

# Lincoln School for Colored Children



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# Agenda

- History of education of Colored children (15 minutes)
  - Pre–Civil War
  - Civil War to the Lincoln buildings
  - Lincoln as part of the Crawfordsville Parks and Recreation Department

# History of Education of Colored Children

# Pre-Civil War Education for Colored Peoples

- Almost non-existent
- Was considered a dangerous practice that could lead to all ethnic backgrounds achieving equality, independence, and prosperity
- Covert teaching occurred whenever time and space allowed
- Very few plantations/owners educated the enslaved alongside their White children
- Learned through night schools and Sunday schools

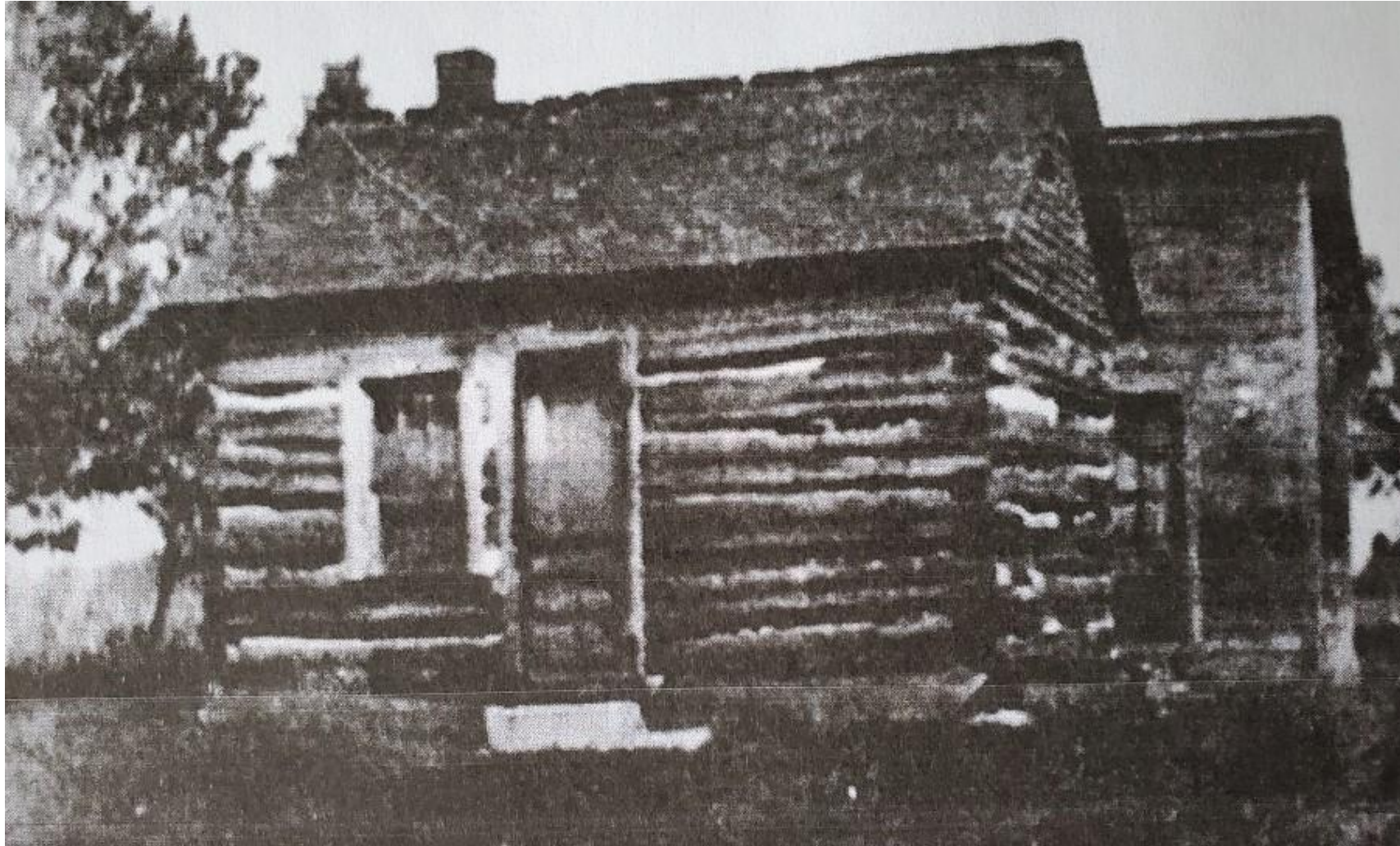
# Article IX, section 2, 1816 Indiana Constitution

"It shall be the duty of the General Assembly, as soon as circumstances will permit, to provide, by law, for a general system of education, ascending in a regular gradation, from Township schools to a state university, wherein tuition shall be gratis, and equally open to all."

# The 1852 Free School Law

- Mandated that every county provide at least three months of free common school education, set up a system to administer it, and levy estate taxes to help fund public education throughout the state
- Unfortunately, Indiana laws excluded Colored and Mulatto children
- Colored elementary schools sprang up in most communities with substantial Colored populations, and several cities opened segregated high schools

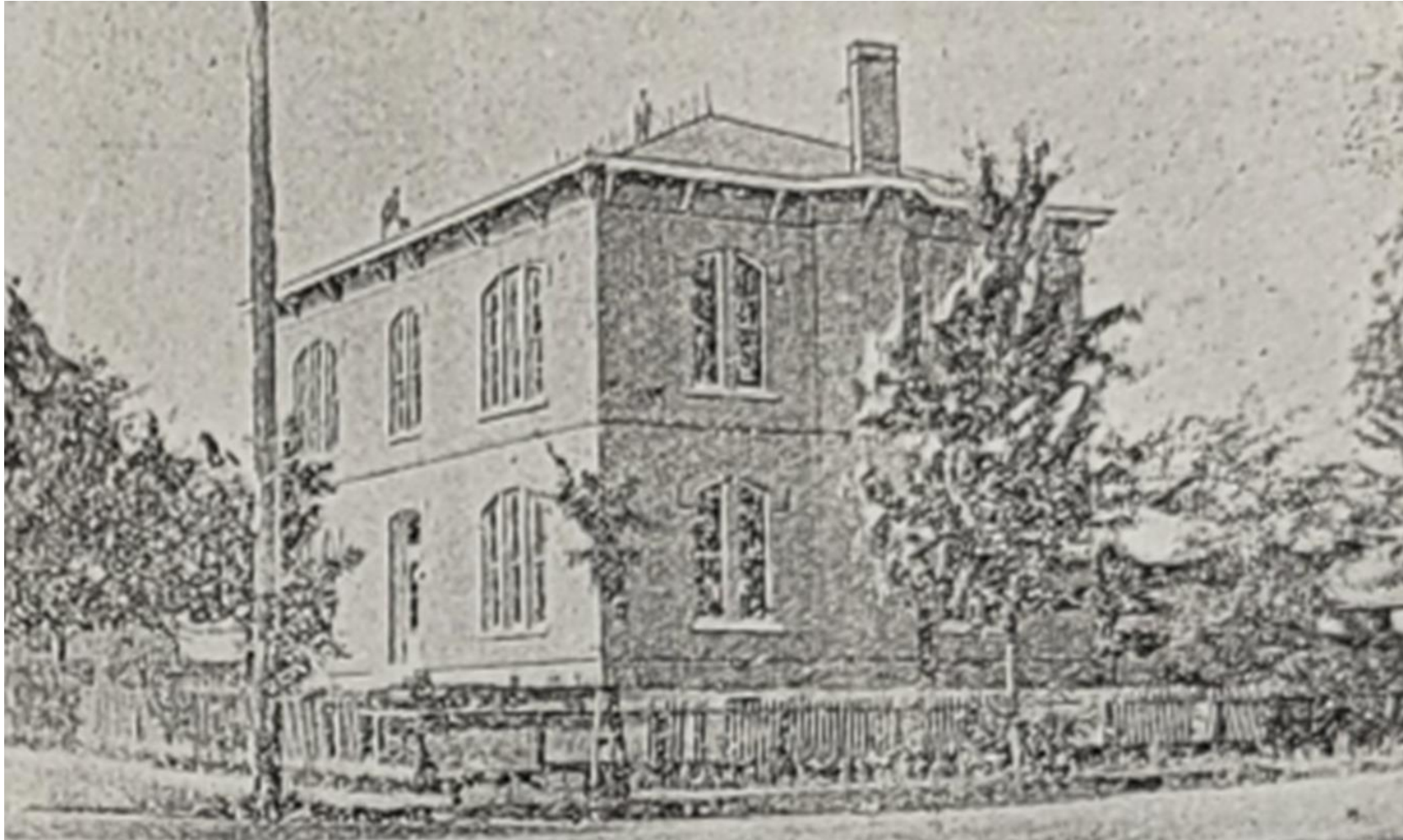
# AME Church School



The 2 Buildings of the Lincoln  
School for Colored Children



# Lincoln Building 1



# Lincoln Building 2

- In 1881 the Crawfordsville School Trustees ordered an all-Colored school be built at the southwest corner of Spring and North Walnut Streets to serve Colored students in grades 1-8 in the Northend
- Simple two-story red brick structure complete with playgrounds.
- Officially opened in September 1882 with 42 students.
- Segregation verses integration theme
- White teachers verses Colored Teachers
- For quite some time, only 1 teacher for all grades

# Lincoln Building 2

- By early 1910s, large portion of the Colored population had moved to Crawfordsville's East End to take advantage of factory jobs
- The original Lincoln School Building 1 was abandoned, renovated, and became Horace Mann School
- From 1933- 1936, students attended the Tin School (Wabash Avenue and Pine Street) while Lincoln 2 was being built or were integrated
- Segregation verses integration again a theme
- Eventually hired 2 teachers (primary and secondary)
- Lincoln 2 opened in 1922 on East Wabash Avenue
- Basement and the main floor, two rooms on each side of the hall, no windows in the front and very large windows in the back, girls' playroom and a boys' playroom downstairs, restrooms, and a large playground
- Closed forever at the end of the 1946-47 school year

# Lincoln Recreation Center

- December 1952, Crawfordsville Schools deeded the Wabash Avenue property to the city of Crawfordsville, Parks and Recreation Department to become Lincoln Center, a recreation center for the Colored community, a meeting place for the Second Baptist Church, House of Ruth, Odd Fellows, Colored judges, and the Colored Prince Hall Masonic Lodge that was very active with members from Lebanon and Greencastle
- Eventually, the indoor facilities boasted space for up to 100 people, a lighted outdoor playground, two basketball courts, exercise programs, and held evening and weekend programming. Residents exercised and learned ballet on the hard wooden floors
- The building was demolished in 1981 by Hamilton Excavating
- The city of Crawfordsville, along with an anonymous donor, is scheduled to update the green space in 2023

# “The Corner”

- Lincoln School Building 2 became a place for local community members to congregate and socialize
- The South Pine Street and East Wabash Avenue intersection became known as “The Corner” and “The Avenue”
- On a good day/ evening, people could be spread halfway down the curb on Wabash near Pine Street to play on the playground equipment, play softball, participate in a game of basketball or other sports, listen to stories, share the latest news, or relax, learn survival skills such as laundry, sewing