

Frederick Douglas Patterson

Frederick Douglas Patterson was born in Greenfield, the oldest son of C. R. and Josephine Patterson. After completing the eighth grade, Fred was refused admission to the all-white Greenfield high school. During the school year that C. R. [sued the board](#) to admit his son, young Fred and his brother Samuel were sent to live with relatives in Philadelphia and go to school. When the case was settled, Fred returned to Greenfield and was admitted to the high school.

He graduated from Greenfield and entered The Ohio State University in September of 1889. While at Ohio State he was the first black varsity football player, playing on the 1891, 1892 & 1893 teams. He was a member of the Horton Literary Society, being Corresponding Secretary and vice president of that group. He served as Assistant Business Manager of The Lantern, the school's newspaper. He was Class President of the class of 1893.

After his junior year he took a history teaching position at Louisville Central High School in Louisville, Kentucky and stayed there for five years. After the death of his brother, Samuel, Fred returned to Greenfield to help his father run C. R. Patterson & Sons.

Fred Patterson was very active in the Greenfield community. Several instances in the 1902 issues of The Greenfield Republican list Fred as being a baseball umpire. He was a member of Cedar Gove Lodge 17, as his father was. He held the office of Worshipful Master and was also several times the Grand Orator. He is mentioned in Great Black Men of Masonry, 1723-1982, published in 1982 by Joseph Mason Andrew Cox. He was a member of the Greenfield Business League as well as the Greenfield Commercial Club. He was a member of a committee to organize a group of 50-60 "colored" men to help local and state officials in case of an emergency during World War I.

Fred was active in local politics, being a member of the Republican Party he attended the 1902 convention of Ohio Republican clubs held in Springfield. That same year he spoke before the Greenfield Foraker Club. In March, 1902, he was nominated by the Greenfield Republicans as a candidate for City Council. Fred won the election and served on council for one year. He was appointed to standing committees including Finance, Street and Ordinance. He did not run for reelection in 1903.

Fred was involved in the Negro Business League an organization started by Booker T. Washington. In 1905 Fred spoke at the sixth annual meeting. In that speech he stated that he believed that Negro businesses should advertise to get the business of the Negro population while continuing to appeal to the general population. During 1904 to 1907 he was one of the vice presidents of the organization. In 1908 to 1909 he was a member of the Executive Committee. From 1910 to 1919 he was president of the local chapter.

He was chosen as "one of the leading men of this country" to be on the national committee organizing the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. In 1924 Fred was an alternate to the National Republican Convention.

Also see "[The Negro Soldier – His Part in the World War](#)" by Fred D. Patterson.