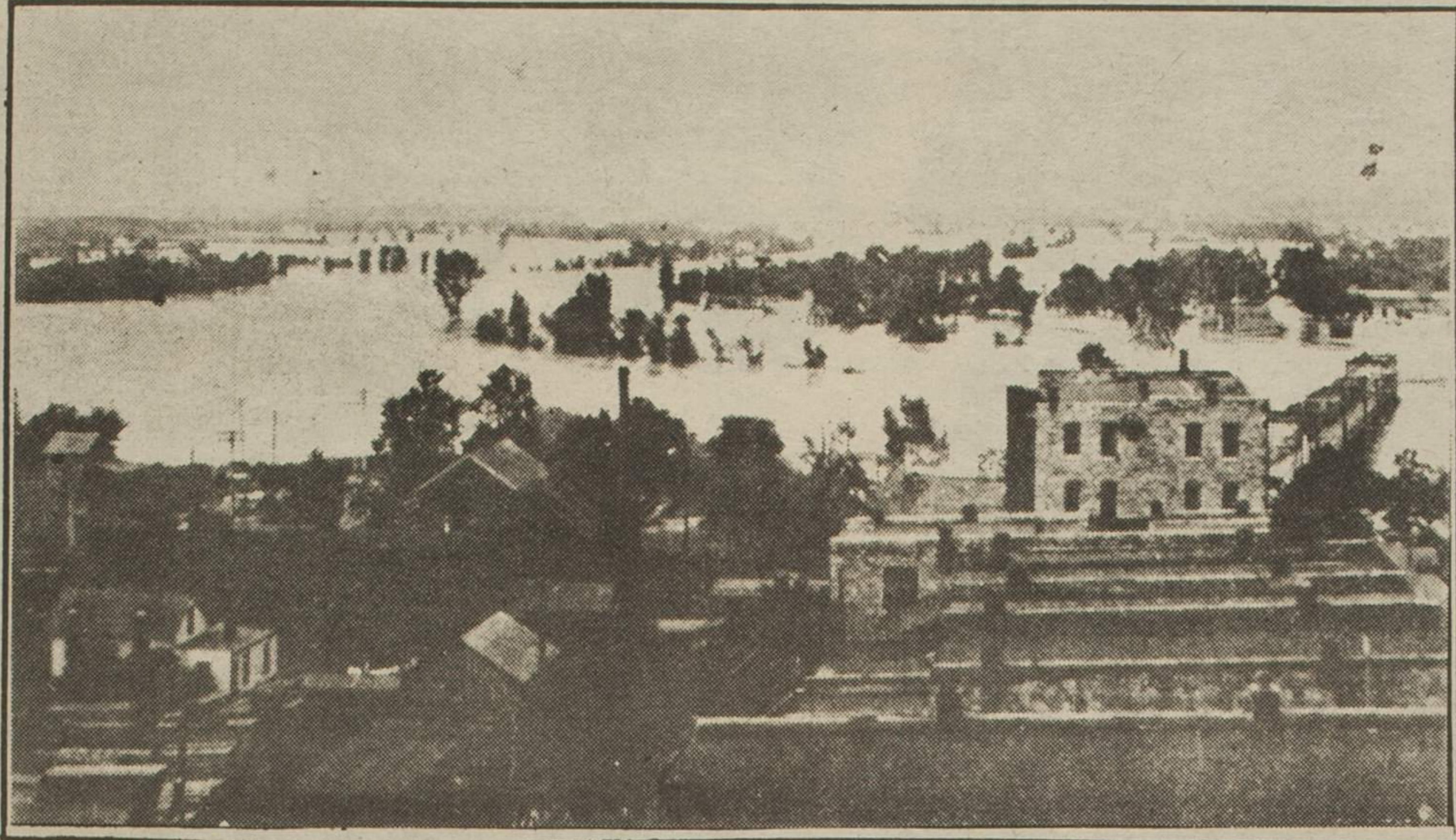


John Taylor

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ELEVEN...

liked him. He was a little frail skinny boy when we went to school. But my mother knew his mother before that and as I said, we didn't go to school, because we didn't have no ride over here.

Z: So really, North Lawrence was kind of a community in itself?



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BELOW RIGHT: THE OLD KAW RIVER BRIDGE TO N. LAWRENCE

T: In its own. In early days it was a city of its own. This old house that's sitting right here next door used to be the old city town hall. And then when the man bought that old building and tore it down then built this here rooming house.

Z: Did Langston Hughes--I bet you followed his career when he went to New York, didn't you? Did you follow his writing?

T: Yes, we corresponded, even I got one letter, I wished I'd kept it, when he was in Japan. And had a little trouble over there, he was wide-spoken and they'd mistaken him to be communist, which he wasn't. And then he finally came back to America and the last time I saw him was about, oh, a year before he died, he came to KU and lectured and I went up there to his lecture and we visited. And he had gained weight then, he was a big robust man then.

Z: We were talking before about a colored upper class. Did all these people kind of go to parties together and kind of a little social circle?

T: Yes.

Z: Did they have more white friends than a lot of other colored people might have had?

T: No, I wouldn't say that. I would say it was just about 50-50.

Z: Did they all go to the same church?

T: No. We had our own colored church, we had, it was a Baptist church which still operates now over

here in the 400-block on Lincoln and the St. James down at Seventh and Maple Street... it's still operating. And then of course we had St. Luke's on Ninth and New York and then where the Ninth Street Baptist Church is that used to be called Warren Street Baptist Church because Ninth Street was Warren Street at that time. And I think that was just about the limit of the churches. And then about thirty years ago, I sent my boys to a Catholic school at Leavenworth and then when their sister was born, the mother of

Little Tiffany there, then she had to be christened and taken into the Catholic Church because they were Catholic. And then my wife and I decided that since our children was in one church that we would join and be as one family in the Catholic Church. So we've been in St. John's Church for about thirty years.

Z: But before that time what church did you go to?

T: We went to the North Lawrence Baptist Church.

Z: Where did you spend your leisure time when you were a teenager?

T: Teenager, well, most of it was working at home. Then on Sundays we went to church and we went to the forum and we had horses and we would go horseback riding, things like that.

Z: Were there any dances or...

T: Well, there wasn't much dancing going on until I was in high school and then we had dances in the high school.

Z: You mentioned colored vaudeville theater. Who was in charge of that? I was reading once about--I don't know if this is the same one--I believe it was called the Palace Theatre, and there was a man named Langford in charge. That's it?

T: That's it. And then on New Hampshire right along there where the Chevrolet is, there was a place there they called Open Air Dome, kind of like what you know, they have in Kansas City.

Z: Starlight?

T: Starlight, well, we had a small one here. And they would put on shows and movies and things there, of course we had our upper section to go to.

Z: Could the colored population go to all the parks?

T: Well, yes, there was no segregation in the parks.

Z: And only colored restaurants, though?

T: Yes, that was the only place you could go to.

Z: Was it Harper's Restaurant?

T: Yeah.

Z: And who else...

T: You could go to Muzzy's and sit on the far end.

Z: Right. And I believe, didn't the Stone family have a restaurant? Curtis Stone or Frederick Stone?

T: Yes, that was a little later on. I knew them when I was going to school over there, they had a restaurant.

Z: They lived over on Mississippi, didn't they? About Sixth and Mississippi.

T: Yes.

Z: Were there any large get-togethers or celebrations of the colored community besides what happened at the Forum?

T: Well, they were mostly confined to--we had a lot of get-togethers, you know.

Z: Someone told me that the colored families would get together on the first of August for a big celebration.



T: Well, part of them did on the fourth of August, but most of my friends celebrated on the Fourth of July.

Z: What was the fourth of August?

T: That was supposed to be Emancipation Day. That's when they were really liberated. Now my wife's people in Missouri, they celebrated the fourth of August, but we here in Lawrence we celebrated the Fourth of July.

Z: What newspapers did you read back in those days?

T: Well, we used to have what they called, the Democrat and then later it was changed and a man by the

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