

Lift Every Voice and Sing: St. Louis African Americans in the Twentieth Century

Doris A. Wesley, Ann Morris, Wiley Price

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Initially a project to preserve the stories of men and women who lived in the Ville—a black neighborhood in St. Louis known for its business leaders and educators—Doris Wesley's work soon took on a larger purpose. Lift Every Voice and Sing pairs Wesley's profiles of one hundred prominent African American citizens with Wiley Price's stunning photographs of each, offering an intimate look at what it was like to live in a segregated city. Revealing the challenges faced by blacks throughout a tumultuous century, the profiles feature people from various fields, including doctors, educators, musicians, journalists, men and women in business, pastors, and civil rights leaders. They each relate their experiences of racism, the obstacles they overcame in their professions, and the lessons life has taught them.

The book opens with an overview of St. Louis in the twentieth century, providing a historical context for the profiles. A segregated city up through the 1950s, St. Louis became a birthplace of civil rights. A number of organizations in the city fought for equality, including an early chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality, which sponsored pickets, boycotts, and sit-ins. The community's African American lawyers sent several important civil rights cases to the U.S. Supreme Court. Citizens also worked together to create an effective political machine that garnered work for blacks despite the segregated job market.

The individuals represented in *Lift Every Voice and Sing* witnessed firsthand the events that changed the face of their city and the nation. Their accounts, both engaging and insightful, present a unique perspective on the African American community of St. Louis.



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