BLACK TOWNS IN OKLAHOMA: THEIR DEVELOPMENT AND SURVIVAL

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PREFACE

This is a study of the quest of a people to build all-Black towns in Oklahoma; these towns provided Blacks with light to lead them upward from the brink of death, desolation, and despair. There initially were twenty-eight such towns; however, some became anchronisms and slowly faded under the strains of integration and economic instability. For many Blacks who dreamed of independence on the crimson hills and barren plains of Oklahoma, there came a rude awakening of depression, hardships, and violence; moreover, their desire to survive disappeared. However, others endured, today challenging Mother Nature and Father Time while completing a century-long cycle of hardship and despair.

This study will relate a part of the history of Black towns in Oklahoma while also detailing the growing awareness of the Black's role in settling the American West. Much of the study also deals with a general history of Blacks in Oklahoma as an ingredient in the ultimate development of the all-Black towns. While this study vividly details the initial development of these unique towns, it will give testimony to those visions of long ago. Those communities that still survive reinforce the nobility of this experiment. This study also will point out that the establishment of Black towns was one of the bravest attempts made by people of any color to attempt to harvest the American dream.

Furthermore, this study clearly points out that there were

peculiar socio-psychological factors that affected the rise and fall of some of these towns. Therefore, the sociological influence in this study was necessary. It is commonly known that sociologists have been incapable of adequately and accurately assessing Black communities and their development largely because of the Black-white conflict, manifestations of dissent, and other exterior constraints. This study proves that Black communities are less complex than all-white towns.

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INTRODUCTION

Black communities in the United States have received remarkably little historical attention from scholars, with the exception of such studies as The Negro Family in the United States, done by Sociologist E. Franklin Frazier and Historian Carter G. Woodson's The Rural Negro. However, Frazier's work concentrated primarily on communities of mixed-bloods rather than all-Black towns,[1] and Woodson's work emphasized Black rural towns throughout the United States rather than in one specific geographical area.

This curious absence of research on totally Black communities is difficult to understand in view of the fact that there are at least fifty towns in the United States which are still inhabited and governed exclusively by Blacks.[2] Furthermore, all-Black communities and towns can provide a wealth of information regarding Black behavior that cannot be obtained in a study of biracial communities. For example, there is speculation that such social phenomena as class structure, attitudes toward mobility, color distinctions, criminality, and political activity in the all-Black towns are quite unpredictable and unlike similar behavior in biracial towns and communities.[3] This apparently is true, for most of the information on Black behavior in the United States has been based on research of Black Americans living in a day-to-day environment of biracial communities. It is reasonable to assume that

in all-Black communities patterns of behavior more likely would reflect the true aspirations of Blacks rather than some conformity to white expectations. As W. E. DuBois stated in The Souls of Black Folks, Black Americans had to lead two lives: one for the white majority and one for himself.[4]

American Western historians writing on migrations, expansion, and urbanization have studied and written about the plight of white pioneers, Indians, and even Mexicans, but few scholars have examined the development of Black towns of the West as an integral part in the settlement of the frontier. Some of the writers responsible for this neglect are Walter P. Webb in The Great Plains, Herbert Eugene Bolton in The Spanish Borderlands, and more recently Gerald Nash in The American West in the Twentieth Century. Although these writers refer to Blacks in the West, they do not include Black towns in Oklahoma as part of the move toward frontier urbanization. However, some works have recognized Black contributions to the West. For example, The Black West, by Loren Katz, Buffalo Soldiers in Indian Territory by Fairfax Downey, and an unpublished Master's Thesis, "Black Deputy Marshals in Oklahoma Territory," by Nudie Williams have attempted an historical investigation of the Black man in Westward expansion and development. Although these works place the Black man in a proper perspective in the West, they have not investigated his role in urbanization--especially in the Oklahoma Territory. Thus, earlier historians have written of the Indian's suffering on the Trail of Tears and the white travelers along the Oregon and Sante Fe Trail, but no scholars have studied Black towns or Black accomplishments in the urbanizing and taming of this frontier.

This study will trace the founding, development, and survival of Black towns in Oklahoma as well as the growing awareness of Black Americans' role in the settling of the West. Black Oklahoma towns have been chosen because they are representative of Black community development in the Eastern and Southern United States.

The founding of these towns in Oklahoma was part of the general westward movement in this country during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Accordingly, to understand the establishment of these communities in Oklahoma, it is necessary to relate them to the larger movement of settling the West.[5] Frederick Jackson Turner has explained that to a large degree American development has been the history of the colonization of the great West, the existence of free land, its continuous retirement, and the advance of American settlement westward. He pointed out that the peculiarity of American social forms resulted from the necessity of continuous changes due to the nature of frontier developments. American institutions, he said, have been constrained to adjust to the changes of a restless, mobile, and expanding people.[6] Yet, this explanation perhaps does not fit the experience of Blacks who moved to the West.

During the early years of territorial expansion there were many all-Black towns and communities in Oklahoma. Few works have been done on this subject, but the two most significant studies were done by Oklahomans, Mozell Hill, a sociologist, and Arthur L. Tolson, an historian. Tolson concluded that there were twenty-five all-Black towns while Hill noted that there were twenty-seven all-Black towns and one unincorporated community. These towns and one unincorporated community, as compiled by Hill and Tolson, are: Arkansas Colored,

Bailey, Boley, Bookertee, Canadian Colored, Chase, Ferguson, Foreman, Gibson Station, Langston, Lewisville, Liberty, Lima, Lincoln City, Lincoln (later named Clearview), Marshaltown (sometimes Marshall Town), North Fork Colored, Overton, Red Bird, Rentiesville, Summit, Taft, Tatums, Tullahassee, Vernon, Wellston Colony, Wild Cat (later named Grayson), and Wybark.[7]

What kind of Blacks came to Oklahoma and helped to create these towns and communities? Where did they come from? When did they come? How did they come? Why did they come? What did they come for? And, moreover, who were they? What factors contributed to the growth of some towns and the death of other towns? For those towns surviving, what characteristics did they share in common? And, finally, what is the future of Black towns in Oklahoma as they face their second century of existence?

At the end of the Civil War more than nine million slaves gained their freedom. Some of the Black men enjoying this new freedom were those relocated in the Indian Territory and held by the Five Civilized Tribes. These freedmen along with runaway slaves comprised the Black population in Indian Territory. In 1879 they were joined by the "Black Exodusters" whom Benjamin "Pap" Singleton led to the territory after the failure of the cotton crop in the South. Doubtless those Blacks who migrated to Oklahoma Territory in later years came for the same reasons and with the same pioneering spirit as did whites. Yet many of these same Blacks helped to establish all-Black towns.

One possible explanation for the settlement of the first Black communities was the pattern of land allotments made by the Dawes Commission. Certainly the location of many of these communities

within the territory of the Five Civilized Tribes supports this view. Another possible explanation was the conscious effort to achieve self-segregation as a form of Black dissent in the late nineteenth century. The work of William E. Bittle and Gilbert L. Geis indicates that racial self-fulfilment contributed significantly to the settlement of all-Black communities.[8] A third possible explanation was Mozell Hill's suggestion that continued conflict between whites and Blacks resulted in Black's attempting to limit their contact with whites.[9]

In addition to answering the questions regarding the origin and development of Black towns in the early years of Oklahoma, this study will attempt to shed considerable light on why some Black towns survived and others died. To this end it will be necessary to examine the structure of town government as well as the educational and economic bases of Black towns from the early 1900s to the present. Attention will be focused on birth rates, mortality rates, and out-migration rates. This information will prove the basis for concluding why some towns prospered and others did not.

Preliminary investigation of the early years and the later years of Black towns in Oklahoma suggested that those Blacks followed the road of self-determination to all-Black communities, although they faced almost insufferable obstacles. Through the years the road twisted and turned, doubling back on itself, as the problems Black towns faced seemed to multiply. Yet some of these Black towns endured.

Some of those dreams of long ago which led to the establishment of Black towns still exist in the survival of some of those towns today. In this context, therefore, the last major question this study will attempt to answer is what does the future hold for Black towns in

Oklahoma in the second century of their existence? What conditions must be met if these Black towns are to avoid the fate of becoming a modern-day ghost town or community?

It was in this milieu and vein of thought and under these harsh conditions, that the Black man embarked upon the road to self-determination. Some of those dreams and the survival of some of those Black towns that were developed serve today as a testimony that Black Americans, too, can dream.

FOOTNOTES

[1]E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro Family in the United States (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), pp. 1-50.

[2]Carter G. Woodson, The Rural Negro (The American Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc., Washington, D. C., 1930), pp. 1-75.

[3]See especially, the unpublished thesis (University of Kansas: 1937), by Mozell Hill, "A Sociological Study of an All Negro Community," and unpublished doctoral dissertation (University of Chicago: 1946), Hill, "The All Negro Society in Oklahoma." Also see Hill and Albert N. Whiting, "Some Theoretical and Methodological Problems in Community Studies," Social Forces, No. 29 (December, 1950), pp. 117-124, and Hill and Thelma D. Akiss, "Social Classes: A Frame of Reference for the Study of Negro Society," Social Forces, No. 22 (October, 1943), pp. 92-98.

[4]W. E. B. DuBois, Souls of Black Folks (Chicago: A. C. McClug, 1903), pp. 41-59.

[5]Fredrick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), pp. 3-30.

[6]Ibid., pp. 205-206. This frame of reference has been recognized and stressed by several sociologists, notably Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, Introduction to the Science of Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd Edition, 1924), pp. 16-24.

[7]Kate M. Teall, Black History in Oklahoma, a Resource Book (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma City Public Schools - Title III, ESAE Grant, 1971), pp. 167-168.

[8]William E. Bittle and Gilbert Geis, "A Racial Self-ful-fullment and the Rise of an All Negro Community in Oklahoma," Phylon, Vol. 18 (1957) pp. 247-260.

[9]Mozell Hill, unpublished doctoral dissertation, "The All-Negro Society in Oklahoma" (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1946).

CHAPTER II

THE RELOCATION OF THE FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES, THE CIVIL WAR, AND THE DAWES COMMISSION AS STATUS DETERMINANTS OF BLACKS IN INDIAN TERRITORY

Blacks populated America long before the early British settlement in Virginia and more than 250 years before the Black's presence would be felt in the West. Blacks participated in exploration in North America for there exist accounts of Spanish conquistadors who traversed the New World searching for souls for their church and gold for the royal treasury. The most famous Black, Estebanico, or "Little Stephen" as he was called, accompanied Cabeza de Vaca on his epic trek through the Southwest in 1528-1536.[1] There was an inseparable relationship between the Five Civilized Tribes, their forced removal westward, and the Black's eventual separation from the white's and the Indian when the establishment of all-Black towns in Oklahoma occurred. The Indians and Blacks came to Oklahoma under circumstances peculiar to this state alone. The Spaniards claimed Oklahoma because they discovered America; the French claimed it because it was drained by the Mississippi River, the mouth of which they had discovered, and near which they had founded the settlement of New Orleans; the English claimed it because, having taken possession of the Atlantic Coast, they claimed the land between parallel lines west to the Pacific Ocean; but, the Indians really were

first in the New World.[2] European powers, however, had little respect for the Indians even though it was doubtful whether there were any tribes in this area.

Originally, the idea of locating the Indians in a separate territory was set forth in a treaty the United States signed with the Delawares in 1778. Thomas Jefferson, justifying the purchase of Louisiana in 1803, mentioned the desirability of isolating the Indians far from the whites.[3] Many of the leading men of the country and some missionaries among the Indians favored removing the Indians to some territory west of the Mississippi River where they would not be so likely to acquire the views of whites. This "Indian Territory" was rather indefinite at first, but it included parts of the country west of Arkansas, Missouri, and Iowa, especially the area included in almost all of what is now Oklahoma without the panhandle.

The removal of the Indians to the West actually began in 1802 in Georgia when that state ceded its western lands to the United States with the understanding that the Indians would be removed from the state as soon as possible, but peaceably. As the Cherokees had a tribal government, this was, in fact, a case of a state within a state. Furthermore, the whites in Georgia thought that the Cherokees had more good land than they could use and prospectors wished to dig for gold on this land. Thus the Georgians became very impatient to have the Indians removed. The Cherokees refused to go and remained in their homes until removed in 1838 by General Winfield Scott and an army of 2,000 men.[4] One of the saddest chapters in American history occurred when 16,000 men, women, and children forcibly were ejected from their homes and escorted to the West; four thousand would die on the trail

west. The Cherokees were given as their home a large tract of land in the northeastern part of what is now Oklahoma. They also were given a strip of land fifty-eight miles wide extending along the northern portion of the state from the 96th to the 100th meridian as an outlet to the mountains.[5]

Other tribes were involved in the great removal, for the Creeks originally occupied a large part of Georgia and Alabama, just south of the Cherokees. Whites entered the Creek lands without waiting for the legality of a treaty to be determined, and therefore provoked the Creeks to action. The people of Alabama were just as anxious to be rid of these Indians as the people of Georgia were the Cherokees. The Creeks by that time realized that to fight against the overwhelming odds of the United States government would bring death, destruction, and futility. In 1832 the Creeks therefore signed a treaty ceding their Alabama lands to the American government. The agreement did not provide for instant removal, but the greed of some frontiersmen would not allow them to wait for the land to be surveyed. Rushing in prematurely, whites forced the Creeks to abdicate their rights. This was another step in the march down the historic "Trail of Tears."[6]

Cherokee and Creek tribesmen were not alone in their sufferings, for the Choctaws, Mobilian Indians whose home was in the central part of Mississippi extending into Alabama, suffered a similar fate. Indians feeling the pressures of whites reluctantly gave up their land and joined the migration west. Having given up their lands in the South, they received lands between the Red and Canadian rivers. The government carried many Indians by steamboat up the Arkansas River; only a few being permitted to remain in the South. Moreover, the

Chickasaws, who lived in northern Mississippi and western Tennessee and who were much more warlike,[7] also were deported. The state of Mississippi in 1830 made the Chickasaws subject to the same laws of non-Indian government as they had done with the Choctaws earlier.[8]

Finally, the Seminole Tribe, made up of runaway Creeks, remnants of other tribes, and some Blacks, were added to the list of suffering tribesmen who followed the trail to Oklahoma. The Seminoles also signed a treaty in 1832, just as did the other four tribes, to give up their land in Florida and move west. However, there was much resistance, and some tribesmen even refused to be bound by the treaty. The American government tried forcefully in 1835 to remove them, and war ensued for seven years at an estimated cost of nearly ten million dollars. Finally, Chief Osceola was captured and imprisoned until his death. His followers were defeated, and in 1842 they were removed. As the Seminoles numbered fewer than any of the Five Civilized Tribes, a part of the Creek land was set aside for them.[9]

Thus the Five Civilized Tribes faced desolation and despair in Oklahoma, and would do so for many years, but this would continue longer for the Black's who came with them. These Indians were sent West to live and master a harsh environment; they journeyed West with their Black slaves to assist them. The Five Civilized Tribes had come from slave states where they had lived as a semi-civilized people who engaged largely in agricultural pursuits. That the slave-owning Indian tribes were removed to the Indian Territory at such an early date brought Blacks to Oklahoma earlier than would have been the case as a consequence of the general westward movement of the population. In 1839, at the conclusion of the emigration of the Cherokee and

TABLE I

NUMBERS OF BLACK SLAVES OWNED BY PRINCIPAL SLAVE OWNING INDIAN TRIBES AND DATES OF ENUMERATION

Name of Tribe	Date of Enumeration	Number Black Slaves
Choctaws	1831	512[1]
Eastern Creeks	1832	457[2]
Western Creeks	1833	498[3]
Eastern Cherokees	1835	1,592
Chickasaws	1837-38	1,156[4]

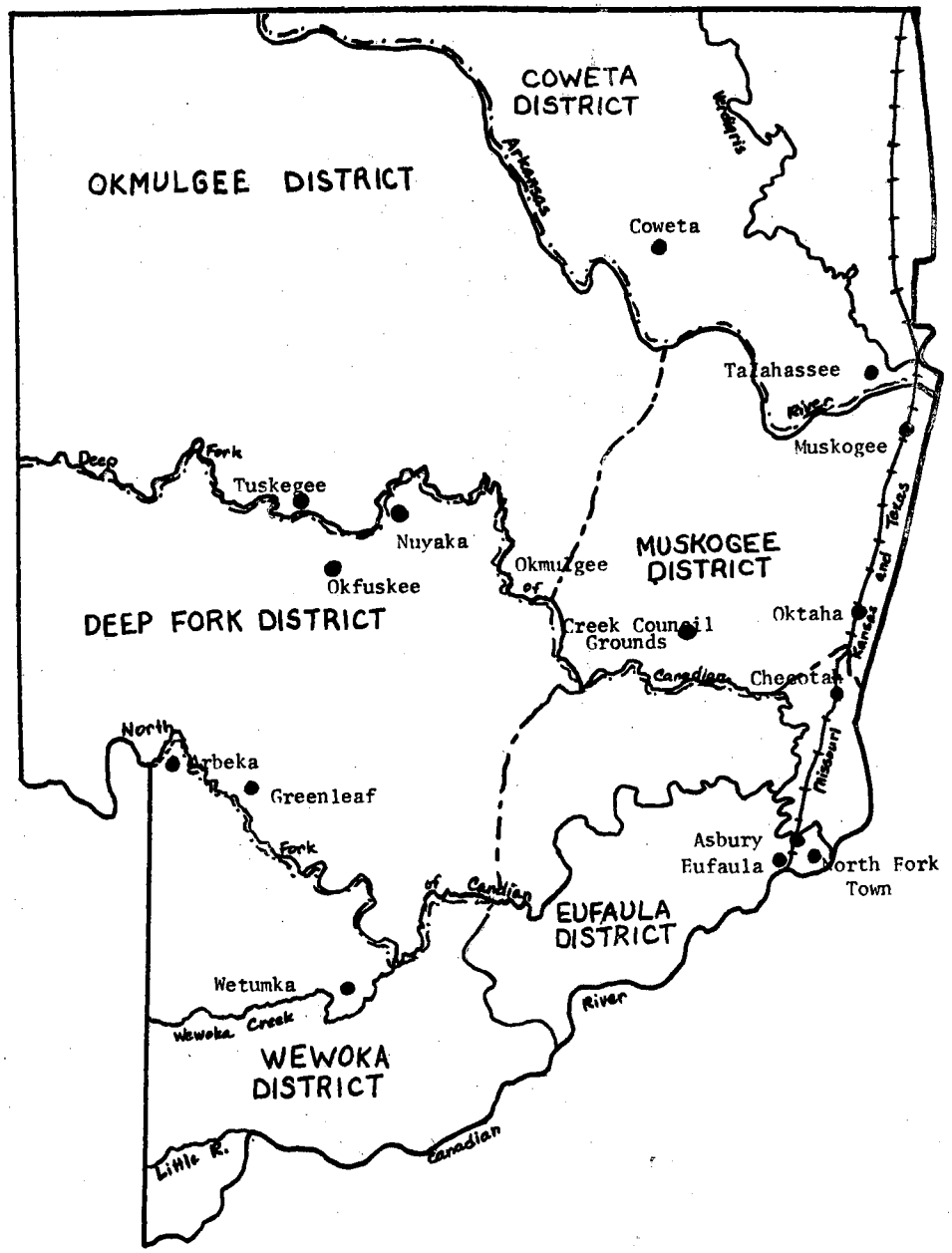
[1]Census enumeration before going to Territory

[2]Census of Creeks east of Mississippi River

[3]Creeks living in Territory

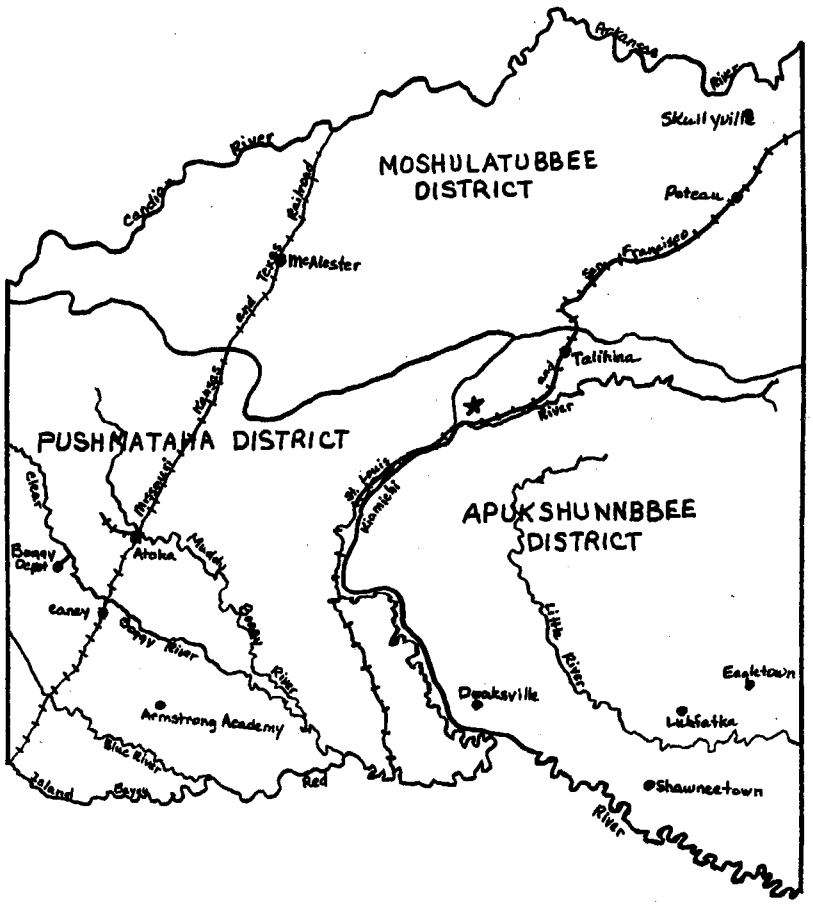
[4]From Emigration Rolls[11]

Statute 2047, U.S. Senate, 74th Congress, 1st Session, p. 10.



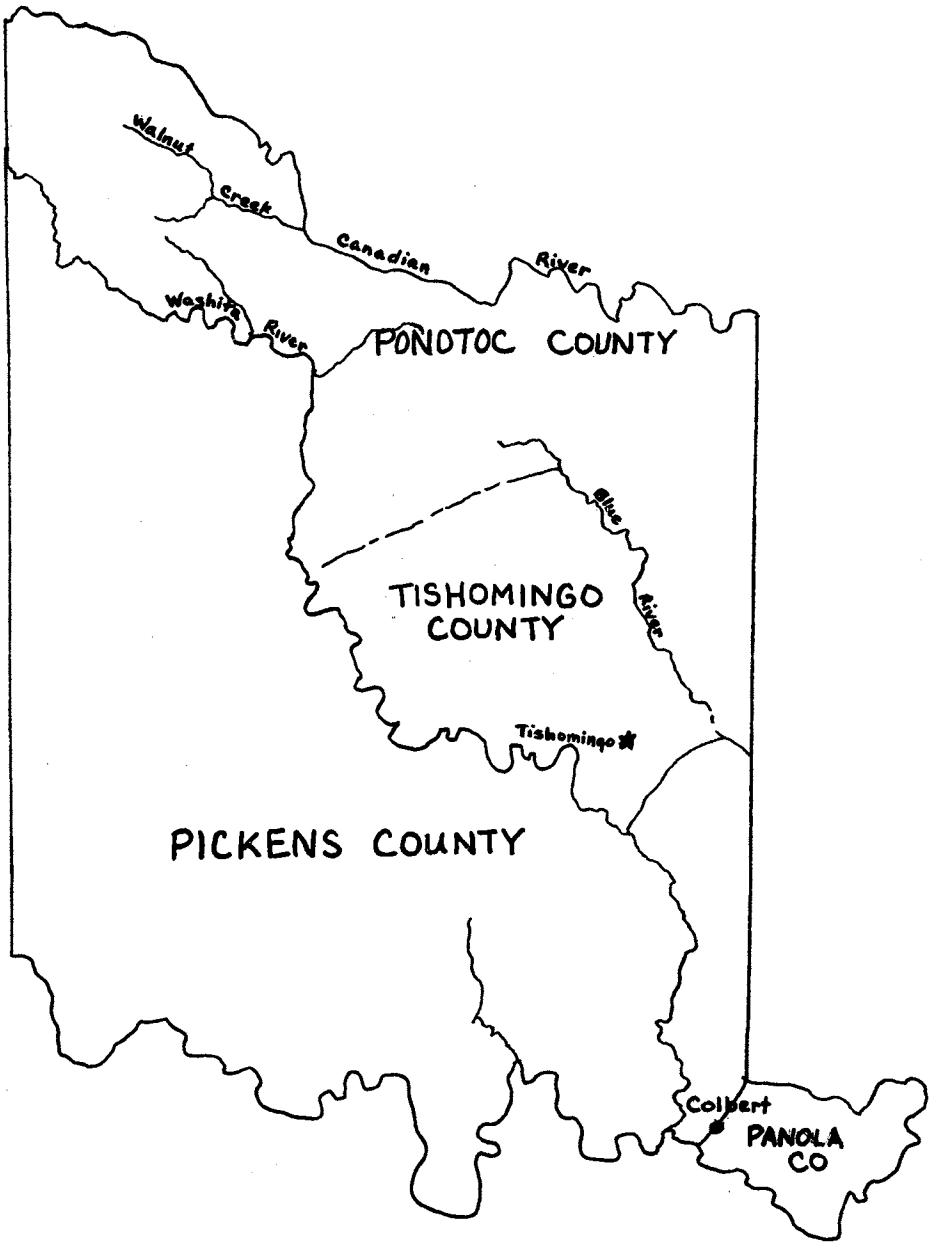
Source: Edwin C. McReynolds and John W. Morris, Historical Atlas of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), Map Number 36.

Figure 1. The Creek Nation



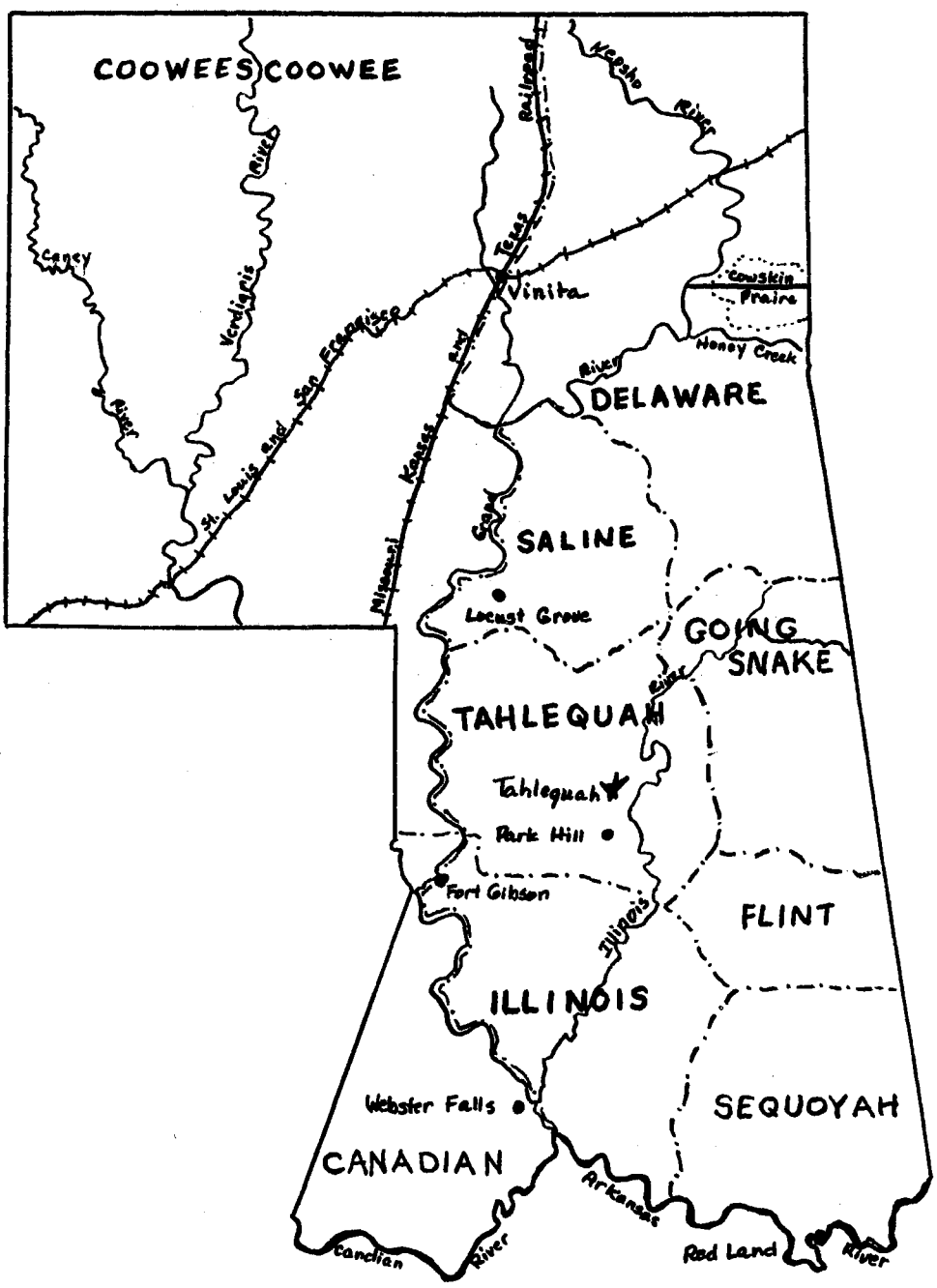
Source: Edwin C. McReynolds and John W. Morris, Historical Atlas of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), Map Number 36.

Figure 2. The Choctaw Nation



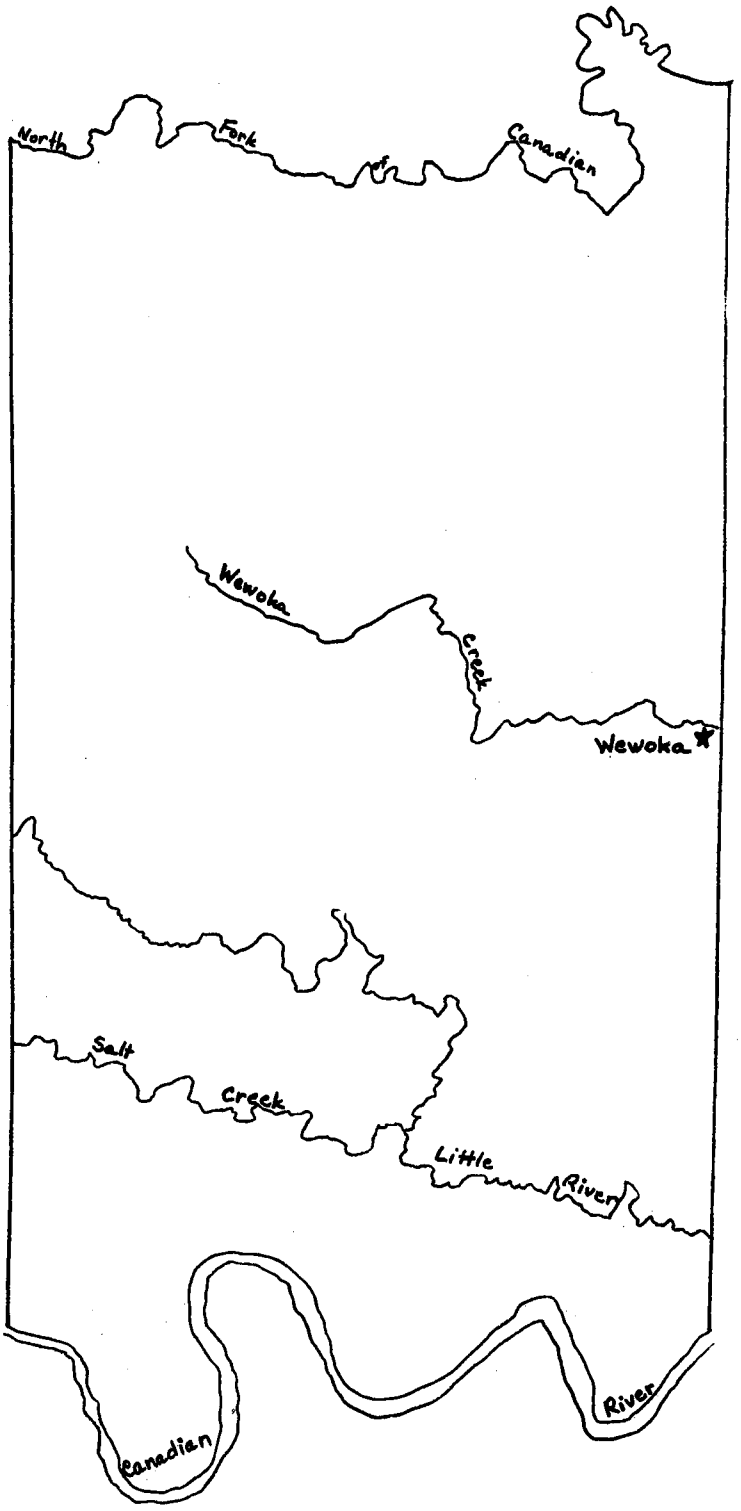
Source: Edwin C. McReynolds and John W. Morris, Historical Atlas of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), Map Number 36.

Figure 3. The Chickasaw Nation



Source: Edwin C. McReynolds and John W. Morris, Historical Atlas of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), Map Number 36.

Figure 4. The Cherokee Nation



Source: Edwin C. McReynolds and John W. Morris, Historical Atlas of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), Map Number 36.

Figure 5. The Seminole Nation

Chickasaw tribes, there were between 4,500 and 5,000 slaves in the Indian Territory. By 1847 the number of slaves in the Choctaw Nation alone had increased to about 2,000,[10] primarily due to the fact that the area was a haven for runaway slaves from the harsh southern traditions of hostility and hatred for Blacks.

There were indications that slavery had become well established in the Indian Territory by the middle of the nineteenth century. The various tribes had by that time become engaged in agricultural pursuits because of cotton production.[11] The tribes not only took advantage of the Black's expertise with cotton, but they engaged in the production of corn, oats, vegetables, and livestock. The Creeks were especially successful in developing a diversified type of agriculture, even to the point of sending some corn and livestock to market.[12]

The slave occupied a unique position in his relationship with his Indian owner and master. Having assimilated some of the learning of his former white master, the slave was expected to teach the Indian many ways of the whites. In certain of the tribes there was little aversion to intermarriage with slaves. In the Creek, Seminole, and Cherokee Tribes there existed a close social relationship between the three groups. The close association of the slave with his Indian master proved of significance later when the lands owned by the Five Civilized Tribes were allotted individual members.[13]

FOOTNOTES

[1]J. Sanders Redding, They Came in Chains (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1950), p. 11.

[2]Charles H. Roberts, The Essential Facts of Oklahoma History and Civics (New York: Benjamin H. Sanborn and Co., 1914), pp. 18-19.

[3]Ibid., p. 25

[4]Edward E. Dale and Morris L. Wardell, History of Oklahoma (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1948), pp. 75-93.

[5]Ibid., pp. 94-111.

[6]Charles H. Roberts, The Essential Facts of Oklahoma History and Civics (New York: Benjamin H. Sanborn and Co., 1914), pp. 32-34.

[7]Victor E. Harlow, Oklahoma, Its Origins and Development (Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing Co., 1949), pp. 125-140.

[8]Ibid., pp. 130-140.

[9]Ibid., pp. 135-150.

[10]Joseph Thoburn and Muriel Wright, Oklahoma, A History of the State and Its People (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., Vol. I, 1929), p. 297.

[11]Ibid., p. 297. "There were several cotton gins in the Choctaw Nation as early as 1837, and a number of steamboats were loaded with cotton bales each year at landings a few miles above the mouth of the Kiamichi on the Red River."

[12]Don A. Marshall, Type-of-Farming Development in McIntosh, Muskogee, and Wagoner Counties, Oklahoma (Unpublished Thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1936) pp. 19-20.

[13]Nathaniel J. Washington, Historical Development of the Negro in Oklahoma (Tulsa: Dexter Publishing Co., 1948), p. 8.

CHAPTER III

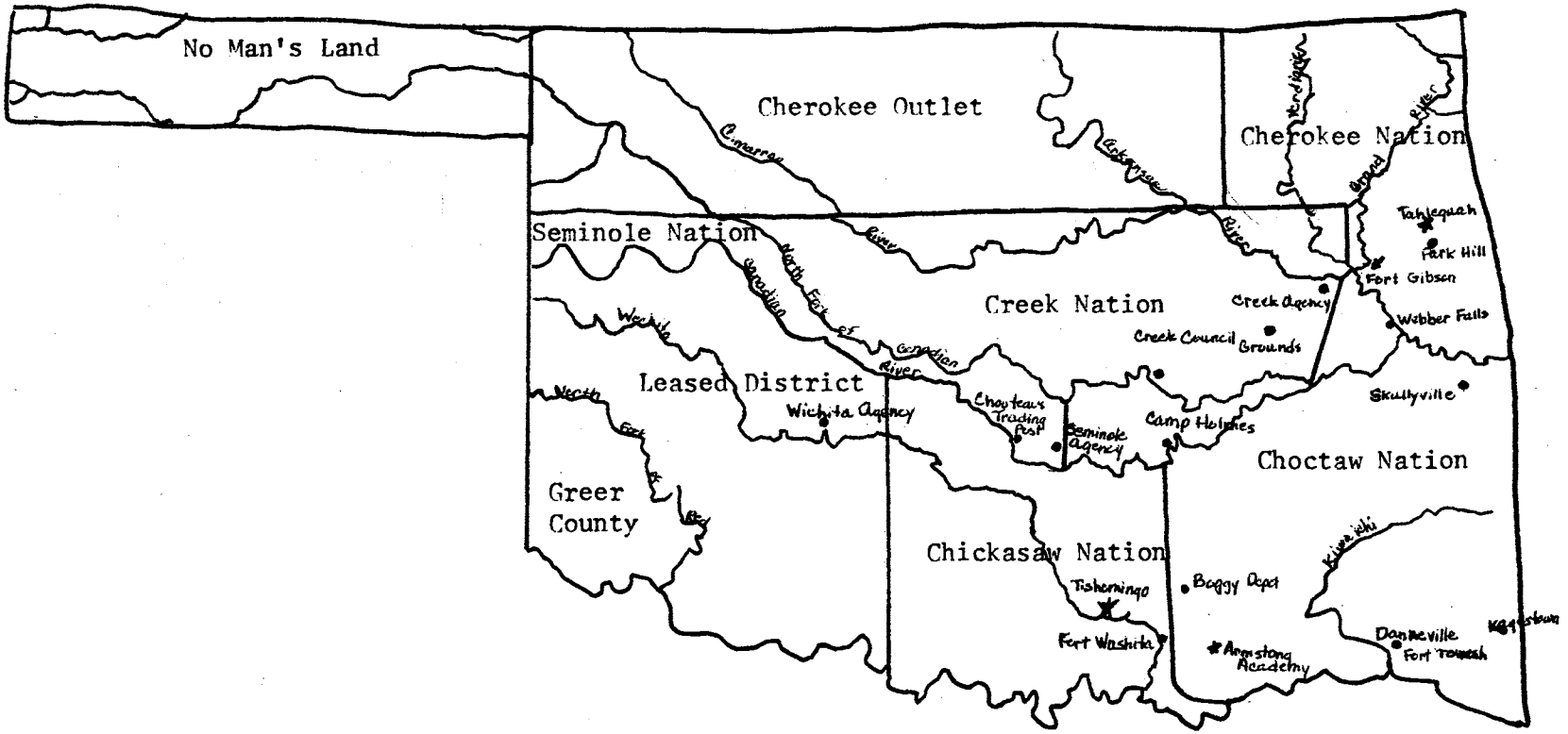
CIVIL WAR IN INDIAN TERRITORY: REACTION AND RECOVERY

In 1861, life with its uncertainties and many perplexities once again dipped into the chasms of darkness and despair and fomented a great civil conflict. Life in the Indian country had been happy during the later years of the 1850s, although the tribesmen had suffered strife, distress, internal feuds, and the enduring effects of the "Trail of Tears." Bitterness lingered as the Indians suffered the tribulations of settling into a foreign land, but the dispossessed gradually came to love their new country. As homes were built, farms cleared, and the old wounds caused by removal began to heal, the Five Civilized Tribes looked forward to a bright future. But bad fortune still stalked their trail at a time when hard years were behind them and peace seemed to be ahead of them. They were forced to choose sides in the American Civil War, which would not end until their homes had been burned, their livestock destroyed, and their entire country left wasted and in ruins. The story of that war is the story of conflict and controversy which involved both Blacks and Indians in Oklahoma.

The Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes, having lived among the whites of the South for many years, quite naturally had accepted the practice of slavery as one of the many customs. Slavery was practiced in Africa, in Asia, and among the American Indians before the arrival

of the white Europeans. It was logical and almost unavoidable that they began this practice, although slaves were treated with little or no harshness by the Indians. Slavery therefore was less harsh on Blacks owned by members of these tribes, with the understanding that work, especially cotton crops, were the responsibility of Blacks. However, in 1860, when the contest over secession actually began, slave restrictions and codes in the Indian Nation were tightened.[1] Despite this mild attitude on the question of slavery, the Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes were drawn into the Civil War.[2]

Early in 1861, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America, sent an official representative to the Indians with power to make treaties binding them to the Confederacy. The man chosen to go was Albert Pike, a resident of Arkansas who had been born in New England. Pike had served in the Mexican War and had risen to the rank of captain. He was a lawyer, a poet, and a thirty-third degree Mason; moreover, he was a good friend of the Indians. Several weeks before he began his mission, the Choctaws and Chickasaws met in a great council and voted to join the South. Here Pike had no trouble, but with the Creeks and Seminoles, he would have difficulties. Members of these tribes remained temporarily loyal to the United States. They felt that to make treaties joining the South would be a mistake, as indeed it was. Nevertheless, both groups ultimately agreed, although they were bound to the United States by the very treaties that gave them their lands. However, their natural sympathies were with the South.[3] This loyalty to the Southern cause, however, would not remain unanimous. Soon after the outbreak of actual hostilities, members of the three northernmost tribes, the Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles, aligned



Source: Edwin C. McReynolds and John W. Morris, Historical Atlas of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), Map Number 22.

Figure 6. Indian Territory on the Eve of the Civil War

themselves with the Union. The Choctaws and Chickasaws remained throughout the war almost solidly on the side of the Confederacy.

The Indians suffered severe losses during the war, many of which were inflicted by opposing elements of their own race. This was especially true with regard to the three northern tribes. All of the tribes were actively engaged in hostilities, and several campaigns were waged in the territory by major forces, in addition to numerous minor engagements and skirmishes.

When the war closed in 1865, practically all of the property of the Indians had been destroyed or confiscated. Conditions in general were deplorable. Production of crops had virtually ceased, and most of the livestock had been killed or driven off. The war disrupted practically all orderly activities. Many of the former slave owners returned from the war to find their plantation homes in ruins and their properties confiscated by the former slaves. Bitter hatred existed between the factions into which the Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles had divided themselves. Tribes and factions of tribes who had joined the Confederacy had forfeited their former holdings by renouncing allegiance to the Union and were, therefore, uncertain about their status.

To most of the Indians, the future looked dark. The war had been lost and the Confederacy with which they had cast their dreams was no more; they were eager to know the terms of peace which the victors would impose on the vanquished and defeated. Confederate Indians had not long to wait, for the terms that would soon be made would make their hearts sick; these terms proved even worse than their fears.[4]

Thus this was the situation confronting representatives of the

Five Civilized Tribes and officials of the federal government who undertook to negotiate the terms of peace at a council held at Ft. Smith, Arkansas, on September 8, 1865. Terms of peace could not be agreed upon at the Ft. Smith council, and arrangements were made to meet the following spring in Washington, D. C.[5]

After the Civil War the Five Civilized Tribes entered into several treaties with the federal overnment that provided for freeing slaves. The Cherokee Nation had called its council together in 1863 and formally abolished slavery, but the status of the slave had remained unchanged.[6] Moreover, the Choctaws and Chickasaws were reluctant to free slaves after war's end. In fact, in their first negotiations in Washington, D. C., they were determined to seek payment for their manumission. They allegedly remarked that if they did not receive payment of some kind, they would strip the slaves naked and drive them south to Texas or north to Fort Gibson.[7] The Seminoles agreed to many of the same provisions with respect to the freedmen and the railroads, but they wanted to give up all of their land at fifteen cents an acre and repurchase land from the United States government at fifty cents an acre for the establishment of a new reservation far from everyone else.[8]

The Choctaws and Chickasaws jointly agreed with the United States to free their slaves and grant forty acres of land to each freedman. Finally, after consenting to give up land to other Indians coming into the territory, these two tribes would receive $300,000 for all their concessions to the Federal government--one-fourth to the Chickasaws and three-fourths to the Choctaws.[9] The Chickasaws, however, just as did the Choctaws, hated the freedmen, and refused at first to accept

the clause giving Blacks land, but the United States filed a claim against them in the United States Court of Claims, and the Chickasaws lost. This only angered the tribe and further aggravated the already deteriorating conditions between them and the freedmen.[10]

The provisions of the Treaties of 1866 affecting the freedmen laid the foundation for the future of the Black towns in the State of Oklahoma. The treaty with the Seminoles provided that slavery was to be abolished entirely, and that the freed slaves were to be placed upon an equal footing with the remainder of the people. This probably described the most liberal condition under which the freed slaves were incorporated into the membership of the Indian tribes. Former slaves of the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Cherokees were granted tribal rights, but with certain definite restrictions keeping them from being incorporated fully into tribal membership.[11]

Proceedings of the council at Washington, D. C. in the spring of 1866 were fraught with outbursts of the dissensions still existing between factions of the tribes. After lengthy debate, treaties finally were signed with representatives of each of the Five Civilized Tribes setting forth the terms under which peace was to be restored and rights to lands redefined. The first of the treaties, which were referred to generally as the "Treaties of 1866," was signed by the Seminoles on March 21, 1866. The last of the five treaties was signed by the Cherokees on July 19, 1866.[12]

While the Treaties of 1866 differed as to details, their provisions substantially were as follows:

1. Slavery was abolished.

2. The freedmen were given tribal rights, varying from full and

unqualified tribal membership to membership under restrictions as to the right to hold office in the tribal government, and the like.

3. Certain of the original Indian lands were ceded to the government in return for which the tribes were to receive annuities.

This feeling expresses somewhat the degree of hostility these tribes had towards the freedmen. Many historians have agreed that to some extent that most of the Indians in the territory suffered later for joining the South during the war. They learned in a real and harsh way that they thereby had forfeited all the rights to own slaves and land; consequently, and understandably so, they were hostile toward the freedmen.

The United States Commissioners who met the various Indian delegations quickly warned them and explained the terms to which they had to submit. They were to make peace with the United States government and with each other; they were to free their slaves and adopt them into the several tribes; the freedmen must then be given rights of land and other annunities; they must grant right-of-way across their country to railroads; and finally, they must give a part of their land to furnish homes for other tribes who dwelt upon the plains. The Indians naturally considered these terms more unreasonable than they had expected, and therefore they unsuccessfully tried to change them. These agreements were made treaties in the spring of 1866 as the Five Civilized Tribes met in Washington with the U. S. Commissioners.[13]

The Creeks agreed in the summer of 1866 to all of the stipulations of the treaty and in return were to receive thirty cents an acre for

their land.[14]

The Blacks again would be cast into a situation that he has known during his entire existence. Blacks continued to be misused and to be the recipient of brutal Indian and white hostilities. The Indians in Oklahoma would now assert all of the violent practices that they ahd learned from whites in the South and add a few of their own to make life a dark nightmare of despair and tragedy for almost three decades in Indian and Oklahoma Territory.

The section of the multi-faceted treaty which is of most concern to this study dealt with the freedmen after the Civil War. Article VI was most significant for it provided that ex-slaves be incorporated into the tribes with whom they formerly lived, despite objections raised by the Chickasaws, Cherokees, and Choctaws. The Cherokees, formerly one of the more lenient tribes toward the Blacks, believed that this idea would not be workable or advantageous for either the Indians or freedmen. Significantly, the United States Commissioners seem to have inserted the Article in the treat- to humiliate the Indians for their part in the war against the Union.[15] The treaty also decreed that all former slaves returning within six months after the treaty of peace was signed would be given all of the rights and privileges provided for full-blood Indians.[16] The Cherokees once again disliked this arrangement and accepted it, but had no intention of carrying it out; this later proved to be a source of trouble for the freedmen for years to come.

Fate now played havoc with the freedmen, as there were many who did not hear of the clause providing for their right of tribal incorporation; therefore, within an alloted six-month period these

Blacks returned too late to reap the benefits of the treaty. When the freedmen returned, the Indians treated them as intruders rather than citizens.

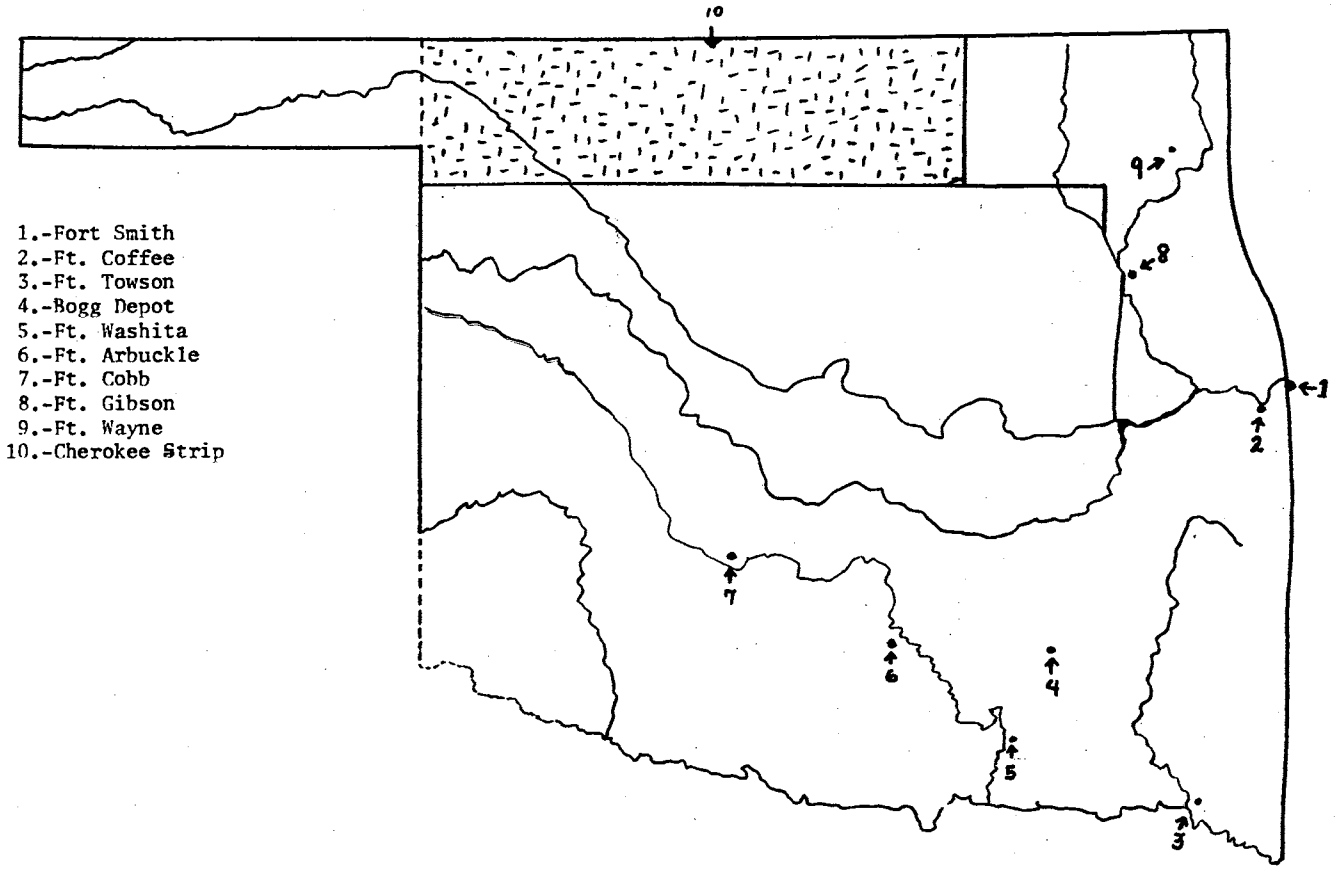
Although Blacks entered the territory and although some were members of one or another tribe, they were denied privileges because they had missed the six-month deadline. Yet they had no place else to go, even if they had desired to leave. Time therefore passed with little or no accomplishment on behalf of the former slaves. The freedmen could not buy land, for they lacked funds; moreover, they had no permanent location, and they were stranded. Thus it is easy to understand how this situation caused trouble between the freedmen and the Cherokees for the next three decades.[17]

The plight of the freedmen during the period after the Civil War (1866-1894), can truly be called a period of Black suffering, for it was a time of importance to Blacks socially and economically. Blacks had become an orphaned race, rejected by whites and Indians. The Blacks had no property and little or no conception of what the responsibility of their new freedom and citizenship meant. The irony of the situation was that Indians and Blacks suffered cold, hunger, misery, and deprivation with each other during the war, but after hostilities between the sections ceased, the Indians turned in anger and ignorance on their former slaves. The Indians, instead of realizing that the Blacks had been a victim of circumstance, felt Blacks had caused the war, and therefore the Blacks were also the cause of Indian troubles with whites. Many Blacks were shot or punished, while too many were subjected to their former master's whims.[18] Some individuals believed during this period that the freedmen would be completely annihilated

unless the federal government intervened. However, those officials charged with concern about the plight of the Blacks were unable to render any relief. With the freedmen scattered through the area poorly clad, without shelter, and near starvation, the federal government did make some efforts to protect former slaves and so-called "Federal Blacks" by stationing Union troops at Forts Boggy Depot, Tawson, Arbuckle, Washita, and Gibson.[19] (See Figure 7)

Critical as the Black's lot in Indian Territory was, especially among the Choctaws, Cherokees, and Chickasaws, this was not the case in the Creek and Seminole Nations. The latter had taken a different attitude toward the freedmen and the federal government. The Creeks in 1866 were willing to incorporate Blacks into their tribe as citizens. They granted them annuities and privileges at an early date, and treated the Blacks from the outset as any other citizen would be treated.[20] This was the question on which the Cherokees had been originally divided, and which had led to sympathy for the freedmen by some and hostility by others.

In Indian Territory, just as in the South, many mythological beliefs about Blacks had been perpetuated. Slavery had been described as a peculiar product of humanity, and therefore Blacks were described as being ignorant, lazy, and shiftless. Yet in the Indian Territory the Blacks survived, sometimes literally looking the wolf in the mouth and giving it a stiff battle when necessity demanded. Many people even asserted that Blacks never looked more than a few days ahead if they could make a living by working two or three days a week. Yet with all of the adversities of having been a slave, Blacks were more industrious than their former masters, the Indians, and in many cases



Source: Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1866, p. 284.

Figure 7. Location of Early Forts and the Cherokee Strip

the whites entering this area. Blacks demonstrated an acute knowledge of business, as far as making a living was concerned. In a short period, Blacks had secured farming equipment, crude plows, oxen, and other tools while adjusting to the waves of hostilities and hardships.[21]

The problem of Blacks in the Indian Territory differed from that in the old South in several ways. The freedmen had no natural leadership, for there were no slave insurrections, Booker Washingtons, Frederick Douglasses, or Nat Turners. This definitely was true, for Blacks in Indian Territory did not concentrate as they did in the South; moreover, they did not wish to be set aside in segregated sections.[22] Significantly, Black attitudes also delayed the arrival to Indian Territory of the Freedmen's Bureau for a few years.

In summary, Blacks were destitute, and suffering from deplorable conditions; some were sick, weak, old, and generally in a poor condition. The plight of these Blacks in Indian Territory was the first sign of a growing need for extension of the Freedman's Bureau to the West. Blacks in Indian Territory needed help, and therefore General John B. Sanborn was appointed to advise and to supervise the misplaced and downtrodden freedmen. One of his primary duties was to regulate affairs between Blacks and Indians, and to strive for an agreement between the two that would ease the tension. Where Blacks already were working, Sanborn was urged by the Interior Department not to interfere; where they were unable to do anything, he was urged to assist them.[23] The Indians, except for some Seminoles, Creeks, and Cherokees, had disregarded totally the new status of the freedmen. Sanborn knew that although things were bad for the freedmen in Indian and Oklahoma Territories, they were worse in the South during these turbulent

decades of the 1860s-1880s. Sanborn suggested the following analysis of Blacks:

1. Freedmen were more industrious and economical than their former masters. Many had gainfully employed themselves as carpenters, blacksmiths, etc.
2. Freedmen expected to be removed to a place set aside for them, and for this reason they hesitated to make many improvements on their property.
3. The Choctaws were more bitter toward the freedmen than any of the other tribes.
4. The Chickasaws still held most of their slaves either in bondage or at an economic disadvantage.
5. The only way to prevent poor treatment of Blacks was to employ federal troups in the area.
6. The freedmen of the Seminoles believed they would be safe without federal interference.[24]

Probably the most peculiar situation found among the freedmen and the Indians was that the tribes insisted that the offspring of the Indian woman and the Black man were Black unalterably and forever, but the offspring of the Indian man and Black woman were accepted into the tribe without question, and the children were members of the tribe forever. Finally Sanborn asked to be relieved from his assignment; his last venture was a visit to the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations in January of 1866. He reported better relations between the opposing forces and cited the following changes and recommendations:

1. That a tract of land thirty-six square miles be set aside on the Washita River as a home for the freedmen of the

Choctaw and Chickasaw Tribes.

2. That each of the Indian tribes or affiliated tribes be located on some limited reservation, the country be sectionalized, and Indians be induced to accept lands in severalty.
3. That each male freedman and each single woman with more than one child be allowed to have sixteen acres of the freedmen's reservation as a homestead.
4. That a large tract be retained by the government on which other Indians might be located from other states.
5. That railroads be encouraged to enter the Indian Territory by making large land grants to them.
6. That any land not otherwise disposed of be subject to settlement by an class of people under the existing act of Congress.[25]

This situation fluctuated until nearly three decades before a more substantive settlement would be reached. However, in 1893 an act of Congress provided for the appointment of a commission of three members to discuss with the Five Civilized Tribes the question of giving up their tribal governments. The commission was also to secure from the Indians their consent to such changes in their affairs as would prepare the Indian Territory for statehood. The commission was usually called the "Dawes Commission" after its chairman, Senator Henry L. Dawes, of Massachusetts.

There was a difference, however, between the Dawes Act and the Dawes Commission. The Dawes Act or Severalty Act of 1887 preceeded the commission and provided mainly for the breaking up of Indian tribal

antonomy on the reservations. It thereby provided the heads of these families with 160 acres of land and comparable amounts going to unmarried Indians. It also provided for citizenship after twenty-five years, with eventual citizenship coming for all Indians in 1924.

The Dawes Act, however, did not apply to the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma. They were dealt with by the Dawes Commission (1893-1905). They were persuaded to give up their tribal governments and live under state and federal laws, while nonetheless, still receiving equitably distributed lands.

Early in 1894 the Dawes Commission came to Indian Territory and held meetings with the leaders of the Five Civilized Tribes. The Indians, however, refused to meet with the commission declaring that they were quite satisfied with things as they were. For two years the commission made almost no progress, and in 1895 it reported that the Indians refused to make any changes. The commission recommended that Congress control Indian Territory entirely without waiting for the consent of the Indians. The commission asserted that the tribal governments were in bad condition and that the former treaties should not be regarded as binding under conditions such as existed in the Territory.

In 1896 Congress directed the Dawes Commission to compile tribal rolls containing the names of all Indians who should rightfully share in the tribal lands. During the next few years, the commission labored over this very difficult task. Many people who had no Indian blood tried to get their names placed on the rolls so that they might share in the land allotments. Also, many people who were entitled to land had so little Indian blood that it was hard to believe that they were really Indians. Many full-bloods refused to have their names entered

on the rolls. These Indians had to be sought out and enrolled in order to prevent their losing a rightful interest in tribal property.

Some of the land was rough and fit only for grazing. Other land consisted of rich valleys along the streams. The land had to be surveyed and divided into small tracts that were classified, or graded, so that all Indians might receive allotments approximately equal in value. Those who were given poor lands received more acres than those who were given fertile farm land.

The Indians at last realized that they could not stop the work of the Dawes Commission and that they might as well give up the struggle against a new form of government for Indian Territory. In 1897 agreements alloting lands were made with all tribes except the Cherokee. The Atoka Agreement, made on April 23, 1897, concerned the allotments for the Choctaws and Chickasaws. The agreement with the Seminoles was made on September 16 of the same year. The Creeks refused to accept the agreements, and therefore not until April, 1900, were agreements finally made with that tribe and with the Cherokees.[26] (See all parts of following Tables II, III, and IV.)

When tribal rolls were eventually completed, 15,794,205 acres of land were alloted to the enrolled members and freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes.[27] Freedmen shared in the allotments on a different basis than Indian citizens of the tribes. The freedman was entitled only to forty acres of land, whereas the Indian citizen was entitled to share pro-rata in the total land available for allotment in accordance with the provisions of the allotment applicable to his nation.[28] Allotments were made to citizens of the Seminole Tribe in average tracts of 120 acres, Cherokees 110 acres, Choctaws and Chickasaws 320

TABLE II

TOTAL TRIBAL APPLICANTS

Nation	Applicants	Enrolled or Identified	Refused	Undetermined
Choctaws and Chickasaws	66,217	35,638	27,719	2,860
Cherokees	46,464	35,394	4,639	6,431
Creeks	20,110	15,513	1,157	3,450
Seminoles	3,171	2,750	7	414
TOTAL	135,962	89,295	35,522	13,155

House Document XX, No. 5, Part I, p. 385, Fifty-ninth Congress, First Session. A report of the Department of the Interior for the Commission to the Five Civilized Tribes.

TABLE III

STATISTICS OF TRIBAL ALND, JUNE 30, 1905

Nation	Total Number of Acres	Reserved from Allotment	Allotted to June 30, 1905	Subject to Allotment, June 30, 1905
Choctaw and Chickasaw	11,660,952.35	507,607.95	6,413,876.26	4,739,468.14
Cherokee	4,420,077.73	20,000.00	3,542,842.80	857,234.93
Creek	3,079,094.61	19,632.80	2,453,042.40	606,419.41
Seminole	365,851.57	2,272.65	344,586.28	18,992.64
TOTAL	19,525,976.26	549,513.40	12,754,347.74	6,222,115.12

House Document XIX, No. 5, p. 608, Fifty-ninth Congress, First Session. A report of the Commission to the Five Civilized Tribes, 1905.

TABLE IV

TRIBAL ROLLS AS COMPLETED ON JUNE 30, 1905, BY CLASSIFICATION

A. STATISTICS OF ENROLLMENT BY BLOOD

Tribe	Number of Applicants	Enrolled or Identified	Refused	Undetermined
Choctaw	20,157	15,898	3,777	842
Chickasaw	6,322	4,956	1,187	179
Creek	11,191	9,975	577	639
Cherokee	33,189	31,275	431	1,483
Seminole	3,171	2,750	7	414
TOTAL	74,030	64,854	5,979	3,557

TABLE IV (Continued)

B. STATISTICS OF ENROLLMENT BY INTERMARRIAGE

Tribe	Number of Applicants	Enrolled or Identified	Refused	Undetermined
Choctaw	1,914	1,467	339	108
Chickasaw	721	598	87	36
Creek				
Cherokee	3,589		543	3,046
Seminole				
TOTAL	6,224	2,065	969	3,190

TABLE IV (Continued)

C. STATISTICS OF ENROLLMENT OF FREEDMEN

Tribe	Number of Applicants	Enrolled or Identified	Refused	Undetermined
Choctaw	5,436	4,966	90	380
Chickasaw	4,821	4,610	86	125
Creek	6,519	5,538	580	401
Cherokee	6,958	3,923	1,204	1,831
TOTAL	23,734	19,037	1,960	2,737

TABLE IV (Continued)

D. STATISTICS OF ENROLLMENT OF NEW BORN (Under Act of March 3, 1905)

Tribe	Number of Applicants	Enrolled or Identified	Refused	Undetermined
Choctaw	1,643	252		1,391
Chickasaw	569	421		148
Creek Indian	1,472			1,472
Creek Negro	938			938
Cherokee				
Seminole --White	270			270
--Negro	144			144
TOTAL	5,036	673		4,363

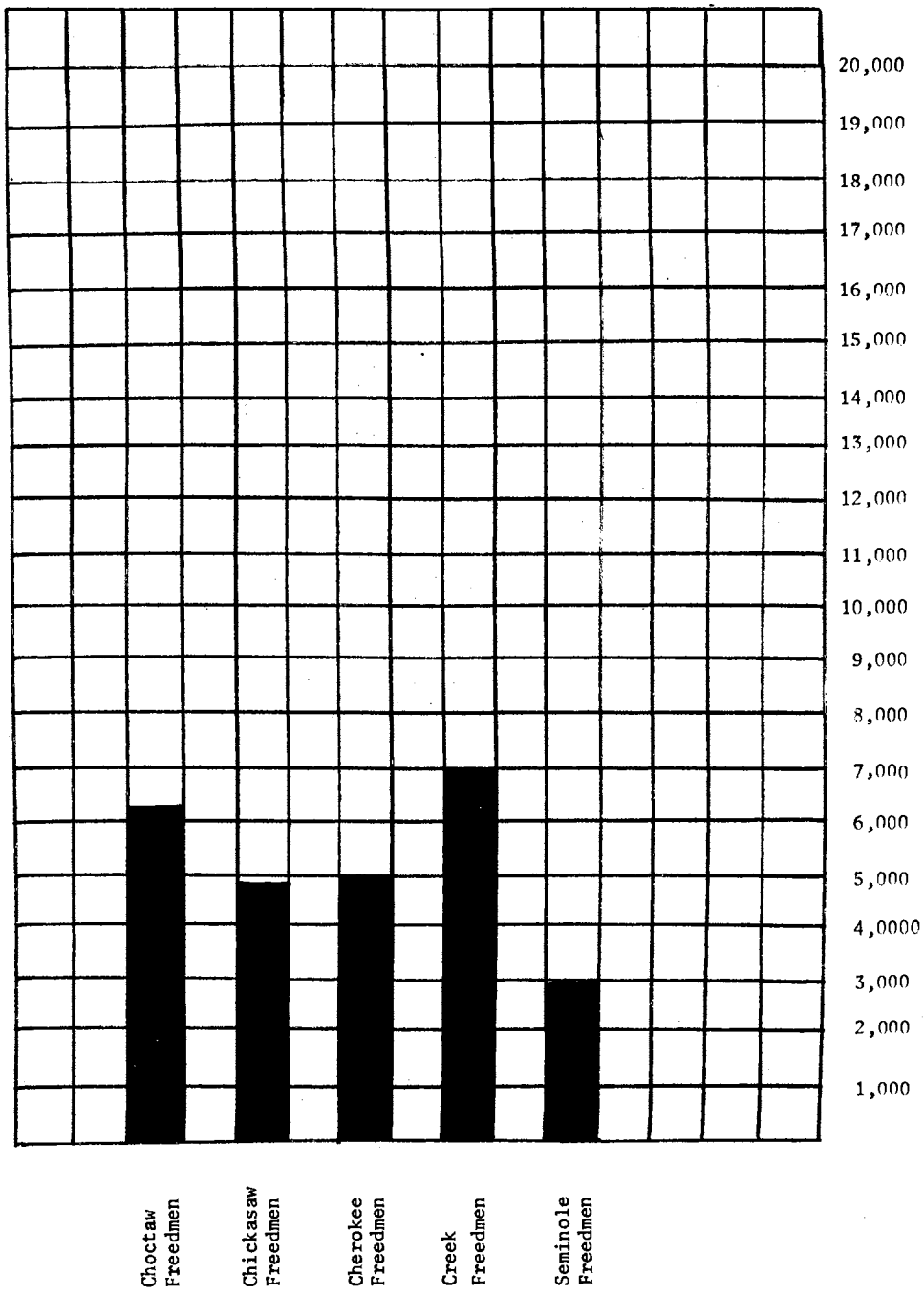
TABLE IV (Continued)

E. MISCELLANEOUS ENROLLMENTS (Under Act of March 3, 1905)

Tribe	Number of Applicants	Enrolled	Refused	Undetermined
Mississippi Choctaw	24,634	2,470	19,496	2,668
Chickasaw				
Delaware Cherokee	871	196	8	36
Shawnee Cherokee	790	79		
Creek				
Seminole				
Undetermined	1,345			1,345
TOTAL	27,640	2,745	19,504	4,049

TABLE V

NUMBER OF FREEDMEN ON ROLL



Statute 2047, U.S. Senate, 74th Congress, First Session, p. 10.

acres, and the Creeks 160 acres.[29]

According to Muriel H. Wright, a Cherokee and former editor of the Chronicles of Oklahoma, the breaking up of the five tribal governments and the allotment of land to each Indian citizen were the most important steps in the early history of the state of Oklahoma. Certainly the allotment of forty acres of farm land to the former slave or his descendant was unique in the history of Blacks as agriculturists.

The allotment of land to Blacks in forty-acre tracts probably influenced the subsequent development of all-Black towns in areas where large numbers of such allotments were made. The rapidity with which Black communities developed in the area may have been a result, in part at least, of the early land policy of establishing large numbers of small units under separate ownership. Over-population of tracts in central and southeastern Oklahoma has been referred to as a fundamental problem that confronted land owners in that section of the state. Possibly the all-Black towns in eastern Oklahoma originally were divided into tracts too small to yield satisfactory incomes, and the pressure of owners, as well as other social and economic factors, prevented an adequate increase in size of the towns. Blacks who had been slaves knew how to do several of the chores required of them along with some tasks for themselves such as patchfarming. They led a relatively simple life.

Agriculture, however, was the chief industry among the freedmen of the Indian Territory as it had been in the South. Black women assisted with the farm work and in many cases they did most of the work while the men spent a great deal of time hunting and fishing. The freedmen did not raise large crops, but managed to produce enough to eat. For

recreation they played baseball, engaged in horse races, and enjoyed week-long barbecues. During this period the Blacks and Indians attended these recreational activities together. There was little racial hatred between these two groups at this time, and, except for some Choctaw hostility, the relationship seemed to have been good. The freedmen also worked together for when one was ill the neighbors would plow his crop, cut his wood, wash his clothes, and do whatever work there was to be done. They used herb medicines and often visited an Indian doctor.

Former Black tribal members also were very active in the Creek Nation. In fact, they founded three of the towns in this study--Arkansas Colored, Canadian Colored, and Norfolk Colored. The Creek Nation allowed one king and one warrior for every 200 inhabitants in a town, which accounted for the number of Black representatives in the Creek Tribal Government.[30]

Later some of the Blacks or their descendants were caught in the nets of land sharks and cheated out of their property, while others lost their money and property through mismanagement. A few have kept their wealth until this day.

Indians and Freedmen Roll

Number of Choctaw Indians and Freedmen on Roll

1.	Choctaws on roll by blood	16,227
2.	New born Choctaws on roll by blood	1,583
3.	Minor Choctaw citizens on roll by blood	956
4.	Choctaw citizens on roll by marriage	1,672
5.	Choctaw freedmen on roll	5,546

6. Minow Choctaw freedmen on roll	472

Number of Chickasaw Indians and Freedmen on Roll

1. Chickasaws on roll by blood	5,059
2. New born Chickasaws on roll by blood	578
3. Minor Chickasaw citizens on roll by blood	331
4. Chickasaw citizens on roll by marriage	648
5. Chickasaw freedmen on roll	4,853
6. Minor Chickasaw freedmen on roll	None listed

Number of Cherokee Indians and Freedmen on Roll

1. Cherokees on roll by blood	53,926
2. New born Cherokees on roll by blood	None listed
3. Minor Cherokee citizens on roll by blood	4,991
4. Cherokee citizens on roll by marriage	288
5. Cherokee freedmen on roll	4,360
6. Minow Cherokee freedmen on roll	619

Number of Creek Indians and Freedmen on Roll

1. Creeks on roll by blood	10,181
2. New born Creeks on roll by blood	1,291
3. Minor Creek citizens on roll by blood	493
4. Creek citizens on roll by marriage	None listed
5. Creek freedmen on roll	5,697
6. Minor Creek freedmen on roll	329
7. New born Creek freedmen on roll	881

Number of Seminole Indians and Freedmen on Roll

1. Seminoles on roll by blood	1,899
2. New born Seminoles on roll by blood	None listed
3. Minor Seminole citizens on roll by blood	248

4. Seminole citizens on roll by marriage	None listed
5. Seminole freedmen on roll	2,757
6. Minor Seminole freedmen on roll	129[31]

FOOTNOTES

[1]Edwin C. McReynolds, Oklahoma, A History of the Sooner State (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), pp. 200-203

[2]Ibid., pp. 200-250.

[3]Edward E. Dale and Morris L. Wardell, History of Oklahoma (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc.), pp. 160-176.

[4]Ibid., p. 177.

[5]Charles H. Roberts, The Essential Facts of Oklahoma History and Civics (Chicago: Benjamin Sanborn and Co.), pp. 56-59.

[6]Annie H. Abel, The American Indian Under Reconstruction (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Co.), p. 272.

[7]Ibid., p. 291.

[8]Ibid., pp. 755-757.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1866, Chickasaw Freedmen vs. Choctaw Nation and Chickasaw Nation, 193 vs. 115 (1904).

[11]Roberts, pp. 56-73.

[12]Joseph Thorburn and Muriel Wright, Oklahoma, A History of the State and Its People (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., Vol. I), pp. 390-397.

[13]James S. Buchannan and Edward E. Dale, A History of Oklahoma (New York: Row Peterson and Co.), p. 147.

[14]U.S. Statutes at Large, Vol. 14, Article II, III, V, VI, pp. 786-787.

[15]Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1866. Treaty of July 19, 1866, with the Cherokees, Article 9, 14, Statutes 799, 801.

[16]Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1866, p. 234.

[17]Ibid., pp. 230-236.

[18]Ibid., p. 234.

[19]Annie H. Abel, The American Indian Under Reconstruction, Vol. III (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Co.), p. 273.

[20]Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1866, p. 284.

[21]Ibid., p. 283.

[22]Abel, p. 290.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1866, pp. 283-285.

[25]Ibid., p. 286.

[26]Edward E. Dale and Morris L. Wardell, History of Oklahoma (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc.), pp. 289-297.

[27]John E. Dawson and E. R. Moose, The Five Civilized Tribes (Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, 1931), Unpublished paper.

[28]Joseph B. Wright and Muriel H. Thorburn, The Story of Oklahoma (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., Vol. I), p. 272.

[29]Dawson and Moose, Exact words of the paper follow: "To the Seminoles the allotment was made on the basis of an average allotment of 120 acres of the appraised value of $308.76; to the Cherokees on the basis of an average allotment of 110 acres at the appraised value of $310.60; to the Choctaws and Chickasaws on a basis of an average allotment of 320 acres at the appraised value of $1,041.28; and to the Creeks on the basis of an average allotment of 160 acres at the appraised value of $860. Payment out of the tribal funds were made to equalize the allotments."

[30]Oklahoma Historical Society, Files of Archives.

[31]Office of Superintendent for Five Civilized Tribes, Department of Interior, Muskogee, Oklahoma.

CHAPTER IV

THE BLACK EXODUS TO OKLAHOMA TERRITORY: A PILGRIMAGE TO DESPAIR

Following the era of repression and slavery of the transplanted Africans, who had forcefully been tied to the American economy on the shores of freedom and democracy, fate raised its ugly head in war and civil strife, virtually ripping the fibers of the Constitution on which this country was founded. When the confusion of war and separation disappeared as a cloud before a summer storm, more than 9,000,000 slaves had been awarded sudden freedom as payment for more than 250 years of free labor and repression. These Blacks enjoying this new freedom were scattered from the Old South to the West. Blacks traveled west after the Civil War in increasing numbers.[1] In 1879 a group called the "Exodusters" and their leader, Benjamin "Pap" Singleton, headed for Indian Territory. They came in a multiplicity of ways, boldly asserting their human dignity in a quest for total freedom. They came with the knowledge that between them and this revelation of happiness stood the pathological watchfulness of frightened former masters, the ooze of primordial swamps, the shadows of unknown forests, the thunder of roaring rivers, the heat of burning plains, and the uncertainty of tomorrow's weather; and yet they came by the thousands.

Benjamin Singleton, an unforgetable character of small stature, was a seventy-year-old mulatto with an abundance of energy and a series

of schemes for the betterment of the Black race. "The Black Moses," as he was commonly called, had been born a slave about 1809. After finally making his escape from bondage to Detroit in 1846, he operated a boarding house there for fugitive slaves. He periodically returned to the South beginning in 1867 to elevate the Black race--which eventually ended in the colonization of what is now Kansas and Oklahoma territories. This settling in Oklahoma Territory was by no means a new idea to Blacks, for some had come to Oklahoma earlier expecting to live on unclaimed land looking for gold as explorers and as runaways. However, the prospects of a large Black population were certain enough to frighten some Indian leaders, such as the editor of the Vinita Indian Chieftain, who later wrote defamatory articles on Blacks. However, with limited opportunities in the Indian Territory during this time, most Black immigrants to the West went on to the Kansas Territory first; thus indirectly when the rush to Oklahoma began, Kansas provided the majority of Black settlers and leaders for the Oklahoma Territory.[2]

Before adequate assessment of the exodus and its ensuing impact can be given, there must be an assessment of the events that led up to the "Black Exodus of 1879." This mass movement of humanity, the largest of its kind in the history of the United States, was actually the beginning of Black dissent in America. It began with realization of unfilled promises, broken dreams, and repressive violence in the aftermath of the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. The Emancipation, although thought of as the "Freedom Jubilee," brought along with its hope some despair, suffering, and unsurmountable hostility. Many, however, were too wise to hope; instead they had the feeling of strangers to the mystery of large doubts and the small uncertainties

of this new freedom after centuries of bondage. This new freedom meant different things to Booker T. Washington, only nine years old, it was his beginning; and to Frederick Douglass who was forty-eight years old at the time; to Douglass it was a redemption of the American soul.

If history is to assess the meaning of the Emanicipation Proclamation, not in terms of contemporary ideas, but in terms of the men who experienced it, then it must be seen as having been a time not only of shouting and dancing, but also as a time of suffering and deprivation. It is also worth remembering that Emancipation came to different slaves at different times in different ways. Some slaves escaped and celebrated, while others were freed by invading Union armies in 1862 and 1863.

In the moment of its beginning, the process unfolded roughly in three phases: (1) the twilight period of 1861-1862 when the federal government tried to wage war without touching slavery; (2) the post-Emancipation Proclamation period of 1863-1864; (3) the year of Jubilee following the defeat of the Confederate armies in 1865.[3]

At the same time, and with the same consciousness and pride, the freedmen began to organize themselves and to define themselves. Males began to assume patriarchal postures and women withdrew from the fields and busied themselves with their children and their homes. In this same summer, in the midst of the shouting and weeping, the institutional structures of the Black community was created. Black churches and Black fraternal organizations sprang up. And there were innumerable mass meetings, celebrations, and community gatherings.[4]

Black Americans fondling this new and precious thing called

"freedom" found them little more than mere words with shallow meaning. This benign concern and neglect of whites was met by Black dissent and unrest. Between 1876 and 1915, the conditions of life for Blacks in the United States were such that all Blacks were forced into a dissenting role in one way or another. Black Americans comprised more than ten per cent of the total population during the entire period, increasing from approximately nine million to ten million; yet, they were progressively denied the rights granted them as freedmen during reconstruction, for a series of historical events precluded their ascendancy to full citizenship. The coming of Rutherford B. Hayes to the presidency, the historic Plessy vs. Ferguson decision, constitutionalizing segregation, extensive lynching, and wholesale disfranchisement all occurred in the South where the majority of the Black race lived. In other parts of the country, where Blacks flocked both North and West in search of redress for their grievances, they were still treated as second-class citizens.

From the time of the compromise of 1877, by which Northern Republicans deserted Blacks in the interest of political expediency, until the eve of the American entrance into World War I, the pattern continued. There were major figures in this dissent, but the most prevalent was Booker T. Washington. In fact, many historians have defined this age of early dissent as the "Age of Booker T. Washington." Oddly enough, Washington in his fight for the elevation of the Black American, chose the road of accomodation to white supremacy, and acceptance of an agrarian role on the lowest ring of the social ladder. Many Blacks, especially the young and dynamic W. E. B. DuBois, were chagrined. Washington felt that the rising affluency of Blacks was

expected to be restricted to the Black community; however, DuBois believed Blacks should be full partners in society--in politics, education, economics, or wherever others had opportunity.[5]

The Black Americans in the years bridging the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were torn between two poles of thought about their future in the Republic, according to Howard Brotz in the introduction to his anthology of Negro thought, Negro Social and Political Thought, 1850-1920: Representative Texts. The dominant leaders, including Washington and DuBois, believed that assimilation into white society was possible. How to assimilate caused the greatest friction among these dissenters. Another group of thinkers, despairing that Blacks could ever "make it" in a white man's world, advocated nationalist or separatist goals. In the 1850s, emigration to countries where no color prejudice existed was suggested. Those in Africa or the Carribbean were widely acclaimed as an answer to the Black American problems. Some later observers claimed that Black nationalism died out after the abolition of slavery only to re-emerge briefly in the post-World War I years with Marcus Garvey. They did not make a connection between emigration and migration within the United States into all-Black communities, an astonishing phenomenon of the 1890s. August Meier in Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915 saw clearly, however, that these attempts at self-segregation stem from the same basis disaffection with the whites which animated the emigrationists. Further, Meier traced self-segregation directly to the ideology of self-help and racial solidarity, the keynote of the assimiliationist orientation in the Age of Booker T. Washington. He consequently asserted that the Black Americans of the period exhibited an ambivalence between the

integration or self-segregation. DuBois in particular veered closer to separatism in his defense of cultural nationalism than other well-known assimilationists. Perhaps this is why DuBois seemed to be the embodiment of the protest element in Negro thought--then and now.[6]

Regardless of DuBois' position, there was an exodus of Blacks from the states along the Mississippi to the West and to the North. So significant was the movement that the United States Senate appointed a committee to investigate the exodus in 1880 and nearly 1700 pages were printed.[7] Although various factors were involved in the exodus, three causes stand out prominently: (1) a sense of personal insecurity attending the reversion of the South to Democratic rule; (2) political discontent resulting from the low prices for cotton and the system of debt-servitude which grew out of the operation of the crop lien system; and (3) attractive Western propaganda.[8] Various other theories were advanced as to the causes of the mass shift in the Black population of America during the late 1870s. Moreover, it was widely speculated that many Blacks were lured from the South by unscrupulous politicans seeking to use their votes in close elections. Another report suggested that the newer Western border states mislead Blacks to come by promising a free mule and forty acres of land. The chief cause, however, was the explanation given by Governor John Mashall Stone of Mississippi in his message to the state legislature in 1880. He believed the cause to be a partial failure of the cotton crop in portions of the state, and the low prices received for what was harvested. This created a feeling of discontent among plantation laborers which, with other extraneous influences, caused some Blacks to abandon their crops in the spring and seek havens in the West.[9] Personal letters also arrived

from friends who had gone north and west, and these letters stirred a new hope in the hearts of Southern Blacks.[10]

Benjamin "Pap" Singleton had started the agitation for the exodus as early as 1869. As president of a committee to invite Blacks to southern Kansas, Singleton tried to make them see that they should and must leave, because by staying in the South they were to be eternal instruments of the rebel whites and northern businessmen who constantly employed tactics of humiliation and exploitation.[11] Blacks ran away from the sharecropping system of the plantation and from the terror of mobs by day and Klansmen by night. But the South did not want to let its Black laborers leave. Transportation companies were forbidden to sell tickets to Blacks, vagrancy laws were invoked to arrest travelers, and Black "agitators" who preached migration were horsewhipped and driven away.

But two Black men succeeded in organizing large migrations. One was Henry Adams of Louisiana, and the other was "Pap" Singleton of Tennessee. Both set Kansas as a goal--the Kansas of John Brown. At this time Southern Democrats accused Northern Republicans of enticing Blacks away from the South in order to add their names to Republican voting rolls in the North. Democratic Senator Daniel Wolsey Voorhees of Indiana in 1878 asked Congress to appoint a committee to investigate the matter, and, as stated earlier, several conclusions were reached.

Both "Pap" Singleton and Henry Adams were called to Washington to testify. Each gave evidence of the bad treatment of the colored race; they told how schools were burned, children were forced to work in the cotton fields, and Black tenants were kept in debt by plantation trickery and high commissary prices--two dollars for a gallon of

molasses worth only a quarter, for example. Despite 1,700 pages of such testimony, the Democrates still contended that Republicans had instigated the mass Black migration. Certainly, freedmen continued to leave the South by the thousands.[12]

Singleton and other promoters who organized the migration were denounced in the South as troublemakers. According to one settler, a Kansas settler who had built a house and saved $100 went back home to get his family, but the brutal "Regulators" (white vigilantes) seized him, cut off both his hands, and threw him into his wife's lap saying, "Now go to Kansas to work."[13]

There were many conventions--some planned and some sporadic--to map plans and discuss the reasons and needs for the exodus. Of these, one met in New Orleans on April 17, 1879; the 200 delegates there adopted a resolution that the Negro should emigrate, and, at the same time, the meeting issued an appeal for material aid; another met in May of 1879 in Vicksburg, Mississippi, and voted to emigrate, but to to so as honorable and reasonable human beings. The people at the Vicksburg Convention also corrected the false propaganda that a "free mule and forty acres" would be waiting in Kansas.[14]

Some of the Black emigrants to Kansas settled on the public lands that the government had opened to squatters. Some went into the Indian territories where, until they came in large numbers, they were welcomed and allowed to prosper. But still the largest number went to Kansas. Soon messengers were sent South from that state to advise that no more Blacks should come there, for most transients had arrived ragged, hungry, and penniless. Under the Homestead Law some of the Blacks did acquire land, but most had no funds for livestock or for farm tools. The

Freedmen's Relief Association and some eastern philanthropists aided the new settlers to a limited extent, and some cash and clothing reached them from England. But although schools were built, neither the state of Kansas, nor the federal government gave Blacks any direct help. Western winters were cold and the snow deep, and some Blacks even had arrived barefooted. A few were so distraught at prospects for success in a new land that they ultimately returned to the South.[15]

Frederick Douglas, a great Black leader of the time, advised Blacks to remain in the South where they would have sufficient numbers to wield political power. The promoters of emigration also had an advocate for the exodus. He was Richard T. Greener, the first Black Ph.D. from Harvard University, a brilliant spokesman and scholar, and John M. Langston, an educator from Virginia for whom Langston, Oklahoma, and Langston University would be named. Having sufficient foresight to see that the United States government would not soon interfere in behalf of the Black race of the South, these men advised them to flee from the political, economical, and social pressures of the South to a free country.[16]

By the late 1870s substantial numbers of Black communities had been built in Kansas. Emmigration reached a high point in the exodus of 1879, thus causing The American Citizen of Baltimore to carry this article:

> ... For colored men to stay in the rebel-ridden South and be treated like brutes is a disgrace to themselves and to the race to which they belong. The only way then that lies open to our people is to leave the South and come to the West. While we don't favor the colony idea very much, believing that the best course is to get as near other people as you can, yet, we would prefer that to being cheated and abused by the whites. When the South begins to lose her course towards them, and her own necessities will force her to change her policies...[17]

In the South the loss of a significant portion of Black laborers owing to imigration presented serious economic problems to white planters. Yet this article expressed the only recourse, as seen by Blacks, during those frustrating and turbulent years.

Though conditions were generally hard for the Black settlers in the West, Black editors wherever possible used every conceivable chance to continue their highly effective promotion of imigration from the evils of the South; Blacks continued to leave like soaring ducks in flight for warmer climate hoping to escape the onrushing cold. Aptly describing the flight of Blacks the Kansas Herald of Topeka wrote on February 6, 1880:

> Many good people in the East have probably heard of a "Kansas dugout" and have thought of it as a sort of human habitation peculiar to partial civilization and frontier barbarity. This is by no means a fair conclusion. "Dugouts" are not simply holes in the ground. They are generally dug into a side hill. They have two or more sides, with windows and doors. The floor and the roof are of earth. They are warmer than most of the more pretentious dwellings. They are as comfortable as they are cheap, and in nearly every place they protect a happy and prosperous family. Though comparatively few in number at the present time, they are still foremost among the best devices for building a fortune from the ground up. "Despise not the day of small things" is the motto of those who dwell in the dugouts.[18]

Many editors were in favor of the exodus but were skeptical of the ability of these new-found havens in the West to absorb the Blacks. Despite the adversities of nature and the diversities of opinion, migration was not halted nor really discouraged, for Blacks had enjoyed earlier successes. Consequently, as fate would have it, the tumultous tide of human migration reached a saturation point and was met in Kansas with white hostility in this quasi haven for Blacks. It was not that the Black settlers were unwelcome; rather, when greater numbers

began to arrive by loatloads and trainloads, the ability of the area to support them was inadequate. Thus, ironically, fate played a strange reversal; the heaven had become a hell. Steamboats were forbidden to dock at some cities, and at Topeka a mob destroyed shacks recently built for Black newcomers and wildly threw the lumber into the river. At Atchison the city council passed an ordiance prohibiting the entrance of paupers into the town, which effectively eliminated Blacks. Yet Blacks came fulfilling the promises of their dreams of yesterday. They felt if they remained in the South that they would have no security of life, limbs, or property.

Still, with all of this facing them, the exodusters would be dealt another disheartening blow, as the following letter, printed in the March 12 issue of the Kansas Herald of Topeka, illustrated:

> I have received a letter from Tennessee. There are a thousand people that have sent here for me to come after them... They have sent for "Old Pap" but I find that the city is overrun with exodusters at this time and I think it would be inexpedient to bring more here at present. But still they want to come here and nowhere else; and there is no way of getting around it as Kansas is their destiny and they are bound to come. I am now getting too old and I think it would be better to send someone more competent, and identified with the immigration and has the interest of his race at heart and not his own picket; someone that has heretofore directed and established colonies in the state and is known in the South. They should be sent to turn the tide of immigration...[19]

At this time Black interest began to center on Oklahoma Territory as a possible second choice for this new chance for freedom from hunger, hostility, hatred, and halcyon. Moreover, Blacks were aware that in this territory were friends--the freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes, truly Black pioneers of the 1830s, although some still were virtual slaves.

The destitute Blacks, however, were not the only ones looking for

new opportunities in the virgin lands of Oklahoma; the railroad had a great interest and role to play in settling the territory. It was, in fact, significant that Oklahoma was being proposed as the site for exclusive Black colonies at this time, for The Colored Patriot of Topeka stated in its June 22, 1882, edition that:

> The M.K. and T.R.R. (Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad) traverses the Indian Territory from the line of Kansas to Denison, Texas. This may be deemed a sort of exclusive right in as much as the government had not seen fit to grant a single right of way to other railroads. To this extent it is a monopoly. Now this franchise, valuable as it is, cannot be successfully utilized until this vast country through which this road passes has been settled and its agricultural resources developed, in other words, what this road most needs now, is "way freight," which is always more profitable than "through freight." The Indians are not good railroad patrons and hence the desire of the railroads to seize what is known as the Oklahoma Territory and settle it up by such persons as would bring grist to their mill. Capt. Payne, under railroad inspiration, attempted to invade the territory, but with poor success; since that time the railroads have been casting about for new agencies; and they believe they have found the agencies in the co-operation of the members of the A.M.E. (African Methodist Episcopal) Conference. I say A.M.E. Conference because 5, or 6 ministers who belong to that Conference are here as delegates asking Congress to do precisely for them what it declined to do for Payne. The question may be asked--Why should not this territory be set apart exclusively for th= colored people? The moment these people are eliminated from the American people they will require for their protection class legislation; legislation which has always proved destructive to the interest of those whom it was designed to protect...[20]

The area of Oklahoma actually represented a second chance for Black survival, for the New York Globe on April 14, 1883, stated that:

> There is some prospect of a new field being opened to the Negro of the South, who may seek to better his condition by removal to some other part of the country. In the Indian Territory, which lies south of the state of Kansas, there is situated a fertile tract of land, almost entirely occupied by the Cherokee Indians and Negroes. The latter were slaves of the Indians before the war and have lived with them ever since the emancipation. They

> are believed to be entitled to a considerable portion of the land in the Indian Territory, and application has been made to the government for an investigation and decision upon their claims. The Secretary of the Interior gave a delegation of colored men who called upon him the assurance that inquiry shall be made into the matter. The territory is now in the exclusive possession of the Indians, who have not succeeded as agriculturalists and the resources of the country have not yet been made available. But if the claims of the colored people to some of the land should be allowed, a vast field would be opened for them to become producers of wealth. Those who have struggled on in the various states of the South, unable to do more than make a bare living, owing to the better part of their earnings going to the storekeeper, would find an opportunity to settle and make home for themselves.[21]

The efforts to emigrate to and interest in other places, after entrance into Kansas was denied, were met with other alternatives such as African colonization and the opening of new lands in the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Iowa. Many Blacks felt that although western colonization was not the most accepted answer, a return to Africa was out of the question. Moreover, the most logical place for Blacks, because of the similarity of climate to what they previously knew, was either Kansas or Oklahoma. And, as Kansas began rejecting Blacks, it was only natural that Oklahoma would receive the new emigrants. Thus, plans were made to direct the exodus to Oklahoma Territory. There were those southern Blacks that thought only briefly that Oklahoma might offer the chance for an all-Black state in the Union. The American Citizen of Topeka, Kansas, stated in its issue of March, 1888:

> Let every colored man who wants 160 acres of land get ready to occupy some of the best lands in Oklahoma, and should it be opened up, there is no reason why at least 100,000 colored men and women should not settle on 160 acres of land each and thus establish themselves so firmly in that territory that they will be able to hold their own from the start.
>
> The discontented and oppressed Europeans have heard of of intended opening of this country and they are now falling over each, so to speak, to reach America in time to enter

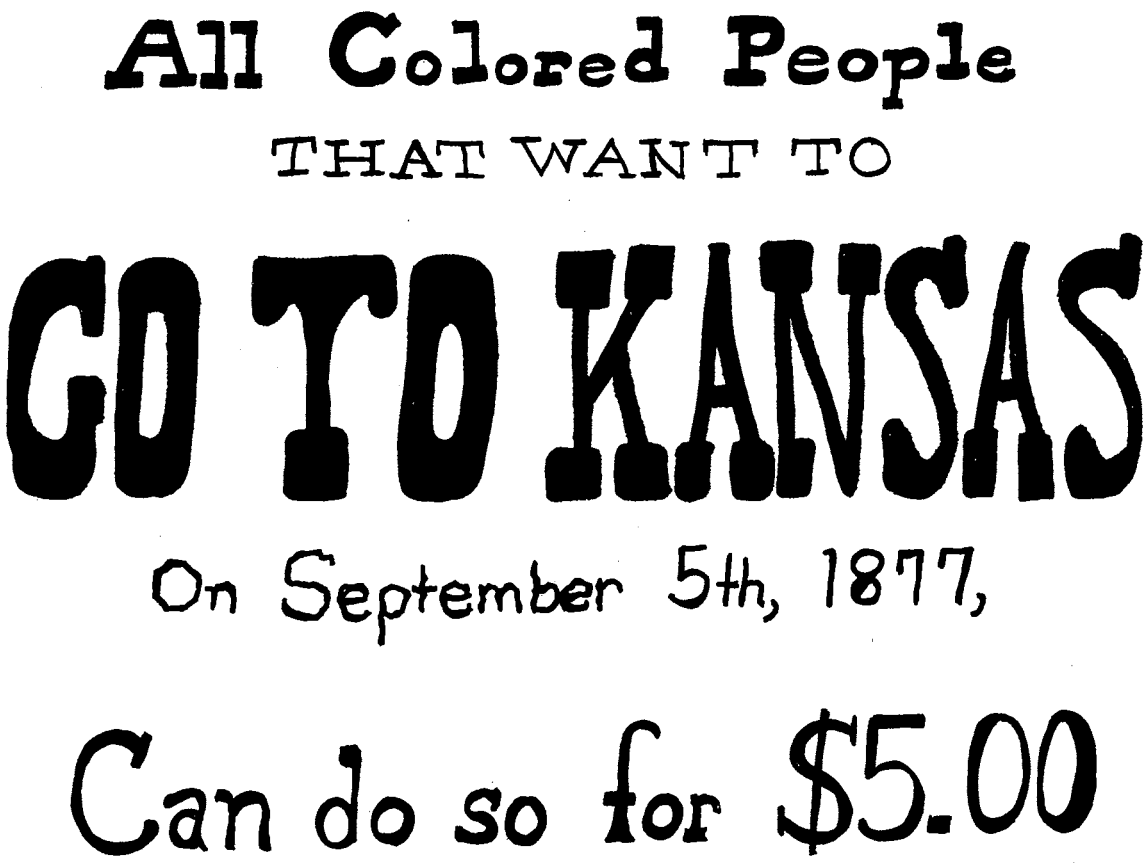


Figure 8. A Lexington, Kentucky, Handbill of 1877

1809 1882

GRAND COMPLIMENTARY

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!

TENDERED TO

"Pap" Singleton,

The originator of the Colored Emigration from the south to the west, and father of the late great "EXODUS" in the seventy-third year of his age, by the citizens of Kansas, for his untiring efforts to ameliorate human suffering,

TUESDAY AUG 15th,

To be held at HARTZELL PARK,

NEAR THE CITY LIMITS OF

TOPEKA, - KANSAS

(Street cars run to and from the Park.)

Benjamin Singleton, better known as "Old Pap," was born in August, 1809, and therefore will be seventy-three years old that day. And on that day let every loyal citizen, be he speaker, statesman or minister of the Gospel, come forward and extend the right hand of fellowship.

Invitations have been extended to leading citizens in different cities of the state, and excursions are expected from each city.

- PROGRAMME FOR THE DAY :-

OPENIN G CHORUS.....Song, JOHN BROWN.

PRAYER

"Why We Celebrate To-Day".....Judge W. I Jamison, of North Topeka.

After which addresses will be delivered by the following prominent speakers and divines:

Gov. John P. St John,	Rev. Jno. M. Wilkerson,	Major Joseph Wilson,
Rev. John F. Thomas,	James Trontman, Atty.	D.B. Garrett
" Peter Rucker,	Rev. R. F. Markham,	Rev. S.C. Pierce
" L.S. Cooper,	" W.W. Williams,	" Sanford Griffin
" Layer,	Hon. Thomas Ryan,	" J. Turner, Kan. City.

- MUSIC WILL BE INTERSERED BETWEEN EACH SPEECH. —

100 salutes will be fired at early sunrise, and at 7 o'clock, P.M. by Officer James Mason. Stands can be had on the grounds by referring to the Committee of Arrangements.

Admission to Park, Five Cents

All Sabbath School Scholars & their Teachers will be admitted FREE!

Source: Frank A. Blackman, Kansas Encyclopedia of History (Chicago: Standard Publishing Co., Vol. 11), pp. 340-342.

Figure 9. A Topeka, Kansas Handbill of 1877

> the best of these lands. Let the colored American keep his eye on Oklahoma and when the opening alarm shall have been sounded, move forward and take it. We shall keep our readers posted on whatever Congress does on this matter, to the end that they may be prepared to act unitedly and at the proper time.[22]

The expected influx of Blacks into Oklahoma already had been anticipated by whites and Indians because of the overflow of Blacks into Kansas during 1879, and therefore Oklahomans likewise were getting uneasy about this issue. In fact, the possibility of a large Black population in Oklahoma Territory actually frightened some Indians and whites in the area.[23]

E. P. McCabe, a Black legislator from Kansas, tried to organize a huge exodus from his state to Oklahoma with the idea of creating an all-Black state. McCabe did migrate to Oklahoma and later held government offices in the territory. Born in Troy, New York, on October 10, 1850, McCabe while quite young moved with his parents to Newport, Rhode Island, where he attended school. Eventually he worked as a clerk in the law office of Shreve, Kendric and Co. of New York City; furthermore, he later worked as a messenger in the United States sub-treasury before moving to Chicago in 1873.[24] He held other jobs in that city, remaining there until he accepted a position as clerk in the Cook County, Illinois, treasurer's office.[25] In Chicago, McCabe met A. T. Hall, editor of the Chicago Conservator, a Black paper. Hall had learned of a number of Kentucky freedmen who were planning on establishing Black colonies in Kansas, decided to join them, and persuaded McCabe also to move West.

Hall arrived in Kansas a few days before McCabe and settled in the Nicodemus colony (in what later became Graham County, Kansas). This was one of the all-Black colonies that had been founded in western Kansas during the early days of the exodus, but had not been organized

officially before the arrival of Hall and McCabe in April of 1878. McCabe soon was elected secretary of the Nicodemus Town Company and served in that position until April of 1879 when the company was disbanded.[26] He received additionally an honor on April 1, 1880, when Governor John P. St. John of Kansas appointed him temporary clerk of newly organized Graham County. He served in that capacity until June 1, 1880,[27] when he was elected to the office for a two-year term.[28]

McCabe and Hall operated a small business in a sod structure for a while; the small structure was also used as a polling place for county elections, an indication of McCabe's determination to become involved in politics.[29] Hall late in 1880 sold his share of the business to McCabe and returned to St. Louis. Meanwhile, McCabe continued his interest in politics and was nominated for state auditor on August 17, 1882, at the Republican State Convention. Governor St. John objected fiercely. The governor, who was seeking election to a third term, feared defeat with a Black man on the ticket, but the anti-St. John men prevailed and voted as a block for McCabe, "the dark horse."[30]

McCabe enjoyed a trouble-free administration during his first two years as state auditor an- was renominated by his party at the convention of 1884.[31] McCabe was reelected, but retired from this post in 1887. He then inadvertently became a candidate for the registrar of the United States Treasury, but lost. Later he sullenly rejected the opportunity of becoming immigrant inspector at Key West, Florida because it was a powerless position with no political future.

In 1889, W. L. Eagleson, a Black Kansas politician, organized the Oklahoma Immigration Association at Topeka for the purpose of colonizing and founding an all-Black state. The plan, as conceived by some

Black leaders, was to petition Congress for statehood after the census of 1890 showed a Black majority in Oklahoma. McCabe was appointed the agent in Washington for this venture, and directed his campaign for the governorship of the Oklahoma Territory from that vantage point. Hundreds of letters and circulars advertising cheap alnd and urging McCabe's appointment as governor were sent to Blacks throughout the South.

McCabe's strategy for the governorship was towfold. He hoped either to be appointed to the position by President Benjamin Harrison, or else elected to the office by a Black constituency once Oklahoma gained statehood. Furthermore, Black bosses in Illinois, New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, who claimed they held the balance of power between the two parties in those states, treatened to transfer their votes to the Democrats in the election of 1892 if Harrison failed to appoint McCabe. The president, who had been in contact with McCabe, was silent.[32]

McCabe moved to the Oklahoma Territory in 1890 and continued his program of state-building, although he had been denied the governorship.[33] He founded the town of Langston[34] in Logan County, on October 22, 1890, and began urging that Blacks immigrate to the area. He hoped to organize Black majorities in each of the proposed state's congressional districts in order to effect Black domination.[35]

He also had been appointed treasurer of Logan County by the Republican Party of Oklahoma, but soon resigned that post and turned it over to a successor. After declining the unanimous nomination for the office, he devoted himself to establishing the Langston City Herald,[36] which was edited by his old friend W. L. Eagleson.[37] The

Herald, which was subsequently circulated throughout the South, advertised Langston as the new "Eldorado" where the Black man ruled supreme.[38]

By 1894, McCabe had moved to establish his residence and realty office in Guthrie.[39] He organized a Republican club in Payne County that year[40] and probably was serving unofficially as assistant territorial auditor. Governor Cassius M. Barnes of the territory officially appointed him to the office in 1897.[41] He was reappointed to the office by Governors William M. Jenkins, William C. Grimes, Thompson B. Ferguson, and Frank Frantz, serving in that capacity until the day before statehood in 1907.[42]

McCabe claimed in 1895 to have made Oklahoma safely Republican by bringing about the immigration of thousands of Blacks to the territory.[43] But by 1907, white antipathy toward both Blacks and Republicans enabled the Democrats to organize the state.[44] White opposition to Blacks had progressed to such a degree that Charles N. Haskell, the Democratic gubernatorial nominee in 1907, publicly stated that ["the Republican party in Oklahoma... has so fostered and petted the Negro by favoring mixed schools, opposing separate coaches and appointing... (them) to official positions, has fostered in the Negro's breast ideas of social and political equality..."] Haskell further urged all voters in the state to vote the Democratic ticket "to see to it that Oklahoma is kept a white man's state."[45]

With such opposition, McCabe saw little future for himself in Oklahoma, and he eventually returned to Chicago and obscurity. He died on February 23, 1920, as a charge on the public relief roles and was taken to Topeka, Kansas, for burial on February 26 in a Topeka cemetary.

His funeral was attended only by his wife and the undertaker.[46] It is ironic that the Black immigrants of Oklahoma, on whom he based his support, also were the cause of his defeat because of the threat they represented to whites.

McCabe's actions were only a few steps toward realizing the Black dream of racial betterment. The reaction to McCabe was expressed clearly by one white who said, "I am told that dead niggers make excellent fertilizers, and if Negroes try to Africanize Oklahoma they will find that we will enrich our soil with them."[47]

Many whites began to feel that it was a shame to take land away from the Indians and let Blacks eventually get it. Moreover, a number of white settlers were willing to use violence to keep Blacks out of the area. White resistance received the needed envouragement at the Democratic Convention in Guthrie in the spring of 1890. When the issue of Black colonization was proposed, the delegates became angry. The convention finally agreed to accept Blacks in the territory, but to keep them definitely out of political power. Shortly thereafter, white masked riders roamed the area, attacking Black colonists in an effort to frighten them out of the territory. On one occasion McCabe himself was attacked, and this contributed to many Black families selling their homes and leaving Guthrie.[48] Some historians have stated that the high incidence of Black population in Guthrie prompted the changing of the capital site from Guthrie to Oklahoma City. This and the non-preparation of Blacks for the expected inclimate weather of Oklahoma prompted many settlers to leave.[49]

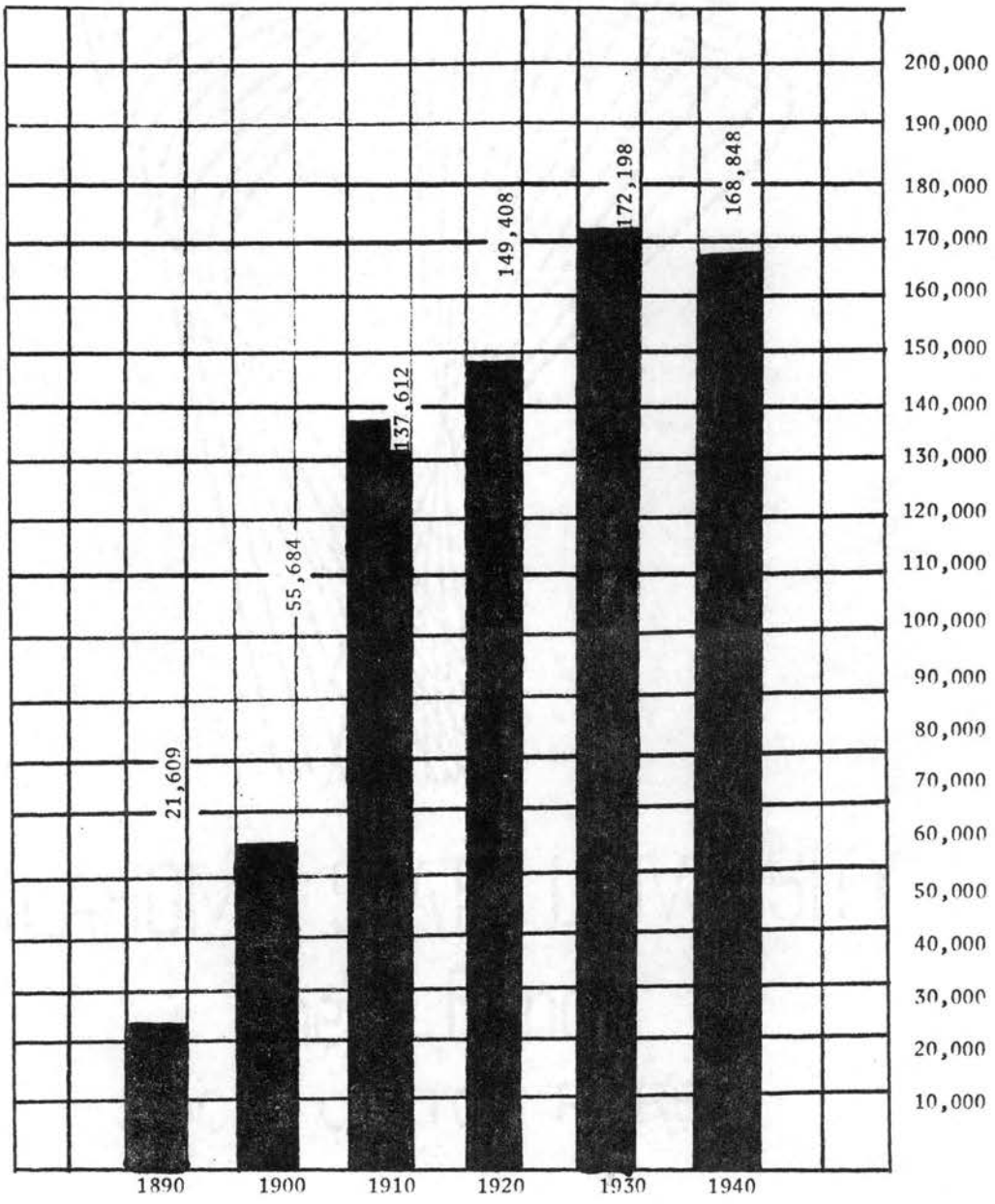
Whatever the case, the stage was set, the time was right, and the desire for racial separation was felt and wanted more than ever before.

Within this vein of thought, the sociology of segregation would soon raise the prospect of the impossibility of the races peacefully to coexist in the same community. These factions moved men to formulate the idea of all-Black towns, for which there were sufficient Blacks in the area. Oklahoma had been opened to settlement on April 22, 1889, and a considerable number of Blacks had entered the territory at that time. A lawless white element made things both unpleasant and unsafe for them, yet the Black population continued to increase until in 1900 there were 55,684 Blacks in the territory. By 1920 the Black population totaled 149,408--a tremendous growth had occurred.[50]

Thus, by 1920, an experiment had taken place like few others in the history of the American Republic. Masses of people had moved, reminiscent of the ancient exodus out of Egypt by the Jews, or, more historically, the Bantu exodus to South Africa during ancient times.

TABLE VI

GROWTH OF NEGRO POPULATION IN OKLAHOMA-1890-1940



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[6]Ibid.

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[8]Everett Dick, The Sod-House Frontier (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co.), pp. 196-198.

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[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid., p. 340

[12]Carter G. Woodson, A Century of Negro Migration (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History), pp. 126-141.

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[15]Carter G. Woodson, A Century of Negro Migration (Washington, D. C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History) pp. 126-135.

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[17]Martin E. Dann, Ed., The Black Press, 1827-1890 (New York: Capricorn Books), p. 269.

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[19]Ibid., pp. 275-276.

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[23]Solon J. Buck,"The Settlement of Oklahoma," Reprint from Vol. XV, Part 2, Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters (Madison, Wisconsin: Academy of Arts and Letters), p. 373.

[24]Edward P. McCabe File, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City.

[25]Marion Tuttle Rock, Illustrated History of Oklahoma (Topeka, Kansas: Hamilton & Sons), p. 271.

[26]William J. Belleau, The Nicodemus Colony of Graham County, Kansas, (M. A. Thesis, Kansas State College--Fort Hayes, Fort Hayes, Kansas) pp. 51-57.

[27]Clara H. Hazelrigg, A New History of Kansas (Topeka, Kansas: Crane Publishing Co.), pp. 188-202.

[28]E. P. McCabe File, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City.

[29]Nicodemus, Western Cyclone (April 28, 1887).

[30]Kirwin Kansas Chief (August 17, 1882).

[31]Biennial report of the Security of State, Kansas 1884, pp. 80-91.

[32]Fred S. Bard File, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City.

[33]Edward Everett Dale, Oklahoma: The Story of a State (Evanston: Row Pettersen & Co.), pp. 24-243.

[34]Arthur L. Tolson, "A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890-1950," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater).

[35]Arthur Tolson, "The Negro in Oklahoma Territory, 1899-1907: A Study in Racial Discrimination" (Unpublished Doctorial Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, Norman).

[36]E. P. McCabe File, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City.

[37]Carolyn Thomas Foreman, Oklahoma Imprints, 1835-1907: A History of Printing in Oklahoma Before Statehood (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press), p. 347.

[38]W. P. A. Writers Project, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City. Eldorado was the mythical country sought by adventurers in North and South America, and symbolized a land of wealth. Ed. Grant Forman (Indian-Pioneer History, 113 Vols. of unpublished manuscripts, Indian-Archives Division).

[39]McCabe File, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City.

[40]Guthrie Oklahoma State Capital (July 9, 1894).

[41]Evidence is contradictory here. Some secondary sources refer to McCabe as the assistant auditor from 1890-1907. This writer is unaware, however, of any primary sources referring to McCabe as assistant auditor prior to 1897. See Newkirk (Oklahoma) Republican (July 5, 1951); Wichita (Kansas) Morning Eagle (July 5, 1951); and Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman (May 25, 1906).

[42]Topeka Plain Dealer (March 19, 1920). William M. Jenkins served as Governor of the Oklahoma Territory from May 12, 1901-November 1901 when President Theodore Roosevelt removed him from office. William C. Grimes, Secretary of the Territory, served as acting Governor from the time of Jenkins' removal until December 9, 1901, when Thompson B. Ferguson was appointed. He served until January 13, 1906, when Frank Frantz, a former Roughrider who served with Theodore Roosevelt in Cuba, was appointed to the office by President Roosevelt. He served until November 16, 1907.

[43]Oklahoma Democrat (May 24, 1895).

[44](Muskogee) Oklahoma Democrat (April 13, 1905).

[45]Ibid.

[46]Topeka Plains Dealer (March 19, 1920).

[47]Kate M. Teall, Black History in Oklahoma: A Resource Book (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma City Public Schools Title III, ESEA Grant), p. 154.

[48]Mozell Hill, "The All-Negro Communities of Oklahoma: The Natural History of the Social Movement," Journal of Negro History, Vol. XXXI (July, 1946) p. 261.

[49]Ibid.

[50]United States Census, 1910-1920, Vol. III, pp. 459-812.

CHAPTER V

ESCAPE TO DISILLUSIONMENT: THE RISE OF ALL-BLACK TOWNS IN OKLAHOMA DURING THE DECADES OF DECISION

Say, have you heard the story
Of a little colored town
Way over in the nation
On such lovely sloping ground?

With as pretty little houses
As you ever chanced to meet
With nothing but colored folks
A-standing in the streets.

Oh, tis a pretty country
And the Negroes own it, too,
With not a single white man here
To tell us what to do---
In Boley;

And I will tell that fellow
Whoever he may be
If you don't think we are colored
Just come here and see

Get on the Fort Smith and Western
The train will bring you here.
Take any of the coaches
You have no cause to fear.

Here a Negro makes your dresses
And a Negro makes your pants
And hands your mail out
If you'll give him half a chance---
In Boley.[1]

In this poem was expressed the dream of Boley, Oklahoma, as sung by Uncle Willie Jesse, the town poet more than half a century ago. Founded in 1904 in what then was Oklahoma Territory, Boley was one of the many Black towns that was to become a haven and symbol of what

Blacks were capable of achieving on their own. Some of these Utopian guiding stars of Black independence would become anachronisms and slowly fade under the strains of integration, the flight of Blacks to urban areas, and economical in stability; however, others would remain, challenging nature, hardship, and hostilities, while completing a century of existence. This likewise would be the destiny of twenty-seven other towns born out of a dream of independence on the crimson hills and the barren plains of Oklahoma--dreams filled with the aspirations of a lifetime which would be shattered by a rude awakening of depression and of hardships and violence.

The fate of many of the Oklahoma all-Black towns testified to the fact that the visions were good, but practicality, workability, and acceptability under the prevailing conditions would not allow continued growth. The discrepancies between the aims and aspirations of Black communities and the actuality of them give vivid and ample illustrations to the lengths to which Black people would go in pursuit of a sustaining social order. Further, it exemplified the counter lengths to which non-Blacks would go to manifest the same goal. Thus the Oklahoma all-Black communities acted as a compromise between complete integration, which then was unfeasible in terms of white value. What was created was a hope in a new environment, with the all-Black residences making a bold step toward a change. During the early years of settlement in Oklahoma, there were many Black towns and communities in Oklahoma, some lasting for long periods of time, even yet enduring, while others would fade as quickly as the dreams that spawned them. Mozell Hill, in his study called "The All-Negro Communities of Oklahoma," published in the Journal of Negro History, on July 1, 1946, stated that

these Black towns were escapist societies established by Blacks attempting to lift themselves from the caste system of white society, but that Blacks who came West migrated for the same reasons and possessed the same pioneering spirit as other men.

Other reasons for the early, if not sustaining, growth of these all-Black communities were the sporadic conflicts between Whites and Blacks creating much dissatisfaction toward the biracial towns and communities among both races. The following exerpts from several newspaper articles serve as apt examples of racism.

The Lexington Leader (November 28, 1891).

> The Choctaws are driving the Negroes out of the Nation. Anyone exploying a colored servant is subjected to a $50.00 fine.[2]

The Kingfisher Press (September 24, 1896).

> In the southern portion of the Oklahoma Territory, white cappers are running the Negroes out of the country. At Norman, not one Negro remains.[3]

The Indian Chieftain (August 29, 1901)

> Major H. C. Miller has issued a proclamation to the citizens of Sapulpa stating that if they are determined to rid the town of Negro population, let them do so in a peaceable, low-abiding manner.[4]

The Beaver Journal (November 29, 1902).

> A vigilance committee of the citizens of Waurika posted notices to the Negroes to vacate the community within 24 hours.[5]

The Cherokee Messenger (August, 1905).

> One Negro and one white man were wounded in an effort of a number of whites to run Negroes out of Claremore. The white man was wounded fatally.[6]

These conflicts obviously were not confined just to the towns mentioned, nor did they end easily and quickly. Many stories of this nature circulated through the early Oklahoma towns. One tale about Guthrie and the removal of the capitol to Oklahoma City included the statement that, "It is told that the real reason that some whites wanted the capitol moved to Oklahoma City was that they were afraid that since there were so many Blacks in Guthrie, many of them would get into government service if the capitol remained there."[7]

Black towns in the Oklahoma Territory were as unique as they were complicated, disappointing, frustrating, and tragic. Some studies and excerpts of complete works have indicated that attempts at self-segregation within the United States historically have been considered as unique manifestations of Black dissent. As most all-Black communities were centered in frontier Oklahoma, they suffered the usual hardships of a town on the edge of civilization.

For example, the mortality rate in most of these early Black communities were frightfully high. In some communities, one person out of every two died from disease.

The exact date of the founding of the various all-Black towns in Oklahoma has been difficult to pinpoint, presumably because several of these towns did not originate as uniracial communities. However, sufficient general information places the foundings into four eras: pre-Civil War, post-Civil War, the period of the "great migration," or Black exodus, and post-World War I.

The emergence of Black towns during these periods was not restricted just to Oklahoma and Kansas; others were founded in many Southern and Northern states. Examples include Grambling, Louisiana,

Mound Bayou, Mississippi; Brooklyn, Illinois; Lawnside, New Jersey; Fairmount Heights, Maryland; Kinloch, Missouri; and many others throughout the United States.

Boley, Oklahoma, in the eastern section of the state is one of the surviving Black towns. For all but two days of the year Boley and its 942 residents appear to be in a deep sleep--typical of any small rural Oklahoma town. Boley is a fine example of Black culture in Oklahoma. Located between Oklahoma City and Tulsa, the town really comes alive during its annual rodeo. Rodeo time and Boley have not changed drastically since the town was founded. Early in this century, the Fort Smith & Western Railroad pushed into the newly opened Creek Indian lands, bringing with it a host of workers, including many Blacks who settled permanently in the area.

In Indian Territory in 1904, according to legend, two white railroad executives were debating the capacity of the Blacks for self-government. One maintained that Blacks could direct their own affairs successfully if they had the proper chance; the other argued that Blacks were incapable of running their affairs correctly. "The result of the argument," reported Booker T. Washington in The Outlook in 1908, "was Boley."[8] Whatever the reason, the railroad did encourage settlement in townsites it established along its right-of-way. One of these was Boley, named after W. H. Boley, a railroad official.[9]

To manage this townsite, the Fort Smith officials appointed a capable Black, Thomas M. Haynes, and sold the land to freedmen at low prices. Settlement began quickly. By 1905, Boley, in the heart of the rich cotton belt, was thriving. About 2,500 people were lured to it both by the prospect of cheap land and by the potential for a life

free of racial restrictions. As the farm population grew, merchants and professional men soon settled there.

"All Men Up--Not Some Down" was the call of the local newspaper, and in issue after issue the editor asked Blacks around the nation: "What are you waiting for? If we do not look out for our own welfare, who is going to do so for us? Are you always going to depend upon the white race to control your affairs for you?"[10]

From outside the town, most whites applauded, finding in Boley an ideal solution to "the Black problem." Visitors came away singing its praises. "The citizens of Boley appear to be solving the race problem in a very satisfactory manner," declared one, while another asserted, "The experiment of founding a colored colony has in the case of Boley proven an unqualified success," yet another wrote, "The vicious Negro is not found in Boley."[11]

In 1907, as Oklahoma was about to be admitted to the Union as a state, some of the white cheers turned to hisses. In Boley, as it prospered and grew, local leaders began to have political ambitions. The editor called for Black control of Boley's county. "If we fail in this effort," he wrote, "we will never have the opportunity again. There is not another spot so desirable in this country where the Negro has a chance to settle down in a little community of his own and sleep under his own vine and fig tree."[12]

The prospect of Black control was anything but appealing to Oklahoma whites, and the charm of the racial experiment in Boley quickly palled. In the state's first election, when Blacks who had captured the Republican county convention elected two county commissioners, the county election board declared all returns from those precincts invalid.

When they continued to try to vote, the precinct lines were redrawn in so complicated a way that it was almost impossible to find out where to vote. "The map maker would work himself into a premature grave to keep up with the changes," a newspaper complained. In order to cast a ballot, the Black who wanted to vote almost found it necessary "to swear out a search warrant to finally locate the voting place."[13] The disenfranchisement of Boley's Blacks was paralleled in other areas. Throughout the state white farmers refused to sell land to new Blacks, and an effort was made to drive those already on the land off it. In 1913, a Black woman and her son living on the outskirts of Boley were lynched. For Boley this was the beginning of the end of its once bright promise. Some of its citizens gave up and in 1914 set sail for the Gold Coast under a Pied Piper named Alfred C. Sam, who promised them a new life there. One of the migrants was an 88-year-old woman living in Tulsa, who said of the back-to-Africa movement: "I will and do say to you that the Negro people for the first time in my long life came together and acted like they loved one another, while trying to get back to Africa;" she further stated; "I wanted to go so bad I could've walked."[14]

But the colonization scheme was ill-planned, poorly financed, and doomed to failure; most of the migrants eventually returned to the United States more disillusioned than ever. For those Blacks who stayed in Boley, there was acceptance of the reality of their situation, and they began to slow process of isolating the town from the outside world and of settling into a slow decline.

The plight of Boley was complicated by economic reality. Between the two World Wars, cotton failed almost entirely as a cash crop for

the region's small farmers, and peanuts, which became the biggest crop, hardly provided enough to support a farm family. And the young began to leave, as they have left every rural community, seeking a life in the cities where they might not be racially secure, but where, at least, there were opportunities for employment.

The decline of Boley paralleled the decline of rural communities in general, but its plight was greater, due to complications of additional factors. As there was no white investment in Boley, the community was forced to rely solely on its own resources, and these were few. Credit was hard to obtain. The Black farmers had great difficulty raising the cash to carry them through poor agricultural seasons, and their problems hurt the merchants in the town who depended upon them for trade.

By 1940, Boley's population had fallen to 942. By 1960, it was down to 573, and today it is lower yet. On the two-block-long main thoroughfare, Pecan Street, three of every five stores are empty, and some buildings are only shells with a few trees growing in their brick-enclosed interiors. The town's only bank collapsed some years ago when a federal audit detected embezzlement. And the telephone company, once locally owned, was sold to whites after it was determined that "they were sympathetic to the town," and could provide better service. The only new business to open its doors in years was a small company manufacturing electrical barbecue equipment. It employed five workers.[16]

Boley today is a town without a future. For many of its people welfare is the major source of income. Others travel to Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Shawnee during the week for work and return to Boley's homogeneous racial setting on weekends. About the only regular employment

in town is in teaching, preaching, government service and in the few remaining retail stores. Blacks in Boley have not created jobs, and are not usually around people who have the ability to do so. Its citizens today seem stoic and resigned. One factor that attests to this occured in 1954. After the Supreme Court's desegration decision, there was talk about sending students to integrated facilities nearby, but this was soon dismissed with the thought that whites might move in and take over as has been the case so many time earlier. The young leave and the older citizens apathetically remain. There is a sense of hopelessness in the face of social and economic forces that are little understood and perhaps beyond control.[17]

With regard to social organization and stratification in Boley, their determinants were largely economic in character. There were, for instance, four rough economic divisions, the members recognized by each other to have certain economic and social interests in common. These divisions included: the (1) proprietorial class (those individuals having ownership of businesses), (2) professional class (teachers, laymen, physicians), (3) laboring class (landless workers), and the (4) floaters (those who came and went).[18] Even with these in mind, there were really only two division of class structure in Boley, the upper and lower.

Concerning these two fundamental division of society in Boley, the upper or elite class consisted of those who were referred to as proprietorial and professional. These individuals were bound together by a host of factors. In the first instance, they achieved economic security. In the second place, they formed an elite group in a truer sense than could be possible for any Black person in a mixed community,

because Boley was "their town." A further cohesive factor was a recognition by the members of the upper class that they were interdependent. They needed each other more urgently than they would, for example, if there had been some white upper-class residents with whom certain Blacks psychologically could identify themselves through business contacts or otherwise.[19]

The upper class then identified itself as a class by means of prestige symbols which were understood as such throughout the American cultural pattern--economic resources, education, family status, and leadership, not by skin color or family origin, which is contrary to the findings of some investigative research in mixed communities.[20] Blacks in Boley seemed to have realized, and still do, that although differences in wealth may exist and a microcosm Black-Bourgeouise was formed, it made no sense to try to form an alliance with whites, because all Blacks were in the same boat.[21]

Thus it might be claimed that although class alignments were rather definite and sharp in Boley (and a class struggle in terms of these alignments goes on ad infinitum), there was a minimum of class frustration and personality disorganization as a result, because the all-Black social structure afforded psychological compensations for both large class groups. The nature of these compensations can be best understood by considering the inter- and intra-class relationships and communication. The earlier research done by sociologist Daniel P. Monyihan on the Black family stated that the Black family was unstructured, but studies of the all-Black community prove he was erroneous in his findings about the Black family. Group solidarity did exist in Boley:

> Factions, gossip, and animosities are numerous in Boley but in cases of community crisis, there is group solidarity. Fundamentally, the citizens of Boley have the welfare of every individual in Boley at heart. The racial homogeneity and "like-mindedness" of the citizens of Boley are the basic explanation for this social solidarity. This solidarity is based on sentiments and habits. These sentiments of loyalty have their basis in a modus vivendi, which is a mutual understanding by the citizens of Boley.[22]

A year and a half after its founding, Boley had a dry-goods, hardware, millinery, and grocery stores, drugstores, shoe shops, restaurants, real estate offices, a six-thousand-dollar gin, a shingle mill, two saw mills and a first-class hotel. There was a free school with a good building about 40 x 24, with an enrollment of 150 pupils. Two teachers were engaged in structing the colored youth of the community. There was also a colored station agent who looked after the affairs of the railroad company, soon to occupy a new depot which was being erected. Its population was 824 in 1907. Meanwhile, efforts were made to urge more Blacks to immigrate to the town, so that it could be proved that such experiments provided a solution to the problem of racial discrimination.[23]

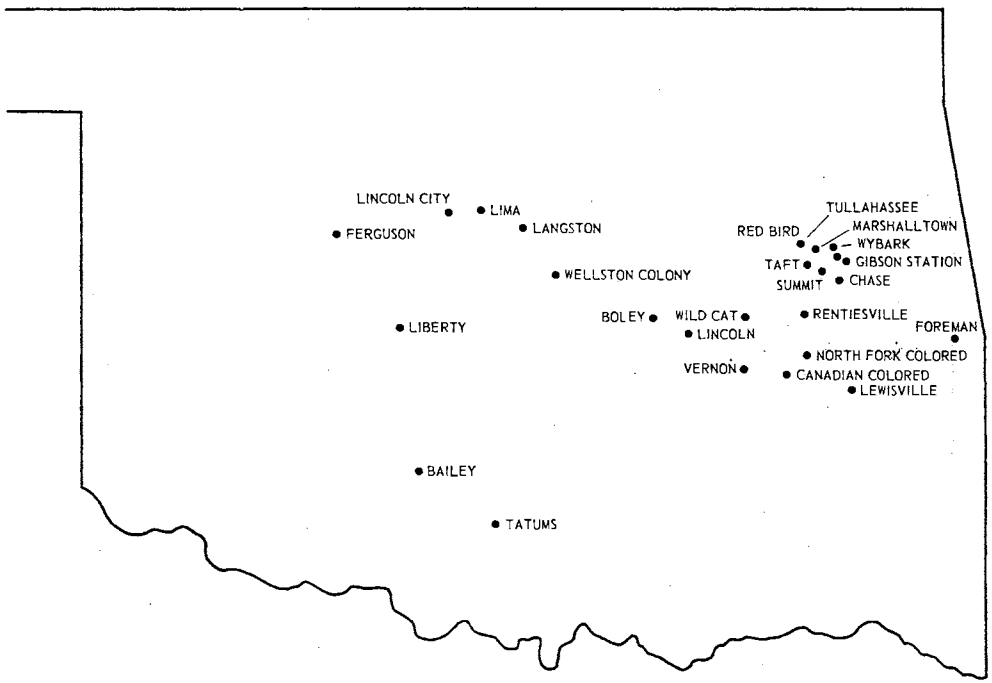
The fate of many of these all-Black towns is testimony to the fact that even self-segregation under the prevailing regional and national strains of racism was not practical, causing in many cases the lapse into ruin and decay of the dream that caused the founding of these communities. Over the years, as the enthusiasm of the initial establishment of these communities ended, their populations steadily declined. The rise of these towns also vividly illustrated to a large degree the extent to which a people would go in order to fulfill the aims, goals, and aspirations of a lifetime, even at the risk of racial confrontation and conflict. It also indicated, as was illustrated in

the History of Boley, to what limits the counter group would go to preserve the real limits of white supremacy and superiority.

The all-Black towns in Oklahoma were as unique in character as they were in development. While many observers would conclude that they were all in Oklahoma there were also two divisions, often called the twin territories; Indian Territory and Oklahoma territory. Twenty-three of the twenty-eight towns were in Indian Territory while five were in Oklahoma territory. The oldest in Oklahoma Territory was Lincoln City, while the most publicized was Langston City. Boley was the most famous and most publized in Indian Territory (See Figure 10).

Lincoln City, Langston City, Liberty, Ferguson, and Wellston colony were all Black towns in Oklahoma territory. Those established in Indian Territory were two unnamed Seminole Nation Black towns, Tullahassee, North Fork Colored, Arkansas Colored, Canadian Colored, Gibson Station, Wybark, Marshalltown, Overton, Lincoln (later renamed Clearview), Rentiesville, Red Bird, Boley, Taft, Bailey, Tatums, Wildcat (later named Grayson), Foreman, Chase, Summit, Lewisville, Vernon, Backertee, and Lima (later named Linn).[24]

As early as 1869, Creek freedmen organized the Black towns of Arkansas Colored, Canadian Colored, and North Fork Colored. Blacks were very active in the Creek Nation, and they had more freedom and responsibility than they did Blacks in some of the other tribes. The towns were set up initially by the Creeks, allowing one king and one warrior for every two hundred inhabitants. This accounted in part for the large number of Black representatives that were present in the Creek tribal government.[25] In the Creek Nation by 1891, North Fork Colored had a population of 789, Arkansas Colored had 1,970, and



Source: Kate M. Teall, Black History in Oklahoma (Oklahoma City, Title ESEA, 1971), p. 168.[26]

Figure 10. A Map of Oklahoma Showing the Location of Twenty-Four of the Twenty-Eight Towns. The Other Four had Either Gone out of Existence or Were Unable to be Located

Canadian Colored, 1,444.[27]

Bailey was another of the early Black towns that came and went quickly. It was located in the Chickasaw Nation (one of the more hostile tribes toward Blacks) on Rush Creek, in what later became Grady County, about twenty-five miles north of Marlow. The Oklahoma Guide related that Bailey was one of the most orderly Black towns in the Indian Territory and that the inhabitants were able to solve their own problems. It was also said that when trouble did arise, the inhabitants called the older people together in a council and settled the matter.[28] Steadily the population declined during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Cotton failure and World War I contributed to the town's failure.

Bookertee was situated on the St. Louis and Santa Fe Railroad Line in Oklahoma County (about twenty miles northwest of present day Weleeta), the area where Alfred Sams had his success with his "Back to Africa Scheme." It was named for Booker T. Washington, the famous Black spokesman of the era. Washington had just made a trip through Oklahoma in the 1890s. The town's newspaper, the Bookertee Searchlight, was edited by Roscoe Dunjee who later would become editor of the Black Dispatch of Oklahoma City. The motto of the editor, "Freedom Forever," also would succumb in time of lean years,[29] hostility, and hard times. It was another of those towns born in a dream of glory but died almost as quickly.

The Black twon of Chase was found in 1906, and, according to an article printed in the Oklahoma Safeguard, it was supposed to be the "latest thing going" in Black towns. Located ten miles west of Muskogee, in Muskogee County, the town was initiated by J. M. Louis on

February 29, 1908.[30] Records show that the town existed, but also that it never had any permanent population.

Ferguson, founded in Blaine County, was the last Black town to be located in the Oklahoma territory. It was promoted and supported by Reverend C. N. Moore and a group of then-prominent Blacks living in Watonga. The following advertisement apparently appeared in the Watonga news concerning Ferguson:

> We, the Colored Townsite Board have arranged to open up a Colored Town at Ferguson. The Townsite is located on the Rock Island Railroad, 12 miles north of Watonga, the county seat of Blaine County. Here is an opportunity for the Negro to build a great town in western Oklahoma.
>
> Oklahoma is the best country in the United States for the Southern Negro. I am speaking of the liberty living Negro of Tennessee, Mississippi, Texas and Louisiana. If you want to breathe pure freedom, come to Ferguson, Oklahoma, and buy business lots and get ready for doing business.
>
> The railroad runs through the townsite. You step off the train on the townsite. Say, my colored brother, don't come in a late train.
>
> Be on time, act at once; come and buy the desirable property.[31]

Foreman was founded in the extreme southern portion of the Cherokee Indian Nation, about fifteen miles north of Spiro. Located on the Missouri-Pacific Railroad, it later became a city in Sequoyah County. It derived its name from Zack Foreman, an early merchant of the town.[32]

Gibson Station started, as many of the railroad towns did, during the laying of the transcontinental railroad. It can be traced back to 1870 when it was a tent town housing workers on the rail construction project. Reportedly it was where the scum of the frontier collected. Located about seven miles south of Wagoner on the Arkansas Valley Railroad line, it had as its first postmaster R. E. Reaser in 1879.[33]

Langston City was founded October 22, 1890, by Edwin P. McCabe. It was named for John Mercer Langston, a Black Congressman, who was born on December 14, 1829, on a plantation located three miles from Louisa County Courthouse, in Louisa County, Virginia. One writer characterized him as a man of medium size with a good figure and the air of a gentleman. From September 1890 to March 1891 he served in the Fifty-First Congress as a representative from Virginia.

In his paper, the Langston City Herald, McCabe published the following advertisement concerning Langston:

> Langston City is newly settled and is better adapted to the progress of the Negro race than any other city or place in the United States.
>
> Langston City restores to the Negro his rights and privileges as an American citizen and offers protection to themselves, families and home. Langston City is the Negro's refuge from lynching, burning at the stake and other lawlessness and turns the Negro's sorrow into happiness.[34]

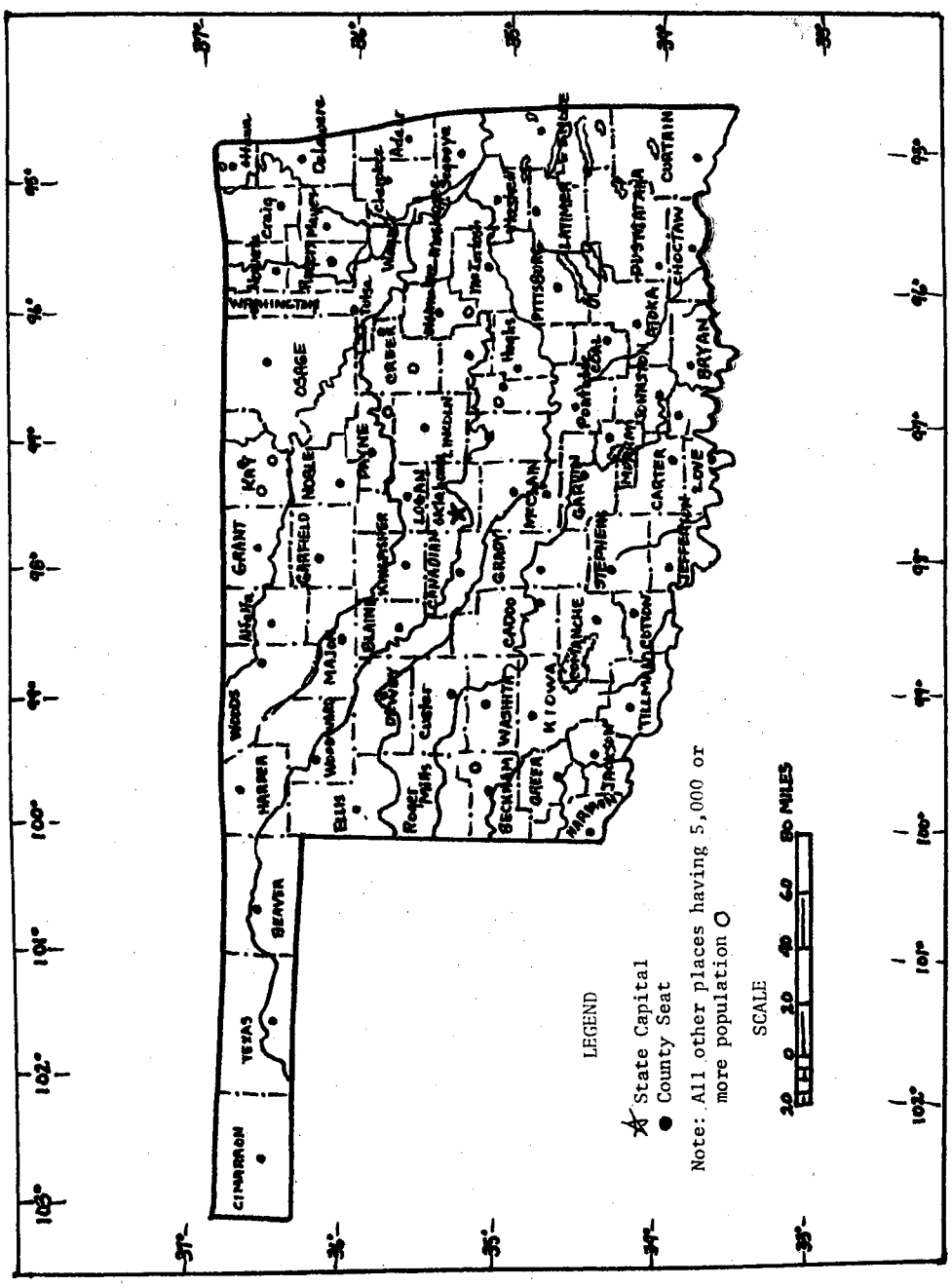
Two white homesteaders were the original owners of the land on which the twon was situated. The first was Mary Shea of Indiana, who entered a homestead of 160 acres on J-ne 19, 1889. The second was Austin Swan from Vermont. He homesteaded 160 acres on December 2, 1889. Charles H. Robbins, a white man, bought the Shea ans Swan land. He had it surveyed, and the town plot was filed with County Clerk H. H. Bockfinger. McCabe and James B. Robinson, a Black, obtained the land from Robbins. The first Black postmaster of the town was Samuel G. Garrett, who began his duties on June 25, 1891. He was followed by John P. Gates and Jerry I. Hazelwood. In 1907, the town's population was 274.[35]

Langston is about twelve miles northeast of Guthrie, the first capitol of Oklahoma, in Logan County. The fact that Langston University

was located there gave rise to McCabe's efforts to colonize the township. In this "New Eldorado," as McCabe called it, lots were sold to Blacks coming from Southern states, and before long, through misleading advertisement in McCabe's paper, the Langston Herald, the townsite had about 2,000 people in it, mostly living in tents. The town survived despite adversity and hardship.[36]

Lewisville was located in Haskell County eight miles east of Kinta on a tributary of Beaver Creek. The exact date of its founding is not known, but it was established, according to the memories of older citizens, several years after statehood. J. E. Thompson, a speculator of sorts during the early days when Black solidarity went hand-in-hand with Black enterprise, was said to have been responsible for beginning the town's boom. Upon arriving at the townsite Kemp Workman and Miss Lizzie Alexander reported that they were pleased with the town's progress and expected it to become a great Black town in the future. Armed with this speculation, the Clearview Patriach went so far as to report the possible building of a Baptist college at Lewisville.[37]

Edwin P. McCabe, tirelessly contemplating the success of a dual effort of township building for Blacks, expanded his financial and speculative activities, leading to the founding of the town of Liberty three miles north of Perry in Blaine County. The Santa Fe Railroad had been induced to build a depot on the site to bring Blacks in for settlement from Texas and Mississippi. As late as October of 1893, McCabe was still working on the scheme, hoping it would give impetus to the growth of Langston, the older Black town. The procession of postmasters at Lewisville included Nicholas D. Barrett, the first one, Eli Barclay, John P. Matthews, W. E. Cecil, Samuel B. Williams, and



Source: Edwin C. McReynolds and John W. Morris, Historical Atlas of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), Map Number 59.

Figure 11. Oklahoma Counties, U.S. Census Bureau, 1970

Joshua B. Deardorff. However, after January of 1905, all mail was rerouted through El Reno, signaling the beginning of the end for Liberty.[38]

Lima, located in what is believed to have been Sequoyah County on the line of the Rock Island Railroad (eight miles west of Wewoka), was composed entirely of Blacks. In 1919 it had a school and five teachers. The head of the school was reported to have been a Professor Jones, while the town was reported to have had several stores doing a good business.[39]

Lincoln City was located about seven miles east and two miles south of Dover in what was known as the Blackjack Hills (north of Kingfisher in Kingfisher County). It was organized in August of 1889 with a population of about three hundred Blacks, many of them from the Southern states. The major was R. Hamilton, who, with a council, managed its affairs in a wise and economical manner. Its first postmaster, John D. Young, assumed his duties on December 14, 1889, and was followed by Matthew A. Williams. After September 22, 1894, all packages were sent to Wanamaker, a nearby town; again this signaled the beginning of the end of a dream.[40]

Lincoln, located in Okfuskee County, changed its name in 1903 to Clearview. Described as a town of "Negroes" only, it was founded near present-day Okmulgee on the old Ozark and Cherokee Railroad. During the early years one of the town's ads read:

> Lincoln is the name of a new town on the Ozark and Cherokee Central Railroad twenty-five miles west of Okmulgee. It is designed exclusively for Negroes. Negroes will own the land and all the business including stores, gins, banks, mills and shops. They will have their own mayor, city council, and everything else. The price of lots is $18.[41]

The town had its own newspaper, the Lincoln Tribune which proclaimed that "Lincoln was the only Black town in the Indian Territory that attempted to support a newspaper. It speaks for a progressive community to have an organ to present its views to the public. That's us." The Abe Lincoln Trading Company, a private corporation, was organized at Lincoln on February 13, 1904. In 1907 its population was 618, including 174 whites, 437 Blacks and 7 Indians. It supported the Clearview Tribune to 1911 and the Clearview Patriarch to 1914. Neva B. Thompson and Noah H. Starks served as postmasters of the town between 1907 and 1909.

Located in the Coweta district a few miles north of Muskogee was the Black settlement of Marshalltown. This sprang up at what was commonly referred to as the "point" between the Arkansas and Verdigris Rivers. It reportedly was a community serving as a hideout for vicious Black criminals, such as horse and cattle thieves, who went about their way unmolested by the local law.[43] This town, unlike all the others, did not have a listing for a post office, causing speculation that as a town it may not have lasted long.

Overtown, very similar to Marshalltown as far as lack of information goes, was located in Cleveland County, according to the Cleveland County Leader.[44] It had about 500 persons in 1900; all of its citizens, city officials, and the Marshall were Black. It, too, soon faded and added its name to the growing list of disappearing Black towns in Oklahoma.

Red Bird was located in Wagoner County southeast of Coweta on the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroads. The first postmaster, Alexander White, was appointed in 1902. The town made progress, according to the

report of two visitors, H. E. Frith and R. C. Walter of New Port, Arkansas:

> We spent a day at Red Bird and found the location much better than it is advertised and will say that the Townsite company has not gone far enough in advertising that town.
>
> We can say this is the best town in this country that I have seen for the Negro who wants to make money and get a home that will be a credit to himself and family. People are moving to Red Bird every day and we will say if you want to get in on the ground floor, come to Red Bird now, and see for yourself. This is really the Negro's last chance. Our present home is at New Port, Arkansas, but in a few weeks our address will be Red Bird.[45]

In the year of statehood, 1907, the town had a population of 140 including 112 Blacks and 28 whites.[46] However, the population increased slightly in Red Bird and in Tullahassee (a town to be discussed later), after the 1921 race riots in Tulsa in which several people were killed and scores injured. According to one historian, this is what happened:

> In June, 1921, a Black man accused of assault on a white woman was jailed. A lynching was rumored. Armed Blacks went to the jail to protect the prisoner from the reported mob action. Whites objected to the protective action taken by the Blacks. Brawls between whites and Blacks spread quickly and soon turned into widespread rioting, looting, burning, and killing. Before the National Guard could restore order, a million dollars' worth of property had been destroyed and at least nine whites and twenty-one Blacks had been killed.[47]

Rentiesville, another Black town, was located in northern McIntosh County about seventeen miles southwest of Muskogee (on Dirty Creek west of Rattlesnake Mountain). It was founded in 1903.[48] A vivid historical account of the town was given by N. A. Robinson, a Baptist minister, in his address delivered at the Townsite Company Meeting, of which he was president, on October 6, 1904:

> Twelve months ago, this beautiful site was nothing more than a common grove, today it is a well-organized town. The townsite has been surveyed by the U.S. surveyor, and a blueprint plat prepared and the same is on

record with other towns.

The scheme of the organization of the town of Rentiesville was conceived by your humble servant on or about the first of October, 1903. I held a conference with I. J. Foster, W. D. Robinson, and William Rentie; all of whom concurred with me. The result was a call to meet at the new Paradise Baptist Church on the 20th day of October, 1903. During the meeting, a resolution was adopted which carried with it the organization of a townsite company. Your humble servant was elected president; Reverend David Green, vice-president; William Rentie, secretary; W. D. Robinson, treasurer.

THE WORK

We then began to cast about for a suitable place. Mr. and Mrs. William Rentie kindly consented to set apart 20 acres of land for the beginning of a town, and Mrs. Pheobe McIntosh twenty, making a total of forty acres.

MERCANTILE DEPARTMENT

After several conferences with Professor J. J. Hudson of Checotah, he finally consented to open business at this place. This was done about the first of February, 1904. We now have five business houses in the town, all of whom are doing a splendid business.

POST OFFICE AND RAILWAY

The post office in Rentiesville is a blessing to the town an- community. Postmaster J. J. Hudson is in the right place. We are very grateful to Superintendent J. W. Walton for making Rentiesville a flag stop. We now have the accommodation of passenger trains Nos. 1 and 2, and local freight trains Nos. 541 and 542 each day.

SCHOOL AND CHURCH

As we assemble in this splendid hall, it reminds us that education and high civilization is the watch word at Rentiesville. Our school is in splendid condition, with an enrollment of 81, and yet they are coming. The church is seeking to play its part as a religious organization, our aim is to do the bidding of the Master.

WATER FACILITIES

Good water is a blessing to any town or community. Rentiesville has that advantage. A good well of water can be obtained in most any part of the town.[49]

John J. Hudson served as postmaster from 1904 to 1914, followed by Buck C. Franklin, the father of Dr. John Hope Franklin, presently the Head of the History Department at the University of Chicago.

Summit was located in Muskogee County (about seven miles south of Muskogee) on the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad Line. Robert D. Minter was offered the postmaster's job there in August 1908. He declined, and August Robinson accepted a year later in May, 1909.[50] The post office is no longer at Summit; however, 125 residents still live there.

Recently Taft has become a center of interest because of Mrs. Lelia Foley, its Black woman mayor. It was located about two miles south of the Arkansas River and ten miles west of Muskogee. Originally named Twine, for one of its founders, the town's name was changed to Taft in 1908 in honor of President William H. Taft. It was organized in 1903, and in 1907, according to records, there were 225 Blacks, twenty-one whites, and four Indians living there. It was served by postmasters C. T. Rogers, 1906-1908 and Jefferson L. Carrier afterwards for an undertermined number of years. Taft still thrives in the heart of what once was probably the Black town capitol of America.[51]

One of the Chickasaw Nation's contributions to the parade of all-Black towns in Oklahoma was Tatums, located in the northern part of present-day Carter County. The town was named for Mary Tatums, an early settler who became the town's postmistress.[52] It likewise faltered under the strains of economic instability and loss of population.

Tullahassee was located in Wagoner County near the Verdigris River, and was considered the oldest known Black town in Indian Territory. Its existence can be determined as early as 1850, when the Creek Indians

built a school there. In December, 1880, the Tullahassee school was destroyed by fire and the chief called a convention to decide where to locate the new building. It was located in an Indian neighborhood and turned what remained of the old building over to the freedmen, who had lost their boarding school when the United States reoccupied the agency in 1879. Three Blacks, Henry C. Reed, judge of Muskogee District, Snow Sells, chief of Arkansas Town, and Sugar George were appointed as the trustees of the colored school which opened in 1883. Wilson R. Redus was the first postmaster of the town in 1905.[53]

Vernon was located in McIntosh County about ten miles southeast of Dustin, an all-white town. It contained several Black businesses and was at the time, located near a small rural community called Hanna.[54] Vernon was started about 1911 on the Tankard Ranch in what is now McIntosh County. Thomas Haynes, a Black from Texas, was instrumental in securing the land for the town site and organizing the pilgrimage to the town. The town was named for Bishop W. T. Vernon of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. How the land was secured has not been determined; however, old timers there said a white man deeded the land to Tom Haynes who, in turn, sold it to the settlers.[55]

The first farm of eighty acres near Vernon was purchased by Edward Woodard. He later served as the town's first and only president in an office that was short-lived. A grocery store was started in 1911. Mrs. Louise Wesley established the first school and church. The church was conducted under an old elm tree while the school was held in her home. Five years later, in 1917, the New Hope Baptist Church building was erected an- a school building was built partly from the fund set up by Julius Rosenwald of Sears and Roebuck fame.[56] The population of the

town increased until it reached its zenith in the early twenties. At its height it had ten stores, two blacksmith shops, a drug store, a restaurant, a cannery, and a barber shop.[57]

All too soon Vernon began to decline. During the post-World War I years, the price of cotton fell so low that it was hardly worth producing. Close on the heels of the price decline, the Mexican bool weevil and the army worm made their presence known in the cotton fields. These twin enemies seriously curtailed cotton production; however, for a few years after the recovery of the price of cotton, the town prospered. The great depression of the thirties signaled the demise of the community. As stores employed only their owners, young people left for the cities to enter the servant class of laborers.[58] L. T. Woodard and a group of men organized the Midwest Chicken Hatchery Company, but it was short lived because the great depression had made most agricultural enterprises unprofitable. One of the most picturesque citizens of Vernon was Robert Butts and his wife Ruth. Butts was a cattle rancher and politician. He was able to secure the vote for the Vernon citizens by getting the white registrar intoxicated. By the time the registrar sobered, Butts had registered all of the Black citizens.[59]

Besides the unfavorable economic situation in which Vernon found itself, there were other forces from the very start which operated against its growth. Whites who opposed the establishment of the town sought to destroy it. The site had to be guarded with arms against marauding bands of whites at all times, as the land became harder and more difficult to obtain from the controlling whites. The local school board, which also was controlled by whites, did not permit a high school in Vernon until about 1955, when there remained only a small

number of young people of appropriate age. The town had never attracted people with college or high school training. Without a high school in the community, it was impossible to develop trained people. The young people who left the community to be educated never returned, nor did most of those who left to fight in World War II. At one time, there had been about 150 families in and around Vernon. There now remain about 100--the remnants of some of those pioneering families.[60]

In the fall of 1900, a colony of 300 Blacks purchased about 1,000 acres of land near Wellston in Lincoln County and divided it into cotton patches. It was located near the lines of Logan and Oklahoma Counties in what is commonly referred to as scrub oak country. According to Arthur L. Tolson, the three hundred Blacks who came from Grimes County, Texas, had purchased the land, and one hundred and fifty came ahead to build homes and begin farming operations with the other members to come later.[61] However, word of the settlement spread, and the Wellston News, a white newspaper, printed a story denying the existence of the colony to discourage other Blacks from coming.[62]

Wild Cat, later called Grayson, located in McIntosh County, was described in 1905 as "a coming town." One account stated that Blacks who located there were progressive people, and with Reverend Tyson and others they were building a prosperous and substantial community. The Muskogee Cimeter declared in 1905 that Wild Cat had a population of about 1,000. It also reported that property owners there were not trading for lots in any proposed new towns. Two years later, its population was down to 375, including one Indian and 374 Blacks. It was within two miles of a railroad station, the land was productive, and coal and other minerals reportedly had been found in abundance.[63] The

decline, however, was eniment because the very nature of the economic situation and its lack of stability along with depopulation.

Wybark was located about ten miles north of Muskogee at the junction of the Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma Railway lines in Muskogee County. William Lamb is reported to have been the first postmaster in 1890. According to a later issue of the Daily Oklahoman, a white man was not allowed to stop there after sunset, as Blacks ran the town.[64]

There were approximately 19 all-Black towns in existence as late as 1952--one in the former Oklahoma territory and eighteen in the former Indian Territory. In Oklahoma territory Langston still existed with a population of 685 Blacks. In Indian Territory were Tullahassee with 209 persons, Gibson Station (125), Wybark (281), Clearview (500), Rentiesville (156), Red Bird (411), Boley (816), Taft (541), Bailey (25), Tatums (150), Wild Cat (147), Foreman (40), Chase (150), Summit (260), Lewisville (50), Bookertee (100), Lima (99), and Vernon (600).[65]

By 1962, four of the Black towns, Wybark, Bailey, Foreman, and Bookertee, no longer existed. The surviving fifteen all-Black towns had suffered a servere loss of population during the intervening years. Langston's population was only 486 (population excludes 650 outside corporate limits); Tullahassee (199), Gibson Station (100), Clearview (500), Rentiesville (122), Red Bird (310), Boley (573), Taft (386), Tatums (300), Grayson (142), Chase (50), Summit (200), Lewisville (80), Lima (87) (corporate name for New Lima), and Vernon (150).[66]

Eight years later, according to the advance report of the 1970 Census of Population, only eight of the original twenty-eight former all-Black towns remained in existence.[67] These were Langston (486),

Rentiesville Town (96), Taft Town (525), Boley Town (514), Grayson Town (143), Lima Town (238), Red Bird Town (230), and Tullahassee Town (183). The other seven Black towns which became non-existent during these years were Gibson Station, Clearview, Tatums, Chase, Summit, Lewisville, and Vernon.[68] This complete data is listed in Tables VIII, IX, X, and XI (pp. 107-114).

Even though the latter seven towns were not shown on the census tracts, some still retained post offices, a few people, and were included in a list of cities and towns in Oklahoma not listed in the 1970 Census of Population obtained from the Oklahoma Governor's office. These were Gibson Station (0), Bailey (0), Clearview (300), Chase (0), Liberty (0), Lewisville (50), Summit (125), Tatums (150), and Vernon (100), Wild Cat (0), and Wybark (40).[69]

In a society which had become industrialized and urbanized, these all-Black towns remained predominantly rural farming communities. Although the majority of them were established as a result of racial discrimination, they eventually offered no permanent solution to the Black question; rather, they served as temporary expedients for relieving racial tensions in a biracial society during the territorial era. However, as Oliver C. Cox has emphasized:

> It seems possible, therefore, to show remarkable intuition in sensing the behavioral requirements for achieving the individual success...without grasping the dominant purposes of the social system and the ethos seen to be nationalism and its variants, racial antagonism and prejudice. At some time or other in the rise of capitalism, the establishment of all these societal values provoked clashes with established social norms. The heart of the capitalist ethos appears to be the climate of speculativeness in which the individula operates: it is in the involvements of this trait...that the fabulous magic of capitalism lies.[70]

Some of these towns faintly survive today as a living testimony of some

of Black dreams of yesterday. The following Table gives census figures that show the rise and decline of population trends during the decades from 1910-1970. There was, however, a territorial census in 1907, when the Oklahoma territory became a state, but many of the all-Black towns were not incorporated; therefore, they were not a part of the census. In many cases, some of the twenty-eight all-Black towns were missing because they were considered a part of the nearest larger white or biracial town in the census figure. For those towns not shown in the census materials, supplementary data taken from readings, manuscripts of Dr. Arthus L. Tolson, and personal narratives will be included to complete the study.

For a more detailed explanation of these all-Black towns, their origins, demise, and makeup, observe the following symbols and notes of interest.

Explanation of Symbols Used in Table VII

1. Ø — This town was listed in the census data 1907-1970.
2. X — This town was listed in the special listing of Oklahoma towns and cities not in the census, by Rand McNally and Co. Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide of 1972.
3. NA — The town was not listed in 1907-1970 census material and possibly could or could not have been in the special listing. However, their existence was revealed through histories, interviews, or visitation.
4. NE — This town no longer exist on either the census data or special listing of towns and cities.
5. BA — Black settlement is part of a larger local white or biracial area or town.
6. + — This town or county has unusual characteristics, history or background. For possible explanation refer to Table III.

TABLE VII

CENSUS FIGURES BY DECADES

TOWNS	1907	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	Symbols
Arkansas Colored Creek Nation	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	NE, NA, 6+, BA
Bailey Grady County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	X, BA, NE, NA, 6+
Boley Okfuskee County	824	1334	1154	874	942	646	573	514	⊗, 6+
Bookertee Okfuskee County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	NA, NE, BA, 6+
Canadian Colored Creek Nation	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	NA, NE, BA, 6+
Chase Muskogee County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	X, NA, NE, BA, 6+
Ferguson Blaine County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-0-	NA, NE, BA, 6+
Foreman Sequoyah County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-0-	X, NE, BA, X, 6+
Gibson Station Wagoner County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	125	NE, BA, 6+, X, NA
Langston Logan County	274	339	259	351	514	685	417	486	⊗, 6+
Lewisville Haskell County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-0-	NA, NE, BA, 6+
Liberty Blaine County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	40	X, NA, BA, 6+, NE
Lima (Later named Linn) Seminole County	--	--	146	239	271	99	90	238	⊗, X, 6+, NE, BA
Lincoln City Kingfisher	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	NA, BA, NE, 6+
Lincoln (Later named Clearview) Okfuskee County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	300	6+, X, BA, NE
Marshall Town Logan County	364	480	434	695	382	386	363	420	6+
Northfork Colored Creek Nation	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	NE, BA, NA, 6+
Overton Cleveland County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	NA, 6+, BA, NE
Red Bird Wagoner	--	--	336	218	393	411	310	230	⊗, 6+
Rentiesville McIntosh County	--	411	255	154	180	156	122	96	⊗, 6+
Summit Muskogee County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	X, NA, 6+, BA, NE
Taft Muskogee County	250	352	553	690	772	541	386	525	⊗, 6+
Tatums Carter County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	X, NA, NE, BA, 6+
Tullahassee Wagoner County	--	--	189	164	219	209	199	183	⊗, 6+
Vernon McIntosh County	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	100	X, BA, 6+, NE, NA
Wellston Colony Lincoln County	669	590	650	632	607	643	630	788	NA, BA, 6+, ⊗, NE
Wildcat (Later named Grayson) McIntosh-Okmulgee Counties	--	--	298	134	188	147	142	142	⊗, 6+, X
Wybark Muskogee County	--	--	--	--	--	--	40	40	X, 6+, NA, NE, BA

Taken from U.S. Censuses of 1907-1970

TABLE VIII

CENSUS FOR 1907-1920

Blaine County

Canton township organized from part of Cantonment township, and Kennedy township from part of Dixon township, since 1910.

Carter County

Healdton town and Wilson city incorporated from part of Hewitt township since 1910.

Grady County

Part of Caddo County (Dutton, Prairie Valley, and Washington townships) annexed in 1911. Totals for 1910 and 1907 include population (975 and 743, respectively) of Brushy township, taken to form Middleberg and Tabler townships since 1910. Alex town incorporated from part of Alex township since 1910. Townships organized since 1910: Lucile from part of Alex; Pocasset from part of Amber; Starr from part of Cross; Vincent from part of Waldron. Part of Chickasha township annexed to Chickasha city, and part of Shirley township annexed to Dutton township, since 1910.

Haskell County

Keota town incorporated from part of Sans Bois township, and Kinta town from part of Beaver township, since 1910.

Kingfisher County

No data

Lincoln County

Totals for 1910 and 1907 include population (4,146 and 4,341, respectively) of Creek township, taken to form North Creek and South Creek townships, and of Keokuk township, taken to form North Keokuk and South Keokuk township, since 1910. Kendrick town incorporated from part of North Fox township since 1910.

Logan County

Name of Le Bron township changed from Bismarck since 1910. Population of Oak View township in 1910 includes population (220) of Lovell town, reverted to Oak View township since 1910.

McIntosh County

Part of Hughes County (Hanna township) annexed to McIntosh County in 1915. Totals for 1910 and 1907 include population (718 and 719, respectively) of Hoffman and Wild Cat towns, annexed to Okmulgee County in 1918. Hanna town incorporated from part of Hanna township, and Hitchita town from part of Turner township, since 1910.

TABLE VIII (Continued)

Muskogee County

Council Hill town incorporated from part of Brown township, and Warner town from part of Vann township, since 1910.

Okfuskee County

Total for 1910 includes population (1,624) of Boley township, organized from part of Paden township between 1907 and 1910 and annexed to Paden township since 1910. Hickory Ridge township organized from part of Bearden township, and Lester township from part of Morse township, since 1910.

Okmulgee County

Part of McIntosh County (Hoffman and Wild Cat towns) annexed to Okmulgee County in 1918. Dewar and Kusa cities incorporated from parts of Henry township, and Morris city from part of Morris township, since 1910.

Seminole County

Lima town incorporated from part of Brown township since 1910.

Wagoner County

Totals for 1910 and 1907 include population (388 and 334, respectively) of Clarksville town, disincorporated since 1910; total for 1907 also includes population (4,657) of township 2, taken to form Adams Creek, Coweta, Lone Star, and Shahan townships between 1907 and 1910. Coal Creek township organized from part of Lone Star township. Red Bird town incorporated from part of Gatesville township, and Tullahassee town incorporated from part of Tullahassee township, since 1910.

Sequoyah County

Parts of McKey and Marble townships annexed to Vian township, and part of Vian township annexed to Vian town, since 1910.

Cleveland County

No data

TABLE IX

CENSUS FOR 1930-1950

Blaine County

Part of Alfalfa township annexed to Geary city in 1949. Part of Cimarron township annexed to Okeene town in 1942.

Carter County

Parts of Morgan township annexed to Ardmore city in 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949 and 1950. Part of Doyle township annexed to Cyril town in 1945.

Grady County

Parts of Chickasha township annexed to Chickasha city in 1941 and 1943.

Haskell County

No data

Kingfisher County

Part of Kingfisher township annexed to Kingfisher city in 1946. Part of Harrison township annexed to Okarche town in 1947.

Lincoln County

Parts of Chandler township annexed to Chandler city in 1948. Parts of North Keokuk township annexed to Stroud city in 1950.

Logan County

Parts of Guthrie township annexed to Guthrie city in 1950.

McIntosh County

No data

Muskogee County

Porter township, coextensive with Muskogee city, annexed parts of Agency township in 1949 and 1950 and parts of Harris township in 1942, 1944, 1947, 1949, and 1950.

Okfuskee County

Boley town returned in 1940 as a city. Part of Okemah township annexed to Okemah city in 1947.

Okmulgee County

Parts of Hamilton township annexed to Okmulgee city in 1950. Parts of Henry township annexed to Henryetta city in 1949; Kusa city disincorporated and annexed to Henry township since 1940. Parts of Severs township annexed to Okmulgee city in 1946 and 1950; parts of Okmulgee city annexed to Severs township in 1940.

TABLE IX (Continued)

Seminole County	Parts of Brown township annexed to Wewoka city in 1947 and 1949; parts of Wewoka city annexed to Brown township in 1944. Parts of Econtuchka township annexed to Seminole city in 1946, 1947, 1948, and 1949. Parts of Konawa township annexed to Konawa town in 1940 and 1950.
Wagoner County	No data
Sequoyah County	No data
Cleveland County	Parts of Liberty township annexed to Norman city in 1948 and 1949. Part of Noble township annexed to Norman city in 1944. Parts of Norman township annexed to Norman city in 1940, 1944, 1946, 1948, 1949, and 1950.

TABLE X

CENSUS FOR 1950-1960

Blaine County

Part of Cimarron township annexed to Okeene town. Part of Watonga township annexed to Watonga city. Part of Long township annexed to Hydro town. Part of Alfalfa township annexed to Geary city.

Carter County

Springer town not returned separately in 1950. Parts of Morgan township annexed to Ardmore city. Parts of Hewitt township annexed to Healdton town.

Grady County

Part of Tuttle township annexed to Tuttle town. Part of Union township annexed to Minco town. Part of Chickasha township annexed to Chickasha city and part of Chickasha city detached an area annexed to Chickasha township. Part of Rush Springs township annexed to Rush Springs town.

Haskell County

Part of Center township annexed to Stigler city.

Kingfisher County

Part of Kingfisher township annexed to Kingfisher city.

Lincoln County

Part of Wellston township annexed to Wellston town. Part of Chandler township annexed to Chandler city. Part of South Creek township annexed to Prague city. Part of South Choctaw township annexed to Meeter town.

Logan County

Marshall town returned as New Marshall town in 1950. Part of Crescent township annexed to Crescent city. Part of Guthrie township annexed to Guthrie city and part of Guthrie city detached an area annexed to Guthrie township. Crescent town changed to city since 1950.

McIntosh County

Part of Checotah township annexed to Checotah city.

Muskogee County

Parts of Harris, Agency, and Ogle townships annexed to Porter township coextensive with Muskogee city. Part of Moore township annexed to Haskell town. Part of Vann township annexed to Warner town.

Okfuskee County

Part of Okemah township annexed to Okemah city.

TABLE X (Continued)

Okmulgee County	Part of Severs township annexed to Okmulgee city and part of Okmulgee city detached an area annexed to Hamilton and Severs townships. Part of Henry township annexed to Henryetta city.
Seminole County	Parts of Econtuchka and Wolf townships annexed to Seminole city and part of Seminole city detached an area annexed to Econtuchka township. Part of Lincoln and Brown townships annexed to Wewoka city and part of Wewoka city detached an area annexed to Brown township. Part of Konawa township annexed to Konawa town.
Wagoner County	Part of Blue Mound township annexed to Wagoner city. Part of Coweta township annexed to Coweta town.
Sequoyah County	Part of Sallisaw township annexed to Sallisaw city. Cans town incorporated from part of Cans township. Part of Muldrow township annexed to Muldrow town.
Cleveland County	Parts of Moore township annexed to Oklahoma City and Moore town. Parts of Taylor and Case townships annexed to Oklahoma City. Parts of Norman, Liberty, and Noble townships annexed to Norman city.

TABLE XI

CENSUS FOR 1960-1970

Blaine County

Annexations were made by Okeene and Canton towns and Watonga city. Annexations were made by and detachments were made from Geary city.

Carter County

Annexation was made by an- detachment was made from Ardmore city. Ratliff city, Dickson and Lone Grove towns incorporated since 1960.

Grady County

Annexations were made by Minco, Tuttle, and Rush Springs towns, and Chickasha city.

Haskell County

Annexations were made by Stigler city and Tamaha town. Kinta town changed to city since 1960.

Kingfisher County

Annexations were made by Kingfisher and Hennessey cities and Okarche town.

Lincoln County

Annexations were made by Carney and Wellston towns and Stroud, Chandler and Prague cities. Warwick town incorporated since 1960.

Logan County

Annexations were made by Crescent and Guthrie cities and Orlando town. Navina and Seward disincorporated since 1960.

McIntosh County

Annexation was made by Checotah city.

Muskogee County

Annexations were made by Muskogee city and Haskell and Fort Gibson towns.

Okfuskee County

Annexations were made by Boley town and Okemah and Weleetka cities.

Okmulgee County

Annexations were made by Henryetta, Okmulgee, and Dewar cities and Grayson town. Name of Wild Cat town changed to Grayson since 1960.

Seminole County

Lima town returned as Linn in 1960. Annexations were made by Cromwell town, and Seminole and Wewoka cities. Part of Seminole city detached.

TABLE XI (Continued)

Wagoner County

New Tulsa and Fair Oaks towns incorporated since 1960. Annexation was made by Coweta town.

Sequoyah County

Annexations were made by Roland, Gore, Vian and Muldrow towns, and Sallisaw city.

Cleveland County

Annexations were made by Lexington and Noble towns, and Norman and Oklahoma City cities. Hall Park town incorporated since 1960. Moore town changed to city since 1960. Detachment was made from Oklahoma City city.

The changes in many of these all-Black towns especially since 1950 have resulted in a changing of their status, including the closing of post offices, but some precariously survived. There is growing concern and awareness that the remaining towns will disappear because of the strains of anemic economics, integration, and loss of employment. In short, the present and future of all-Black Oklahoma towns will be subjected to a complex set of variables that make survival uncertain, and moreover make the survivor's behavior difficult to predict.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Boley Progress (May 11, 1905).

[2]Kate M. Teall, Black History in Oklahoma, A Resource Book (Oklahoma City: 1971), pp. 167-168.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., pp. 167-168.

[8]Luther P. Jackson, Jr., "Shaped by a Dream, A Town Called Boley," Life Magazine, Educational Report (November 29, 1968), pp. 14-16.

[9]Joseph Taylor, "The Rise and Decline of a Utopian Community, Boley, Oklahoma," Negro History Bulletin (March, 1940), pp. 90-93.

[10]Luther P. Jackson, Jr., "Shaped by a Dream, A Town Called Boley," Life Magazine, Educational Report (November 29, 1968), pp. 14-16.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Loren Katz, The Black West, Booker T. Washington, "Boley A Negro Town in the West (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.), pp. 313-317.

[13]William E. Bittle, Gilbert L. Geis, "Racial Self-Fulfillment and the Rise of an All-Negro Community in Oklahoma," Phylon, Vol. 18 (1957), pp. 247-260.

[14]Ibid.,

[15]Luther P. Jackson, Jr., "Shaped by a Dream, A Town Called Boley," Life Magazine, Educational Report (November 29, 1968) pp. 14-16.

[16]Ibid.

[17]William E. Bittle, Gilbert L. Geis, "Racial Self-Fulfillment and the Rise of an All-Negro Community in Oklahoma," Phylon, Vol. 18 (1957), pp. 247-260.

[18]Mozell C. Hill, "A Sociological Study of an All-Negro Community" (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Kansas, Lawrence, 1937).

[19]Ibid.

[20]Franklin Frazier found that color is a significant factor in the spatial pattern of Negroes in Chicago. The Negro Family in Chicago (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932), Chap. 6. He also brings out that color differences among members of the same family create tensions and conflict. See "Certain Aspects of Conflict in the Negro Family," Social Forces (October, 1931), pp. 76-84. The same author in another publication takes the position that skin color cannot be considered in isolation, but that when it is considered along with social experiences of the individual, attitudes toward skin color grow out of the reactions of others in the community. Negro Youth at the Crossways (Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1942). Similar points of view are substantiated by: W. Lloyd Warner, who describes a southern community as a two-caste system with a class system in each, "Formal Education and the Social Structure," Journal of Educational Sociology (May, 1936), pp. 524-531; E. B. Reuter, Race Mixture (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1931); Chas. Johnson, Growing up in the Black Belt (Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1942); Allison Davis, Donald Young, Ira D. Reid, Robert Sutherland, and others.

[21]Ibid.

[22]See especially Mozell C. Hill, "A Sociological Study of an All-Negro Community" (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Kansas, Lawrence, 1937) pp. 87-93.

> The best evidence of the solidarity, loyalty, and mutual understanding by the citizens of Boley can be seen in their cooperation during the recent bank raid. The Farmers and Merchants Bank of Boley was raided by three bandits eighteen months ago. (The exact date not known by writer.) The bandits are believed to have belonged to the "Pretty Boy Floyd" gang of outlaws in the State of Oklahoma. These gangsters entered the town from U. S. Highway 266 and stopped in front of the bank, located on Pecan Street. They entered the bank with pistols and

sawed-off shotguns. They covered everyone in the bank, including the president of the bank, except a cashier in in the bank, who was working in the vault. The president gave the alarms, which were located in several places of business on Pecan Street. In the meantime, the alarms were heard by one of the gangsters who said he would kill the president for turning on the alarm. This gangster was shot fatally by the cashier working in the vault and before he fell to the floor dead, he emptied his pistol in the president of the bank, wounding him fatally. The other two bandits started from the bank with the money, but were met by a volley of bullets from the guns of citizens of Boley, who had come to the rescue of the bank. One of these bandits was wounded fatally, and the other severly. He is now a "life-termer" in the state penal institution.

After the bank raid, several letters in the form of threats were sent to certain citizens of Boley, saying that Pretty Boy Floyd's gang would be in Boley and shoot up the town. Individual threats from all sections of the South were received, some announcing the death of certain citizens of Boley on certain days. This of course caused much excitement. Here all personal animosities and factions were forgotten. There was a mutual understanding and everyone had the welfare of the group in mind. Men guarded the homes of certain citizens for weeks. Highways entering Boley were guarded and cars stopped whenever suspicion was aroused. This was a crisis which aroused a reaction of social solidarity among the people in the community. This same social solidarity can be seen in less significant crises. Deaths and bereavements, marriages, sickness, economic distress, etc., are the types of crisis which show that social solidarity is a reality in Boley.

[23]Monroe N. Work lists 30 towns and 13 settlements in America founded by Negroes. In Oklahoma there was a town called Mantu with a population of 100, whose existence the writer was not able to substantiate. Monroe N. Work, Negro Year Book, 1912 (Tuskegee, Alabama: Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, 1912), pp. 165-166. According to the Pittsburgh Courier (February 10, 1962), "As late as 1919, there were over 60 towns and communities in America settled and governed by Negroes."

[24]Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans, A History, 1841-1972 (New Orleans, Louisiana: Edwards Printing Co.), p. 97.

[25]Ibid., p. 102.

[26]Kate M. Teall, Black History in Oklahoma, A Resource Book (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma City Public Schools, Title III, ESEA), pp. 165-169.

[27]Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans, A History, 1841-1972 (New Orleans, Louisiana: Edwards Printing Co.), p. 103

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid., pp. 96-103.

[30]Ibid., pp. 102-103.

[31]Ibid., pp. 97.

[32]Ibid., pp. 94-95.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Arthur L. Tolson, "A History of Langston Oklahoma, 1890-1950" (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, 1953).

[35]Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans, A History 1841-1972 (New Orleans, Louisiana: Edwards Printing Co.), p. 103.

[36]Ibid., p. 95.

[37]Ibid., pp. 103-104.

[38]Ibid., p. 98

[39]Ibid., pp. 103-104.

[40]Ibid., p. 98.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid., p. 100.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid., pp. 100-101.

[47]Bryan Fulks, Black Struggle: A History of the Negro in America (New York: Dell Publishing Co.), p. 223.

[48]Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans, A History 1841-1972 (New Orleans, Louisiana: Edwards Printing Co.), pp. 98-100.

[49]Ibid., pp. 98-103.

[50]Ibid., p. 103

[51]Ibid., pp. 102-103.

[52]Ibid., p. 97.

[53]Ibid., p. 103.

[54]Ibid.

[55]James E. Woodward, "Vernon: An All-Negro Town in Southeastern Oklahoma," Negro History Bulletin, Vol. XXVII (1963-65), pp. 115-116.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Ibid.

[60]Ibid.

[61]Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans, A History 1841-1972 (New Orleans, Louisiana: Edwards Printing Co.), p. 96.

[62]Ibid., p. 102.

[63]Ibid., p. 97.

[64]Ibid., p. 100.

[65]Ibid., p. 101.

[66]Ibid., pp. 97-104.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Ibid.

[69]Supplementary List of Cities and Towns not Listed in the 1970 Oklahoma Census, 1972 Rand McNally and Company, Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide.

[70]Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans, A History 1841-1972 (New Orleans, Louisiana: Edwards Printing Co.), p. 105.

CHAPTER VI

DEVELOPMENT AND DECAY OF UTOPIAN DREAMS: INFLUENCING FACTORS

Census data on the all-Black towns, communities, and societies of Oklahoma was and still is difficult to locate. Records have been lost, there was inaccurate census taking among freedmen, and there was little interest in Black populations by white census takers.

To formulate intelligent plans for group action or to keep up with the progress being made by other groups requires accurate demographic information about the past and present. The twenty-eight all-Black towns of Oklahoma were no exception. Moreover, this "stock taking" indicates the shortcomings of a population group; and it directs attention toward those problems that must be solved to provide sustaining energy to the town while allowing a comparison with general demographic trends. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to present some of the available statistical and census data dealing with the demographic trends in the all-Black towns of Oklahoma from territorial days to 1970. Although the territory was settled roughly in 1880, complete censuses of all of the all-Black towns, as stated previously, is impossible to find for the years prior to 1910 because few records were kept, and because of poor census techniques.

An analysis of the overall racial composition of Oklahoma population therefore is necessary. Although the state of Oklahoma has been inhabited by persons from many racial and cultural groups, the popula-

tion has been largely tri-racial (whites, Blacks and Indians) since its first inclusion in census reports (Table XII). However, there is a tendency for it to become more biracial in nature. This tendency is indicated by the fact that the Indian population decreased from twenty-four per cent of the total population in 1890 to forty-five per cent of the same in 1910. Still, the percentages for native-whites have increased steadily, while those figures for Blacks have remained constant. From the standpoint of numbers, the native-whites and Blacks increased steadily to 1910, after which there were small decreases for both. The number of Indians has varied from decade to decade, the number being slightly smaller in 1910 than it was in 1890.

Table XII also reveals that the largest increases in the Black population came during the pre-statehood period or immediately after statehood (1907). The trend, however, for the Black population seems to be similar to the trend for the total population since the first census report. This is reflected in the fact that the percentages of Blacks in the total population have changed little since 1890. Furthermore, this table suggests that in the future there will be little change in the proportion of Blacks to the total population.[1]

The census of 1890 reported 21,609 Blacks in the entire area now comprising the state of Oklahoma. Of this number, 18,636 were located in the Indian Territory. By 1900 the number of Blacks in the state had increased to 55,684, of which number approximately two-thirds, 33,965, were living within the Indian Territory. (See Figures 12 and 13).

According to census figures, approximately eleven per cent of the 190,192 farms in Oklahoma in the years 1890 to 1910 were operated by Blacks.[2] For the entire state there was at that date an average of only one Black farm operator for each 200,149 acres of the total land

area. The Negro was not as insignificant in the agricultural structure of the state as this figure would indicate, however, for between 1890 and 1910 Blacks were found in appreciable numbers in less than one half of the state. Thirty of the 77 counties reported less than 100 Black farm operators; twenve of these counties reported less than ten.

Figure 13 shows conclusively that the area inhabited by Blacks from 1890 to 1910 conformed closely to the territory assigned to the Five Civilized Tribes as of 1860. Within the boundaries of the original Indian Territory, varying degrees of concentration were obvious. The area of highest concentration was comprised of the five counties--Wagoner, Muskogee, Okmulgee, Okfuskee, and McIntosh--the area of most of the all-Black towns. Within this group of counties, Blacks constituted from 32.2 per cent to 47.4 per cent, of the total number of farm operators; this distribution ranged from 833 in Okmulgee County to 1,286 in Wagoner County. Blacks were only slightly less numerous in the group of counties lying east and north of the five mentioned.[3]

Why were Blacks situated exclusively in the eastern one half of the state and what general factors influenced their concentration in certain points? The answer suggested in Figure 25, which geographically portrays the extent to which association with the Five Civilized Indian Tribes influenced the general location of Black farmers during 1890 in Oklahoma.[4] However, the degree to which the general location of the Black farmers through 1910 conformed to the land area originally occupied by the Five Civilized Tribes was striking as well as significant. Factors influencing the location of Blacks in other areas vary according to the degree of land area occupied within the

TABLE XII

RACIAL COMPOSITION OF OKLAHOMA POPULATION BY NUMBER AND PER CENT FOR CENSUS YEARS: 1890-1910

Racial Group	1910	1900	1890
	NUMBER OF PERSONS		
Native White	1,404,447	649,814	172,554
Foreign-born White	40,084	20,390	(1)
Black	137,612	55,684	21,609
Indian	74,825	64,445	64,456
Chinese	139	58	25
Japanese	48	-0-	-0-
All Others	-0-	-0-	-0-
Total	1,657,155	790,391	258,657
	PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION		
Native White	84.8	81.7	66.7
Foreign-born White	2.4	3.1	(1)
Black	8.3	7.0	8.4
Indian	4.5	8.2	24.9
Chinese	(2)	(2)	(2)
Japanese	(2)	(2)	(2)
All Others	(2)	(2)	(2)
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0 [2]

(1) Included with native white
(2) Smaller than 0.1 percent

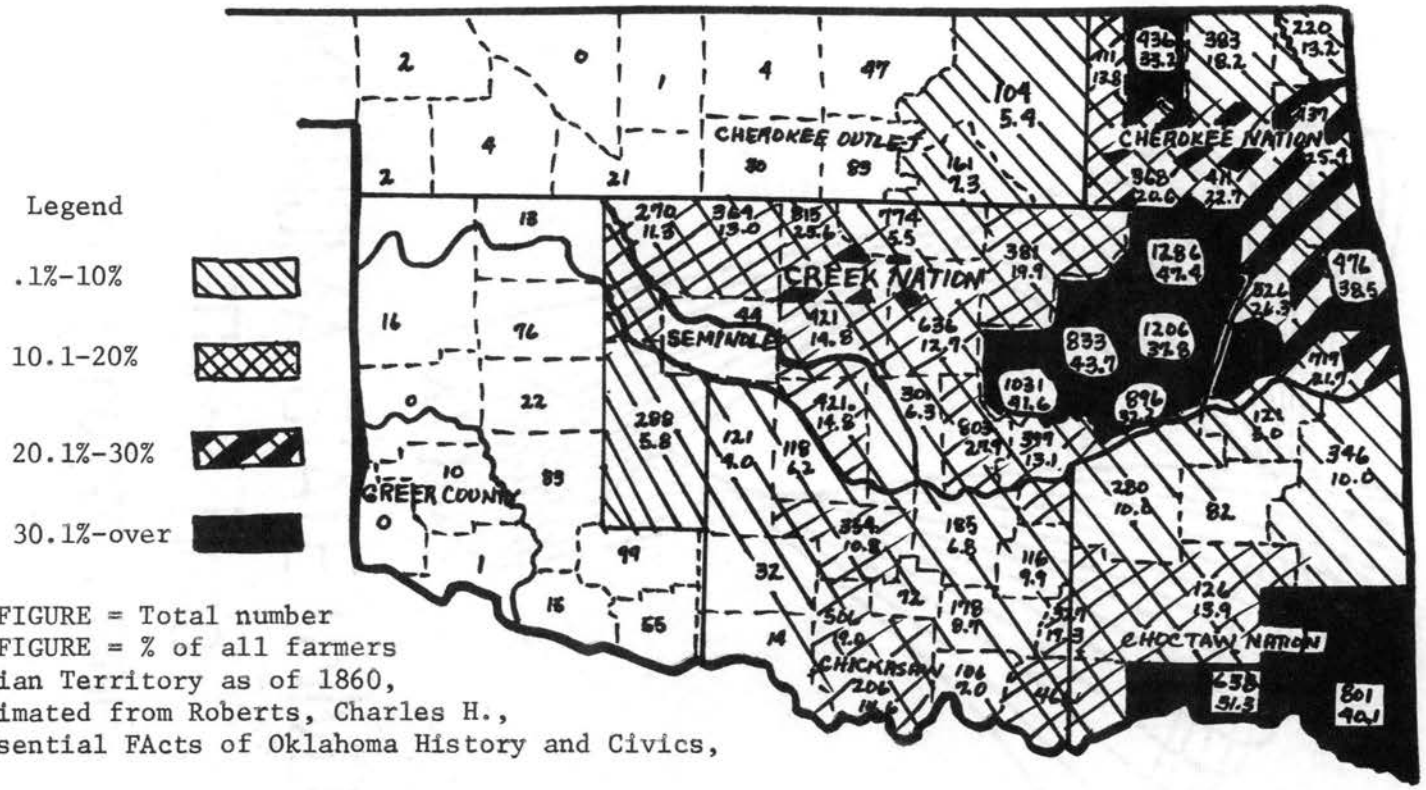
The 1910 census enumeration came just three years after Oklahoma became a state. Numbers of Blacks by counties are not available for a date earlier than 1910.

boundaries of the original territory. Some of these factors are suggested by Figure 13.

A comparison of Figures 12 and 13 reveals that Black farm operators have remained in the areas of original concentration. These areas reflect larger numbers and higher proportions of Black farmers after 1910 than in 1890-1910. Areas bordering the points of highest concentration reflect a slight decline in the proportion of Blacks. Thus, there was a noticeable tendency for Blacks to converge at the concentration points.[5]

The presence of all-Black communities in each of the counties discussed here resulted in a natural high concentration of Black farms. Two striking examples were Taft and Boley. The Taft community bordering the Arkansas River in the north central part of Muskogee County was inhabited exclusively by Black families. Farms in this community constituted a high percentage of all-Black-operated farms in the county. A majority of the farms studied in Okfuskee County were situated in, near, or around Boley, an all-Black town in the northwestern part of the county.[6]

The social and cultural characteristics of the two communities were similar to the other all-Black communities in Oklahoma. The Black farm families and residents of Taft and Boley had access to good schools, churches, clubs, and other group activities found in the average rural community. If the areas studied here were unique in any respect, it was in the presence of the exclusively Black towns. Otherwise, conditions in these areas were similar to those found in any county of the state where Black farmers were located in appreciable numbers.



UPPER FIGURE = Total number
LOWER FIGURE = % of all farmers
44 Indian Territory as of 1860,
approximated from Roberts, Charles H.,
The Essential FActs of Oklahoma History and Civics,
p. 40.

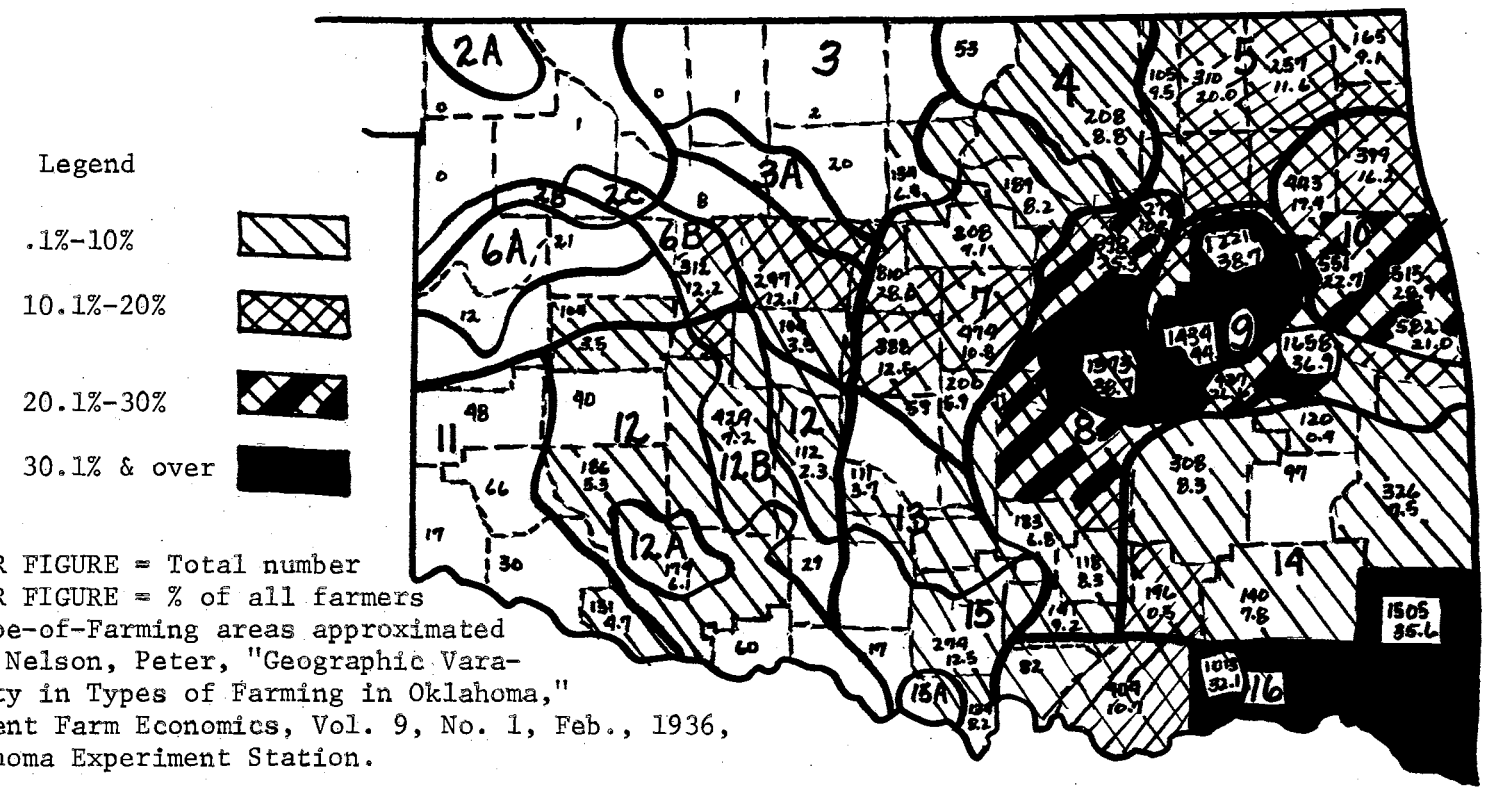
Number of Black farm operators taken from United States Census. Four per cent not calculated for counties having less than 100 Black farm operators.

Figure 12. Distribution by Counties of Black Farm Operators, 1890 to 1910, as related to Indian Territory

A high degree of uniformity existed throughout the area with respect to the kind, quantities, and proportions of crops and livestock found on individual farms; this was evidenced by the fact that the area under consideration was almost wholly within two similar type-of-farming areas. The farms were largely self-sufficient and maintained general livestock and dairy enterprises. The area west and south of Muskogee County became somewhat less diversified, but the farms remained largely cotton producing and self-sufficient. The farms were small, averaging about ninety to ninety-five acres, partly from original allotment and some partly from inheritance from deceased relatives.[7] Approximately three-fourths of the farms were operated by tenants, which in itself adds testimony to the type of economy and income pertaining in the all-Black towns in Oklahoma before the later Black exodus to urban areas.[8]

So far as industry or occupation other than farming was concerned, the freedmen of the territory had little choice, for the principal occupations were "patch farming" and cattle raising. They lived on small plots of land, raised some corn and other garden products, and spect considerable time hunting and fishing. They did not raise cotton at first because it was impossible to transport to market and make a profit. The only means of transportation was by ox-train, which could travel about eight miles per day, and then only during the months when the oxen could find grass for food along the way.[9]

Blacks in the Indian Territory were helped materially when the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad crossed the territory in 1871. This partially solved the problem of transport, and, with land new and fertile, cotton growing was possible. No statistics are available to



UPPER FIGURE = Total number
LOWER FIGURE = % of all farmers
5 Type-of-Farming areas approximated from Nelson, Peter, "Geographic Varability in Types of Farming in Oklahoma," Current Farm Economics, Vol. 9, No. 1, Feb., 1936, Oklahoma Experiment Station.

Number of black farm operators taken from United States Census.
Per cent not calculated for counties having less than 100 Black farm operators.

Figure 13. Distribution by Counties of Black FArm Operators After 1930, as Related to Types-of-Farming Areas

Figure 13. Distribution of Rural Farms Reporting Irrigation: 1959

Number of black farm operators taken from United States Census.
Per cent not calculated for Counties having less than 100 Black farm operators.

Source: Census of Agriculture 1959, Volume 3, Special Reports, Part 9, Irrigation of Agriculture, Vol. 9, No. 1, Feb., 1959.
Oklahoma Experiment Station.

Utility in Types of Farming Operations," Journal of Farm Economics, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1, Feb., 1951.
Irwin Nelson, "Cross Elasticities of Demand Between Factors in Type-of-Farming Areas," Journal of Farm Economics, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1, Feb., 1951.
Total number of farms reporting irrigation.
Number of farms reporting irrigation as per cent of total number of farms reporting.

POWER PLOUGH - 1 or more tractors
10.1%-20%
20.1%-30%
30.1% & over

show how much cotton the freedmen raised, but one report indicated that as early as 1880 the Cherokees were producing more than 1,600 bales annually.[10] The Indian was more a stockman than the Blacks, so much of this cotton apparently was grown by the Cherokee freedmen.

The coming of the railroad also gave the Blacks new occupational opportunities. With the opening of new areas, there were cities to be built, roads to be constructed, farms to be cleared, and other common labor jobs for which he would receive a fair wage. The cotton industry grew rapidly before statehood, but it would have grown much larger had many Blacks not preferred other types of employment.

General observation has demonstrated that in many Black families, every member was gainfully employed. This might lead to the hasty conslusion that their financial status was secure, that they had a sufficient income for a fine home and luxuries. But it must be remembered that many young people, who should have been in school, and many Black wives who doubtless would have preferred to remain at home, worked because their husbands generally were not paid an adequate wage. This, plus the fact that the average Black managed his finances poorly, made it necessary for a large percentage of the family to be employed.

The trend of Blacks to move from rural to urban areas was because this was advantageous for many of them. Between the years 1900 and 1910, the Blacks of Oklahoma showed an increase of 148.9 per cent in home ownership, not including farm homes.[11] Another advantage of city life was that they were able to give their children better educational opportunities. Although Blacks in Oklahoma were already beginning the urban trend between 1900 and 1910, those who remained on farms showed economic gains. The average improved acreage of Black farms in the

United States was 31.2 per cent as compared with 50.3 per cent in Oklahoma. During this same period, Black-operated farms increased 107.9 per cent, Oklahoma topping all southern states in this respect. Georgia ranked next to Oklahoma with forty-eight per cent.[12]

There are certain reasons which might be noted for the improvement and economic progress of Black Oklahomans at this time. First the country was only recently opened and not crowded. Too, Blacks who came into the state from the Old South had been better trained for work than those in the territory. Students of history feel this was true because more was required of slaves on plantations, and their contact with the more advanced civilization in that section had given them a decided edge on the freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes. Blacks from the South who remained on farms took more interest in scientific farming, tried to build better farm houses, enlarge and improve their barns, and conscientiously send their children to school. Another favorable factor was that there was a public interest shown in making life better for the Blacks, economically and otherwise. Yet despite of improved conditions for rural Blacks, the lure of the city brought about a drop in the number of Black-operated farms from 13,209 in 1910 to 8,987 in 1940. The economic picture was not bright for the Blacks in Oklahoma, although he had done well under existing circumstances.[13]

Finding new jobs required technique and learning, yet few slaves had been allowed to attend mission schools in the Indian Territory. Yet, when they were allowed to attend school, such children frequently excelled the Indian pupils in their school work and had a better command of the English language. Although they were taught chiefly the three R's, this elementary education gave them a decided advantage over

those Blacks not allowed to attend. After the Civil War, when the Freedmen Bureau was established and Blacks worked under a contract, many did not have enough education to sign these contracts. As a result they often were mistreated as well as defrauded an- had to appeal to the Bureau for justice.[14]

In 1873 in the Creek Nation there were five schools maintained wholly for Black children. Although the school houses and equipment were crude and inadequate and the teachers incompetent, considerable progress was made. The average daily attendance in these five schools was about thirty. There were thirty-three Creek Indian schools besides the five maintained for Black children; these thirty-three included some Black pupils as well as others of mixed blood.[15] The Cherokee Agent also became dissatisfied with the teaching force in that nation. He recommended that teaching be more practical and related to real life objects such as horses, saddles, deer, turkeys, bows, and arrows.[16]

The lot of the Choctaw and the Chickasaw freedmen was the most difficult, for Blacks were unwelcome in those tribes. Representatives of these nations had objected to that part of the treaty of 1866 which called for adoption of their former slaves into the tribes; these Indians wanted segregation. For a long time freedmen were not allowed to own property in these nations and were denied all political, social, and economic privileges, including the right to attend school. Eager for education, the freedmen of these two nations offered to furnish the buildings if teachers and supplies could be had by some means.[17] It goes without saying that the freedmen of the Seminoles, Creeks, and Cherokees had decided educational advantages over those of the Chickasaws and the Choctaws. They were able to impart some of their knowledge

to their children, as well as stress to them the advantages of an education.

As a result of the schools which were established, illiteracy among the Blacks in Oklahoma in 1910 was comparatively low, 17.77 per cent, especially in the all-Black towns.[18] Those counties with the lowest percentages were the ones which grew out of the Creek, Seminole, and Cherokee Nations. For example, in Muskogee County, which grew out of the Creek Nation, Blacks comprised 31.2 per cent of the total population with twelve per cent illiterate. In Bryan County, which grew out of the Choctaw Nation, more than thirty per cent of the Black population was classed as illiterate.[19]

So long as the Indian and his former slave lived in the territory and conducted business, the Black did not suffer a great deal for want of education.[20] The situation changed with the "Run" of 1889;[21] afterward Blacks began to feel the need of education and training. With the first white settlers came a large percentage of lawless, adventurous, restless fortune seekers with whom uneducated Blacks were unable to cope; for example, if a Black were unable to read, he might find he had signed a paper depriving him of his land. This occurred many time in Boley.

For the Blacks, obtaining an education was not easy. The Southern white man who settled in Oklahoma was not in favor of the children of the Indian attending school with his sons and daughters, and he would not even entertain the idea of Blacks and whites attending school together. So although there was no law on the territory's statute book requiring segregation of the races in schools, such a law existed in practice.[22]

In his report of 1891, territorial Governor George W. Steele showed that in Oklahoma territory there were 60,417 people, of whom 3,289 were Black. There were 20,085 whites enrolled in school and 1,252 Blacks. These figures show that separate schools probably came from the first white settlers especially if accordance is given to the Constitution of Oklahoma.[23] After statehood, the schools became better equipped and were held in more comfortable brick buildings. Some of the older states provided for separate schools through their legislatures; Oklahoma incorporated such an act in its Constitution, the first article of which read:

> Provision shall be made for the establishment and maintenance of a system of public schools, which shall be open to all the children of the state--provided that this shall not be construed to prevent the establishment and maintenance of separate schools for white and colored children.[24] The Constitution further provided in Article XIII, that: Separate shcools for whites and colored children with like accommodations shall be provided by the legislature and impartially maintained. The term "colored children" as used in this section shall be construed to mean children of African descent. The term "white children" shall include all other children.[25] Section 88 of Article XIII stated: Whenever in this Constitution and laws of this state the word or words "colored" or "colored race," "Negro" or Negro race" are used, the same shall be construed to mean or apply to all persons of African descent. The term "white race" shall include all other persons.[26]

By these provisions the Indian, Mexican, and all other racial groups except those of African descent, were permitted to attend the "white" school. The provisions would not have been so disgraceful if they had been carried out to the letter; but, just as a segregation law had put Blacks in the most undesirable parts of the city, bus, or train, so the school law, instead of providing "like accommodation," too often furnished the Blacks with inferior school buildings, poorer equipment, and inadequately-trained teachers. These conditions were so obvious

that many large philanthropic organizations such as the Rosenwald Fund, the Anna Jeans Foundation, and the Rockerfeller Foundation who gave monies to funds to help equalize the education system in Oklahoma. The administration of the Black schools was also in the hands of a white county superintendent. As he was elected by popular vote, naturally he was guided by the wishes of the majority--whites. There were no Black representatives on school boards except in the all-Black towns.

In counties where Blacks comprised a considerable per cent of the population, the question of school financing presented a grave problem. McCurtain County illustrated this. In that county Blacks comprised 18.2 per cent of the total population, and they had to be educated on a maximum two-mill levy on the taxable property of a county which was not rich.[27] It was not surprising to learn that in this situation the teachers were poorly paid.

Wagoner County was another example. Here there were twenty-two separate schools, and it was impossible for the levy of two mills to have maintained these schools adequately.[28] The white schools were classified into independent districts, village districts, graded districts, and ordinary rural schools. The Black schools were classified in the same way in the county superintendent's office, but not in practice. For example, an independent white school was a four-year accredited high school located in an incorporated town. A Black school in the same district was under the supervision of the local superintendent and board of education, and it was reported as an independent district although it might be only a one-room school.

However, aside from state aid, various foundations made noteworthy

contributions to the Black schools of Oklahoma, especially those in all-Black towns in Oklahoma. The General Education Board, for example, was founded by John D. Rockefeller for the purpose of administering funds to promote education in the United States. This Board worked for (1) the development of public schools in the Southern states, and (2) the advancement of higher education throughout the United States.[29] It equipped a number of Black county training schools, gave scholarships to teachers at the Black Agricultural and Normal University in Oklahoma (Langston), and paid the traveling expenses of three rural supervisors. The Rosenwald Fund aided in providing schoolhouses for Blacks in the Southern states and in many of the districts of Oklahoma, providing better buildings and facilities for health and sanitation.[30] The John F. Slater Fund contributed to the salaries of teachers in various training schools for Blacks. This proved extremely helpful in the deplorable condition of the all-Black towns.[31]

The Anna Jeans Foundation helped Black Schools by paying one-half of the salaries of industrial supervisors in all-Black schools. Among the counties in Oklahoma which took advantage of the Jeans Fund were Creek, Okfuskee, Seminole, Wagoner, McIntosh, Choctaw, Logan, McCurtain, Muskogee, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Pittsburg, Lincoln, and Carter. These were the home counties of most of the all-Black towns.[32]

Oklahoma Blacks had only one state institution of higher learning. This was the Colored Agricultural and Normal University located at Langston, one of the all-Black towns. The college was established by the Territorial Legislature in 1897. The Black settlers of Langston donated the site, and at a cost of $6,500 the Legislature built the first building. The school was opened on September 14, 1898, with four

teachers and forty-one pupils. Because the building was not quite complete, classes were held in public school buildings and in churches until late in October of that year. Before this first school term closed, the enrollment had grown to 181, seventy-five per cent of the students being from farms and about fifty per cent of them working their way through school.[33]

The Fifth Legislature appropriated $44,000 for the next two years. Fifteen thousand dollars was to be used for buildings, and the legislature designated further that $15,000 of the accumulated Morrill Fund in the hands of the Agricultural and Mechanical College at Stillwater might be transferred to the Black college. But for some time the Department of Interior would not approve this transfer, for the agreement between the territory and the federal government provided that the money be used by the Stillwater institution.

In 1901 the Board of Regents added 120 acres of land and three buildings to the college, which cost approximately $15,000. By then the faculty had grown to nine members and there was an enrollment of 192 pupils, with an average daily attendance of 145. In this same year the institution graduated its first two students.[34] By 1906 the enrollment had increased to 334 and the faculty to seventeen. Additional buildings had been added, including a president's home and several buildings for class, office, and dormitory purposes.[35]

The Colored Agricultural and Normal University at Langston was changed to Langston University by the Eighteenth Legislature which met in 1941.[36] Langston University still exists in Langston, Oklahoma, as yet another testimony of the determination of the all-Black towns to give local citizens good educational opportunities.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Mozell C. Hill and Eugene S. Richards, "Demographic Trends of the Negro in Oklahoma," The Southwestern Journal, Langston University Press, Vol. 2, No. I (Winter, 1946), pp. 47-63.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Charles H. Roberts, The Essential Facts of Oklahoma History and Civics (Chicago: Benjamin H. Sanborn Co.), p. 40.

[4]Peter Nelson, "Geographic Variability in Types of Farming in Oklahoma," Current Farm Economics, Vol. 9, No. 1 (February, 1906), Oklahoma Experiment Station.

[5]Peter Nelson, Current Farm Economics, Vol. 9, No. 1, February, 1936, p. 4. The words used to describe the type of farming in area 8 follow: "Cotton, general farming, self-sufficing, dairy. (An area of generally poor soil, except on small bottons)." Area 9 is described in this manner: "Cotton, some dairy, potatoes, self-sufficing." Circumstances leading to the establishment of Taft and Boley as exclusively Black towns are of interest. The Taft community was formed as a result of the allocation of lands of the Creek Indians to Blacks in this area. Boley, on the other hand, became an all-Black town and community as the result of promotion policies adopted by railroad officials and real estate dealers immediately following the building of a railroad through the area in 1902.

[6]Ibid., pp. 4-20.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1869, p. 122.

[10]Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1880, p. 8

[11]U.S. Department of Commerce, Bulletin No. 129, p. 30

[12]Ibid., p. 139.

[13]Mozell C. Hill and Eugene Richards, A Demographic Study of the Negro in Oklahoma (Langston, Oklahoma: Langston University Press), p. 58.

[14]James Wilford Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi (New York: McMillian & Co.), p. 259.

[15]Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871, p. 175

[16]Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1873, p. 211.

[17]Ibid., p. 209.

[18]U.S. Census, 1910, Vol. III, p. 47.

[19]Ibid., p. 463.

[20]Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1857, pp. 252-254.

[21]Lotta, Bethel, and Imogene Mosier and T. T. Montgomery, The Growth of Oklahoma (Oklahoma City: The Economy Co.), pp. 137-138.

[22]Report of Territorial Governor of Oklahoma, G. W. Steele, 1891, p. 3.

[23]Ibid.

[24]The Constitution of the State of Oklahoma, Article I, Section 5.

[25]Ibid., Article XIII, Sec. 3.

[26]Ibid., Article XIII, Sec. 2.

[27]Department of Education, Bulletin 110, Education in Oklahoma, p. 22.

[28]School Laws of Oklahoma, 1945.

[29]Russell Sage Foundation, The General Education Board, pp. 14-18

[30]Shelby M. Harrison and Emerson F. Andrews, American Foundations of Social Welfare (New York: Russell Sage Foundation), p. 67.

[31]Ibid., pp. 172-173.

[32]Anna T. Jeanes Foundation, The Negro Rural School Fund, Inc., 1907-1933, p. 11.

[33]Charles S. Roberts, "Negro In Education" (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Colorado, Boulder, 1930).

[34]Report of the Territorial Governor of Oklahoma, 1901, p. 34

[35]Report of the Territorial Governor of Oklahoma, 1906, p. 7

[36]School Laws of Oklahoma, 1941, p. 60.

CHAPTER VII

THE FUTURE OF ALL-BLACK TOWNS IN OKLAHOMA: A REFUSAL TO DIE

Conclusion

The history of America is replete with instances wherein, during periods of unrest in other parts of the world, this country has served as a haven for the oppressed. Groups of people with political, religious, or economic notions of such a nature that the societies in which they live would label them traitors, heretics, or radicals, migrated to America to escape physical and mental oppression. In America, they hoped that the moral isolation which they already had achieved would enable them to become self-sufficient groups, for here people could achieve territorial isolation as well.

Following the Civil War, Blacks were given a new status entirely different from that when plantation slavery was legal. This condition undermined a hitherto relatively static Southern society. No longer was the position of Blacks fixed. There now was the possibility of vertical mobility on the part of all members of society. The once peaceful relations existing between two racial groups living in accommodation was destroyed. Instead, there was now conscious competition--and conflict. In the parrying which followed between the Northern politicians and the rapidly solidifying South, the latter emerged the victor. There was a determined effort made to reestablish the Black

in his former position. Thus attempts to enjoy the newly acquired freedom resulted only in frustration for Blacks as a whole. A few devices were utilized by scattered groups of Blacks in an effort to resolve this frustration. One of the most significant was that of seeking a separate, independently derived existence in isolation--a self-sufficient community--a Utopia such as was the goal of the all-Black towns in Oklahoma. A recent Chamber of Commerce circular in Boley attests to the dogged tenacity with which one, and perhaps many all-Black towns hold onto life:

> The spark of enthusiasm born in the founders of Boley still survives in spite of the death of many towns its size all over the nation. It has a mayor and town council (trustee) type government. It operates its own water system. It is served with both adequate and relatively inexpensive natural gas.
>
> Because of the active work by its citizens to make Boley a thoroughly modern town, the tide of population loss has been reversed. The population is presently estimated at 650 and it is rapidly climbing. The diligent work of its citizens have resulted in:
>
> 1. Modern dial telephone
> 2. Natural gas fuel installation
> 3. Paved Main Street and school roads
> 4. A school system second to none
> 5. Water and sewer installation
> 6. Improved street lighting
> 7. Town library
>
> These are just a few of the progressive works accomplished by its citizens. The many new homes which are being built to replace outdated structures are well worth mentioning. Every year during Memorial Day weekend, Boley sponsors a rodeo. Old timers say that this affair rivals the Barnum and Bailey Bigtop shows. It attracts thousands from all over the nation to watch the thrilling performances of the cowboys.
>
> Boley has a very definite future. It is not limited as an all-Negro town. Boley passed the first "Open Housing" ordiance in the State of Oklahoma. The school was the first school (public) to adopt integration.
>
> The citizens of this town are working hard to improve

> the town's economy. The town hopes for a new bank. It has commitments for a new factory providing up to 80 new jobs in the next five years.
>
> Many of Boley's former citizens have expressed a desire to return. The population is on the up-swing now. Because of Boley's pastoral and peaceful atmosphere, many people find it an excellent place to live.[1]

These goals, in part, destroyed or may be just deferred can yet be found in surviving and decaying towns like Boley, Taft, and Tatums. There they are taking a last breath of triumph while drifting like unmoored ships in despair. While their fate has been cast, obviously through channels of injustice over the years, one must search for the answers that prompted this chaos and destruction of a people with a dream.

Since community life is symbolic of people living under the influence of a common or set of common interests, the Utopian community where the interest or interests can be clearly defined furnish what might be called ideal conditions for testing the validity of laws which are descriptive of the behavior of individuals functioning in social life.

The flight of free Blacks to the West in general and to the trans-Mississippi Spanish borderlands was instructive to those who would examine the Turnerian thesis.

No interpretation of any part of America's broad, boundless, and somewhat diverse history has aroused more controversy than has Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis read in 1893 before the Chicago meeting of the American Historical Association. Historians, save few, from that historic day to the present, have either attacked or defended the four major points of the frontier thesis which held that on the frontier was born the true American ideals which gave birth

Nationalism, Democracy, and Individualism, and, most of all, provided a safety-valve for those people not able to make it in other places.

Any historian of sound logic and within the realm of the historical tradition and knowledge of Western history, however, need but reconsider the text of the first three issues to see the fallacy of Turner's thesis. First, he asserted that the westward movement was a guarantee of democracy for those individuals taking part, but he was speaking only for whites and European immigrants and not allowing that same democracy for Blacks and, in many cases, Indians. He then boldly asserted that individualism and nationalism were present in such abundance that anyone on the frontier developed a love for America because it was here that love of country was born. This too was a fallacious assumption, because in the Oklahoma territory and other parts of the West, many of the inhabitants were not citizens and were not under the jurisdiction of the federal government. This especially included Blacks and Indians who in the formative years resided on reservations under tribal government only. Turner obviously was theorizing for the white pioneer only.[2] This thesis did little to help in the development of the all-Black towns of Oklahoma. On the contrary, the role that is played probably was the antithesis of the realization of these dreams.

This is not to demean the significance of his thesis, but rather to vindicate it as having sweeping parallels for all the fronteirsmen sent scurrying west for one reason or another.

When the definitive history of Oklahoma is written, many accolades must be rendered to the fortitude of the descendants now inhabiting the glimmering remnants of those Black Utopian dreams. Starting from

positions of economic deprivation, educational inadequacy, and legal impotence, these residents retain a desire for a life and existence unlike other people in the state.

The Blacks' fight against racial discrimination in Oklahoma has continued since 1889. Throughout this discrimination the survival of these all-Black towns, with some presently being little more than Black residential entities near a part of larger white areas, has been an amazing feat even with the recent barrage of Civil Rights legislation. The question now is more financial and economic in nature than the issues of earlier times: voting and social issues. Eight of the twenty-eight original towns exist today as momentos and memories of the gallantry posed by these Black frontiersmen of yesteryear. They include Langston, Rentiesville Town, Taft Town, Boley Town, Grayson Town, Lima Town, Red Bird Town, and Tullahassee Town.[3] The young people leave, never to return; the old stay because there is no place for them to go. In a recent interview with M. C. Oliver, an elderly resident of Red Bird, it was learned that young people move out because nobody has any money. Eugene Jackson, mayor of the same town, stated that the town could possibly have potential if they could get some federal grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to attract industry.[4]

During these recent interviews, it was found that most Black residents wanted some whites to move in because they felt that the federal government usually steps in to help white communities plagued by the kind of financial woes the Black towns were suffering. In Tullahassee, J. H. Matlock, postmaster and mayor, was less optimistic, but seemingly hardened because of the early exploitation of Blacks by

political leaders. Feeling that there was a possible chance for growth, he said, "I think the federal government is going to have to come in, and I think the state is going to have to come in. It's going to have to be something that will be a--well, something that will see every man somewhere as a human being, with the right to earn a living."[5]

When queried on the future of Tullahassee, and the love he had for it, Matlock stated:

> Oh, I don't love it here so well, but I've been here forty years and I couldn't establish friendships any stronger anywhere else at my age now than I have here, I don't think. It would be impossible for me to come back over what I've gone over--in other words, I couldn't build a new home like I built here. So to go someplace else in the condition that I'm in, why it'd be almost impossible for me to get by at all. I just couldn't, unless I had my--well, I just couldn't do it.
>
> The dreams that spawned the kind of town that lived rigorously here for the last seventy years is just not here anymore. That is, because of the lack of the younger people becoming interested in staying. I think when Tullahassee first started out to be a Tullahassee the Negro had his franchise in this county, from what I can understand--and they lost it, under this white disfrancisement. They lost that and when they did that they had no protection under the law. They couldn't vote. When I came here they couldn't vote. I spent my money and my influence trying to make it possible for us to vote. But I never feel bitter when I feel that I have done what I ought to do and what I should do. I don't feel bitter, no, no. If I had the strength, I believe I'd try to do more; I believe I would. But now I just have to acknowledge what I am: physically, mentally, unable. I'm not what I was physically nor mentally when I came here.[6]

In reference to the survival of Tullahassee as well as the other surrounding all-Black towns, Matlock had this to say:

> If Tullahassee is ever to be anything, it must change. The political element here has got to change. That's from the President on down. From the President down to the county clerk, yes sir, just got to change.
>
> I would advise my group to unify themselves, unify yourself, 'know ye one another and make friends with your enemies.' If we can make friends with the oppressor, we

> can get his friendship, we have a chance, but until we get that...[7]

Many residents of these surviving towns still retain the hope of a few more years of survival. For example, Antone Fuhr, an eighty-one-year-old pioneer still remembers Alfred C. Sams of the "Back to Africa Scheme and Booker T. Washington living in Guthrie. Fuhr related that the fate of these towns was not that of Black towns alone but also that of small white towns. Speaking of their development he related:

> There is a very interesting story in connection with that from the Dawes Commission. Well, now, these people coming on in here, they could come and even prior to the Dawes Commission, they could lease and rent the land from these natives, that they called them, and they were principally freedmen. And there was almost as many of those as there were Indians, as far as that's concerned, but Oklahoma history somehow or other has left them all, has left the freedmen out of there. They don't mention them too often. But anyhow, there were large concentrations of them. Those people came in there and found out that they could establish a little town of their own, and they did. That's how all these little towns got started. They never heard of such a thing as a Negro mayor or a town marshall, and folks would go back and tell those folks back down in Louisiana and Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas, 'Do you know, over there they've got a town of their own? They've got a town marshall, they've got a mayor, they've got a city council of their own and all,' and they thought that was heaven. And so they came in there, and that's the way all those little towns were built up throughout Oklahoma. They just sprang up all around, as I stated at the first to start with.
>
> Perhaps Boley was the most noted, and then, of course, Taft in Muskogee County. Now most of those towns have died down, and it's a funny thing as to why. Without going into all the details as to why it is, but it was <u>progress</u>, <u>good roads</u>, and <u>consolidated schools</u>. Those were the things that killed the little Negro towns. And they killed a number of white towns. Just look at them all over there, any number of white towns that have had to be abandoned.[8]

Throughout the interview Fuhr asserted that all the towns with any kind of substantial tax and economic base would survive, especially Langston, which has the University, Taft because of the state school, and possibly

Boley, if on sheer tradition alone. He further related:

> There is a future for the all-Black towns in Oklahoma; yes, there is for Taft. And not much for Boley. There is for Langston because of the university. Rentiesville is dead; Red Bird is dead; Tullahassee is dead; when I say dead, it might as well be dead, you know. Clearview, the same thing. Lima, same thing. Grayson is just a place in the road like all other Black towns. I know all those places used to have their own post offices, post masters and all. And that was a great incentive to come here. Now Taft and Langston will last because they have a payroll. You know Boley has a rodeo every year; that is going to save them. Yes, yes, just like a place where you have a big picnic. People will come just for the rodeo; you'll have 10,000 one day and 10 the next day. Well, they'll have a homecoming, and so far as they do that a lot of families have that. All the members of the family will come from all the way around. Residents will come from miles and miles, but then after the homecoming is over they're gone too. It's just a normal evolution; they just, they can't live because they haven't got the means to live by, and as I said, good roads, consolidated schools, and progress killed those; not only the Black towns, you can go all over the country and find any of these little white towns that's nothing but just a place in the road. A wonderful experience.
>
> It was a wonderful dream, and in many ways it served its purpose. Those people came out, and for the first time they tasted freedom, and that, that tasting of freedom and chance of educating their children and all; but, that dream was a wonderful dream that they had. They had no way of tying their children down there. Nearly all those places, you can go back over the rolls, nearly all of these, most of our teachers, our principals, our educated people, came from these little towns. Their parents had their dream of educating, but when he got educated there wasn't anything for him to do but to teach school or leave.

According to Fuhr, the founding and survival of these towns was and is one of the most glorious episodes in the history of Black Americans. In them Black people believed in Black people despite white antagonism and agitation, and Blacks overcame their supposedly ineptness as progenitors of their future determination. Fuhr then began to espouse the sentiments of what he considered the theme of many of the oldtimers like himself:

> If I had my choce, I'd do exactly what my father and hundreds of others did. I'd come from back out in that area, back out here where I could own some land. That was the first chance some of those ex-slaves got to own land, in Black towns, and to taste authority. They had no authority, not even over their own families and their own places down there. I started to say, even the schools there; they say the plantation boss could ride up to the school right in the middle of the afternoon. The sun would come out and just like that, say, 'Hey, Mary, Sue, or whoever it was teaching school there, turn these kids out and let them go on out and start picking cotton,' and things like that. It was only rainy weather, or bad weather, or when there wasn't anything to do at home, so when they came on out here, they were able to organize their own school district, and you'd be surprised at the number of boards here and where that they became, uh, the whole board. There was all-Black school boards and things. Well, all of those things were a wonderful incentive, something they had never been used to and all, and I think that it was a wonderful beginning. It was what you might say, just like a flower that is nourishing, and I think it was brought to full bloom through that, and I can't blame these small towns for dying down because they had to leave. The youngsters as they got educated, they just had to leave to find suitable work, but most of them haven't forgotten their towns. They'll come back.
>
> It was, that was the dream that came to fruition, just like Martin Luther King, Jr. says, 'I've been to the mountain top and had a chance to see over.' Well, that's the thing about it; it brought them to the mountain top where they could see, and that to my mind was worth every bit of it, and, as I say, they, these little towns, these Black towns, they haven't died because they were Black towns because for every Negro community or town that has died I can cite you at least a half a doxen or more white, for every one. The white towns are the same caliber, the same size, that have died for the same reasons because their community was broken up once they started consolidating schools, once they got good roads. Good roads is what killed the whole situation, killed all of these little Black towns, except those still struggling to live. Taft, Boley, Langston, all dying out.[9]

As some of these surviving all-Black towns struggled for existence, they have elected women mayors, as was the case of Lelia Foley in Taft; they have appointed national Black celebrities to offices as was the case with Redd Foxx of "Sanford and Son" Television Fame to Chief of Police, also for Taft (see Appendices), thereby receiving national

attention; another method is the enlarged rodeo efforts in Boley which currently draws people nationwide; Langston currently thrives on Langston University. All still try to exist in an era when death is almost certain.

Langston on July 4, 1974 received a community certificate from the Oklahoma Bicentennial Commission. For the most part, however, the future holds little for the all-Black towns of Oklahoma. Those that still remember the pioneering spirit that fostered the founding of these towns. To the young, this hope is but a glimmering flame on the horizon.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Boley Chamber of Commerce Circular, May, 1974.

[2]Frederick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History (New York: Henry Hold and Company, 1920-1947), p. 259. Typical of the forest acculturative position are the following: Thomas D. Clard, Frontier America (New York, 1959) pp. 6, 7, 14. R. A. Billington, Westward Expansion (New York, 1949), and The Far Western Frontier, 1830-1860 (New York, 1956), pp. 1, 4, recognizes the existence of other branches of western culture existent in the westward advance but brushes them aside as of little or no consequence before the power of "American Frontier Technique." Paxson, an earlier student, When the West Is Gone (New York, 1941), p. 31, can be classed with Clark as a part of the culture free frontier school.

[3]Arthur L. Tolson, "The Negro in Oklahoma Territory 1889-1907: A Study in Racial Discrimination" (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1966).

[4]Personal Interviews with M. C. Oliver and Mayor Eugene Jackson, Red Bird, Oklahoma, August 8, 1974.

[5]Personal Interview with J. H. Matlock, Mayor of Tullahassee, Oklahoma, August 8, 1974.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., see especially the transcripts from the personal interview of August 8, 1974:

> I don't know about so much pride but frankly I'm a minister, and I believe my calling came from above. You see, in my submission was the confession that I made that I would be true to my cause, and brother, I mean that, I mean just that. I'm still a minister. I'm not pastoring now on account of my physical condition, my wife's physical condition. I resigned from the New Zion Baptist Church in Muskogee, which is under construction, and my resignation took effect I believe, was supposed to take effect, on June the twelfth, 1900--I mean June the third, at twelve o'clock, 1974. I was just physically broken down, you see my wife--sometimes I have to be up all night long, all day long, all

this and all that. She's mentally, physically--she had a stroke and it just--it worride me and I was just too worried, I just couldn't keep my thoughts together, couldn't separate my church and my home, you know. If a man is going to be a preacher, he has to be able to put them both together but use them separately, but I couldn't do it. I just disn't have the guts I guess. Well, for me, may I say, for me as a minister, I can't pursue two courses at once and let one of them be behind. I can't work for the Lord and man, too, not at the same time. And I can't let man hinder me from working for the Lord. So I just seen that I wasn't good and I just asked the Lord to permit me to be idle for a while. I'm going back to preaching one of these days... you know, I believe I'd tell young Blacks like Booker told the people in Guthrie, I'd tell them to 'let your buckets down where you are.' Cause it's just as much material underneath the soil here as it is anywhere. You can get it here if they will let the bucket down. The thing about it--they get the education, they go off, they don't come back, they don't bring nothing back--they stay away. So whatever they get here--now we've got pretty good schools here far as that goes, we've got a high school, pretty good school, I guess you heard about it, you know about it. I don't think rolling stones gather very much moss and neither do settin' hens get very fat, but there's always a way if you pursue the right course. Tullahassee is, in my opinion, a worthwhile place. It is a place with a future. Yes, it could be made, it could be made, it could be--but it's gonna have to be something to help hold us here--nothing here, nothing within our reach...been here a long time and I'm very well respected here among the politicians, I think I'm very well respected, but I say this to them just like I do to you. I see an opening just like I do in the door; these politics got to change, got to change, and I think it is changing gradually, gradually, but so slow, slow. You know it's the attitude towards the politician most of them now in my opinion towards Wagoner County, they seem like to me now even the county officers, most of the, I think or I feel that they feel like they don't need the Negro vote. You don't see them campaign among Negroes now. If they have put anything, they put it in a club, you won't know anything about it, so the attitude is gonna have to change, they're gonna have to get out from where they are...get up from where they are.

[8]Personal Interview with Antone Fuhr, Muskogee, Oklahoma, August 8, 1974.

[9]Ibid., see especially transcribed interview, August 8, 1974.

Well, now as to the Black towns in the state of Oklahome, both in Oklahoma County and in Muskogee County or you might say the Indian Territory, there, starting back

with most of these towns we had two territories in Oklahoma, we had the Oklahoma territory and then we had the Indian Territory. And perhaps more of these towns were established in Indian Territory than in Oklahoma territory in that Indian Territory had been settled for a long while and a lot of people coming in here and Oklahoma territory didn't open up until about 1892, 1889, I'd guess, I'd say more correctly, 1889 was when Oklahoma territory was opened up to settlers and of course among some of those early towns over in Oklahoma territory the most noted Black town was perhaps Langston. And then back in the Indian Territory perhaps the most noted in those days, back when I was a kid, was Boley.

Well, the difference was Indian Territory was the area where the government moved the Indians from the South and the East into Oklahoma, they started out with the removal of the Cherokees from Georgia and then from Tennessee and from Virginia, that was the great Cherokee country. But the thing that started it, it started under Andrew Jackson, the thing that started it was that they discovered gold in Georgia and gold has a peculiar way of changing the character and the philosophy of a lot of people. If you wanted some background on that just take the California gold rush for that matter. And they saw, or at least they thought they saw that there was going to be a tremendous gold rush into Georgia there and most of that land where they had discovered some symptoms of gold, and they are still finding a little gold there in northern Georgia, was owned by the Cherokees and that was the thing, regardless of all you might have heard about it, that was the thing that decided Andrew Jackson to move the Cherokees out of Georgia and then of course, they were just going to make a clear sweep of it there because they wanted the land that they had but that gold, find of gold in northern Georgia, you might say, was the main spring of the, of the, Trail of Tears which is the so graphically remembered by the people but they moved those over there and after they moved the Cherokees why then they decided that they would move also the Chickasaws and the Choctaws from the areas of some in Texas, but especially from the areas of Mississippi and they never did move all of them out of Mississippi, right around Philadelphia, Mississippi, round their yet is quite a colony of Indians known as the Choctaws, but anyhow, those tribes, then also they started moving the Seminoles out of Florida. They never did move them all out. And, I'll probably want to come back to that to tell you one of the reasons they had so much trouble with the Seminoles down there.

Half of those Seminoles were Black people. Black runaway slaves that was the main thing and Oscelo was, he was just about 3/4 Indian, he was, well, he was, I guess if you'd sift it on down, he might have been just about a

half breed. And his main cohort, the fellow that stood behind him and was with him was Black Sam. And he was what the name implies. Black Sam was just really a runaway slave. If he had any Indian blood in him it was just about 1/8 but he was the chief there, he grew up down there and those runaway slaves from Georgia would go down there and those Seminoles would protect them and they never could get them but those slaves somehow or another, those runaway slaves, had a lot of know-how that the Indians didn't have and that's a long story. It's a story within itself but if you'd go and it would take up all the time but it's sufficient to say that one of the big reasons that they had so much trouble moving those Seminoles out of there was the fact that most of the Seminoles they had to deal with in northern Florida there and they were nearly 50 per cent Black.

Well, the thing about it is that, let me see, we'd better get on back I guess I got a little bit off on the difference between Oklahoma territory and Indian Territory.

Now, they moved in while there were a number of other Indian tribes in here, they moved those people in here and they were known as the Five Civilized Tribes. That took in there, now let me see, Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Seminoles, how many did I name? And Creek. That made up the Five Civilized Tribes and it is significant to note that the reason they were designated the Five Civilized Tribes is because they were more civilized than the rest of them but all of them had a background of Negro slaves. They came on back over here and started building houses, those slaves, the Indians lived in wigwams but now those people come because they had these Black people around they called them slaves but they in most incidents they were just kind of integrated there. But when they were moved over here they brought those Black people with them and they're the ones who started to cultivate the land because they were runaway slaves most of them or their parents had been and they were used to, and they knew how to build houses. That's the reason they were designated, and the only reason they were designated the Five Civilized Tribes because they came over here and started farming the land and started building the houses. Then we had that great territory over half of Oklahoma that was the, to the west of the lines drawn for, by the tribes and that was open land until 1889 they opened that up to settlers and gave everybody who wanted to come in there 160 acres if they'd come in there and prove up the ground. They had to live on it a certain length of time, and do a certain amount of improvement. And that part was known as Oklahoma territory. And any number of ex-slaves came on over there and homesteaded. In fact, one of my grandparents did. And my father came in there and they homesteaded out there in Oklahoma County near there and a big influx of them came

in around Guthrie and the, and around Langston and that was the starting of Langston. And that was the reason why, and it started and that was the beginning of Langston University over there because these ex-slaves put up such a fight for education and wanted to enroll in Edmond and that was about the first school that was located, college, was over at Edmond, Oklahoma, and then they finally, the legislature finally decided that they was going to have to do something about it and that was when they, which is a story within itself, the foundation, the beginning of Langston University and how those people had to fight for it and the little small beginning on 40 acres and all. It would be a book within itself. And by that time into Oklahoma also came a bunch of people especially from Arkansas and Texas and they of course brought their southern philosophy along with them. And then the northern part came down a bunch of people that settled around, Germans and Kansas people that settled around Guthrie in that area there and that's why Guthrie became known as the most liberal of all the towns. So far as minority groups is concerned and this had a whole lot to do with Guthrie losing the Capitol too. Because a number of those people, the powers that be, the southerners wanted to get it away from that place where you had such a Black such a big Black influence, Negro influence they called it at that time. So that was they, that was the thing about that. Now, coming back you wanted to know something about my opinion as to why the decrease in Negro towns, alright.

These towns happened because these people came on in here and they had been very oppressed in these southern states being ex-slaves. And then in Oklahoma territory they could file and get homesteads. In the Indian Territory here they could come over there and the Indians about that time right along during that era they, the land was divided up among the Indians and it is a long and interesting story as to how that their slaves were also allotted land...now back in those days, the horse and buggy days, as we like to call them, those people were, those were the centers, that's where they had the little community store out there. They carried everything in those stores and did a great, a tremendous business because, let's take right out here, Taft, just take right here in Muskogee County, at Taft, the people would come into Muskogee once a week. Now they come two, three times a day. You see they, and those stores out at Taft, even when I first came over here as a county agent. There were three or four stores in Taft, all of them doing tremendous business because all of the farmers and all the people around there, that's where they'd come to trade and as I said, those stores carried everything that the farmers needed. From overalls to gingham, this stuff they make cotton sacks out of, because cotton, that was the big thing, and there was a cotton gin. Oh, I guess there was about two or three

of them around Taft. But every little community had a cotton gin and now I don't think the whole county of Muskogee has got two, if you can find them. It may have just only been one, but then those little communities because people couldn't come to town, you might think now it's just ten miles out to Taft, or something, but now if you had even a little shower like we had today, and you had to drive with a muddy wagon and all like that, that's a whole day's job to drive to town. But usually you'd come to town that ten miles and might not go back until tomorrow. But, but they only came, like I said, once a week. They had a little train that came through there and progress and good roads have killed the trains too, the same way.

Taft lasts because it built some institutions, some foundations. It wasn't Bill Murray, I think it was the first governor, Haskell, that got together with some leaders and people beginning to vote and decided that we ought, that they ought to have an institution out there at Taft. They called it the DB&O. The deaf, blind, and orphaned children were sent there. And they established that and incidentally, the first president of that was Russell, that was a big shot in Langston. The whole Russell family came on over there and Russell, old man Russell was kind of a politician and all and he was the first president they had out there. But that developed a payroll out there at Taft, and they could hire people and they began to live and people, well, in other words, they could get a paycheck every month. That was, was the big reason that started that. Then, when it looked as though that things weren't going too well there, at DB&O, oh, it was just about holding it's own, Bill Murray came in as governor, and it, it's a funny thing, the people were raising and saying about, you know, our insane assylum was down at Norman, Norman, Oklahoma, and they used to have a sign up in Norman back in the early days when I was a kid, 'Nigger don't let the sun go down.' They had signs, 'Nigger don't let the sun go down on you.' Well, anyhow, a lot of people who had, whose relatives they had to send down there, they, they, didn't feel free going down there to see them and clamor was, it did raise for a place for, for their own and at the same time they opened up, I don't recall about just who it was responsible for opening up this boys home at Boley, too, at that time. Anyhow, it was a correctional institution but the big thing was they really didn't want those Black boys to have to go and associate with those white boys at where is that, at Durant, or wherever it was, and they weren't too fond of the idea of these crazy people, if they were Black associating with the crazy people if they were white. Segregation had a whole lot to do with it. In other words, they could be crazy but they should know the difference between Black and white and some of them were so crazy they

didn't know the difference, you see, and so if they didn't know the difference that was a sure sign that they were crazy! But, anyhow, it is interesting how that institution was established out at Taft...as far as integration is concerned, no, I wouldn't say integration killed Black towns but just a matter of progress and lack of payroll. I wouldn't say, now you take Taft, they've just now, you wouldn't hardly see Taft integrated yet, the schools are, but the people in, there aren't many white people that live out at Taft. Never has. And won't they live on the out lines where they can farm, you know. Take Boley, there's not many white people live in Boley. But now I remember Boley, that was the biggest cotton town, why at one time they were thinking about making Boley the county seat. They were doing way yonder more business than Okemah but they didn't have the payroll, and the people who were in charge of the business were old hardy pioneers, they died off and the young people, when they got an education, left. Most of them because they didn't have a job. I don't think integration, take Rentiesville, there's not any white people. The whites live all around there buying up all the land, but no white people live in it...I know lots of people; yep, even John Hope Franklin, I knew his daddy before John Hope was born for that matter. His daddy was a native, his daddy was what we called a native down there, and he was a Chickasaw native, no, no, he came from down there near Winnewood. Down in that area, all the Franklins, his daddy's name is Buck Franklin, Buck C. Franklin, the first teacher that my wife ever had. He taught in little country schools and all down there and got away from down there and finally got a law degree and all and came on back up there and now, he, he was a big shot in the little town of Tatums, now we forgot about Tatums. Tatums was down in Carter County. Carter County, well, that's where Buck Franklin grew up right in Garvin County which is just like almost saying Okmulgee County and Muskogee County, it's just, you cross the line without ever knowing it, the community, and, Buck was a great incentive down there. His brothers were ranchers and, but, Buck started out teaching school and my father-in-law used to talk like he'd say, 'Well, those other Franklin boys, say Buck got all the learning but we got all the money.' They were big ranchers, big farmers down there and they rather ridiculed Buck a little bit because they figured that, well, they, you take those ranchers and all among those natives down there, the only thing that counted to them was land and cattle and Buck was turning mostly to books and things and they, they, they kind of ribbed him, his own brothers did, they riduculed him, 'Oh, Buck he's got...

I think it's one of the most glorious episodes in the history of the Black people. Those ex-slaves you know, and that's, that's the thing that opened up that, that pulled the veil from over their eyes and opened up, because Black

people didn't believe in Black people. They'd been taught that, it, it had been driven into them while they were slaves, that you can't trust another Black man. The only thing you can do is trust him to work, but now, you can't put him in authority because if you do, why, and they had a little background there, you know, they'd take the strawbosses among the slaves, because my grandmother, my grandfather used to talk about it. And those strawbosses were harder on the slaves than the slaves than the white overseers. Well, they had to do it to impress the masters, he was a hard, so they would give authority to a Black man and he can go haywire with you. When they came down and found out that not only that but that he made a good administrator when he had equal chance, didn't have somebody standing over him with a whip, so to speak, and he could speak his mind then, that to my mind, that was the opening up as I said before, the unveiling and the open up a vision to him and I think these, these little Black towns, I think they've served their purpose, and a glorious purpose too. I think that, it gave them incentive and gave him the knowledge that you can't give a Black man authority because he'll abuse it and all like that, and, I had to talk with Evers down there, you know he became mayor, the first mayor of an integrated town, I guess probably in, you know down in Mississippi. He was telling me when, way back when, when he first came back down from Chicago, you know, after his brother got shot. Says that that was his ambition, just to show those white people down there that a Black man wouldn't abuse his authority.

I am eight-one years old. I get around and I do about as much as I did forty years ago. Old King Sams, I don't only remember him, I saw Alfred C. Sams. I was down in Tatums ginning cotton when he came down through there, you know, when he was starting that, you know, that back-to-Africa thing. Because so many people...Well, he had a, a wonderful dream, but no way of carrying it out. It reminded me, that, they had more nerve and more courage than they had good sense in fact, I think I said one time when I was talking to him, that Sam and Marcus Garvey reminded me of, and this I guess is practically a true story of a little boy, when they were building the, when I was a small boy they built the first Katie railroad through, coming from McPherson, Kansas, into Oklahoma City, and they built it right on there close to our farm and I used to go over there and peddle buttermilk. I'd carry it over there and sell it to those fellows camping over there at the railroad and of course I was selling it for 10¢ a gallon and that was good money, but anyhow, one of the fellows said that when they first got to run the train through there, and, this might be fiction, but I don't think it was, that, there was a big old bull in these people's pasture there that everytime they'd run that accommodation train and blow the whistle that old bull would get up and go down there and run him off the

track so the bull would figure he'd won out on that. So, one day, the train came through there and was late, it was about an hour or so late, and the bull heard the whistle and he ran up there on the tracks and the fireman said, 'Old bull, I admire your courage but I wouldn't give a damn for your judgement.' And so that was pretty much the way with Sam and Marcus Garvey both. They had wonderful ideas but they didn't have proper judgement.

[10]Ibid.

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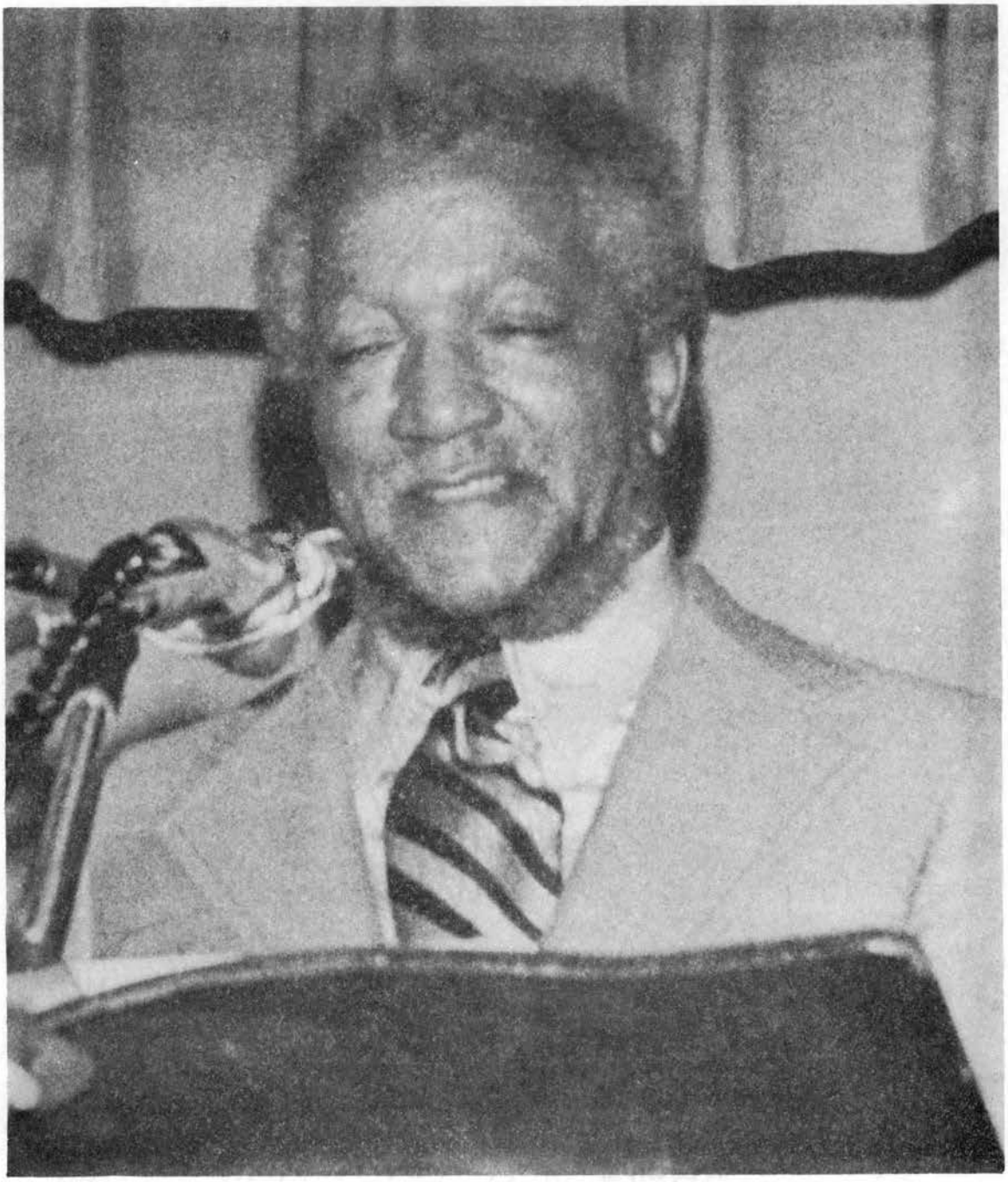
APPENDIX

REPRINTS AND PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE STAFFS OF TULSA DAILY WORLD, TULSA TRIBUNE, COY HOBBS OF THE TULSA DAILY WORLD STAFF, AND UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

Redd Foxx presents $10,000 check to Karen Grayson and Nicky Robertson.
Man in background unidentified

Photo, courtesy of Coy Hobbs, Tulsa Daily World, Tulsa, Oklahoma



Redd Foxx Addressing Taft residents during check presentation

Photo, courtesy of Coy Hobbs, Tulsa Daily World, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Redd Foxx and Taft Mayor, Lelia Foley, during ceremonies

Photo, courtesy of Coy Hobbs, Tulsa Daily World, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Redd Foxx 'Stars' at Taft, Tulsa Daily World, Tulsa, Oklahoma, August 30, 1974.

TAFT - Louis P. Bradley has not had a squad car during his two months as Taft's sole policeman.

In fact, he didn't even have a 'boss' until Wednesday. That's when he acquired what probably is the nation's most famous police chief, comedian Redd Foxx.

Foxx's notoriety doesn't lie in law enforcement, but in his starring role on network television's 'Sanford and Son.'

His appointment drew unanimous approval from the three-member town council, said Mayor Lelia Foley, who last year became the first Negro woman mayor in the United States.

MRS. FOLEY SAID FOXX visited the community of about 600 to personally accept the post.

'He heard about the job opening through a friend of mine. He was looking for an all-Black community to help. So he took the job,' said the mayor. She said he would not be placed on the town payroll.

'But he's serious about the job. He showed me a badge where he was once a Chicago policeman,' she said.

The new chief was in New York City Thursday for video taping of a television show with Count Basie. He could not be reached for comment.

AFTER HIS APPOINTMENT, Foxx announced plans to build a museum and swimming pool in Taft, according to Mrs. Foley. He reportedly promised to place some of his personal possessions in the museum, including former champion Jack Johnson's boxing gloves.

The swimming pool is to be ready by next summer, Foxx reportedly said.

Mrs. Foley said Foxx will build a home in Taft, although he will not live there the year round.

'But he said he'll be in frequent contact with the police department and plans to visit us often,' she said.

United Press International, "'Sanford' is Police Chief, Actor Redd Foxx Sworn in at Taft Ceremony," Tulsa Tribune, Tulsa, Oklahoma Oct. 23, 1974.

Television actor Red Foxx, wearing bleached blue jeans and a jeans jacket, today was sworn in as chief of police of the all-Black Taft community.

Dist. Judge Bill Haworth gave Foxx the oath of office during an intermission in a jury trial.

FOXX, STAR of the 'Sanford and Son' television series, said he would try to spend as much time as possible in Taft, a community of about 500 persons. He said he wants to establish recreational facilities for the town's youth and develop a museum.

Mayor Leigh Foley appointed Foxx to the chief's post, which has been vacant for several years. No badge goes with the office, just a commission card.

Muskogee Police Chief Henry Sharp nemed Foxx an honorary police chief of Muskogee.

The swearing-in ceremony was witnessed mostly by courthouse employees, who apparently were the only people aware of the TV star's visit. He was swamped by autograph seekers after the ceremony.

FOXX SAID HE expected to return to Muskogee about Nov. 8 with comedian Flip Wilson to work on developing a non-profit trust to solicit funds for construction of a swimming pool in Taft.

Bill Settle of Muskogee, attorney for the town, was given articles of incorporation to file with the secretary of state. The corporation was organized in California as the 'Red Foxx Foundation for Disadvantaged Youth of the World.'

The articles stated its general purpose was to aid recreation and educational programs in California, Oklahoma 'and other states of the world which will enhance the every-day life of all disadvantaged youth.'

United Press International, "Police Chief Redd Foxx Says 'Flip' to Visit Taft," Tulsa Daily World, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Oct. 25, 1974.

Redd Foxx was sworn in as police chief of Taft Friday and quickly announced plans to bring in fellow television star Filp Wilson to solicit funds for upgrading the town's recreational facilities.

Foxx, star of the 'Sanford and Son' television show wore bleached blue jeans and a jeans jacket to the swearing ceremony before Fistrict Judge Bill Haworth.

Foxx said he hoped to return to Muskogee about Nov. 8 with Wilson to work on developing a non-profit trust to solicit funds for construction of a swimming pool in Taft, an all-Black community of about 600 persons.

Taft Mayor Leigh Foley appointed Foxx to the chief's post, which had been vacant for several years. No badge goes with the office, just a commission card.

Muskogee Police Chief Henry Sharp named Foxx an honorary police chief of Muskogee.

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Foxx gave the town's attorney, Bill Settle of Muskogee, articles of incorporation to file with the secretary of state.

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Redd Foxx 'Stars' at Taft, Tulsa Daily World, Tulsa, Oklahoma, August 30, 1974.

Red Foxx the actor and comedian was Redd Foxx the chief of police and humanitarian Sunday as he helped swear in his four-man auxiliary police force and presented a $10,000 check to the Taft town council.

Taft, a predominantly Black community of about 525 persons, turned out a welcoming committee equal in size to its population to greet the star of 'Sanford and Son,' who was named police chief last summer.

'Five months ago when I came here for the first time,' Foxx told the crowd, 'I said I wanted to help build a swimming pool so the children wouldn't have to go 10 or 12 miles to swim in the summer.'

As a step towards that goal, Foxx turned over a

check from the 'Redd Foxx Foundation for Disadvantaged Youth of the World' to two children, Nicky Robertson and Karen Grayson, and told them to give ti the the town council.

Foxx also promised at least two more trips within the next few months to help in raising additional funds for the pool and other community projects.

He estimated $40,000 will be needed for the pool and possibly other facilities for football and basketball, and he described his initial gift as 'doing good for the people, doing good for the community.'

Before presenting the check, Foxx, who noted that Taft didn't have a jail and 'I hope we won't need one,' assisted Dist. Judge Bill Haworth of Muskogee in swearing in Taft's auxiliary policemen. They are Leonard Jackson, Joe Beatty, All Williams and Barry Wright.

Following the ceremonies, Foxx said he will return in December for Christmas to distribute food baskets and clothing and told newsmen he plans to stage a benefit show in January in Taft to raise additional funds for the town.

He said he will bring a number of actors and actresses with him, and named Dionne Warwick, Flip Wilson, Frank Sinatra and Mark Spitz.

Foxx's foundation was founded to help 'disadvantaged youth,' he said, adding that other locations also will benefit from it.

Asked why he picked Taft to help Foxx said 'Taft selected me' and he will go where 'people need help.'

There is a rumor in Taft that Foxx might some day make the community his home town. However, Foxx said, 'let's just leave it like that--a rumor.'

Foxx may never be able to make Taft his home as it was announced Sunday that steps are being taken to change the name of the town to 'Redd Foxxville, Okla.'

VITA

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Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: BLACK TOWNS IN OKLAHOMA: THEIR DEVELOPMENT AND SURVIVAL

Major Field: History

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Monroeville, Alabama, June 25, 1942, the son of Duncan J. and Lubirda Knight.

Education: Graduated from St. Elmo High School, Mobile, Alabama, in May, 1959; received Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science from Alabama State University in 1963; enrolled in the Master of Arts program in Journalism (Public Relations) at the University of Iowa in 1967-1968; received the Master of Science in History from Kansas State College-Pittsburg in 1969; completed requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at Oklahoma State University in May, 1975.

Professional Experience: Played Minor League Baseball with San Francisco Giants Minor League Chain, 1963-64; high school teacher and baseball coach at Blount High School, Mobile, Alabama, 1963-67; Geographic Coder with the United States Department of Commerce, 1968; Director of Public Relations, Alabama State University, summer, 1968; Instructor of History and Director of Public Relations at Alabama State University, 1969-1971; Assistant Professor of History and College recruiter in the Southeastern region of the United States for Ottawa University, 1971-73 (currently on leave of absence); Graduate Associate to Dean of Graduate College, Oklahoma State University, summer of 1974; Visiting Instructor of History, Oklahoma State University, 1974.