

A PLACE TO CALL HOME: A STUDY OF THE SELF-SEGREGATED
COMMUNITY OF TATUMS, OKLAHOMA, 1894-1970

Rhonda M. Ragsdale, B.A.

Thesis Prepared for the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

August 2005

APPROVED:

Elizabeth Hayes Turner, Major Professor
Randolph B. Campbell, Committee Member
F. Todd Smith, Committee Member
Harold Tanner, Chair of the Department of History
Sandra L. Terrell, Dean of the Robert B. Toulouse
School of Graduate Studies

Ragsdale, Rhonda M., A Place to Call Home: A Study of the Self-Segregated Community of Tatums, Oklahoma, 1894-1970, Master of Science (History), August 2005, 205 pp., 15 tables, 8 illustrations, 332 references.

This study examines Tatums, Oklahoma, under the assumption that the historically black towns (HBT) developed as a response to conditions in the South. This community provides a rich example of the apparent anomalies that the environment of self-segregation created. Despite the widespread violence of the Klan, the residents of the HBTs were not the targets of lynching or mob violence. During the years after World War II, Tatums residents enjoyed the greatest prosperity. The final chapter looks at the battle Tatums' residents fought to keep their school from being closed after the state of Oklahoma began to enforce the *Brown v. Board of Education* decisions in the 1960s. Their solidarity during the desegregation transition remained powerful enough for them to negotiate compromises regarding the fair treatment of their children in a world that was integrating around them.

Copyright 2005

by

Rhonda M. Ragsdale

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although the list of those who helped me is too long to name, I must acknowledge my debt of gratitude to the people of the community of Tatum, Oklahoma. Without them, I may have never understood community at all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	v
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapters	
1. HOPE FOR HOME: THE FORMATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF TATUMS, 1894-1915	26
2. NO QUARTER, SAVE JUSTICE: REALIZATION OF DREAMS AND HBT PROTECTION, 1915-1935	65
3. HEIGHT OF PRIDE: 1935-1955	103
4. THE END OF CHOICE: THE CLOSURE OF TATUMS PUBLIC SCHOOLS	132
CONCLUSION	161
Appendices	
A. GLOSSARY OF KLAN VOCABULARY	166
B. OKLAHOMA TOWNS WITH REPORTED KLAN ACTIVITY	170
C. HISTORICALLY BLACK TOWNS OF OKLAHOMA	172
D. LIST OF KNOWN FOUNDING RESIDENTS OF TATUMS, OK	174
E. TATUMS PUBLIC SCHOOLS INFORMATION, 1955	176
F. OTHER TATUMS SCHOOLS GRADUATION INFORMATION	182
BIBLIOGRAPHY	186

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
1.1 The Quadroon Sisters.....	44
1.2 Charter Members of the Eastern Star.....	51
1.3 Comparison of 1910 Literacy Rates	58
2.1 Worshipful Master of Tatums Masons, 1898-1932	73
2.2 African Americans as Percentage of Total Population, 1920 and 1930	77
2.3 African Americans as Percentage of Population in East South Central, 1920 and 1930	78
2.4 African Americans as Percentage in Four States, 1920 and 1930	78
2.5 Garvey and Klan Ideologies.....	89
2.6 Rise and Fall of Klan Memberships in Oklahoma in the 1920s	91
2.7 Lynching Ratios for Southern States, 1882-1930.....	99
2.8 Lynching Rations for Selected States	100
3.1 Comparison of Social Stratification: ‘Georgia Town’ and the HBTs.....	111
3.2 Population Overviews with Percentages of Black Residents, 1920-1950	112
4.1 Arbitration Representatives	149
4.2 Timeline of School Desegregation and Fox-Tatums Dispute.....	158

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
1.1 Big Bethel Church.....	47
2.1 Tatums Post Office	70
2.2 Black Gold Movie Poster.....	97
3.1 Tatums House, circa 1950.....	116
3.2 Tatums Tigers Yearbook Page.....	118
3.3 Eastern Star Lodge	122
4.1 Abandoned Tatums School Buildings	133
4.2 Jewel Carter Varner Neighborhood Trust Center	156

INTRODUCTION

Those who are attacked often respond in one of three ways: run, fight, or give in. All three methods can work to survive oppression in different circumstances. Many of the former slaves of the South realized that their lives and future were still under attack. Despite the change in their legal status, they faced a life of constant racism and domination in the former slave states. When the Freedmen's Bureau left the southern states in the 1870s, floods of African American families began to leave their homes finally in search of their own version of the American dream. Thousands became pioneers, founders of all-black communities in Kansas, the Indian and Oklahoma Territories, and various other locations spanning as far west as California, where they believed they could live free from the shadow of their former lives. They built their own towns – but they built much more than that. The freed people constructed a refuge, a sense of community, and reasons to believe they could hope for their future.

Understanding the background of these communities is fundamental to examining the historiography of the historically black towns (HBTs).¹ Most standard considerations begin with the migration of freed slaves from the South to the North and the West and concentrate on their trends toward urbanization. Few mention or evaluate the cultural effects of these towns on the

¹ The term “historically black town” or HBT is modeled after HBCU or “historically black college or university.” The term is intended to look at the way they were thought of as all-black towns, although they were actually a mix of Native and African Americans. This study also acknowledges the few white residents that currently reside within the city limits of some of the HBTs.

movement toward black nationalism. Despite the limited research, mostly by sociologists, the historically black towns in Oklahoma provide rich resources for study. Still, the inclusion of the black town movement in the scholarly literature about southern and African American history is in the early stages of development, yet those who have written about these unique self-segregated communities have provided a foundation for this study.

Although the black town movement did not start until the 1870s, it is important to consider the events that precipitated it. After the Civil War, slave owners were forced by law to free the men, women, and children they held in bondage. Unfortunately, the reality of black lives following the war, during Reconstruction, and in the decades that followed was far from improved. Lynchings, public and private beatings, cruel tortures, and intimidations flooded over the African-American people as they attempted to live alongside whites. In addition, the freeing of slaves meant that the value of life was no longer labeled in monetary terms. By removing the financial reason to treat people of color with any care at all, the “Land of the Free” became a dangerous place indeed for those who had been freed.

As the Ku Klux Klan of the 1870s gained in number and power, families feared for safety in their own homes. The fear of violence continued to grow among the African-American population; a freed slave from Texas tells about her experience after being released by the plantation owner who owned her mother and siblings:

Co'se, my mammy goes to Marster Hooper's place, an weuns all goes wid him, cause father em thar. Father rents land f'om Marster Hooper. Weuns lives that fo' seven yeahs an' m'ybe would be thar yet if 'twarnt fo' de Ku Klux Klan. Yas sar, 'twas de cause fo' weuns leavin'. Dey gits to causin' so much troublement dat de cullud fo'ks am 'fraid to leave thar home. De Klux would come to that home an' whup dem. Why, de cullud fo'ks am 'fraid to sleep in de house an' would go to de woods whar dey hides out 'til mo'nin'. De Klux always comes after dark an' busts in de house whar dey tooks de

menfo'ks outside an' whups dem fo' nothin'. Some of de cullud fo'ks fit back, an' dat made things worsen.²

As with many other ex-slave families, the desire to leave this land of torment prompted a movement of African-Americans to other parts of the country where they believed that racial tensions would not be as threatening. Some of these freed slaves were not convinced that any place they had previously lived could give them the opportunity to dwell in a peaceful environment with their fellow white citizens. They chose to abandon the South with its dismal racial condition and move to a frontier that might provide more hope. These pioneers were nearly all former slaves. Most had little formal education, yet they founded towns and cities that dotted the states and regions along the edge of the South or the near the fringes of the frontier. These historically black towns maintain their status today as communities of nearly all African American residents in Oklahoma.

Some speculated, perhaps prematurely, that the land known as Indian Territory, now Oklahoma would become developed into an all-black state. Edwin McCabe, land promoter and black-town advocate, worked very hard to spread the idea of African-American separate nationalism through the concept of the all-black state. The result is that Oklahoma boasted fifty autonomous African-American towns. Today thirteen all-black towns still exist in Oklahoma. They mark the dedication of those who chose to march on to new lands rather than live in the oppressive post-war South.

The first scholar to examine the black towns was sociologist Mozell C. Hill. Hill published articles in the late summer and fall of 1946 in both historical and sociological journals

² Sheldon F. Gauthier, "Ex-Slave Narrative Tarrant Co., Dist. #7 FEC," interviewed by Works Progress Administration, transcript, n.d., Center for American History: University of Texas at Austin.

on what he called the “All-Negro Communities,” “All-Negro Society,” and the “All-Negro Community.” These articles, part of his life study about race and race analysis, focused on the towns in Oklahoma. Hill prepared them while teaching at Langston University, one of the most brilliant markers of the black towns’ accomplishments. Hill later paired with several other sociologists in an examination of social class and community studies. He published the first of the black town articles, called “The All-Negro Communities of Oklahoma: The Natural History of a Social Movement” in the *Journal of Negro History*; it was a portion of Hill’s dissertation from the University of Chicago. His original analysis of the black towns made clear the idea that the communities were “the result of a social movement in which Negroes were attempting to solve the ‘race problem.’”³

Hill’s work explains the position of black separatists as members of a social movement because he was attempting to understand the social conditions connected with the desire to self-segregate. In addition, Hill examined the particular social structures and institutions that developed in these self-segregated communities. His work was based on more than 200 newspaper and magazine articles and numerous unpublished manuscripts from the Oklahoma Division of the Works Progress Administration along with interviews with fourteen “ex-slaves and pioneers in all-Negro society.” He relied on the work of Frederick Jackson Turner and various sociologists for his foundation in frontier theory and developments.⁴

³ Mozell C. Hill published at least three articles on the black towns in Oklahoma. See Hill, “The All-Negro Communities of Oklahoma: The Natural History of a Social Movement,” *Journal of Negro History* 31 (July 1946): 254-68; “A Comparative Analysis of the Social Organization of the All-Negro Society in Oklahoma,” *Social Forces* 25, no. 1 (October 1946): 70-77; and “A Comparative Study of Race Attitudes in the All-Negro Community in Oklahoma,” *Phylon* (1940-1956) 7, no. 3 (3rd Qtr. 1946): 260-68.

⁴ Hill, “The All-Negro Communities of Oklahoma,” 258.

Hill contended:

The development of all-Negro communities in Oklahoma was an integral part of the Great Western Movement in the country during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In order to comprehend thoroughly the establishment of the all-Negro society on the Oklahoma frontier, it becomes necessary to relate this racial movement in which Negroes attempted to “escape” the social pressure of the dominant white culture, to the larger social movement toward the Great West.

In the development of his theories about the formation of these communities, he referred to Turner’s insistence on using a naturalistic interpretation of the history of the region.⁵

Hill explained, “An indispensable requisite of a frontier society is a dissatisfied, restless, people who are desirous of a new way of life,” which was an integral part of Turner’s frontier thesis. These people must exhibit a “yearning for ‘subduing the wilderness’ in order to shape new institutions and find new and better horizons of living.” Hill realized that the pioneers who founded these black towns in the “wilderness” of the Indian Territory fit Turner’s qualifications. The opportunities for personal, social, financial, and governmental development on the frontier were worth the risks they faced. They were frontier people.⁶

Hill’s article concentrated not only on the social dynamics of the frontier mentality but also on the organization of the African American self-segregation movement on a national level. Edward McCabe, among other land promoters, was driven to perpetuate his belief in the separation of the races by advocating an all-black state in the Indian Territory. McCabe, former state auditor of Kansas, printed papers and advertised across the South and Oklahoma to promote what Hill called “The ‘Great March Westward’ into the Oklahoma frontier.” McCabe’s campaign was largely responsible for the flood of African Americans into the area from as early

⁵ Ibid., 254.

⁶ Ibid., 255.

as 1890 until it reached its height of growth around 1910, even after the state's status was sealed.⁷

According to Hill's report, there were twenty-five black towns in Oklahoma at the time his paper was published in 1946. He had studied ten of them but not all were used in his article. He described Langston University (formerly the Colored Agricultural and Normal University of Oklahoma) and Langston, the oldest of the black towns in Oklahoma, as "an educational and cultural center for the Negroes of the state. It is also the center for most of the political activity of the state about which the interest of Negroes is affected." He provided a brief history of the tenuous founding of Langston, located eleven miles east of Guthrie, the first state capital of Oklahoma. No other specific information was provided about the other towns, neither their place in the black town nor the black state movements. However, he did list some of the black towns that may have been undocumented previously. Overall, he placed emphasis on the importance of considering these towns, within the context of their social constructs, as a reaction to the white domination of the South.

Many years passed before the subject of black towns resurfaced in scholarly writing. Historians appeared to have taken new notice of the towns in the late 1970s. Desegregation and the civil rights movement had a profound effect on the communities. In a new era of integration, what place did self-segregated schooling and living serve? Nell Irvin Painter responded to these queries when she wrote *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction in 1977* and expanded the discussion to show the beginning of the ex-slave town movement in Kansas.

Painter's work showed that the "Exodusters" make up the "first major migration to the North of ex-slaves," so called because of their exodus to Kansas. She framed the black town

⁷ Ibid., 257.

movement within a historical perspective and provided an elaborate background to the settlement relocation of ex-slaves from southern states directly after emancipation to Kansas. Her work, like Hill's, considered the black towns as part of a movement that resulted from the "failure of citizenship after Reconstruction." She was the first historian to document the historiography of the movement and referred to Hill in her bibliography.⁸

Painter claims that while some freed slaves from the Deep South "set their sights on Liberia, a steady stream of migrants flowed from three border states to Kansas. . . . The movement was gradual, and little is known of its progress...." These emigrants established black settlements they called colonies, such as Nicodemus, which was founded by thirty families associated with the well-organized Nicodemus Town Company. Although most of the African American settlers originally moved into black settlement areas, not all of the migration of ex-slaves into Kansas was included in the black town movement. Some of the settlers moved into more urbanized, predominately white areas with segregated enclaves within or near the main town. Others used the black towns in Kansas more as a resting spot before moving on to other areas.⁹

The plethora of periodical articles, handbills, circulars, billboard placards, personal papers, letters, census records, congressional reports, slave narratives, and other primary documents create a detailed picture of the promotion of Kansas, encouraging, if not beseeching, slaves to form their own communities or move to newly forming black towns. Advertisements and sales pitches gave the settlements utopian-like qualities and played on the emotional interests

⁸ Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1976), viii.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 146 (first quotation); 150 (second quotation).

of their targets. Flyers for Nicodemus recited the song “Nicodemus,” “a slave of African birth, And was bought for a bag of gold; He was reckoned a part of the salt of the earth, But died years ago, very old.” Boosters used this image of Nicodemus gaining his freedom to cultivate the idea of escaping from the virtual slavery that existed after emancipation. The lyrics describe meeting under a cottonwood tree at dawn to head to the Great Solomon Valley (located in Kansas) to break the ties of bondage.¹⁰

Painter did not intend to consider the black town movement, per se; instead, she documented the origins of it and examines the migration of the ex-slaves into Kansas. She provides more background information on McCabe than did her predecessor Hill, explaining that he and A. T. Hall, Jr. were both educated, ambitious black men from Chicago who received two of the Graham County’s political appointments in Kansas. McCabe’s appointment to the state auditor’s position was the highest held in Kansas by an African American in the nineteenth century. Painter gave the details of McCabe’s upbringing in New England and shed light on his reputation as a “self-made man,” as reported by such prominent forces as the New York *Globe*.¹¹

Exodusters examines the migration of ex-slaves into Kansas while many whites were migrating there as well. The African American settlements are not studied as a separate movement within this exodus. They are instead treated in relation to the migration of ex-slaves in a chronological order rather than separated thematically. Many black towns, settlement areas, and other refugee points provided springboards for, and the foundation of, the black town movement. McCabe’s dreams of an all-black state seem to start in Kansas. So close to the open land of the Indian Territory, it is easy to see the path his leadership took in a self-segregated

¹⁰ Ibid., 157.

¹¹ Ibid., 153.

pilgrimage. McCabe and Hall found this dream profitable in Kansas, working as real estate agents, growing prosperous along with the numerous entrepreneurs and con artists that Painter details in her work. Many of the settling families were tricked by deceptions of all kinds by both races. With little or no law enforcement on the frontier of Kansas, those who had been wronged could do little more than learn from the experience.

In January 1978, Charles A. Humphrey and Donald E. Allen, both sociologists, released “Educational and Social Needs in Small All-Black Towns,” in the *Journal of Negro Education*. They asked what was wrong with these towns and examined those areas that needed improvement. They considered the oppressive conditions that created self-segregation and discussed the history of the towns. The research used to compile the findings of their study was funded by a grant from the Cooperative State Research Services Project to Langston University, although Charles Humphrey was at the University of Kentucky and Donald Allen at Oklahoma State University at the time of the article’s publication. The associates were interested in the social environment of the “All-Black Towns” with four specific goals:

(1) identify socio-economic factors for local supply and demand for labor; (2) determine the role of social organizations in community development; (3) determine the degree of self sufficiency of the community; and, (4) determine the potential for development in jobs, education, and housing.¹²

Humphrey and Allen had an entirely different approach to the black towns. They were looking at the needs of the communities and their deficiencies. Overall, the two found that many of the findings of their study were just as true of the historically black towns as they were of many small, rural communities. Almost begging other scholars to dig deeper into the field, they reported, “Since this study has revealed that there is much in common among the six

¹² Charles A. Humphrey and Donald E. Allen, “Educational and Social Needs in Small All-Black Towns,” *Journal of Negro Education* 47, no. 3 (1978): 245.

communities [of the study], a participant observer study of a single one of them in greater depth could be most revealing.” Although the report did discuss the background of the communities, it did not address the role of race (or what part that had played in their educational and social needs) in much of the actual discussion of the towns. Likewise, they neglected to discuss, or even mention, what relation race might have to the deficiencies they did find.

Humphrey and Allen did not address the education about the African American race that residents of HBTs received, but acknowledged that many residents of the towns had reported that the qualities they liked best about living in their communities were associated with their feelings about the schools, churches, and neighbors, all of which were comprised of members of their own race. Although they stated that the original goals of their study would be to consider the areas of self-sufficiency, they reported very little about it. Rather, they discussed the insufficiencies of the communities. Humphrey and Allen mention the institutions that held what they described as independent religious services, but they did not elaborate on what services the local churches provided for the communities. The diversified and rich pool of community members who were involved in civic, political, and religious leadership was seen as a negative and a positive for the community but was not listed as an area of self-sufficiency.¹³

Humphrey and Allen did report that the black towns had included, or been a part of, the movement led by Edward McCabe (designated as E. P. McCabe in the article) to form an “All-Black State” from the land that was called Indian Territory. They found that this “prompted a countermovement by whites in the territory to become a regular state in the Union.” They do not

¹³ Ibid., 254-55.

follow this interesting information with any specific evidence or elaborate on any of the activity that resulted from the white politicians or settlers in the area.¹⁴

As the two scholars concluded their study of six HBTs in central and eastern Oklahoma, they noted the economic decline of the towns from their once thriving origins. However, they seem unable to offer much explanation for it. Although school desegregation had profound social and economic effects on the HBTs, Humphrey and Allen do not mention this in the evaluation of the educational institutions. It is unclear if they did not have this information available to them, if they felt it was not relevant, or if they were simply not interested in addressing this issue.

Because so little had been written about the black towns, Humphrey and Allen relied on questionnaires that were sent to residents of six HBTs: Boley, Langston, Lima, Taft, Tatums, and Vernon. In addition, numerous oral interviews were conducted with the heads of households. They found, “a series of problems, which include ... younger people leaving for employment opportunities ... a weakening tax base ... [and] rapid decline in employment opportunities.” Although they recognized these problems within the black communities and other rural towns, they did not provide an explanation for the factors that caused them. No mention of racism or challenges related to race were included in their discussion. Their study, however, did mention that outside sources were not interested in investing in declining communities.

Then, two years later in 1979, Norman L. Crockett wrote the first general monograph, *The Black Towns*. His work discussed the entire movement, including settlements in Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Kansas. This book, an overview of a handful of HBTs, was the first to remove the geographic boundaries of the towns. Hill, Humphrey, and Allen had specifically looked at

¹⁴ Humphrey and Allen, “Educational and Social Needs in Small All-Black Towns,” 244.

the towns in Oklahoma, while Painter had considered the movement in Kansas. Crockett viewed the subject from a broader perspective, mentioning all-black towns in California, New Mexico, and Mississippi in addition to those already studied. He examined the following towns with this explanation:

Nicodemus, Kansas (1879), established at the time of the black exodus from the South; Mound Bayou, Mississippi (1887), perhaps the most prominent black town because of its close ties to Booker T. Washington and Tuskegee Institute; Langston, Oklahoma (1891), plotted after the run into the Unassigned Lands and visualized by one of its promoters as the nucleus for the creation of an all-black state in the West; and Clearview (1903) and Boley (1904), in Oklahoma, twin communities in the Creek Nation which offer the opportunity to observe certain aspects of Indian-black relations in one area.¹⁵

Crockett acknowledged that historians had neglected the black towns and the African American agency in town promotion and settlement. In addition, he added a new interpretation to the historiography of the black towns. He flatly insisted, as mentioned by Humphrey and Allen, that the black towns had been destroyed, like “thousands of small towns, unhampered by racial prejudice, during the same time period.” He further claims that the self-segregated communities were, “a racial and town-building experiment.”¹⁶ These contentions, however, may not fully realize the context of the foundation of the HBTs. Hill vehemently expressed his supposition that the towns represented a desperate response by freed slaves who had little choice but to try and survive. The term *experiment* was not used before Crockett’s work either by the settlers of the towns, their boosters, or in early historical references to the movement. Overall, the idea of experimentation is not an accurate description for the foundation of these communities.

¹⁵ Norman Crockett, *The Black Towns* (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1979), xiii.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, xiv.

Crockett outlined a history, development, and decline of the five towns in his study. He included photographs and maps with his descriptions as well as biographies of the town promoters and founders. The stories of the towns are vivid and well-documented, and some read like great westerns. It is no wonder that Crockett chose to examine Boley, Oklahoma, where episodes in the town's earliest days included wild, freedmen cowboys called "Natives" riding through town, shooting out windows and generally raising hell. Other pioneers faced the cruel conditions of nature's frontier, like the first arrivals in Nicodemus who lived in dugouts in the ground until homes were built.¹⁷

Crockett examined the racial attitudes within the HBTs, that is, the skin color of the African American people there. Social structures in the new towns replicated the ones that residents seemed desirous of avoiding in their previous slave states. Crockett examined the importance of skin color in each of the towns in his study. It appears a bit of a misnomer that the communities were called "all-black towns," since they were comprised of black, Native American, and mixed races, a tri-racial population base. Hill briefly made a comment that may have referred to the relation of skin color within the communities as an "inter-caste." He admitted that, "they discovered virtually the same inter-caste relations which had stimulated them to emigrate from the South."¹⁸

Although Hill does not elaborate on this concept in his articles, Crockett describes a ladies' club in Boley where three women, "formed a club emphasizing better English, good housekeeping, and the social graces, with membership only to ladies with light skin." The club, however, was quickly disbanded due to objections from the community. One HBT hosted a

¹⁷ Ibid., 2; 39.

¹⁸ Hill, "The All-Negro Communities of Oklahoma," 268.

“whites only” hotel in town available to white travelers. Only local residents who were employed there were permitted in the White Way Hotel without permission. These and other issues concerning race and its association with skin color became newly revealed examples of the internalized racism they had adopted while living among whites. In addition, Crockett shed light on the complex relationship many of the towns had with the Native Americans with whom they traded, fought, and married.¹⁹

Overall, Crockett’s work took giant steps in the historiography of the HBTs. It related that the towns, which were located in several states, were the result of a social movement that encouraged self-segregation as a solution to the “race problem.” He provides an exceptional bibliography, which is particularly strong in the use of early newspapers from the Indian Territory and Oklahoma, such as the black newspaper printed in Boley. However, by comparing the HBTs to a social experiment, he minimized the experiences that created the needs for these towns. Furthermore, the final chapter of his book is entitled, “Frustration and Failure.” He summarized his finding with the note that these HBTs failed. Highlighting stories that gave example to his assessment of failure, Crockett overlooks many success stories and places of pride in the historically black towns. He finishes the book as though the communities were all gone, using words like “dead” and “doomed.” The view of the towns as a failed experiment, rather than as a shelter from white terror, failed to evaluate the real objectives of the pioneers who founded them.

Jimmie Lewis Franklin, author of *Journey toward Hope: A History of Blacks in Oklahoma in 1982*, incorporated the black town movement and the self-segregated ideology into his history of African Americans in Oklahoma. Although Franklin provided a considerable

¹⁹ Crockett, *The Black Towns*, 71-72.

amount of information about the blacks in Oklahoma and Langston University, like Crockett's *The Black Towns*, he explained the towns' founding as an experiment rather than a survival mechanism. He emphasizes the promotion of the towns through "black boosters" but does very little to ascertain the atmosphere of these conditions. Likewise, he does not offer any further information about black boosters, or where the term came from. Franklin also appears to have adopted the view of the black towns as declining and does not mention them much after the early twentieth century.²⁰

Franklin's discussion of black history in Oklahoma covered the late 1970s, just before his work went into print. Although he did mention the strain of desegregation on the schools and the families involved, he does not include the HBTs or how they dealt with the transition. Like Crockett, Franklin portrays the towns as though they have disappeared into the history of Oklahoma. In fact, he does not view the towns as distinct social entities within the African American community in Oklahoma. As he reports the events of the civil rights movement within the state, Franklin describes a sit-in, violent altercations, and political activism. Unfortunately, he does not investigate to determine if the HBTs played any part of this or if the civil rights movement affected the towns. Aside from discussing some political activities at Langston University, there is no mention of the towns or their participation in the changing social climate. In his chapter, "Behind the Veil of Segregation," he does not refer to the anomalies of more than a dozen self-segregated communities within the state.

In 1991, Kenneth Marvin Hamilton wrote *Black Towns and Profit: Promotion and Development in the Trans-Appalachian West, 1877-1915*. His thesis about the black towns,

²⁰ Jimmie Lewis Franklin, *Journey toward Hope: A History of Blacks in Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 11-13.

although apparently a result of the evolution of thought before him, differed from Mozell Hill's initial assessment of the founding of the communities as a social movement that responded to racism. In fact, Hamilton's interpretation polarized the historiography of these towns. He made many sweeping statements about the black town movement based on case studies of some of the most outstanding communities, which may be more unlike the majority of the towns. These towns may not serve well as the group to study in an overall evaluation of the black town movement. For example, Hamilton posts in his "Introduction" that the towns are neither significant nor important in relation to urban settlement on the frontier. According to Hamilton, the HBTs were not rooted in a response to racism.²¹

Black Towns and Profit attempts to prove that, "Economic motives, rather than racism, led to the inception of western black towns."²² This interpretation may stem from research he conducted. Hamilton, like those who studied the subject before him, looked at five black communities. Four of those towns, certainly the most famous of the HBTs, (Nicodemus, Langston, Boley, and Mount Bayou) were the most studied. They were the most successful and probably the most advertised. In addition, the fifth town, Allensworth, California, was so far away from the South, it required more publicity and economic pull than closer HBTs. He believes that the towns were all promoted and organized for the purpose of making profit, rather than escaping oppression.²³

²¹ Kenneth Marvin Hamilton, *Black Towns and Profit: Promotion and Development in the Trans-Appalachian West, 1877-1915* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 1.

²² *Ibid.*, 1.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1-3.

Although the inhabitants of the historically black towns were certainly interested in the economic opportunities of their own communities, the early settlers made it clear that they had hopeful pursuits related to their personal freedoms as well. Painter and others relate that many settlers wanted the self-segregated environment so desperately that they dreamed and planned an exodus to Africa. Hill and Painter understood that the dreams of economic conquest in the HBTs were directly related to their race, not to an external force. The ex-slaves could not pursue their economic ambitions in the states they moved from because of racism. The desire to conduct business in the network of self-segregated communities is evidence alone that, at the very least, racism was a motivating factor in the “inception” of the towns. In addition, this theory neglects the black towns that were not established or developed through any enterprising promotions, such as Tatums, Oklahoma, which is the focus of this study.

Hamilton contends that, “The builders of predominately white towns and the developers of black towns were influenced by the same set of factors.” This seems to ignore the overwhelming evidence that Hill provided, revealing that the social conditions of the freed slaves were paramount in the creation of these towns. Although many town developers, like McCabe, were interested in profit, they also made their views about self-segregation well known. Hill and Painter provide evidence that McCabe’s interests were political as well as economic. He spent a considerable amount of personal time and money on the promotion of the all-black state plan for the Indian Territory.²⁴

Because Hamilton dedicated so much of his research to the business of the communities, he may have missed part of their social and cultural dynamic as self-segregated communities. Because the messages on advertisements did not hail the pride of these towns as refuges from

²⁴ Hill, “The All-Negro Communities of Oklahoma,” 261; Painter, *Exodusters*, 153, 259.

white oppression, Hamilton assumed that they were driven more by the motivating factor of profit. He fails to examine the reactions that the white population might have had to banners that magnified the racial reasons for separation. By advertising economic opportunities, the issue was avoided in print. This does not mean that race and the desire to escape the racial environment of the South were not important factors in the formation of the HBTs. The flight of ex-slaves from the South has been examined by numerous historians, including Painter, who established the movement's fuel in the racial tensions after emancipation and Reconstruction. As Hill discussed, the formation of new towns and communities along the frontier edges was an extension of a social movement, which began in response to racism.

There have not been many books written, or histories collected specifically for the HBTs. One particularly valuable asset of Hamilton's work that contributes to the historiography of the movement is a list of the "Black Towns in the Trans-Appalachian West." This list, although probably still partial, is not available in other sources and provides a starting place for more thorough research. The economic hopes of the black towns were an integral part of their development; however, this can only be used as a partial picture of the social, political, religious, and educational pursuits of the community members. In defense of Hamilton, he did understand the nature of the way that the HBTs developed: like any other frontier town. What he underestimated was why they developed. This economic analysis, however, is not the last word on the historiography of the HBTs.²⁵

²⁵ By making an analysis of the HBTs through a frontier historian's perspective, it would be easy to conclude that the towns developed under similar circumstances as many frontier communities did. For example, see Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois 1825-70* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978). The infant stage, booster ethos, voluntary institutions, moral government, localism as nationalism, and other factors of Doyle's frontier community are evident in the HBT histories as well.

The study of the black town movement has been given a helpful resource tool for those interested in African American, Oklahoman, or urban history in Hannibal Johnson's latest memorial to the historically black towns. *Acres of Aspiration: The All-Black Towns in Oklahoma* provides a comprehensive and never previously released list of the self-governing, black towns of Oklahoma.²⁶ Although not trained as a historian, Johnson's Harvard law degree and extensive work in black activism have produced this third book in his repertoire of historical analyses of African American experiences in Oklahoma. Based on interviews, newspaper articles, and unpublished manuscripts, Johnson's work appears to respond to the previous publications in the historiography of the black town movement.

Johnson contends that the towns were a social and economic response to the brutal racial conditions of the South, motivated by the agency of the black pioneers themselves. This stands in sharp opposition to Hamilton's thesis, in *Black Towns and Profit*, that the towns were established primarily by white and black town boosters who duped and exploited thousands of desperate families for the purpose of profit. Johnson's work digs deeper into the towns, by examining the entire over fifty communities in Oklahoma, not just a small handful as previous historians had done. He discovered that freed slaves, tribal citizens who had been slaves of the Indian tribes, and Native Americans, not profit-seeking land developers, founded many of these communities. Despite the hardships of traveling, settling new towns, and facing the wild frontier of the Oklahoma and Indian territories, Johnson shows that the towns were agents of some of the earliest manifestations of African American nationalism.

In addition to detailing the formation of each of the black towns in the state, Johnson provides a background of the history of African Americans in the Oklahoma lands prior to Indian

²⁶ Hannibal Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration: The All-Black Towns in Oklahoma* (Austin:

placement. A chapter has been dedicated to Edward McCabe, leader of the black state movement that took place in Oklahoma. This interesting vein of self-segregation was a legitimate and powerful exhibition of agency in the racial problems of the South. Johnson ties in the strength of Langston University and Ada Lois Sipuel, a Langston University graduate, who pressed the courts for her admission into the University of Oklahoma's law school.

There seems to be a persistent theme in *Acres of Aspiration*, which is evident in the other works on the black towns; this is the idea that these towns declined or failed in the twentieth century because their populations dwindled; they never achieved metropolitan status; and they are now disappearing. Only about a dozen of these communities still exist in Oklahoma, despite a rise in the attention given them in the past ten years or so by tourists and historians. If the purpose of the towns was safety, refuge – a place for self-actualization – then it appears they served that goal. As the initiatives of the civil rights movement stepped in and continued to attack racial inequities, it is possible that there was less need for self-segregation on a citywide level. The towns certainly protected their citizens from much of the violations and intimidations they would have experienced in the biracial towns and cities of Oklahoma, particularly in the violent Klan years of the 1920s. Johnson's work, like those before him, still leaves much room for study of these communities in the years since WWI.

Another problem with Johnson's collection of community profiles in a monograph, subtitled "The All-Black Towns of Oklahoma," is the inclusion of the Greenwood district of Tulsa. He defines the black towns as unique, different from black districts in biracial towns and cities. The HBTs are self-governing and autonomous, not annexes or "across the tracks" communities. However, he inserts the story of the Tulsa Race Riot into this work, much of

Eakin Press, 2002), 205-232.

which appears to be a revision of some of his previous work. This information seems out of place in a book about the “All-Black Towns” of Oklahoma, particularly since he does not include any of the other black districts of Oklahoma’s biracial towns, such as the African American neighborhoods of Oklahoma City, Muskogee, or Shawnee.

Regardless of what is still needed in the historiography of this movement, Johnson has made a valuable contribution. He demands respect for the towns, their founders and settlers, and for such important figures as land developer and politician Edward McCabe, historian John Hope Franklin, activist and attorney Ada Lois Sipuel, and blues legends D.C. and Selby Minner. The work serves not only as a historical foundation for the story of the black town movement but also as a memorial to those early black nationalists who found strength and dignity in their communities.

When historians highlight the decline or failure of these communities, the interpretation does not really offer a complete look at the bigger picture of this movement. The view of the towns as a failed experiment, rather than a shelter from white terror, starts its approach on questionable grounds. By evaluating the success of these communities by their growth, industry, prosperity, or even longevity, historians may be missing the point. The real success can only be evaluated by fully realizing what the objectives of the founders and early settlers were. Although they had grand aspirations for thriving cities, and even their own black state, their primary objective was to find a peaceful life, safe from the constant threat of violence and intimidations. Their goals were fairly limited in scope. Survival, a new start, education for their families, and opportunities for the future – these were the goals of the townspeople. By all these measures, there can be no failure when speaking of the black communities. HBTs provided better education and social conditions for African Americans than the situations from which they fled.

They dictated the religious and personal aspects of the own lives within their community. How can this be called failure? They were towns of refuge, built by a community for the sake of creating a community. And for that they have served a purpose. There are other purposes, which continue today for these existing communities. Langston University in Langston, Oklahoma, proudly educates African-American students from all over the United States and foreign countries. It stands as the most westward of the historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the nation. Tatums has become a retirement haven for many former Tatums residents who left the area for Chicago or other urban areas during the Great Migration and have since returned to enjoy the later years of their lives with cousins and childhood friends.

This study examines the HBTs under the assumption that while they developed with the traditional social constructs of a frontier community, the towns were a response to conditions in the South. By understanding the history of Tatums, Oklahoma, a deeper understanding of the HBT functions and ideology will be made available. The first chapter outlines the background of the black town movement and establishes the formation and early development of Tatums. This community provides a rich example of the apparent anomalies that the environment of self-segregation created. Tatums is also a good selection for looking at those factors that differed from previous histories of HBT's. Tatums was not built along the railroad lines, was not promoted by boosters as a utopian community, and did not reach its lowest economic peak until after the civil rights movement. Therefore, this community study can provide information about the HBTs that has been neglected by previous historians.

The second chapter focuses on the HBTs and the Ku Klux Klan. Throughout the years when lynching gained the most attention, from the late teens to the mid-1930s, the South was attributed with the greatest number of gruesome mob murders, mostly race-based. In addition,

this era signified a dramatic rise in Klan activity, particularly in Oklahoma. Despite these factors, the residents of the HBTs were not the targets of lynching or mob violence.

Furthermore, the lynching trend in Oklahoma did not follow the traditional southern patterns of racially charged murders; in Oklahoma lynching victims were far more likely to be white than black. The towns appear to have provided a refuge in Oklahoma from racial conflict in general.

Chapter three, “Height of Pride,” outlines the decades after WWII and before school desegregation in Tatums and other HBTs in Oklahoma. During these years, Tatums residents enjoyed the greatest prosperity. The school and voluntary institutions of the community were great sources of pride and agency for the residents. These years exemplify the utopian ideals that the HBT movement hoped to accomplish. Hill’s research about racial attitudes and opportunities in the HBTs reveal that social mobility and self-made determination do make it easy to call this period their height of pride. These years were too short, according to those who live there now. The success that Tatums’ residents felt about their goals for the community were cut short by a movement that helped many other black communities – desegregation.

The final chapter looks at the battle Tatums’ residents fought to keep their school from being closed after the state of Oklahoma began to enforce the *Brown v. Board of Education* decisions in the 1960s. To reach a compromise, the NAACP and other groups assisted by offering support and mediating between conflicting parties. With the exception of a few parents, Tatums’ families showed their resistance to the state’s decision to close the Tatums school system by boycotting the neighboring school of Fox where their children were expected to attend for an entire year. Their fears about what might happen to the community were realized, as in each of the HBTs across Oklahoma, black schools were closed and students were integrated into the predominately white system. The effects of desegregation were serious for Tatums residents.

Teachers and school staff had trouble finding employment. The removal of funds and jobs, with the strain of the demoralization of their loss, marks the beginning of the end for Tatum's and the HBT's economies. Despite these disadvantages, their solidarity during the desegregation transition remained powerful enough for them to negotiate compromises regarding the fair treatment of their children in a world that was integrating around them.

Although many rural biracial Oklahoma communities have been in decline for the past thirty years, their stories differ from that of the HBTs. The towns based on the concept of self-segregation were forced to lay down their most basic community element. With the legislated plan for desegregation, their survival mechanism no longer worked to counter the oppression of the "outside" world. With the progress of the civil rights movement, anti-lynching legislation, and decline of the Ku Klux Klan, however, interacting with others became less dangerous. As with any method of handling crisis, tools that work to ensure survival during emergencies may not work effectively when the crisis is lessened. Self-segregation, as a survival response and community building tool, is an open field of study. It is possible that the same methods found in the black town movement may be evident in other self-segregated communities. For example, a study of autonomous German, Jewish, or Amish towns may reveal patterns of regularity that are also apparent among the HBTs.²⁷

Finally, the most apparent finding is that self-segregation worked. It worked to create opportunity; it worked to build communities; and it worked to protect HBT residents from lynching and racial violence. Referring to the black town movement as a failure ignores the role

²⁷ For a study of the patterns in cultural adaptations of particular ethnic groups in Oklahoma, see Donald Nelson Brown, "Ethnic Adaptations to Oklahoma: The Germans, Mexicans, and Vietnamese," in *The Culture of Oklahoma*, eds. Howard F. Stein and Robert F. Hill (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 68-83.

that the communities played in factors that were not economic or political. It removes the authority of the community builders to define for them what their towns should create and represent. It would be remiss, however, to believe that self-segregation would have continued to work indefinitely. While localism and a strong sense of black solidarity still exist within these communities, the need to remove from mainstream society is no longer necessary to keep the African Americans in Oklahoma safe. Self-segregation continues to work to create a sense of belonging and support.²⁸

²⁸ See Beverly Daniel Tatum, *“Why are all the Black Kids Sitting together in the Cafeteria?” and Other Conversations about Race* (New York: Basic Books, 1997) for perspectives on race and the development of racial identity in recent decades as related to self-segregation.

CHAPTER 1

HOPE FOR HOME: THE FORMATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF TATUMS, 1894-1915

While many associate the origins of the black nationalism movement in the United States with the Garvey ideology of the 1920s, the foundation for this social movement began among the free blacks in the North prior to the emancipation of enslaved African Americans.¹ In the years that followed the announcement of freedom, African Americans from the South joined them in thought and organization, fostering the origins of black nationalism as a social movement in the whole United States and proving their strength in numbers and solidarity.² Impassioned blacks structured literacy campaigns, encouraged political involvement, formed collaborative labor negotiations, and provided immigration movements for the purpose of the advancement of their

¹ Patrick Rael, *Black Identity and Protest in the Antebellum North* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002) reveals the brewing atmosphere of black nationalism prior to the Civil War. Princeton University, *WordNet 2.0*, 2003 [program on-line]; available from <http://wordnet.princeton.edu>; Internet; accessed March 4, 2005 defines a social movement as, “a group of people with a common ideology who try together to achieve certain general goals.” Numerous sociologists have examined how social movements develop and why. Resource mobilization theory finds that social movements are always limited and driven by the resources available to the group trying to create change of some kind. For an introduction into the theories of social movement dynamics see Charles Lemert, *Social Things: An Introduction to the Sociological Life* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1997), 109-19.

² Hannibal Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration: The All-Black Towns in Oklahoma* (Austin: Eakin Press, 2002), 11-33. Johnson called the founders of the HBT (historically black town) movement, “impassioned Black nationalists.” (pg. 26).

race.³ Certainly, the movement of numerous freed families from farms and plantations to more urban areas provided greater opportunities for employment, education, and collaboration. In cities, social networks and housing enclaves allowed black communities to develop throughout the South amidst the conditions of forced segregation. In addition, thousands of families moved out of the South to other regions of the U.S. and even foreign territories to create lives in new social environments.

Through the influence of black newspapers, circulars and flyers, field agent promoters, letter writing and church meetings, African Americans from all over the South migrated into and formed new non-white communities. These towns were different from the African American enclaves created all across the South because they were not built just outside the city limits or within a segregated district of a predominately white or biracial city. They were autonomous and self-governing, filled with black leaders, business people, religious and civil institutions, educational and entertainment facilities, law enforcement, and social clubs. They were physical manifestations of the emerging strength of black nationalism and separatism.⁴

Large numbers of the former slaves joined the second largest migration trend in U.S. history by participating in what may be called the black town movement.⁵ They organized their

³ Homer C. Hawkins, "Trends in Black Migration from 1863 to 1960," *Phylon* (1960-) 34, no. 2 (1973): 140-52.

⁴ Larry Odell, *Oklahoma's All-Black Towns* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2000). This small publication provides a general background and the criteria used to differentiate an "all-black" town from a black district within or near a biracial community. The latter was a result of forced segregation; the former was an autonomous, self-governing "all-black" town.

⁵ Danney Goble, *Progressive Oklahoma: The Making of a New Kind of State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 124. Sociologists Clark McPhail and Ronald T. Wohlstein, "Collective Locomotion as Collective Behavior," *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 4 (1986): 447-63 explores the patterns of collective behavior which result in a group of

efforts to found and develop intentionally segregated communities in unsettled areas of the West and Southwest where blacks could live free from white oppression and pursue traditional American dreams of owning land, prospering economically, and raising children in a comfortable community. Scholars have discussed the American frontier from many angles. It is the stuff of great stories. And although many new social historians have shed light on the diversity that made up the West, the image that permeates the minds of most that look to those pioneering days is that of white families forging lives and making homesteads where their wagons or horses stopped. While this image of the white West is made no less valid by the progress of ethnohistorians and others, it should not stand as the enduring symbol of the American spirit of the frontier. In fact, people of a great variety of colors, cultures, and religions founded the Trans-Appalachian West. Oklahoma, in the heart of the frontier lands, provides an excellent example of this kind of multiculturalism.⁶ Furthermore, without much ado, the

people physically moving from one location to another. Although it does not specifically address the black town movement, it sheds light on some of the events that lead to and provided the “locomotion” of African Americans from the South into the black towns.

⁶ For a traditional view of the frontier, see the well-known Everett E. Edwards, ed., *The Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner: With a List of all his Works*, with an introduction by Fulmer Mood (Freeport, N.Y.: Books For Libraries Press, 1969); Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1921); and William Loren Katz, *The Black West: A Documentary and Pictorial History of the African American Role in the Westward Expansion of the United States* (New York: Ethrac Publications, Inc., 1996) (or any number of Katz’s others books) draws attention to the ubiquitous presence of African Americans in the American West. For Katz’s description of the involvement of blacks in the Oklahoma territories, see p. 245-64. Theodore D. Harris, ed., *Black Frontier: The Memoirs of Henry O. Flipper* (Ft. Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1997) is an account of the first black graduate of West Point and a specific example of the participation of African Americans in the development of the West and Southwest. See also, Scott Minerbrook, “The Forgotten Pioneers: New Scholarship Reveals the Major Role Blacks Played on the Frontier,” *U.S. News and World Report* 117 (August 8, 1994): 53-55. Minerbrook points to the role of the HBTs as one of the seriously neglected aspects of frontier development in the American West.

historically black towns were microcosms of black nationalism well before the Garvey-style movement took shape.

In the most general terms, modern linguists describe nationalism as, “devotion to the interests or culture of one’s nation,” or the, “belief that nations will benefit from acting independently rather than collectively, emphasizing national rather than international goals.” Another definition states that nationalism is the, “aspiration for national independence in a county under foreign domination.” Although the term *nation* may conjure ideas of a politically unified territory, it is important to understand, particularly when thinking about nationalism, that a nation is not necessarily confined or defined by physical borders, as is the case with a *state*. A nation is, “a people who share common customs, origins, history, and frequently language;” black nationalism, therefore, is defined as the participation in an urge toward, “separatism from white people and the establishment of self-governing black communities.”⁷ Certainly, many social scientists have explored the complexities of these ideologies with more complicated definitions.

August Meier addresses the origins of black nationalism after Reconstruction as a response to the deflated faith in integration by blacks into mainstream America. While efforts to gain the rights granted to them after the Civil War focused on the participation of freed people as equals in the labor economy, the reality of the racial environment kept this from happening. This resulted in a movement in thought toward separation and self-help; Meier, unlike most historians

⁷ Dictionary.com provides definitions from a variety of sources including contemporary and archaic denotations. In addition, it provides both literal definitions and vernacular connotations. *Dictionary.com* [program on-line] (Lexico Publishing Group, LLC, 2005); available from <http://dictionary.reference.com/help/about.html>; Internet; accessed January 5, 2005. Quotations are derived from this search engine’s responses to the following terms: *nation*, *state*, *nationalism*, *black nationalism*, and *black nationalist*.

after him, used the term self-segregation to describe the kind of emergent nationalism present among freed populations of blacks.⁸ Furthermore, his discussion of black thought in the U.S. from the 1880s to 1915 included a study of what he termed, “the psychology of both Mound Bayou [a black town in Mississippi] and the Oklahoma towns,” that was, “accompanied by an emphasis upon racial pride and solidarity.”⁹ Most important to this study, Meier acknowledged that, “these ideas of racial solidarity, self-help, and group economy do not appear to have been shared evenly by all segments of the Negro community,” outlining the distinctive nature of this type of early nationalism.¹⁰

Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois both advocated the historically black towns (HBTs). Washington made a whistle-stop tour of the black towns along the rail lines in 1905 and 1908. He believed that the towns would prove that blacks could prosper economically if given the opportunity. In addition, he envisioned political progress as a natural consequence of that financial success. DuBois believed that self-segregation could create environments for African Americans that they might not find otherwise.¹¹ DuBois wrote a forward to one of the first

⁸ August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the age of Booker T. Washington* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), 4-8; the use of the term “self-segregation” in relationship with black nationalism begins on page 8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 148. Meier made several generalizations about the black towns, joining in the historiography that calls the communities failures; in addition, he erroneously stated that there were a total of twenty-five of the towns established as a result of the black town movement. He concluded, “The all-Negro communities remained small towns that were more significant as a symptom of a certain racial philosophy than as a solution to the race problem in America,” (p. 149).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 149.

¹¹ Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration*, 7-8, 112-13. Katz, *The Black West*, 248. Katz believed that Washington’s belief in the HBT philosophy was further evidence of the fallacy of his belief that the races could exist as separate fingers on the same hand. Katz, like Meier, and most of the other historians that have classified that towns as failures incorrectly reported several factors

studies of the black towns, written by Arthur Tolson in 1952. His words reveal his support of the study of the black town movement and its ideology:

When we have such broad and complete factual bases of history covering the facts of Negro life in America the real interpretation of the full significance of the impact of Africa on America can begin. Meantime too much cannot be expected of the pioneers in research. In this thesis, for instance, amid the documents, dates, and figures, one misses the human element – the play of emotion, ambition and conflict; and particularly the bitter racial prejudices which the history of the Negro in Oklahoma has involved. But that revelation and interpretation must inevitably await greater maturity of judgment and wider knowledge of the multitudinous kinds of facts which elude counting and documentation.¹²

Regardless of the theories on the success of the ideology, basic understandings of black nationalism rely on the premise that separatism and self-government lead to the promotion and collaboration of blacks who did not wish to integrate with and join into the larger nation of Americans but clearly defined themselves as a nation of African Americans. Others believe that true integration is not possible because of racism. The blacks who left the South and joined in the black town movement were certainly participants of the embodiment of black nationalism.¹³

about the HBTs in his chapter, “Oklahoma: A Black Dream Crushed,” including the misstatement that there were only thirty black towns in the state, p. 249. Norman L. Crockett, “Witness to History: Booker T. Washington Visits Boley,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 67, no. 4 (1989): 382-91, explores Washington’s trips to the HBTs and his concurrent hope and concern for the potential of the self-segregation used on a long term basis.

¹² Arthur Tolson, “Langston, Oklahoma: 1890 to 1950, 1978” Oklahoma Historical Biographies Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman.

¹³ Many other sources are available regarding black nationalism. A few examples include, Charles Herod, “Afro-Americans: A Historic Nation in the United States,” *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 29, nos. 1-2 (2002): 105-19. Herod explores the premise that a sense of nationalism began to emerge immediately after the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868; Bruce Glasrud, “Black Texas Improvement Efforts, 1879-1929: Migration, Separatism, Nationalism,” *Journal of South Texas* 14, no. 2 (2001): 202-22 discusses similar efforts in Texas to separate and foster nationalism. Dexter B. Jordan, “Early Roots of Black Nationalism: The Birth of the Black Subject,” in *Black Identity: Rhetoric, Ideology, and Nineteenth-Century Black Nationalism* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003), 69-100 explains the inevitability of a formation of a sub-national identity by African Americans

The Indian and Oklahoma territories that later became Oklahoma (also called the Twin Territories) were not viewed as highly valuable to Anglo settlers until well after the Civil War. The territory, therefore, may have looked opportune for African Americans who flooded into the region, primarily along railroad lines, as a result of nationalistic beliefs and a desire to flee the conditions of the South. In understanding the ideology of a group of people whose views are not well documented, historians must consider their behavior as evidence of their beliefs. The term “black nationalism” was not used to advertise the HBTs during their formation – the term was not coined until much later. However, the separatism and solidarity evident in the development of the HBTs as enclaves of independence reveal the nationalistic thinking that propelled those who participated in the movement.¹⁴ Many blacks who were already living in the regions joined into the philosophical movement by their actions.

In the South, enslaved blacks arrived with Europeans or shortly after them. The Oklahoma lands, however, were home to African Americans long before most white frontier

as a result of their dismissal as legitimate actors in the American identity before and after emancipation. Curlew O. Thomas and Barbara Boston Thomas, “The Impact of Black Nationalism on Negritude: A Comparative Study of Black Males and Females,” *Phylon* (1960-) 38, no. 1 (1977): 35-45 provides a gender analysis of black nationalism.

¹⁴ The concept of analyzing behavior to interpret attitudes among formerly enslaved blacks is explored in James W. Davidson and Mark H. Lytle, “The View from the Bottom Rail: Oral History and the Freedpeople,” in *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection (Forth Edition) Volume II* (Boston: McGraw Hill Companies, 2000), 147-77. Anthropologists studying culture and belief systems use specific terms to describe these functions in a society. Cultural adaptation is, “a complex of ideas, activities, and technologies that enable people to survive and even thrive.” Pre-adaptation occurs when the adaptive behavior appears prior to the presence of the greatest adaptive value and its recognition. William A. Haviland et al., *Anthropology: The Human Challenge (Eleventh Edition)* (Toronto: Wadsworth, 2005), 428. In the case with the HBTs, the need for nationalism was present prior to the movement’s technical identification with “black nationalism.” These pre-adaptive attitudes and behaviors existed within the black town movement. For the use of this study, the term *black nationalism* is used to describe both the pre-adaptive and adaptive qualities of nationalism among African Americans.

families began to arrive due to the fact that each of the Five Civilized Tribes practiced slavery. For centuries, the Spanish and the French had left the region to Native Americans. The “Red Man’s Land” (the meaning of the Choctaw word for Oklahoma) was home to various tribes through natural migration patterns or forced removal.¹⁵ The struggle for the ownership of the region came fairly late in regards to the rest of the United States and it culminated in a campaign to create an all-black state for the colonization of freed people and their descendents by the 1880s.¹⁶

The first migrants to take part in the black town movement, now called exodusters, prompted the migration of thousands of African Americans who left the South and formed self-segregated communities in Kansas; many were linked together by business, social, and religious networks. The towns in Kansas were established in the late 1870s in direct response to the racially oppressive conditions of the South that emerged with the end of Reconstruction.¹⁷ Engrained in the basic ideology of the migration of these former slaves was self-segregation as a tool to enable community building and prosperity.¹⁸ The racial environment in Kansas

¹⁵ *Portrait and Biographical Record of Oklahoma: Commemorating the Achievements of Citizens who have Contributed to the Progress of Oklahoma and the Development of its Resources* (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, 1901), 9. The Choctaw word, *Oklahoma*, can also be interpreted as “the land of the red people” or simply “red people;” however, it does not mean “beautiful land” as some early Oklahomans claimed.

¹⁶ On November 16, 1907, Oklahoma was the 46th state admitted to the Union, followed by New Mexico and Arizona in 1912, and Alaska and Hawaii in 1959. For information about the factors that led to Oklahoma’s later entrance as a state, see Charles W. Ellinger, “Political Obstacles Barring Oklahoma’s Admission to Statehood, 1890 – 1906,” *Great Plains Journal* 3, no. 2 (1964): 60-83.

¹⁷ This is the premise of Nell Painter’s study of this movement, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976).

¹⁸ Very little research related to the ideology of self-segregation has been conducted for this era of the black town movement from the late 1870s to the 1910s. Two articles, however,

developed into traditional southern patterns and a threatening atmosphere followed close behind. Social tension and deflated morale weakened the movement in Kansas, but the charismatic and enterprising black town promoter and Kansas state auditor, Edward McCabe, took the black town premise south, initiating the founding of the largest numbers of HBTs in the Oklahoma and Indian Territories, starting with Langston.¹⁹ McCabe was born in Troy, New York, to free parents; his family had lived in several states before he landed in Chicago and began a legal career.²⁰ Other boosters, such as Hannibal C. Carter established formal enterprises to promote the migration movement. Carter's business, the Freedmen's Oklahoma Immigration Association in Chicago circulated flyers throughout the South, using St. Louis as a staging ground for their promotions activities as early as 1881. Another African American land promoter, James Milton Turner started what he called the Oklahoma Colonization Movement to organize Missouri residents for entrance into the black town movement.²¹

may shed some light on the premise. See Donald H. Henderson, "Causes of Recent Negro Migration," *Journal of Negro History* 6 (October 1921): 410-20 and Stanley Lieberson and Donna K. Carter, "A Model for Inferring the Voluntary and Involuntary Causes of Residential Segregation," *Demography* 19 (November 1982): 511-26. There is a basic assumption that self-segregation is both a response to a threatened environment as well as an empowering tool for recovery from those circumstances.

¹⁹ There are several accounts of McCabe's interesting career ambitions. Johnson dedicated a chapter to him in *Acres of Aspiration*, naming McCabe as the, "Father of the All-Black Town Movement," and a, "Pioneer in the Promised Land," 33. Johnson provides details of the nationalistic drive of McCabe and the Black State promoters, *Ibid.*, 33-60. See also Martin Dann, "From Sodom to the Promised Land: E.P. McCabe and the Movement for Oklahoma Colonization," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (1974): 370-78; and Jere W. Roberson, "Edward P. McCabe and the Langston Experiment," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 51, no. 3 (1973): 343-55. Johnson, a scholar in African American studies, repeatedly identifies McCabe and the black town promoters as nationalists.

²⁰ Goble, *Progressive Oklahoma*, 120.

²¹ Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration*, 26-28.

McCabe, like other town promoters used newspapers to advertise communities. In fact, McCabe established the first successful black newspaper in the Territories, the *Langston City Herald*, which released its first issue in 1891. The editor and subsequent owner, William Eagleson, had been an editor for a black newspaper in Nicodemus, Kansas, the primary town involved in the exodusters movement. Initially, the paper was criticized for its device as a promotional tool; one issue reported that, “Langston City is the Negro’s refuge from lynching, burning at the stake and other lawlessness and turns the Negro’s sorrow into happiness.”²² However, the *Herald* quickly adopted broader goals, establishing a motto that summed up the publishers’ intentions, “Without fear or prejudice, we are for the right and ask no Quarter, Save Justice.”²³

The Herald and other black newspapers that formed throughout the state quickly evolved into vehicles for sincere spiritual, political, and economic progress. Eagleson determined, “We know that we cannot please everybody. We do not expect to try to do so. The Negro must go forward or backward; he cannot stand still.”²⁴ Furthermore, he continued:

Now dear reader we ask you, knowing all these things, shall we fill up the columns of the *Herald* each week with society clap trap and reports of powerful sermons by so-called preachers thirsty for notoriety? Or shall we on the other hand try to point out to you some way in which you can secure more freedom, a better education for your children, a better and more comfortable home for your beloved wife.²⁵

²² Nudie Williams, “The Black Press in Oklahoma: The Formative Years, 1889-1907,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 61, no. 3 (1983): 310.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 311.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

These clear goals became mantras in the black newspapers that were distributed throughout the Territories, and later the state.²⁶

Inspired by the migration of freed slaves to Kansas and the nationalistic ideals promoted in the black newspapers, African Americans formed a social movement to create autonomous, self-governing, all-black towns that led to the formation of over fifty historically black towns within the Twin Territories of Oklahoma.²⁷ It is likely that the black town movement was encased in a larger migration pattern of self-segregated communities, including autonomous German and Amish towns. Hannibal Johnson's *Acres of Aspiration* specifically addresses the migration of African Americans into Kansas, the Twin Territories, and later Oklahoma as a movement; the black town movement. He documents the founding of the most comprehensive list of the Oklahoma HBTs available. Larry O'Dell's, *Oklahoma's All-Black Towns* also describes the autonomous nature of these communities and a basic history of their formation. In 1907, the U.S. government and early Oklahoma legislatures closed the debate for the contested territory by making it yet another Jim Crow state, demoting Native and African Americans to

²⁶ Ibid., 312-18.

²⁷ Far more HBTs may have existed, but a national study of the HBT movement and an inventory of all HBTs in the United States has yet to be written. Evidence shows that there was at least one in California, two in Missouri, two or more in Texas, and even up to thirty in New Mexico. Flora L. Price, "Forgotten Spaces and Resident Places: New Mexico Black Towns and Communities, 1897-1930" (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 2003) is a study of the self-segregated settlements of African Americans in New Mexico. This research shows that a similar pattern of community building based on intentional separatism took place in the Southwest much as it did in Oklahoma. Price concluded that these communities demonstrated an element of African American agency and self-determination that previous historians had either ignored or not explored. Sharon L. Squire, "Wealth and Reality in an All-Black Town: Kinlock, Missouri" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1993) is an example of a community study for a black town outside of Oklahoma.

ineffective political and economic positions on the state level.²⁸ However, many towns continued to flourish and provide social and physical refuge from the volatile conditions of race relations in the twentieth century. Many families were able to prosper and move on; others found what they were looking for and stayed.

Tatums, Oklahoma, founded in the Indian Territory, was one of the many HBTs established in the mid-1890s. Tatums is located in the southeastern region of Oklahoma. Among locals and many Oklahomans, the 's' at the end is silent when pronounced, most likely a remnant of the reference to "Tatum's town." Today, the population is around 200, which includes about 85 families; however, there are no stores or businesses today as there once were. Only a few roads are paved. The community did not originate as a traditional booster town along the rail lines, as other HBTs such as Boley, Langston, and Taft did. The streets were never quite bustling with traffic.²⁹ Promoted primarily through word of mouth, Tatums quickly joined the

²⁸ The disfranchisement of African Americans was as vicious in Oklahoma as in any of the traditionally southern states. See Murray R. Wickett, "The Fear of 'Negro Domination': The Rise of Segregation and Disfranchisement in Oklahoma," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 78, no. 1 (2000): 44-65; or for a broad description of disfranchisement methods, see Michael Perman, *Struggle for Mastery: Disfranchisement in the South, 1888-1908* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

²⁹ Kenneth Hamilton, *Black Towns and Profit: Promotion and Development in the Trans-Appalachian West, 1877-1915* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991) is a study of the HBTs that were promoted through town boosters, primarily along railroads. These towns were founded as strongly in the drive to make a profit as they were in the self-segregating environment. These forces are difficult to separate since the concept of succeeding financially is rooted in the separatist ideology. The HBT business network was a key component in the philosophy of the movement. Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825-70* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 62 described a "booster ethos" as capturing a spirit that "equated social unity with progress and warned of the evil fruit born of a divided community." The HBTs appear to have embodied that spirit as developing communities. Hamilton believed that many freed people were duped into the black town movement by utopian boosters; however, Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr. and Lonnie E. Underhill, "Black Dreams and Free Homes: The Oklahoma Territory, 1891-1894," *Phylon* (1960-) 34, no. 4 (1973): 342 found repeated warnings to settlers to be prepared for the hardships of the frontier. One warning read,

other black towns in the region in their ideological and economic connections to strengthen and develop their self-segregated community. Intended to provide an opportunity for both physical refuge and financial prosperity, Tatums stands as one of thirteen remaining HBTs in Oklahoma where descendents of the original founding families still live and raise their families.³⁰

The founder of Tatums, Lee B. (L.B.) Tatum, described as a black man in some census records and mulatto in others, was the son of a plantation owner and his enslaved mistress from Arkadelphia.³¹ His family came from Arkansas to the Indian Territory, where Tatum and his wife were born.³² Many Oklahoma blacks arrived in the Territory from the Arkansas area during

“DON’T COME TO THIS COUNTRY UNLESS YOU ARE PREPARED TO SUPPORT YOURSELF AND FAMILY UNTIL SUCH TIME YOU CAN RAISE A CROP,” *Langston City Herald*, June 15, 1893.

³⁰ The thirteen remaining HBTs in Oklahoma are Boley, Brooksville, Clearview, Grayson, Langston, Lima, Red Bird, Rentiesville, Summit, Taft, Tatums, Tullahassee, and Vernon.

³¹ For example, in U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census, 1900* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), L.B. Tatum is listed as “Black;” in the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census, 1910* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), he is listed as “Mulatto.” This is a clear example of the challenges of interpreting racial information from the census due to the subjectivity of the officials. Using census records to document the history of Tatums and other HBTs is an arduous task. Many of the communities, Tatums included, were not listed as individual towns, despite their having post offices, local law enforcement, and independent town governments. In the 1910 census records for Carter County, Oklahoma, Tatums was originally written in as the township (in the same handwriting style as the original census taker) and then crossed out. Later records omit the name of the town altogether. The small size of the community does not appear to stand as a viable reason for omitting the information because many small predominately white communities are listed by township. The historical evidence to document Tatums’s past is mostly held within the interviews of those who lived there. Few original or city documents exist prior to statehood. Even after 1907, Tatums was not given much documented attention as a municipality until the 1920s. Manuel G. Gonzales, “Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 22, no. 3 (Spring 2003), 93-96 provides a study of factors to be aware of in conducting interpretations of census research.

³² The Honorable Cecil Jones was raised by the Tatum family as an unofficially adopted son and has served as mayor of Tatums since 1973. He learned the early history of the

this time. A large number of Arkansas immigrants were originally from Alabama; many blacks were prompted to move into the Arkansas area at the same time that the exodus to Kansas took place. In addition, racists in Arkansas reacted much like those in Kansas did. As black families began to move into Arkansas and establish themselves, as Tatum and his family did, their political and economic strength began to threaten many whites, resulting in increased migration out of the state into the potentially improved social environment in the Twin Territories.³³

Still, Tatum had a more precise ideological concept of the settlement than a geographical one. According to Mary Tatum, her husband was traveling across the Indian Territory in 1894 and camped along the bank of Wild Horse Creek, so called by the Chickasaws for the way it ran throughout the region haphazardly. The Tatum family, which included Lee, Mary, and Lee's brother Eldridge (or E.G), quickly surveyed the region and determined that it would suit their upcoming plans. They quickly erected shelters and set out to bring other families to the same location for collaboration and protection.³⁴

Chickasaw and Choctaw freed people living in the area gained access to land through their rights as tribal members, entitlements granted to them along with emancipation by the

community from Lee and his wife, Mary Tatum, a black Chickasaw, and his biological family who are also descendents of town founders. Cecil Jones, interview by author, tape recording, Tatums, Oklahoma, January 20, 2001, hereafter referred to as the Jones Interview. Shortly after this interview, Jones felt compelled to write down some of the history of Tatums. He compiled a collection of his thoughts: Cecil Jones, "The Mis-Education of Tatums: The Story Told By Mayor Cecil Jones as Told to Him by His Father Clarence Jones, Sr. and Grandmother (First Draft), February 3, 2001," p. 1-3, copy in author's possession.

³³ Lori Bogle, "On Our Way to the Promised Land: Black Migration from Arkansas to Oklahoma, 1889-1893," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 72, no. 2 (1994): 160-77.

³⁴ Jewel Carter Varner, "A History of the Tatums Community" (M.A. thesis, Kansas State Teachers College, 1950), 3.

postwar treaties of 1866.³⁵ Some finally earned these benefits by the allotment of lands from the Dawes Commission Acts from 1883 to 1886 due to their mixed Indian ancestry, while others earned land grants through those years because of their citizenship into a tribe after having been enslaved by that nation. Still others made their claim to Indian lands through marriage.³⁶ Despite this, early settlers claim these freed people were barely living at the level of survival. They were ostracized and degraded, especially in the Chickasaw and Choctaw territories. George Worley, a freedman from the Indian Territory, and his family lived at a bend in Wild Horse Creek with other formerly enslaved blacks from the tribes as early as 1892 with little means for education or opportunities for advancement.³⁷ The Worleys had been in the Territory since at least 1853 with a large, established plantation, but their former slaves had little connection to a support system.³⁸

Interviews conducted by the Indian-Pioneer History Project through the Works Progress Administration in 1937 verify that many blacks were living in the Tatums community shortly after the Tatum family arrived. Newton Graham told the interviewer, "I came to Ardmore from Alabama in 1895; and located in the Chickasaw nation. I drifted about forty miles southeast of Ardmore, near Tatums in Carter County as there were a good many Negroes there."³⁹ He

³⁵ Goble, *Progressive Oklahoma*, 115.

³⁶ Murray R. Wickett, *Contested Territory: Whites, Native Americans and African American in Oklahoma, 1865-1907* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 35-41.

³⁷ Jones, "Mis-Education of Tatums," 2.

³⁸ *Leaders and Leading Men of the Indian Territory: Choctaws and Chickasaws, Volume I* (Chicago: American Publishers' Association, 1891), 273.

³⁹ Newton Graham, "Indian Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma," interviewed by Works Progress Administration, August 24, 1937, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City,

described the earliest crops as yielding plentiful returns of cotton, corn, pumpkins, beans, peas, and, “other garden truck.” Another interviewee, Manuel Spencer, gave vivid descriptions of the first homes in Tatum. They were log cabins, often covered with shingles and always dobed with mud. The first fireplaces and stoves were made of the native stones. Spencer also mentioned the harvests in Tatum, including potatoes, sweet potatoes, pecans, wild grapes, plums, blackberries, and black walnuts.⁴⁰

The arrival of other black settlers to the area and their prompt involvement in community building was no accident. Tatum brewed the idea of founding a black town after his father’s plantation in the Arkansas Delta lost economic and political power and racial conditions worsened. Realizing that a new community would require a variety of skilled workers and professionals in order to create anything close to autonomy for the community, Tatum determined that the recruitment of others in similar circumstances would be necessary not only to populate the community but also to ensure that the resources necessary for survival were present. Certainly without the ability to build their own mills, utilize the services of metal, leather, and other tradesmen, develop their own fuels, and educate their children, Tatum’s dreams of living without relying on white business people would be dashed. In his town planning, Tatum set out to find strong and well-trained leaders. These early residents knew that they must all work together to make their plan for a self-segregated, self-sufficient, town work effectively. While

Oklahoma. See also Monroe Billington, “Black Slavery in Indian Territory,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 60, no. 1 (1982): 55-65, this article provides comment and quantitative analysis of the 135 “usable” interviews from the WPA projects in Oklahoma between 1936 and 1938.

⁴⁰ Manuel Spencer, “Indian Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma,” interviewed by Works Progress Administration, August 16, 1937, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Tatum residents still enjoy the harvests of wild blackberries and pecans, selling surpluses for extra income.

residents of HBTs in Kansas grew disheartened by the harsh conditions of forging towns from desolate prairies, Tatums's residents appear to have been better prepared for the difficult tasks set before them.⁴¹

With his father's assistance, Tatum made contact with C. Wall, a plantation owner in Alabama who also feared that the future for his racially mixed children was dismal. In addition, prior to his setting claim to the land in the Indian Territory, Tatum, like other HBT boosters, made a trip into the South to promote his scheme for a remote refuge from physical, social, and economic threats. Tatum made contact with other families on this promotion campaign who later moved to his community.⁴² Most of the families were also of mixed racial parentage.⁴³ The Walls were successful farmers, with a large family and considerable personal value economically.⁴⁴ In addition, Wall had several children, some apparently born to a mulatto slave,

⁴¹ Painter, *Exodusters*, 256. Freed slaves has to find creative ways to earn income in the midst of their obstacles; Sharon Ann Holt, *Making Freedom Pay: North Carolina Freedpeople Working for Themselves, 1865-1900* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000) explores this concept among former slaves in North Carolina.

⁴² Jones, "Mis-Education of Tatums," 2.

⁴³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census*; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census*.

⁴⁴ John F. Schunk, ed., *1850 U.S. Federal Census of Covington County, Alabama*. (Wichita: S-K Publications, 2003), 157-157B. Many details of this account are verified in the Master's Thesis of a former resident, Jewel Carter Varner, "A History of the Tatums Community." Her research was based on numerous interviews with founding community members and their children (including Mary Tatum). Some local versions of the Tatums history claim that the Wall ancestor was not spelled Wall or Walls, as Varner and other suggested; instead they believe to be descendents of the slaves of the Wahl family of Cooza County, Alabama, originally of German descent. However, there was insufficient census data to support this theory. All original settlers of Tatums used the spelling Wall or Walls, although it is certainly possible that Walls came to Tatums from more than one location.

because his daughters are often called “The Quadroon Sisters” by local residents of Tatums.⁴⁵ Tatum discussed the Tatums township plan with Wall through letters. The social and political atmosphere of Alabama was frightening. Racial tensions were suffocating for young black families, and Wall was worried about his children. Advertisements and passionate speakers endorsed re-approaching the American frontier by settling in land outside the South and forming new communities. Wall quickly settled on an agreement for his racially mixed children to escape the threatening environment of the South.

Within a short time of Tatum’s arrival to the area, Wall followed through on a plan for his daughters and several of his plantation workers and former slaves. He sent at least eleven children to Tatum’s community; six of his nine daughters were married and brought their husbands. The husbands of the “Quadroon Sisters” brought a variety of crafts and specialties. (See Table 1.1.) The group arrived about forty miles away in Ardmore by train with many supplies and some funds. They quickly made their way to Tatums to start their new lives, as Wall had discussed with Tatum in 1883.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Jones Interview; although the term quadroon is antiquated, it refers to an individual with one-quarter black ancestry; therefore it is assumed that the mother of the “Quadroon Sisters” had only one black parent.

⁴⁶ Chart data from Jones interview; most of the information is verified in Varner’s thesis and census records. Wall’s children apparently used the surname Walls.

Table 1.1: The Quadroon Sisters

Name	Married To:	Occupation at Wall Farm
Ada Walls	Gus Austin	Blacksmith
Molly Walls	Austin Jones	Coke Maker
Ida Walls	Sebram Carter	Quarter Master
Ann Walls	Robert Swindall	Cotton Gin Master
Harriet Walls	Elija Hooks	Leather Expert and Sorghum Maker
Carrie Walls	Jim Buchner	Farmer and Rancher

Source: Jones Interview; and Varner, “A History of the Tatums Community,” 3-4.

Tatum’s new community was located in Pickens County, Indian Territory, a region of Oklahoma that had experienced many changes in the 1880s as a result of the arrival of the railroads.⁴⁷ The Santa Fe Railroad Company built the lines up from Gainesville, Texas, from 1885 to 1887, establishing or energizing towns such as Ardmore, Marietta, Berwyn, Wynnewood, and Paoli along the way. Scheduled trains began arriving in Ardmore on July 28, 1887; white settlers followed close behind, leasing land annually from the Chickasaw Indians who were already in the area. Ardmore became a trading center for the southern part of the state, later providing most necessary supplies to Tatums residents. In addition, by 1890 a Federal

⁴⁷ Pickens County was established in the Chickasaw Nation by the 1850s. “Organization of Counties in the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 8, no.3 (1930): 328.

Court began operation in Ardmore; at statehood the town became the county seat when Pickens County, Indian Territory, became Carter County, Oklahoma.⁴⁸

After less than a year of building shelters and gathering with other families who mostly arrived by train to Ardmore, Tatum applied for and received the federal seal of approval – a post office. Tatum served as the first postmaster and town marshal in 1895, using his home to serve as the first post office and general store, which provided dry goods and other basic necessities.⁴⁹ Most early townspeople did their shopping twice a week when mail was delivered to the Tatum's home. Another pioneer, Enoch Carter, also from Alabama, taught at the community's first educational enterprise, a brush arbor subscription school.⁵⁰

The school had a three-month session the first years; families paid twenty-five cents to the educator for compensation each month. The school grew to include two other professors; one of them was Wall's son, John Walls, who taught with Carter as the school found its first

⁴⁸ Patty Virginia Norton and Layton R. Sutton, eds., *Indian Territory And Carter County, Pioneers Including Pickens County, Chickasaw Nation: Volume I, 1840-1926* (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1983), 16-17.

⁴⁹ Varner, "A History of the Tatums Community," 8. For a list of post offices established through the Twin Territories, see two articles: Grant Forman, "Early Post Offices of Oklahoma," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 16, no. 1 (1928): 155-162 and Grant Forman, "Early Post Offices of Oklahoma II," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 16, no. 4 (1928): 271-98. After 1905, Tatums also received mail for the nearby Indian town of Monk. (p. 278) Although some Tatums residents claim Lee Tatum was a U.S. Marshal, no evidence was found to support this. Several black men did serve as Deputy Marshals in the Indian and Oklahoma Territories. See Nudie Williams, "Black Men Who Wore the Star," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 59, no. 1 (1981): 83-90. William concedes that territorial records were poorly kept, so while it is possible that Tatum served as a Deputy Marshal and no supporting documentation remains; however, no black man was appointed as U.S. Marshal in the Territories. Several successful black Deputy Marshals served as peace keepers throughout the territorial years, arresting and even killing outlaws of all races.

⁵⁰ Varner, "A History of the Tatums Community," 23. Earl Canady, P.R. Mitchell, Robert Swindall, Mark Crookshank, Will Brown, and Anderson and Josia Hooks also had early grocery stores in Tatums. Some of these businesses lasted a long time. The Hooks store stayed open until 1930 when Josia Hooks died.

official home in a log cabin. Early residents quickly established the importance of education in their community. While it may have been justifiable to turn their efforts toward crops or lament the absence of government support, Tatums townspeople decided to place a high priority on education, even if limited to the “three R’s” in the infant stage of their community.⁵¹

In addition to setting up an educational institution as an immediate priority, Tatums decision makers ensured that the cost of schooling would not be prohibitive. First, the cost of twenty-five cents for monthly tuition was much less expensive than other schools in Oklahoma for blacks. For example, one territorial newspaper reported that blacks could not participate in the school in the area because they could not afford to pay five dollars per month for tuition. In fact, in 1890, the Cherokee Nation opened a high school for its black students (the Cherokee freed people and their descendents were granted tribal citizenship) but it closed due to the inability of families to pay the high fees.⁵² Even if the low-priced tuition was a problem for Tatums families, teachers often accepted an equivalent offering of food, supplies, or services.⁵³ Tatums children could get an education, one way or another.

One early resident, E.B. Hunt, organized a Methodist church to adhere to the spiritual needs of the settlers, becoming their first pastor; however, the first church in Tatums did not last long. A large number of the settlers from Alabama were Baptists and did not support the Methodist endeavor. In as early as May 1894, shortly after the Tatum and Walls families arrived, residents began coordinating efforts to establish a Baptist church with the assistance of a district missionary. The church, like the school, began under a brush arbor. By fall, the

⁵¹ Varner, “A History of the Tatums Community,” 4.

⁵² Wickett, *Contested Territory*, 83.

⁵³ Varner, “A History of the Tatums Community,” 4.

community erected a wooden structure and settled on a name for their congregation - Bethel. The Knights of Pythias collaborated with Bethel Church members to build a communal facility, a two-story structure.⁵⁴



Illustration 1.1: Big Bethel Church, Tatums, Oklahoma. Photograph by Anthony Ray Davis, 2002. This and all other photographs used with permission.

These voluntary organizations were critical to the development of the community. Don Doyle, in *The Social Order Of A Frontier Community*, found that this was a fundamental step in developing social order within the forming group because leaders emerged from those involved

⁵⁴ Ibid., 10-13. The Order of Pythias, a fraternal order, began during the Civil War with the ambition of promoting friendship and relieving suffering. Its founder, Justus Rathbone believed that it “might do much to heal the wounds and allay the hatred of civil conflict.” These years of building together must have been reinforced by the trials of friendship, charity, and benevolence: the distinguishing principles of the Order of Knights of Pythias. “The Order of Knights of Pythias,” available from <http://www.pythias.org/>; Internet; February 2005.

in the “voluntary community.”⁵⁵ Lee Tatum’s plan to bring in both professionals and community leaders succeeded. The development of Tatums as an official town site took shape as did many frontier communities. Doyle’s organization of the stages of development described the initial phase as, “The Infant Community.” Certainly, Tatums reacted as the struggling, fledgling town Doyle discussed.⁵⁶ Stores, schools, churches, and business enterprises quickly emerged as new community builders arrived. Official institutions, such as schools and churches, marked the establishment of Tatums like any frontier town. As more families moved into Tatums, other social institutions developed and became more complex both in their progress and in organization.

Over the following years, the community had a few similar home-style general stores that provided basic necessities to the residents. These stores were run from the fronts of homes of individuals who lived there. Towns people established these stores to provide for their community as well as profit from the trade. Ambitions were set toward self-dependence to avoid leaving the community as much as possible. Such goals were intended to prevent the members of Tatums from encountering dangerous racial situations or aggravators. By maintaining a separate space from would-be oppressors, members of Tatums (and other HBTs) created a kind of safety zone within their community, choosing carefully when and why they should leave that protection. Lee Tatum, the current pastor, or another respected (and often light-skinned) leader

⁵⁵ Doyle, *The Social Order of A Frontier Community*, 13-14; Don Harrison Doyle, “The Social Functions of Voluntary Associations in a 19th Century American Town,” *Social Science History* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1978). It appears that the voluntary community is a vital part of the development of frontier communities. Social institutions are not a luxury; they determine the survival and progress of the young community. See Appendix A, “List of Known Founding Residents of Tatums, Oklahoma.”

⁵⁶ Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community*, 18-38.

of the community made the necessary trips to nearby towns with their wives when the need arose. As part of their plan to avoid the conflict that seemed inevitable between the races, early residents limited their exposure to outsiders who were not HBT members. They believed that by reducing the opportunities for contact with whites, they could escape the violence or resentment that resulted within biracial or predominately white communities.⁵⁷

As the responsibilities to town members grew, Tatum handed over the prestigious responsibilities of the post office to another founding resident, Phillip Ware, assisted by Sylvia Thrash, a former teacher. Thrash assumed the role of postmistress two years later. After her marriage to a local farmer and businessman, P.T. Ziegler, she hired her sister to work with her. Thus, a tradition of women holding vital positions in community leadership in Tatums began before the turn of the century. In fact, Mrs. Ziegler was the post mistress for thirty-nine years and received retirement compensation from the U.S. government.⁵⁸ Additionally, of the twelve early residents who were part of the decision making process about the direction of the community's first Baptist church, four or more were women.⁵⁹ Little room existed in Tatums for excluding good leaders, particularly in the voluntary community.

Specialized businesses developed in Tatums as well. In 1900 Ben Austin opened the first blacksmith shop in Tatums and operated it successfully for a number of years; however, the cinders from a shop fire eventually blinded him, forcing him to close the business. Dan Thrash and Austin Jones opened another metal working business in 1902, running continuously until 1920. The need for two blacksmith shops in the community is indicative of the swelling size of

⁵⁷ Jones Interview.

⁵⁸ Varner, "A History of the Tatums Community," 8.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 10.

the population as well as their levels of productivity.⁶⁰ Each service they could provide for themselves within the community meant empowerment and autonomy, ensuring they could take care of their own needs.⁶¹ In addition, each local industry and enterprise offered opportunities for younger generations to learn trades outside of the typical employment for blacks of field labor and domestic work across the South. *Herald* editor William Eagleson made this claim as well, stating that those who settled into the black towns were assured that, “your boys and girls will learn trades there and thus be able to do business with other people.”⁶² Boley advertised its “Old Folks Home” in the *Daily Oklahoman* as early as 1909, only a few years after the town was founded, providing yet another example of the diversity available in the black town business network.⁶³

A Masonic lodge, Order of Prince Hall Masonry, entered into a collaborative project with Bethel Church in 1901 much like the Knights of Pythias arrangement a few years before. This endeavor led to the building of a larger two-story building that served as the next meeting site of Bethel Church, the Masons, and students of the Tatums school, both children and adults. The Masons were established in Tatums soon after the arrival of families. Soon after men in the community formed a fraternal organization, women established an Eastern Star lodge, Mount

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

⁶¹ For a comparison to a small, all-white frontier community in the Territory, consider Mount Hope which was founded around the same time. See Leslie Howes, “Making a Pioneer Landscape in the Oklahoma Territory,” *Geographical Review* 86 (October 1996): 588-603. As in the case with Harrison’s analysis of a frontier community’s development, Doyle’s study reveals that Tatums developed much like any developing community along the frontier, whether compared to a town in Illinois or a community in the Territory. These initial establishments secure the opportunities for a community’s autonomy.

⁶² Goble, *Progressive Oklahoma*, 118.

⁶³ “State Charters,” *Daily Oklahoman*, December 24, 1909.

Mariah, Chapter 145. (See Table 1.2) A majority of the adult females participated in the group from its inception in 1899. The leader of this first official women’s organization in Tatum, called the Worthy Matron, was Alice Carter. The Baptist Young People’s Union (B.Y.P.U.) was also established in 1901 in Tatums.⁶⁴

Table 1.2: Charter Members of the Eastern Star

Worthy Matron	Alice Carter
Associate Matron	Emma Taylor
Secretary	Lottie Hooks
Treasurer	Mollye Newberry
Other Members:	Rosie Hooks
	Jennie Hooks
	Liza Hooks
	Carrie Jenkins
	Josia A. Hooks
	Susie Hooks
	Lucie Williams
	Maggie Swindall
	Ella Davis

Source: Varner, “A History of the Tatums Community,” 45.

These social and religious organizations, Doyle’s voluntary community, grew as the population continued to increase. Likewise, a variety of business establishments began to meet needs for community members through services and employment opportunities. There were a few hotels; others could accommodate boarders, who were often new or prospective residents. Tatums hotel owners, Mary and Viola Mannings, even accommodated white travelers with

⁶⁴ Varner, “A History of the Tatums Community,” 13, 45.

segregated quarters when they passed through the area and initiated business contacts or needed shelter. They saw the advantages of being able to do business with outsiders of any race. They held restaurant hours and frequently provided accommodations for school teachers. These sisters, like the Thrash sisters, took early roles as business women and representatives for the community. Another early resident, Henry Taylor, proudly hosted U.S. Deputy Marshal Bill Buck Garrick on several occasions in the boarding section of his home.⁶⁵

By 1904, Tatums boasted a town physician, Dr. L. H. Henry who fulfilled his requirements for the medical board examination in Pauls Valley, Indian Territory. Upon his decision to open a medical practice in Tatums, Henry persuaded another resident, John Collins, to invest in medicines so that prescriptions could be filled. He opened a drug store and soda fountain shop that same year, which he ran until 1909. Henry took over the drug store at that time until he moved his practice to Oklahoma City in 1912. Dr. Henry provides an example of an individual using an HBT as a staging ground to establish a business before moving to a larger, racially mixed area.⁶⁶

As the land that had been set aside for Indians became eligible for statehood, many black residents prepared for a final attempt at creating the black state they still believed could be theirs. While some details of early institutions and leadership are available, political involvement within Tatums was either non-existent or is difficult to ascertain. Little is known about what the early members of the township intended in relation to the movement to unify the HBTs in the formation of an “all-black” state. Scant evidence remains about this campaign on a state or national level; even less is known about individual participation of the towns. Proponents for the

⁶⁵ Ibid., 13, 18-20.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 34.

Native-Americans and other political interests were lobbying for an all-Indian state to be called the State of Sequoyah. At the Sequoyah Convention that met in Muskogee, delegates from each of the Five Civilized Tribes and other residents of the Territory determined to put the idea to a popular vote. On November 7, 1905, voters overwhelmingly ratified a new state constitution, but the idea was put to rest by the U.S. House of Representatives on December 4.⁶⁷ Visionaries like Edward P. McCabe, promoter of Langston, Oklahoma, and state auditor of Kansas, preached the hopes of an all-black state with several meetings and newspaper advertisements to solicit support.⁶⁸ These campaigns formally started many years before that with a conference on April 27, 1882 in Parsons, Kansas, to develop strategies for lobbying Congress to establish Oklahoma as a black state. The group was eventually able to get a bill introduced with the assistance of Senator Henry W. Blair of New Hampshire. Unfortunately, the debate was tabled when Hiram Price, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, opposed the proposition, reminding everyone present that the land was already committed to the Indian tribes and their freed people, not to all former slaves. Despite their defeat at the federal level, as Johnson determined, “Black nationalists continued their relentless agitation for an all-Black state for freedmen from throughout the South.” Neither of these options for exclusive statehood was acceptable to the thousands of white settlers who made their lives there already. Furthermore, white politicians were priming themselves for the upcoming issue of race in the state’s constitution.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ John Morris and Edwin C. McReynolds, *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), 54.

⁶⁸ Norman Crocket, *The Black Towns*, (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1979), 16-26.

⁶⁹ Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration*, 29-30. Quotation from p. 30.

In fact, as Democrats met to prepare their agendas and candidates at the Oklahoma's Constitutional Convention in 1906, a debate over black domination was at the forefront. Opposed to black migration from the southern states, the Democratic delegates gave evidence of a black threat by pointing to Edward McCabe's campaign for black statehood, with himself seated as governor. Politicians warned that blacks were pouring into the land expecting opportunities and rights that whites enjoyed. They preached that if the pattern of self-determined black migration continued, they could take over the state. White Republicans, too, were persuaded to vote for southern principles that firmly set Jim Crow as Oklahoma's winner for the Territories. It was not just their numbers that threatened the majority – white Oklahoma politicians feared the nationalistic agency of the hopeful and ambitious migrants from the South who were moving to the cities and HBTs.⁷⁰ Although blacks in the Territories had been supportive of the Republican party, by 1906 as the issues of statehood were drawing close, white Republicans adopted a “lily-white” campaign to officially abandon their black counterparts.⁷¹

Blacks in the state organized and held conferences to fight for voting privileges after the statehood question was settled and the grandfather clause became the law. The Negro Convention League met in Boley to address the Republican desertion of the African American members of their party. Choosing rather to disenfranchise their potential cohorts, the Republican party decided to, “allow the Negroes to take care of themselves,” according to the *Daily Oklahoman*. The newspaper also reported that, “The raising of funds is also to be left to the

⁷⁰ Wickett, *Contested Territory*, 203. For a more precise explanation of the debate over Oklahoma's statehood and convention's determined priority to creating a segregated, Jim-Crow style government, see also James Scales and Danney Goble, *Oklahoma Politics: A History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 36-65.

⁷¹ Nudie Williams, “They Fought for Votes: The White Politician and the Black Editor,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 64, no. 1 (1986): 20-21.

negros.”⁷² Boley deputized two hundred armed peace officers for the convention that publicly and riotously condemned President Taft as the “Only Republican president who had repudiated the platform on which he was elected.”⁷³

The years prior to statehood and those immediately following were filled with drought, poor crops, and religious division in Tatum. The only community study of Tatum focuses on the educational and social development of the town; there is little information about the political environment. Evidence implies that the town members focused primarily on building their community institutions and otherwise providing for the needs of their families. In Tatum, many believed they would never actually see the realization of an all-black state, so they were not invested in joining with the cause.⁷⁴ Other studies of specific HBTs have focused on educational or social factors as well.⁷⁵

While Oklahoma’s admittance into the union as a typical Jim Crow state was a loss for proponents of the Indian and African American state concepts, there were many positive consequences for fledgling Tatum, which continued to maintain its ideology of localized black nationalism. Many families that moved into Tatum prior to statehood had lived in the Indian

⁷² “Negro Loses in Suffrage Fight,” *Daily Oklahoman*, September 1, 1910.

⁷³ “Taft Is Condemned,” *Daily Oklahoman*, September 11, 1910.

⁷⁴ Wickett, *Contested Territory*, 12, 37; Jones Interview.

⁷⁵ Arthur Tolson, “A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890 to 1950,” does not clearly address any ideological or political connection to a black statehood campaign. Similarly, Chleyon Decatur Thomas, “Boley, an All-Black Pioneer Town and the Education of its Children” (Ed.D. diss., University of Akron, 1989) is specifically focused on education within Boley. Charles A. Humphrey, “Educational and Social Need in Small All-Black Towns,” *Journal of Negro Education* 47, no. 3 (1978): 244-55 compares several black communities. These serve as valuable tools in understanding the philosophical debates about school desegregation, but do not shed much light on political involvement outside of town government.

Territory as freed people of the Five Civilized Tribes.⁷⁶ The formation of Tatums as a community provided an opportunity for these families to congregate and cooperate. These settlers who had formerly been enslaved by the tribes in the Twin Territories received forty acres of land. In addition, by the time of the land allotments in 1907 at statehood, many freed people had adult children who were eligible for land. Some Tatums families received up to three hundred acres. Of these residents, a few sold lots to the families in the area who were not former slaves of the Five Civilized Tribes and who, therefore, did not receive land grants.⁷⁷ This official entitlement to the land proved to be a substantial benefit of statehood.

Statehood also brought outside funding for the school system of Tatums. From its brush arbor inception in 1894, the residents of Tatums alone supported the school and its teachers. The three-month school year was expanded to a full eight-month program. Teachers received consistent salaries from the county. This enabled families to use their money for other personal and civic advancements. Furthermore, the local Tatums school board retained the authority to distribute funds as they decided. They quickly improved the facilities and instituted compulsory education, supported by local authorities. Higher education for blacks was nearly unattainable at the turn of the century, making it difficult for Tatums school to find qualified educators. However, they worked to continually improve the quality of education for their students.⁷⁸ This

⁷⁶ Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration*, 22-26. Each of the tribal governments had different ways of utilizing slavery. For example, Seminoles openly married their slaves, while Chickasaws and Choctaws forbade such relationships. See also Wickett, *Contested Territory*, 6.

⁷⁷ Varner, "A History of the Tatums Community," 36.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 50-53.

community dedication to education is evident in other HBTs as well.⁷⁹ The school served as a source of pride for Tatums' community members.

Unlike other areas of the Twin Territories, Tatums schools provided safe environments for students to learn. Newspapers reporters and even white administrators readily admitted that education was miserable for black students outside the HBTs, whether or not they attended racially mixed or separate black schools. Many Native Americans resented the tribal status given to freed people, particularly when it came to their requirement to provide education for blacks. Most of the whites in the Territories were from the South and brought racist attitudes with them. Black students were attacked, whipped, and stoned while trying to attend school outside of the HBTs. One territorial superintendent conceded that most black students simply did not have school privileges.⁸⁰ In Tatums school, it appears, the biggest threat was the looming knowledge that one's mother would see the teacher at church each week!⁸¹

But Tatums residents had another good reason to be proud of their schools. By 1910, Oklahoma blacks had a strong literacy rate that ranged between 80 and 87 percent, the highest literacy rate for African Americans in any of the formerly slaveholding states. Nationally, literacy among blacks was much lower, from 66 to 79 percent. Tatums residents had a high literacy rate of 70 percent by 1900 and an even stronger rate of 86 percent by 1910, above the state's already high average. (See Table 1.3) In the Progressive decades, the literacy rate of younger generations grew considerably higher than those of the generations who were past school age when they settled in Tatums. Furthermore, females learned to read in equal

⁷⁹ See Jolson's and Thomas's studies of Langston and Boley.

⁸⁰ Wickett, *Contested Territory*, 85-87.

⁸¹ Jones Interview.

proportions to their male counterparts in Tatums.⁸² In regards to literacy, Tatums schools were taking care of the job.⁸³

Table 1.3: Comparison of 1910 Literacy Rates

	Literacy Rate
Tatums Sample	86.1%
Oklahoma Blacks	80.6%
U.S. Blacks	67.1%

Source: State and national numbers on literacy were derived from Wickett's census compilations in *Contested Territory*, 92. Tatums statistics were compiled from the 1900 and 1910 census records for the Indian Territory and Oklahoma, respectively.

The church school (meaning a school operated by or with the church, not an institution to teach religion) was an integral part of social life among most African American families in general. This was no exception in Tatums. While addressing the Negro History Association in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1926, Rufus Clement claimed that for over a century, "The willful neglect of Negro education was an actual condition which the church school tried to meet."⁸⁴ These schools were important for reasons outside of their opportunities for fostering literacy;

⁸² To determine the literacy rate for Tatums for each year considered, a random sample was selected from the known residents of Tatums aged more than ten years. Sixty-five residents were considered for each sampling. This represents approximately 5 to 10 percent of the Tatums population at the time. *1900 United States Census, Graham Township, Pickens County, Indian Territory* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902); *1910 United States Census, Graham Township, Carter County, Oklahoma* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912).

⁸³ It is reasonable to believe that the presence of the HBTs in Oklahoma contributed to the high literacy averages for Oklahoma blacks in 1900 and 1910, particularly considering that in those years the populations of the HBTs overall were at their highest points.

⁸⁴ Rufus E. Clement, "The Church School as a Social Factor in Negro Life," *Journal of Negro History* 12, no. 1 (1927): 6.

they provided vital roles that were instrumental in the development of many personal factors. Clement found four aspects of church school life that cultivated the social life of African Americans, “First, they have taught race pride; second, they have developed Negro leadership; third, they have been instruments working for the adaptation of the Negro to his environment; fourth, they have been centers of independent thought.”⁸⁵ Tatums residents reported similar benefits, particularly in connection with pride in their race and the opportunity for leadership training.⁸⁶

Tatums residents were vigilant about their local school activities. By at least the mid-1910s, the first generation of Tatums school children began attending college at Colored Agricultural and Normal School at Langston.⁸⁷ In 1913, parents in Tatums, Davis, and Ardmore made state newspaper headlines when they became the largest participants in a petition to investigate the Langston Normal School administration. The families involved were invested in issues of teaching quality, appropriations of funds, and morality among students.⁸⁸ Measures

⁸⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁸⁶ Varner, “A History of the Tatums Community,” 4-5, 50-65.

⁸⁷ The Colored Agricultural and Normal University was formally established on March 12, 1897 by House Bill 151, a result of the Morrill Act of 1890, introduced by Territorial Governor William Gary Renfrom, to designate a land grant for a black university after his bill his civil rights bills to remove segregation at the collegiate level was voted down. Now called Langston University, the institution is the only HBCU in Oklahoma; in addition, it is the most westward of all the HBCUs. Since there were no funds allocated by an outside agency for building facilities for the school, it did not actually open until September 3, 1889, in a Presbyterian church in Langston. The first president Dr. Inman E. Page (1898-1915) was the son of a freed slave. The Enabling Act of 1906 allocated some funding to the university in addition to 100,000 acres of land in western Oklahoma and New Mexico. “The History of Langston University,” *Langston University*, 2004; available from <http://www.lunet.edu/>; Internet; accessed September 15, 2004.

⁸⁸ “Probe of Negro School Is Asked,” *Daily Oklahoman*, April 30, 1913.

like these, to insure improvements in education for their children, at home and away, kept learning and progress in the minds of up-and-coming leaders for the community. In the years that followed, the criterion used to determine candidates for the presidency for the school became more competitive and responsive to the needs of the students.⁸⁹

In addition to understanding the liberating power of education, Tatums townspeople realized that they must be able independently to process their own agricultural products. In 1910, Tatums residents Robert Swindall, Tommie Williams, Jim Rosenbrough, and S.B. Carter formed a company to gin cotton and grind corn for the farmers of Tatums. Edward Abram operated a small gin prior to this, but little is known of it. The joint-venture company established a cotton gin, grist mill, and a saw mill. Another resident, S.E. Hooks opened a grist mill in 1913, which he ran with the assistance of his seven sons. With these resources, they were able to handle many needs of not only the community members but also other non-white Oklahomans who felt more comfortable doing business with Tatums townspeople than with white businessmen in the area.⁹⁰ Throughout the South, black farmers faced dismal circumstances when facing the reality that their harvest must eventually interact with a monopoly of white mill owners who were notorious for their exploitation of black labor.⁹¹

For blacks outside the HBTs, participating in business or seeking employment could be dangerous. As white families flooded into the area, they increasingly grew to see black laborers in any field of work as competition. The *Daily Oklahoman*, the state's leading white-owned

⁸⁹ "Faculties Named in State Schools: Negro School at Langston Sole Exception to the Board's Work," *Daily Oklahoman*, May 17, 1916.

⁹⁰ Varner, "A History of the Tatums Community," 27.

⁹¹ Painter, *Exodusters*, 58-60.

newspaper, reported that blacks were being driven out of certain counties because of their advantage in the labor market due to their superiority in farming practices, particularly the cotton fields.⁹² As the century drew to a close and statehood approached, these issues worsened. Black newspapers advertised the advantages of participating in a network of all-black businesses, run by blacks to serve blacks. Furthermore, as the HBTs and black business districts developed throughout the state, the black business network allowed them to establish such a system and promote the boycott of white establishments. Overall, Oklahoma had a large number of professional blacks compared to southern states; Tatums was no exception.⁹³ The Tatums facilities were demonstrations of that.

Black educators in Oklahoma were holding annual conferences by 1909, using Boley and Langston as convention host towns. The *Daily Oklahoman* reported that the speakers at a Boley meeting included a Professor J. R. E. Lee, an Oklahoma resident and secretary of the National Association of Colored Teachers.⁹⁴ This connection to a national organization reveals that the Oklahoma educators were instrumental in cultivating collaborative support within the black town network and were involved in connecting with black support outside the state. The web of the HBT network, therefore, extended beyond business connections to social and educational development.

Tatums and Oklahoma blacks in general experienced a rise in population as well as professionalism throughout the years after statehood. In 1870, approximately 6,000 blacks were

⁹² Wickett, *Contested Territory*, 112; "State News," *Daily Oklahoman*, January 6, 1897.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 112-13.

⁹⁴ "Colored Pedagogues Favor Civil Service Quizzes," *Daily Oklahoman*, January 2, 1910.

living in the Indian Territory; by 1890, there were at least 22,000 blacks in the Twin Territories, of which no fewer than 3,350 were from Kansas. By 1900, however, the number of African Americans in the territories had risen to 57,000.⁹⁵ In 1910, Oklahoma was the sixteenth most populated state with African Americans, totaling 115,000.⁹⁶ This marked a dramatic increase of 147 percent in only ten years. White immigration into the state also rose significantly, but only by 115 percent. In regards to the jump in African American population, Wickett found that, “This was not surprising, for in its early years, Oklahoma afforded black opportunities denied them elsewhere.”⁹⁷ This rise in the number of blacks in the state paralleled the growing sense of pride reported by Tatum settlers about the accomplishments of its townspeople.⁹⁸ In addition, the promotion of the towns did not stop after the first settlers arrived. Tatum land owners advertised in the *Daily Oklahoman*, hoping to attract blacks with easy payment plans.⁹⁹

The story of oil in Carter County begins at the end of this era in Tatum’s history, around 1912, when men from Ardmore began to act on the belief that southern Oklahoma held below the soil a large pool of oil waiting to be exploited. In fact, Roy Johnson, local printer of the

⁹⁵ Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration*, 30; Goble, *Progressive Oklahoma*, 124-25. Kansas migration number for 1890 was taken from Painter, *Exodusters*, 259.

⁹⁶ Goble, *Progressive Oklahoma*, 125.

⁹⁷ Wickett, *Contested Territory*, 203.

⁹⁸ For a more in-depth approach to population trends in the state, see Mozell C. Hill and Eugene S. Richards, *Demographic Trends of the Negro in Oklahoma* (Langston: Langston University, 1946). Varner’s, “A History of the Tatum Community,” repeatedly displays the pride that Tatum earliest founders felt about their community. The apparent decline that most historians have reported about the HBTs at the end of the 1910s was not evident to Tatum residents who believed their town was continuing to make respectable progress.

⁹⁹ See the classified section of the *Daily Oklahoman* on March 24, March 31, and April 28, 1912.

weekly paper, *The Ardmore Statesmen*; emerging businessman Edward Galt; and geologist A.J. McGhee believed they should start their project within a fifty-mile radius around Ardmore with particular interest in the area around Healdton, less than twenty miles south of Tatums. They were joined by two Oklahoma lawyers, Sam Apple and Wirt Franklin, who believed that profit from oil in Carter County was imminent. Their collaboration and legal strength enabled the lease of 10,000 acres in the area for the purpose of exploring for oil pools. Investors from Pennsylvania, representing wealthy English and Scotts men, provided funding for the drilling of the first wells in 1913, which were immediate successes. The men formed the Red River Oil Company and the Crystal Oil Company and the oil boom in Carter County ensued.¹⁰⁰

The years from the settlement of the community to the beginnings of oil production brought security to the residents. Although the founding of Tatums and the other HBTs is not known for its role in the movement to cultivate black nationalism, numerically or otherwise, these communities represent HBT members' desires to separate and ban together, glorify their own self-determination, and realize the strength of collaboration. Tatums residents exhibited the desire not only to avoid white repression but also to reveal that without the malicious intervention of outsiders, blacks could prove their own community-building skills. Through their school, businesses, and social institutions, Tatums townspeople strove to bring progress to their "infant community." Unlike some of the larger HBT founders that boasted their towns would develop into thriving utopian metropolises, Lee Tatum did not make those claims. Rather, his settlement was intended to create a safe place for blacks to raise their families and cultivate legitimate financial opportunities without constant intimidations. During the founding years of

¹⁰⁰ Patty Virginia Norton and Layton R. Sutton, eds., *Indian Territory And Carter County, Oklahoma, Pioneers Including Pickens County, Chickasaw Nation, 1840-1926, Volume I* (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1983), 16-18, 628-631.

Tatums, from the early 1880s to the early 1910s, which has been touted as the nadir of African American history, Tatums residents focused on developing their town without suffering racial violent episodes. Since blacks filled all positions within the community, Tatums and other HBT residents by default had more opportunities. Children grew up seeing blacks engaged in a range of activities and responsibilities, inevitably internalizing the belief that opportunities actually existed for blacks in every facet of civic life. This contrasts sharply with most regions of the South where African Americans were relegated primarily to domestic or manual labor and to limited leadership positions. Tatums, therefore, quickly became the embodiment of Lee Tatum's intentions. The following decades would reinforce that premise.

CHAPTER 2

NO QUARTER, SAVE JUSTICE: REALIZATION OF DREAMS AND HBT PROTECTION, 1915 - 1935

The all-black towns of Oklahoma and Kansas and across the Trans-Appalachian West have been documented historically in connection to their formation, promotion and varied purposes. In the historiography related to these unique communities, their economic, political and some social goals were considered; however, many questions remain unanswered regarding their role as sanctuaries from the violence many African Americans sought to escape. Little research has been conducted on these non-white towns for any time after WWI. Most studies treat the communities as though little of great importance happened outside of their education for black citizens. In Tatum, however, many opportunities presented themselves and the residents were protected from the overtly racist environment of Oklahoma.

D. W. Griffith's release of Thomas Dixon's novel *The Clansmen* as the popular film *Birth Of A Nation* in 1915 marks the beginning of an era that gave popular Hollywood approval to the nation's racist views after the Civil War and Reconstruction. In the 1920s, Ku Klux Klan and mob activity within the state reached outrageous levels, resulting in numerous lynchings, public and secret beatings, and the infamous Tulsa race riots.¹ Questions remain as to the

¹ David W. Griffith, dir., *Birth of a Nation* (Hollywood: David W. Griffith Corporation, 1915); Thomas Dixon, *The Clansman* (New York: Doubleday, Page, and Company, 1906). For a comprehensive overview and state-by-state comparisons of the Klan see David Chalmers,

relationship or interaction between the Klan and the historically black towns of Oklahoma. What bearing, if any, did these towns have on the level of violence in Oklahoma at the time? Did the existence of these communities aggravate race relations? Discovering the ideology that existed within these towns and worked to protect them from violence, may reveal aspects of African American agency and nationalism that have been previously overlooked.

Oklahoma historically black towns (HBTs) continued to promote their ideals of separatism and solidarity and the benefits of physical, social, and economic protection they provided, growing in population and infrastructure despite the revival of the Klan. Many of the HBTs became magnet centers, bringing other African Americans into their communities for trade, education, and religious events. In some of the larger HBTs, like Boley and Langston, African Americans were drawn to their black banks, lenders, and educational facilities. Even in smaller, more rural areas such as Tatums, residents created a joint-venture company to provide a mill for their community members as well as other blacks and non-whites who may not have been given fair treatment at the white mills. Their churches and schools served the town members as well as area blacks.²

Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan (New York: F. Watts, 1981). For an in-depth study of the events of the Tulsa riots, see *The Tulsa Race Riot: A Report by the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, 2001) and Hannibal B. Johnson, *Black Wall Street: From Riot To Renaissance In Tulsa's Historical Greenwood District* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1998). For an understanding of the complex and looming threat of lynching that African Americans lived under, see Jonathan Markovitz, *Legacies Of Lynching: Racial Violence And Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

² Three unpublished manuscripts provide detailed accounts of the business and social networks in the HBTs. John Daniel Bell, "Boley: A Study of a Negro City" (M.A. Thesis, University of Kansas, 1930); Jewell Carter Varner, "A History of the Tatums Community" (M.S. Thesis, Kansas State Teachers College, 1950); Arthur Tolson, "Langston, Oklahoma: 1890 to 1950, 1978," Oklahoma Biographies Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman.

As the season of vigilantism and violence took national attention in Oklahoma along with the rise of the Klan, the HBTs shared in episodes with outlaws, bank robbery attempts, fires, and general disorderly conduct as did the rest of the state. The bank in Boley was apparently too tempting to pass up, particularly considering the obvious wealth of so many Boley residents who did business there. In 1917, a gunfight broke out near Boley between a sheriff and bank thieves he was tracking. Sheriff M.I. Boulware and one “bandit” were killed. Two other fugitives were wounded.³ Pretty Boy Floyd and his gang caused scares or problems in more than one HBT. In all cases, the black towns appeared prepared for altercation, but hoped to avoid them. The Langston City *Herald* took a clear stand on the issue, “Self defense is the first law of nature; and he is a coward indeed who fails to take advantage of it.”⁴

Although census records may determine the approximate number of African Americans living within the state of Oklahoma in the 1920s, it is much more difficult to ascertain the number living within the HBTs at the time. Many of these towns, despite the fact that they had their own federal post offices, were not listed as townships in the census records. In addition, many of these towns provided services such as shopping, banking, education, social and religious participation and political involvement for residents living outside the HBTs in the surrounding area. For example, Boley’s population in the 1920s is reported to have been around 2,000.⁵ The

³ “Results of Robbery,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 19, 1917.

⁴ Murray R. Wickett, *Contested Territory: Whites, Native Americans and African Americans in Oklahoma, 1865-1907* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 160.

⁵ Bell, “Boley,” 15.

greater Boley township population included up to 7,000 residents, while an additional 25,000 area black families used the services of the HBT.⁶

By the 1920s, Boley had fifty-four business establishments, including hotels, restaurants, cotton gins, drug stores, jewelry and department stores, livery stables, insurance agencies, a mortuary, lumberyard, ice plant, an elaborate water system with a 200,000-gallon tower, and the first black-owned nationally chartered bank. In addition, Boley boasted seven physicians, several professional photographers, and two colleges, the Creek-Seminole College and the Methodist Episcopal College.⁷ Although Langston, Tatums, Rentiesville, and the other HBTs were smaller than Boley, they also reported having a network of many area black families with a variety of commercial services and social organizations. In the 1920s, the Tatums population was approximately 700 provided services accessible to the more than 4,200 Carter County blacks.⁸

Tatums businesses began to appear before the turn of the century, but they diversified and expanded in the late 1910s. Many new businesses developed under the direction of the new generation of Tatums natives, the sons and daughters of founding members, many of whom were educated at the Colored Agricultural and Normal School at Langston (now Langston University). The transition from Tatums to Langston must have been a fairly easy one; residents from the two

⁶ Johnson, Hannibal, *Acres of Aspiration: The All-Black Towns of Oklahoma* (New York: Eakin, 2003) 82.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 82-84.

⁸ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population, Oklahoma* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1942), 96; Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Composition and Characteristics of the Population by States, Population 1920, Fourteenth Census of the United States* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922), 817.

towns began to develop relationships as students began attending the Normal School. When students from Tatums first made these treks, they rode bicycles along brick paths to Edmond and dirt roads from there, a 130 mile one way trip.⁹

Henry Carter, Seaborn Carter's son, was one of the first children of Tatums to attend Langston in the 1910s, the only higher education institution nearby and a proud symbol of the HBTs. He gained an understanding of mechanical and electric operations – this is also where he learned to drive. Carter returned to Tatums and opened a mechanic shop in 1918 to service the community's car owners and passers-by. Carter, himself, was the first to own an automobile in Tatums and taught many to drive, but Tatums residents Rufus Hooks, Joseph Carter, Willie Evans, Gus Austin, and T.S. McMillian followed right behind.

⁹ Varner, "A History of the Tatums Community," 23, 25.



Illustration 2.1: This picture of the Tatum post office from the late 1910s or early 1920s reveals a sign advertising gasoline. Photograph in Personal Collection of Lacy McCreary (Tatum, Oklahoma).

Their acquisitions meant progress for the community both in terms of collective pride and increased opportunity. Carter's ambitions far exceeded his interest in the motor car; he also learned to operate an electrical power plant as part of his higher education at Langston. He successfully lit up Tatum by setting up electric lights throughout the town. The icons of progress dotted the churches, streets, homes, businesses, and streets.¹⁰ Although Carter died in 1924, his wife Queenie Hooks Carter and their son Burl Carter held prestigious positions in the

¹⁰ Ibid., 23-24.

town. Their home still stands on a hill overlooking the community; their wealth was a beacon of accomplishment for townspeople for many generations.

The social and professional environment of Tatums, the public sphere, matured throughout this era. While the earliest years afforded only a church and a couple of social organizations, the next stage of Tatums development ushered a time of growth and greater social complexity. The town slowly lost its rugged, frontier status and moved beyond the fledgling stage of the infant community that Doyle described in *The Social Order Of A Frontier Community*.¹¹ With electric lights and automobiles, the Tatums community whole-heartedly welcomed the modernization of the time. Blacksmith shops, gins and mills, restaurants, general stores, and many other necessary businesses continued to blossom.

While farming remained the mainstay of the town and most rural people in Oklahoma, for that matter, new enterprises emerged that created even more job diversification among the Tatums residents. In addition, oil, which knows no color line, bubbled up from Tatums soil as it did in many locations in Oklahoma and Texas.¹² As though the earth itself responded to Tatums involvement in a more modern world, oil production there made state news beginning in the late 1920s. Many wells yielded large rewards. Residents took advantage of the benefit that came to them as land owners; some became wealthy.

¹¹ Don Doyle Harrison, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825 – 70* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 18-38.

¹² Tatums' oil activity made the *Daily Oklahoma* news too many times to list. The following is a small sampling of hundreds of similar articles. "In and Around the Oil Fields," May 24, 1927; "Tatums Field Play Widens," June 12, 1927; "Tatums Field Is Exploited," October 2, 1927; "Tatums Field Yields Two Good Producers," February 5, 1928; "New Tatums Producer Flowing 425 Barrels," June 3, 1928; "Tatums Are Well Has Oil Showing," May 12, 1929; "Seven Oilers Completed in Tatums Field," August 24, 1930; this pattern continued for many decades, "Seaboard Hits Oiler at Tatums," January 18, 1953.

Tatums population steadily climbed, as the original members' families grew and new residents continued to stream in from areas of the state that promoted racially motivated violence and threats. Brutal lynchings, whippings, and other forms of coercion forced many Oklahoma blacks out of predominately white towns within the state. Tatums members welcomed the refugees and quickly incorporated their families into the life of self-segregation.¹³

Social institutions in Tatums developed along the era's traditionally fraternalistic lines.¹⁴ Social groups made significant contributions to the founding years, particularly in the support of education, and the community responded with a growing number of social organizations in the following decades. Formal organizations such as the Masons, The Order of the Eastern Star, and the Knights of Pythias were active in Tatums throughout the 1920s.¹⁵ In addition, less structured groups developed programs to stimulate social and personal development. Separate men's and women's groups at the churches sponsored a variety of events to promote citizenship, literacy, and even social skills. All of these organizations participated in beautification projects at various times.¹⁶

The Masons in Tatums originally shared their building with the local school; however, by the 1920s they were holding their meetings and social events in a separate exclusively Masonic lodge. Typical of their abilities to innovate and collaborate, when a fire destroyed the building in

¹³ Cecil Jones, interview by author, tape recording, Tatums, Oklahoma, January 20, 2001, hereafter referred to as the Jones Interview.

¹⁴ Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, And Fraternalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) explores national fraternalism and its interplay with social construction.

¹⁵ Varner, "A History of the Tatums Community," 40-48.

¹⁶ Jones Interview.

1927, members purchased a building from a nearby community and successfully hauled it to the former location of the lodge. The organization temporarily disbanded in the early 1930s, however, after a catastrophe bankrupted the “Grand Chapter” of the Oklahoma black Masons. In a mining accident near Coalgate, Oklahoma, several hundred men were killed, forty-eight of whom were entitled to substantial death benefits from the Grand Chapter. This expense proved to be too costly for the organization. Consequently, local members lost faith in the assistance they counted on from the state level, and interest waned. The Masons were inactive in Tatums for a few years in the mid to late 1930s.¹⁷ (For Masonic leadership, see Table 2.1)

Table 2.1: Worshipful Master of Tatums Masons, 1898 - 1932

Jim Buckner	Dan Springer
Jim Brooks	Will Brown
J. D. Hooks	John Collins
	Willie Newberry

Source: Varner, “A History of the Tatums Community,” 41.

As a result of the decline in Masonic interest in Tatums from the failure of the Oklahoma Grand Chapter to fulfill their commitments to local units, a Texas Mason named Clark decided to intervene and assist the Tatums group. The chapter operated under the Texas jurisdiction as the Order of Saint Joseph until the Oklahoma Prince Hall Masons re-established their power and fought to oust Clark. The group reorganized after some litigation over the matter as Friendship lodge Number 79 of Free and Accepted Masonry. Because the Eastern Star organization was affiliated with the Masonic group, they also experienced this restructuring.

¹⁷ Varner, “A History of the Tatums Community,” 40-43. The Masons allowed the Tatums School to hold session at their lodge until the late 1910s and was a stable force supporting the Tatums schools for decades.

Under the leadership of Worthy Matrons, Alice Carter, Eliza Williams, Almedia Hooks, Henrietta Franklin, and Callie Rosenbrough, the Mount Mariah Eastern Stars in Tatums operated continuously from their founding until the 1930s when the groups temporarily disbanded in conjunction with the local Masonic issues. In 1934 Clark reorganized the Eastern Star chapters as he did the Masons under Texas jurisdiction. Gracie Brooks served as Worthy Matron with Effie Austin as Secretary.¹⁸ These women discussed a variety of domestic concerns such as home management, child care, and food preparation in their meetings, but their prime focus was directed toward community service and betterment.¹⁹

Like the secular clubs, the religious atmosphere in Tatums continued to diversify and factionalize, developing complexities in the stratification among the townspeople. In 1924, Bethel Baptist, which had stood as the town's main church for many years, was joined by another denomination for the support of the community. The Church of the Living God, Pillar and Ground of the Church, a group with a base in Ardmore, sent Elder Cain and Phillip Varner to conduct meetings for residents of Tatums who were looking outside of Bethel for spiritual direction. For a year, these men held monthly meetings in the community and built a gathering of members who would be able to financially support a full-time minister. By 1925, the congregation brought in the family of Elder Richardson, a pastor from Texas. Richardson served for a couple of years until the arrival of Elder R. L. Gray, who served as pastor of the Tatums

¹⁸ Ibid., 45.

¹⁹ Jones Interview; Lacey McCreary, interview by author, tape recording, Tatums, Oklahoma, March 6, 2001, hereafter referred to as the McCreary Interview.

church until 1942. This church, however, never had its own building but met in the first floor of the Masonic building throughout its duration in Tatums.²⁰

In Tatums, residents did their business or socializing within the limits of the HBTs and were rarely susceptible to the judgment of on-looking whites. HBT members were removed from racially charged arguments over gin prices or inappropriate street behavior when conducting business with other blacks. By keeping to themselves, they reduced the opportunities for conflict, the precipitating factors for racially motivated violence. Even black and other non-white residents of biracial communities could benefit from the HBTs by using their services instead of those in the white-dominated towns. Rather than feeling threatened by the racially tense conditions and the apparently ever-present watchful eye of the Klan, it would appear that black residents and non-residents alike could escape to the HBTs for dignity as well as business, education, or other opportunities.

In order to illustrate the impact of the pervasive social and economic network provided by the HBTs, it is necessary to examine some population figures for the state of Oklahoma. Approximately 75,000, half of all Oklahoma blacks, lived within the HBTs or took advantage of the business, social, and religious networks of the towns. In 1920 the population of Oklahoma was reported as 2,028, 283. Of that, 149,408, or 7.4 percent, were listed as the “Negro Population” in census compendia. Only 38,339 of those blacks were living in towns larger than 10,000. Another 5,075 were dispersed in small numbers in towns with populations between 2,500 and 10,000. Thus, 43,414 African Americans were listed as living in biracial communities with populations of more than 2,500. A significant number of the African American population

²⁰ Varner, “A History of the Tatums Community,” 17-18.

in Oklahoma, 105,984 residents, was not listed in these towns of 2,500 or more.²¹ No census compendia for Oklahoma ever record the population of an HBT, suggesting that none ever officially achieved a population of 2,500 or more people.

It may be assumed that these Oklahoma blacks were living in rural areas, small predominately white communities of less than 2,500 (which are not listed in compendia), or within the HBTs. It seems fair then to assume that at least half of the African Americans in Oklahoma, approximately 75,000 people, were living within, conducting business with, or using the protective security of the HBTs.²² Map A, "Location and Sizes of Oklahoma Towns with Populations of Less than 2,500," shows that the majority of the state's communities of less than 2,500 were concentrated in the eastern part of the state.²³ (See Appendix for maps.) This supports the idea that the majority of these African Americans living in towns of less than 2,500

²¹ U. S. Bureau of the Census. *Fourteenth Census of the United States. State Compendium: Oklahoma: Statistics of the Population, Occupations, Agriculture, Drainage, Manufacturers, and Mines and Quarries for the State, Counties and Cities* (Washington: Government Printing Company, 1924), 40-42. The existing census data does not account for the location of 105,994 blacks, fully 71 per cent of the total reported black population. This suggests that the majority of blacks living in Oklahoma were living in rural communities of less than 2,500. Census compendiums do not list any HBTs in Oklahoma as having populations of more than 2,500. Other sources, such as Johnson and local officials for the towns, insist that at least Boley and Langston exceeded that number. See "New Chance For a Black Town," *Business Week*, August 9, 1969.

²² Using Johnson's statistics, the bare minimum number of people living in the network of the HBTs is approximately 30,000. In fact, Johnson even states his belief that this estimate is too low. If one subtracts the number of blacks living in communities with populations above 2,500 from the total black population of Oklahoma, the figure achieved is approximately 100,000. With such a wide variance in statistical data, one must find another point of reference. If the statistics for the town of Boley, stated above, are representative of the HBTs as a whole, it does not seem outrageous to use a figure as high as half of the total black population of Oklahoma, or 75,000 people, as an estimate for the total number of people in the HBT network.

²³ Donald Brandt, "Population Trends of Incorporated Agglomerations (1,000 – 2,500) of Oklahoma, 1920 – 1950" (M.S. thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1964), 63.

were in or near the HBTs, which also centered in the eastern region of Oklahoma. (See Map B, entitled, “Locations of Klan or Mob Violence and Major HBTs in Oklahoma.) Tatum is located only 19 miles west of Highway 35, the vertical dividing line of the state (excluding the panhandle).

After contextualizing the HBTs within the general African American population in Oklahoma, it is useful to point out how Oklahoma compared to other states in black population percentages. The U.S. Bureau of the Census determined particular regional zones of the United States, such as the South, the North, and the West. The South, however, is a complex category, divided into the South Atlantic, East South Central, and West South Central. Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas comprise the East South Central region of the United States. This sub-region is similar to those reported for the total South and the South Atlantic district in regards to the percentage of the black population. Table 2.2 demonstrates the percentage of African Americans that made up the population in 1920 and 1930. Table 2.3 shows the breakdown on the East South Central states. In Oklahoma, a little more than 7 percent of the population was black. Missouri, West Virginia, and Kentucky are states with relatively similar proportions, ranging from around 5 to 10 percent black as seen in Table 2.4. These provide comparison factors when examining the differences in Oklahoma trends.

Table 2.2: African Americans as Percentage of Total Population, 1920 and 1930

		The South				The North	The West
Year	United States	Total South	South Atlantic	East South Central	West South Central		
1920	9.9	26.9	30.9	28.4	18.7	2.3	.9
1930	9.7	24.7	28.0	26.9	20.1	3.3	1.0

Table 2.3: African Americans as Percentage of Population in East South Central, 1920 and 1930

Year	Arkansas	Louisiana	Oklahoma	Texas
1920	27.0	38.9	7.4	15.9
1930	25.8	36.9	7.2	14.7

Table 2.4: African American as Percentage in Four States with Similar Ratios, 1920 and 1930

Year	Kentucky	Missouri	West Virginia
1920	9.8	5.2	5.9
1930	8.6	6.2	6.6

Source: Data compiled from statistics in the United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Commerce, *Negroes in the United States: 1920 – 1932* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1935), 13-15.

When comparing Oklahoma to the East South Central region, the state stands out as having a much lower percentage of blacks in the population. The black population in Oklahoma is closer in proportion to the percentage of blacks in the population of Kentucky, Missouri, or West Virginia. (Table 2.4). Nevertheless, Oklahoma can also be compared to the traditionally southern states because it held slaves. In addition, most of the white population came from southern states that had strict Jim Crow laws, highly segregated living conditions, Klan extravaganzas, and gruesome lynchings with live burnings. But, unlike the traditional South, Oklahoma was the center of the black town social movement, which was still strong in the midst of the Garvey nationalism of the 1920s.

If there were ever a stage set for volatile and ominous racial drama, the social conditions of Oklahoma at the brink of the 1920s must have seemed as inviting as front row tickets to a Broadway play. Still tense from the defeat of black statehood in 1907, when Indian lands officially became absorbed by the white government, citizens of Oklahoma witnessed the revival

of the Ku Klux Klan, a uniting force especially for the numerous southerners that had moved in. National post-WWI racial and political tensions, droughts, a flu epidemic, falling cotton prices, the oil economy in Oklahoma, a large socialist and labor party movement, and the revitalization of the glamorized *Birth of a Nation* styled Klan created a heated social environment in Oklahoma. With its Klan activity, large white southern population, the Tulsa Race Riot, and the extreme segregationist attitudes of the state, Oklahoma resembled the South. Oklahomans in 1920 experienced bank failures and the end of the Bank Guaranty Fund in Oklahoma, the struggle of economic depression, and the general unrest of national social and political changes. However, the presence of the Klan in the state may stand out among all other factors.²⁴

Historian Carter Blue Clark studied the Klan in his unpublished dissertation from the University of Oklahoma. He found investigating the history of the Klan was laborious and often unfruitful. Clark described the situation, “Enter a room filled with people and inquire about the Klan and the result is similar to turning on a light at night in a kitchen and watching cockroaches scatter.”²⁵ Despite the obstacles, Clark gathered hundreds of original documents, now archived in the Western Histories Collection at the University of Oklahoma. He found the violence in Oklahoma was far greater than in other states. In fact, the first convictions for night-riding Klansmen took place in Oklahoma. Clark also contested the previous historiography that

²⁴ Carter Blue Clark, “Timeline of Walton’s Political Career,” Carter Blue Clark Collection, Western History Collections (University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma); see also Thronton Cooke, “The Collapse of Bank-Deposit Guaranty in Oklahoma and its Position in Other States,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 38, no. 1 (1923): 108-39; R Halliburton, Jr., “The Tulsa Race War of 1921,” *Journal of Black Studies* 2, no. 3 (1972): 338-57; Garin Burbank, “Agrarian Radicals and Their Opponents: Political Conflict in Southern Oklahoma, 1910-1924,” *Journal of American History* 58, no. 1 (1971): 5-23.

²⁵ Carter Blue Clark, “A History of the Ku Klux Klan in Oklahoma” (Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1976), vi.

claimed that the violent nature of the West was a myth. With western violence and the South's propensity for racism, the Klan was planted in fertile soil. The state was rich with a mix of sixty-seven Indian tribes, European miners, white ranchers, immigrant merchants and laborers, and African and Mexican Americans. In the decade before the infamous years of the 1920s, the Oklahoma population rose 123 percent.²⁶ In addition, the state had a large socialist and labor union movement that added to the stewing elements of diversity.²⁷

The Klan first sent recruiters, called kluges, and organizers, called leangles, into the state in 1920 as the national organization was experiencing the very beginning of a revival from the original Reconstruction Klan.²⁸ Prior to the attention of the national order, however, a state Klan had already started meeting and klavakading (parading) in the late fall of 1919 in Oklahoma City. Prominent attorney Wash Hudson of Tulsa admitted that he and many other Oklahomans wanted to be part of the organization their fathers had formed in the Deep South decades before.²⁹ The campaign to increase membership within the state and the atmosphere of racism and fraternalism boosted the Klan numbers greatly. In the first year of kluging (recruiting), membership in Oklahoma reached 20,000. After this jump in participation, the need for field agents was no longer necessary. Klan membership in the state in the early 1920s reportedly

²⁶ Ibid., 2-4; U.S. Bureau of Census, *Population 1920*, 812.

²⁷ For an in-depth study of this, see Jim Bissett, *Agrarian Socialism in America: Marx, Jesus and Jefferson in the Oklahoma Countryside, 1904-1920* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999) or Jack Green, *Grass-Roots Socialism: Radical Movements in the Southwest, 1895 – 1943* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978).

²⁸ See Appendix A for a glossary of Klan terms. Researching Klan history is often difficult because of the prolific use of their unique terminology. The glossary is limited, but provides definitions of some of the frequently used terms.

²⁹ Clark, "A History of the Ku Klux Klan in Oklahoma," 36.

reached between 150,000 and 200,000, organized into 200 to 300 caverns (local units).³⁰ David Chalmers states that, “by the end of 1921 there were as many Klansmen in the Sooner State as there had been in the whole Invisible Empire six months before.”³¹

During the first few years of the 1920s, Oklahoma experienced a peak in Klan and mob violence. Gruesome story after gruesome story can be told, relaying the details of thousands of beatings, whippings, floggings, mutilations, tortures, and threats that were poured out onto the people of the Oklahoma countryside and cities. The perpetrators of these acts appeared ruthless and obsessed with savagery. In their desire to put down black resistance to white domination and evict many African Americans from the black and prospering Greenwood District of Tulsa, racial aggressors created what has been termed the worst race riot in American history in “Little Africa” or “Black Wall Street.”³²

After the alleged assault of a young white woman in a chance encounter on an elevator, the black community of Tulsa believed that the accused, Dick Rowland, was sure to die at the hands of a mob. Armed black men attempted to resist, and hopefully prevent, the lynching death of their neighbor. In a confrontation that became a backlash against the Greenwood district, growing mobs of white men invaded, burned, and destroyed the black enclave, burning over 1,200 homes and nearly every other building in the black district, including churches, schools, businesses, a hospital, and a library. Hannibal Johnson, author of *Black Wall Street* and *Acres of Aspiration: The All-Black Towns of Oklahoma*, reported that the fight that ensued resulted in millions of dollars in property damage and between one and three hundred deaths. Johnson

³⁰ Ibid., 69.

³¹ Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism*, 49.

³² Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration*, 168.

claimed that the Tulsa race riot and other similar riots that took place across America, “set out to displace Blacks physically while ‘keeping them in their place’ psychologically.”³³

Women joined in on the Klan concept, in step with national Klan politics at the time. Women of the Klan, a newly developed and highly controversial female arm of the Klan, enrolled 150,000 new members in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Indiana, Ohio, and Texas. In 1925, Oklahoma proclaimed sixty women’s Klans and has been called the “mother state” for the concept of female Klans. These women claimed that they held enough Klantons to provide an opportunity for women in any area of the state to participate in Klan activities. They held their own ranks with segregated and secret meetings. In addition to these women’s groups, the Klan in Oklahoma also organized and supported Junior Klans, aimed toward boys between the ages of fourteen and eighteen.³⁴

Oklahoma governor Jack Walton received a large share of the complaints made about Klan or other mob violence.³⁵ Walton, his councilor Aldrich Blake, and his advisor Pat Nagle were fierce enemies of the Klan and made no attempt to hide it despite an atmosphere that led

³³ Ibid., 172. The young woman involved in the accusations that fueled the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 refused to press charges against the young black man who eventually did escape the threat unharmed and left town. In 1916, a lynching was prevented in Muskogee, Oklahoma by armed black men. Clark, “A History of the Ku Klux Klan in Oklahoma,” 17.

³⁴ Clark, “A History of the Ku Klux Klan in Oklahoma,” 85-89. See also Kathleen Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender In The 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

³⁵ Playing the devil’s advocate, it is necessary to state that some or many of the violent mob activities carried out in the name of the Klan could have been connected to other hate groups or renegade vigilantes settling issues *disguised* as the Klan in order to evade punishment. The Klan claimed in their publications that any persons that participated in such heinous acts were acting as imposters and not real agents of the Klan. Several issues of the *Klan Courier*, which are preserved in the Carter Blue Clark Collection at the Western History Collections at the University of Oklahoma, were helpful in demonstrating this kind of explanation to the accusations of extra-legal measures.

much of the public to believe that the Klan ruled Oklahoma at the time. Walton had been elected mayor of Oklahoma City in 1920 with strong labor support. By 1922, Walton was elected to the governor's position with the largest plurality and extravagant celebration of Oklahoma's history to that point. Walton held a barbeque at the fair grounds the day after his inauguration that served at least 75,000 people with free food. Some reports claim as many as 300,000 people attended. Newspapers report that it was a victory for Catholics, laborers, and those opposed to the Klan.³⁶

Immediately after taking office, Walton began facing political difficulties when attempting to handle the state's business. He found himself heavily involved in power struggles with the Klan-controlled legislature. Walton could hardly ignore the strength of the Klan or their involvement in the activities of communities in nearly every corner of the state. The governor's office had news reported by phone, letter, and telegram in the early 1920s to show that there were likely to have been at least six whippings a night in the state. Newspapers and other publications printed numerous accounts of Klan and mob violence, and many of these events reached print at the national level.³⁷ Walton was forced to call martial law across Oklahoma counties and cities on numerous occasions, threatening his political career. In a telegram sent to the U. S. Attorney General, Walton pleaded for federal assistance when his attempts to investigate and regulate the Klan were aborted by their systematic impeachment efforts.³⁸ Many counties requested investigations or interventions of mob outrages. The Oklahoma legislature,

³⁶ Clark, "Outline of Walton's Political Career," Carter Blue Clark Collection.

³⁷ Michael Jessup, "Consorting With Blood and Violence: The Decline of the Oklahoma Ku Klux Klan," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*. 78, no. 3 (2000): 297.

³⁸ "Telegram from Walton to U.S. Attorney General, September 25, 1923," Carter Blue Clark Collection.

which eventually ousted Walton, consisted of at least 68 Klansmen out of 125 representatives. Walton once admitted, “The only thing that surprises me is that they have not convened their legislature at night in the whipping pastures, where, in full regalia of mask and robes, in the presence of dragons, cyclops, goblins, and wizards, impeached me in the sanctity of nature’s temple that had so often resounded with the cries and agonies of tortured victims.”³⁹

The Klan and mob violence that took place in Oklahoma, especially in the volume of the 1920s, were horrific. A pregnant woman was pistol whipped to the point of losing her unborn child.⁴⁰ A man in Tulsa accused of registering black voters had his ear cut off and then endured the indignity of the crowd trying to make him eat it. He was stripped and beaten into unconsciousness. A Klan group pulled one couple out of bed, stripped, whipped, and beat them, dotted the woman’s body with carbolic acid and otherwise assaulted her because they were accused of bootlegging.⁴¹ The list of graphic descriptions of unthinkable tortures is lengthy and sickening. The Klan’s scope of extravagance was demonstrated in other ways in 1922. Just south of Tulsa, at a Klan initiation ceremony that was reportedly attended by 60,000 on-lookers, they witnessed 1,020 night-hawks (candidates) become Klansmen. Another initiation ceremony in Tulsa, just four months later, inducted 400 candidates and was witnessed by a crowd of 20,000. This ceremony, however, took place at the fairgrounds, with airplanes and banners flying over the crowds, promoting the Klan while searchlights filled the sky with drama.⁴²

³⁹ Clark, “A History of the Ku Klux Klan in Oklahoma,” 189-96. Quote, 196.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 126.

⁴¹ Jessup, “Consorting With Blood and Violence,” 299-300.

⁴² Clark, “A History of the Ku Klux Klan in Oklahoma,” 52.

In September of 1923, the battle between Governor Walton and the anti-Klan factions, and the Ku Klux Klan had reached such extreme points that Walton actually issued a notice to all Oklahoma residents. He claimed that he would pardon any individual who shot a Klansman! With a history of pardoning criminals shamelessly, this must have been a believable threat. In addition, he threatened to censor the *Tulsa Tribune* for printing stories that were “inciting riots.” The “klash” between the governor and the anti-Klan and the Klan brought national media attention; *Literary Digest* announced that, “Oklahoma is in the throes of something very like civil war...”⁴³

The feud between the Klan and the anti-Klan factions of Oklahoma resulted in Governor Walton’s impeachment late in 1923. The Klan may have suffered a greater blow than its opponents because Walton agreed to step down if an already proposed anti-masking law was approved. Trying to save some dignity, the Klan declared that the de-masking bill was already on the agenda and agreed to what Walton considered self-sacrificing terms, claiming that he was out of office either way. Klansmen asserted that the recent violence and troubles had caused the need for removing the masks. Regardless, the public backlash against the grotesque atrocities of violence quickly tarnished the image of the Klan as benevolent and patriotic.⁴⁴ The Klan did as much damage control as possible, even hiring Leon Hirsch, a twenty-one-year old Jewish lawyer, the youngest assistant Attorney General in the U.S. at the time. Hirsch later revealed that the

⁴³ “Constitution Weak in Oklahoma,” *Literary Digest* 13 (October 1923): 12.

⁴⁴ Clark, “A History of the Ku Klux Klan in Oklahoma,” 203. Also Stanley Frost, “The Klan, the King, and a Revolution: The Regeneration of Oklahoma,” *The Outlook* 135 (November 1923), 530-31.

Klan had intentionally used a Jewish legal defense team to avert charges that their representation was identified with the Klan.⁴⁵

In the midst of these highly racist and segregated times, two forces stand out in Oklahoma race relations: the Klan and the anti-Klan, but not the Klan and the black towns. Why? By examining Map A, it is clear that many HBTs and towns with Klan activity or mob violence were within close proximity to one another. (See Appendix E.) The Klan was more active and more violent in the 1920s in Oklahoma than in any other state. In other southern states, the Klan terrorized black communities.⁴⁶ A group of Klansmen organized in Healdton, only 20 miles away from Tatum. These Healdton Klansmen appear to have placed their energy into other issues than Tatum matters. The Oklahoma black towns continued to exist as agencies of black nationalism on a micro-level. A consideration of all the Klan or mob violence locations reveals that there were no reported whippings, lynching, parades or Klan activities in the black towns. Appendix C shows lists of both towns with Klan or mob violence as reported by local papers, letters to the governor, photographs, Klan reports, etc. A list of Oklahoma's HBTs is included in Appendix D. Examination of those lists will reveal that there are no towns that appear on both lists. Map B also shows the towns with Klan or mob violence and a majority of the HBTs.

William Loren Katz reveals that the Klan in Oklahoma was not nearly as concerned with race as with other issues. According to Katz, the "Klan claimed its goal was to 'enforce the 10

⁴⁵ "Interview with Leon Hirsh, 1974," Carter Blue Clark Collection.

⁴⁶ William Loren Katz, *The Invisible Empire: The Ku Klux Klan Impact on History* (Seattle: Open Hand Publishing, Inc., 1986), 90.

Commandments,' and punish 'wife-beaters,' 'family-deserters,' and 'home-wreckers.'"⁴⁷ These social conditions of interest to the Klan may have kept them out of the lives of Tatums residents who proclaimed the same standards that the Klan touted: patriotism, family, morality, discipline, excellence. More important, if Tatums residents were not adhering to the controlled morality of the Klan, they were not doing it in front of those in judgment. There was no Catholic or immigrant sentiment in Tatums; gambling and drinking were kept to private parties and clubs where whites did not venture.

Some residents of Tatums claim that there has been a long-standing, unwritten rule about the level of independence and the sense of safety in the HBTs. Lacey McCreary, former city councilwoman of Tatums, was born there and has held numerous positions for the community's social and religious institutions. She was a founding member of the national club, T-Okie (stands for Tatums Okie), which holds biannual town reunions for residents, former residents, and family connected to Tatums. Thousands from numerous states flood over the little town for two or three days of parades, games, activities, commerce, music, dancing, and home-cooked soul food. McCreary's parents and grandparents were vital members of the Tatums community and shared family and town history with each other. The Honorable Cecil Jones, current and longest office-holding Mayor of Tatums, Betty Hooks Norman, who took the Tatums High School basketball team to state championships in 1955 and 1956, and Myrna Roberts, a local Tatums expert, all report similar things when asked about the level of racial tension within their

⁴⁷ Ibid.

community and their parents' and grand-parents' perceptions of the level of safety and violence within the town, as portrayed to them.⁴⁸

The Tatums residents claimed that the Klan did not come into the black towns because of their segregated and mostly Protestant practices and allegiances, thus the Klan did not have a problem with them.⁴⁹ Testimonies confirmed that many HBT residents were not bothering the Klan by living such separated lifestyles. Their perception of this was that they did not bother the Klan, and the Klan did not bother them.⁵⁰ On a smaller scale, this kind of thinking, of avoiding the Klan or just staying out of its way, was evident in biracial communities like Enid, Oklahoma, where many reports of violence were reported. Members of the local Klan group were involved in every aspect of city government; they even decided who could join the Enid Musical Society. The mayor of Enid claimed that that town all knew a watchword, "keep your mouth shut and keep out of the hands of the Klansmen."⁵¹

Ideologically, and maybe ironically, the HBTs and the Klan may have held similar points of view about race relations. Booker T. Washington's tours of some of the HBTs and his segregationist philosophies were glorified in these towns.⁵² Even W.E.B. DuBois advocated

⁴⁸ McCreary Interview; Jones Interview; Betty Hooks Norman, interview by author, tape recording, Tatums, Oklahoma, March 6, 2004, hereafter referred to as the Norman Interview; Myrna Roberts, interview by author, tape recording, Tatums, Oklahoma, March 15, 2004, hereafter referred to as the Roberts Interview.

⁴⁹ Despite their predominately Protestant solidarity, there was one Catholic church in Boley in the 1920s with a congregation of around 200. Bell, "Boley," 41. All Tatums' churches have been Protestant.

⁵⁰ McCreary Interview, Norman Interview, Jones Interview, Roberts Interview.

⁵¹ Katz, *The Invisible Empire*, 90.

⁵² Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration*, 76; see also Norman Crocket, "Witness to History: Booker T. Washington Visits Boley," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 67, no. 4 (1989): 382-91; Louis

planned self-segregation.⁵³ By the time of the Klan’s revival in Oklahoma, Marcus Garvey touted philosophies of separation of the races after being influenced by Washington’s work. In an event that outraged the Universal Negro Improvement Association and worked to rally his enemies against him, Garvey actually met with Edward Young Clarke, Imperial Kleagle of the Ku Klux Klan, in Atlanta in 1922. Garvey’s ideals of racial separation and racial purity were parallel to the Klan’s thinking. As Table 2.5 shows, Garvey’s ideology and the Klan’s philosophies had many correlations. Similar parallel philosophies existed between HBT and Klan ideologies.

Table 2.5: Garvey and Klan Ideologies

Garvey Ideology	Klan Ideology	Shared Ideology
Black-owned business; Black racial pride; Superiority of Black culture.	White-owned business; White racial pride; Superiority of White culture.	Separate business networks; Racial purity and preservation of group identity; Freedom to express culture depended upon the ability to be free of other races; Believed the U.S. was, and always would be a white man’s country; Used religious-styled meetings and delivery methods; Considered themselves connected to their ideology in a kind of fraternal brotherhood; Saw separation of the races as the best answer to the race problem.

Source: The basis for the statements about Garvey’s ideology is based on Lawrence W. Levine, “Marcus Garvey and the Politics of Revitalization,” in John Hope Franklin and August Meier eds. *Black Leaders Of The Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982): 132, 105-138. For Klan ideology, from its own sources, W.C.

R. Harlan, “Booker T. Washington and the White Man’s Burden,” *The American Historical Review* 71 (January, 1996): 441-67; and Wilson J. Moses, “The Evolution of Black Nationalist Thought: A Study of W. E. B. DuBois,” *Topics in Afro-American Studies* (1971): 77-100.

⁵³ Earl Offari, “W.E.B. DuBois and Black Power,” *Black World XL* (August 1970): 27-28.

Wright, *Religious And Practical Ideals Of The Ku Klux Klan* (Waco, TX: n.p., 1926) is comprehensive, with a title page quote that claims the book is, “a textbook on Klankraft for the instruction of Klansmen and the information of non-Klansmen.”

Regarding the published attitudes of the Klan, Rev. W. C. Wright states, “some people claim that the Klan of today is the black man’s enemy. Such is not the case. The Klan of today is the negro’s best friend. He has his own society, secret Orders and churches and does not admit the white man. This is as it should be.”⁵⁴ At least in theory, Klansmen proclaimed that living within the U.S. in completely segregated terms would be the only way to maintain any civilized order. In other areas the Klan claimed to hold some of the same views as the black population. The typical HBT promotional flyer, like the following one taken from a Boley advertisement, claimed that the towns were attempting to create answers to the threatening racial conditions of the time: “Come and help to prove to the Caucasian race and not only the Caucasian race, but the world, that the Negro is a law-making and law-abiding citizen, and help solve the racial problem that is now before us.”⁵⁵ Both the Klan ideology and the black towns’ self-segregation philosophies supported separate living situations, and business networks, independent social and religious facilities, their own race-based local schools, and Protestant Christianity as a backbone of their belief systems. Tatums’ residents made this ideology work for their community, staying clear of the ominous organization.

The Klan began to decline after the impeachment of Walton, the bad publicity of the early 1920s, and the anti-masking provisions. Table 2.6 shows the rise and decline in Klan membership in the state. From 1929 to 1933, there were actually no known reports of Klan

⁵⁴ The Reverend W.C. Wright, *Religious and Practical Ideals of the Ku Klux Klan* (Waco, Texas: n.p., 1926), 43.

⁵⁵ Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration*, 81.

activity for the state of Oklahoma. Klan historian Michael Jessup reported that, “violence, external opposition, and a breakdown of the organizational structure destroyed the Oklahoma Klan.”⁵⁶ This external opposition did not appear to come directly from the HBTs. No evidence has shown that there were any formal anti-Klan organizations in the HBTs.

Table 2.6: Rise and Fall of Klan Membership in Oklahoma in the 1920s

Year	Total Reported Memberships
1921	70,000
1924	100,000
1926	18,000
1928	7,000
1929	2,000

Source: Jessup, “Consorting With Blood and Violence,” 296-97.

Perhaps in addition to having relatively similar ideas about racial separation, there were other factors that kept Klan or mob violence out of the HBTs. There may have been a kind of mutual respect for the possibility that black townspeople might have been able to protect themselves from mob attacks. The Tatums residents were armed and willing to defend their towns. Despite the fact that whites occasionally stayed overnight in Tatums at the Mannings Hotel, consistent rumors report that a sign at the edge of town once read: WHITE MAN, DON’T LET THE SUN GO DOWN ON YOUR ASS.”⁵⁷ In 1928, a historian noted that there was no evidence to show that any white person had ever spent the night in Boley, Oklahoma.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Jessup, “Consorting With Blood and Violence,” Chart data from 296-97. Quote, 313.

⁵⁷ McCreary Interview, Jones Interview, Roberts Interview. William Murray, *The Negro Place in Call of Race* (Tishomingo, Oklahoma: n.p., 1948), makes mention of a similar sign in Boley. It announced a warning to white visitors that they must not stay in town overnight without permission of the sheriff. Murray served as governor of Oklahoma from 1931 to 1935.

⁵⁸ Bell, “Boley,”15.

Perhaps fighting the anti-Klan factions such as the Catholics, Jews, Socialists, labor party unionist, and Walton's crew were too ominous to face if they were joined by the HBTs. In Healdton, only miles away from Tatum, there was more than one organized anti-Klan group. Blacks in Muskogee and Tulsa showed they were willing to fight back against white aggression. The Boley police department was impressive and well armed.⁵⁹ Most Tatum families were prepared to defend themselves as well.⁶⁰

The relationship between the HBTs and the Klan may be elusive and complicated, but it was not broadcast as the issue of the day. National, state, and city newspapers were talking about the Klan in Oklahoma and all those who opposed them. Many politicians included their association with the Klan as an important part of their platform, in a variety of handbills being distributed to show Klan and anti-Klan support in the state.⁶¹ The relationship between the HBTs and the Klan just does not appear in the newspapers, ads, or circulars used to bring the important issues between the Klan and those that opposed them. The absence of any mention of the HBTs in the news and the political propaganda of the day may show that conflicts between the Klan and the HBTs were not important enough to identify. If the Klan answer to the race problem was to keep African Americans in their place, then staying in their own towns and communities and away from whites, may have proved their complicity in separatist arguments. Charles Alexander studied the Klan in the Southwest, classified as Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma,

⁵⁹ In fact, in 1932 the Boley law enforcement and armed residents fought off Pretty Boy Floyd and their gang with only one casualty in a foiled attempt to rob the Boley bank. Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration*, 84.

⁶⁰ Jones Interview.

⁶¹ John Calloway, "John Calloway Papers, n.d.," Walton Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman.

and Arkansas, and determined that “The ‘Negro problem,’ seemed to furnish little impetus for Klan expansion in the Southwest.” He noted that a traveler reported in 1922 that

the Ku Klux movement hereabouts is not conspicuously anti-negro. The ... Negroes with whom I have had an opportunity to talk are not greatly disturbed by it so far as the security of their own people is concerned.⁶²

Supporting this claim, and emphasizing that it was likely most true for African Americans in the HBTs, Lacey McCreary made the following statement about her grandmother’s childhood while being questioned about the Klan in Tatums in the 1920s:

What you cannot forget is that Tatums has always been a safe place for black people. I ran around these streets and yards when I was little, and so did my Gramma. It’s always been this way. We didn’t have to worry about the rules of how to act the way other black folks in Oklahoma City and other places had to act. The Klan never came here and bothered none of us. We went to church; we kept to ourselves, and they didn’t bother us. They rode up near Healdton a lot. My aunt said she saw them with their white robes and everything, but they didn’t come near here.⁶³

It should not be interpreted, however, that the HBTs, or Tatums, for that matter, were free from violence altogether. Pranks, petty thievery, and general disturbances took place in Tatums, as in the other HBTs, just as they did in any other town. For that reason, Lee Tatums was appointed Marshall shortly after becoming postmaster.⁶⁴ In April of 1923, founder and civic

⁶² Charles Alexander, “Invisible Empire in the Southwest: The Ku Klux Klan in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, 1920-1930” (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1962), 20.

⁶³ McCreary Interview.

⁶⁴ Varner, “A History of the Tatums Community,” 6.

leader John Wall (brother of the founding Quadroon Sisters) was murdered while holding the position of town marshal for Tatums. Carter County officials questioned Tatums residents and detained five of them overnight; however, most investigations were handled within the town.⁶⁵ In addition, Tatums' events rarely made the news outside of the numerous reports on oil production and the occasional for real estate. In the years between 1915 and 1935, only the one short article about the Wall murder mentions anything deviant at all about Tatums in the *Daily Oklahoman*.

Tatums quietly hosted Oklahoma outlaws who may have believed they also could take advantage of the black town network. Because of the oil booms in the Tatums area in the late 1920s and early 1930s, many laborers stopped at a well-known establishment in that area of Oklahoma; Mary Mannings' "Hotel," as it was simply called, was accustomed to offering lodging and boarding to workers of all races. Her reputation for cooking and hospitality drew many in just for a meal and a rest. By handling the town's encounters with whites, Mannings maintained a non-confrontational routine for many years. Her personality and public relations skills ensured that problems were kept to a minimum, but the Hotel barely missed a harried scene when men posing as oil workers stopped in for accommodations in the white quarters.⁶⁶

The men arose no suspicions until their third day when another white guest arrived. The apparent leader of the two men, called Floyd, noticed the guest approaching and got nervous, asking Mannings about his identity. When Floyd discovered that Arthur Fletcher, a Carter County Deputy Sheriff, would be staying at the Hotel, he quickly retired to his room. Later, when Mannings delivered water to him, Floyd was polishing what Mannings' daughter Irene

⁶⁵ "Tatums Death Suspects Released," *Daily Oklahoman*, April 26, 1923.

⁶⁶ Varner, "A History of the Tatums Community," 20-22.

later said was the, “largest gun she [her mother] had ever seen.”⁶⁷ In addition to this peculiar event, the deputy sheriff was not following his typical routine of chatting and enjoying a meal before leisurely retiring to his room. Instead, Fletcher went straight to his quarters and slept, giving Floyd and his cohort an opportunity to leave.⁶⁸

As Mary Mannings inconspicuously observed these events, she became aware that something was surely out of the ordinary. Shortly thereafter, her daughter Irene returned from errands. At the post office, newly-posted flyers announced that the outlaw “Pretty Boy Floyd” was in the area, making Fletcher’s reason for the Tatums visit apparent. The picture on the poster identified him as the same Floyd they were housing!⁶⁹ Apparently, even outlaws believed that Tatums could serve as a point of refuge.

Mary Mannings and her sister, Viola Spigner, continued with their successful hotel and restaurant service for many years, upgrading from a log cabin to a frame structure that served the community into the 1950s.⁷⁰ This brush with part of the Pretty Boy Floyd gang was one of the most exciting events that happened at the hotel. This example and that of Marshal Wall’s murder reveal the reality of self-segregation. While it served to keep racial conflicts to a minimum, the risks of living with others cannot be avoided.

Although outlaws and gunfights make great stories for old-style westerns, Tatums was the stage for another kind of drama. Although most images of blacks in film were either

⁶⁷ Ibid., 22.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 20-22.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 21. It is likely that Floyd and his traveling companions were hiding out in Tatums before or after the foiled bank robbery in Boley, Oklahoma. In this botched attempt by the Floyd gang, Boley law enforcement fought to defend the security of their funds.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

comedic or villainous, a director from Jacksonville, Florida, Richard E. Norman, set out to make a series of films starring all-black casts as heroes, business men, and lovers. From 1920 to 1928, Norman Film Manufacturing Company created eight full-length feature films and many more short movies portraying positive images about African American life. One of these films, *Black Gold* was filmed in Tatums and used Tatums residents in the cast. The film was exceptional in its portrayal of both the all-black town and the image it presented of blacks in leadership and business.⁷¹

⁷¹ Charlie Patton, "Studio Puts Black Actors on Screen," *The History of Jacksonville Film*, 2003; available from www.coj.net/pub/film/history; Internet; accessed January 2004; see Richard Alan Nelson, *Lights! Camera! Florida! Ninety Years Of Moviemaking And Television Production In The Sunshine State* (Tampa: Florida Endowment for the Humanities (FEH, now the Florida Humanities Council), 1987) for a complete history of Norman's film career and the interesting goals of his craft. Tragically, *Black Gold* and several of the other Norman films were destroyed in fire. No copies are known to exist.

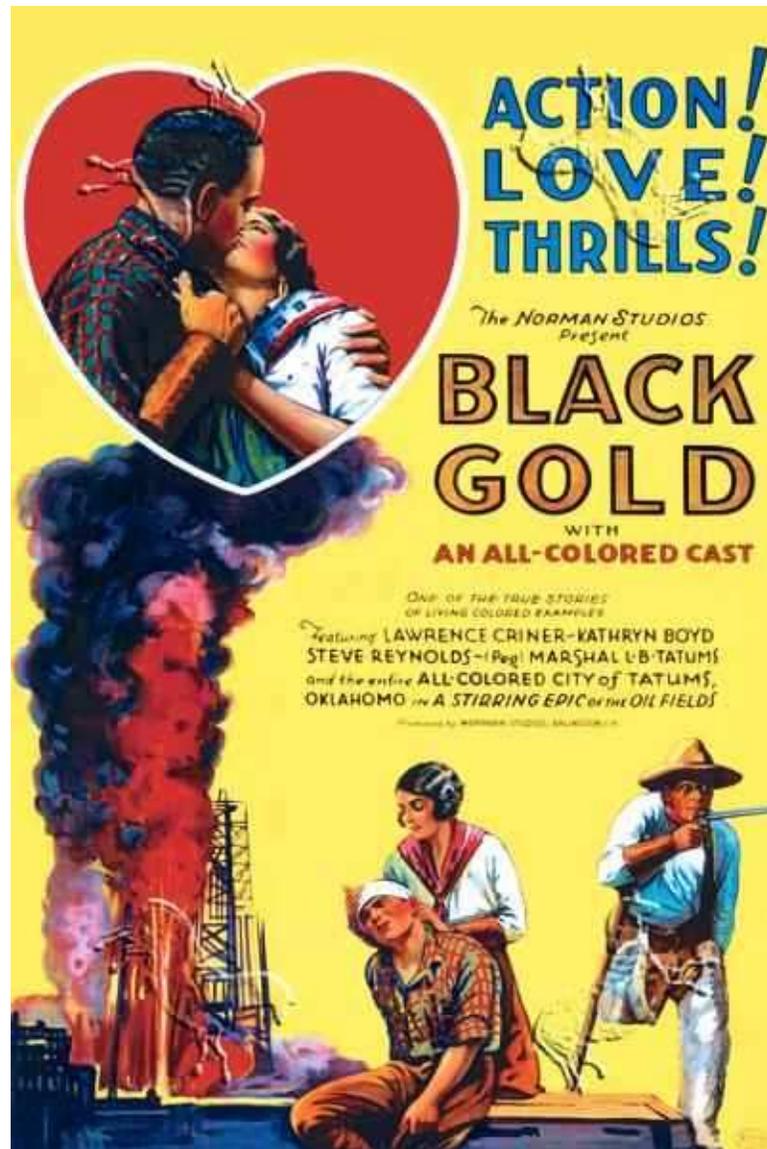


Illustration 2.2: Norman Studios Movie Poster, circa 1920s. Poster reads, “Marshall L. B. Tatums and the Entire All Colored City of Tatum, Oklahoma in a Stirring Epic of the Oil Fields.”

Many of the towns, like Tatum, prospered and grew in the 1910s, sitting as icons of black success by the dawn of the 1920s when Klan violence began to take center stage.⁷²

⁷² Oklahoma Historical Society, “African-Americans in Oklahoma,” Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department Travel and Tourism Division, n.d.), 7.

According to Stewart Tolnay and E.M. Beck's quantitative and sociological analysis of lynching and southern violence, this kind of success in the southern states (Oklahoma not considered) could have been construed as threatening and lead to more racial violence. They concluded:

Lynchings were more likely to occur where, and when, southern whites felt threatened in some way by their African-American neighbors. This perceived threat could arise from concerns for popular justice over offending black behavior or from the more subtle threats of black competition for greater access to economic, political, or status resources. Thus, efforts to explain variations in lynching over time and across space must emphasize the social conditions that aggravated these perceived threats about the white population.⁷³

According to evidence, statistical information about lynchings and race should provide insight into the social conditions of an area or for a particular time period. Tolnay and Beck determined, as others had already said, that the vast majority of the victims lynched in the South were black. From the scope of their study, the ten southern states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee) whites lynched approximately 82 percent black victims. In the states Tolnay and Beck designated as the Deep South, this number was even higher at 92 percent, while the Border South states averaged 80 percent black victims. For the years 1920 to 1929, southerners lynched an overall alarming number of 91 percent black victims. (See Table 2.7).⁷⁴ Could these same assumptions about threat and violence be applied to the racially tense social conditions in Oklahoma in the 1920s? In that decade, forty Oklahomans were lynched, all of them in the early 1920s, and none of them in the black towns. In fact, no reports of Klan or mob activity are listed in any of the HBTs.

⁷³ Stanley Tolnay and E.M. Beck, *Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 81.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 92, 270-73.

Table 2.7: Lynching Ratios for Southern States, 1882-1930

	Overall South	Deep South (Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina)	Border South (Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Tennessee)
Percentage of Black Victims, 1882-1930	82	92	80
Percentage of Black Victims, 1920-1929	91	--	--

Source: Tolnay and Beck, *Festival Of Violence*, 92, 270-73.

Robert Zangrando provided other lynching statistics including Oklahoma. Unfortunately, this study did not give specific percentages by state per year, but it does show that overall trends for lynching in Oklahoma did not follow the traditionally southern absolute that the largest percentage of lynching victims was black. In fact, the greatest conflict between blacks and whites in Oklahoma took place in Tulsa, an environment unlike that of the black towns. Blacks interacted with and were seen by whites constantly, despite their large black district. Table F shows that lynchings in Oklahoma were almost reversed from traditional lynching statistics of the South. Oklahomans lynched 67 percent white victims, and only 33 percent black victims overall from 1882 to 1968. This stands in sharp contrast to the other states in either the East Central South region or to states with similar percentages of black populations like Kentucky, Missouri, and West Virginia. In fact, Oklahoma showed the highest percentage of whites and the lowest percentage of blacks lynched among southern states, as seen in Table 2.8.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Robert Zangrando, *The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching, 1909-1950* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 5.

Table 2.8: Lynching Ratios for Selected States

State/Region	Percentage White	Percentage Black
United States	27	73
Alabama	14	86
Arkansas	20	80
Florida	9	91
Georgia	7	93
Kentucky	31	69
Louisiana	14	86
Maryland	7	93
Mississippi	7	93
North Carolina	15	85
Oklahoma	67	33
South Carolina	3	97
Tennessee	19	81
Texas	29	71
Virginia	17	83
West Virginia	42	58

Source: Robert Zangrando, *The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching, 1909-1950* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 5-6.

The Commission on Interracial Cooperation reported that there were forty lynchings in Oklahoma in the 1920s; at least five of them are known to be black victims.⁷⁶ Walter White, in his groundbreaking *Rope and Faggot*, only reported eight lynchings from 1919 to 1929 in Oklahoma.⁷⁷ Other sources dispute the actual numbers for these years as well. As with any

⁷⁶ “Commission on Interracial Cooperation Papers, 1919-1944,” Woman’s Collection, Texas Woman’s University, Denton, Texas, Reel #5.

⁷⁷ Walter White, *Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1929), 257. The Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching and the Commission on Interracial Cooperation used White’s numbers in its overall tally; however, their records, were later included in the published summaries in the Southern Commission on the Study of Lynching, *Lynchings And What They Mean: General Findings Of The Southern Commission On The Study Of Lynching* (Atlanta: The Commission on the Study of Lynching, 1981). This work includes more lynchings. It is clear, regardless of the source, that Oklahomans overall lynched more white than black people. This becomes less apparent in the years after statehood than in those before. In fact, Oklahoman saw more lynched whites than anywhere except Texas. No sources report any lynchings in Oklahoma in the late 1920s. Looking at the location of Klan and mob violence in Oklahoma may provide another perspective on this issue.

study of violence or lynching, exact numbers are hard to calculate. Researchers have no definitive number that has been published on percentages of blacks lynched in Oklahoma or percentages of black victims involved in Klan or mob attacks in the 1920s. In the absence of a statistical analysis of this type, other data must be consulted in order to make any kind of analysis. Therefore, the locations of the lynchings and those of Klan or mob violence for this time period must be examined.⁷⁸

By maintaining highly segregated towns, African Americans avoided the threat caused by rising African American success and lowered their chances of becoming victims of white racial violence. These towns were more than just centers of profits as suggested by Hamilton and more than just town-building experiments as touted by Crockett. They were centers of refuge in the midst of highly volatile social conditions. Certainly it is clear that fewer percentages of blacks were lynched in Oklahoma than in the traditionally southern states or in states like Missouri or Kentucky with similar proportions of black populations. It appears that residents who lived in Tatums or any of the other HBTs did not have to face a lynching or klavakade in their community.

The worst case of racial violence in Oklahoma took place in the biracial, urban center of Tulsa. The African American Greenwood District was the largest black enclave in Oklahoma that was not a self-segregated HBT, making it a vulnerable location for conflict. Living within the same city as whites, therefore supporting Tolnay and Beck's power-threat theory, blacks in Tulsa were much more likely to be victims of violence because of their success in front of the white population of Tulsa. The apparent lack of such situations in the HBTs also seems to

⁷⁸ The CIC released their calculations on overall lynching statistics by year and by state, but not by both.

support this theory. Since they were conducting their business, social activities, and political participation away from whites in self-segregated HBTs, they did not threaten whites as much as did the successful blacks in Greenwood. While living within the limits of their communities, the residents of the HBTs enjoyed freedom without the threat of whites. A poet from Boley seemed to sum up some of the attitudes about the purposes of the HBTs, a resounding sentiment heard in Tatums as well:

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.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Poem written by “Uncle Jesse,” Boley town poet. Johnson, *Acre of Aspiration*, 80.

CHAPTER 3

HEIGHT OF PRIDE: 1935 – 1955

With the exception of Hannibal Johnson's *Acres of Aspiration*, written as recently as 2002, the monographs on the black towns have treated them as though nothing of notice happened after their failure to continue numerical and economic growth, a peak that occurred by the 1920s. Most historians have interpreted their population decline as the end of the black town movement, a failure in general. Norman Crockett's introduction to historically black town (HBT) historiography in 1979 defined the so-called decline as the "Frustration and Failure" of the movement beginning in the 1910s. Tatum residents were not aware of the negative interpretation of their community; in fact, they considered the years between 1935 and 1955 to be a height of pride in their accomplishments, particularly when considering the goals the founders of Tatum had in mind for the years ahead. Other evidence reveals that many factors in the historically black towns provided advantages for their residents that were not available to the majority of blacks in the South. Although lynching was finally on a slow decline, an atmosphere of racial oppression continued to dominate American culture and economics.¹ The utility of self-segregation had not ended, neither had the towns.

¹ Hannibal Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration: The All-Black Towns in Oklahoma* (Austin: Eakin Press, 2002). Norman Crockett, *The Black Towns* (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1973), 155-88. There were twenty-two officially documented lynchings in the United States from 1941 to 1946. See James T. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 5.

While overall the HBTs experienced a loss in population by the 1920s, some of the Oklahoma black towns actually saw population increases after that time. Taft and Tatums realized the height in their populations as late as the 1940s.² Changes in population numbers for Tatums fit in with the migration patterns of the region around them and most rural communities at the time. Tatums school enrollment spiked in the mid-1950s as black students from other towns were rerouted there, the result of local white school boards that began to close some black schools and yet refused to integrate.³

In his study, Hannibal Johnson appreciated the historical value of the HBT's in Oklahoma and realized that the remaining towns in the later part of the twentieth century had a unique history that contradicted prevailing black thought.⁴ Valerie Grimm described a different kind of rural life than the HBT residents recorded:

Between 1900 and 1950, the social, political, and economic conditions of African Americans living in rural communities throughout the United States were atrocious. Housing, for the majority, was poor, wages were low, and educational opportunities were limited for rural black children. Many felt oppressed, exploited, and in serious need of relief.⁵

² Jewel Varner, "A History of the Tatums Community," (M.A. thesis, Kansas State Teachers College, 1950), 64-65.

³ "Board Puts End to Segregation in Pauls Valley," *Daily Oklahoman*, August 7, 1955.

⁴ Hamilton declared that, "when viewed as an integral part of the frontier urban settlement process, they [HBTs] are neither insignificant nor of special importance." Kenneth Hamilton, *Black Towns and Profit: Promotion and Development in the Trans-Appalachian West, 1877-1915* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 1. While this idea is arguable for the years that the towns were founded, it is inaccurate in describing the status of Tatums and other black towns after the turn of the century.

⁵ Valerie Grimm, "African American Rural Culture, 1900-1950," in *African American Life In The Rural South, 1900-1950*, ed. R. Douglas Hurt (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 108.

That exceptions existed to those conditions is a valuable part of the black town historiography. Johnson took note of these differences in his work. From their level of safety to other less calculable social advantages, the HBTs were singular places for blacks, offering interesting avenues of study for social scientists about the usefulness of self-segregation to achieve certain goals.⁶

At the same time that some scholars and national black organizations were fighting for better opportunities for African Americans through desegregation of higher education, a University of Chicago trained sociologist at Langston University, Mozell Hill, began to look at the environments in the self-segregated black towns and see what might be learned from their unique social conditions. In a series of articles that covered social perceptions, stratification, mobility, and racial attitudes among blacks in the HBTs of Oklahoma, he made several interesting findings about the dynamics of the black towns compared to biracial communities in the South. Whereas evidence that portrayed the segregation of blacks as negative could have been beneficial to campaigns of the NAACP and other black rights activists, Hill determined that there was something different about self-segregation.⁷

⁶ In 1951, T.R.M. Howard, a prominent African American surgeon, and other black leaders established the Regional Council of Negro Leadership, “which drew thousands to [HBT] Mount Bayou for annual meetings.” Pete Daniel, *Lost Revolutions: South In The 1950s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 209.

⁷ Shortly after Hill began this research, he taught at Atlanta University. See Mozell C. Hill, “The All-Negro Communities of Oklahoma: The Natural History of a Social Movement,” *Journal of Negro History* 31 (July 1946): 254-68; “A Comparative Analysis of the Social Organization of the All-Negro Society in Oklahoma,” *Social Forces* 25, no. 1 (October 1946): 70-77; and “A Comparative Study of Race Attitudes in the All-Negro Community in Oklahoma,” *Phylon (1940-1956)* 7, no. 3 (3rd Qtr. 1946): 260-68.

One of Hill's most interesting articles portrayed his belief that the differences between the residents of black towns and blacks in biracial communities throughout the South were not only measurable but also worth interpretation. He concluded that there were:

significant differences among Negroes in social organization in respect to class structure, color motivation, family patterns, political and educational structuring from those Negroes accustomed to living in societies controlled by the superordinate white race.⁸

His study compared the social structure of what he called "all-Negro society," a representation of the HBTs, with the previously compiled models of communities established for the use of comparison. From the studies of fellow sociologists and historians, models emerged representing the social stratification of a typical northern town, called "Yankee City" and a representative biracial southern community called "Old City." He found that the social structure between typical northern and southern communities were similar. Hill compared these models to the social structure he discovered in the HBTs, which did not reveal the same kinds of similarities.⁹

Hill determined that due to the "underlying equalitarian ideology" of the black towns, outsiders might believe that no class hierarchy existed at all. In fact, many HBT residents displayed evidence that they too believed there were no class distinctions among them. Of course, no American society has ever truly achieved such a utopian goal. The HBTs, like all

⁸ Mozell Hill, "A Comparative Analysis of the Social Organization of the All-Negro Society in Oklahoma," *Social Forces* 25, no. 1 (October 1946): 70.

⁹ Hill and his associates used complicated methods developed by social scientists at the University of Chicago to create models of representative communities for numerous projects. They involved multiple layers of comparison, considering social, environmental, economic, political, and demographic factors. They are not representative of social structures in cities; rather they provide a model for rural communities of similar size (less than 5,000). The limitations and advantages of these types of community studies (and others as well) are addressed in Mozell Hill and Albert N. Whiting, "Some Theoretical and Methodological Problems in Community Studies," *Social Forces* 29, no. 2 (December 1950): 117-24.

modern societies, formed distinctive class structures that were influenced by multiple factors. Hill found that the black towns had simpler social structures than did the comparative communities. In Boley, as in the other HBTs, social stratification was based almost entirely on economic factors rather than race.¹⁰ Hill found a model for these categorizations that appeared to apply to other black towns in Oklahoma as well. These groups included the proprietorial class (business owners with a “measure of economic security and independence), professional class (doctors, lawyers, teachers, preachers, and dentists), laboring class (usually landless but permanent residents), and floaters (workers who have odd jobs but do not stay within the community for long).¹¹

One of the most astounding findings that Hill determined was associated with the roles of upper-class blacks in the HBTs in comparison to their counterparts in biracial southern communities. In the HBTs, blacks in the upper class achieved their status through economic prosperity, education, and leadership. In southern towns, however, most blacks achieved this status because of their connection to white leadership. Hill found that this standard requirement for black success promoted disharmony within the black community in the biracial town, thereby limiting their abilities to collaborate and gain power collectively. Conversely, upper-class blacks in the HBTs promoted cohesion among the residents by showing that they could achieve social mobility through their own works, rather than by promoting the ambitions of whites or relying on white assistance. HBT blacks in this category were not exclusively light toned, as in a typical

¹⁰ Hill, “A Comparative Analysis,” 70-71, 94-95.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 94-95.

southern town. This, too, removed association with whites as a necessity for class status since blacks of all colors held positions in the highest class within the HBTs.¹²

In the HBTs, upper-class blacks actually ran the towns, while upper-class blacks in biracial southern communities were limited in their abilities to be involved in city leadership and other symbols of prosperity.¹³ Whereas color was a distinctive quality of identification in the social dynamics and internalized in the consciousness of most HBT blacks, there was far less importance placed on light complexions. Skin tone did not determine social class in the HBTs as it did in many southern communities.¹⁴ Most community members indicated that there was a preference for moderation in skin color, rather than an attraction or prestigious identity associated with light skin tone. In Tatums, many of the founders of the town had a white parent

¹² Mozell C. Hill and Bevode C. McCall, "Social Stratification in 'Georgia Town'," *American Sociological Review* 15, no. 6 (December 1950): 726.

¹³ Hill explores the ways that blacks and whites achieved leadership; in some cases, segregation made leadership for blacks easier because they did not have to rise above all of society (which would not have been tolerated by most whites), only their own race or local community. See Mozell C. Hill, "Some Early Notes of R. E. Park," *Phylon (1940-1956)* 14, no. 1 (1953): 88. For a more comprehensive investigation of the advantages and disadvantages of segregation in biracial cities, see Christopher Silver and John V. Moeser, *The Separate City: Black Communities in the Urban South, 1940-1968* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995).

¹⁴ Hill and McCall, "Social Stratification in 'Georgia Town,'" 729. In a representative southern community, 20 percent of the upper-class blacks were described as having "White" skin and another 80 percent were listed as "Light Yellow." No other skin colors were reported for the upper class. Whereas fair-skinned blacks were part of the upper class in Tatums, other tones existed in this category. In addition, in Hill's model, "Georgia Town," no "White" toned blacks were in the lowest socioeconomic class, and only 0.5 percent of "Light Yellow" color skin comprised that group, the "Lower, Lower" class. For an in-depth study of the connection to light skin tone and the upper class among blacks see William B. Gatewood, *Aristocrats Of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); see also, Mozell Hill, "Social Status and Physical Appearance among Negro Adolescents," *Social Forces* 22, no.4 (1944): 443-48 and Gary T. Marx, "The White Negro and the Negro White," *Phylon (1960-)* 28, no. 2 (1967): 168-77.

or grandparent. The light color of the first generation turned to a brown tone by the 1950s, due to that fact that very little or no miscegenation took place in Tatums since the establishment of the community.¹⁵

Another Hill article, written with Bevode C. McCall, revealed other significant differences between the social structure of the HBTs and those in biracial communities. Using very technical and scientific models developed at the University of Chicago, Hill and McCall spent several months in a small town in southern Georgia conducting interviews and surveys, taking photographs, and pouring over local documents such as census and tax records. This process produced a set of factors they determined represented a typical, rural biracial southern community in the 1940s. “Georgia Town” became the pseudonym for this model. In “Social Stratification in ‘Georgia Town’,” the sociologists compared the representative communities to Hill’s model of “All-Negro Society,” based on similar research in several HBTs.¹⁶

In the class structure of ‘Georgia Town,’ very few people, 3 percent, comprised the upper class. The upper-middle and lower-middle classes made up approximately 42 percent of the town’s population, but the majority of the community, almost 55 percent, existed in the lower classes.¹⁷ In these classes, whites and blacks had vastly different representation. As one might expect, a much larger percentage of white residents comprised the upper-classes. Only .3 percent of blacks were in the upper class, while a little more than 4 percent of whites enjoyed the

¹⁵ This analysis should not be interpreted as understating the significance of skin color. Tatums residents did place some value on skin tone as a form of social identification; burial patterns in the Tatums and Oil Springs cemeteries reveal that light skinned families clustered graves together. Informal interviews with residents occasionally produced references to skin color.

¹⁶ Ibid., 721-24.

¹⁷ Ibid., 724.

same status. For white citizens of ‘Georgia Town,’ almost 57 percent of them were in the middle class and nearly 40 percent of whites existed at the lower class level. Black structure in the representative southern community was much different. Only 10 percent of the middle class were African American; most blacks, almost 89 percent, were in the lower classes.¹⁸

The racial structure of the HBTs obviously ensured that blacks would comprise 100 percent of each category. Their representation in each class, however, reveals significant differences of opportunity for blacks to live at middle-class or upper-class status. In fact, in the HBTs, blacks had a better chance of maintaining a lifestyle in these two classes than did whites in ‘Georgia Town.’ Whereas some racists have claimed that keeping large numbers of blacks in the lower class ensured their own place in the upper class, Hill’s model did not support that notion. In Hill’s model for the HBTs, almost 6 percent of the population was in the upper class; 59 percent were middle class; 35 percent comprised the lower-class. Furthermore, the analysis of the HBTs revealed that large numbers of lower class workers were not necessary to support the upper and middle class. The HBTs functioned with a large majority in the middle class. The chart below, “Comparison of Social Stratification: ‘Georgia Town’ and the HBTs,” displays these statistics.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ibid., 726.

¹⁹ Ibid., 721-26. Hill’s team used more than nine components to determine social class. They included more factors than income, but both net worth and earnings were key components. Other categories included neighborhood, social influence/social connection to power, perception of others about their status, and education.

Table 3.1: Comparison of Social Stratification: ‘Georgia Town’ and the HBTs

Socioeconomic Class	Total Population Georgia Town	Whites in Georgia Town	Blacks In Georgia Town	HBTs
Upper	3.0	4.1	0.3	5.9
Middle	42.4	56.4	10.8	58.9
Lower	54.6	39.5	88.9	35.2

Source: Mozell C. Hill and Bevode C. McCall, “Social Stratification in ‘Georgia Town,” *American Sociological Review* 15, no. 6 (1950): 724, 726.

As in the decades that proceeded the 1940s and 1950s, Tatums social and economic structure continued to mature. Community members enjoyed the opportunities available to them as HBT participants. Townspeople enjoyed a wider range of store front establishments, specialized services, and entertainment options than in the previous decades. Candy and deli items, appliance repair, and night clubs became available to Tatums residents. The majority of families remained in farming and agriculture; several realized comfortable prosperity from oil production on their land. Once again, their abilities to obtain land proved beneficial. The school employed more educators than ever before and continued to send many graduates to Langston University for higher learning. Some Tatums residents gained experience and financial benefits from military service. Fraternal organizations continued to support building projects. On a larger scale, the HBTs of Oklahoma were still among the largest proponents of civil and political rights for blacks in the state and the staging ground for civil rights commentary.

Many of the black towns that were established prior to statehood experienced peaks in their populations by the 1920s. For Tatums, however, a decline in population did not begin until the 1940s when many residents left for urban centers to work in war and defense related jobs. The town followed general migration patterns for the area; Carter County, where Tatums is

located, experienced a 15.8 percent decrease in population from 43, 292 residents in 1940 to 36, 455 in 1950.²⁰ (See Table 3.2 for other population data.)

Table 3.2 Population Overviews with Percentages of Black Residents, 1920 – 1950

Year	1920	1930	1940	1950
Total Population of United States	105,710,620	122,775,046	131,669,275	150,697,361
Total Black Population of United States	10,463,131	11,891,143	12,865,518	15,042,286
Percentage of Blacks in U.S.	9.9	9.7	9.8	10.0
Total Population of Oklahoma	2,028,283	2,396,040	2,336,434	2,233,351
Total Black Population of Oklahoma	149,408	172,198	168,849	145,503
Percentage of Blacks in Oklahoma	7.4	7.2	7.2	6.5

Source: U.S. Department of Census, *United States Summary, Population, 1790-1990* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1993): 5.

Tatums residents engaged in a variety of occupations. Outside of work in farming, most Oklahoma blacks worked as laborers or domestics including janitors, porters, servants, chauffeurs, and cooks. In the HBTs, a much wider range of work was available. In Tatums from 1910 to 1940, proprietors and educators were growing in numbers, while overall the state saw an

²⁰ United States Department of Commerce, *Population: Characteristics of the Population, Oklahoma (Second Series)* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1942): 40; United States Department of Commerce, *1950 Census, General Population Characteristics, Oklahoma*, Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1952): (Section 36), 29.

increase in black janitors and servants. Retail establishments began employing more Tatum residents, but overall, fewer Oklahoma blacks were finding employment in those fields by 1940. In the same year, 75 percent of all black working women in the state were employed as servants. Although a few women in Tatum worked as housekeepers, cooks, and care givers for families in the community, by this era, working women in Tatum were not employed as “domestic servants.”²¹ Although, one woman, Nettie Hooks was primarily a homemaker, she supplemented her family’s income for years by working as a housekeeper for the Varner family in Tatum.²²

Migration trends that affected black Oklahomans in general were evident among Tatum residents. Eugene Richards, scholastic partner of Mozell Hill, determined that since the early part of the century, certain trends existed in Oklahoma among African Americans. Some of these, such as the tendency to urbanize, were paralleled in other parts of the country. The black population in the state living in urban areas in 1910 was 26.9 percent; however, by 1940 this number had risen to 47.2 percent. Likewise, in 1920, rural farming blacks comprised over half of the black population (52.2 percent). In 1940, this number had dropped to 34.9 percent. Furthermore, the rural migration in Oklahoma was not just to urban areas in general but specifically to Oklahoma City and Tulsa.²³

²¹ Statistics on Oklahoma employment trends for blacks are from Eugene S. Richards, “Trends of Negro Life in Oklahoma as Reflected by Census Reports” *Journal of Negro History*, 33, no. 1 (1948): 46. Information about Tatum employment was derived from Varner, “A History of the Tatum Community,” 18-39; and Cecil Jones, interview by author, tape recording, Tatum, Oklahoma, January 20, 2001, hereafter referred to as the Jones Interview. One black woman from Tatum was listed as a servant to a mulatto family in the 1910 census records.

²² Anthony Ray Davis, interview by author, tape recording, Denton, Texas, July 5, 2004, hereafter referred to as the Davis Interview.

²³ Richards, “Trends of Negro Life in Oklahoma as Reflected by Census Reports,” 41-42.

While some Tatums residents left the area permanently after World War II, others returned to continue building the community where their parents had grown up. Jimmy Lee Varner, World War II Navy veteran, was appointed Postmaster for Tatums in November, 1949. Varner was one of the most traveled of the Tatums leaders, having attended basic training in Illinois, the Naval Training College of Physical Instruction in Maryland, and then working as a physical education instructor at the San Diego Naval Field. When he returned to Tatums, he handled a personal grocery business, postal affairs, led the Parent-Teacher Association, and served as a leader in Bethel Baptist Church. His experiences in the Navy and his travels to other places could have afforded Varner the opportunity to leave Tatums and create a life elsewhere. Like many Tatums residents who went away for military service, however, he returned to invest in the future of his home town.²⁴

Many of the families that chose to remain in Tatums stayed for more than sentimental reasons. From the mid-1930s to the mid-1950s, Tatums made the state and local news on numerous occasions for its oil production. Several companies, both from within and without the state invested in drilling in and around Tatums. Magnolia Petroleum Company, Wirt Franklin Petroleum Company, and Trevelyn Oil Company operated wells in the region referred to as the Tatums Field of Carter County beginning in the 1930s.²⁵ Seaborn Oil of Delaware, Kirkpatrick Oil, Continental Oil, Stanolind Oil & Gas, and Sun Oil Company established wells in Tatums

²⁴ Varner, "A History of the Tatums Community," 9.

²⁵ "Seven Oilers Completed in Tatums Field," *Daily Oklahoman*, August 24, 1930; "New Producer in at Tatums: Wirt Franklin and Magnolia Each Has Well Drilling With Good Oil Shows," *Daily Oklahoma*, March 9, 1930; "Tatums Well Due For Test," *Daily Oklahoman*, July 7, 1930.

Field from the early- to mid-1950s.²⁶ Unlike some, these companies proved that they were willing to do business with African Americans when it benefited them financially.

Many Tatums residents, such as C. L. Anderson, James Hooks, and Jake L. Hamon, made state news for the production of their wells.²⁷ Rozell Spigner and W.E. Mitchell actually had sixteen productive wells each on their farm land, which provided income for their families for generations. As a result of the prosperity that oil brought to Tatums land owners, several were listed in *Who's Who in Colored America*.²⁸ One former Tatums townsperson remembered the great sense of pride the community felt when a local family installed a swimming pool in their back yard. It served as a symbol of wealth not only for the owners but also for the other members of Tatums.²⁹

²⁶ "Seaborn Hits Oiler at Tatums," *Daily Oklahoman*, January 18, 1953; "Kirkpatrick Gets Pair at Tatums," *Daily Oklahoma*, August 25, 1954; "Dual-Oiler Added In Tatums Sector," *Daily Oklahoman*, November 11, 1954; "Stanolind Adds One at Tatums," *Daily Oklahoma*, March 22, 1955; "Tatums Offset Gets First Pay," *Daily Oklahoma*, October 7, 1955; "Hamon to Deepen Tatums Dry Hole," *Daily Oklahoma*, December 21, 1956.

²⁷ "Tatums Well Aid To Carter," *Daily Oklahoman*, July 13, 1930; "Anderson to Pump New Tatums Oiler," *Daily Oklahoman*, July 30, 1930; "Hamon to Deepen Tatums Dry Hole," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 21, 1956. Tatums residents Willie Hooks, Queenie Carter, Vanaster Hooks, Rufus Hooks, Ada Hooks, Doctor Brooks, Rozell Spigner, Joseph Carter, Florance Lucas, Minor Lucas, Ethel Franklin, Willie Evans also had flowing wells. Tatums, "A History of the Tatums Community," 37-39.

²⁸ Varner, "A History of the Tatums Community," 37-39. *Who's Who in Colored America* (New York: Who's Who in Colored America Corporation, 1950).

²⁹ Betty Hooks Norman, interview by author, tape recording, Tatums, Oklahoma, March 6, 2004, hereafter referred to as the Norman Interview; Ray Davis Interview.



Illustration 3.1: One of the beautiful brick houses in Tatums, circa 1950. Photograph from Personal Collection of Lacy McCreary (Tatums, Oklahoma).

Tatums schools reached a peak in this era as well. First of all, the teachers in the Tatums school became progressively better educated. Initially teachers needed to be literate for the job; most had informal teaching certificates. By 1929, only two educators, E. W. Franks and Geneva Smith, held college degrees. In the early 1930s, this number jumped to five degreed teachers. By the end of the 1930s, however, all nine educators at the school held bachelor's degrees. In 1948, the first Tatums educator received an M.S. degree, and by the 1950s, three more were pursuing graduate degrees.³⁰

College degrees and education were on the rise for African Americans in Oklahoma. Langston University experienced a considerable growth after 1935. Enrollment increased 250

³⁰ Varner, "A History of the Tatums Community," 59-60.

percent from a student body of 500 in 1935 to 1,249 in 1938. The *Daily Oklahoman* claimed that the university was a, “cultural center for Negroes in Oklahoma.” Furthermore, the writer boasted that the physical growth of the student body and facilities was due to the, “prestige of the institution.” The curriculum, continued expansion of services, conferences, and administration all received acclaim for their contributions to the state.³¹ Langston made state headlines for its football efforts as well, especially when victories were in games played against Texas teams.³²

The Tatums school’s largest facility, a modern, brick structure was built in 1936 while I. H. Jackson was principal. His wife, D.M. Jackson, directed the schools highly regarded music program. By 1940, the school educated its largest population of 250 students. The school system employed nine teachers in addition to other workers. Extra-curricular courses included a selection of activities in music, art, industrial trades, and agriculture. The school also provided adult classes, such as specialized agriculture for veterans.³³

The next principal in Tatums, W. E. Franks, oversaw the building’s installation of electricity, plumbing, butane gas heating, and telephone service. They developed a library and home economics laboratory. By 1946, Franks and Jimmy Lee Varner, prominent community member and president of the Parent-Teacher Association, worked toward the realization of a project to build a gymnasium for the school along with Ogelia Hogans and Queenie Carter.

Frank’s desire to allow Tatums students with opportunities to participate and compete in indoor

³¹ “Langston Colored and Normal University: An Institution That Is Helping the Negro Youth,” *Daily Oklahoman*, April 23, 1939.

³² “Langston Negroes Are Grid Victors,” *Daily Oklahoman*, October 30, 1938. In 1938, the Langston Negro football team beat Texas College at Tyler, the Southwestern Regional Champions, 17-0.

³³ Varner, “A History of the Tatums Community,” 64.

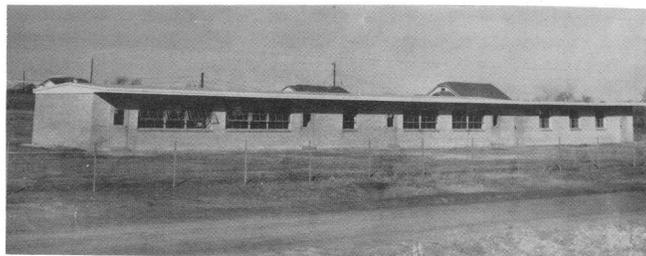
athletics, such as basketball, prompted community response. By 1949, the new gymnasium was dedicated to the Tatums School. This building expansion plan also enabled the creation of a vocational training building, a modern lunch room (which meant hot meals at school), and a double garage for two school buses. They boasted modern facilities and educational tools such as film projectors and other media devices.³⁴

P r o g r e s s

THE TATUMS SCHOOL IS MANNED BY A FACULTY OF NINE TEACHERS, ONE OF WHOM SERVES AS PRINCIPAL. THE SCHOOL IS ACCREDITED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR TWENTY-TWO UNITS. MR. AARON CARR IS THE SCHOOL JANITOR HAS FIVE CHILDREN IN SCHOOL AT PRESENT. MRS. ESSIE HOOKS IS THE SCHOOL COOK AND IS LOVED BY ALL THE CHILDREN AND FACULTY. OUR FINE BUS DRIVERS ARE MR. MILDRED FRANKLIN, WHO HAS ONE CHILD ENROLLED IN SCHOOL AND MR. EUGENE MCCONNELL HAS BEEN A BUS DRIVER FOR TWENTY-ONE YEARS. MRS. OGELIA HOGAN IS OUR EFFICIENT P.T.A. PRESIDENT. THE SCHOOL HAS SERVED AS HOSTS FOR THE DISTRICT P.T.A., MUSIC FESTIVAL, N.H.A., 4-H CLUB RALLY, BASKETBALL TOURNAMENTS, BOY SCOUT MEETINGS, AND GIRLS' DISTRICT TOURNAMENT '55.



ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, BUILT 1936, HOUSING ADMINISTRATORS OFFICE, RECEPTION ROOM, MIMEOGRAPH ROOM, LIBRARY, STUDY HALL AND EIGHT CLASS ROOMS.



VOCATIONAL HOME ECONOMICS, INDUSTRIAL ART BUILDING AND HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA, BUILT 1954.

Illustration 3.2: A page from the Tatums Tigers year-book reveals the image that the school wanted to portray about their facilities. Tatums Tigers 1955.

³⁴ Ibid., 66-67.

The 1955 yearbook, *Tatums Tigers*, is a tangible representation of the pride Tatums residents felt about their students and educational system. (Because most of the information about Tatums schools has been lost, a summary of remaining information from the 1955 yearbook and a collection of graduation programs is presented in Appendix X, “Tatums Public School Information, 1955”) In addition, the yearbook staff funded the project by selling advertisements to businesses in the area, most of which were located out of the Tatums area – a great way to bring money to the school from outside the town. A wide range of businesses sponsored pages in the yearbook from several area towns including Ardmore, Davis, Healdton, and Lawton. Not all of the sponsors were black business owners, although it is presumed that some were. The numerous Healdton businesses that purchased ad space had white owners who appreciated the neighboring town’s business.

Tatums residents sponsored pages as well. On the Industrial Arts page, for example, Willie Evans advertised, “Bring Your Mares & Receive Off Springs of Registered ‘Famous Jet’” at Evans Quarter Horse Stable. Another Tatums resident, H. B. Mitchell, Oil Properties, Broker, and Notary Public, took the opportunity to give advice to Tatums students in his advertisement, “Under the earth’s surface lies great wealth: oil, gas, and many minerals, including uranium ore deposits. Your land may have a possibility for formations of great wealth! Hold on to your land and mineral rights!”³⁵ High schools seniors, Violet Hooks and Elizabeth Johnson, endorsed the ad for Colvert’s Grade A Milk and Ice Cream of Ardmore by adding personal statements.

³⁵ *Tatums Tigers 1955*, Yearbook (n.p., n.d.) This yearbook was printed in the late spring of 1955, but does not contain any publishing information or page numbers. This book is in the possession of Lacy Hooks McCreary of Tatums, Oklahoma. (Copy in author’s possession.)

Johnson wrote, “When I think of ice cream, I think of Colvert's.”³⁶ Apparently, the student body received training in marketing and advertising as well as layout and design.

The yearbook revealed that Tatums boys were actively involved in Boy Scouts. Troop 510 had several members in each of its three divisions: Tiger Patrol, Wolf Patrol, and Buffalo Patrol. Houston Jones was the Senior Patrol Leader in 1955; Billie Brooks and Grady Worley served as Patrol Leaders as well. Cecil Williams held the position of Assistant Patrol Leader, and Amazeral Hooks was the organization’s bugler and librarian. A.C. Hill worked as the Scoutmaster, assisted by R. Hooks. The group's photograph shows the well-dressed young men in a variety of activities including holding an award, tying knots, and signaling with flags. A large United States flag was displayed in one corner of the room, with a personalized Tatums High School Boy Scout tapestry covering another wall.³⁷

Outside agents of support existed for students who wanted to pursue an education beyond their Tatums diploma. A home demonstration club provided scholarships to Langston University for black students throughout Carter County; Tatums leader, Ogelia Hogan served as a county scholarship committee chair that made awards to area black students. Two Tatums High School students, Henry Shannon and Charlotte Prince, received such scholarships and made state news in 1952.³⁸

Students were not the only group showing excellence in Tatums. Women continued to hold important positions of leadership. Many owned their own property and businesses. In 1935, Ogelia Spigner Hooks opened a grocery store. When grocery store owner, J.J. Tucker,

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ “Tatums Students Win Scholarships,” *Daily Oklahoman*, September 10, 1952.

died, his wife Mary Tucker and their daughter Maybell Tucker continued to operate the business until 1947 when they established a café in Ardmore. Ora Smallwood was the motivation behind her husband Coma's investment in a confectionary for school children in the 1940s. In 1947, Mattie Riley managed a café for her brother, grocery store owner O.C. Riley. Joseph Carter and his daughter Jewell Carter Varner opened a grocery store together in 1945 that included a variety of what they called "fancy groceries;" many of the items had never been available in Tatums stores before. Jewel Varner contributed significantly to Tatums. Her involvement in the Varner Grocery Store brought diversification to the community. Varner's scholarship created the first historical documentation of Tatums in 1950. In the years ahead, she would prove to play a vital role in politics and educational reform for Tatums students.

Tatums women were highly involved in civic and religious leadership as well. Blanch Bruner was responsible for reinstating the Order of the Eastern Star in 1948; Gracie Brooks was elected the first Worthy Matron of the new group. Another Eastern Star chapter organized the next year in Tatums with Effie Austin, Worthy Matron. Both groups were active for many years. Sylvia Ziegler was "Postmistress" until 1949. The Mission Sisters Circle of Bethel Baptist Church and their president Lillie M. Evans met weekly and worked on service projects such as purchasing new furniture for the parsonage. Three women, Mattie Riley, Dollie Hooks, and Viola McConnell, held positions on the newly formed Usher Board of Bethel in 1950. These and other women of Tatums showed their importance in the community by strengthening it in every venue, both in and out of their homes.³⁹

³⁹ Varner, "A History of the Tatums Community," 30-34.



Illustration 3.3: The Eastern Star lodge still (barely) stands in Tatums.
Photograph by Anthony Ray Davis, 2003.

New social groups that interacted with other communities developed throughout this period. One woman made a claim that the local Farm Women’s Club,” every year wins a number of first prizes at the county fair for their canned goods and hand work.” In 1950, the 4-H Club received a second place award at the Carter County 4-H Roundup.⁴⁰ Like many communities in the area, Tatums had its own chapter of New Homemakers of America and participated in regional events by the mid-1950s.⁴¹ Their participation in such events reveals that by this time, townspeople were more commonly venturing out of the security of their community to join in with county events. Tatums residents began to develop stronger ties with businesses in biracial communities. Some were given credit in neighboring communities; Matthew Hooks

⁴⁰ Ibid., 70.

⁴¹ “Woodford Plays Host To New Homemakers,” *Daily Oklahoman*, November 17, 1956.

actually had a credit card for L.H. Ensley Tire & Supply Company of Duncan, Oklahoma, in 1949.⁴²

Their skills in several areas appeared to have not suffered despite their limited interplay with whites. One community member said that the business enterprises of Tatums, “compare favorably with the ones of many other towns of similar size.”⁴³ Community members felt pride about their accomplishments. Jewel Carter Varner summed up the views of numerous townspeople in 1950, “despite hardships and sacrifices, the people have made steady progress in raising their standard of living and improving cultural opportunities for themselves and their children.” She concluded, “The people of Tatums are still progressing.”⁴⁴

While Tatums members may have been happy with the progress of their community, most blacks in biracial cities did not share these sentiments regarding social conditions. After the 1930s, membership in the National Association of Colored People (NAACP) rose sharply. In 1940, the national group had 50,000 registered members; however, this number reached 450,000 by 1946. In addition, the membership was not limited to a few major cities; by 1948, the NAACP had 14,000 chapters, a jump from 800 in 1939.⁴⁵ African American collaboration cultivated organized agendas for countering the inequality related to education, employment, legal rights, and social status. Their campaigns began to produce limited results that inspired

⁴² Matthew Hooks, Credit Card, Ensley Tire & Supply Company of Duncan, Oklahoma, 1949; this document is among family papers of Lacy Hooks McCreary of Tatums, Oklahoma. The card was pre-printed; Hooks information is hand-written. It would appear that Hooks was participating in a standardized credit system. Duncan is over 30 miles away from Tatums.

⁴³ Varner, “A History of the Tatums Community,” 69.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁴⁵ Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 2.

hope in the future of the organization. Blacks also began to experience some limited success politically in the 1940s. By 1948, Truman gave orders to end desegregation in the military and in federal employment.⁴⁶

In the famous *Brown v. Board of Education* cases in 1954 and 1955, public schools across the United States were given instruction to provide racially integrated educations. For the HBTs, this movement posed curious questions about how their ideology of self-segregation would fit into the federal mandates for desegregation. The residents of Tatums were proud of their school system; they had worked hard for generations to make it a special place for black students. They were proud of the role models to whom their children were exposed.

While the majority of black leaders advocated the importance of integration at the eve of the Civil Rights movement, the HBTs remained self-segregated. Yet, they concurrently supported the political campaigns to pursue higher education at white institutions and participate in other integrated activities. Tatums residents, like many segregationists, believed that the movement ahead of them would lead to the improvement of black public schools, not integration with white students. Southern historian James Patterson addressed the resistance to desegregation among African Americans. While Thurgood Marshall and other NAACP leaders began to face the issue of segregation as a blockade to equality, many blacks were resistant to the idea that integration could happen successfully, even if they wanted it to. A large faction decidedly did not want to mix with whites; they wanted separate and equal conditions. Patterson said, "Others fretfully wondered: what would desegregation of schools really mean in practice?"

⁴⁶ Ibid.

And still others, notably teachers, worried that desegregation would destroy black institutions, including schools.”⁴⁷

One of the most famous works of black resistance to the acceptance of school desegregation was written years before the NAACP campaign for integration began. W.E.B. DuBois, former NAACP president wrote in 1935, “Does the Negro Need Separate Schools?” In considering the avenues for the delivery of education to black students, DuBois determined that any general rule for handling the matter that was not flexible would not suffice. In black schools, he added, the children were treated like human beings; he knew their fate among whites could not guarantee decency and a comfortable learning environment. Ultimately, he proclaimed, black children needed an education – and it should be equal to that of white children.⁴⁸ Because his article did not clearly support integration, and DuBois admitted that black schools could provide numerous benefits, John W. Davis used this as an integral part of his defense of segregation as lead attorney for South Carolina in the state’s 1952 desegregation battle.⁴⁹

While the NAACP prepared to fight for desegregation, the HBTs continued to enjoy the advantages of self-segregation. In Tatums, as in most of the HBTs, the pre- and post-WWII years were relatively uneventful in terms of crime or scandal. No particularly significant

⁴⁷ Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 7.

⁴⁸ W.E.B. DuBois, “Does the Negro Need Separate Schools?” *Journal of Negro Education*, 4 (July, 1935): 328-35; Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 8-9.

⁴⁹ Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 240. DuBois served as NAACP president from 1909 until the 1930s when the organization ideology began shifting away from separation of the races. Although DuBois had originally been an integrationist, the years of working for black rights disheartened his thinking. By the time he gave up the presidency, DuBois had grown to believe that whites would never accept blacks into mainstream American culture. *Ibid.*, 8-9.

political event took place in Tatum throughout these years; however, Langston University students took center stage in one of the most important cases in the desegregation of education. Ada Louis Sipuel Fisher brought Oklahoma into a new era of opportunity with her demands to receive an education at the University of Oklahoma School of Law after her graduation from Langston University in 1946.⁵⁰ Selected by the NAACP as an ideal candidate to take a test case to the U.S. Supreme Court, Sipuel was hard to resist. Intelligent, attractive, and poised, she was an excellent student, the wife of a military man, and a preacher's daughter.⁵¹

Sipuel and the NAACP were facing an enormous task in a state where separation of the races was fundamental to the structure of society. Oklahoma, like other states that promoted segregation, offered financial incentives to black students who wanted to attend graduate school out of state.⁵² Even if it was a financial drain on the state, legislators preferred to enforce racial separation rather than bring larger enrollment to the University of Oklahoma and other higher level institutions by incorporating black students. The U.S. Supreme Court, however, did not

⁵⁰ Although Sipuel Fischer was married while attending school at Langston, her maiden name was used for all school records and the Supreme Court cases. Historical sources use both names to identify her, although she appears to have primarily used Sipuel. For the purpose of this study, she is hereafter referred to as Sipuel.

⁵¹ Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration*, 113-15. During the legal battle, Sipuel's father died. In addition, her main supporter, the NAACP chapter president from her home town of Chickasha, Oklahoma, Dr. A.J. Bullock, died. She experienced several other personal tragedies, but remained steadfast in her pursuit. The NAACP found that using individuals with connection to the United States military improved the image of plaintiffs. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 3-4. See also, Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: the History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 257-59, 265-67.

⁵² Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration*, 115. Oklahoma legislators set up funds to pay black students a stipend to attend graduate school out of the state. The University of Missouri School of Law offered to pay excess tuition for out of state graduate schools above the cost of an in-state education. However, only Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, and Illinois had law schools that accepted out-of-state black students. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 16.

support the stance and insisted the State establish a “separate, but equal” school of law for black students. By 1948, officials developed a law program in the state capitol building for that purpose.

Later that year, Oklahoma A & M Board of Regents opened a crude and poorly organized operation they called the Langston University School of Law in Oklahoma City. Langston students responded with disdain to the impotent gesture by holding a rally with nearly 1,000 students protesting educational segregation. The school’s accommodations and opportunities could not be considered equal to that of the University of Oklahoma’s established program. Furthermore, the poor conditions and the low requirements for admission ensured that the degree would not hold the same value as one from a white institution. Sipuel, with NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall on her side, decided she must take the issue further legally.⁵³

As Marshall and the NAACP team began to fight for Sipuel’s education equal to that of white graduate students, they were determined that the time had come to end racial segregation in higher education.⁵⁴ While Langston students were living in a self-segregated town, they understood that the nature of choice and opportunity in the ideology that caused blacks to reside within an HBT was primarily based on the environmental factors they hoped to see changed. “Separate, but equal” philosophies did not formulate into state funded institutions that provided comparable environments for learning, professional development, directed research, and scholarly networking.

⁵³ Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration*, 114-18.

⁵⁴ *Sipuel v. Board of Regents of University of Oklahoma* [no. 369, January 12, 1948. 332 U.S. 631].

In 1950 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education* and overturned Oklahoma's segregated policies. The University of Oklahoma Board of Regents had already succumbed to the legal battles and admitted its first black student to the university in 1948 on a segregated basis, relegating the African American student, G. W. McLaurin, to second-class status in the College of Education.⁵⁵ McLaurin, however, brought the issue back into court after becoming disgusted with the notion that he could receive an equal education corralled away from white students, ostracized by peers, and neglected by professors.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, Sipuel enrolled at the University of Oklahoma School of Law shortly thereafter and received her law degree in 1951. She practiced law in Oklahoma briefly before joining the faculty at Langston University as Head of the Department of Social Sciences.⁵⁷ Her experience with Marshall and the legal team for the NAACP proved invaluable in shaping her education. Years later, she served on the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma, but only after she had been personally implored to serve by Governor Walters in a visit to her home. Despite these accomplishments, she never forgot her first experiences as a law student -- in the chair marked, "Colored."⁵⁸

⁵⁵ *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents For Higher Education* (1950), 339; Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 265; William E. Bittle, "The Desegregated All-White Institution...The University of Oklahoma," *Journal of Educational Sociology* 32 (February 1959): 275-82.

⁵⁶ Kluger said that McLaurin's poor treatment at the university was, "surely Oklahoma's most inventive contributions to legalized bigotry since the adoption of the 'grandfather clause.' The state was punishing George McLaurin for requiring it to honor his rights as a citizen." Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 267.

⁵⁷ For more information on this case, see also Michelle Celarier, "A Study of Public Opinion on Desegregation in Oklahoma," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 67, no. 3 (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1989): 268-81; for court records, reference *Sipuel v. University of Oklahoma*, 322 U.S. 147 (1948).

⁵⁸ Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration*, 114-18.

Several Tatums teachers took advantage of the opportunities that the Sipuel and McLaurin cases created. Although they all received their bachelor's degrees from Langston University, after the rulings, many enrolled in graduate programs at the University of Oklahoma in Norman. In 1955, only a few years after legislation allowed it, six of the eight full-time teachers at Tatums Public Schools completed graduate work there.⁵⁹

In 1954, the first year of the *Brown* rulings, Oklahoma schools began to receive orders from local school boards to desegregate their facilities. When children in Pernell, more than eight miles from Tatums, were ordered to begin attending school together, approximately ten high school and thirty-three elementary students transferred to Tatums instead of attending the local white schools.⁶⁰ Oklahoma school boards intended to close some black schools but avoided integrating those students into their system. They found neighboring black schools that were still open and bussed students to them. In some cases, school boards finally showed in focusing on improving the quality of black schools within the state, hoping to avoid desegregation. Tatums residents had no intention of sending their children to school in any of the predominately white communities in the vicinity and made plans for the future of their school.

The *Black Dispatch*, an African American newspaper printed in Oklahoma and distributed throughout the South, acknowledged the unique situation for the black schools in the HBTs in an article discussing school desegregation within the state. The editor remarked,

⁵⁹ *Tatums Tigers 1955*. Educational information is not available for Principal Andrews who also taught and held at least a bachelor's degree.

⁶⁰ "Board Puts End to Segregation in Pauls Valley," *Daily Oklahoma*, August 7, 1955.

“Oklahoma is different from any of the other southern states with respect to separate schools.”⁶¹

Regardless, the article continued by identifying the movement to hold off on federally mandated legislation to desegregate the educational systems in Oklahoma as temporary:

We just hope no errant legislator will start a lot of horseplay about the inaction of the high court since the May 17 decision. A lot of official life in this state, and out, has tried to spread the impression that the Supreme Court has not yet reached a final judgment in this matter and that everything should be held up until such time as the Supreme Court spells out more clearly what it has in mind. It is our opinion the Supreme Court has said its last word about the constitutionality of segregation. What it is really doing just now is giving the Deep South a breathing spell before it enforces implementation techniques.⁶²

Although desegregation struggles were just around the corner, Tatums was focused on the progress of the school. Looking back on the town’s establishment in the 1890s and its development to the 1950s reveal that the height of pride for Tatums residents came particularly in connection to their school. The work of their parents, grand-parents, and great-grand-parents had brought the rewards they had hoped for their future generations. Tatums families constructed a learning environment for their students that glorified their solidarity and encouraged racial pride without fear of community standards contradicting those belief systems. The freed people who fled the South to shelter themselves from racially motivated violence and economic oppression had, in fact, created a place where that happened – not only for themselves, but for many generations.

In the years ahead, many of the patterns of life for Tatums residents were interrupted by the changes affecting the rest of the United States. The freedom struggles of the civil rights movement and the culture of the Cold War affected even the most rural areas. Many factors that

⁶¹ “Desegregating Our School System,” *Black Dispatch*, January 8, 1955.

⁶² *Ibid.*

had enticed blacks to self-segregate minimized or disappeared in the 1950s and 1960s. Job opportunities increased outside of the HBTs rather than within them. Educational autonomy succumbed to integration. Even with these changes, and a general decline in all rural communities in Oklahoma at the time, the years ahead still held some of the strongest points of Tatum's solidarity.⁶³

⁶³ Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) is an excellent overview of the intersection of the Cold War and the civil rights movement. Pete Daniel, *Lost Revolutions: The South In The 1950s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000) provides a study of the changing cultural climate of the South at the brink of the civil rights movement.

CHAPTER 4

THE END OF CHOICE: THE CLOSURE OF TATUMS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Tatums High School class motto for 1955, “Use Today, Tomorrow Never Comes” reveals an interesting aspect of the philosophies that existed in the community. While many school slogans focus on preparing for or enjoying the future, Tatums students in 1955 were reminded that they must deal with present-day issues, rather than waiting for something to happen. This premise had been an integral part of the ideology that promoted the establishment and continuation of the town for many decades. Hopes for improvements in racial conditions were part of the tomorrow that historically black town (HBT) members did not assume would arrive. Instead, in Tatums, residents focused on their opportunities at the present time, a premise they had relied on since the town’s inception. As the NAACP’s powerful legal team chipped away at the system of segregation that prevented equity in education, economics, and social conditions, the conditions that precipitated the necessity for their self-segregation diminished. Despite this, Tatums residents were not ready to put down the defensive measures that had worked to protect their families for many generations. Likewise, the community members were committed to the investments they had worked so hard to maintain and develop. For Tatums, as for the rest of the South, tomorrow did come in the 1960s. Tatums residents as well as the staunch southern supporters of separation had to face the dawning of desegregation.



Illustration 4.1: Abandoned Tatums school buildings, photograph by Anthony Ray Davis, 2003.

Throughout the 1950s, as the NAACP constructed a successful legal strategy to fight segregated public schooling, Tatums community members continued with education as usual by pressing for the best possible learning environment for their children. The Tatums teachers and principals were well trained; the Tatums facilities were far above the conditions of most rural black schools. In the preceding decades, the community had expanded its business network to include many white enterprises in addition to black owned businesses in biracial communities. These connections provided further opportunity for students and townspeople alike. The earliest signs of integration were present among the Tatums residents and local businesses and social connections.

Tatums participated in activities that were intentionally designed to supplement their isolated rural community resources and facilities. Like many of the rural black and white schools in the area, such as Springer, Berwyn, Pernell, Madill, Colbert, Ardmore Douglas, and

Graham schools, Tatums received chemistry lessons through the services of a circuit science teacher named Gatewood and his mobile laboratory, a program supervised by Oklahoma State University. Tatums students and other children in even more rural areas had the opportunity to use facilities and supplies for experiments and demonstrations that they would not otherwise have been able to experience. In addition, the program had an average cost of \$20 per student, while another school paid an average of \$230 per student for a permanent laboratory, supplies, and curriculum.¹

Despite the infusion of external resources and neighboring towns' black students, officials of Tatums schools and other community members became aware that the mandates for desegregation that were designed to improve education for African Americans would mean that Tatums students could not remain racially segregated indefinitely. Some Tatums residents hoped that the constant redistricting of students in the rural areas of southern Oklahoma due to Supreme Court rulings might mean that the Tatums schools could remain and serve neighboring white and Indian students.² Instead, by the 1950s, Tatums residents were informed that their school district would be absorbed by the Fox School District; Tatums School District would no longer even exist.³ To make adjustment easier and delay the desegregation mandates as long as possible, the

¹ Bill Harmon, "Science Is Riding Circuit to Schools," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 1, 1957. In his article about the mobile chemistry teacher, Harmon explained that, "Gatewood is a modern day circuit rider. The message he carries in the gospel of science ..." It is presumed that Professor Gatewood is white; neither his race, nor his first name were mentioned in the article.

² After 1905, Tatums received mail for the neighboring and predominately Native American community of Monk.

³ The Fox School District houses the Fox Den Museum which preserves the history of the community of Fox and the Fox schools. Unpublished local histories of Fox supplement their collection; see Virginia Sheffield, "History of Fox, Oklahoma," n.d. Fox Den Museum (Fox, Oklahoma). Sheffield served as the Fox Schools secretary for over thirty years.

Fox School Board arranged a staggered integration process that began in 1964. The process was not completed until 1968, and then only after a substantial public battle over the rights of the Tatums students.⁴

With rare exception, southern states interpreted desegregation as the closure of the historically black schools and the incorporation of black students into the existing white schools. Although some claimed that the schools must be closed due to their poor conditions, the state of the black facilities actually had little or no relation to the district's decision to close them. While the Supreme Court ruling mandated desegregation, the system used to achieve those measures was almost always one-sided. In addition, it meant far fewer jobs for black teachers and staff. In a five-state survey, researchers determined that between 1968 and 1971, 5,000 white teachers received new employment while black educators experienced a net loss of at least 1,000 jobs. Black students also lost most black counselors and other staff. When the black schools closed, the student body lost their mascot, school colors, and other rallying symbols.⁵

The *Daily Oklahoman* featured article after article about the desegregation movement, which was finally enforced by law in Oklahoma in the 1960s. Tatums repeatedly made news for

⁴ Betty Hooks Norman, interview by author, tape recording, Tatums, Oklahoma, March 6, 2004, hereafter referred to as the Norman Interview; Jones Interview; Lacey McCreary, interview by author, tape recording, Tatums, Oklahoma, March 6, 2001, hereafter referred to as the McCreary Interview; Cecil Jones, interview by author, tape recording, Tatums, Oklahoma, January 20, 2001, hereafter referred to as the Jones Interview.

⁵ David S. Cecelski, "The Hyde County School Boycott: School Desegregation and the Fate of Black Schools in the Rural South" (Ed.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1991); see also Vivian Morris, *The Price They Paid: Desegregation in an African American Community* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), 99. Throughout the work, Morris explores several of the negative consequences of desegregation including the loss of the qualities that most black students claimed to cherish most about their schools: caring and dedicated teachers, range of school activities and leadership opportunities, sense of belonging, and the support of their community.

its ongoing battle, unlike most other school disruptions that took place across the South. Most commonly referred to as the “Fox-Tatums Dispute,” the newspaper reported on each event as it unfolded. Tatums parents, as a final effort to protect their children from racism, continued their policy of self-segregation (after being ordered to enroll young students in the Fox Schools) by participating in a boycott. Despite the community’s long-standing tradition of supporting education, in 1966 Tatums parents held back more than eighty-five school children from the neighboring and predominately white school of Fox ten miles away. They had worked too hard to keep their children away from racial degradation to start tolerating it in 1966. After submitting to sending their junior high and high school students to Fox schools the previous year, most Tatums families were not willing to subject their younger children to the humiliation the older children had experienced.

Tatums parents had good cause to express concern over the affects of desegregation on their elementary school students. Social acceptance and self-esteem were key concepts cultivated in the Tatums students. They thought these areas of development would be retarded if the children were subjected to regular discrimination and harassment in their educational environment.⁶ Frank Aberdeen’s investigation of black students’ adjustments to desegregation found that the African American children in the study reacted poorly to many aspects of the transition. Reading and achievement levels dropped after integration. Social factors and self-esteem also suffered as a result.⁷ The Tatums parents believed that their intervention would improve the conditions for black students at the Fox schools.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Frank D. Aberdeen, “Adjustments to Desegregation: A Description of Some Differences Among Negro Elementary School Pupils” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1969), 38-79; see also James Patterson’s chapter entitled, “Resegregation?” in *Brown v. Board of*

The problems started almost as soon as Tatums students began attending Fox High School in 1965, but their transition to the new school did not make state news.⁸ Throughout this time the black students experienced public humiliation, brutality, abuse of power, and other injustices because of their race. For all of them, this was their first exposure to daily racism. Their community had protected them from the routine indecencies they encountered at Fox, despite their desires to participate and excel. As in many parts of the United States, many Fox students and teachers did not want the students in “their” school. Numerous fights erupted between Fox boys who discovered Tatums boys would not tolerate degrading name-calling and other more aggressive kinds of bullying. When Tatums students reminded others of their rights or simply got in the way, they were pushed around and intimidated.⁹

In the summer after the first year of integrated schooling at Fox, the school conflicts became public disputes and caught the attention of outsiders. Although the first year of the desegregation program only involved the junior high and high school students, the second year required elementary students to attend Fox schools as well.¹⁰ While some Tatums parents were willing to allow their older students to enter the vulnerable world of biracial education while they fought for better treatment, others were adamant about keeping their younger children in the self-segregated environment. In addition, the removal of the elementary grades from Tatums would

Education: A Civil Rights Milestone And Its Troubled Legacy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 191-205.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ “Tatums Pupils Reveal Charge of Prejudice,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 24, 1967; Jones Interview; Norman Interview; McCreary Interview.

¹⁰ Ivy Coffey, “Jury in Ardmore Recesses Before Starting Third Week,” *Daily Oklahoman*, December 16, 1966.

mean that the few remaining teaching and school staff positions would no longer be available within the community, since most of the Tatums teachers were left without jobs after the junior high and high school closed. Some parents were willing to send the elementary school children to Fox if changes were made to create a better learning and social environment for the students; they hoped to achieve this, in part, by adding more black teachers to the staff.¹¹

Initially, Tatums parents petitioned the Fox School Board regarding a request for annexation to the Pernell School Board after negotiation efforts failed between Tatums members and the Fox School Board in the summer of 1966. In addition to experiences with discrimination and scorn in Fox, Tatums parents had problems with the management of funds. Fox was receiving the money as a result of being responsible for educating the newly transferred Tatums students. The Fox School Board did not approve the Pernell annexation request, voting 303 to 184 to keep Tatums in their school district. Fox superintendent, Kenneth Anderson, told the *Daily Oklahoman* reporter that the Tatums students meant funding. Fox actually needed the \$1.5 million incentive from the state for educating the black students to keep their rural program running.¹²

With the realization that Tatums parents would not be able to attend Pernell schools, families needed a plan that would address their frustration and insure that their children would be in a setting that nurtured them. Parents of over nearly eighty-five children simply refused to send their youngsters to the Fox schools when the end of summer arrived and school began in the fall of 1966. Some of these students included high schoolers who had attended Fox for one year

¹¹ Jones Interview; Norman Interview; McCreary Interview.

¹² "Plan Rejected for Pernell to Annex Tatums Students," *Daily Oklahoman*, July 17, 1966. It is not apparent why Anderson said the Fox schools "needed" the Tatums funding.

and refused to return.¹³ The school boycott was designed to give Tatums families negotiating leverage and reveal the extent of their dedication to the issues of education for their children. After squabbles with Fox schools about their blatant truancy, Tatums parents began to seek assistance from outside entities. By December, the Tatums Parent Teacher Association (PTA) along with the Tatums Community Action Program received an answer to the petition that described complaints about discrimination, misappropriation of funds, and other issues. Their persistence, led in great part by Ogelia Hogan, president of the Tatums PTA and cook for the Community Action Program, incited a Grand Jury investigation.¹⁴

During the first week in December, 1966, investigators interviewed Orner Rowe, Carter County Superintendent of Schools, R. J. Meek, Carter County Clerk, and Mike McComber, Carter County Treasurer before a Grand Jury in Ardmore, Oklahoma.¹⁵ The investigation went on for over three weeks, extending interviews into night sessions. Tatums community leaders and high school students reported on the abuses the students had endured, which included physical violence. Parents, such as Jimmy and Jewel Varner, testified about the misuse of Title I funds that were allocated for poor children. These children, in fact, included several of the Tatums students who would not be benefiting directly from expenditures on business equipment and other items.¹⁶ They revealed that the money was not being spent for the benefit of many

¹³ Coffey, "Jury in Ardmore Recesses Before Starting Third Week," December 16, 1966.

¹⁴ Ivy Coffey, "Jury Told Funds Not Helping Poor," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 13, 1966.

¹⁵ "Testimony in Ardmore to Resume," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 9, 1966. The Grand Jury began its investigation of the Fox-Tatums dispute on December 5, 1966. Coffey, "Jury to Enter Third Week at Ardmore," December 17, 1966.

¹⁶ "Jury Nears End of Testimony," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 15, 1966.

black students who needed programs to counter the disadvantages of poverty, particularly after the loss of jobs in Tatums from the school closure.¹⁷

Others testified about the poor conditions of the bussing system that required students to leave very early for school so they could arrive in time for Fox buses to drop them off and then pick up white students in town. Parents reported inconsistencies with the schedule at the end of the day as well. At times, Tatums students were required to leave the school before the normal school day ended to ensure that busses would return to Fox to deliver white students home at the appropriate time.¹⁸ According to Tatums resident Lacy McCreary, on other occasions they would have to wait until after the Fox students were delivered home to be returned home. She worried about the children coming home so late in the day. In addition, this caused problems for families with businesses who needed the assistance of these older children.¹⁹

The last Tatums witness for the Grand Jury, Ermogene Young, mother of six, testified about the psychological problems the integration process was causing the children and other townspeople. Although she sent her two oldest children to Fox the year before, she withheld all of them from attending in 1966. She emphasized the importance of at least keeping the elementary school within Tatums. The school, she explained, was a valuable asset not only to the children but also to the community itself. The last Fox witness for the Grand Jury, accountant Marie Dunn, testified that she believed the Tatums parents should be prosecuted for

¹⁷ Ivy Coffey, "Use of Funds under Fire," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 13, 1966.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ McCreary Interview.

withholding their children from attendance and criticized the quality of education they had received before entering the Fox Public Schools.²⁰

As the Grand Jury investigation ended, only days before Christmas, Tatums residents received news that they would not retain control of Tatums elementary school, nor could they continue with their boycott of Fox schools. The court found that the school could not remain open under the federal and state ruling that had clearly made segregated education illegal, regardless of who wanted it or how much better they felt it would be for their children. Kenneth Anderson met with Tatums representative Jimmy Lee Varner after the court's determination to assure the black community that Fox officials were "willing to work out" their differences. As part of the immediate compromises, Anderson agreed to add two Tatums residents to the staff at the Fox schools, Christine Jackson, as teacher's aid to the junior high library and Tatums's Deputy Sheriff Will Evans as the attendance officer for the Tatums students. Evans was to begin his position immediately by submitting names of parents who were participating in the school boycott.²¹

When the Grand Jury submitted its final report on the investigation of the Fox-Tatums dispute, they found that the Fox School Board had indeed improperly used funds allocated to them as a result of their new responsibility of the Tatums students. Among these offenses, investigators discovered that money that should have been used for equipment, personnel, and other materials was instead used to provide gravel and road improvements on private property

²⁰ Ivy Coffey, "Jury Nearing End of Lengthy Witness List," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 15, 1966.

²¹ "Fox-Tatums to 'Work Out' Elementary School Fuss," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 22, 1966.

not connected with the schools.²² Despite these findings, the jury determined that the Fox School Board had not committed “illegal” discrimination. Furthermore, in regards to the misappropriation of funds, although board members had blatantly exploited their budget, the jury found that the school board had only used ‘poor judgment’ in dispersing the monies.²³

While Fox superintendent Anderson may have assumed that the Grand Jury deliberations would have settled the matter for Tatums parents, this only created more bitterness and distrust of the system that was supposed to protect their rights and the rights of their children. The Grand Jury made recommendations in late December, which included the conclusion that parents participating in the boycott after the second semester began should be prosecuted and jailed if necessary. Five parents announced that they would reluctantly succumb to the threat, but the other families, numbering around seventy-five or eighty students, became more determined in their resolve. Tatums members held a meeting early in January where they restated their solidarity on the issue, claiming they would face whatever consequences that resulted, but they would not subjugate their children to harassment or mistreatment of any kind.²⁴

By January, the Tatums boycott had kept students out of school for a full semester and showed no signs of letting up. The Oklahoma City and Ardmore chapters of the NAACP offered

²² Houses positioned adjacent to the Fox School property belonged to some Fox administrators. An aerial photograph of the Fox campus in 1969 shows the installed driveways provided by the misuse of educational funds. “Aerial photograph of Fox Campus, 1969,” Fox Den Museum, (Fox, Oklahoma, 1969).

²³ Ivy Coffey, “Grand Jury at Ardmore Seeks Action,” *Daily Oklahoman*, December 30, 1966.

²⁴ Ivy Coffey, “Negroes Bitter About School,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 11, 1967.

support to the Tatums activists, encouraging them to “remain firm in their decision.”²⁵ The NAACP chapters also joined in the conflict by sending representatives to the Tatums meeting and telegrams to the governor’s office requesting further investigation of the Fox problems.²⁶ Oklahoma’s newly elected Governor Dewey Bartlett responded by designating staff members on his administration to study the conflict and to try to persuade both sides to consider reconciliation. William Rose, director of the Oklahoma Human Rights Commission, reported that he had been in contact with the governor’s office and was involved in finding a resolution to the dispute as well.²⁷

As announced, Fox schools returned to their business in the latter part of January, 1967, but Tatums students were not in attendance. Even though some parents originally claimed that they were resigned to the orders to send their children, when the second semester started, Fox teachers reported only three Tatums children actually attended.²⁸ The continuation of the school boycott, despite strict orders to comply with compulsory education laws, revealed the determination of the parents to continue with their plans to fight for the proper treatment of their children. It was this very kind of resolve among their ancestors that had created the community; however, the time had come to use their collaborative efforts to fight for their rights rather than simply remove themselves from the conflict.

²⁵ Shorty Shelburne, “City NAACP Group Enters School Dispute,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 13, 1967.

²⁶ The Oklahoma City Chapter of the NAACP sent three women: Nancy Davis, Etoyce Flenold, and Nancy Haeger; the Ardmore Chapter president, J. Milton Grant, also attended. Shelburne, “City NAACP Group Enters School Dispute,” January 13, 1967.

²⁷ Coffey, “Negroes Bitter About School,” January 11, 1967; Bartlett served in the Oklahoma State Senate from 1962 to 1966 before holding office as governor from 1966 to 1970.

²⁸ “Only 3 Negro Pupils Attend at Fox,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 17, 1967.

Shortly after the realization that the Tatums students would not enter the Fox Schools as directed by the courts, the Oklahoma Human Rights Commission authorized a project to investigate the allegations of discrimination that the Grand Jury in Ardmore did not act upon. Rose reported that Tatums parents made several complaints to the Human Rights Commission prior to the continuation of the boycott. The Fox School Board, however, had refused to acknowledge the requests made by the Tatums PTA or the Tatums Community Action Program for a meeting to address their grievances and reach agreements on the treatment of students and distribution of funds. Rose told a *Daily Oklahoma* reporter that the Fox School Board “has not indicated willingness to hold such a meeting.”²⁹

As a result of his queries, Rose also determined that school teachers from Tatums were not given appropriate opportunities to work in the Fox school district, despite the fact that Fox schools had added almost a dozen employees as a result of the Tatums integration. Rose enlisted the assistance of the U.S. Department of Education Superintendent, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the U.S. Commissioner of Education. Governor Bartlett, maintaining communication with Rose about the investigation of the dispute, expressed his concern and continued his support in the Human Rights Commission’s inquiry into the problems.³⁰

While the tension heightened between the Fox and Tatums parties, state newspaper headlines reported almost daily on the events that unfolded, the retorts from each side, and the key players involved. As the months progressed and the boycott showed little sign of budging, the articles made references to officials in higher positions; the writers described the heated words and detailed procedures in greater depth. While in many towns across the South whites

²⁹ “School Dispute Quiz Ordered,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 18, 1967.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

were resistant to integration, Tatums parents joined those who protested the desegregation policies.

Rose met with Tatums parents in their community to determine what they wanted and why they persisted in the boycott. In his interaction with the Tatums residents, he found, “the determination is more apparent after talking with them than it was just reading about it.”³¹

Tatums parents wanted safety measures in place and a specific process of accountability to insure that their children would be treated with dignity. In addition, they wanted audits that would keep school officials under supervision about spending, particularly related to Title I funds that were directed toward poor children. Tatums parents insisted on having black teachers working with students – they believed that if the students were going to be integrated, so should the staff. Furthermore, they believed the presence of these black employees was necessary to hold whites accountable for their behavior since the Grand Jury had obviously not taken the children’s experiences seriously. After realizing the tenacity and ambition of the Tatums faction, which now included the NAACP, Rose stated, “I’m concerned about the whole situation. I hope it gets cleared up, because if it doesn’t it could easily denigrate into something that’s not good for Tatums or the state.”³²

After Rose’s meeting with Tatums members, interested parties participated in a meeting at the Fox school auditorium on January 23, 1967, moderated by Dr. Truman Wester, consultative director of the Southwest Center of Human Relations at the University of Oklahoma. Described as “smoldering” and “tense” by *Daily Oklahoman* correspondent Ivy

³¹ “Parents Keep Children Out,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 20, 1967.

³² Ibid. Some details of the demands of Tatums parents were provided by Jones Interview.

Coffey, officials limited the large gathering to parties directly involved in the menacing dispute. Oklahoma Highway Patrol stationed at the entrances to the Fox campus checked the identity of individuals before letting them enter. Throughout the assembly the Highway Patrol officers remained stationed nearby in case the bickering and disagreements should transition into a violent episode. Governor Bartlett sent two representatives from his office, his executive assistant Wayne Rowley and William Rose. The Human Rights Commission, the office of the Governor, the NAACP, and both schools hoped that the meeting would result in compromises that would satisfy all groups. National NAACP treasurer, Alfred Baker Lewis, came from Greenwich, Connecticut, to attend. Five television stations, including a national network from Chicago, arrived at the event to cover the unusual news of the Tatums boycott.³³

Moderators allowed each school to make presentations, stating their most important obstacles to reaching common ground and continuing with a plan for integration. After an introduction by the Reverend D. M Jackson, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Henry Floyd, president of the Oklahoma City NAACP branch, served as the representative of the participants in the Tatums boycott. By interviewing Tatums children in front of the audience, he exposed the details of physical abuse, demoralizing discriminations, and other offenses, such as the exclusion from certain school activities. Tatums student Larry Jackson told the crowd that he and his sisters had refused to attend because they feared, “white children might beat them.” Jackson had gotten in several fights and reported that no teachers had tried to defend him or stop the altercations.³⁴

³³ Ivy Coffey, “Bias Charged Aired by Tatums Pupils: 200 at Hearing on School Fuss,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 24, 1967; and Ivy Coffey, “Tatums Pupils Reveal Charge of Prejudice,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 24, 1967.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Floyd used other people to speak in behalf of the Tatums students and their families. By efficiently orchestrating his presentation, many advocates of the black students made contributions. The bitter and emotional testimony of white Fox parent, Mrs. Claude Dudley, revealed evidence of the discrimination and blamed most of the problems on the Fox superintendent, Kenneth Anderson. Dudley addressed Anderson directly in her statement, as Coffey reported, “I’m not a liar, I didn’t intend to get involved in these Negro problems and all of this didn’t happen until you came to this school.”³⁵ Floyd followed with a procession of influential people: race advocate Clara Luper Clark, vice-president of the Oklahoma NAACP; the Reverend Wade Watts of McAlester; and State Youth Director of the NAACP, Cecil L. Williams. Finally, Floyd openly asked Fox teachers to have a say. He invited any who had attempted to stop violence between students to step forward, but none did.³⁶

³⁵ Coffey, “Tatums Pupils Reveal Charge of Prejudice,” January 24, 1967. Dudley is not identified by her given name in the article. She explained that Anderson established policies that excluded Tatums students by removing race directly from the equation. For example, although Tatums students played musical instruments and integrated them into their music program, Anderson instituted a prerequisite of a specified “Band” class for potential orchestra members. Since Tatums differentiated between their vocal and instrumental music classes, the school records automatically disqualified them from participating in orchestra at Fox. Dudley’s white son was also excluded from the orchestra because he had not taken band before. Anderson denied that the policy had been used at all, which outraged Dudley. Anderson became the Fox School District Superintendent in 1965 at the beginning of the desegregation program. Nelda Keck, “Administrators, 1931 – Present,” n.d., Fox Den Museum, Fox, Oklahoma.

³⁶ Keck, “Administrators, 1931-Present.” Former teacher Clara Luper Clark was a well-known civil rights advocate in Oklahoma, accredited with spearheading protests movements in the mid-1950s with the Oklahoma City branch of the NAACP. Working in conjunction with the NAACP Youth Council, she and groups of young people successfully enacted change in well-organized sit-ins, boycotts, and picketing campaigns that began in the mid-1950s. In fact, the first lunch counter sit-in was orchestrated by Luper in Oklahoma City in 1958. See also, James M. Smallwood and Crispin A. Phillips, “Black Oklahomans and the Question of ‘Oklahomaness’: The People Who Weren’t Invited to Share the Dream,” in Howard F. Stein and Robert F. Hill, eds., *The Culture of Oklahoma* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 62-63.

To the Fox School Board, Superintendent Anderson, and the Fox School representatives were seated with Lawrence Crowder from the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Education. Anderson provided the Fox rebuttal, which was a defense of his and other Fox staff members' behaviors in a brief arrangement. After he denied that any mistreatment had taken place in the past, called the Tatums students and parents liars, and minimized the financial offenses, Anderson claimed that in the future, "all students involved would be treated fairly." Referring to the addition of new textbooks, he explained, "If the kids were here now, they would benefit from them." He did not, however, suggest any specific programs to insure that changes would be made or protection provided. He insisted that Tatums students were, "treated as well as any students at Fox."³⁷ Despite his denials Tatums boys still attending Fox High School reported fights as recently as that month and feared for the safety of younger students and their sisters, Anderson assured the audience that he would prevent violence from happening in the future, but he did not refer to any plans for implementing the changes.³⁸

While the official parties deliberated, the NAACP Youth Council of Oklahoma City and the organization's president, Harold Woodson, participated in a public relations campaign to assist with information dissemination. The group distributed flyers explaining that the purpose of the Tatums PTA and Community Action Program boycott was not to refuse integration indefinitely (although some parents would have preferred it). Rather, Woodson and others explained, the Tatums community insisted that integration must not include mistreatment and discrimination. The *Daily Oklahoman* reported that Floyd publicly rallied the students and asked

³⁷ "3-Hour Debate Fails to End School Fuss," *Daily Oklahoman*, January 24, 1967.

³⁸ Coffey, "Tatums Pupils Reveal Charge of Prejudice," *Daily Oklahoma*, January 24, 1967; "3-Hour Debate Fails to End School Fuss."

them if they wanted integration; in response, they yelled out, “Yes!” The presence of Tatums students and Oklahoma Youth Council members had a significant influence on the image portrayed by the media about the protest event. It kept the attention on the future of the students. Their involvement in front of television cameras and newspaper reporters was a critical element in the heightened emotions of the meeting at Fox that night. State Youth Director Williams was quoted in the *Daily Oklahoma* for his vehemence, a trait that the Oklahoma Youth Council also displayed:

Williams reported that everyone who had spoken before him had been ‘real moderate and real nice,’ but that if Negroes like himself would stand for the rights of others in Selma, Ala., ‘I can tell you right now, I’m ready to sit in, lay in, or stand in for the rights here.’³⁹

After three-and-a-half heated hours, Floyd announced to the gathering that both parties had reached an impasse and further mediation was required. In order to move beyond into more focused negotiations, the groups agreed to meet at the University of Oklahoma in Norman that Thursday with limited representatives and omission of the press. They agreed that the Fox delegates and six Tatums representatives would attend arbitration with William Rose, William Rowley, and Dr. Truman Wester.⁴⁰

Table 4.1: Arbitration Representatives

Fox School Board	Tatums Community Committee
Kenneth G. Anderson, Superintendent	Henry Floyd, President, Oklahoma City NAACP
R.S. Woolridge, President	Reverend Wade Watts, Vice-President Oklahoma NAACP*

³⁹ “3-Hour Debate Fails to End School Fuss.”

⁴⁰ Ivy Coffey, “3-Hour Airing Fails to Solve School Dispute: Another Meeting Slated in Norman Thursday Night,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 24, 1967.

* Table continued on next page.

Fox School Board	Tatums Community Committee
*H.M. Baker	Ogelia Hogan, Tatums PTA President
Oscar Powell	Jimmy Lee Varner
E.C. Roach	Jewel Varner
O.M. Garrett	Reverend D. M Jackson, Bethel Baptist Church

Source: "Fox-Tatums Fuss Progress Reported," *Daily Oklahoman*, February 1, 1967.

Although Alfred Lewis claimed that he only attended the meeting on Monday night as an observer for the national NAACP, he released his suggestions for progress in the situation the next day in a press conference. He believed that the two factions should, "try and iron out these charges of physical abuse and verbal harassment, but they shouldn't argue about whether these things happened. They should make sure they don't happen in the future." In order to achieve this, Lewis suggested the placement of, "a permanent committee to probe future charges of racial discrimination against Tatums youngsters at the Fox school." In addition, the board should have the authority to take punitive action if discrimination or mistreatment is determined to have taken place.⁴¹

The meeting at the University of Oklahoma started with a dinner meeting at the Center for Continuing Education and a brief visit from Governor Bartlett. Thursday's negotiations, like the ones earlier in the week at Fox, proved to run late into the night. Although it closed after five hours of negotiations, past midnight, they all agreed to another meeting to continue mediation. Setting another discussion for the following week in Tatums, Wester released a press

* Table continued from previous page.

⁴¹ "National NAACP Officer Makes Suggestion," *Daily Oklahoman*, January 25, 1976.

announcement that the parties had reached agreement on some points but would continue to move toward closure.⁴²

Before that meeting Rowley proposed a compromise for each side to consider before rejoining. His plan included a “crash program,” intended to start as soon as possible and hold session until August, designed to provide Tatums students with the education they missed throughout the boycott. The program would take place at the Tatums facilities, which were now owned by the Fox School District. Tatums students would forfeit their summer vacation to compensate for their absences. When the parties met the following Tuesday, Fox representatives flatly rejected the offer. Anderson left the Tatums auditorium without comment. Tatums representatives approved, reemphasizing their sentiment that all children should be required to attend school.⁴³

The next day, Superintendent Anderson and the Fox School Board released a statement to the press and the Tatums community informing them that if their children did not begin attending school in Fox the following week, the district attorney would receive a list of names of Tatums parents participating in the boycott. Tatums action teams promptly set a meeting in Bethel Baptist Church to decide collectively how they would proceed. They still did not feel that they had received the assurances they needed to send their children to the Fox schools. Catholic priest and human rights advocate, Reverend Roy Barton of Oklahoma City, and many other new supporters from across the state joined the Tatums faction, which included a large number of

⁴² Ivy Coffey, “Bartlett Talks With Fox, Tatums,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 27, 1967; “Fox-Tatums School Talks Slated,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 28, 1967; “Fox-Tatums Fuss Progress Reported,” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 1, 1967.

⁴³ Ivy Coffey, “Fox Officials Reject Plan,” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 1, 1967.

NAACP officials. Floyd told the parents they must make a decision about how far they were willing to take their boycott.⁴⁴

As the audience faced the threat of jail, a Tatums mother stood up and spoke with a baby in her arms. Annie Lee Lucas vehemently told the crowd, “First of all, we have been told we will have to go to jail Monday, but we don’t have to wait. I will not send my children to Fox until this situation is cleared up. I’m ready to go when they come.” After she made her stand, other parents stood and gave their views, making a commitment to the boycott and its goals even if that meant incarceration. Viola James said, “Where I go from here is to jail. I would rather be persecuted than have my child persecuted.” Another mother, Delores Taylor, told the group, “I’ve gone this far and I’ll go the last mile. I’ll stay with the bunch.” One by one, seventy-eight parents stood and told Floyd and their supporters they would continue with the boycott regardless of the consequences.⁴⁵

The Reverend Wade Watts and the NAACP assured the Tatums parents that they would have the help they needed to get their demands for their children met. Watts told the crowd, “Big plans between now and Monday call for bondsmen to be ready to get you out of jail.” He added that he was committed to ensuring that the Tatums children got a “first class education . . . if I stay in jail the rest of my life.” Reverend Barton told the parents that, “several hundred people,” were willing to bail them out of jail. Watts furthered inspired the group by promising

⁴⁴ “Balking Tatums Parents May Face Legal Action,” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 2, 1967; “Parents at Tatums Face Legal Threat,” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 2, 1967; Ivy Coffey, “78 at Tatums Say They’ll Go to Jail,” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 3, 1967.

⁴⁵ “Balking Tatums Parents May Face Legal Action,” “Parents at Tatums Face Legal Threat,”; Coffey, “78 at Tatums Say They’ll Go to Jail.”

them he would ask the national NAACP to “give an award to everyone who goes to jail so they can hang the awards in their homes.”⁴⁶

While the Tatums group strengthened its resolve and grew in numbers, Rowley from the Governor’s office and NAACP officials continued to negotiate an agreement between the factions. As the days progressed and meetings pressed on, Anderson delayed his recommendation for prosecution of the Tatums parents. A week later he announced that a settlement was possible. Pressures weighed heavily on Anderson and the Fox School Board while Tatums parents stood their ground. On Wednesday, February 8, 1967, Governor Bartlett held a press conference at the state capital announcing the beginning of the end of the Fox-Tatums dispute. In the interest of returning Tatums children to school as quickly as possible, Bartlett proclaimed that representatives from both parties agreed to settle their long-standing differences through the use of an arbitration team, consisting of Rowley, Rose, and Wester who had been involved in the dispute for months. Both sides were committed to following the decision of the council.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Coffey, “78 at Tatums Say They’ll Go to Jail.” This was only the beginning of Reverend Watts’s reputation in Oklahoma as a race relations advocate. For one amazing story of his strong, unyielding character and its drastic affect on race relations, see the story of Johnny Lee Clary, *Beneath The Sheets: The Ku Klux Klan Exposed* (Underwood, Australia: Kingswood Press, 2003). Clary served several high level security and leadership positions with the Klan as a devout racist, body guard for the infamous David Duke, Grand Dragon of the National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, and finally Imperial Wizard of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Clary was so moved by the repeated acts love and courage that Watts exhibited that he experienced a conversion-style life change. Having abandoned the Klan and racism, his life is now dedicated to working as a spokesperson and advocate for racial equality and healing. The book is dedicated in part to Reverend Watts who died in 1998.

⁴⁷ “Tatums Parents Vow Jail Trip in School Fuss,” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 6, 1967; “School Dispute Talks Continue,” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 7, 1967; Ivy Coffey, “Fox, Tatums Sign Arbitration Pact,” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 9, 1967.

Within a week, the arbitrators agreed on a settlement; representatives from Fox and Tatums signed their commitment to the agreement. Governor Bartlett released their findings and the future plans at another press conference the following Wednesday. Instituting the previously devised plan of a “crash program,” Rowley, Rose, and Wester determined that a “full scale remedial program” would be necessary to ensure that Tatums students were brought up to grade level to make up for lost time as a result of the boycott. Furthermore, the alternative session would then take place at the Tatums schools until the end of July. Tatums students would be required to begin regular attendance in the Fox schools in the fall semester of the next school year. The team concluded that the educators for the summer would be approved by Anderson but coordinated through the Continuing Education Program at the University of Oklahoma.⁴⁸

By mid-March the Tatums school, which had been the headquarters of the Tatums Community Action Program throughout the boycott, opened its doors to school children once more. The “crash program school” enabled children to make up for the absences they had missed throughout what the *Daily Oklahoman* called a “protest holiday.” Four teachers, two black and two white, came from cities not affiliated with Fox or Tatums. In addition, Evans Harris, a graduate assistant from the Southwest Center of Human Relations at the University of Oklahoma, worked at the school throughout the March to August session as an advisory specialist. Students arrived anxious to begin with their studies. In addition to the academic program designed to target bringing them to appropriate skill levels for the following year,

⁴⁸ “Tatums to Start Remedial School,” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 16, 1967; “Tatums to Begin Remedial Classes,” *Daily Oklahoman*, March 7, 1967.

students also received a physical examination, psychological assessments, and achievement tests in the alternative school.⁴⁹

The session for Tatums students unfolded without incident and the protest was broken between the two school systems. By the fall semester 1968, the Tatums public schools were officially dissolved, and all Tatums students began attending the Fox schools. Two teachers were hired from the Tatums schools, and eventually a Tatums community member was seated on the Fox School Board. Kenneth Anderson did not return to the Fox schools in 1968.⁵⁰

At the end of the long boycott, Tatums families were able to achieve many of the goals they had established at the beginning of their fight. Representatives from Tatums were hired into the Fox system. In addition, educators from Fox received specialized training in managing an integrated classroom.⁵¹ Still, many acts of harassment and discrimination continued at Fox over the years. One Tatums resident, who attended Fox Elementary School in 1969 as a third grader,

⁴⁹ “Tatums to Start Remedial School,” February 16, 1967; “Tatums to Begin Remedial Classes,” March 7, 1967; Ivy Coffey, “Tatums Start ‘Crash’ Study,” March 14, 1967; “Pupils Begin to Make Up School Work,” March 15, 1967, all in *Daily Oklahoman*. The two black teachers hired to work at the Tatums Crash Program were John Reagor, a recent Langston graduate with teaching experience in Tulsa, and Revolda Wright from Oklahoma City. Duane Moore, an Oklahoma City University graduate and former teacher from Kansas, and Lee Clayton from Oklahoma City who previously taught in the rural community of Wanette, Oklahoma, were the two white teachers. Charles Butler from the University of Oklahoma assisted Wester and Rowley in the enrollment and initial stages of the Tatums “crash program.”

⁵⁰ Keck, “Administrators, 1931 – Present.” Information about Superintendent Anderson’s removal or resignation from the Fox School District was not available in any of the local histories of Fox schools; Current Fox Schools Superintendent James Miller and Fox Den Museum Curator Keck did not have any details about this matter either. James Miller, interview by author, April 12, 2005, telephone. Nelda Keck, interview by author, April 12, 2005, telephone.

⁵¹ Nancy Kell, “Fox Teachers Experiment: They’re Looking for Integrated Class Solutions,” *Daily Oklahoman*, July 28, 1968.

recalled frequently being called derogatory names and being intimidated by white students.⁵²

Despite these obstacles, Tatums parents were able to accept the terms of the integration process.

The Tatums school buildings were used for adult education classes, a preschool facility, and an after-school program. In addition, the school gym was converted to a community center.⁵³



Illustration 4.2: The Jewel Carter Varner Neighborhood Trust Center, Established 1968. Photograph by Anthony Ray Davis.

In the years following, Tatums fell from public attention. The events of the boycott were relegated to private conversations in homes. The *Daily Oklahoman* never again reported on the Tatums students or their integration. Many community members still believe that the desegregation process and the closure of the Tatums schools was the lowest point in Tatums history. The loss of revenue for the town created economic ripples, causing many to move into

⁵² Anthony Ray Davis, interview by author, tape recording, Denton, Texas, July 5, 2004, hereafter referred to as the Davis Interview. Davis also remembered that black students received harsher punishments than their white peers.

⁵³ "Adult Education Classes Planned," *Daily Oklahoman*, February 3, 1968; Jones Interview; Davis Interview.

nearby cities for better employment opportunities. The demoralization of the students as a result of their interaction with whites in Fox was heartbreaking for many who had worked so hard to avoid those kinds of situations. The core of self-segregation was dissolving as integration and civil rights marched on.

Tatums was not the only black school to boycott integration. In 1968 and 1969, in rural Hyde County, North Carolina, black students refused to attend public school for five months in conjunction with nonviolent demonstrations and marches.⁵⁴ In Hyde County, as in Tatums, the state government kept black schools open for more than ten years by tampering with district boundaries and procedures to avoid compliance with the Brown rulings. Both school systems rejected the program of closing black facilities as the means to integration. The boycotters similarly hoped to achieve negotiating power through their solidarity.⁵⁵

Other Tatums townspeople viewed the boycott and the integration struggle as the strongest moment in the community's past. Tatums blacks relied heavily on the support of their churches and outside civil rights workers. Their solidarity protected their rights, as it had guarded their physical safety over the years. Many believe that the cohesive efforts to lobby for their children were the culmination of a tradition of seeking alternatives to the status quo of racism. Tatums residents held their ground and avoided violent outbreaks with whites.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Cecelski, "The Hyde County School Boycott," iv.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 39-61, 123-36; see also Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: the History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 168.

⁵⁶ Jones Interview; McCreary Interview; Norman Interview; Davis Interview. This statement excludes the previously reported school yard fights among students.

Table 4.2: Timeline of School Desegregation and Fox-Tatums Dispute

Year	School Related Desegregation Events
1896	<i>Plessey v. Ferguson</i> Established “Separate, But Equal”
1931	NAACP Began Series of Lawsuits to Create Equitable Opportunities in Black Schools Across the South
1935	W.E.B. DuBois Published, “Does The Negro Need Separate Schools?”
1938	Supreme Court Ruled Blacks Had Been Denied Equity in Higher Education in <i>Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada</i>
1946	Youth Council of NAACP in North Carolina Held Strike Opposing Conditions at Their Black School
1947	Students in Hearne, Texas Hold Strike Protesting Inferiority of Black Schools in Their District
1948	Court in Oklahoma Ruled that Ada Lois Sipuel Should Be Granted Opportunity for In-State Higher Education Based on Separate But Equal Premise, <i>Sipuel v. Oklahoma State Board of Regents</i>
1950	Thurgood Marshall and Team Establish Strategy and Begin Campaign to Attack Segregation As Main Opposition to Equity in Schools
June 1950	Two Desegregation Victories on the Same Day: <i>Sweat v. Painter</i> and <i>McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education</i> (McLaurin Win Based on Continuance of Sipuel Battle)
1951	NAACP Involved in Over 20 Lawsuits Opposing Segregation in Elementary and High Schools in Addition to Over 12 Cases Fighting Segregation in Higher Education
1954	<i>Brown v. Board of Education of Education</i> , Brown I Overturned <i>Plessey v. Ferguson</i>
1955	<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> , Brown II Mandated School Desegregation to Begin “With All Deliberate Speed”*

* Table continued on next page

Year	School Related Desegregation Events
*1955	Tatums School Enrolled Black Pernell Students In Response to <i>Brown</i> Rulings
1957	Civil Rights Act Created Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department
Fall 1965	Tatums Junior High and High School Students Began Attending Fox Public Schools
July 1966	Fox School District Rejected Tatums Petition For Annexation to Pernell School District
Fall 1966	Tatums Parent Began Fox Schools Boycott for Elementary Children
December 5, 1966	Grand Jury Investigation Began As Result of Tatums PTA and Tatums Community Actions Program Complains About Fox Schools
December, 1966	Grand Jury in Ardmore Determined That No Illegal Discrimination Took Place In Fox, Only “Poor Judgment”
January 1967	Oklahoma City & Ardmore NAACP Entered Fox-Tatums Dispute
February 1967	Tatums and Fox Representatives Agree To Comply To Arbitration Board’s Program for Compromise
March 1967	“Crash Program” School Established in Tatums for Students
Fall 1968	Tatums Students Officially Complete Integration Into Fox School District
1970	<i>Adams v. Richardson</i> Attacked Continued Problem With Under-Representation of Blacks in Oklahoma Higher Education

Source: Timeline for Tatums events are verified in a series of *Daily Oklahoman* articles from 1967 and 1968.

* Table continued from previous page.

In the decades that have passed since the boycott, Tatums population has continued to slowly decline; its news rarely makes state headlines. Oil wells, ranches, and farms continue to operate in Tatums, but there is no internal network of businesses to support the residents. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, families continued to submit to the trend of urbanizing for employment and other opportunities. Some residents have moved into Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Chicago, but they keep homes in Tatums to enjoy a retreat to rural ways. Children continue to play throughout the town without much concern. Two churches continue to hold services every Sunday. Approximately 200 residents remain despite the dwindling economy because of their love for the community and its legacy.

CONCLUSION

People who have enough basic satisfaction to look for love and respect (rather than just food and safety) tend to develop such qualities as loyalty, friendliness, and civic consciousness, and to become better parents, teachers, public servants ... People living at the level of self-actualization are, in fact, found simultaneously to love mankind most and to be the most developed idiosyncratically.¹

Abraham Maslow, *The Right to Be Human*

Tatums continues to hold great value to the remaining two hundred residents who continue to preserve the historical and social value of their dwindling community. In recent years, Tatums residents have initiated many projects to bring historical attention to their town. Big Bethel proudly hosts a historical marker for the building and the community. A small museum is emerging in what was once a choir room in the church. The Tatums Vista Center is a library and media center which provides internet access and other opportunities for the community and rural neighbors, made possible by a grant supervised by the Oklahoma Black Mayors Council. The T-Okie reunion held every other Fourth of July brings thousands of previous residents and their families. Throughout the celebration which lasts two or three days at least, the town is full of music, food, games, laughter, and dancing. A winding parade displays license plates from almost every state. Current and previous Tatums residents belong to several horse clubs who prance and trot their show horses, fully costumed, in the procession. Many

¹ Edward Hoffman, *The Right to be Human: A Biography of Abraham Maslow* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1999), 88.

residents, like Lacy McCreary, are enjoying their retirement years in the quiet town they grew up. Cecil Jones works tirelessly to find ways to continue to bring pride to the Tatums legacy.

Hundreds of Oklahoma towns have passed into history and no longer exist. Many more, Tatums included, have been reduced to a couple hundred residents and no store front enterprises. Many Oklahoma historians recognize the most obvious reasons for ghost towns, such as the decline in farming and general urbanization. John W. Morris details many other factors that led to the large number of fleeting rural communities in *Ghost Towns of Oklahoma*. These include the movement of county seats, liquor laws, weather and climate, decline in railroad patterns, and the environmental changes created after the United States Corps of Engineer projects caused the formation of numerous lakes. Morris recognized specific factors that generally described his parameters for a ghost town. The towns must either be completely destroyed, largely unused with few remaining buildings, or have experienced a population decrease of more than 80 percent from its maximum.²

Tatums and many of the historically black towns (HBTs) did not make his list of ghost towns in Morris study because they did not experience a severe enough population decrease. Despite their still being categorically “alive,” Tatums is no longer a working, autonomous community. Residents must do all their shopping in nearby towns and little employment is available to those who remain. Viewing the decline of the community within the context of the state, it is clear than the town is only one of thousands of rural, Oklahoma communities with recessing and disappearing economies. Tatums and the Oklahoma HBTs, in fact, experienced declines in their populations and economics which paralleled that of nearly all rural towns.

² John W. Morris, *Ghost Towns of Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1980), 3-8.

The study of self-segregated towns, like Tatums and others, provides interesting paradigms to investigate responses to oppression and domination. While forced segregation clearly alienated opportunities for most blacks, the element of choice in separatism changed its function in the social and economic structure within the community. Their solidarity in ideology and collaboration enabled them to live in conditions much better than other blacks in the South. Inevitably, despite their convictions to live within an enclosed community, Tatums residents resigned themselves to the decline of the effectiveness and functionality of segregation. They concurrently embraced many of the new opportunities to enjoy the progress of the civil rights movement and the push toward integration.

The remaining HBTs in Oklahoma continue to strive for revitalization and historical preservation. Hannibal Johnson explored this in a chapter entitled, “The Future of the All-Black Towns,” in *Acre of Aspiration*.³ Soon after the black schools were closed in the HBTs, the communities began to look toward other outside sources of income and employment. Boley gained a factory that strengthened the town’s economy.⁴ Several of the HBTs in the state serve as host to numerous blues musicians. Rentiesville, Oklahoma, hosts the annual Dusk ‘til Dawn Blues Festival and is home of the Minner’s Down Home Blues Club.⁵ The Oklahoma Historical Society sponsors a traveling exhibit on the HBTs and the African American pioneers who founded them.

³ Hannibal Johnson, *Acre of Aspiration: The All-Black Towns in Oklahoma* (Austin: Eakin Press, 2002), 195-202.

⁴ “New Chance for a Black Town,” *Business Week*, August 9, 1969.

⁵ Rhonda Ragsdale, “Black Towns and the Blues,” *Southwest Blues Magazine* 7 (August 2004). Rentiesville is located at the site of the Honey Springs Battle of the Civil War where many African Americans fought.

The HBTs are not the only agents of self-segregation. Most groups self-segregate due to tradition or common interests without paying much attention to having done it. The phenomenon has been studied and even opposed on the Harvard campus as black students congregate, isolate, and network with each other.⁶ Historically black colleges and universities remain strong despite the fact that African Americans may attend biracial universities; likewise, many female students choose to attend women's universities. These entities exist to support their group and its interests, but usually do not exclude those of another race or sex. In the hands of those trying to leverage their disadvantaged social position, it is a useful and benign tool. However, when similar methods of separatism are used by those who are already in power, they can be detrimental to the social structure overall and certainly to those without dominance in the society.

In many ways, as social historians venture into cultural histories, the interpretations that develop often include analysis of the methods that particular groups use to adapt culturally and survive oppression. Thus general perceptions emerge about the way a section of people think or behave. While it is important to consider a feminine perspective or a racial paradigm when addressing historical events, it is important to remember that no group is cohesive. There is no way to document *the* black point of view about segregation. Each racial, ethnic, and gender group is full of a complex weave of individuals and sub-groups. This investigation of Tatum's and its part in the black town movement reveal many points of contradistinction from what has been traditionally assigned to African American history. Not all blacks wanted integration with

⁶ "Taking Steps to Curtail Black Student Self-Segregation at Harvard College," *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 15 (Spring, 1997): 14-15.

whites. Some Tatums community members resisted the boycott. The diversity of reaction to racism and oppression in general is an open field of study.

APPENDIX A
GLOSSARY OF KLAN VOCABULARY

100% Americanism (real or true Americanism) = the idea that real or true Americans were white Protestants who held a belief in the superiority of their race; Klan ideology

AKIA = a acronym for “A Klansman I am” to respond to the coded AYAK (Are you a Klansman) identifier of fellow Klansmen

AYAK = a acronym for “Are you a Klansman” to identify fellow Klansmen

countersign = secret Klan signal

cyclops = president (also exalted cyclops)

dead books = records of the names of black leaders

den = meeting place

exalted cyclops = president

exchequer = treasurer

genii = group of the fifteen imperial officers of the imperial wizard

ghoul = Klan member

hydras = group of the nine grand officers who assist the grand dragon

imperial klovokation = convention of the invisible empire and supreme legislative body of the order (from convocation, as assembly called by higher authority)

imperial wizard = the emperor of the invisible empire (taken from the chief officer of the original KKK, called the grand wizard)

invisible empire = the universal geographic jurisdiction of the order

k-uno = the first order of the Klan

klabee = treasurer (from kaba, to keep and kees, and ancient Egyptian coin or purse)

kladd = conductor

klaliff = successor in office

Klan = the unit of the order (from clan, a number of men of kindred purpose)

Klankraft = the principles, purposes and practices of the KKK religious and patriotic ideals

Klan Kourier = the title of the official organ; the Klan newsletter

Klanishness = a sense of comfort and security, based on fraternal bonds, that Klansmen feel when together

Klansman = member of the Klan; the title of the first order, or K-Uno

Klanton = jurisdiction of the Klan, a corner or a small district (from Canton)

klarogo = inner guard

klavakade = parade or other public exhibition (from cavalcade, a procession)

klavalier = the soldier of the Klan in the military department (from cavalier, a courtly and skillful soldier)

klavern = smallest, local unit of the Klan; meeting place or den of local unit (from clavern, a large cave)

kleagle = recruiter/organizer

klexter = outer guard

kilgrapp = secretary (from kirographer, one whose business it is to write)

klokan = investigator

klokann = board of investigators

klokard = lecturer or teacher (from klo of kloran and kard, meaning teacher or reader)

klonkave = Klan ceremony, gathering in secret session of a Klan (from conclave, a secret meeting or locked room)

klonverse = assembly of a province (from converse)

kloran = ritual book and lectures

klorero = convention of the realm (from korero, a convention)

kloxology = Klan song

kludd = chaplain (from culdee, the high priest of the ancient Druids)

kluxer = recruiter

kluging = recruiting

knights = Klan members

kyklos = circle of friends (from Greek)

lictors = guards of the den

night-hawk = candidate for Klan membership

magi = vice-president

MIOAK = name used to refer to the insignia symbol of a Klansman which was to be worn so that Klansmen could identify one another

province = sub-division of the realm, a county or a number of counties of a state or territory

pukers = those who turned in fellow Klansmen or talked about secret Klan activity

realm = sub-division of the invisible empire, a state or territory of the United States

snoopers = undercover Klan representatives used to identify people who violate Klan ideology by behavior that was less than the 100% Americanism preached

terrors = Klan officers

turk = marshal

TWAK (Trade With a Klansman) = a Klan business network supported by merchants, professionals, consumers and special campaigns

Source: This glossary was compiled primarily from the *Kloran* and *Religious and Patriotic Ideals of the Ku Klux Klan*, and a few issues of the *Klan Courier*, but also consulted Carter's dissertation. Many other Klan terms existed and were used, such as Great, Grand and Imperial. These were designated hierarchal levels within the leadership. Terms such as dragon, cyclops, dragons, wizards, and others were used to represent descriptions of officers within the Klan.

APPENDIX B

OKLAHOMA TOWNS WITH REPORTED KLAN ACTIVITY OR MOB VIOLENCE

Ada	Kiefer
Alsuma	Kiowa
Anadarko	Lawton
Ardmore	Limestone Gap
Arkansas City	Medford
Atoka	Muskogee
Bald Knob	Oklahoma City
Barnsdall	Okmulgee
Bartlesville	Owasso
Beggs	Picher
Blackwell	Pittsburg
Broken Arrow	Ponca City
Checotah	Poteau
Collinsville	Prague
Coweta	Pryor
Cushing	Quay
Dewar	Sand Springs
Durant	Sapulpa
El Reno	Shawnee
Enid	Silder
Eufala	Skiatook
Garber	Spelter City
Granite	Sulphur
Guthrie	Tonkawa
Guymon	Tulsa
Healdton	Turley
Henryetta	Wellington
Hobart	Wilson
Hollis	Winfield
Hominy	Woodward
Jenks	

Source: This list of reported Klan rallies, parades, attacks, meeting places, and other reported mob violence was compiled from newspaper clippings, letters and documents and photographs at the Western History Collection at the University of Oklahoma Libraries, in addition to numerous contemporary articles and unpublished theses and dissertations.

APPENDIX C
HISTORICALLY BLACK TOWNS OF OKLAHOMA

Source: This list of HBTs was compiled using the publications of Johnson and Odell.

Arkadia	Lewisville
Arkansas Colored	Liberty
Bailey	Lima
Bald Hill	Lincoln
Black Jack	Mabelle (Santown)
Bluff	Macedonia
Boggy Bend	Marshalltown
Boley	Melvin
Brooksville	North Folk Colored
Canadian Colored Town	Old Vinita
Carson	Oberlin
Chase	Oktaha
Chilesville (Stringtown)	Pleasant Valley
Cimarron	Red Bird
Clarksville	Rentie
Clearview (Lincoln)	Rentiesville
Columbia	Rusk
Douglas City	Salt Creek
Earlsboro (Loftis)	Saunders
Emanuel	Sweet Home
Ferguson	Summit
Foreman	Taft
Gay (Lenton)	Tatums
Gibson Station	Tullahassee
Grayson (Wild Cat)	Udora
Haney	Vernon
Homer	Weogufkee
Huttonville (Nerotown)	Wellston Colony
Iconium	Wiley
IXL	Wybark
Langston	Yahola
Lee (Wellington)	Zion City

APPENDIX D

LIST OF KNOWN FOUNDING RESIDENTS OF TATUMS, OKLAHOMA

Mary Austin	W.F. Lewis
Cornelius Austin	Mary Mannings
Evelyn Austin	P.R. Mitchell
Ben Austin	Willie Newberry
Augustus Austin	Mollye Newberry
PR Black	Brown Peters
A.W. Brooks	Robert Pettus
Will Brown	West Phillips
Earl Canady	Fed Prices
S. B. Carter	Rozell Spigner
Seaborn Carter	Dan Spigner
Alice Carter	Robert Swindall
F.R. Cee	Maggie Swindall
John Collins	Charlie Swindall
Mark Crookshank	L.B. Tatum
Ella Davis	E.G. Tatum
Walter Franklin	Mary Tatum
B.F. Franklin	Henry Taylor
BE Givens	Tenna Thrash
Nute Graham	Dan Thrash
C.R. Green	John Tucker
L.H. Henry	J. Walls
Ocie Hoffman	Phillip Ware
J.D. Hooks	W.H. Ware
Violet Kenner Hooks	Billie Williams
Anderson Hooks	Noma Williams
Josia Hooks	Lucie Williams
Lottie Hooks	Eliza Williams
Susie Hooks	Tommie Williams
E.B. Hunt	George Worley
Robert Jackson	George Yates
Miles Johnson	Silvia Thrash Ziegler
Robert Johnson	P.T. Ziegler
Austin Jones	

Source: This list was derived solely from Jewel Carter Varner's, "A History of the Tatums Community." These individuals were listed as leaders in the voluntary community as well as prominent business people. Her findings were compiled from twenty-seven interviews with early residents or their adult children. Since little remains in terms of historical documents for the infant stages of Tatums' development, these interviews are invaluable in preserving the town's history. Certainly, many other individuals and families lived in Tatums and participated in ways vital to the voluntary community. Any oversight in their involvement is unintentional.

APPENDIX E

TATUMS PUBLIC SCHOOLS INFORMATION, 1955

Source: Derived from *Tatums Tigers 1955 Yearbook* and 1955 “Graduation Activities Program”

Tatums School Board

President: W. N. Towles

Vice President: Otha McGlasson

Clerk: Hayes B. Ward

Member: Jess Phipps

Member: H.A. Everett

Teaching Staff

Bettye J. Gaffney: Langston University, Miami University

Cyrus O. Jackson: Tuskegee Institute, Langston University

Gwendolyn Ables: Langston University, University of Oklahoma

Elizabeth Johnson: Langston University, University of Oklahoma

Violet Hooks: Langston University, University of Oklahoma

Willie Roberts: Langston University, University of Oklahoma

Andrew C. Hill: Langston University, University of Oklahoma

Jewell Varner: Langston University, Kansas State Teachers College

Tatums Staff

Superintendent: Carl Buck

Principal: M. F. Andrews

Cafeteria Supervisor: Essie Hooks

Custodian: Aaron Carr

Baccalaureate

May 22, 1955 (Sunday); 3:00 PM

Processional/Recessional: G. Ables

Hymn: Fairest Lord Jesus, High School Chorus

Invocation: Brother Aaron Carter, Dean of Bethel Baptist Church

Girl Trio: To A Wild Rose, Edward MacDowell

Sermon: Reverend W. S. Crawford, Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church

High School Chorus: Go Down Moses, J. Rosamond Johnson

Benediction: Reverend W. S. Crawford

Commencement Program

May 24, 1955 (Tuesday); 8:00 PM

Processional/Recessional: G. Ables

High School Chorus: One World, Geoffrey O'Hara

Invocation: Reverend W. S. Crawford

High School Chorus: No Man Is An Island, Joan Whitney

Address: Dean J. H. Hughes, Director of Education, Langston University

Girl Trio: L'Amour Toujours, Rudolph Friml

Presentation of Graduates: M. F. Andrews

Presentation of Diplomas: Superintendent Carl Buck

Class Song: Senior Class

Benediction: Reverend W. S. Crawford

Senior Class

Flower: Red Carnation

Colors: Red and White

Motto: Use Today, Tomorrow Never Comes

President: Kelley B. Brown

Sponsor: Bettye J. Gaffney

Class Song

Onward we march together, faithful may we ever be.

No thought or time or weather, hearts filled with hope and ecstasy.

Bravely we'll fight our battles, happily we'll meet success.

But the things for which we strive, are honor and happiness.

Hep! Hep! Hep! Three cheers for Tatums High!

Voices Ring.

Hep! Hep! Hep! Just see her colors fly while we sing.

Forward march let this our motto be victory

Through all kinds of weather we will jog along

Together true and loyal we will ever be! Hey!

Student Council

President: Kelly Brown

Vice-President: Lacy Hooks

Second Vice President: Ruby J. Davis

Third Vice President: Beverly Roney

Recording Secretary: Fayeoma Winslett

Assistant Secretary: Hughzetta Winslett

Treasurer: Rose Varner

Pianist: Geneva McConnell

Chaplain: Nealy Prince

Parliamentarian: Betty Hooks

Historian: Betty Hurley

Song Leader: Winnie Jones

State Office Holders

1952/1953 State Treasurer: Rose Varner

1953/1954 State Pianist: Geneva McConnell

1954/1955 State Song Leader: Fayeoma Winslett

Boys Basketball Squad: Tatums Tigers

Coach: Andrew C. Hill

Captain: W Austin

Kelly Brown

Eugene Franklin

William Roney

L E. Franklin

C Williams

J L. Lee

V Jones

Altus Prince

Girls Varsity Basketball: Tatums Tigerettes

1954 State Champions

1955 District Champions

Coach: Andrew C. Hill

M L. Carr

E Elliot

H J. Davis

F Winslett

L Austin

Lacy Hooks

B. Hurley

M Carr

H Winslett

F Averiett

Industrial Arts Officers and Special Positions

General Superintendent: Eugene Franklin, Aaron Winslett, Joe Lee

Recording Clerk: Cecil Williams, Willie Roney,

Librarian: I. A. Workey, Joe Evans, Kelly Brown

Safety Foreman: Elbert Jones, Lee Earl Franklin

Maintenance Foreman: Nealy Prince, Altus Prince

Stock Room Foreman: Grady Worley, Simm Drain, Warner Austin,

Finishing Room Foreman: Connie Stevenson, Verlee Jones

Tool Checker: Lawrence Thrash, Williard Breath, A.C. Richardson

New Homemakers of America Officers

Sponsor: Bettye J. Gaffney
President: Lacy Hooks
Vice President: Lutrecia Austin
Secretary-Treasurer: Fayeoma Winslett
Parliamentarian: Ruby Davis

Senior 4-H Club

Coach: W. F. Roberts
President: Fayeoma Winslett
Secretary: Betty Hooks
Game Leader: Mary Lee Carr
Reporter: Betty Hurley
Girl of the Year for Carter County: Beverly Roney

Junior 4-H Club

1953 State Champions for Girls' Team Demonstrations
1954 Tri-County Rally Champions
1955 Tri-County "Coach of the Year" Award: V K. Hooks
1955 3rd Place, County Livestock Show: Hiram B. Mitchell
1955 9th Place, State Livestock Show: Hiram B. Mitchell
Coach: V K. Hooks
President: Kathryn McConnell
Secretary-Treasurer: Vera Lee
Reporter: Vestella Young

Boy Scouts Officers: Troop 510

Scoutmaster: Andrew C. Hill
Assistant Scoutmaster: R Hooks
Senior Patrol Leader/Tiger Patrol: Houston Jones
Assistant Tiger Patrol Leader: Cecil Williams
Wolf Patrol Leader: Billie Brooks
Assistant Wolf Patrol Leader: Lawrence Thrash
Buffalo Patrol Leader: Grady Worley
Assistant Buffalo Patrol Leader: Elbert Jones
Bugler and Librarian: Amazeral Hooks
Tiger Patrol Quartermaster: Don Austin
Buffalo Patrol Quartermaster: I. A. Worley

Tatums School Philosophy
(From *Tatums Tigers 1955 Yearbook*)

In setting up our school philosophy, we think of education as growth and continuous change, yet flexible to the needs of mankind and the activities of our modern world. The main objectives of our educational program are economic efficiency, good human relations, and civic responsibility for the maximum development of our youth into useful citizens for a democratic society. Tatums school attempts to reveal to the students the higher activities of life, and make them both desirable and possible; we like to develop the ability of one to guide himself, to discover and develop those desired characteristics while stimulating intellectual and social mobility.

Our philosophy is to satisfy certain basic needs of students, develop certain abilities as:

1. The ability to think rationally, to express their thought clearly, to read and listen with understanding.
2. To develop good health and physical fitness.
3. To understand the duties and rights of a citizen in a democratic society, and perform their obligations to the highest degree of efficiency.
4. The ability to understand the significance of family life, and the conducive to successful family life.
5. The ability to appreciate art, beauty, music and nature.
6. The ability to understand the latest scientific methods, the influence of science on human lives and the conditions of the world.
7. To develop the art and intelligence of economic values.
8. To respect, work and live co-operatively with others.
9. Be able to make successful use of their leisure time.

APPENDIX F

OTHER TATUMS SCHOOLS GRADUATION INFORMATION

Tatums School Board

President: R. F. Stallcup
Vice President: H. B. Word
Clerk: Wylie Dixon
Member: R.S. Wooldridge
Member: Forrest P. Groover

Superintendent: Carl Buck
Principal: M. F. Andrews

Baccalaureate

Sunday, May 14, 1961 (3:00 PM)
Processional/Recessional: Mrs. H. D. Agee
High School Chorus: Elizah Rock, Jestes Hairston
Invocation: Deacon A. Carr
High School Chorus: Fire, Noble Cain
Sermon: Reverend D. D. Jackson, Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Tatums
Boys Glee Club: It's Me O Lord, Claude Kean
Benediction: Reverend D. M. Jackson

Commencement Program

Tuesday, May 16, 1961 (8:00 PM)
Processional/Recessional: Mrs. HD Agee
High School Chorus: Battle Hymn of the Republic, Roy Ringwaid
Invocation: Revered D.M. Jackson, Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Tatums
Highs School Chorus: Jesus Priceless Treasure
Address: Dr. W. H. Hale, President of Langston University
Girls Glee Club: He, Richard Mullan
Presentation of Graduates: M. F. Andrews
Presentation of Diplomas: Superintendent Carl Buck
Benediction: Reverend D. M. Jackson

1963

Board of Education

President: C.S. Sullivan
Vice-President: R.S. Wooldridge
Clerk: F.P. Groover
Member: E. C. Roach
Member: Oscar Powell

Superintendent: Carl Buck
Principal: M.F. Andrews

Senior Class

Flower: White Carnation
Colors: Old Rose and Silver
Motto: To Thine Own Self Be True
President: Roger Lee Smith
Sponsor: Dorothy Stewart

Baccalaureate

Sunday, May 12, 1963 (3:00 PM)

Processional/ Recessional: Arr. Pauer
Invocation: Deacon A. Carr
High School Chorus: Any How, Arr. Evelyn Pittman
Sermon: Reverend L. R. Austin, Pastor of A. M. E. Church, Guthrie, Oklahoma

Commencement Program

Tuesday, May 14, 1963 (8:00 PM)
Processional/Recessional: Arr. Pauer
Invocation: Reverend D. M. Jackson, Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Tatums
High School Chorus: Rockin' Jerusalem, Arr. John W. Work
Address: Dr. T. O. Chappelle, Pastor of Morning Star Baptist
High School Chorus: I believe, Arr. Harry R. Wilson
Presentation: of Graduates: Principal M. F. Andrews
Presentation of Diplomas: Superintendent Carl Buck

Graduation Activities: May 17 and May 19, 1964

Board of Education

President: R. S. Wooldridge, Jr.
Vice President: F. P. Groover
Clerk: E. C. Roach,
Member: O.P. Powell
Member: O. M. Garrett

Superintendent: Joe V. Bell

Senior Class

Flower: Red Rose
Colors: Red and White
Motto: Still Higher, Ever Upward
President: Mae Gloria McConnell
Sponsor: B.C. Strong

Baccalaureate:

Sunday, May 17, 1964 (3:00 PM)

Processional/Recessional: Mrs. V. C. Ross
High School Chorus: A Modern Spiritual, Davenport
Invocation: Reverend D. M. Jackson
Solo: LaDell Strong; Come to Me, Beethoven
Address: Dr. W. M. Collins, Dean of Instruction, Langston University
Music: May the Good Lord Bless You and Keep You, Wilson-Stickles
Presentation of Graduates: W. H. Bufford
Presentation of Diplomas: Superintendent Joe V. Bell
Benediction: Reverend D. M. Jackson

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Manuscripts

Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching Papers, 1930-1942. Woman's Collection, Texas Woman's University. Denton, Texas.

Carter Blue Clark Collection. Western History Collections. University of Oklahoma. Norman, Oklahoma.

Commission on Interracial Cooperation Papers, 1919-1944. Texas Woman's Collection, Texas Woman's University. Denton, Texas.

Jack Calloway Walton Collection. Western History Collections. University of Oklahoma. Norman, Oklahoma.

Published documents

Cutler, James E. *Lynch-Law: An Investigation into the History of Lynching in the United States*. New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1905.

Dixon, Thomas. *The Clansman*. New York: Doubleday, Page, and Company, 1906.

Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States, House Reports. US House of Representatives, 42nd Congress, 2nd sess. (Washington, 1872).

Leaders and Leading Men of the Indian Territory: Choctaws and Chickasaws, Volume I. Chicago: American Publishers' Association, 1891.

Murder of the Geogles and Lynching of the Fiend Snyder: By the Otherwise Peaceable and Law-abiding Citizens of Bethlehem, Pa., and its Vicinity; A Cold-Blooded Murder. Philadelphia: Barclay & Co., 1881.

Portrait and Biographical Record of Oklahoma: Commemorating the Achievements of Citizens Who Have Contributed to the Progress of Oklahoma and the Development of its Resources. Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, 1901.

Rogers, J.A. *The Ku Klux Spirit*. Messenger Publishing Company, 1923.

Simmons, W. J. *The Kloran: Knights of the Ku Klux Klan*. Atlanta, Georgia: Ku Klux Press, 1918.

Southern Commission on the Study of Lynching. *Lynching and What They Mean: General Findings of the Southern Commission on the Study of Lynching*. Atlanta, Georgia: The Commission on the Study of Lynching, 1931.

Tatums Tigers 1955. Yearbook (n.p., n.d.).

Treasured Recipes from Bethel Baptist Church Choir, Tatums, Oklahoma. Lenoxa, Kansas: Cookbook Publishers, Inc., 1999.

Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Frontier in American History*. New York: H. Holt and Company, 1921.

Twain, Mark. *The United States of Lyncherdom*. 1901.

White, Walter. *Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch*. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1929.

Witcher, Walter Campbell. *The Reign of Terror in Oklahoma*. Ft. Worth, Texas: Witcher, n.d.

Wright, Rev. W. C. *Religious and Patriotic Ideals of the Ku Klux Klan*. Waco, Texas: n.p., 1926.

Interviews

Davis, Anthony Ray. Interview by author. Tape recording. Denton, Texas. July 5, 2004.

Gauthier, Sheldon F. "Ex-Slave Narrative Tarrant Co., Dist. #7 FEC." Interviewed by Works Progress Administration. Transcript. Center for American History: University of Texas at Austin.

Graham, Newton. "Indian Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma." Interviewed by Works Progress Administration. August 24, 1937. Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

"Interview with Leon Hirsh." Carter Blue Clark Collection. Western History Collections. Norman, Oklahoma. April 25, 1974.

Jones, Honorable Cecil. Interview by author. Tape recording. Tatums, Oklahoma. January 20, 2001.

Keck, Nelda. Interview by author. Telephone. April 12, 2005.

McCreary, Lacey. Interview by author. Tape recording. Tatums, Oklahoma. March 6, 2004.

Miller, James. Interview by author. Telephone. April 12, 2005.

Norman, Betty Hooks. Interview by author. Tape recording. Tatums, Oklahoma. March 6, 2004.

Roberts, Myrna. Interview by author. Tape recording. Tatums, Oklahoma. March 15, 2004.

Contemporary articles

“3-Hour Debate Fails to End School Fuss,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 24, 1967.

“Adult Education Classes Planned.” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 3, 1968.

“Anarchy in Oklahoma.” *The Nation* 117 (Oct. 10, 1923): 369.

“Anderson to Pump New Tatums Oiler.” *Daily Oklahoman*, July 30, 1930.

“Balking Tatums Parents May Face Legal Action.” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 2, 1967.

Blake, Aldrich. “Oklahoma’s Klan-Fighting Governor.” *The Nation* 117 (Oct. 3, 1923): 353.

Blivin, Bruce Ormsby. “From the OK Front.” *The New Republic* 36 (Oct. 17, 1923): 202-05.

“Board Puts End to Segregation in Pauls Valley.” *Daily Oklahoma*, August 7, 1955.

Bond, H.M. “Langston Plan [Curriculum of Negro Teacher-Training Schools].” *School and Society* 20 (Dec. 27, 1924): 820-21.

Classified Section. *Daily Oklahoman*, April 28, 1912.

Classified Section. *Daily Oklahoman*, March 24, 1912.

Classified Section. *Daily Oklahoman*, March 31, 1912.

Clement, Rufus E. “The Church School as a Social Factor in Negro Life.” *Journal of Negro History* 12, no. 1 (1927): 6.

Coffey, Ivy. “3-Hour Airing Fails to Solve School Dispute: Another Meeting Slated in Norman Thursday Night,” January 24, 1967.

-----. “78 at Tatums Say They’ll Go to Jail.” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 3, 1967.

-----. “Bartlett Talks With Fox, Tatums.” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 27, 1967.

-----. “Bias Charged Aired by Tatums Pupils: 200 at Hearing on School Fuss,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 24, 1967.

-----. “Fox Officials Reject Plan,” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 1, 1967.

-----. “Fox, Tatums Sign Arbitration Pact,” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 9, 1967.

-----. “Grand Jury at Ardmore Seeks Action,” *Daily Oklahoman*, December 30, 1966.

- "Jury in Ardmore Recesses Before Starting Third Week," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 16, 1966.
- "Jury Told Funds Not Helping Poor," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 13, 1966.
- "Jury Nearing End of Lengthy Witness List," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 15, 1966.
- "Negroes Bitter About School," *Daily Oklahoman*, January 11, 1967.
- "Tatums Pupils Reveal Charge of Prejudice," *Daily Oklahoman*, January 24, 1967.
- "Tatums Start 'Crash' Study," March 14, 1967.
- "Use of Funds under Fire," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 13, 1966.
- Coleman, M. "When the Troops Took Tulsa." *The Nation* 117 (September 5, 1923): 239-40.
- "Colored Pedagogues Favor Civil Service Quizzes," *Daily Oklahoman*, January 2, 1910.
- "Constitution Week in Oklahoma." *Literary Digest* 13 (October 1923): 12.
- Cooke, Thornton. "The Collapse of Bank-Deposit Guaranty in Oklahoma and its Position in Other States." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 38, no. 1 (1923): 108-39.
- "Democracy or Invisible Empire?" *Current Opinion* 75 (November 1923): 521-3.
- "Desegregating Our School System," *Black Dispatch*, January 8, 1955.
- DuBois, W.E.B. "Does the Negro Need Separate Schools?" *Journal of Negro Education*, 4 (July 1935): 328-35.
- "Dual-Oiler Added In Tatums Sector," *Daily Oklahoman*, November 11, 1954.
- Eleazer, R. B. "Inter-racial Commission in Annual Meeting Emphasizes Anti-Lynching Crusade." *Journal of Social Forces* 3, no. 4 (May 1925): 712-13.
- "Faculties Named in State Schools: Negro School at Langston Sole Exception to the Board's Work," *Daily Oklahoman*, May 17, 1916.
- Forman, Grant. "Early Post Offices of Oklahoma." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 16, no. 1 (1928): 155-62.
- "Early Post Offices of Oklahoma II." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 16, no. 4 (1928): 271-98.
- "Fox-Tatums Fuss Progress Reported," *Daily Oklahoman*, February 1, 1967.
- "Fox-Tatums School Talks Slated," *Daily Oklahoman*, January 28, 1967.
- "Fox-Tatums to 'Work Out' Elementary School Fuss," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 22, 1966.

Frost, Stanley. "Oklahoma Regicides Act." *The Outlook* (October 22, 1923): 395-96.

----- "Behind the White Hoods: the Regeneration of Oklahoma." *The Outlook* 135 (November 7, 1923): 395-96.

----- "Klan, the King, and a Revolution: the Regeneration of Oklahoma." *The Outlook* 135 (November 28, 1923): 530-31.

"Hamon to Deepen Tatums Dry Hole," *Daily Oklahoma*, December 21, 1956.

Harmon, Bill. "Science Is Riding Circuit to Schools," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 1, 1957.

"Head Hunting in Oklahoma." *The Independent* 119 (December 31, 1927): 642-43.

Henderson, Donald H. "Causes of Recent Negro Migration." *Journal of Negro History* 6 (October 1921): 410-20.

"In and Around the Oil Fields," *Daily Oklahoman*, May 24, 1927.

"Jack, the Klan-Fighter in Oklahoma." *Literary Digest* 79 (October 20, 1923): 38-44.

"Jury Nears End of Testimony," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 15, 1966.

Kell, Nancy. "Fox Teachers Experiment: They're Looking for Integrated Class Solutions," *Daily Oklahoman*, July 28, 1968.

"Kirkpatrick Gets Pair at Tatums," *Daily Oklahoma*, August 25, 1954.

"Klan as the Victim of Mob Violence." *Literary Digest* 78 (September 8, 1923): 12-13.

"Langston Colored and Normal University: An Institution That Is Helping the Negro Youth," *Daily Oklahoman*, April 23, 1939.

"Langston Negroes Are Grid Victors," *Daily Oklahoman*, October 30, 1938.

McGee, M. H. "Swift Injustice in Oklahoma." *The Nation* 117 (April 27, 1927): 477.

"National NAACP Officer Makes Suggestion," *Daily Oklahoman*, January 25, 1976.

"Negro Loses in Suffrage Fight," *Daily Oklahoman*, September 1, 1910.

Nelson, Llewellyn. "KKK for Boredom." *The New Republic* 41 (January 14, 1925): 196-98.

"New Chance for a Black Town," *Business Week*, August 9, 1969.

"New Producer in at Tatums: Wirt Franklin and Magnolia Each Has Well Drilling With Good Oil Shows," *Daily Oklahoma*, March 9, 1930.

"New Tatums Producer Flowing 425 Barrels," *Daily Oklahoman*, June 3, 1928.

New York Tribune, April 24, 1899.

“Oklahoma Kingless, not Klanless.” *Literary Digest* 79 (December 8, 1923): 9.

“Oklahoma’s Uncivil Civil War.” *Literary Digest* 78 (September 29, 1923): 10-11.

“Only 3 Negro Pupils Attend at Fox,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 17, 1967.

“Organization of Counties in the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations.” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 8, no.3 (1930): 328.

“Parents at Tatums Face Legal Threat,” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 2, 1967.

“Parents Keep Children Out,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 20, 1967.

“Plan Rejected for Pernell to Annex Tatums Students,” *Daily Oklahoman*, July 17, 1966.

“Probe of Negro School Is Asked,” *Daily Oklahoman*, April 30, 1913.

“Pupils Begin to Makeup School Work,” *Daily Oklahoman*, March 15, 1967.

“Results of Robbery,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 19, 1917.

“School Dispute Quiz Ordered,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 18, 1967.

“School Dispute Talks Continue,” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 7, 1967.

“Seabord Hits Oiler at Tatums,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 18, 1953.

“Seven Oilers Completed in Tatums Field,” *Daily Oklahoman*, August 24, 1930.

Shelburne, Shorty. “City NAACP Group Enters School Dispute,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 13, 1967.

“Southern Women and Lynching.” *Journal of Social Forces* 1, no. 4 (May 1923): 469-70.

“Stanolind Adds One at Tatums,” *Daily Oklahoma*, March 22, 1955.

“State Charters,” *Daily Oklahoman*, December 24, 1909.

“State News,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 6, 1897.

“Taft Is Condemned,” *Daily Oklahoman*, September 11, 1910.

“Tatums Are Well Has Oil Showing,” *Daily Oklahoman*, May 12, 1929.

“Tatums Death Suspects Released,” *Daily Oklahoman*, April 26, 1923.

“Tatums Field Is Exploited,” *Daily Oklahoman*, October 2, 1927.

- “Tatums Field Play Widens,” *Daily Oklahoman*, June 12, 1927.
- “Tatums Field Yields Two Good Producers,” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 5, 1928.
- “Tatums Offset Gets First Pay,” *Daily Oklahoma*, October 7, 1955.
- “Tatums Parents Vow Jail Trip in School Fuss,” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 6, 1967.
- “Tatums Pupils Reveal Charge of Prejudice,” *Daily Oklahoman*, January 24, 1967.
- “Tatums Students Win Scholarships,” *Daily Oklahoman*, September 10, 1952.
- “Tatums to Begin Remedial Classes,” *Daily Oklahoman*, March 7, 1967.
- “Tatums to Start Remedial School,” *Daily Oklahoman*, February 16, 1967.
- “Tatums Well Aid To Carter,” *Daily Oklahoman*, July 13, 1930.
- “Tatums Well Due For Test,” *Daily Oklahoman*, July 7, 1930.
- “Testimony in Ardmore to Resume,” *Daily Oklahoman*, December 9, 1966.
- “University of Oklahoma and the Ku Klux Klan.” *School and Society* 16 (Oct. 7, 1922): 412-13.
- “Woodford Plays Host To New Homemakers,” *Daily Oklahoman*, November 17, 1956.

Census

- 1900 United States Census. Graham Township, Pickens County, Indian Territory. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902.
- 1910 United States Census. Graham Township, Carter County, Oklahoma. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912.
- Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Characteristics of the Population, Oklahoma. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1942.
- Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Composition and Characteristics of the Population by States, Population 1920, Fourteenth Census of the United States. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922.
- Schunk, John F. ed. 1850 U.S. Federal Census of Covington County, Alabama. Wichita: S-K Publications, 2003.
- U. S. Bureau of the Census. Fourteenth Census of the United States. State Compendium: Oklahoma: Statistics of the Population, Occupations, Agriculture, Drainage,

Manufacturers, and Mines and Quarries for the State, Counties and Cities. Washington: Government Printing Company, 1924.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. Thirteenth Census, 1910. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. Twelfth Census, 1900. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902.

United States Department of Commerce. 1950 Census, General Population Characteristics, Oklahoma. Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1952.

United States Department of Commerce. Bureau of Commerce, Negroes in the United States: 1920 – 1932. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1935.

United States Department of Commerce. Population: Characteristics of the Population, Oklahoma (Second Series). Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1942.

Court Cases

McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. (1950).

Sipuel v. Board of Regents of University of Oklahoma. [no. 369, January 12, 1948. 332 U.S. 631].

Other

“Aerial photograph of Fox Campus, 1969.” Fox Den Museum, Fox, Oklahoma, 1969.

Griffith, David W. dir. *Birth of a Nation*. Hollywood: David W. Griffith Corporation, 1915.

Hooks, Matthew. Credit Card, Ensley Tire & Supply Company of Duncan. Oklahoma 1949.

Secondary Sources

Articles

Barr, Alwyn. “Black Urban Church on the Southern Frontier, 1865-1900.” *The Journal of Negro History* 82, no. 4 (Autumn 1997): 368-383.

- Blalock Jr., H.M. "Percent Black and Lynchings Revisited." *Social Forces* 67, no. 3 (March 1989): 631-33.
- Beck, E. M. Tolnay, E. Stewart. "The Killing Fields of the Deep South: The Market for Cotton and the Lynching of Blacks, 1882-1930." *American Sociological Review* 55, no. 4 (August 1990): 526-39.
- Billington, Monroe. "Black Slavery in Indian Territory." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 60, no. 1 (1982): 55-65.
- Bittle, William E. "The Desegregated All-White Institution...The University of Oklahoma." *Journal of Educational Sociology* 32 (February 1959): 275-82.
- Bogle, Lori. "On Our Way to the Promised Land: Black Migration from Arkansas to Oklahoma, 1889-1893." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 72, no. 2 (1994): 160-77.
- Burbank, Garin. "Agrarian Radicals and Their Opponents: Political Conflict in Southern Oklahoma, 1910-1924." *Journal of American History* 58, no. 1 (1971): 5-23.
- Michelle Celarier. "A Study of Public Opinion on Desegregation in Oklahoma." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 67, no. 3 (1989): 268-81.
- Clark, James. "Without Fear or Shame: Lynching, Capital Punishment and the Subculture of Violence in the American South." *British Journal of Political Science* 28, no. 2 (April 1998): 269-89.
- Creech, James, Jay Corzine and Lin Huff-Corzine. "Theory Testing and Lynching: Another Look at the Power Threat." *Social Forces* 67, no. 3 (March 1989): 626-30.
- Crockett, Norman L. "Witness to History: Booker T. Washington Visits Boley." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 67, no. 4 (1989): 382-91.
- Dann, Martin. "From Sodom to the Promised Land: E.P. McCabe and the Movement for Oklahoma Colonization." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (1974): 370-78.
- Doyle, Don Harrison. "The Social Functions of Voluntary Associations in a 19th Century American Town." *Social Science History* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1978).
- Ellinger, Charles W. "Political Obstacles Barring Oklahoma's Admission to Statehood, 1890 – 1906." *Great Plains Journal* 3, no. 2 (1964): 60-83.
- Gilmore, Glenda. "Gender and Origins of the New South." *Journal of Southern History* 67 (November 2001): 769-88.
- Glasrud, Bruce. "Black Texas Improvement Efforts, 1879 -1929: Migration, Separatism, Nationalism." *Journal of South Texas* 14, no. 2 (2001): 202-22.

- Gonzales, Manuel G. "Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 22, no.3 (Spring 2003): 93-96.
- Halliburton Jr., R. "The Tulsa Race War of 1921." *Journal of Black Studies* 2, no. 3 (1972): 338-57.
- Harlan, Louis R. "Booker T. Washington and the White Man's Burden." *The American Historical Review* 71 (January 1996): 441-67.
- Harris, J. William. "Etiquette, Lynching, and Racial Boundaries in Southern History: A Mississippi Example." *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (April 1995): 387-410.
- Hawkins, Homer C. "Trends in Black Migration from 1863 to 1960." *Phylon* (1960-) 34, no.2 (1973): 140-52.
- Herod, Charles. "Afro-Americans: A Historic Nation in the United States." *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 29, nos. 1-2 (2002): 105-19.
- Hill, Mozell. "A Comparative Analysis of the Social Organization of the All-Negro Society in Oklahoma." *Social Forces* 25, no. 1 (October 1946): 70-77.
- "A Comparative Study of Race Attitudes in the All-Negro Community in Oklahoma." *Phylon* (1940-1956) 7, no. 3 (3rd Quarter 1946): 260-68.
- "The All-Negro Communities of Oklahoma: The Natural History of a Social Movement." *Journal of Negro History* 31, no. 3 (July 1946): 254-68.
- "Basic Racial Attitudes toward Whites in the Oklahoma All-Negro Community." *The American Journal of Sociology* 49, no. 6 (May 1944), 519-23.
- "Social Status and Physical Appearance among Negro Adolescents." *Social Forces* 22, no.4 (1944): 443-48.
- "Some Early Notes of R. E. Park." *Phylon* (1940-1956) 14, no. 1 (1st Quarter 1953): 84-92.
- and Albert Whiting. "Some Theoretical and Methodological Problems in Community Studies." *Social Forces* 29, no. 2 (December 1950): 117-24.
- and Bevode McCall. "Social Stratification in 'Georgia Town'." *American Sociological Review* 15, no. 6 (December 1950): 721-29.
- and Thelma Ackiss. "Culture of a Contemporary All-Negro Community: Langston, Oklahoma." *Langston University Bulletin* (July 1943): 41.
- and ----- "Social Classes: A Frame of Reference for the Study of Negro Society." *Social Forces* 22, no. 1 (October 1943): 92-98.

- Howes, Leslie. "Making a Pioneer Landscape in the Oklahoma Territory." *Geographical Review* 86 (October 1996): 588-603.
- Humphrey, Charles A. "Educational and Social Need in Small All-Black Towns." *Journal of Negro Education* 47, no. 3 (1978): 244-55.
- "James Hood and the Lynching That Never Good." (in News and Views) *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 21 (Autumn 1998): 80-81.
- Jessup, Michael. "Consorting with Blood and Violence." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 78, no. 3 (2000): 296-315.
- Klotman, R. Phylis. "Tearing a Hole in History: Lynching as Theme and Motif." *Black American Literature Forum* 19, no. 2 (Summer 1985), 55-63.
- "Legal Lynching: Racism, Injustice, and the Death Penalty." (in Opinions on Current Reading) *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 14 (Winter 1996-1997): 142.
- Lieberson, Stanley and Donna K. Carter. "A Model for Inferring the Voluntary and Involuntary Causes of Residential Segregation." *Demography* 19 (November 1982): 511-26.
- Littlefield, Daniel F. Jr. and Lonnie E. Underhill. "Black Dreams and Free Homes: The Oklahoma Territory, 1891-1894." *Phylon* (1960-) 34, no. 4 (1973): 342
- Marx, Gary T. "The White Negro and the Negro White." *Phylon* (1960-) 28, no. 2 (1967): 168-77.
- and James L. Wood. "Strands of Theory and Research in Collective Behavior." *Annual Review of Sociology* 1 (1975): 363-428.
- McPhail, Clark and Ronald T. Wohlstein. "Collective Locomotion as Collective Behavior." *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 4 (1986): 447-63.
- Miller, Robert. "The Protestant Churches and Lynching, 1919-1939." *The Journal of Negro History* 42, no. 2 (April 1957): 118-31.
- Minerbrook, Scott. "The Forgotten Pioneers: New Scholarship Reveals the Major Role Blacks Played on the Frontier." *U.S. News and World Report* 117 (August 8, 1994): 53-55.
- Moses, Wilson J. "The Evolution of Black Nationalist Thought: A Study of W.E.B. DuBois." *Topics in Afro-American Studies* (1971): 77-100.
- Offari, Earl. "W.E.B. DuBois and Black Power." *Black World XL* (August 1970): 27-28.
- Olzak, Susan. "The Political Context of Competition: Lynching and Urban Racial Violence, 1882-1914." *Social Forces* 69, no 2 (December 1990): 395-421.

- Ragsdale, Rhonda. "Black Towns and the Blues." *Southwest Blues Magazine* 7 (August 2004).
- Richards, Eugene S. "Trends of Negro Life in Oklahoma as Reflected by Census Reports." *Journal of Negro History*, 33, no. 1 (1948): 46.
- Roberson, Jere W. "Edward P. McCabe and the Langston Experiment." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 51, no. 3 (1973): 343-55.
- Reed, John Shelton. "Comment on Tolnay, Beck, and Massey." (in *Black Lynching: An Article and Commentary*) *Social Forces* 67, no. 3 (March 1989): 624-25.
- Schrems, Suzanne. "The Ultimate Patriots? Oklahoma Women of the KKK." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 79, no. 2 (2001): 182-99.
- Stovel, Katherine. "Local Sequential Patterns: The Structure of Lynching in the Deep South, 1882-1930." *Social Forces* 79, no. 3 (March 2001): 843-80.
- Stephens, L. Judith. "Radical Violence and Representation: Performance Strategies in Lynching Dramas of the 1920s." *African American Review* 33, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 655-671.
- "‘Yet They Paused’ and ‘A Bill to be Passed’: Newly Recovered Lynching Dramas by Georgia Douglas Johnson." *African American Review* 33, no. 3 (Autumn 1999): 519-22.
- Soule, Sarah A. "Populism and Black Lynching in Georgia, 1890-1900." *Social Forces* 71, no. 2 (December 1992): 431-49.
- "Taking Steps to Curtail Black Student Self-Segregation at Harvard College." *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 15 (Spring 1997): 14-15.
- Thomas, Curlew O. and Barbara Boston Thomas. "The Impact of Black Nationalism on Negritude: A Comparative Study of Black Males and Females." *Phylon* (1960-) 38, no. 1 (1977): 35-45.
- Tolnay, Stewart A. and E.M. Beck. "Black Flight: Lethal Violence and the Great Migration, 1900-1930." *Social Science History* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 1990): 347-70.
- "The Killing Fields of the Deep South: The Market for Cotton and the Lynching of Blacks, 1882-1930s." *American Sociological Review* 55, no. 4 (August 1990): 526-39.
- "Racial Violence and Black Migration in the American South, 1910 to 1930." *American Sociological Review* 57, no. 1 (February 1992): 103-16.
- "Vicarious Violence: Spatial Effects on Southern Lynchings, 1890-1919." *The American Journal of Sociology* 102, no. 3 (November 1996): 788-815.

- Tolnay, Stewart, E.M. Beck, and James L. Massey. "Black Lynchings: The Power Threat Revisited." *Social Forces* 67, no. 3 (March 1989): 605-23.
- "The Power Threat Hypothesis and Black Lynching: 'Witger' the Evidence?" *Social Forces* 67, no. 3 (March 1989): 634-40.
- Wickett, Murray R. "The Fear of 'Negro Domination': The Rise of Segregation and Disfranchisement in Oklahoma." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 78, no. 1 (2000): 44-65.
- Williams, Nudie. "The Black Press in Oklahoma: The Formative Years, 1889-1907." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 61, no. 3 (1983): 310.
- "Black Men Who Wore the Star." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 59, no. 1 (1981): 83-90.
- "They Fought for Votes: The White Politician and the Black Editor." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 64, no. 1 (1986): 20-21.
- Williamson, Joel. "Wounds Not Scars: Lynching, the National Conscience, and the American Historian." (In What We See and Can't See in the Past) *The Journal of American History* 83, no. 4 (March 1997): 1221-53.

Books

- Bissett, Jim. *Agrarian Socialism in America: Marx, Jefferson, and Jesus in the Oklahoma Countryside, 1904-1920*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999.
- Blee, Kathleen. *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Brundage, W. Fitzhugh. *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993.
- Brundage, W. Fitzhugh, ed. *Under Sentence of Death: Lynching in the New South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- Chalmers, David. *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan*. New York: F. Watts, 1981.
- Clary, Johnny Lee. *Beneath the Sheets: The Ku Klux Klan Exposed*. Underwood, Australia: Kingswood Press, 2003.
- Clawson, Mary Ann. *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Crockett, Norman. *The Black Towns*. Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1979.

- Daniel, Pete. *Lost Revolutions: South in the 1950s*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Davidson, James W. and Mark H. Lytle. *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection (Forth Edition) Volume II*. Boston: McGraw Hill Companies, 2000.
- Dittimer, John. *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994.
- Dollard, John. *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1957.
- . *Frustration and Aggression*. New Haven: Oxford University Press, 1939.
- . *Steps in Psychotherapy: Study of a Case of Sex-Fear Conflict*. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1953.
- Doyle, Don Harrison. *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois 1825-70*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978.
- Dudziak, Mary Dudziak. *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Edwards, Everett E. ed. *The Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner: With a List of all His Works*. With an introduction by Fulmer Mood. Freeport, N.Y.: Books For Libraries Press, 1969.
- Eskew, Glen. *But for Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- Franklin, Jimmy Lewis. *Journey toward Hope: A History of Blacks in Oklahoma*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982.
- Franklin, John Hope and August Meier eds. *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982.
- Gates, Eddie Faye. *They Came Searching: How Blacks Sought the Promised Land in Tulsa*. Austin, Texas: Eakin Press, 1997.
- Gatewood, William B. *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.
- Gilmore, Glenda E. *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Goble, Danney. *Progressive Oklahoma: The Making of a New Kind of State*. Norman: University of Press, 1980.
- Hall, Jacquelyn Dowd. *Revolt against Chivalry: Jesse Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign against Lynching*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

- Hamilton, Kenneth Marvin. *Black Towns and Profit: Promotion and Development in the Trans-Appalachian West, 1877-1915*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991.
- Harris, Theodore D. ed. *Black Frontier: The Memoirs of Henry O. Flipper*. Ft. Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1997.
- Haviland, William A., Harald E. L. Prins, Dana Walrath, and Bunny McBride. *Anthropology: The Human Challenge (Eleventh Edition)*. Toronto: Wadsworth, 2005.
- Hill, Mozell C. and Eugene S. Richards. *Demographic Trends of the Negro in Oklahoma*. Langston: Langston University, 1946.
- Hoffman, Edward. *The Right to be Human: A Biography of Abraham Maslow*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1999.
- Holt, Sharon Ann. *Making Freedom Pay: North Carolina Freedpeople Working for Themselves, 1865-1900*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000.
- Hurt, R. Douglas. *African American Life in the Rural South, 1900-1950*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003.
- Johnson, Hannibal. *Acres of Aspiration: The All-Black Towns of Oklahoma*. New York: Eakin, 2003.
- , *Black Wall Street: From Riot to Renaissance in Tulsa's Historic Greenwood District*. Austin: Eakin, 1998.
- Jordan, Dexter B. *Black Identity: Rhetoric, Ideology, and Nineteenth-Century Black Nationalism*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003.
- Kammen, Carol. *On Doing Local History: Reflections on What Local Historians Do, Why? And what it Means*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003.
- Katz, William Loren. *The Black West: A Documentary and Pictorial History of the African American Role in the Westward Expansion of the United States*. New York: Ethrac Publications, Inc., 1996.
- Katz, William. *The Invisible Empire: The Ku Klux Klan Impact on History*. Seattle, WA: Open Hand Publishing, 1986.
- Kluger, Richard. *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004.
- Kroeker, Marvin E. and Guy W. Logsdon. *Ada, Oklahoma: Queen City of the Chickasaw Nation*. Virginia Beach, Virginia: Donning Co., 1998.
- Lemann, Nicholas. *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How it Changed America*. New York: Vintage Books Edition, 1992.

- Lemert, Charles. *Social Things: An Introduction to the Sociological Life*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1997.
- MacLean, Nancy. *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Markovitz, Jonathan. *Legacies of Lynching: Racial Violence and Memory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.
- Meier, August. *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969.
- Metress, Christopher. *The Lynching of Emmett Till: A Documentary Narrative*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002.
- Morris, John W. *Ghost Towns of Oklahoma*. Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1980.
- Morris, John and Edwin C. McReynolds. *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965.
- Morris, Vivian. *The Price They Paid: Desegregation in an African American Community*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2002.
- Murray, William. *The Negro Place in Call of Race*. Tishomingo, Oklahoma: n.p., 1948.
- Nelson, Richard Alan. *Lights! Camera! Florida! Ninety Years of Moviemaking and Television Production in the Sunshine State*. Tampa: Florida Endowment for the Humanities (FEH, now the Florida Humanities Council), 1987.
- Norton, Patty Virginia and Layton R. Sutton, eds. *Indian Territory and Carter County, Oklahoma, Pioneers Including Pickens County, Chickasaw Nation: Volume I, 1840-1926*. Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1983.
- Odell, Larry. *Oklahoma's All-Black Towns*. Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2000.
- Painter, Nell Irvin. *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1976.
- Patterson, James T. *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Perman, Michael. *Struggle for Mastery: Disfranchisement in the South, 1888-1908*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.
- Pitts, Winfred. *A Victory of Sorts: Desegregation in a Southern Community*. Lanham: University Press of America, 2003.

- Rael, Patrick. *Black Identity and Protest in the Antebellum North*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- Scales, James R. and Danney Goble. *Oklahoma Politics: A History*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982.
- Silver, Christopher and John V. Moeser. *The Separate City: Black Communities in the Urban South, 1940-1968*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995.
- Stein, Howard F. and Robert F. Hill, eds. *The Culture of Oklahoma*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993.
- Tatum, Beverly Daniel. *“Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?” And Other Conversations about Race*. New York: Basic Books, 1997.
- Till-Mobley, Mamie and Christopher Benson. *Death of Innocence: The Story of the Hate Crime that Changed America*. New York: Random House, 2003.
- Tolnay, Stewart and E.M. Beck. *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882-1930*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995.
- The Tulsa Race Riot: A Report by the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*. Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, 2001.
- Trelease, A.W. *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction*. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
- Wells, Ida B. *On Lynching*. Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 2002.
- Who’s who in Colored America*. New York: Who’s who in Colored America Corporation, 1950.
- Wicket, Murray R. *Contested Territory: Whites, Native Americans and African American in Oklahoma, 1865-1907*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000.
- Woodard, C. Vann. *Origins of the New South: 1877–1913*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1951.
- Zangrando, Robert. *The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching, 1909–1950*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980.

Unpublished manuscripts

- Aberdeen, Frank D. “Adjustments to Desegregation: A Description of Some Differences among Negro Elementary School Pupils.” Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1969.

- Alexander Jr., Charles Comer. "Invisible Empire in the Southwest: The Ku Klux Klan in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, 1920-1930." Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1962.
- Bell, John Daniel. "Boley: A Study of a Negro City." M.A. thesis, University of Kansas, 1930.
- Brandt, Donald. "Population Trends of Incorporated Agglomerations (1,000 – 2,500) of Oklahoma, 1920 – 1950." M.S. thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1964.
- Cecelski, David S. "The Hyde County School Boycott: School Desegregation and the Fate of Black Schools in the Rural South." Ed.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1991.
- Clark, Carter Blue. "A History of the Ku Klux Klan in Oklahoma." Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1976.
- Estes, Mary E. "An Historical Study of Lynchings in Oklahoma and Texas." M.A. thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1942.
- Hill, Mozell C. "A Sociological Study of an All Negro Community." M.A. thesis, University of Kansas, 1937.
- Humphrey, Charles. "Socio-Economic Study of Six All-Black Towns in Oklahoma." Ph.D. diss., Oklahoma State University, 1973.
- Jackson, Maurice. "Mound Bayou – A Study in Social Development." M.A. thesis, University of Alabama, 1937.
- Jones, Cecil. "The Mis-Education of Tatums: The Story Told By Mayor Cecil Jones as Told to Him by His Father Clarence Jones, Sr. and Grandmother (First Draft), February 3, 2001." p. 1-3, copy in author's possession.
- Nelda Keck. "Administrators, 1931–Present." N.d., Fox Den Museum, Fox, Oklahoma.
- King, Louis. "Negro Life in a Rural Community." Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1951.
- Knight, Thomas. "Black Towns in Oklahoma: Their Development and Survival." Ph.D. diss., Oklahoma State University, 1975.
- Pardee, Ruth Evans. "A Study of the Functions of Associations in a Small Negro Community in Chicago." M.S. thesis, University of Chicago, 1937.
- Pembleton, Catherine. "The Social and Economic Status of Negro Families in Idabel, McCurtain County, Oklahoma." M.S. thesis, Virginia State College, 1947.
- Price, Flora L. "Forgotten Spaces and Resident Places: New Mexico Black Towns and Communities, 1897-1930." Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 2003.
- Sheffield, Virginia. "History of Fox, Oklahoma." N.d. Fox Den Museum, Fox, Oklahoma.

Squire, Sharon L. "Wealth and Reality in an All-Black Town: Kinlock, Missouri." Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1993.

Thomas, Chleyon Decatur. "Boley, an All-Black Pioneer Town and the Education of its Children." Ed.D. diss., University of Akron, 1989.

Tolson, Arthur. "A History of Langston, Oklahoma: 1890 to 1950." Oklahoma Biographies Collection. Western History Collections. University of Oklahoma. Norman, Oklahoma. 1978.

Varner, Jewel Carter. "A History of the Tatums Community." M.A. thesis, Kansas State Teachers College, 1950.

Internet

Dictionary.com. Program on-line. Lexico Publishing Group, LLC, 2005. Available from <http://dictionary.reference.com/help/about.html>. Internet. Accessed January 5, 2005.

"The History of Langston University." Langston University, 2004. Available from <http://www.lunet.edu/>. Internet. Accessed September 15, 2004.

"The Order of Knights of Pythias." Available from <http://www.pythias.org/>. Internet. February 2005.

Patton, Charlie. "Studio Puts Black Actors on Screen." The History of Jacksonville Film, 2003. Available from www.coj.net/pub/film/history. Internet. Accessed January 2004.

Princeton University. WordNet 2.0. 2003. Program on-line. Available from <http://wordnet.princeton.edu>.

Consulted sociological works

Articles

Klanermans, Bert. "A Theoretical Framework for Comparisons of Social Movement Participation." *Sociological Forum* 8 (September 1993): 383-402.

Lipsky, Michael. "Protest as a Political Resource." *American Political Science Review* 62 (December 1968): 1144-58.

Marx, Gary T. and James L. Wood. "Strands of Theory and Research in Collective Behavior." *Annual Review of Sociology* 1 (1975): 363-428.

McCarthy, John D. and Mayer N. Zald. "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (May 1977): 1212-41.

- McPhail, Clark and David Miller. "The Assembling Process: A Theoretical and Empirical Examination." *American Sociological Review* 38, no. 6 (1973): 721-35.
- McPhail, Clark and Ronald T. Wohlstein. "Individual and Collective Behaviors within Gatherings, Demonstrations, and Riots." *Annual Review of Sociology* 9 (1983): 579-600.
- Oliver, Pamela. "Formal Models of Collective Action." *Annual Review of Sociology* 19 (1993): 271-300.
- Park, Robert E. "Human Nature and Collective Behavior." *American Journal of Sociology* 32 (March 1972): 733-41.
- Taylor, Marylee C. "How White Attitudes Vary with the Racial Composition of Local Populations: Numbers Count." *American Sociological Review* 63, no. 4 (1998): 512-35.
- Useem, Bert. "Breakdown Theories of Collective Action." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998): 215-38.
- Warr, Mark. "Dangerous Situations: Social Context and Fear of Victimization." *Social Forces* 68 (March 1990): 891-907.
- and Mark Stafford. "Fear of Victimization: A Look at the Proximate Causes." *Social Forces* 61 (June 1983): 1033-43.
- Zald, Mayer N. and Roberta Ash. "Social Movement Organizations: Growth, Decay, and Change." *Social Forces* 44, no. 3 (1966): 327-41.

Books

- Lofland, John. *Protest: Studies of Collective Behavior and Social Movements*. New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1985.
- Marx, Gary T. and Douglas McAdam. *Collective Behavior and Social Movements: Process and Structure*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1994.
- Smelser, Neil. *Theory of Collective Behavior*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963.
- Turner, Ralph H. and Lewis M. Killian. *Collective Behavior (Third Edition)*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. 1987.