



## Introduction

Now more than ever, a connection to a community is important -- and it's a perfect time to start a community-lead bulletin!

**Note** (before we jump in): I also created a community server that will allow folk to connect, chat, share, barter, and learn together.

Visit [beyondTheFlats.xyz](https://beyondTheFlats.xyz) to:

<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>READ</b></p> <p>Access the same information and read online.</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>ASK</b></p> <p>Reach out to me or others for more information on topics.</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>SHARE</b></p> <p>If you'd like to contribute, you are invited to do so.</p>
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## About Me

My name is Courtney. I didn't grow up in *The Bottoms*, but I spent many summers here during my younger years.

My grandmother/nana (Nadine Bell), and her legacy is much of my inspiration for starting this newsletter.

I'm not a writer, nor am I a stickler about spelling and grammar. If you are and see any errors --- you've been warned and are invited to volunteer as an editor. :)

I've been self-employed for just over 12 years and have a background in technology, activism/community organizing, sales, and healing circles/support groups. I've always loved the outdoors and making things, but since being here, I've been doing a lot more "getting dirty" -- which includes gardening, repairing, woodworking, making shoes/clothing, etc.

That's my short introduction. Nice to "meet" you!

*"Barred from the middle and upper class districts of the city, poor people, immigrants, and African Americans were often relegated to the lowest, most flood-prone areas of the industrial city. While*

## Did You Know?

Many states have neighborhoods known as The Flats/Bottoms.

**Do you know the history and that many still exist today?**

Unfortunately there is not a lot of information available that documents the history, contributions and the socioeconomic disparities of these communities but there is some.

One very impressive and detailed piece I found was "Bottoms, Hollows, and Flats: Making and Remaking the Lower Section of the American City" by Steven Thomas Moga.

You can read the abstract and download the PDF at <https://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/62137>

Note: I will share the link in the Facebook group for easier access and reading.

*"other side of the tracks" or "wrong side of the tracks" remains in common parlance today, in an earlier era these places were known for their low topography and propensity to flood, as much as they were identified by their location across a boundary line or a dividing feature like railroad tracks. In fact, as one looks closely at these low-lying neighborhoods, it becomes clear that the low ground often was on the other side of the tracks, down in the river flats, along a polluted creek or stream, or in the broad expanse of a wide floodplain called "the bottoms." via Bottoms, Hollows, and Flats: Making and Remaking the Lower Section of the American City by Steven Thomas Moga*

## Suggested Reading

Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice by Jessica Gordon Nembhard

"In Collective Courage, Jessica Gordon Nembhard chronicles African American cooperative business

ownership and its place in the movements for Black civil rights and economic equality....To tell the story, Gordon Nembhard uses a variety of newspapers, period magazines, and journals; co-ops' articles of incorporation, minutes from annual meetings, newsletters, budgets, and income statements; and scholarly books, memoirs, and biographies. These sources reveal the achievements and challenges of Black co-ops, collective economic action, and social entrepreneurship. Gordon Nembhard finds that African Americans, as well as other people of color and low-income people, have benefited greatly from cooperative ownership and democratic economic participation throughout the nation's history."

**You can also find some videos of her on YouTube.**

## Plant of the Month

Now is a great time to get to know a bit about natural herbs that grow wild and free.

Did you know that the little fuzzy “weed” you see around is actually good for you?

It’s called **Mullein**.



Also known as “Verbascum thapsus, the great mullein or common mullein, is a species of mullein native to Europe, northern Africa, and Asia, and introduced in the Americas and Australia. It is a hairy biennial plant that can grow to 2 m tall or more.” via Wiki

“Mullein is used for cough, whooping cough, tuberculosis, bronchitis, hoarseness, pneumonia, earaches, colds, chills, flu, swine flu, fever, allergies, tonsillitis, and sore throat. Other uses include asthma, diarrhea, colic, gastrointestinal bleeding, migraines, joint pain, and gout.” via rxlist.com

I invite you to google or grab an herb book to learn more.

**Disclaimer: As with all things -- consult with your medical professional before ingesting anything new to treat anything you might have.**

## Getting Dirty

It was reported that “the rona” had more people buying seeds and starting gardens.

Unfortunately, not many of us (Black folk) have gardens, and not even thinking about it now. There are a lot of systematic reasons, which I may go into at another time, but until then, I wanted to share some info with you about two organizations that might spark some inspiration.

1) Soul Fire Farm :: “Soul Fire Farm is committed to ending racism and injustice in the food system. We are a survival and thrival training ground where people impacted by oppression can reclaim our ancestral right to belong to land and to have agency in the food system. We are a multiracial, people-of-color-led team of activist-farmers drawing upon the wisdom of our ancestors to uproot oppression. Our programs include sustainable farming and leadership training for people of color, strategic development support for grassroots activists of all backgrounds, a subsidized farm food distribution program for people living under food apartheid, food justice training for youth, and public education and organizing on equity in the food system.”



2) NEOKC Farmers Market :: “NEOKC Farmer’s Market (NEOKCFM) is a Cultural Event where both merchant and consumer can interact within an environment reminiscent to the African American ‘down-home farmers markets’ that were scattered throughout Oklahoma. The market will feature local grown food products, cooking and nutrition classes, arts, storytelling and a variety entertainment.”

These are just two doing amazing work in our communities. There are many more.

\* Image Credits: Soul Fire Farm FB Page

### Quote:

"The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any." by Alice Walker

Who: “Alice Walker is an American novelist, short story writer, poet, and social activist. In 1982, she wrote the novel *The Color Purple*, for which she won the National Book Award for hardcover fiction, and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. She also wrote the novels *Meridian* and *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*.”

## In Closing

At some point, I would like to create some type of barter and trade exchange for the community.

Via *Bottoms, Hollows, and Flats: Making and Remaking the Lower Section of the American City* by Steven Thomas Mogo



In these times, our resilience and creativity can come in handy to ensure our neighbors have what they need to keep going.

Not everyone has physical currency, but everyone has a skill, knowledge or item that another may be in need of, and if we’re able to incorporate some of the ways our elders and ancestors who “made a way, out of no way” we can thrive instead of just survive.

I’m not sure how it will work, but I hope to have details for you in the next issue. If you

have any ideas or input, don't hesitate to reach out.

Until next time, remember to be vigilant in taking care of your physical health, emotional well-being and each other.

Thank you for reading!

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