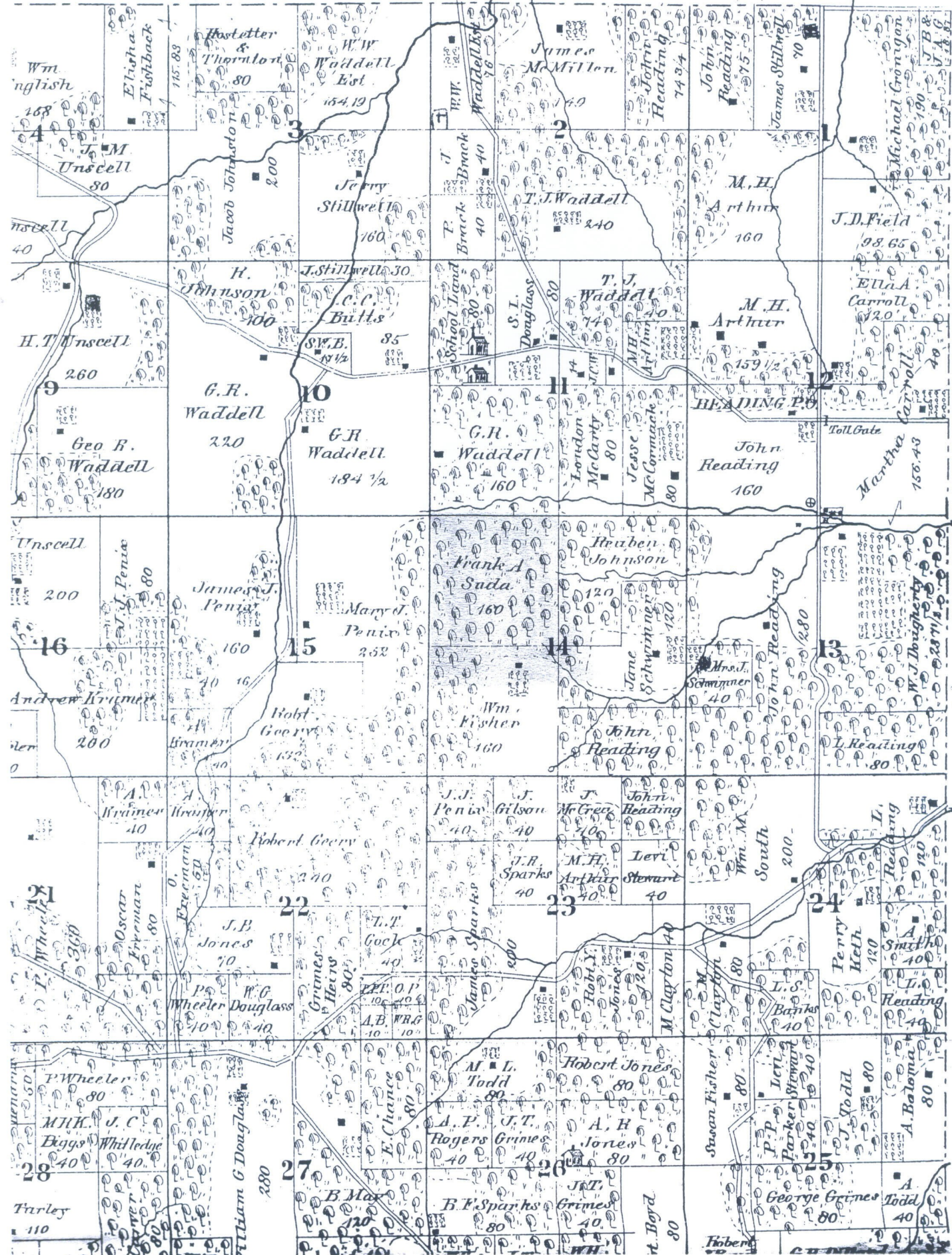
I hope someone can get some use out of it. I hope that it inspires those who know of other communities like this to research and create an existance for them too.

Thank You,
Audrey Jones
Researcher

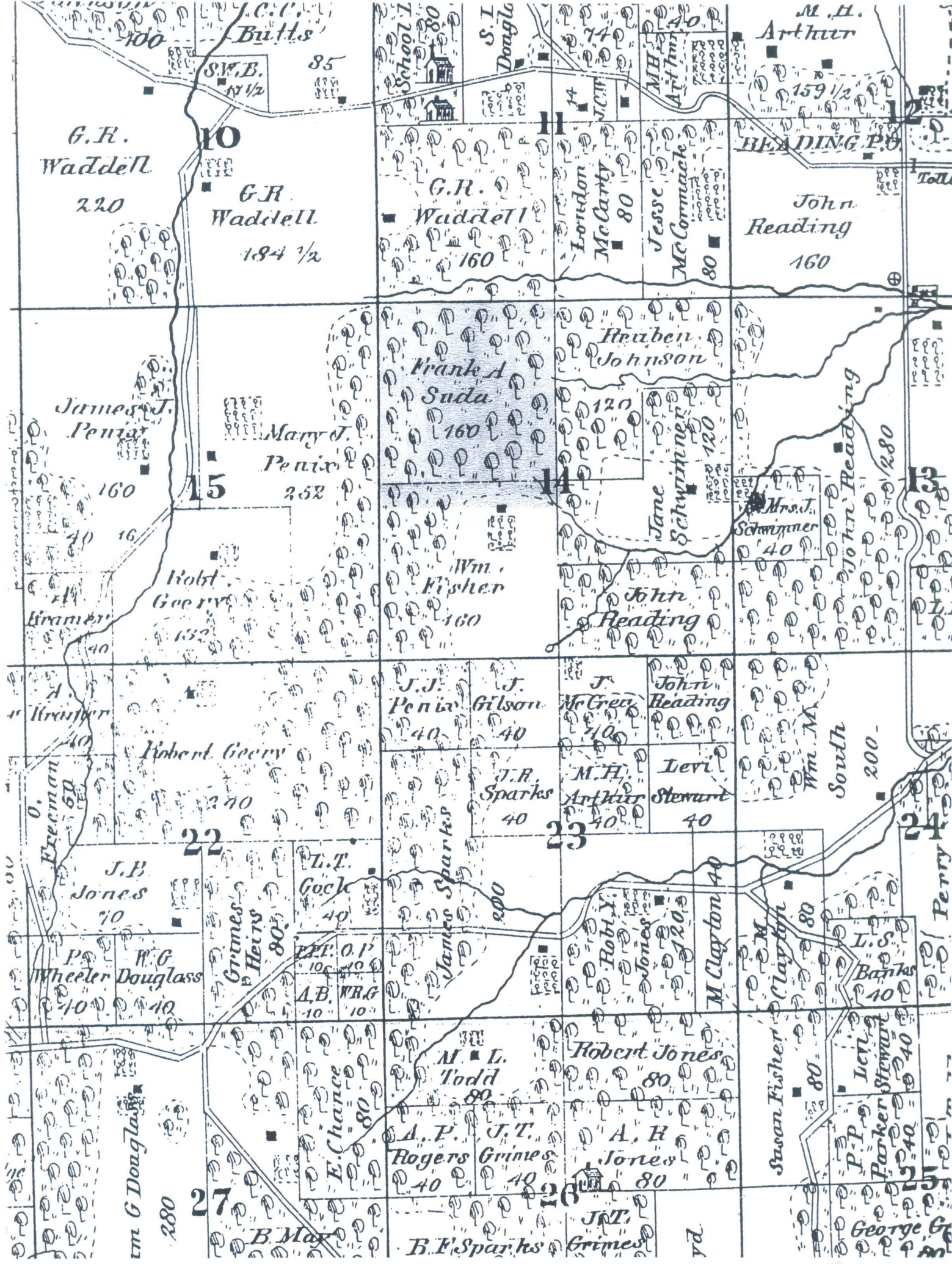
of 3rd. Principal Meridian

(1875)

T-55N-R-3W



T 54N-R-2W



G.R. Waddell

220

G.R. Waddell

184 1/2

G.R. Waddell

160

London McCarty

Jesse McCormack

John Reading

160

James J. Penix

160

Mary J. Penix

252

Frank A. Suda

160

Herben Johnson

120

Jane Schwinner

120

Mrs. J. Schwinner

40

John Reading

280

Robert Geery

132

Wm. Fisher

160

John Reading

J.J. Penix

40

J. Gilson

40

J. McGree

40

John Reading

40

Robert Geery

240

J.R. Sparks

40

M.H. Arthur

40

Levi Stewart

40

John South

200

J.B. Jones

70

T.T. Gock

40

James Sparks

200

Robt. Y. Jones

20

M. Clayton

40

M. Clayton

80

L.S. Banks

40

P. Wheeler

40

R.G. Douglass

40

Grimes & Heits

80

E.P. O.P.

10

A.B. W.R.G.

10

M.L. Todd

80

Robert Jones

80

A.P. Rogers

40

J.T. Grimes

40

A.H. Jones

80

Susan Fisher

80

Levi Parker

40

George G.

40

Wm G Douglas

280

B. May

B.F. Sparks

J.T. Grimes

70

PARTS OF PENO, BUFFALO AND CUIVRE

TOWNSHIPS

PIKE COUNTY, MISSOURI

Township 54 North, Range 3 West of the 5th P. M.

Scale: 1 1/2 Inch to 1 Mile

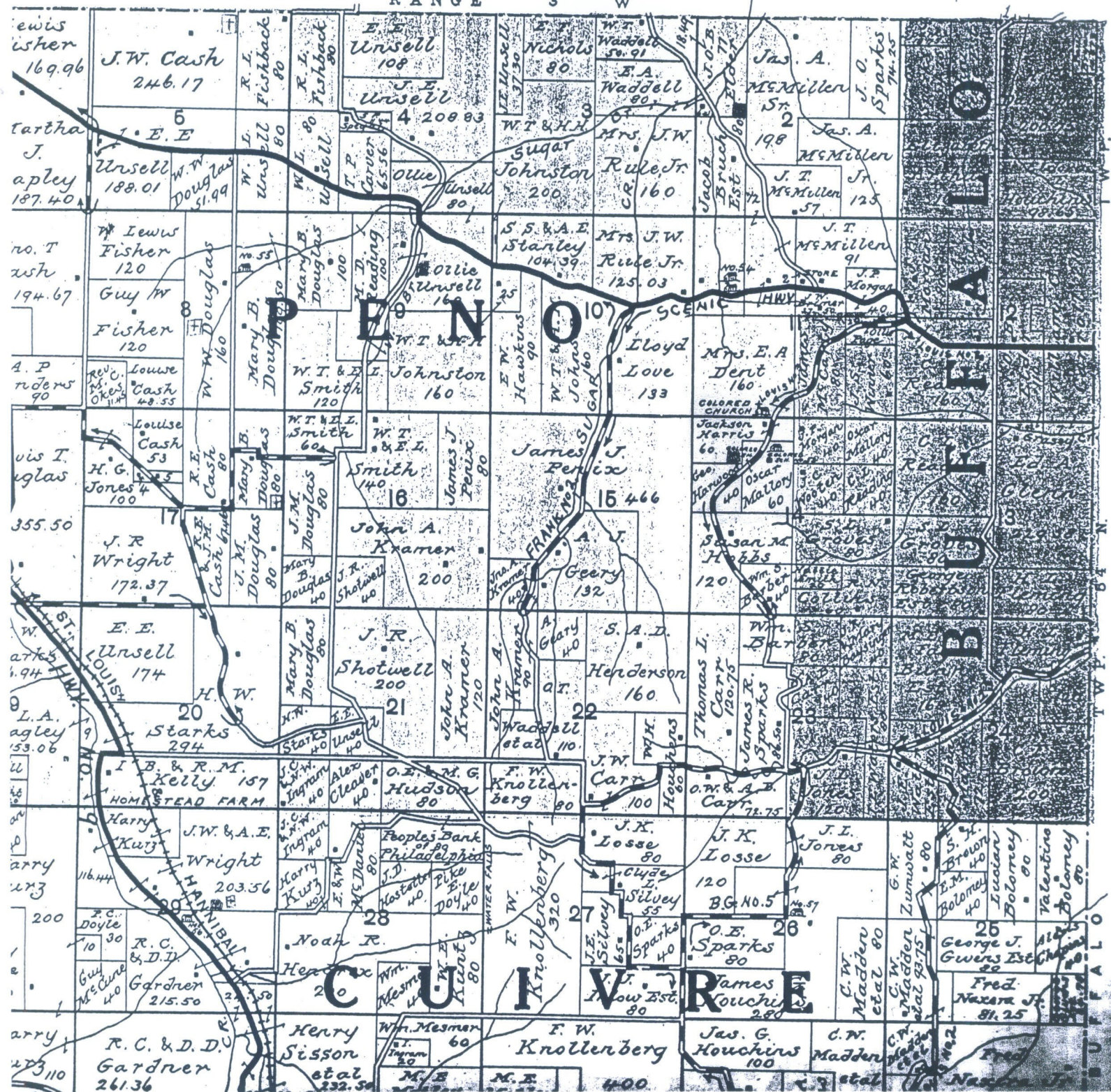
Highways Shown thus - **HWY** Schools Shown thus - NO. 26 Churches Shown thus -

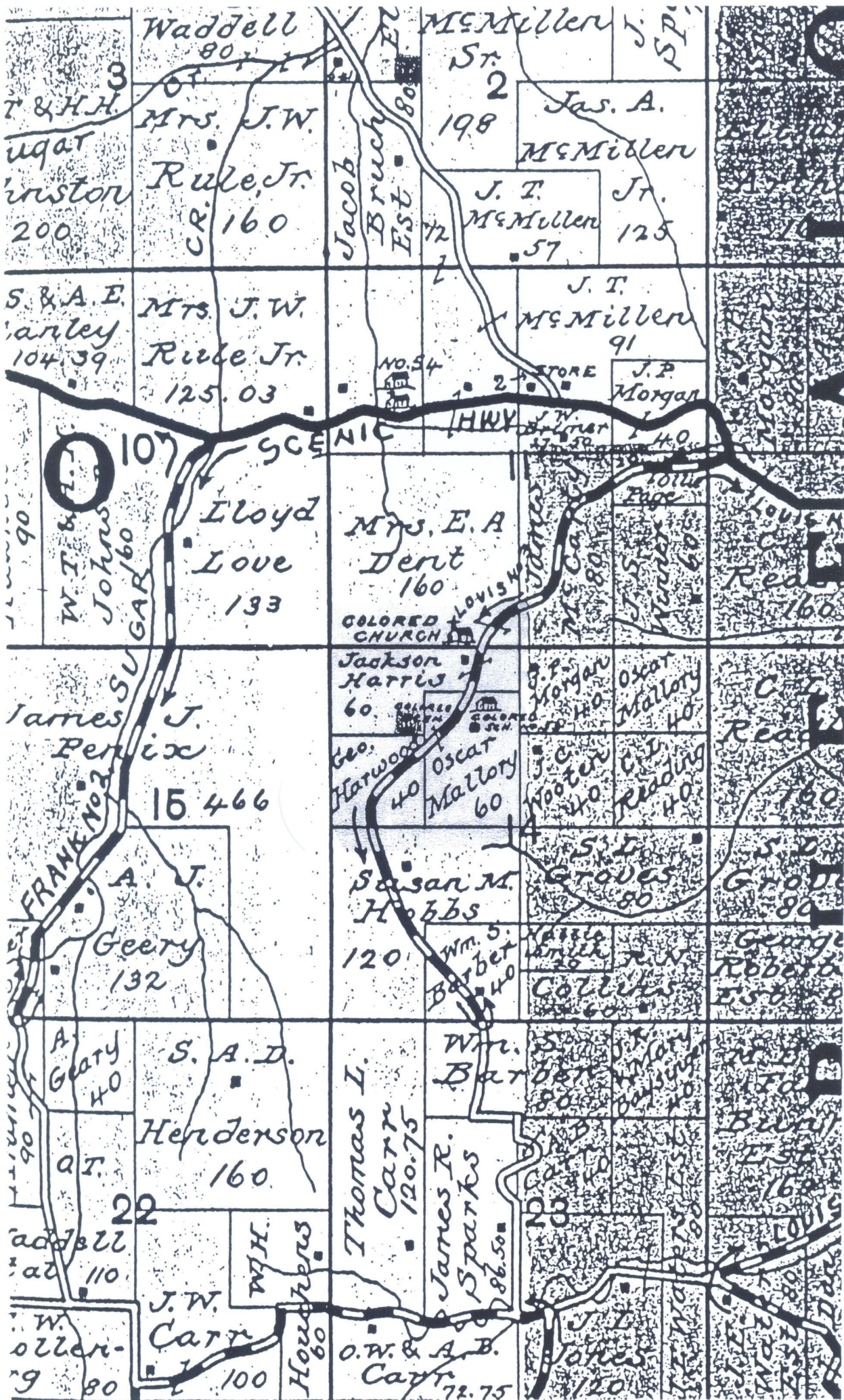
Rural Routes Shown thus Cemeteries Shown thus -

Where Rural Routes run over Highways, they are denoted thus -

1924 Plat

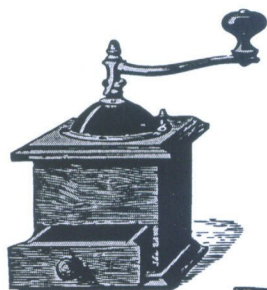
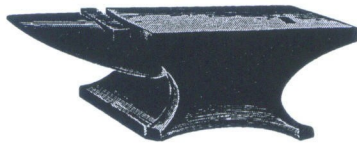
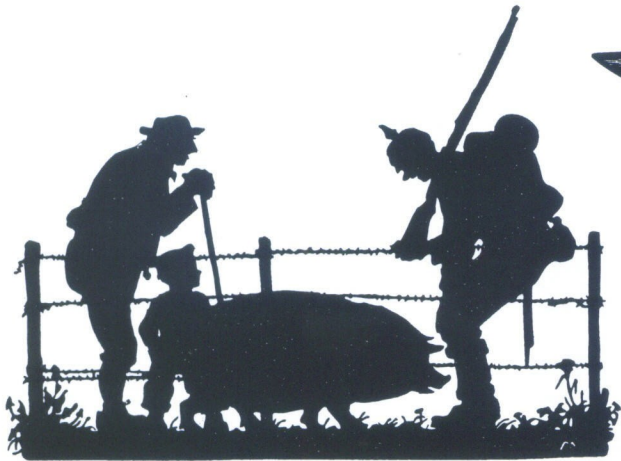
RANGE 3 W

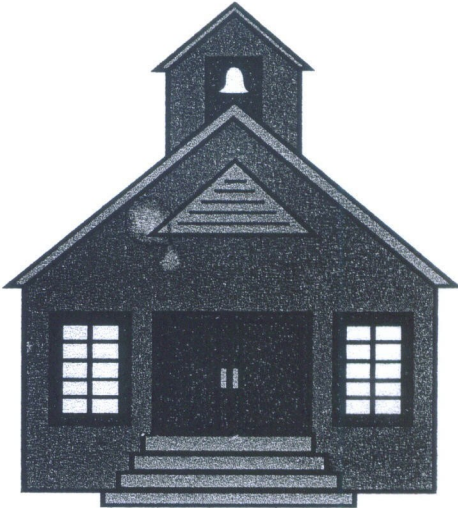




1924
Plat
map

Little Africa Happenstance





Country life



JACKSON CEMETERY.

location: On Bob Peters land, Section 14 of Penn 'E' Township
54-55-N, Range 3-W.
Copied by Bill and Mollie Price, with the help of
Amy Cafer October 27th, 1985.

JACKSON Isabelle, wife of O. Jackson born Jan. 7th, 1896-
died Dec. 23rd, 1918.

JACKSON Kattie born May 5th, 1873-died Jan. 21, 1905

JACKSON Twin sons of O. and Isabelle Jackson.
George C. born July 24th, 1918-died Dec. 26th, 1918
Henry G. born July 24th, 1918-died Dec. 27, 1918

PETER Robert Co. O., 62nd O. S.G.T.

L William Co. C. 58th, U.S.C.T.

There were numerous graves marked only by field
stone.

Note: Information given to me is that this is
a colored cemetery. M.P.

7- The three Jackson stones, and remains have been removed
and have been placed in Riverview Cem. beside O. Jackson's grave.

to the North from the readable stones were 3 rows of field rock
: contained possibly 20 stones per row.