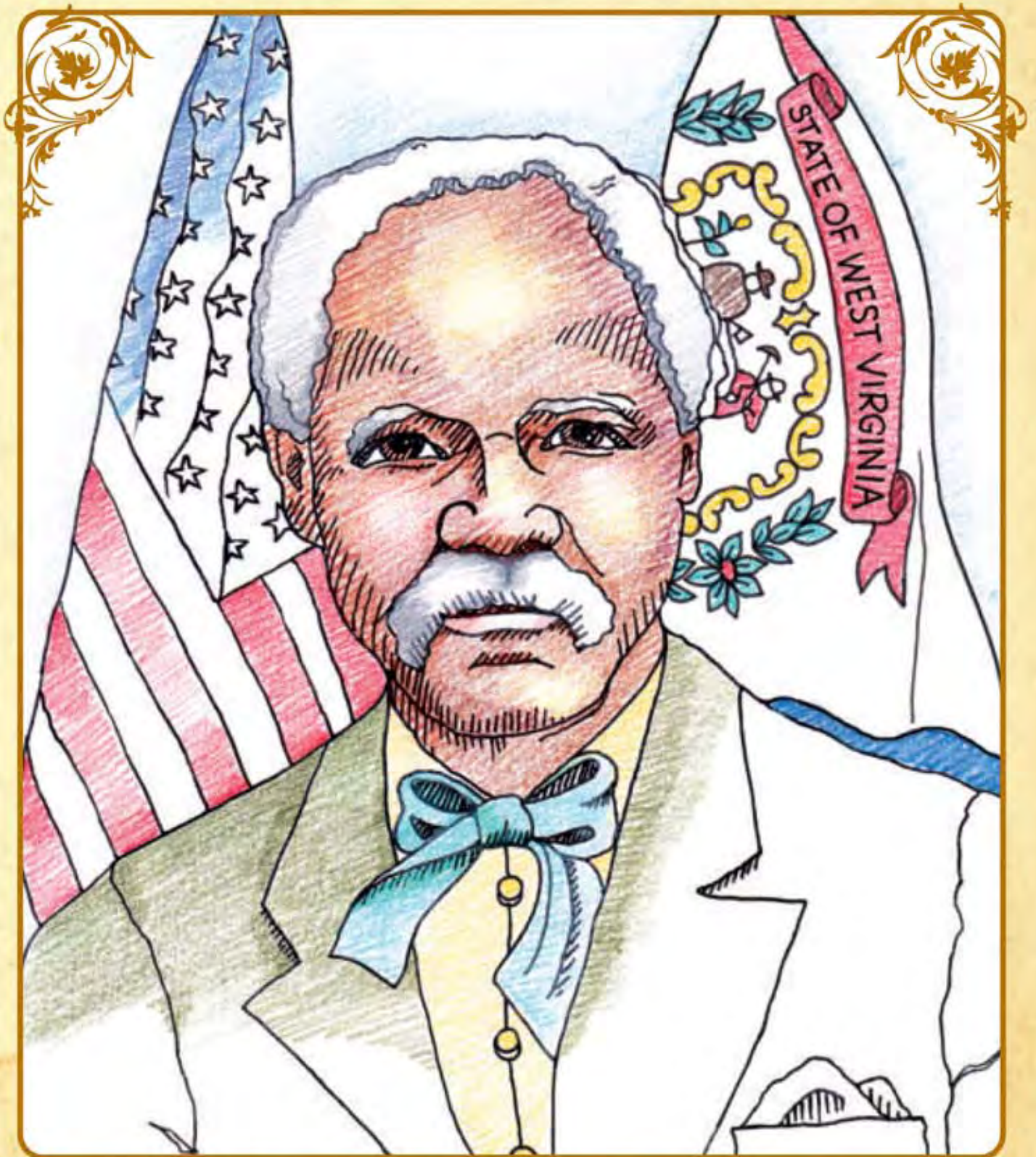


JR Clifford

West Virginia's
Civil Rights Pioneer



West Virginia is our home, we can make things better, we can build a better world, just like J.R. Clifford.



This book is dedicated
to the memory of
J.R. Clifford and his family.

produced by Friends of Blackwater

text by Tom Rodd

illustrations & page design by Sharon Harms



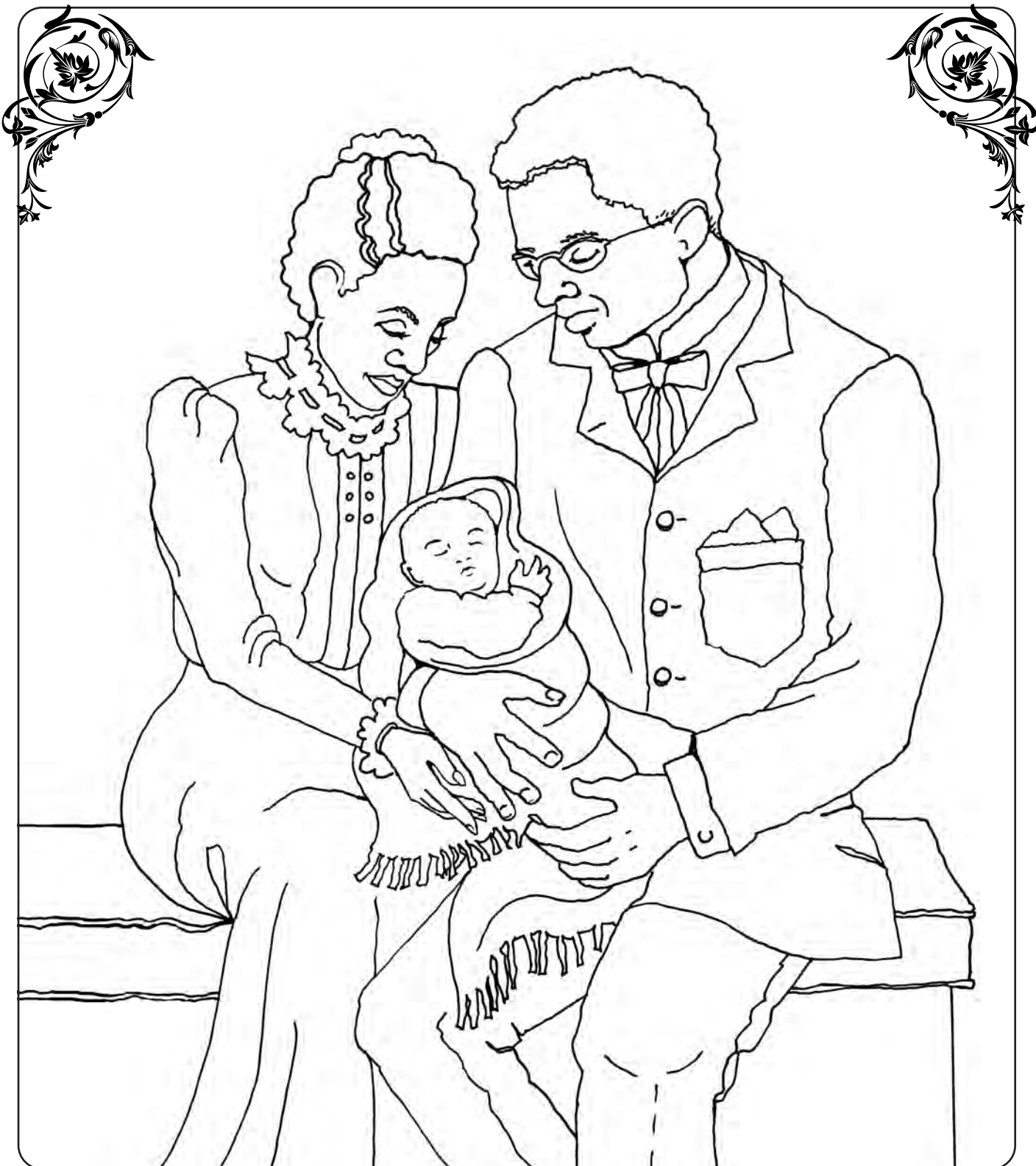
John Robert, "J.R.", Clifford was born in a farmhouse near Moorefield, Virginia (now a part of West Virginia) in 1848. Most African Americans in Virginia were slaves but J.R.'s parents, Isaac and Satilphia, were free and owned their own land. When J.R. was a boy he worked on his family's farm. He was a good worker and he loved nature and the country life. Because of the United States Civil War J.R.'s family sent him to Chicago where he was in a classroom with children of all colors.

In 1864, at age 16, J.R. enlisted in the Union Army and served in the United States Colored Troops. After the Civil War, J.R. enrolled at Storer College in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Storer College trained African American teachers who taught freed slaves. After J.R. graduated from Storer College, he became the principal at the Sumner School in Martinsburg, West Virginia. West Virginia had a racially segregated school system and J.R. taught African American children reading, writing, and other basic subjects.

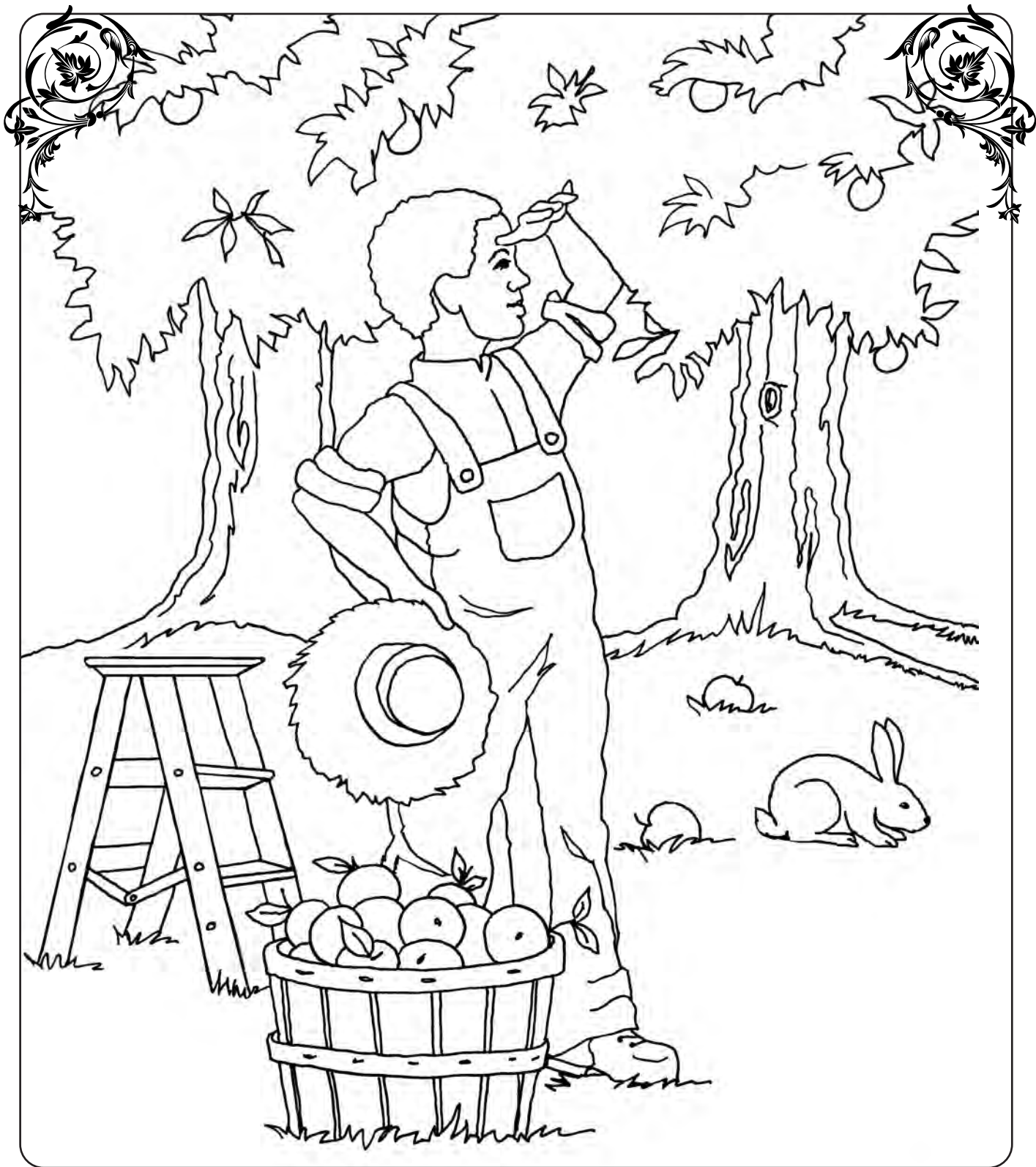
J.R. started a newspaper called the Pioneer Press in 1882. He edited and published the newspaper for thirty years. While he worked as a school principal and publisher, J.R. studied law in the evenings. In 1887, J.R. became the first African American lawyer in West Virginia. In 1892, J. R. argued in court on behalf of Carrie Williams, a teacher at the Coketon Colored School in the Tucker County, West Virginia, Blackwater Canyon area. The West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals held that African American children must have the same school terms as white children and this case was very important to all West Virginians.

Refusing to ride on racially segregated railroad trains J.R. often rode his bicycle instead and even joined a bicycle club. J.R.'s daughter, Mary Clifford, was a main speaker at the 1906 Niagara Movement meeting in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia – the beginning of the modern civil rights movement. Women played a full and equal role in this movement.

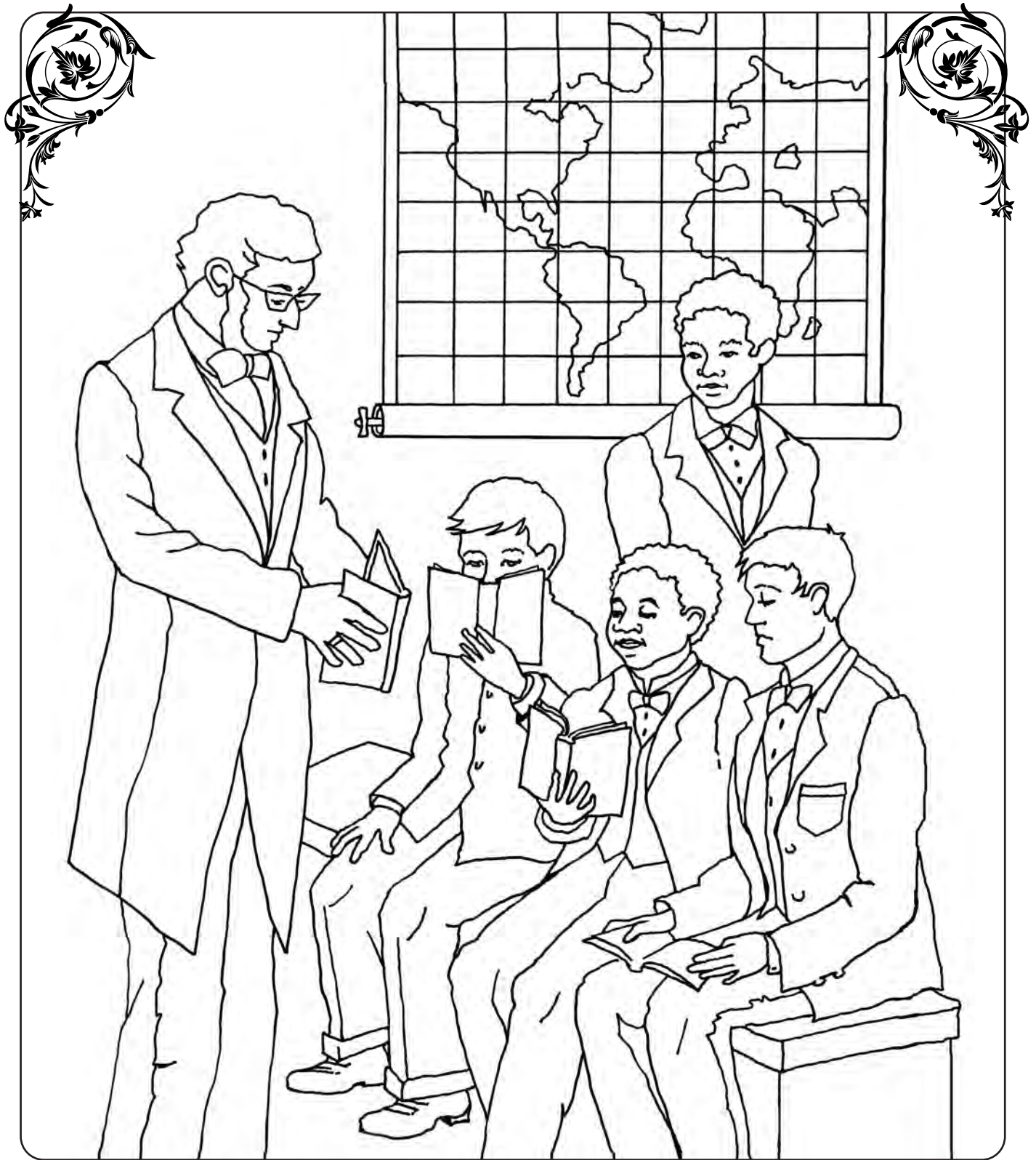
J.R. knew that African Americans would only have real power to improve their lives if they voted. Until he died in 1933 at age 85, J.R. always voted in every election and he was a delegate at many political meetings.



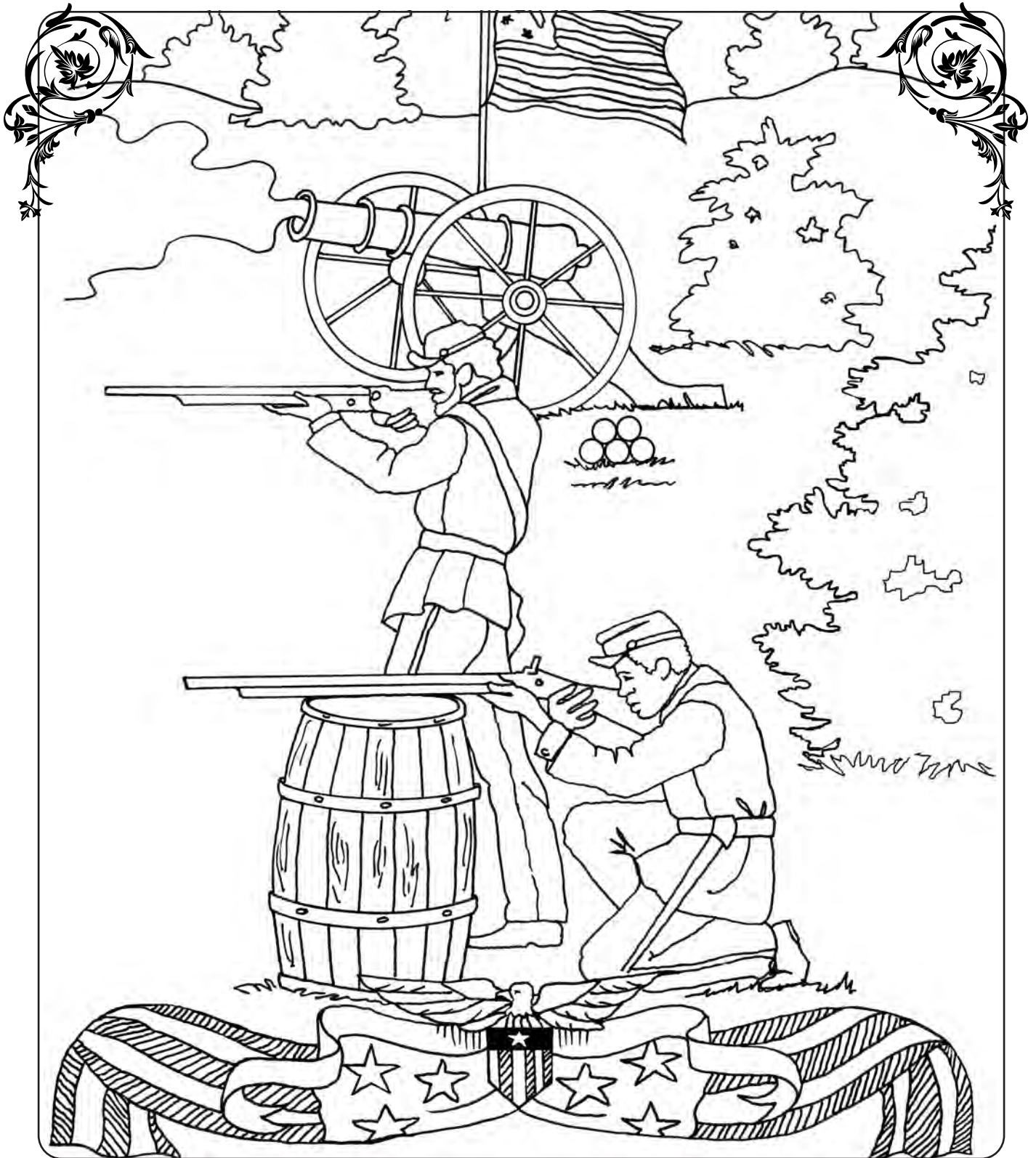
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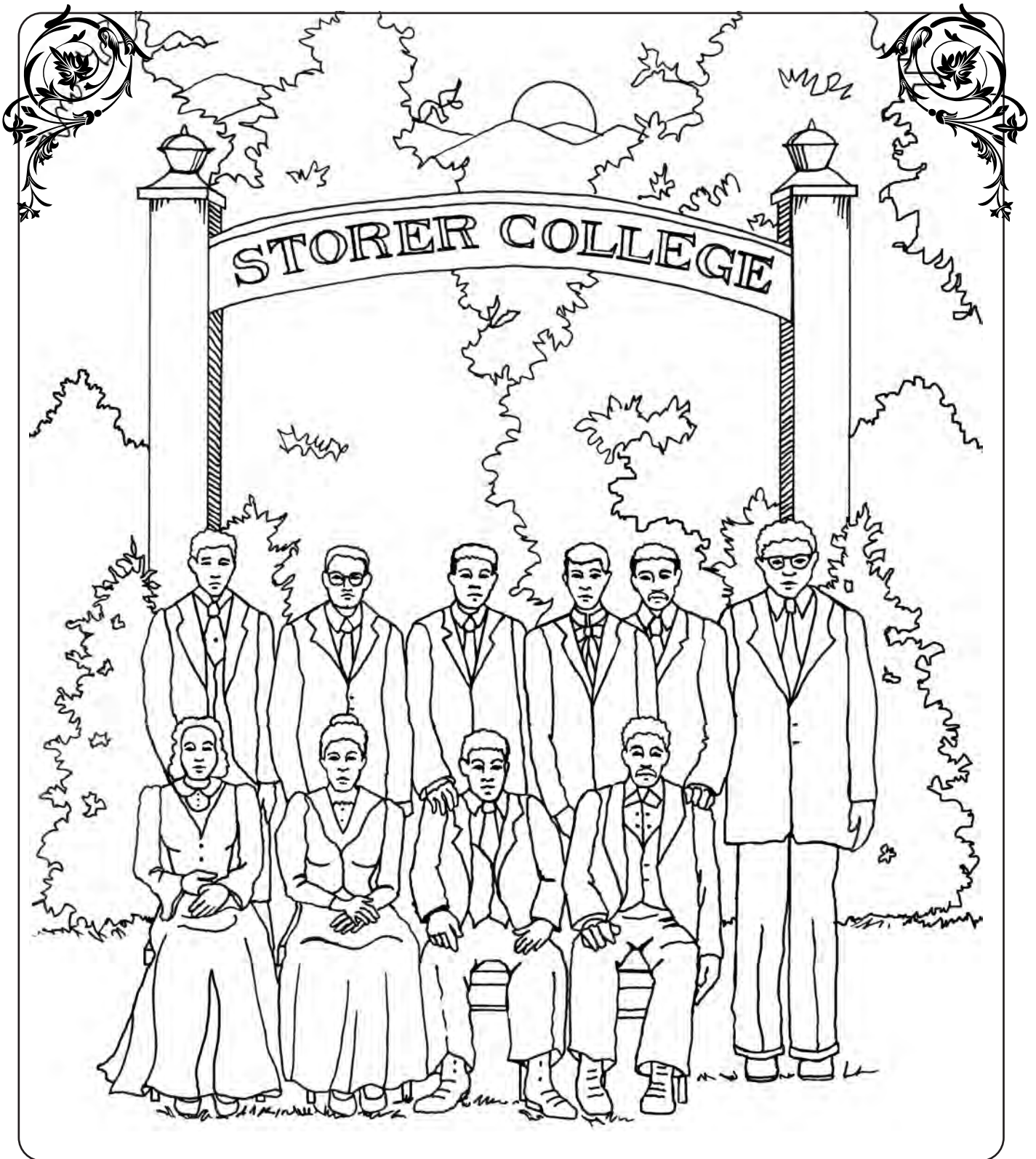
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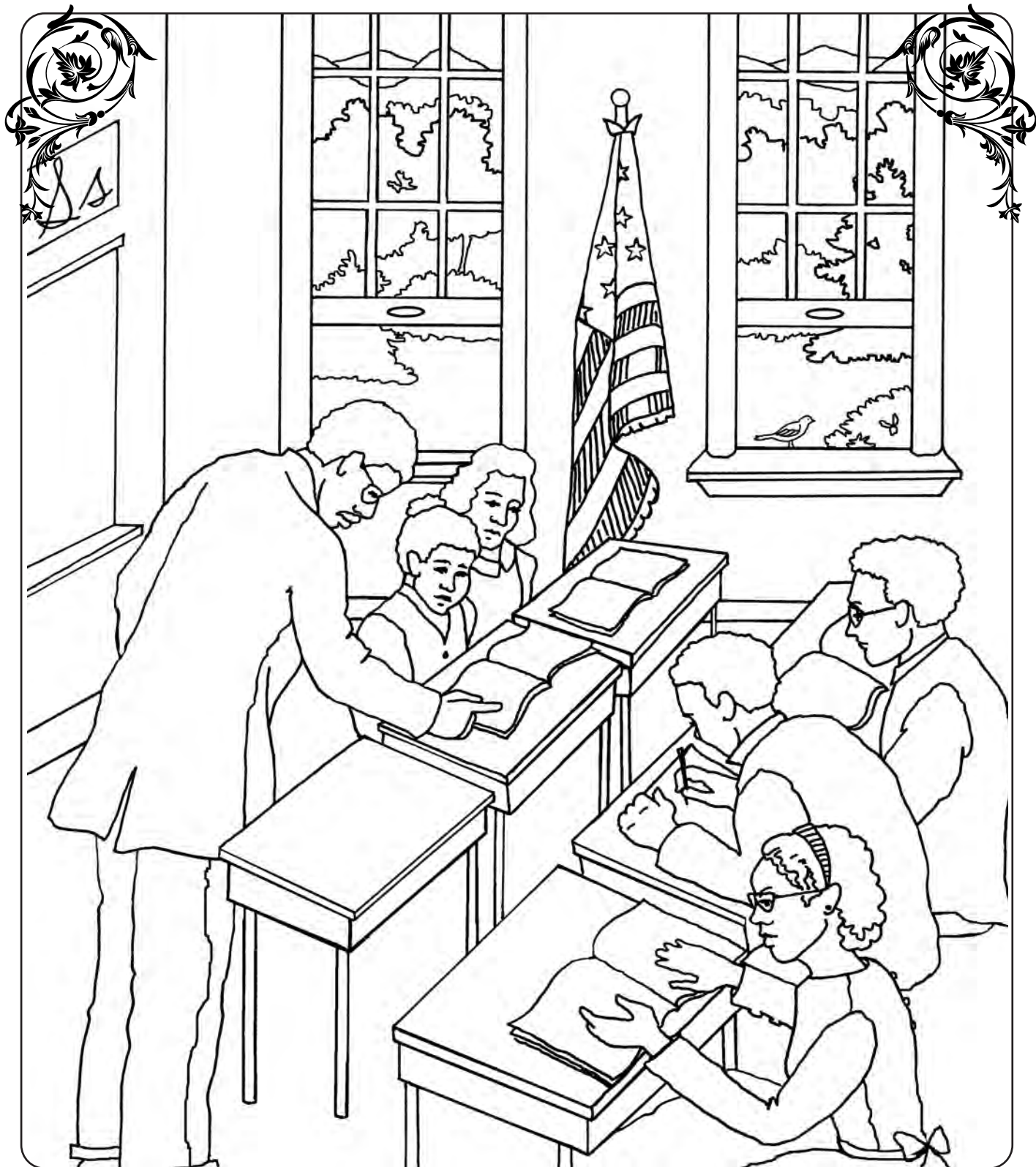
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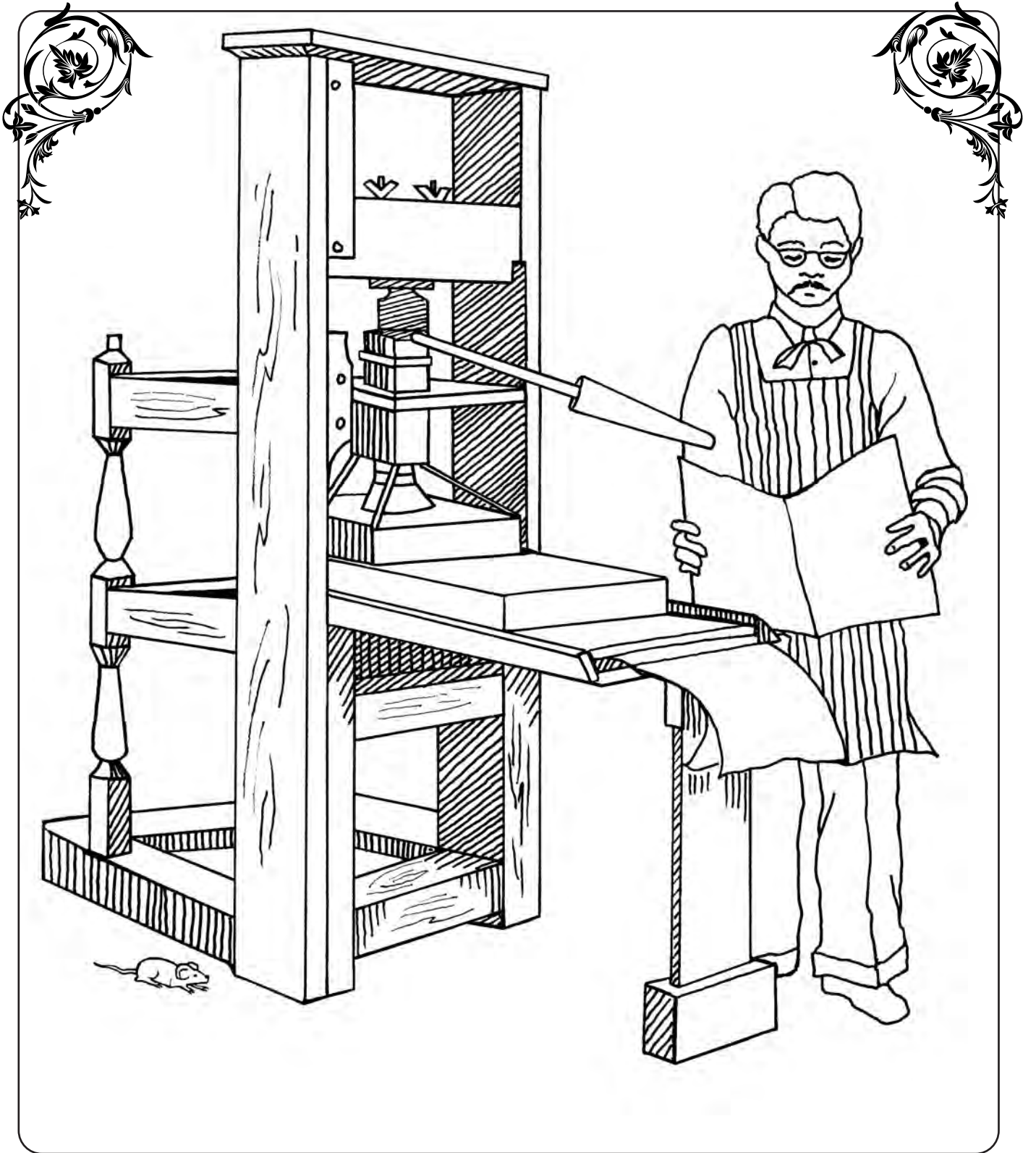
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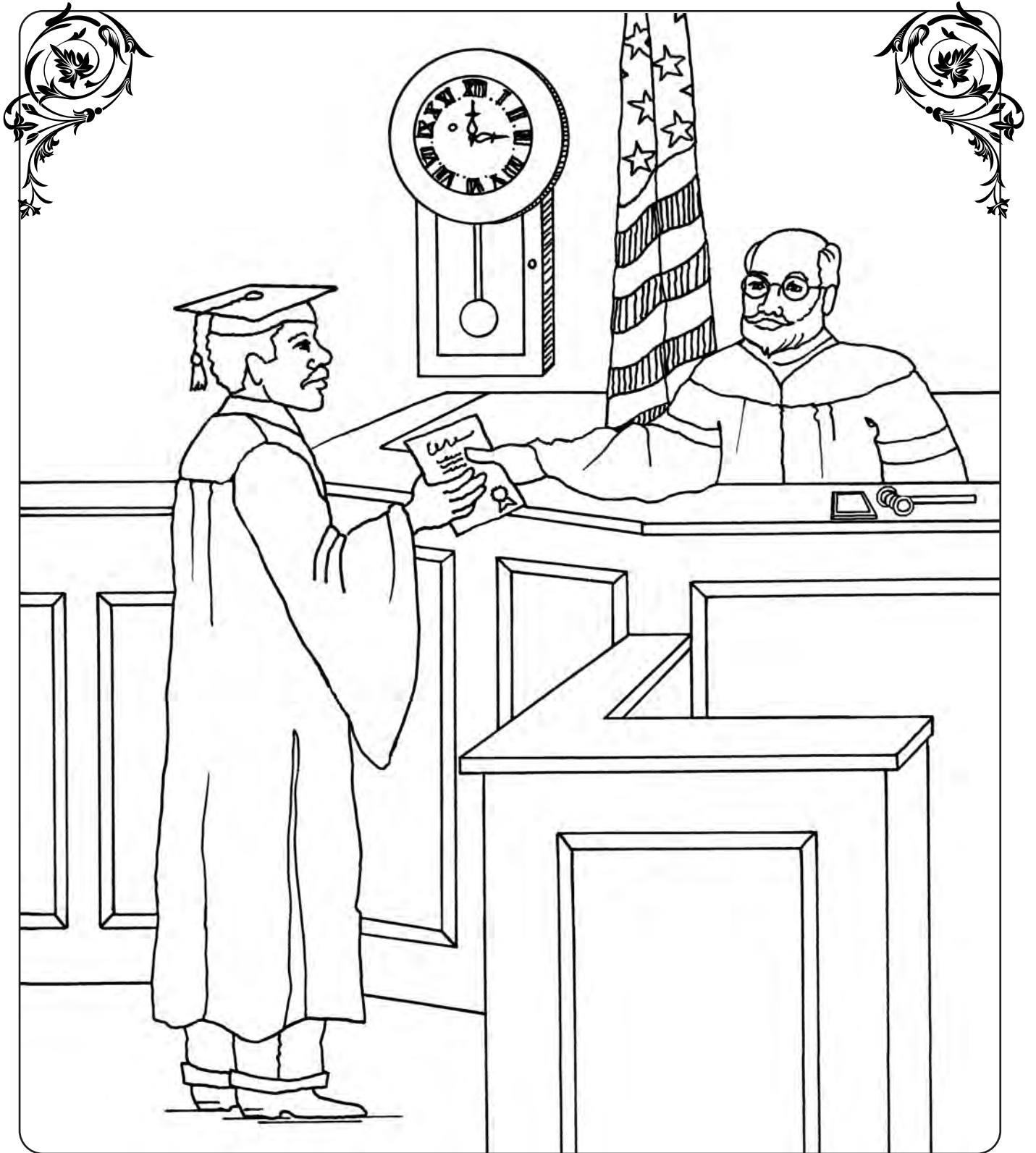
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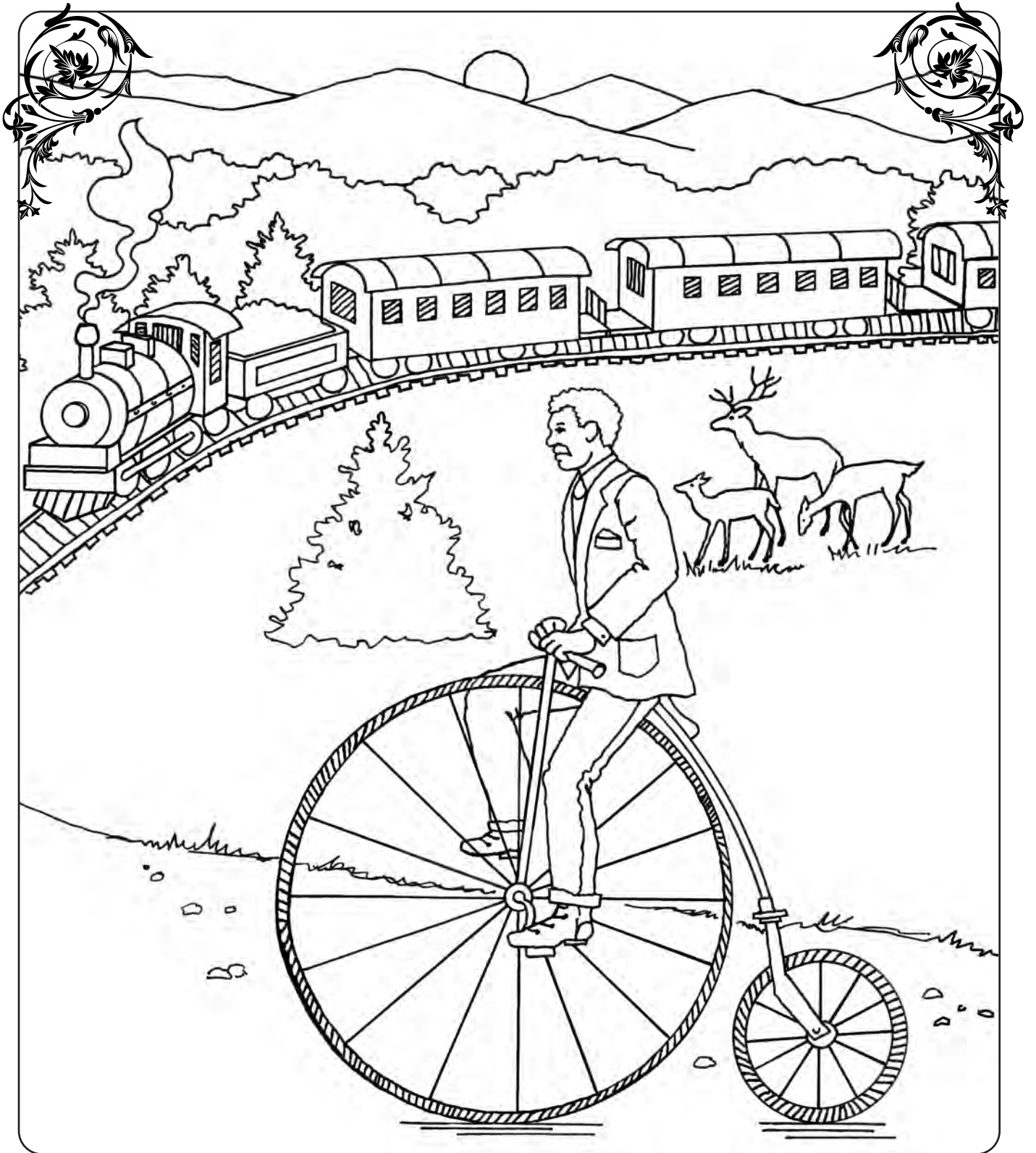
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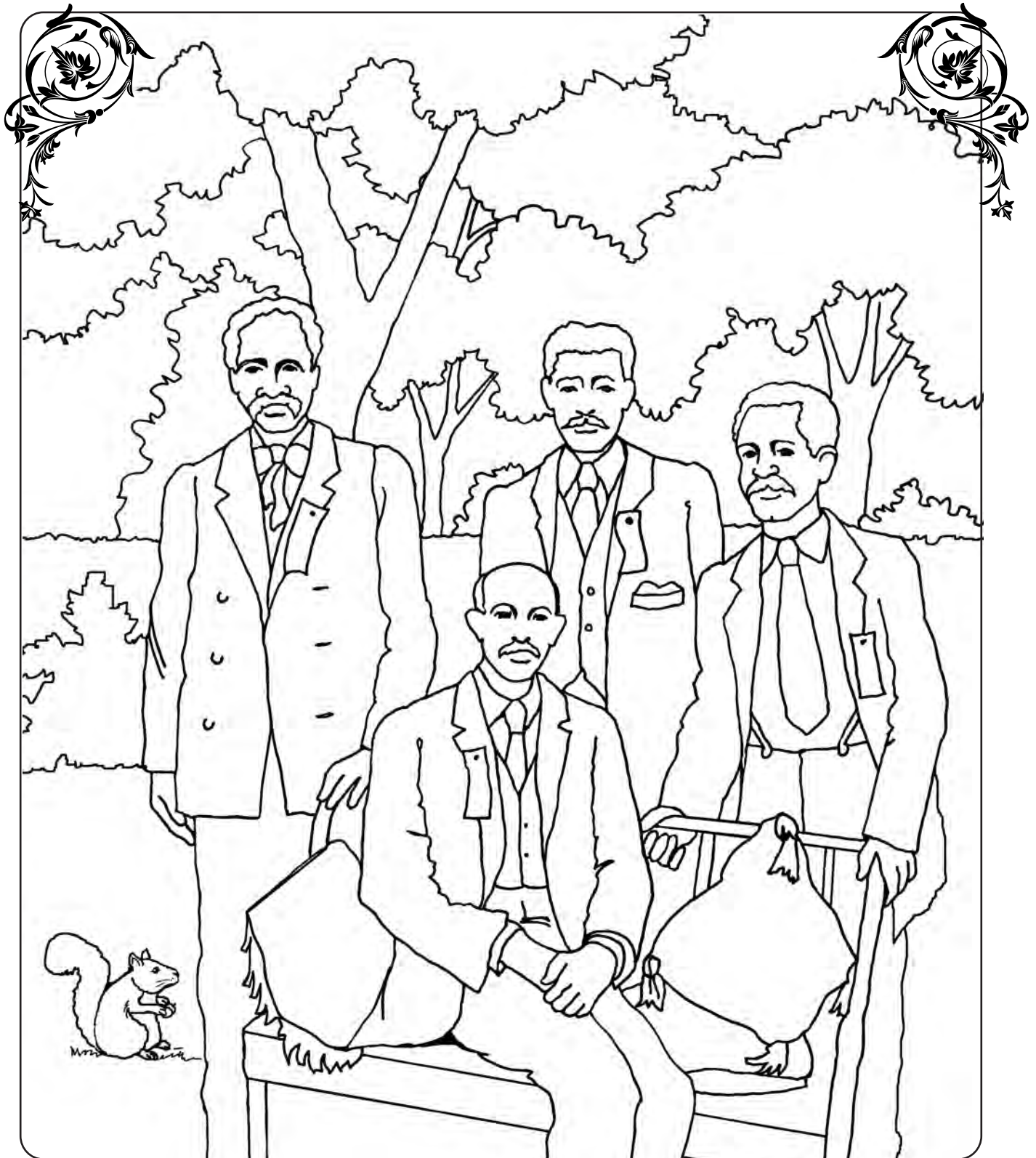
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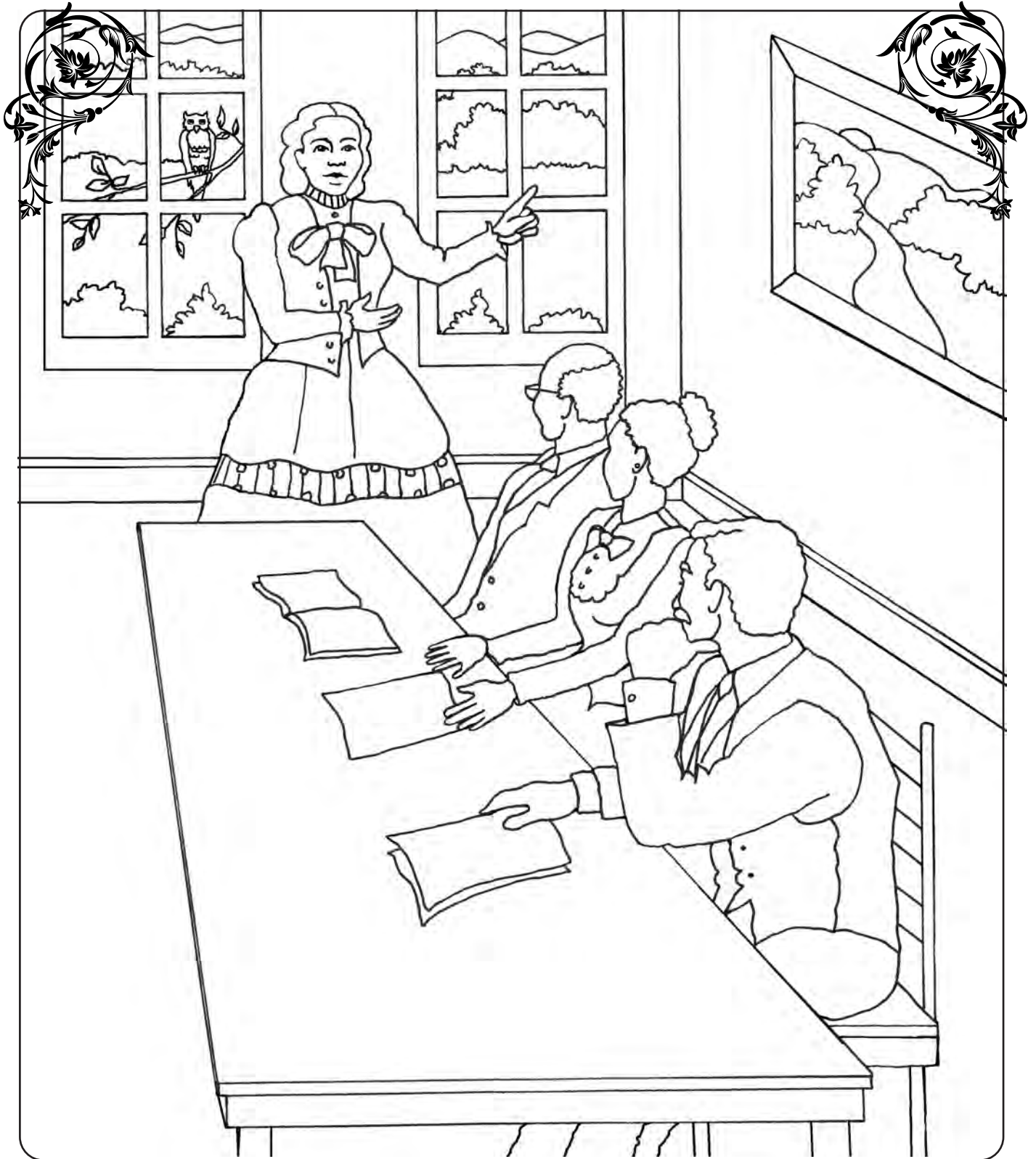
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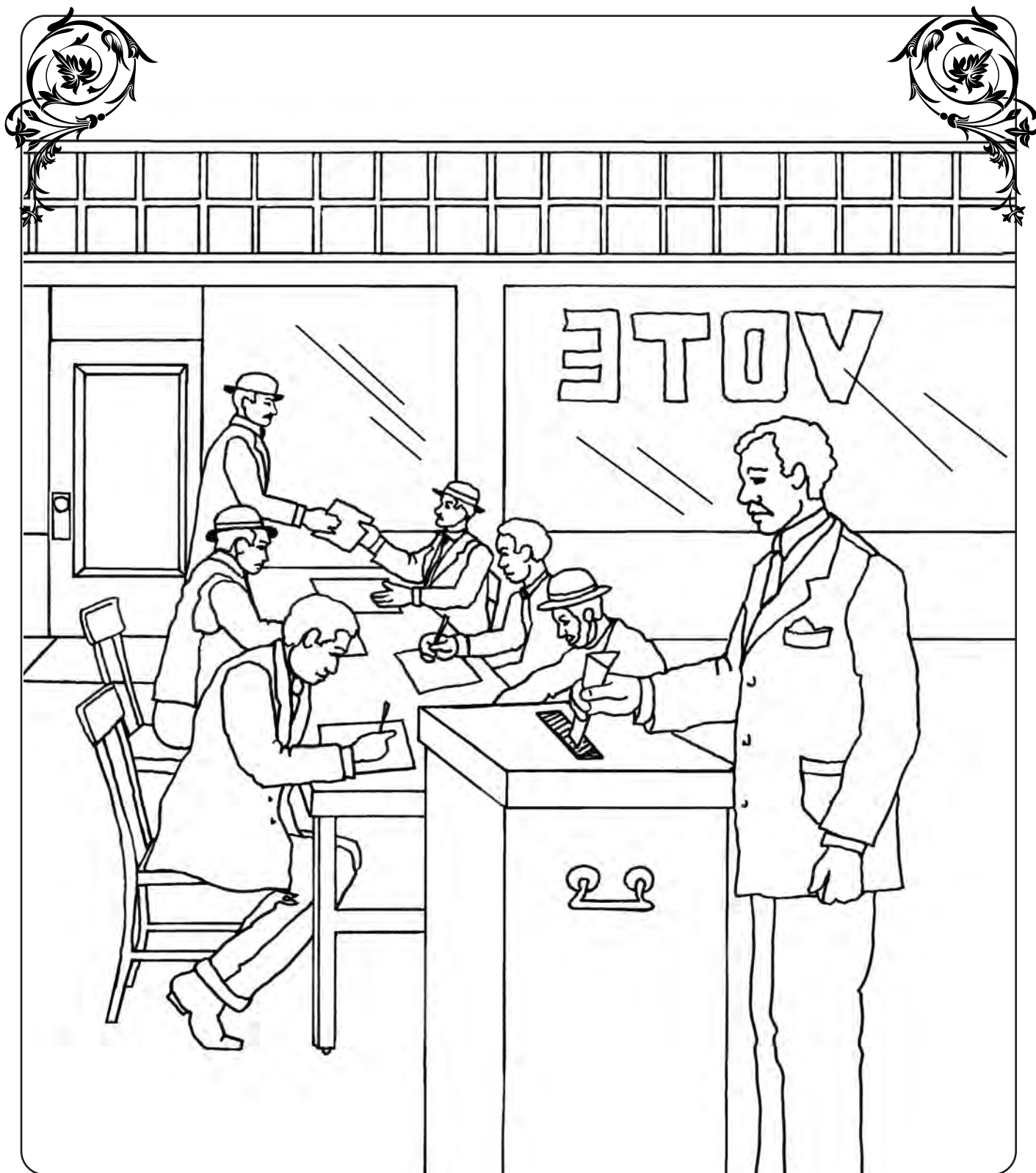
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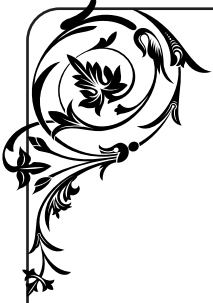
In 1906, J.R. was a founder of the Niagara Movement which advocated for full rights for African Americans. These rights included the right to vote and the right to use all public facilities. This was the beginning of the modern civil rights movement in America. Pictured above from left to right are J.R. Clifford, W. E. B. Du Bois (seated), L. M. Hershaw and F. H. M. Murray in Harper's Ferry, W.V.



J.R.'s daughter, Mary Clifford, was a main speaker at the 1906 Niagara Movement meeting in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, the beginning of the modern civil rights movement. Women played a full and equal role in this movement.



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J.R. Clifford was a great West Virginian. Here are the words to a song you can sing about J.R. (to the tune of the verse of "Yankee Doodle"):

*J.R. Clifford was a boy who lived in West Virginia.
J.R. fought for what is right and that is why we like him.*

*J.R. Clifford went to court so kids could go to school.
The jury said the children won and we think that is cool.*

*We can do what J.R. did, we can help each other,
We can all be best of friends, children of all colors.*

*West Virginia is our home, we can make things better.
We can build a better world, just like J.R. Clifford.*

You can learn more about J.R.'s life at:

www.jrclifford.org

Teachers and parents can find lesson plans and curricula about J.R. Clifford's life and work for elementary school, middle school and high school at www.jrclifford.org

For more copies of this coloring book contact:

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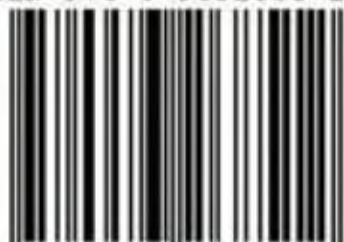


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