

A Look at Race in Lawrence History

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The history of race and racism at a predominantly white institution like Lawrence has many dimensions and is far too complex to address adequately in a poster or two. Nevertheless, this is an attempt to introduce bits and pieces of this history, some of which have been quite literally erased from the formal, published histories of Lawrence University.

If you have questions about this content or are interested in pursuing further research on related topics, please visit the LU Archives (Mudd Library, Level B) or contact us at archives@lawrence.edu.



1915: Krishnabai Tulaskar, from India, graduated from Lawrence. (She was an early international student, but not necessarily the first. Further research is needed on this subject.) Her arrival in Wisconsin in the fall of 1911 had been met with great fanfare – the *Oshkosh Northwestern* published an article headlined "Hindu Heroine Here. Tale of Tribulations."



1925: The "International Club" as pictured in the *Ariel* yearbook.
Top row: Donald Gior Lee '25, Formosa (Taiwan); Wing Yo Hoh '27, Canton, China; Cham Yin Yee '24, Hong Kong; Kujoshi Ota '24, Osaka, Japan; Kosaku Jinno '24, Ehimeken, Japan
Middle row: George J. Mecholson '24, Marinette, WI; Ralph Huntington Coggeshall '26, Wauwatosa, WI; Marguerite Mainssonat, France, instructor of French; Elbert Smith '24, Elderon, WI; Albert Ogilvie '25, Scotland
Bottom Row: Rebecca Benyas '26, Appleton; Grace Hannagan '27, Appleton; Sophia Bachhofen, Switzerland, instructor of Romance languages; Juliette Alice Fourniere '24, Dinard, France; Helena Koletzke '27, Appleton

Pre-1847: For centuries before the arrival of the French in 1634, and for some time after, the Menominee and the Ho-Chunk had lived in and around the Fox River Valley. In the early 1700s, the Meskwaki were pushed into this area by colonial pressures from the east, then pushed farther west. Along with several other groups, the Oneida were forced to move to Wisconsin from New York in the 1820s. Eleazar Williams led the Oneida relocation and later sold some of his land in the vicinity of De Pere to Amos A. Lawrence of Boston.

1857: Robert Pendleton, from Neenah, began attending the preparatory department at Lawrence and continued for about two years. Records indicate that he may have been of both Native and African American heritage.

The *Appleton Crescent*, a Democratic newspaper, denounced Pendleton for attempting to vote in Appleton's first ward. It was a statewide election for Negro suffrage.

1864: Henry Cornelius, Oneida, became the first Native student to graduate from Lawrence.



1847: The Wisconsin Territorial Legislature granted a charter to "the Lawrence Institute." Methodist ministers and agents hired by Amos A. Lawrence to start the school purchased land on the Fox River. The city of Appleton grew up around this site.

A subscription booklet circulated for raising funds claimed that the school was founded to "provide gratuitous advantage to both sexes of Germans and Indians." For the next few decades, Lawrence received both charitable and federal funding for enrolling Native students. In keeping with 19th-century white ideas about Native Americans, the explicit goal was to "civilize" these students.

SUBSCRIPTION BOOK No. 1—1847
Notice to the Benefactors of Our Country

The Lawrence Institute of Wisconsin is to include a Preparatory and a Teacher's Department under the same charter affording gratuitous advantages to both sexes of Germans and Indians.
 A location for this institution has been selected in Wis-

1876: Mary Cleggett (later Vanderhoop) became the first African American student to graduate from Lawrence. Several of her sisters and cousins also attended Lawrence during these years.

1869: J.A. Owen '60 wrote to *The Collegian* (Lawrence's first student newspaper), recalling an incident in which "a black man applied for admission to the University as a preparatory student" and was soon driven out by angry townspeople. He asked "how the University stands now." *Collegian* editors published this in response:

In reply to friend OWEN's inquiry concerning the status of the University on the negro question, we would state, and proudly too, that, though there are no "colored" students here now, our halls are open to every human being of good moral character and suitable age, whether male or female, red, yellow, copper-colored, white or black.

1902-1904: Claude Monroe Paris attended Lawrence as a freshman and sophomore. His father was J. M. Paris, a barber and alderman in Waupaca. Claude was voted Class President in his freshman year and played on the basketball, track and field, and football teams.



1910: President Samuel Plantz sent this letter in response to a questionnaire from W. E. B. Du Bois regarding African American college graduates. Du Bois was compiling a report, "The College-Bred Negro American."

April 2nd, 1910

Prof. W. E. Du Bois,
 Atlanta, Ga.

My dear Sir:-

I am in receipt of your favor asking if we ever had any college graduates of negro descent. In reply I would say that we have had but one graduate, now Mrs. Mary A. C. Vanderhoop of Gay Head, Mass. I believe she has published a book entitled "Legends of Gay Head."

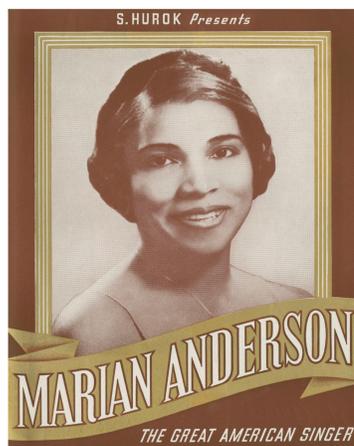
Truly yours,
 Dictated

1917: Fredericka Kla Bada Brown, from Liberia, graduated from Lawrence. Decades later, she would be the only black student remembered from our early history. (In his *History of Lawrence University* (1994), Charles Breunig cites her as "probably the first black student to graduate from Lawrence.")

FREDERICA KLA BADA BROWN
 Monrovia, Liberia, Africa
 Athena; History Club; Chemistry Club.



1941: Famed contralto Marian Anderson performed an Artist Series concert in the Memorial Chapel. She stayed at the Conway Hotel in downtown Appleton, but because she was African American, she was prohibited from eating in their public restaurant.



1967: A majority of the student body voted to bring George Lincoln Rockwell, leader of the American Nazi Party, to speak on campus. Many alumni and community members urged the administration to step in and cancel the address, which they ultimately declined to do. Rockwell spoke in the Chapel on February 9. Faculty members and others protested.

1976: International students founded Lawrence International (LI) and held the first International Dinner – an annual event that became Cabaret.

1977: *The Lawrentian* reported: “an incident in Kohler involving several black students and several white students erupted into a shouting match. In a related incident...a few individuals in the Beta house built a wooden cross. Some people outside the fraternity believed the cross was to be burned on campus.” This became known as “the Kohler incident” and prompted the establishment of the Multicultural Affairs Committee (MCAC) of LUCC – now the Committee on Diversity Affairs (CODA).



1994: Students founded two new organizations: ASIA-A, “The Association of Students Interested in Asian-America,” and ¡VIVA!, “committed to promoting Hispanic people and cultures.”

A.S.I.A.-A. is a Big Hit

By Tae-Sun Kim
Special contributor

Multiculturalism seems to be in the air. Lawrence University's newest ethnic interest group, A.S.I.A.-A. (Association of Students Interested in Asian-America) seems to have won the appreciation of students, faculty, departments and the Appleton Community. A.S.I.A.-A.'s goal of educating Appleton and Lawrence University about their BIGGEST ethnic population, which is Asian-Americans, has sparked the interest of not only Asians and Asian-Americans, but also everyone else on the color spectrum. Membership is already up to thirty people, and with the support of The Office of Multicultural Affairs, BOS, ¡VIVA!, BGLA, DFC and Lawrence International, A.S.I.A.-A. is guaranteed to be an even greater success than anticipated. Decisions on guest speakers, movie showings, celebrations, student forums and Asian-American courses for following terms are currently being discussed. A.S.I.A.-A.'s big ideas are what have made it such a big success. However, A.S.I.A.-A. does have a lot of obstacles to overcome, so if this sounds like an organization that you would like to support, come to the meetings at the International House Sunday evenings at 5:00. Every piece of input is important.

1930

1950

1970

1990

1940

1960

1980

2000

1949: George Kelsey, African American speaker with the department of race relations of the Federal Council of Churches, visited Lawrence and addressed the Student Christian Association. He asked the SCA to consider why Lawrence had “no Negro students.” The SCA and *Lawrentian* editors urged the administration “to secure from five to ten Negroes” for the following fall. A great deal of discussion followed, including this commentary by the administration.

Race Criterion Non-Existent Here: Pusey Administration Replies To SCA, Lawrentian With Statement

“Race has never been a criterion for admission to Lawrence college,” President Nathan Pusey commented on the statement of the Student Christian association which was reported in last week's issue of the *Lawrentian*.

The dean of administration, Marshall Hulbert, says that inquiries by Negro students have not numbered more than a half dozen in the past twenty years, and that none of them ever made formal application. College authorities believe that the reason for this are the relatively high fees, and the fact that most Negroes who seek a college education have a specific professional goal which is better obtained at a university than at a college of liberal arts.

1960: Students surveyed campus opinion with a poll asking whether respondents would support “the pledging of a Negro to your social fraternity if he were of a personal merit comparable to that of current members of your group or to white rushes whom you desire to pledge.” This was the response:

POLL RESULTS					
	Number Enrolled	Number Voting	% Voting	Number Vot. Yes	% Yes
Greek Men	304	186	61.2	131	70.4
Greek Women	309	194	62.7	147	75.8
Independents	275	154	56.0	141	91.6
Seniors			38.3		69.5
Juniors			68.7		77.7
Sophomores			63.7		78.2
Freshmen			63.4		82.0

Results of Student Poll Reveal 73% Affirmative

This began a years-long process to prohibit discrimination in fraternity and sorority chapters. Several of the national organizations for which Lawrence had local chapters had discriminatory policies and/or practices in place. Some of the local chapters took the lead in advocating for national change.

1972: The African American Association, seeing little progress from when they had presented a list of ten demands to President Curtis Tarr in 1969, occupied the business administration offices in the library and issued another list of demands. One of their biggest concerns was a complete lack of black faculty and staff at Lawrence. As a result of their advocacy, Lawrence hired Dr. Curtis Clark in mathematics, academic counselor Stephen Sneed, and admissions counselors Rose Woodson and Louis Butler. These individuals were probably the first African American faculty and staff members at Lawrence.



1997: The Diversity Center opened at a house on 207 S. Meade St. The center was intended to serve as the home for the Multicultural Affairs Committee, the Black Organization of Students (now Black Student Union), Downer Feminist Council, and BGLASS (Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Straight Society – now the LU Pride Group.)

1990: The first staff member was hired for a dedicated multicultural affairs position: Dr. Herbert Perkins, associate dean of students for multicultural affairs.

