

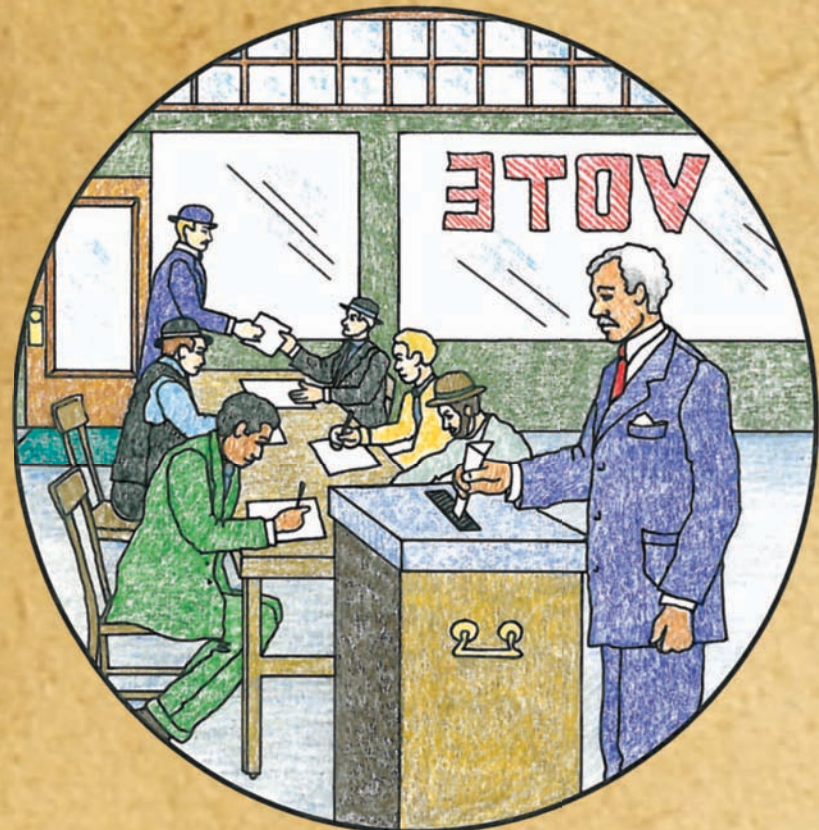
The J.R. Clifford PROJECT

West Virginia African American Heritage

Born in 1848



In 1848, John Robert "J.R." Clifford was born in a farmhouse near Moorefield, Virginia (now part of WV). His parents, Isaac and Satilphia, were free and owned their own land. As a boy he worked on the family farm.



Voter

J.R. knew that African Americans would only have real power to improve their lives if they voted. Until he died in 1933, he voted in every election.

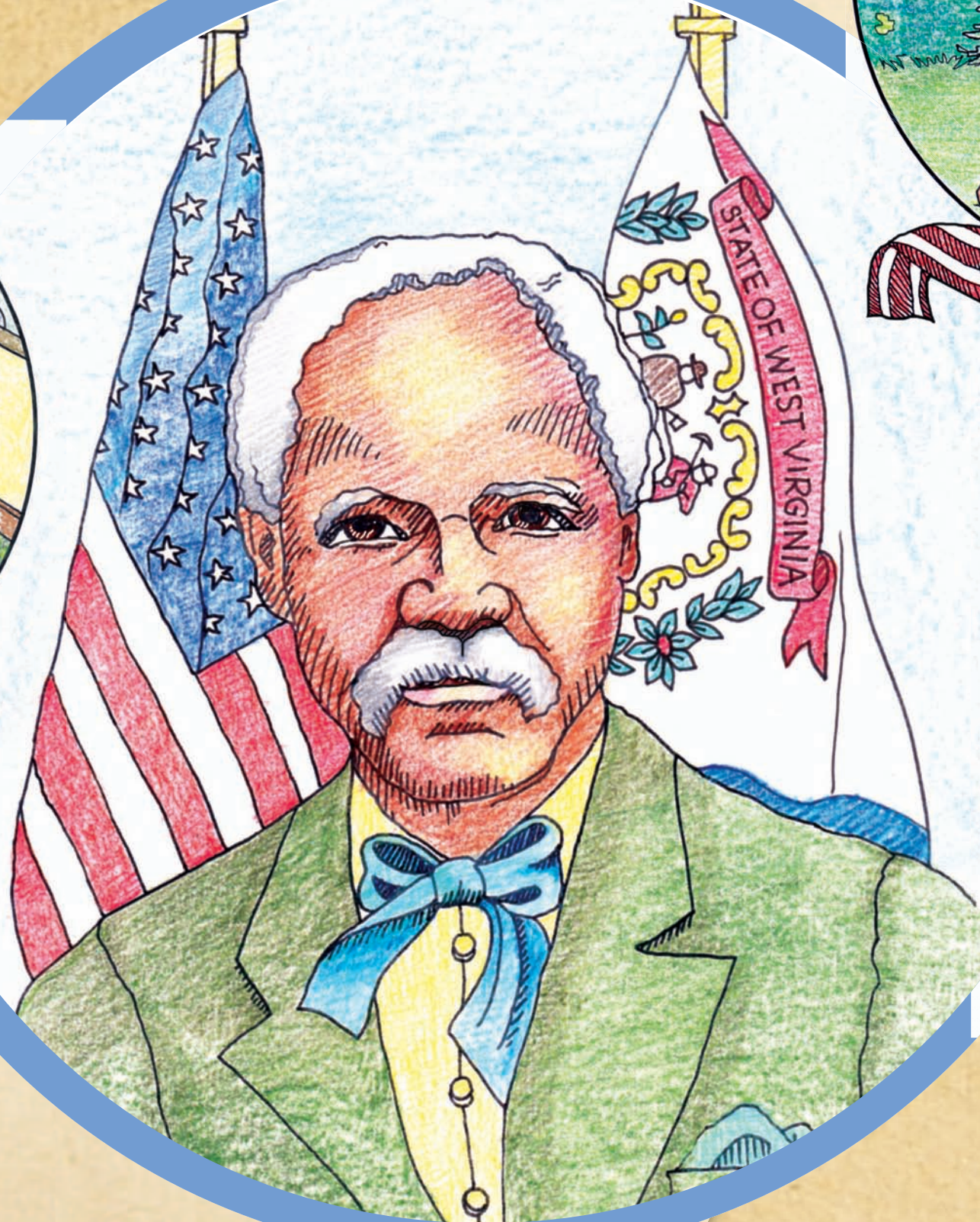
Daughter Mary

J.R. Clifford's daughter, Mary Clifford, was a main speaker at the Niagara Movement meeting. The rights of women played a full and equal role in this movement.

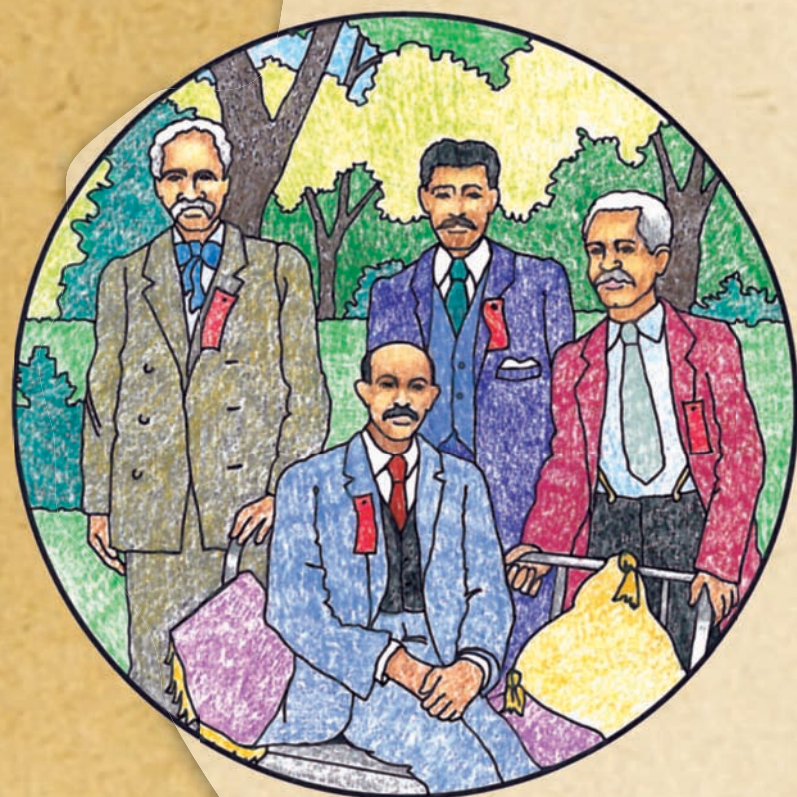


Civil War Soldier

Because of the Civil War, J.R.'s parents sent him to school in Chicago. In 1865 at age 16, he enlisted in the Union Army and served in the United States Colored Troops.



J. R. Clifford (1848-1933)



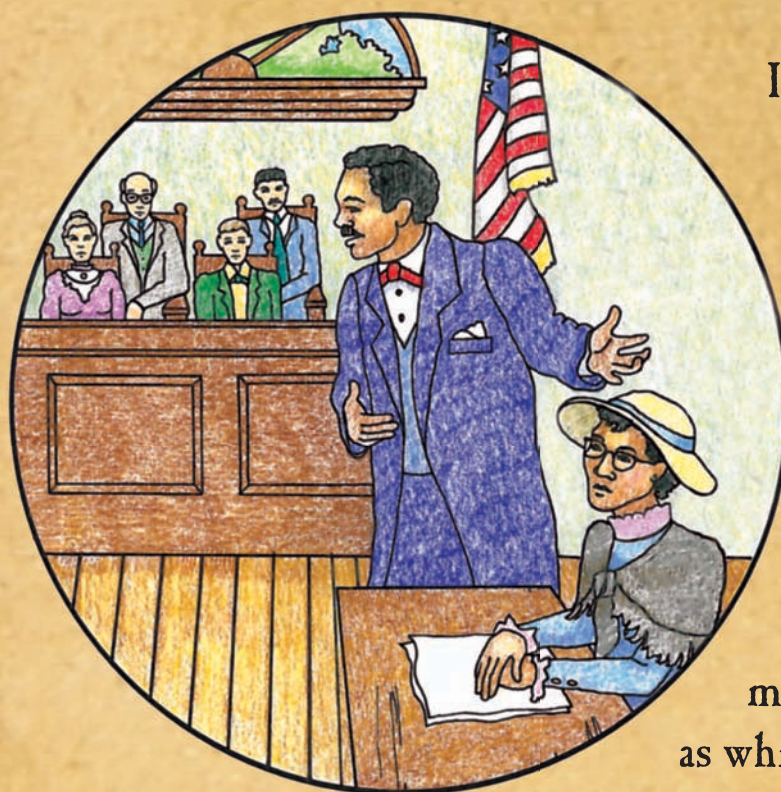
Niagara Movement Leader

In 1906, J.R. was a founder of the Niagara Movement which advocated for the rights of African Americans, including the right to vote and the right to use public facilities. This was the beginning of the modern civil rights movement in America.



In 2009, J.R. Clifford and 11 other civil rights pioneers were honored on U.S. postage stamps.

Famous Williams Case

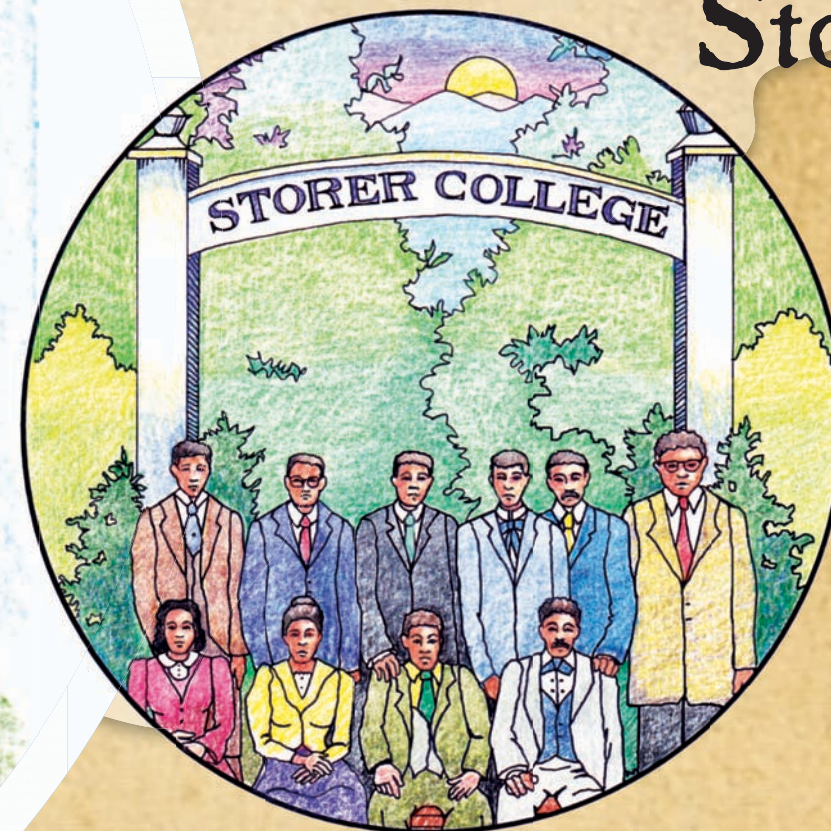


In 1892 J.R. argued in court on behalf of Carrie Williams, a teacher at the Coketon Colored School in the Blackwater Canyon area of Tucker County, West Virginia. In an historic civil rights decision the state Supreme Court held that African American children must have the same school terms as white children and their teachers the same pay.



Lawyer

While J.R. worked as a school principal and a publisher, he studied law in the evenings. In 1887 he became the first African American lawyer in WV.

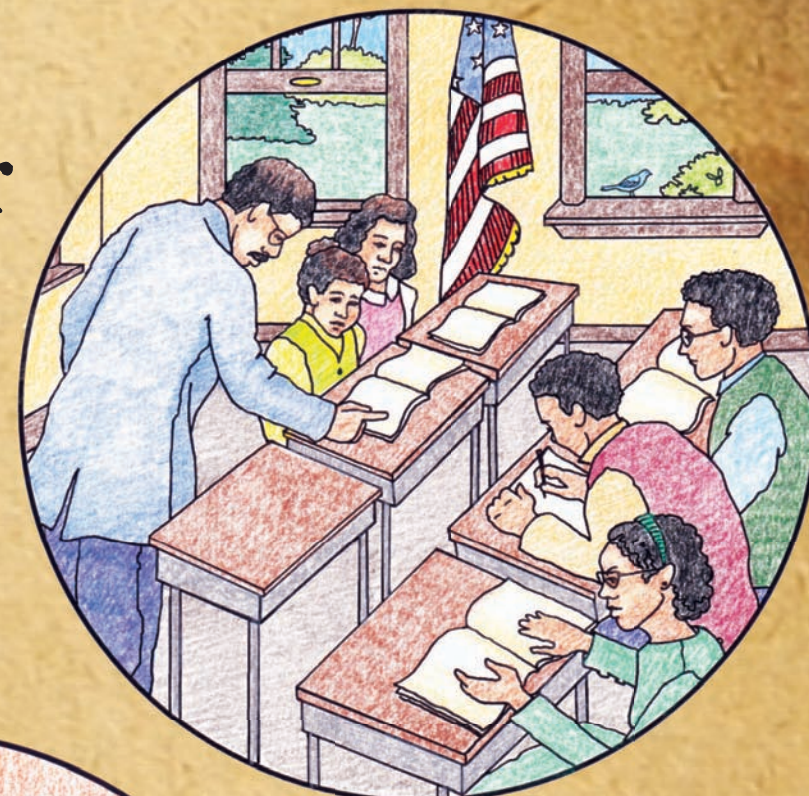


Storer College Graduate

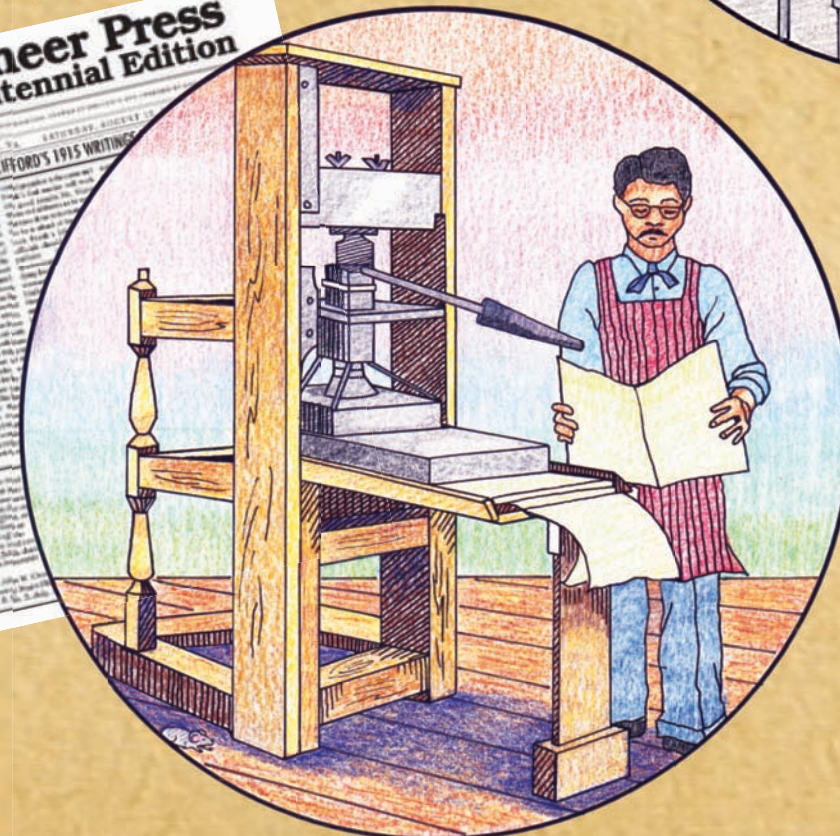
After the Civil War, J.R. enrolled at Storer College in Harper's Ferry, WV. Storer College trained African American teachers who taught freed slaves.

Teacher

After J.R. graduated from Storer College he became principal at the Sumner School in Martinsburg, WV. He taught African American children the basic subjects.



The Pioneer Press
 Niagara Centennial Edition



Newspaper Publisher

In 1882, J.R. started a newspaper called the Pioneer Press in Martinsburg, WV. He edited and published the newspaper for 30 years.

