

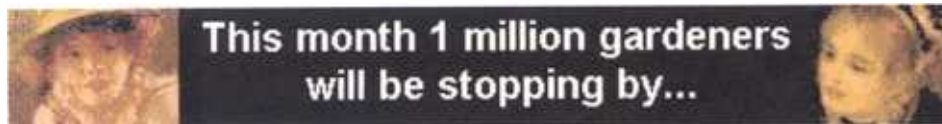
The three men charged in the shootout went to trial Aug. 9, 1971. Felony charges were dropped against Brown and Dotson in September of that year. The three shootout participants were later acquitted. Charges against Donald Jackson, identified and arrested for the shooting of the two officers near the railroad tracks, were dropped because of insufficient evidence.

Few residents other than Nesbitt remained in the area. Not too long after the shootings and trials, the NCCF disbanded as members went their separate ways. Conflicts between the National Black Panther Party and police in the late 1960s and early '70s led to other shootouts in California, New York, and Chicago. Chicago party leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were killed by police during a raid in December 1969 at Chicago headquarters. The shootings were later proved to have been unprovoked. Hampton spoke on SIUC's campus two weeks before his death. The national party officially disbanded in the 1980s.

As far as the incident and the Panthers as a whole, it's mostly ancient history to students of today, Holmes said. Many may have seen the 1995 movie "Panther" based on the group's activities, but few know of its significance. The Black Panther Party and its various inspired subgroups were instrumental in blacks attaining and maintaining their Civil Rights. They also challenged police authority when it overstepped its bounds. Black residents questioned the police concerning the shootout then, and are still questioning police authority, an influence undeniably tied, if not explicitly, to the legacy of the Black Panther Party.

"They are a part of the whole big picture," Holmes said. "There have been a number of individuals and organizations that have had an influence on our continuing struggle, and some of them sort of fade into the woodwork, but they still made their impact."

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