WITH STATEHOOD CAME WHITE SUPREMACY: AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERS BECOME JANITORS

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When the Oklahoma Territory opened for white settlement in 1890, some of the ‘whites’ were former slave states African Americans. It took time for southern White Supremacy to reestablish itself in the former Confederacy after military occupation and Reconstruction had ended in 1877. By 1890 White Supremacy was established or close to establishment in the old Confederacy. Many African Americans looking for ‘a chance’ were drawn to the freedom and opportunity Oklahoma Territory promised. The Territory did have its White Supremacist Democrats but for most of its seventeen years civil rights Republicans in the federal and territorial governments were able to blunt their efforts. Among Oklahoma whites, even if a goal, suppressing African Americans had not the immediacy it had in the former slave states. True, much territorial African American life was within African American institutions, their churches, fraternal groups and sororities, and leagues, even their own towns. Yet, in territorial years African Americans were elected and appointed to public office, participated in political deliberations, were legislators and Republican party delegates, spoke before large white and African American audiences, shared platforms with major white leaders, published African American newspapers, were teachers, school principals, professors and college presidents. At least two met with the President in the White House.

As statehood approached African Americans worried about the new constitution. White Supremacist Democrats drafted it. African American leaders worried about a state government controlled by those same Democrats. It would be yet worse should Democrats gain the Presidency and Congress – as they soon did in 1913.

J. C. Leftwich, S. Douglass Russell, W. L. Eagleson, D. H. Bradley, A. J. Smitherman, John R. Hogan, Jeff. D. Randolph, Adam E. Patterson and Jim Noble are nine African American men bridging the territorial - statehood period. Each either started as a Democrat or switched to Democrat soon after statehood. Those switching to Democrat generally did so for some combination of wanting to share in power and patronage, hoping to moderate Democrat racism by offering African American votes, and through de-coupling African American and Republican thereby making race non-partisan.
W. L. Eagleson, A. J. Smitherman and Jim Noble were accepted as Democrats well prior to statehood. J. C. Leftwich, O. H. Bradley, S. Douglas Russell, John R. Hogan, A. E. Patterson and Jeff. D. Randolph were active territorial Republicans who switched.

W. L. Eagleson

Kansas shares a 410 mile border with Oklahoma. The border is an imaginary straight line following no geographical features. The land on each side is identical. Kansas became a state in 1861, the product of a fierce struggle between those favoring slavery and those opposed. Anti-slavery won. Kansas voted Republican for governor between 1861 and 1934 with the brief exception of 1892 and 1896 when a Populist won. The state finally elected its first Democrat governor in 1936. Kansas’ congressional delegation, house and senate, between 1861 and 1933 averaged 84 percent Republican. The state did not elect a Democrat senator until 1893 or Democrat Representative until 1901. African Americans were 3.5 percent of the 1890 population. At the 1878 Kansas Republican state convention African American Reverend T. W. Henderson was invited among party luminaries to make an address. He received the largest convention vote for Lieutenant Governor, 26.6%, but withdrew afterwards.\textsuperscript{3} Henderson received endorsements from the \textit{Fort Scott Monitor} and \textit{Leavenworth Weekly Times} among other newspapers.\textsuperscript{4} African American Republican E. P. McCabe gained his party’s nomination and subsequent state-wide election as Kansas Auditor in 1882 and 1884.\textsuperscript{5} W. L. Eagleson was part of the Henderson and McCabe campaigns.\textsuperscript{6}

Kansas statute provided cities of the first class may have separate primary schools. Only Kansas City, however, was allowed separate high schools. There, white high school students attended in the morning, African American the same schools in the afternoon.\textsuperscript{7} The state universities in Kansas always admitted African American students. Kansas had no Jim Crow. Nevertheless, Kansas was not an African American paradise. Eagleson, while promoting African American Kansas towns, warned African Americans leaving post-Reconstruction south, the ‘Exodusters,’ “Never leave home for Kansas without having some money over and above what it takes to pay your transportation” and “For the old men and women chances for great success in Kansas are not flattering.”\textsuperscript{8} Much of Kansas was spoken for prior to the end of Reconstruction. Free land in the wide-open Oklahoma Territory offered more opportunity.

William Lewis (W. L.) Eagleson was born in 1835, a Saint Louis slave. Freed and somehow educated, he started Kansas’ first African American newspaper, Fort Scott’s \textit{Colored Citizen}. Eagleson was engaged as
a contributor to the *Topeka Daily Democrat*, the first African American joining a journal not owned by African Americans. He was a leader in several Kansas African American organizations including the Colored Man’s State Convention (Topeka, 1882), the Oklahoma Immigration Association, The Colored Men’s Independent League, and developed plans to turn abandoned Runnymede Kansas into an African American town. A fellow Topeka African American, Green J. Currin was vice president of the Immigration Association. Currin went on to Kingfisher, Oklahoma Territory, where he was elected as one of two African Americans to serve in the territorial legislature. With J. P. McCabe, Eagleson was part of the African American delegation asking President Benjamin Harrison reserve Oklahoma Territory for African American Settlement. Eagleson returned to Kansas from Oklahoma in 1892. In 1896 Eagleson was chairman of the Kansas Negro National League, a group formed to support Democrats. During the administration of Populist Kansas governor John W. Leedy (1897 – 99) Eagleson served as Governor’s Messenger. He started an African American Topeka Populist newspaper in 1897. The *Langston City Herald* editorialized “W. L. Eagleson ... the old war horse associated with the intrepid McCabe instituted Langston and paved the way for much in freedom ...” Eagleson died 1899 in Topeka.

Eagleson, with J. P. McCabe, founded Langston, Oklahoma. They founded Langston’s newspaper, variously called the Herald, Langston City Herald and the Langston Herald, in 1891. Eagleson was associated with the newspaper 1891 - 1892 before turning it over to Langston attorney Robert Emmett (R. E.) Stewart. Eagleson was a Langston justice of the peace and served on the city council. Eagleson variously a Republican, a Democrat and sometime Populist.

W. L. Eagleson left Oklahoma Territory and died before statehood. He was a founding territorial African American whose career in neighboring Kansas provides a contrast to Oklahoma’s White Supremacy. The ‘Old War Horse’ should not be lost in the Oklahoma dust.
Melissa Stuckey gives us an account of J. C. Leftwich’s early days. Born in Forkland, Alabama in 1867, his father, a former slave, was an Alabama Reconstruction Era Republican state senator (1872 – 1876). John C. Leftwich graduated Selma University in 1890. In 1897 he received a Republican sinecure, appointment by President McKinley as Alabama Receiver of Public Money. Alabama Democrats gained control and disfranchised most African Americans by 1902 pushing J. C. Leftwich on to Oklahoma Territory. He started an Oklahoma City weekly newspaper, *Western World*. Leftwich, a solid Republican, was unsuccessful in joining in the limited Territorial Republican largess available to African Americans. An infatigable promoter, Leftwich joined with El Reno African American attorney E. T. Barbour to call a convention of African American Republicans, The Colored League, to demand a share of offices. “The organizers are men who mean business ...” Republican governor Ferguson almost immediately appointed twenty leading African Americans, including Leftwich, delegates to represent Oklahoma Territory at the Southern Negro Congress in Galveston, Texas in July.

Democrat newspapers now and then poked fun, humiliating to educated African American objects of the ‘fun.’ In 1903 Leftwich had become visible enough for such.

“The following is an extract from a political speech made in Oklahoma City recently by J. C. Leftwich, a negro. ‘If de devil out ob hell wuz nominated foh offis by de publicans, and Saint Petah who had de keys to heben wuz nominated by de democrats, I would vote foh de devil!’ ”

In 1904 Leftwich left Oklahoma Territory for Muskogee, Indian Territory. He re-established *Western World* as a Muskogee weekly as he took on the presidency of the Muskogee Baptist College and
Industrial Institute, soon renamed Sango Baptist College and Industrial Institute. At one point Leftwich announced the college was “for the education of the youths of the Five Civilized Tribes.” When talk arose of President Roosevelt passing through Muskogee on his way to the San Antonio, Texas Rough Rider Reunion, 7 April 1905, Muskogee African Americans formed a committee to welcome him. Of the 15 members, Professor Leftwich was listed between A. G. W. Sango and W. H. Twine, easily the two most prominent of the community. The next month Leftwich’s star fell from local night sky. Twine’s Muskogee Cimeter carried cryptic notes:

“The Western World has gone with the Echo to the journalistic grave yard. May it rest in peace. Leftwich, the once president of the Baptist College was arrested Saturday night charged with creating fear among the brethren.”

“Rev. P. R. Neil of Ardmore, claims to be president of Sango Baptist College, and J. C. Leftwich also claims the presidency and is now patrolling the country collecting money as such president. Say, Neil, would it not be a good time for the gallant attorney &c. to tear down a few court houses and get out a few injunctions to stop the Wiley Leftwich in his mad career? And again there are quite a number of small debts due teachers for services performed, and we think if the attorney should make old Left disgorge some of that cash he is collecting under false pretense (that is if he is not president of the college) and the funds used to pay the teachers who work so hard last year and who need their money. Honesty is a pretty policy even in church and school business. There are enough Baptist in the territory to furnish the money to pay off all just claims against the college and then have means for making improvements but the leak will have to be stopped.”

Finally, the Tahlequah Arrow cleared it up.

“John W. Leftwich [sic. John C.], of Muskogee, president of the Sango Baptist college (colored), has been dismissed from his position by the board of directors of that institution and arrested on a charge of embezzlement ... Leftwich has failed to account for about $1,000 of the money collected for the support of the college.”

By 1906 Leftwich got out from under his Sango Baptist College difficulties to begin again in Boley with a college destined to “make Boley the Tuskegee of the new state.” A few days later Leftwich referred to the Boley college as the Creek – Seminole College or the Creek – Seminole Agricultural Institute. In an effort to give the project legitimacy Leftwich persuaded Republican Oklahoma Territorial Governor
Frank Frantz to help dedicate the new school. Frantz, campaigning to be the new state’s Governor, welcomed the opportunity.35

Given the state’s newly dominant politics, by 1910 Leftwich found it expedient to switch from Republican to Democrat.36

After about six years of operation, 1912, tragedy struck. As Leftwich was raising funds in Arkansas fire destroyed the main building of the Creek – Seminole college killing five boys. By 1916 Leftwich had shifted south and east the twenty miles from Boley to a second African American Okfuskee County town, Clearview.

“The Creek-Seminole Agricultural College ... at Clearview, will be dedicated Sunday, September 24th [1916] ... This school has four large buildings completed ... The institution is under the Auspices of the Christian church [Disciples of Christ] and the president, J. C. Leftwich, has secured some large donations from Christian ladies in the north and east ... The president of the school evidently intends to make Clearview second only to Tuskegee as a school town for negroes.”37

“R. H. Wilson, [Democrat state] superintendent of public instruction, delivered the address dedicating to school purposes ... the Creek-Seminole Agricultural College ... which began Monday its ninth scholastic year. The five buildings have been completed at a cost of $25,000. J. C. Leftwich is superintendent of the college. Nine years ago Leftwich founded the school at Boley ... Three years ago all the buildings except one burned, and Leftwich began soliciting donations for new school buildings. Clearview was selected as the location ... The Christian church board became interested in part of the funds invested in the construction of the buildings. The site, thirty-six acres, was donated to the college and will be used as a demonstration farm. ... The enrollment ... will be about 300 students ... Twelve instructors will compose the faculty.”38

After little more than a year, November 1917, the General Baptist Convention of Oklahoma (Colored) assumed control of the school with its indebtedness, appointing S. A. White Acting President. January 1918 the Okfuskee County News reported
“Resolutions were unanimously adopted (many reasons being set forth) to sever all connections with Mr. J. C. Leftwich ... Mr. Leftwich will no longer be connected, in any capacity, with the school.”\textsuperscript{39}

Within a year Leftwich had shifted his activity to Bookertee, yet another African American Okfuskee County town. Roscoe Dunjee’s \textit{Black Dispatch} reported Representative L. C. McNabb (D Sequoyah County) introduced bill to accept the property of the

“Bookertee Agricultural School for Negro Boys and Girls ... founded by John G. (sic, John C.) Leftwich, negro educator and school promoter, who is present head of the institution, which is said to have an average daily attendance of 200 students and from 12 to 18 teachers. The property consists of ten acres of grounds ... valued at approximately $30,000 ... the state will agree to maintain and operate it as an agricultural and mechanical school for the benefit of negro children.”\textsuperscript{40}

Representative McNabb’s bill went nowhere. \textit{Harrow’s Weekly} explained the underlying education situation in Bookertee prompting McNabb’s bill.

“Bookertee was laid out for the purpose of becoming a negro industrial center ... those denizens have been unable to secure funds with which to construct a public school ... This has been partially remedied by John C. Leftwich, who has established an agricultural college, where something approximating $20,000.00 has been raised for buildings and 14 teachers ... The total school population of the Bookertee district is 156, divided between ... Whites, 8; Indians, 12, and 116 negroes.\textsuperscript{41} For that population the school board has a public school which can be attended by white and red races, but the negroes have been unable to secure a separate school as provided by statute, and they have taken up the matter with State Superintendent R. H. Wilson, who in turn, referred them to the Okfuskee school authorities, whose duty is to provide school facilities. So far, and this is the third year, the negroes have failed to secure the public school and have been forced to utilize the agricultural school which is maintained by private enterprise. The Okfuskee county race situation is different from that of any other county of the state. ...
agricultural pursuits. The result has been that the negro farmers have prospered and purchased the lands of white farmers. They have fair prices considered above he market value, for the reason that they wished to acquire property where those of the race were in the majority. Heavy production and abnormal prices have made the negro farmers rich, and they have increased their land holdings, until the white land owners are in the minority.

It has been no easy task for the negroes to secure school facilities and not always have they been given the consideration to be expected from a race superior in civilization. It will be recalled that the citizens of Boley had to take their case to the supreme court before they could have a voting precinct within the city, the program being to have them go six miles to vote. ... The culmination of effort to get a public school seems to be centered at Bookertee ... The attitude is not unnatural, but the blacks, heavy taxpayers and owning much property in Okfuskee county, press hard for establishment of schools and beyond and scope of controversy are entitled to their contention.”

Leftwich remained active and visible in the area, making speeches, issuing press releases and fundraising. In 1921 the Black Dispatch reported

“Dr. J. D. Brooks of New York, general secretary of the U. N. I. A. and Hon. Arnold, his private secretary were most royally entertained at the mansion of President J. C. Leftwich, Saturday evening.”

The U. N. I. A was Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association. Garvey founded the organization in Jamaica, 1914, bringing it to the United States in 1918.

Finally, June, 1921, Leftwich announced “Come to Bookertee Agricultural College where the flood gates of specific knowledge will open to all. A college that does things.” The college opened at the time of Tulsa’s Race Riot – Massacre. Leftwich’s announcement went on

“All vocational trades will be taught at Bookertee, the great center of Negro education; 75 students of the victims of the race riot at Tulsa will be brought to this college and educated. We are pleading to white and colored people to help these poor children whose parents were shamefully murdered and burned out – by donating money, foodstuff, canned goods, old clothes, shoes, etc. The Lord will bless you.”

By September Leftwich’s claims became more exaggerated.
"Bookertee Agricultural College The Only Negro Agricultural College in the State ... Literary, Industrial, Agricultural and Theological Courses taught by Science. The Biggest Educational Center in Oklahoma. A Christian College. A Classical School. Students will get three -3- hots per day. Fine Faculty ... Music, Business Course, Vocational Trades all Free. Tuition Free. Board $9.50 per month."

The Tulsa Red Cross disaster relief headquarters sent an investigator to Bookertee, given Leftwich’s claims to have raised $17,000 in Tulsa for children riot-massacre victims. The report, published in the 2 October 1921 Tulsa World, was devastating.

“That J. C. Leftwich ... is ‘simply running the school for what he can get out of it,’ and that he has set up a ‘limited monarchy at Bookertee with himself as head, is the substance of a report issued yesterday by local disaster relief headquarters of the American Red Cross. The report is based on the investigation of Clarence H. Dawson ... who spent several hours at Bookertee last Sunday.

According to Leftwich’s admissions to Tulsa business men he has collected approximately $17,000 in donations here. Dawson estimates the running expenses of the school of Bookertee as $6,000 as year. It has been running about three years. No figures could be obtained as to other donations. Leftwich and two colored women spend most of their time soliciting funds and articles of apparel, and their territory is virtually the entire United States. ...

The superintendent of charities [William D. Matthews] ... stated he knew nothing whatever about this school. Such investigations as we have been able to make at Boley and Clearview, where Leftwich has conducted such schools, yields no commendable facts, but on the contrary are of the most unsatisfactory sort. Local negro leaders who claim a long time knowledge of Leftwich’s projects who have been interviewed [say] Leftwich has been going from place to place, starting schools which he disposes of in some manner, moving on to other places and leaving behind him an unfavorable record. Local negro leaders also claim that his school projects are supported by contributions from white persons whom he approaches directly with his prospectus. They also claim he does not represent the best element among his race. ...

Regarding the children orphaned during the race riot, the situation as represented by Leftwich in his solicitation statements does not represent the actual facts. In an interview with Leftwich he...
was asked how many children he expected to take to Bookertee. Fifty, he replied. We then asked him to give us a list of names and addresses of these so-called orphan children. He could not produce these names or addresses. ... I think this man should be stopped in his solicitation of contributions and would recommend that steps be taken for an investigation by the state.”  

Eighteen days later the *Weleetka American* published a laudatory report from the Oklahoma State Commissioner of Charities and Corrections, Democrat William D. Matthews.

“The Bookertee Agricultural School ... has been in operation for two years; its object is to take dependent and neglected colored children and give them a literary and agricultural training. This institution was thoroughly inspected by The State Department of Charities and Corrections ... There is at present 46 neglected and dependent negro children in the institution from Tulsa ... This Department, after a thorough inspection and examination of all books and receipts of amounts of money received and paid out approved of this institution on the grounds of its looking after and caring for dependent orphan negro children. It is filling a great need, and from all the information and facts in the possession of this Department, we have issued a certificate of endorsement, as worthy of aid and support of benevolently disposed people.”

In September 1922 the *Back Dispatch* published the Leftwich press release heralding a tragedy to come.

“Bookertee Agricultural College ... Many friends are rejoicing over Dr. S. A. White's coming back to the state and resuming the responsibility of vice president and principal of the college. We are sure he is a safe and experienced man.”

S. A. White, Sam or Stuart, succeeded Leftwich in 1918 as Acting President at the school in Clearview. Within a year of rejoining Leftwich as school vice president, now in Bookertee, the *Weleetka American* reported

“J. C. Leftwich, head of the negro school at Bookertee, was shot and killed last Saturday afternoon by S. A. White who was a member of the teaching staff of the school ... [Leftwich had] called a meeting ... of the student body and faculty, later dismissing the students and holding a meeting of the faculty in his office. ... there had been trouble brewing for some time between White and Leftwich caused by salary due White and possibly other matters. When White opened the door and entered the office where the faculty meeting was taking place it is reported that Leftwich opened fire on him with a revolver and that White returned the fire, killing Leftwich. ... The deceased had the general reputation of being pompous and overbearing.
Last fall he got in a quarrel with one of the colored citizens of Bookertee resulting in Leftwich taking the count [being knocked out].”

“A number of boys who claimed they were in Leftwich’s office when the shooting occurred ... testified that [Stuart, Sam A.] White forced his way into the office and fired the first shot. ... witnesses for the defense stated when Leftwich entered his office and closed the door they heard noises in the office that resembled the clicking of the loading of a gun and the closing of the breach. Afterward he opened the door and invited the boys and Stuart [White] to come in. ... two shots were fired from White’s gun and three had been discharged from Leftwich’s pistol. ... Mrs. S. A. White, wife of the defendant ... stated that Leftwich had approached her in regard to going with him on his trips to solicit money, promising to split 50-50 with her. Stated that it would be an easy matter. At the time of the killing she said that they were attempting to get a settlement from Leftwich in order that they could leave the institution and go elsewhere. Sam A. White ... stated that Leftwich fired the first shot at him when he entered Leftwich’s office.”

How the court viewed Leftwich was revealed in an exchange with White’s attorney.

“[District Judge James] Hepburn asked, ‘Was the murder of Leftwich a crime or an act of mercy?’ In answer [White’s attorney] Shaw stated that he had decided conclusively it was purely an act of mercy. Laughingly the judge explained that he asked the question merely as a citizen and not as a judge.”

White was convicted and sentenced to “four years in the state pen.”

J. C. Leftwich was able to draw others, white and African American, into his vision of a Tuskegee of the West. Yet in the end nothing remained longer than a year or two of his work and the investment of others.
O’Neil Herman (O. H.) Bradley$^54$ and Judge George Napier Perkins$^55$

O. H. Bradley edited-published the *Guthrie Progress*$^56$ and the *Boley Progress.*$^57$ In the 1920s Bradley went on to publish Muskogee’s *Weekly Progress.* A relative, George Napier Perkins, edited/Published Guthrie’s *Oklahoma Guide.*$^58$ Tina Cahalan Jones traced the Williamson County Tennessee origins of the Bradley and Perkins African American Oklahoma Territorial families.$^59$

Related Williamson County, Tennessee slave owning families, Perkins and Bradley, gave their names to related slave families. Some or all of these slaves were subsequently sold and scattered at the Memphis slave market. With emancipation some former slaves and their children managed to find one another and reunite in the territorial Guthrie and Oklahoma City area. The Bradley – Perkins relationship was documented through former slave Nancy Perkins Gardiner’s 1904 Guthrie visit to her cousin Cornelius H. Bradley, his wife Elizabeth, their son O. H. Bradley and her uncle, Judge George Napier Perkins.$^60$ She revisited them in 1912, moving to Oklahoma City in 1916 to be near what remained of her family.$^61$ Gardiner died in 1944.

Whatever education O. H. Bradley and G. N. Perkins managed to acquire was well absorbed. They held their own as newspaper editors, public speakers, elected officials and community leaders. They mixed on the basis of equality with white Territorial leaders. Within the context provided by Republican territorial politics and all black towns, they went far.

Both Perkins and Bradley were active in Guthrie’s Territorial Republican Party. In the 1902 Republican primaries Judge G. N. Perkins was renominated for the City Fifth Ward Council seat while O. H. Bradley
served as Republican ward convention secretary as well as elected delegate to the city convention.\(^{62}\) The same year O. H. Bradley purchased the assets of D. O. Blesh's *Labor Advocate* thus making his *Guthrie Progress* its successor.\(^{63}\) In 1904 African American J. W. Capers defeated Councilman G. N. Perkins for the Republican City Council nomination before going on to win the general election. The Democrat *Guthrie Daily Leader* took delight in Perkins’ defeat, calling him “The Old African Lion.”\(^{64}\) O. H. Bradley was Republican nominee for the Guthrie school board.\(^{65}\) The African American Republicans won overwhelmingly: O. H. Bradley (R) 259, M. Collar (D) 102; John W. Capers (R) 205, H. C. Olds (D) 107.\(^{66}\) Later in 1904 delegates were selected to nominate Republican county officers. These included African Americans R. E. Stewart, J. W. Capers and O. H. Bradley. White delegates included banker U. C. Guss, former Territorial Governor C. M. Barnes, and former Territorial Attorney General Harper Cunningham. O. H. Bradley was appointed Election Inspector for Guthrie’s Fifth Ward for the November 1904 vote.\(^{67}\)

In 1905 O. H. Bradley relocated to the Indian Territory African American town of Boley in future Okfuskee County. There he started the *Boley Progress*.\(^{68}\) Bradley kept one foot in Guthrie, however, tending to his affairs and frequently visiting his mother.\(^{69}\) Bradley was a Republican delegate to the 1906 Guthrie nominating convention for the Constitutional Convention.\(^{70}\) July 1907, just before statehood, the Boley Republican Club nominated candidates to Tulsa’s Indian Territory Republican convention. Delegate O. H. Bradley moved resolution to endorse Frank Frantz for Governor and condemn the Constitutional Convention “in its attempts to curtail and abridge our [i. e. African American] rights as citizens in the new state of Oklahoma.”\(^{71}\)

In 1907 Okfuskee County Democrat officials refused to allow Boley a voting precinct as a means of suppressing African American votes.\(^{72}\) O. H. Bradley and other African Americans sued in federal court.\(^{73}\) The next year, still in response to Democrat vote suppression and Jim Crow, African Americans founded the Constitutional League of Oklahoma “to uphold the constitution of the United States by acquiring a more extended knowledge of laws, economics and civics of Oklahoma.” Officers included M. C. Clayburn, McAlester, President; Dr. H. W. Conrad, 1st Vice President, Guthrie; O. H. Bradley, 2nd Vice President, Boley; D. L. F. Ganks, Enid, 3rd Vice President; William H. Harrison, Oklahoma City and B. O. Tyler, Kingfisher, with legal staff; E. T. Barbour, El Reno, secretary; S. L. James, Sapulpa, Assistant Secretary; B. I. F. Westbrooks, Oklahoma City, Treasurer.\(^{74}\)
The next year Bradley was an Okfuskee County delegate to the Oklahoma City Republican State Convention. The Okfuskee convention adopted a resolution “condemning the democrats of Okfuskee county for ‘duplicity and dishonesty.’”

By 1910 Bradley changed his party to Democrat. The state organized a Guthrie conference on tuberculosis in February 1910. Presentations were divided with ‘Special for Colored People’ sessions. The colored speakers included Dr. G. K. Fitzgiles; R. A. Henderson, M. D. Langston; Mrs. J. C. Horton; A. H. Shoals, M. D.; J. T. Jester, M. D., Oklahoma City; J. W. Capers; C. F. Perry, Principal Lincoln School; O. H. Bradley, Boley; J. A. Cox, M. D. Luther; Mrs. E. T. Barbour, El Reno; J. L. Haywood, M. D. Oklahoma City; A. C. Jackson, M. D.; E. T. Barbour, El Reno; Mrs. A. J. Scales, Douglas School; Mrs. S. E. Long, Lincoln School; Rev. S. A. Striplin, colored M. E. Church; H. W. Conrad, M. D.; A. C. Jackson, M. D.; Rev. C. A. Buchanan Editor The Safeguard; Miss S. V. Floyd, Douglas School; W. H. Slaughter, M. D. Oklahoma City; Mrs. A. R. Eagleson, Supervisor Kindergarten Colored Schools; A. R. Eagleson D. D. S.; Mrs. J. W. Capers; W. H. Conrad, M. D.; Prof. I. R. Page, Langston; Mrs. J. C. Evans, Superintendent Nurses Training Langston; C. F. Sneed M. D. Langston; D. G. Bryant, M. D. Oklahoma City; Prof. G. W. Carry Principal, Logan County Separate High School; W. H. Harrison, Oklahoma City; H. W. Conrad M. D.; Miss Fannie G. Moore; J. W. Taylor; G. K. Fitzgiles, M. D.; J. W. Taylor; J. E. Toombs Pastor A. M. E. Church; Prof. G. W. Carry; C. P. Taliferro Perry. The ‘colored’ presenters constituted a set of the prominent early statehood African Americans, O. H. Bradley among them. But we can notice the absence of as yet Republican S. Douglas Russell, G. N. Perkins and W. B. Twine among influential newspapermen.

With the Word War, O. H. Bradley was made Chief Draft Registrar for Boley with H. C. Taylor and L. I. Dolphin his assistant. The state election board established a Boley precinct exclusively for African American voters in 1918. O. H. Bradley was named Inspector; E. J. King, Judge; S. P. Foster, Clerk. In 1919 new Democrat governor James B. A. Robertson persuaded the legislature to submit a fifty million dollar highway bond to vote of the people. It would be matched by federal funds and result in a system of improved paved roads. Robertson designated Democrat precinct captains responsible for turning out voter support in the May special election. The campaign ran into two problems. Who would get the roads, and skepticism over the enormous cost. In the end the bond was defeated 171,327 to 69,917. In Boley, however, the result was the opposite. The bonds carried 34 votes to 14. O. H. Bradley was credited with supporting the governor’s program against the state and Okfuskee County trend. He was also credited and blamed for suppressing the Boley vote. The 48 votes cast were 7.1 percent of an
estimated 673 Boley persons age 21 or over. O. H. Bradley’s price for authority from Democrats was to register only African Americans supporting Democrats. This became an element in a 1919 murder case appeal to the Oklahoma Criminal Court of Appeals.

White Republican Sam Wilson was elected Sheriff, serving 1913 – 1917, in very Democratic Okfuskee County. African American Chess Chambers was his deputy sheriff and intimate friend. Chambers shot and killed Wilson. At trial, Chambers testified:

"My name is Chess Chambers; I am 53 years old. ... I have been deputy marshal, constable, and deputy sheriff ... Mr. Wilson ... asked me at Castle [a six mile walk from Boley] to get in the car and ride with him ... We got back to Boley between 4 and 5 o'clock ... and walked around the town drinking for two or three hours. Mr. Wilson bought the whisky ... He then went to Turner and told him he only had a few days to get busy or there would be somebody up there who wouldn't let us register, and we couldn't get to vote ... O.H. Bradley gets a stand-in with them Democrats and there would be somebody up there that would not let you negroes register down here, and said: 'The next time I come to Okemah, I am going to run him out of town. You negroes ought to run him out.' ... we started up the street. He began to talk about Bradley again, and he said: 'Give me that pistol. I will get in the car and go up there and run that negro away this evening.' And I said: 'No, Mr. Wilson, don't do that. Don't get into trouble.' My pistol was in my hip pocket, and I moved it around on the other side, and he ran his hand around, and I moved it around this way. We were on the street then. He had a pint of whisky, and we finished drinking that ... Mr. Wilson first got a pint, and me and him ... drank that up. Then he got some more .... We were both drunk. When I got in the car, he said ... 'You know what I told you about Bradley; Bradley ...ought to be ... drove out of the country.' And I said, 'Mr. Wilson, I ain't going to get out of the car and let you do that.' About that time he shoved me, and I put my hand on the car to keep from falling out... and Mr. Wilson started to get the pistol I had, and when he struck the pistol handle I reached in and moved it around. I got it out of my pocket and started to put it in my other pocket, and in the scuffle pulled the pistol off ... I did not shoot Mr. Wilson intentionally. I would not shoot him for nothing. I would shoot my brother as quick as I would shoot Mr. Wilson."

By 1920 Bradley was Boley Justice of the Peace and Ben Jenkins an African American County Deputy Sheriff. In 1926 Bradley, with J. L. House, was publishing the Weekly Progress in Muskogee and active
in the State Negro Jeffersonian Democratic Club with A. P. Bethel, P. A. Chappelle and others. The Weekly Progress ran an endorsement of the Muskogee Colored Bar Association for Judge O. H. Searcy’s Democratic attorney general primary candidacy. It was signed by R. Emmett Stewart and W. H. Twine, among others. Both Twine and Stewart were known Republicans. Searcy narrowly lost the primary as he did again in 1934.

If we fast forward to January 1946, a few months before his 8 October death at age 67, Bradley is back living in Guthrie working as a State Senate custodian. A legislative glitch prevented him being paid, however. Democrats continued to look out for their supporter while at the same time moving him to what they viewed as his appropriate place in their scheme of things.

S. Douglas Russell comes to Oklahoma’s attention in 1892 as editor and publisher of the Paris, Texas African American Living Age, or Living Age Reformer modeled, we can presume, on Littell’s Living Age. He was headed for Kingfisher to start an African American newspaper, the Oklahoma Constitution. Russell organized and served as president of the Colored Men’s Independent Territorial League. He was the only African American at an 1893 ad hoc statehood convention. In 1897 the Democrat Enid Weekly Wave published a confusing item reportedly excerpted from S. Douglass Russell’s Kingfisher Constitution. At Guthrie, 23 January, a Territorial League was organized

“for the purpose of working up interest in the establishment of a normal school for the colored people. ... Nearly 100 delegates were present ... with S. Douglas Russell, president; G. N. Perkins, vice president; S. L. James, secretary; D. L. F. Banks, treasurer. The following resolution
was adopted ... We are unalterably opposed to separate schools and separate institutions of any kind."\textsuperscript{93}

We can assume the hostile Democrat \textit{Enid Weekly Wave} garbled the account to ridicule African Americans. The item was titled “De Colored Folks.” M. J. Johnson, R. E. Stewart, W. Manzilla, H. R. Pierson and G. W. Lawson were also at the meeting.

That same year. As Guthrie’s Republican \textit{Oklahoma State Capital} reported Russell called a May meeting, again in Guthrie, of the Protective League to

“... confer together and as race men ask the governor, Hon. C. M. Barnes, to give our race fair and proper recognition in the distribution of territorial patronage.”\textsuperscript{94}

The Democrat \textit{Enid Weekly Wave} again ridiculed the call.

“De Culard Votahs ... ‘Dare am a black scar on de simoon ob de ‘publican party, suah, an’ onless dat scar am polished dare will suahably be a brakin’ out! – suah as youse a libin’, “ says Uncle Rastus.”\textsuperscript{95}

‘Uncle Rastus’ is S. Douglas Russell. Again, Russell called a meeting of The Colored Men’s Protective League, this time for August in Perry. “The question of emigration will receive careful attention ...”\textsuperscript{96} In 1898 Russell shared a platform with Governor C. M. Barnes and Langston attorney R. Emmett Stewart for a Langston cornerstone ceremony.\textsuperscript{97} Russell spoke on “Negro Journalism in Oklahoma” in September as part of a symposium dedicating Langston University. Other African American speakers included E. P. McCabe, I. F. Norris, N. J. C. Johnson, Rev. T. J. Austin, C. T. Talliaferro, Mrs. P. F. Oliver, judge E. I. Saddler, G. W. P. Brown, professor J. W. Sharp, E. O. Tyler and R. Emmett Stewart.\textsuperscript{98}

The same year the Territorial Republican Executive Committee asked Russell to take charge of Dennis Flynn’s Congressional Delegate campaign among African Americans. Russell told African Americans

“The Demo-Populist Legislature ... two years ago in their mad desire to curtail the God-given right of our people enacted a nefarious election law purely for the purpose of disfranchising the colored voters of this Territory in that they have by legislation so arranged matters that all candidate names shall appear upon the same ballot and the voter will have to go into the booth alone and select the name or names of each candidate as he may desire to vote for. ... we have arranged a simple system by which every man can be taught to vote without the assistance of anyone in the booth. I desire that the colored men in every community, township and county in this Territory get together at once and organize a club by electing a president and secretary, and
address me at Guthrie, O. T., and I will send you blanks and all necessary information for organizing and instructing our people how to vote ...

January 1899 Russell joined African Americans G. W. P. Brown, Professor T. J. Austin, R. E. Stewart, E. P. McCabe, Professor Inman Page, Judge G. N. Perkins and Captain T. D. Jackson as Emancipation Day speakers. At the 1900 Territorial Republican Central Committee meeting

“S. Douglas Russell, editor of the Guthrie Constitution, a negro republican paper, made an eloquent address in which he lauded the republican administration, national and territorial, which he declared, would bear the closest scrutiny and stand every test of comparison. He pledged the 8,000 negro voters in Oklahoma as loyal to the republican party as the ancient Spartans to their government.”

In 1901 Russell published a letter in the Oklahoma State Capital.

“... at the open door reception of Hon. D. T. Flynn, Jan. 1, 1899, your humble servant was invited and participated in the reception. And as we remember it now, no special comment was made; neither did the presence of a gentleman of color to break up the reception nor cause the Cottonwood river to suddenly change its course. Mr. Roosevelt is a wise man in this – he is calling in the better element among the negro race and seeking their counsel on matters of public industry for the benefit of the colored man. It would be a wise thing for Oklahoma statesmen and politicians to emulate the president’s example on this line.

At a 1904 Republican nominating convention E. P. McCabe was elected Reading Clerk and Russell Assistant Secretary. In 1906 he gave an address the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers, “Statehood and the Negro.” Other speakers included Professors Inman Page, J. H. A. Brazelton, G. W. Carey, William Sulcer, A. Baxter Whitby, William E, Guy and Wayne Manzilla with Langston University regent James Rouce. The same year Russell presided over the Inter Territorial Negro Protective League Oklahoma City convention, was elected secretary of the 24th district Republican convention and was a candidate for Constitutional Convention delegate. In 1907 the Republicans African American Advisory Committee met separately in conjunction with the State Republican committee to select national convention delegates. S. T. Wiggins chaired the Advisory Committee with S. Douglas Russell, secretary. Russell was also a Langston Justice of the Peace.
Bird McGuire, 1st District Republican candidate for congress got crosswise with Russell. Russell quoted McGuire saying “This is too far South for negroes to aspire to hold office.” Russell responded

“Oklahoma is a little too far north for negroes to support a lily white Republican like this man McGuire. I am somewhat astounded at the littleness of McGuire, after serving in congress for six years, then today, condescending even below the level of a ‘Pot House Politician’ to deliver a long political speech of one hour in abuse of a poor man who is trying to make honest bread and butter for a loving wife and children [family of eight] and in the mean time doing all in my power to promote my race, and lead them to higher and more independent and honest citizenship. ... S. Douglas Russell, E. P. McCabe, E. I. Saddler, G. N. Perkins, F. R. McKinlay, and other race loving colored men had made it possible to make Oklahoma Republican, hence McGuire and the bunch harnessed up the black boys to ride into office on, and then hitch us on the outside in the rain until they needed us again. Hear me colored men! Hear me in behalf of your wife and children. It is now time for you to throw off the yoke of political slavery. In this you have much to gain and nothing to lose.”

In 1907 Russell worked for Republican Governor Frank Frantz who lost. Frantz, while still governor, arranged Russell be appointed advertising agent for Langston University. He was on the state payroll, but not due to Democrats. By November 1907 Russell was a Democrat. When he took issue with McGuire’s re-election Republicans sought to remove him from his Langston position. White regent U. C. Guss led the charge. Russell explained

“I, of course, had learned to play politics according to the rules of the game, so I doffed my hat to other people who had power on the board, and as a result of that I am still in the employ of the state of Oklahoma ...”

Russell’s opposition to McGuire in 1908 spilled over to support for Democrat governor Charles Haskell, elected over Russell’s candidate Frank Frantz in 1907, and presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan. Bryan ran against William Howard Taft, Theodore Roosevelt’s Secretary of War. Russell linked Taft to the Brownsville Affair.

August 1906 shootings in Brownsville, Texas were attributed, without evidence, to African American soldiers stationed there. President Roosevelt, with no due process, dishonorably discharged the entire 167 member regiment, thereby denying them earned pensions and the possibility of federal employment. As Secretary of War. Taft had at least a formal responsibility for the discharges.
For Republicans, white and African American, Russell was an apostate, a traitor.

“The efforts, made all along the line during the campaign by the democratic state leaders to use the negroes in their campaign for Bryan and Haskell, met with a decided frost here [Langston] last night, when an enthusiastic Taft and Sherman\textsuperscript{113} club was organized by the citizens here and the students in the state negro university. Resolutions denouncing S. Douglas Russell, the negro editor, who is in the employ of the democratic state committee, were adopted, reading Russell forever out of the republican party and condemning him as an enemy of his race and to the educational advancement of the negro and giving the lie to the democratic report that Russell is the negro spokesman in politics.”\textsuperscript{114}

Russell was treated more gently in William Henry Twine’s \textit{Muskogee Cimeter}. “Dr. Russell ... is a great man and a fine fellow socially but he is off the base politically.”\textsuperscript{115}

In a 1909 letter, reminiscent in tone of the great documents of American history, jarringly different from contemporary political rhetoric, Russell wrote elected Democrats in the legislature and state government. His letter was reprinted in African American newspapers.

“Having conceived the idea that the relations between the white and colored citizens of Oklahoma could be materially improved by a division of the vote of the negro race I have for some times advocated in the Western Age, a paper which I publish at Langston, the wisdom of pursuing this course, and in spite of serious criticism and some persecution, it is my determination to continue to pursue this course. But in doing so I desire to have the cooperation of my friends in the Democratic party. They can do this very largely by refraining from making references of humiliating character to members of my race, and by refraining in the legislature from abridging the civil and political rights which are now exercised by them. If my friends in the democrat party will make it possible for me and my paper and in public addresses to point to the fact there is no disposition on their part to humiliate or disfranchise members of my race, I am confident that those who are in sympathy with my position, can be instrumental in convincing a large number of my people that is the dictate of wisdom and common sense to stop the practice of voting almost solidly at every election, the Republican ticket, regardless of the issue and regardless of the character and intelligence of the candidate.”\textsuperscript{116}
A few weeks later Russell received his reply in a public letter from Democrat Attorney General Charles West.

“... I believe that the position of your people in putting themselves in political antipathy to the ruling white classes in their communities has been of inestimable damage to them. I think you are pursuing the right course in advocating their alignment, if not with the Democratic party, at least not in such bitter antagonism to them. ... If the colored people would either refrain from voting or else not vote solidly the Republican ticket, I believe they would be vastly better off ... I also think it is extremely foolish for them, at least at this time, to apply for such public offices as members of the state house of representatives or the state senate, or to put themselves in any position where they attract the fire of economic and political hostility.”

In 1908 Russell had begun agitation for a state school for African American orphans along with deaf and blind children. Russell quickly received this reward.

“... Governor Haskell has named S. Douglas Russell, prominent as one of the leaders of the colored men in Logan county, as president of the new normal school created for the colored race, to be located at the town of Taft ... It will be remembered that it was Russell who lead the revolt against instructing delegates to the national convention for President Taft, and later in the campaign came out openly against McGuire for congress in that district. Thus is his services to the Oklahoma democracy rewarded.”

The Taft ‘normal school’ was far from such. Taft, in Muskogee County, named for Secretary of War William Howard Taft, was an all-black town created by and for Creek Nation freedmen. In 1910 its population was 352. There Democrats created the State Industrial Institute for the Deaf, Blind, and Orphaned of the Colored Race. Russell was to be its first president. Russell had a state sinecure but one which ‘put him in his place.’ The deaf, blind and orphans would not become future leaders whatever Russell’s abilities. Although near Muskogee, Taft took Russell far from the action in Oklahoma City and Guthrie. Most certainly Russell would not be inserting himself among whites. We can be confident Democrats were not intending to be cruel to their friend. Rather, they were asserting what they saw as the natural order. Something best for all concerned.

Russell, in turn, was not quiescent. The same year Russell and others took a complaint to the Corporation Commission. The Katy, Santa Fe, Rock Island and Frisco were not providing adequate accommodation for African Americans. The case was settled by mutual agreement and dismissed.
By 1910 talk surfaced of Inman Page being ousted from Langston University to be replaced by a Haskell Democrat, S. Douglas Russell. The plan was to bring the last of the state educational institutions under Democrat patronage.\textsuperscript{121} This was not to be, at least yet. The Oklahoma Constitution had made special provisions for the Langston Board of Regents. Two of the members must be African American, two others must be the State Treasurer and the Commissioner of Public Instruction. The plan for the State Board of Agriculture to take over the school would require a constitutional amendment, not legislation, an Attorney General opinion, or an order from the governor.\textsuperscript{122}

Heading into the 1912 United States Senate election Russell published another letter with far-reaching consequences. Incumbent Democrat Robert L. Owen was running for reelection in the Democrat primary, his opponent, Russell’s patron, former governor Charles Haskell. Russell wrote asking Senator Owen’s thoughts on disfranchising African Americans, something Governor Haskell tried to accomplish with the 1910 Grandfather Clause. Senator Owen’s response to Russell was widely circulated in facsimile, first in Russell’s own newspaper, \textit{The Saturday Evening Tribune} (Muskogee) and then throughout the state in special supplements, “Let Democracy Know the Truth,” paid for by the Haskell campaign.

\textit{“March 13th, 1912.}
S. Douglas Russell, Esq., Editor,
The Saturday Evening Tribune,
Muskogee, Oklahom.
My dear sir:
I immediately answer your very sensible letter.
The colored people have been used against their own welfare by the Republican party. The Republican party itself has been used by commercial and financial interests in the United States to build up gigantic fortunes at the expense of the individual citizens. The results are manifest – gigantic fortunes on one side and difficulty in making a living on the other side.

There are many reasons why colored men should support the Democratic party. The controlling reason is this: that with all the faults of hotheaded partisan Democrats the Democracy fundamentally stands on the rights of man against privilege, stands for equal
rights to all and special privilege to none. Privilege to some means injury to others and privilege to some means always privilege to the powerful, the rich, the strong, and never privilege to the weak and poor. This being true, the mass of men should support the party that stands for the mass of men.

I confess, frankly, that the grandfather clause which prevents the ignorant colored man from voting ought to prevent also the ignorant white man from voting, and that the race discrimination in favor of the ignorant white man must naturally offend the ignorant negro man.

It requires patriotism and generosity of the negro to ignore this apparent race discrimination. It is to the interest, however, of all men belonging to the weaker classes to do away with privilege, and the Democratic party is the best agency to accomplish this.

The colored people should have the manhood to give their votes to the party best calculated to bring these results. You must judge parties by the [hand-written insert: body of this party] and not be individuals composing them. You must judge parties by the acts of the party in relation to National policies, not be mere party promises. On what standard the Democratic party deserves the support of thoughtful men at this time, and the negro vote would do itself honor to support the Democratic ticket for this reason, without expecting of having any reward whatever except the establishment of honest, faithful government.

The colored people should not permit themselves to be regarded as the personal asset of any party, but should exercise their rights with intelligent self-direction for the general welfare. The Democratic party now stands for the rule of the people, the government of the people, by the people and for the people – and this is exactly what Abraham Lincoln stood for as shown by his prayer on the field of Gettysburg. I should be glad to see the colored people rise to a full appreciation of the value of the suffrage.

Yours very truly,
R. L. Owen

The Haskell campaign supplements explained:

“The records agains show that in the matter of democracy’s fight for white man’s government in Oklahoma that Senator Owen not only then bolted the will of democracy but that he is still in active opposition to democratic principles ... is any man warranted in using the official influence given him by the democratic party to make war on the declarations and principles of that party? ... the failure to adopt the grandfather clause would have left such counties as Seminole, Okfuskee, Okmulgee, Creek, Wagoner, Nowata, Muskogee, McIntosh, Cherokee, Sequoyah, Atoka, Choctaw, McCurtain, and doubtless many others in such condition overrun by ignorant ‘nigger’ voters colonized by and subject to the will and political dictation of such bosses as Jim Harris and Frank Greer that any one of the above counties would not in all probability have elected a single democratic officer in the campaign of nineteen hundreded and ten.”

So Haskell wanted the 1912 Democrat senate primary to turn on African American disfranchisement. Governor Haskell took credit for it, Senator Owen seemingly opposed. Owen defeated Haskell solely with Democrat votes, almost two to one – 80,204 to 44, 483, 64.3% to 35.6%. More evidence Oklahomans, even Oklahoma Democrat voters, did not favor disfranchisement. Was this as Russell intended? We must assume it was. If so, Russell Russell did have a subtle political mind. He can be credited with ending Charles Haxell’s political career.
Figure 1. “Let Democracy Know the Truth” and Senator Robert L. Owen Letter

LET DEMOCRACY KNOW THE TRUTH

A few weeks ago Hon. Charles B. Peters in his newspaper (the Hominy News), complained of Senator Owen’s disloyalty to the democratic party, of his attempt to secure the recognition of his precinct club organizations by the Democratic National Committee, and other matters. Promptly in response to Mr. Peters’ editorial Senator Owen branded Peters’ statements untruthful and unreliable and made the statement that Mr. Haskell was responsible for the Peters statement.

The records again show that in the matter of democracy’s fight for white man’s government in Oklahoma, that Senator Owen not only then bolted the will of the democracy but that he is still in open and active opposition to democratic principles on this question, and as conclusive proof of this fact we present below the true photographic copy of a letter written by Senator Owen to the Editor of the Saturday Evening Tribune, a colored newspaper published at the City of Muskogee.

On a question so important to the democracy and to the homes of the people of the State of Oklahoma, is any man warranted in using the official influence given him by the democratic party to make war on the declarations and principles of that party? It is a well known fact that during the years nineteen hundred and eight and nineteen hundred and nine up to the adoption of the grandfather clause, that sheening republican politicians were organized and actively engaged in colonizing Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas ignorant “niggers” in various parts of the State of Oklahoma, so that the failure to adopt the grandfather clause would have left such counties as Seminole, Okfuskee, Okmulgee, Creek, Wagoner, Nowata, Muskogee, McIntosh, Cherokee, Sequoyah, Atoka, Choctaw, McCurtain, and doubtless many others in such condition overrun by ignorant “nigger” voters colored by and subject to the will and political dictation of such bosses as Jim Harris and Frank Greer that any one of the above named counties would not in all probability have elected a single democratic officer in the campaign of nineteen hundred and ten. Not only the above counties but success in the colonizing of ignorant negroes in these counties would have simply meant spreading into the other counties of the state until Oklahoma, the land of the beautiful sunshine, would have been beyond the power of redemption a republic state dominated by republican machine bosses sustained by the votes of imported ignorant “niggers.”

ROBERT L. OWEN
CHAIRMAN

United States Senate,
COMMITTEE ON PACIFIC RAILROADS.

March 11th, 1912.
My dear Sir:

I immediately answer your very sensible letter.

The colored people have been used against their own welfare by the Republican party. The Republican party itself has been used by commercial and financial interests in the United States to build up gigantic fortunes at the expense of the individual citizens. The results are manifest — gigantic fortunes on one side and difficulty in making a living on the other side.

There are many reasons why colored men should support the Democratic party. The controlling reason is this; that with all the faults of partisan hotheaded Democrats the Democracy fundamentally stands for the rights of man against privilege, stands for equal rights to all and special privilege to none. Privilege to some means injury to others and privilege to some means always privilege to the powerful, the rich, the strong, and never privilege to the weak and poor. This being true, the mass of men should support the party that stands for the mass of men.
I confess, frankly, that the grandfather clause which prevents the ignorant colored man from voting ought to prevent also the ignorant white man from voting, and that the race discrimination in favor of the ignorant white man must naturally offend the ignorant negro man.

It requires patriotism and generosity for the negro to ignore this apparent race discrimination. It is to the interest, however, of all men belonging to the weaker classes to do away with privilege, and the Democratic party is the best agency at present to accomplish this.

The colored people should have the manhood to give their votes to the party best calculated to bring these results. You must judge parties by the VOTES and not by individuals composing them. You must judge parties by the acts of the party in relation to National policies, not by mere party promises. On this standard the Democratic party deserves the support of thoughtful men at this time, and the negro vote would do itself honor to support the Democratic ticket for this reason, without expectation of having any reward whatever except the establishment of honest, faithful government.

The colored people should not permit themselves to be regarded as the personal asset of any party, but should exercise their rights with intelligent self-direction for the general welfare. The Democratic party now stands for the rule of the people, the government of the people, by the people and for the people — and this is exactly what Abraham Lincoln stood for as shown by his prayer on the field of Gettysburg. I should be glad to see the colored people rise to a full appreciation of the value of the suffrage.

Yours very truly,

[Signature]
By 1913 complaints about Russell’s administration at Taft surfaced.

“Eight prominent colored citizens of Taft have signed a protest submitted to Governor Cruce against the retention of S. Douglas Russell as superintendent of the colored school for deaf and dumb and orphan students, located at that place. Russell is considered one of the most highly educated negroes in the state and until statehood had been a republican. He became dissatisfied with his party’s fate and went over to the democrats and has been a force in politics since that time.”

By 1914 Russell had moved on. Into the 1980s, however, his namesake and grandson was still in the Taft area.

Andrew Jackson (A. J.) Smitherman

![Image of Andrew Jackson (A. J.) Smitherman and family]
Andrew Jackson (A. J.) Smitherman, between 1960 and 1961, began writing his autobiography, publishing 39 instalments in his *Empire Star*, a Buffalo, New York weekly. He died before finishing. Myrna Colette Magliulo draws on this for her account of Smitherman’s childhood.

Born in Childersburg, Alabama in 1883. His father

“was a businessman engaged in the manufacturing of charcoal with 80 employees. He also conducted a general store/commissary where all of the employees did their trading. When Andrew was a small boy his parents moved to Oklahoma/Creek - Muskogee Nation territory. His father worked as a coalminer, his mother a school teacher. Andrew was the second eldest of eleven children.”

He worked with his father in Lehigh mining coal. Lehigh, in present day Coal County, was then part of the Choctaw Nation’s Atoka County. There is some confusion concerning his education. Magliulo has him going to Centerville, Iowa.

“His mother was opposed to the idea of him working in the coalmines and insisted he get an education. He was then sent to Centerville, Iowa where he received his primary and secondary education.”

Centerville, itself, was also a coal mining center. A 1915 biographical entry, which we can assume Smitherman himself provided, has his primary education in the Birmingham, Alabama public schools and his high school in Centerville. He attended the University of Kansas and Northwestern, obtaining a law degree from LaSalle University.

Smitherman returned to statehood Oklahoma in 1908, becoming protégé to William H. Twine in Muskogee. As Twine’s law clerk and manager of Twine’s *Muskogee Cimeter*, Smitherman took on ‘The Guardianship Racket.’ In the territorial period oil drilling made Muskogee-Creek freedmen’s land rights valuable. Whites would arrange with district judges to be guardians of freedmen children with the claim the parents are incompetent. Smitherman found more than 3,000 such guardianships with over $100,000,000 stolen. Creek freedman Warrior A. Rentie, founder and editor of the *Muskogee Pioneer*, with his wife and eight children were allotted 1,600 acres of Creek land (160 acres per person) with an estimated $120,000 yearly royalties. A white had gained guardianship over Rentie’s children through the Creek County court. With Twine and Smitherman’s help Rentie, became the first of his race in eastern Oklahoma to gain guardianship over his own children. With Rentie as President and
Smitherman as secretary, the Negro Guardianship League developed strategies to fight the guardianship racket.\textsuperscript{135}

Smitherman worked for W. H. Twine until 1911 when he started the \textit{Muskogee Star}. The next year he moved his newspaper to Tulsa, renaming it the \textit{Tulsa Star}.\textsuperscript{136} Unlike Republican Twine, Smitherman was a Democrat, something strongly reflected in his newspaper editorially, in Democrat election support and advertising. Democrat patronage made Smitherman a Tulsa County Justice of the Peace. Governor Robertson’s 1920 Inter-racial Conference of 50 African Americans and 10 whites included Smitherman.\textsuperscript{137} Democrat patronage also briefly placed him among the State Capital janitors.\textsuperscript{138}

\textbf{The Tulsa Race Riot – Massacre}

Oklahoma accused Smitherman of instigating the Tulsa riot-massacre of May – June 1921. First, in September 1920, regarding the Oklahoma City lynching of an African American prisoner, he wrote

“While the boy was in jail and while there was danger of mob violence any set of citizens had a legal right – it was their duty – to arm themselves and march in a body to the jail and apprise the sheriff or jail of the purpose of their visit to take life if need be to uphold the law and protect the prisoner.”\textsuperscript{139}

Second, when a Tulsa County African American prisoner appeared threatened with lynching, African Americans, meeting in Smitherman’s office, decided to arm themselves and march in a body to the Tulsa County Jail to protect the prisoner.\textsuperscript{140} Afterwards Smitherman gave a Tennysonesque account. Below are the last few verses.

“... Tulsa with her teeming millions
Paid the toll for racial strife,
But her black men won a victory
With their blood they paid the price.

Nobly they had stopped a lynching,
Taught a lesson for all time.
Saved a man the Court has since found
Innocent of any crime.

Though they fought the sacrificial
Fight, with banners flying high,
Yet the thing of more importance
Is the way they fought – and why?"141

Oklahoma Democrat Attorney General S. P. Freeling tried to extradite an African American, Charles T. Smithie, held in Minnesota for alleged crimes related to the Tulsa Race Riot-Massacre. As part of the process Freeling gave what must be considered the contemporary ‘official’ account of events.

“A negro boy was charged and arrested, with making an assault upon a white girl in an elevator, and delivered to the custody of the Sheriff of Tulsa County. The assault was not one of that serious nature which the mind usually associates with such an offense when such a charge is made. An article appeared in an afternoon paper, stating that the charge had been made and that the defendant was in custody.

Various black men living north of the Frisco tracks in Tulsa, phoned the sheriff, asking if there would be mob violence, and were told that there would not be. Later, in the evening, a crowd of white people, consisting of curiosity seekers, and parties driving cars, stopped in the vicinity of the jail. The crowd was orderly, and there was not the slightest sign of any attempt at mob violence on their part. The negro population became inflamed and marched upon the scene armed with pistols and rifles. The Sheriff had some conversation with one or two of them, but no effort was made to disarm any of the belligerents. They left the scene, however, returning later in great numbers, flourishing revolvers and guns, and intimidating white people, and marched on the principal streets of the city in military formation, and armed to the teeth. This enraged the white population, who had made not the slightest attempt to lynch anyone, nor disturb the negro population; but this action of the negroes, undoubtedly precipitated the action of the white people and as the white population began to fire, it gave opportunity to the lowest elements of the white population to pillage and murder. ...

In my opinion, there is no prejudice in Tulsa County, and I feel that a perfectly fair trial can be had there. The white citizens immediately began to repair the damage which had been done and the very best men in Tulsa County took charge of the situation. ... So far as any mob violence is concerned, this is out of the question."142
If the events of 31 May – 1 June 1921 were to be framed as ‘started’ by African Americans, A. J. Smitherman would be candidate for ‘the instigator.’ From the viewpoint of Democrat White Supremacists, platoons of African American men ‘armed to the teeth’ marching to intimidate whites would push the whites beyond their endurance. Violence was inevitable. We should notice even Freeling notes it was the whites, not the African Americans, who opened fire. In the end Minnesota did not extradite Smithie.

Smitherman greatly feared arrest and extradition. As a result he stayed in hiding, fearful his address be made public. Curiously, it was Tulsa Tribune editor Richard Lloyd Jones who most vigorously pursued him in Boston. Jones called Smitherman a “Bad Actor” and fugitive with outstanding extradition warrants. Curious because afterwards Jones’ editorial in his Tulsa Tribune was blamed for inciting the violence.

Democrat Attorney General S. Prentiss Freeling, his team of assistants, Kathryn Van Leuven, George S. Short, and Tom Wallace along with Republican Assistant County Attorney John Goldsberry, procured a grand jury indictment against Smitherman. By then Smitherman had fled north, eventually settling in Buffalo, New York. There he established himself as a community leader, newspaper editor and poet until his 1961 death. Oklahoma’s fugitive arrest warrant was not honored. The warrant was lifted in 2007 through efforts of Buffalo, New York African Americans.

**John R. Hogan**

Republicans lost heavily in elections leading to statehood and after. They elected only 12 of the 112 Constitutional Convention delegates and 23 of the 153 first legislature. None of the state-wide elected officials were Republican. Democrats quickly instituted Jim Crow and disfranchisement. For African American Republicans it was a time for soul searching, confusion and finger-pointing. A 1910 African American convention in Chickasha tried to hash it out. Some speakers blamed the Republicans.

“Those who believed that the negro race should join the socialist party predominated ... and elected J. H. Hogan (sic. John R.) of this city as chairman and C. A. Buchanan of Guthrie secretary. ... Jas. A. Johnson was elected permanent chairman and C. A. Buchanan secretary. ... George Crowell and Chairman Hogan almost came to blows ... delegates gathered ... and loudly denounced Hogan and charged that he was attempting to sell the race into political slavery. W. R. Fulbright of El Reno [said] ... ‘The republicans voted for the constitution and this has
permitted the ‘Jim Crow’ law and the ‘grandfather clause.’ The negro is divided on religion and if they will divide on politics it will be better for the race. The socialists fought hard to defeat the ‘grandfather clause’ and we should be willing to support them this fall. They are our friends.’ ... Rev. Kersh ... was reported as being opposed to the negroes leaving the republican party and was bitterly opposed to Hogan’s resolution [that African Americans abandon the Republicans and join with the Socialists].“ 149

By 1911 Hogan had moved to the Democrats, serving as treasurer to the Oklahoma Publicity Committee of the National League of Negro Democrats.150 The Democrats found places for him within their African American patronage.

“Professor John R. Hogan of the negro A. and M. university at Langston, has been very busy the last few days, circulating petitions ... on the new election law among the negroes of Logan county and has notified President [Inman] Page of the Langston school that he will not be able to report for duty at the beginning of the school term there as ‘Mr. Williams [Robert L. Williams, Oklahoma Chief Justice and Democratic candidate for governor] wants him for a few days.’ ... Hogan was a republican before statehood, but was one of the negro politicians in Oklahoma to ‘see the light.’ He was a strong Cruce [winning Democratic gubernatorial candidate] worker in the 1910 campaign, running a negro paper in Chickasha at the time, and was rewarded with a janitorship during the 1911 legislature and later with a position on the Langston faculty.”151

By 1914 Hogan was President of the Negro Industrial Association speaking in Chandler and other places advocating “a state reform school for wayward negro youth by the next state administration.”152 His efforts were on behalf of the winning Williams campaign for governor.

In March 1918 Hogan’s career suffered a reverse.

“John R. Hogan, negro, former professor in the Langston college was convicted in federal court at Oklahoma City this week on a charge of aiding in the defrauding the government of postal funds. Hogan and William G. Jordan, former postmaster and who served as Hogan’s treasurer when the later was mayor of the negro town were indicted together, charged with issuing over fifty money orders from the Langston postoffice and cashing the orders for almost $5,000. Jordan pleaded guilty and testified against his old friend Hogan.”153
Sentenced to two years in the penitentiary, it was two years before Hogan was able to ‘breeze’ into offices of The Black Dispatch announcing he will “make a tour of Kansas and Missouri in the furtherance of a proposition that he has on foot.” In 1922 The Black Dispatch started carrying advertisements for his book The Builder “One of the greatest books of the age.” I have not been able to locate a copy. Soon after, in 1923, newspaper reports surfaced.

“Licenses to four negro school teachers alleged to have been sold for from $50 to $165 each by John R. Hogan of Guthrie were revoked Saturday by Superintendent of Public Instruction M. A. Nash.... Hogan of Guthrie who was alleged to have been a recipient of a teachers’ license, as a political favor ...”

Later, after Hogan died, a fuller account came out in Harlow’s Weekly. The concern was the candidacy of former Democrat State Superintendent of Schools R. H. Wilson for the Oklahoma City school board. One of the scandals during Wilson’s administration was the sale of teachers’ certificates by John R. Hogan. Harlow’s Weekly quotes an editorial in the African American Black Dispatch:

‘The presence in the city School Board race of the candidacy of H. R. Wilson, former State Superintendent, should arouse the ire of every negro in the second ward in Oklahoma City, who knows history. Wilson is the man who elevated to official life and high position of authority, while in office, J. R. Johnson at the Taft school and the late John R. Hogan. It was Wilson who saw to it that these men were placed out at Langston University to embarrass the then administration of the institution.

The record of John R. Hogan in his life is known to every school teacher in this state. Hogan trafficked in state teachers’ certificates. Where Hogan got his authority so to do is a much mooted question. It is argued that some subordinate in the office of the State Superintendent furnished Hogan certificates to peddle to the negro teachers of the state. The investigation fostered to determine who was responsible for this crime was never conclusive, but it is an open secret that John R. Hogan went from one end of the commonwealth of Oklahoma to another with his pockets crammed full of state teachers’ certificates, during the period when H. R. Wilson was Superintendent of Public Instruction.”

Ralph Ellison’s 1944 short story “Flying Home” tells of what today we call a Tuskegee Airman in training who crashes his plane.

“Now the humiliation would come. When you must have them judge you, knowing that they never accept your mistakes as your own but hold it against your whole race – that was humiliation.”
Roscoe Dunjee called John R. Hogan a man “of much fame and note in this state.” He had risen high. His disgrace was a humiliation for Oklahoma African Americans striving for a place of respect within White Supremacy.

Jeff. D. (J. D.) Randolph

As a boy, about 1925, Ralph Waldo Ellison worked as an assistant to Mr. Jeff. D. Randolph, an African American janitor at the Oklahoma Capitol’s State Law Library. Ellison recalled that legislators, all of whom were white, come to consult Randolph on legal questions. “I was amazed Mr. Randolph had come to know so much about the subject. That was a tantalizing mystery . . . .” Who was this Jeff. D. Randolph? What trajectory brought him as janitor to the State Law Library?

Jeff D. Randolph’s father, Benny D. Randolph was a Cherokee, his mother, Tee-He a Creek Indian and an African American. Benny D. Randolph likely was also part African American as he was foreman on the Randolph Plantation in Kentucky from which he took his name. Jeff D. Randolph was born in Kentucky 19 October 1862. Randolph males appear to have acquired education through private tutors, family and some public school. He traveled from Gallatin, Tennessee, reaching Oklahoma City January 25, 1890, niner months after tie city’s founding and six months before its incorporation.

J. D. Randolph, a teacher in the colored school, was elected a First Ward delegate to the Oklahoma City 1892 Republican nomination caucus. In 1893 Randolph was featured speaker at a large picnic celebrating Haiti emancipation. He served as President (1894) of the Oklahoma County Association of Colored Teachers. By 1894 Randolph acquired the title ‘Professor’ by virtue of his appointment to the faculty of the county colored normal. A such he shared the platform at that year’s Emancipation Celebration with Republican Territorial Delegate to Congress Dennis Flynn. Professor Randolph’s address was “Mixed Schools Have Always Been a Failure.” In 1895 the Eastern Baptist Oklahoma Association met in Choctaw, Oklahoma County, for the purpose of establishing the Choctaw Normal and Industrial College. Randolph was named Dean of the Normal Department and College President. Reverend J. W. Dunjee [father of Roscoe Dunjee] was named Dean of the Industrial Department and Miss Drusilla Dunjee, Librarian. In 1897 Territorial Governor William Cary Renfrow announced Randolph
“principle of the Choctaw normal and industrial college, has been appointed one of the commissioners from Oklahoma Territory to represent the colored people in the negro department of the Tennessee Centennial, to be held at Nashville from May to October.”

In 1898 the Democrat Oklahoma Leader carried the item

“The colored people of Oklahoma county. Led by William R. Fulbright, one of the most intelligent colored men in the territory, have repudiated the lily white republican nominees and have put out a ticket of their own. Prof. Suicer, J. D. Randolph and other leading colored men met at the probate court house Saturday night and poured hot shot into the lily whites for more than two hours amid the most enthusiastic demonstration.”

As statehood approached African Americans feared for their future under a Democrat drafted constitution. Randolph was one of the African American leaders establishing their own organization independent of the Republicans.

“The Inter-Territorial Negro Protective League convention ... Langston, Okla. on August 20 ... 300 delegates ... S. Douglas Russell, Pres. Geo. F. Robinson, Vice-P. L. A. Bell, Secretary. Executive Committee – J. Coody Johnson, Wewoka; W. H. Twine, Muskogee; M. A. Sorrell, Vinita; J. D. Springer, Ardmore; Geo. F. Robinson, Watonga; E. O. Tylor (sic. Tyler), Kingfisher; J. D. Randolph, Oklahoma City; C. T. Tallafarro, Perry; Jno. Lampton, Pawnee; Chas. Yates, Enid; E. E. McDaniel, S. McAlester and E. I. Saddler, of Guthrie.”

Randolph, however, remained a Republican and was elected delegate to the Oklahoma City and County and congressional district conventions. That last convention passed a resolution

“... that we endorse the present excellent school system of Oklahoma, and favor unreservedly separate schools for white and colored children, with equal school facilities for all.”

This position agreed with Randolph’s 1894 Emancipation Day address. Randolph, along with Dr. A. Baxter Whitby, Professor W. A. Whittaker, Reverend J. N. Abby and Professor J. T. Whitaker, was again on the 1909 Emancipation Day speakers platform. When Oklahoma City Democrat Commissioners began seeking to establish a separate ‘Jim Crow’ parks and library Randolph joined with NAACP Branch President Dr. A. Baxter Whitby speaking out against it.

By 1922 Randolph had joined with J. R. Hogan, E. I. Saddler and a number of other African Americans to support Jack Walton for governor along with the entire Democrat slate.

“The rock-ribbed southern democrat of yesterday is the stalwart republican of today. The moss-back republican of Maine is today the thoughtful thinking democrat. ... The sentiment
surrounding the party of Abraham Lincoln has been choked out by the ‘Lilly White’ guardians of party principles and the Negro who lives in this day must teach these usurpers that the party was built for all men who think right, black and white alike. ... Too long the curse of the race, politically, has been the cheap political scalawag who would go up to the white man and debase himself by holding out a filthy hand for the paltry sum that might fall as a cheap price for the vote of the race. But that day is past. ... Now is the time for the intelligent, thoughtful, race-loving Negro to come forward and assert himself politically that there might come those higher achievements of political, economical and sociological opportunities. There must be new leadership and to this end there is born a state committee composed of ... J. D. Randolph ... which has for its primary purpose the election of Hon. J. C. (Jack) Walton as the governor of the state of Oklahoma, and with him every candidate on his ticket ...”

This statement was issued after the Democrat primary. It was an endorsement of the Democrat ticket, not a personal endorsement of Jack Walton. There is no solid substance in the address. It points to no action or policy of the Democrats attractive to African Americans. It cannot because there was none. The complaint the Republicans were ‘Lilly White’ is vague rhetoric. Among other things Republicans were successfully resisting Democrat attempts to disfranchise African Americans. One desideratum of party faithful is to be chosen delegate or alternate to the national convention. It would be decades before Oklahoma Democrats would send an African American. The Republicans, on the other hand, elected African American delegates and or alternates P. F. Tyler (Watonga) from the Oklahoma Territory and A. G. W. Sango (Muskogee) from Indian Territory in 1900; Amos Hall (Tulsa) 1932 and A. G. W. Sango (Tulsa) again in 1940. Other Oklahoma African Americans attended Republican national conventions on their own.
Jim Noble was a fixture in Oklahoma territorial and early statehood government. He was simultaneously obscure and well-known. As an early Oklahoman his legend is as relevant as the truth. An African American, he came to Guthrie, Oklahoma Territory from Camden, Arkansas. By luck and pluck he was appointed “Messenger for the Territory” and later “Messenger for the State,” was adopted by the Seminole Nation as an honorary member, was present at the 1905 Muskogee Sequoyah Convention and “all of the public and private committee meetings of the Constitutional Convention ...” He was a Baptist deacon, steadfast Democrat and even enlisted in Alfalfa Bill Murray’s elite Chickasaw Squirrel (sic.) Rifles. Noble served in some capacity in the territorial and state capitol until his retirement. He remained a Capitol fixture into the 1940s.
Jim Noble told Waldo B. Phillips stories over the decades of their friendship. This is one.

“In 1910 the State voted to move the capital from Guthrie to Oklahoma City. ... the national guards had been placed around the building. This was done because whispers had spread that interested parties had planned to steal the seal and take it to Oklahoma City. [The Constitution stated that the capitol is where the seal is and that the one who has the seal is the governor.] All persons except Jim Noble, the Negro messenger for the State, were searched when entering and leaving the building. Governor Haskell called W. B. Anthony, then Secretary of State, and gave him the seal, telling him to take it to Oklahoma City where the two would meet. Mr. Anthony pleaded that this was dangerous and refused to do it. At this point they called Jim. ‘Jim, you have complete freedom in and out of the building. This is the State Seal. Take it to Oklahoma City and we will be waiting for you. Don’t ride the bus, train, or in cars of your friends. Walk, run, hitchhike or hobo. Remember Jim, you are Governor of the State of Oklahoma and the future of your State depends on you.’ As he was going out of the building the guards began to joke with Jim about the package he was carrying. They asked him if it were whiskey he was taking to a party. Jim said, ‘Yes, a real big party.’ ... Entering the new state
capitol, Jim went to the governor’s chambers where he was greeted by the Governor. The Governor explained to him that he should stand in history among the State’s other great men. But Jim knew and understood that he never would. Receiving the seal, Governor Haskell said, ‘Thank you, Governor Noble, the State is proud of you.’ ‘No, thank you Governor Haskell, it was my pleasure.’

In 1920 Roscoe Dunjee, then still a Republican, wrote an editorial about Jim Noble. Basically, it was a complaint. White officials took “the man who cuts his lawn or the woman who washes his linen” as representing African American thinking.

“So long as the white man continues to ignore those of our group who are the best prepared to represent the race, just so long will the white man have the wrong notion of what the Negro calls social justice and the Golden Rule.”

But Dunjee goes on.

“Every intelligent Negro knows that there is a certain class of Negroes who can get the ear of the white man when he can not get in range of that same white man’s presence. Go out to our state capital and you will find out there is a man illiterate, who has no standing among our group, and yet he boasts of what he can do with the executive heads of the various departments and if you think that he is just kidding himself and that his chances are no better than yours, do this: TRY TO PUT SOME PROGRAM ACROSS OUT AT THE STATE HOUSE, THEN AFTER YOU HAVE FAILED, COME BACK AND GET JIM NOBLE AND HE WILL FIX THE WHOLE THING IN TEN MINUTES AND BUTT INTO EVERY OFFICE OUT THERE WITHOUT KNOCKING.”

While the Democrat officials joked with Jim Noble it seemed a friendly familiarity. To the Guthrie Democrat Leader Jim Noble was not an individual, rather a stereotypical African American, subject to Rastus style ridicule.

“Jim Noble, the negro janitor, is considerable worried since Dr. Baldwin stated that Jim had ancestors, and has asked the genial doctor to examine him and see if that was really what ‘ailed’ him. Jim also denies the report circulated among the members that he was guilty of mastification’ at the dinner table.”

“Jim Noble, the negro chief janitor thinks he would look well as porter of the state dispensary. A resolution was passed by the house endorsing him for the position. Jim will not leave as long as
the house is in session, however, as he says he does not want the legislature to have to stop because of his leaving it ‘laid down in de darkness.’ "185

“Speaker Murray keeps the House busy until the shades of evening are falling nowadays. Frequently the hands of the clock ae pointing to the hour of seven before the house adjourns for the day. Jim Noble says, ‘Hit jis’ seem lak Mistah Murray is gwine t’ keep us legislatures heah all night – he suttinly does hang on powerful.’ "186

“The speaker’s [Bill Murray] reference to Jim Noble showed a feeling of justice and appreciation of the efforts of even the humblest of mankind on the part of the speaker that brought forth a hearty cheer. The members are unanimous that Jim has been a faithful, hard working darkey throughout the session.”187

“Open Letter by Jim Noble. I hereby make clamorous application to be dead headed as a colored Handy Andy, on the Oklahoma special to the democratic national convention at Denver. I done been through the constitutional convention and the first legislature, and am a good democrat. I solemnly pledge myself, in case I am chosen for the position sought, to furnish the entire delegation with fresh chicken throughout the trip. This, no matter how fast the train runs, nor how short the stops at stations, nor how high the fowls roost, for ‘I’ se a natchel baw’n chicken lifter and watermelons, too. Yours Ahopin’ James Noble” "188

Jim Noble told his friend Waldo B. Phillips being African American he hid his education, “he had to play the role of ‘Brer Rabbit,’ that is, appear to be submissive while actually being dominant.”189

Jim Noble and the white Democrats acted a fantasy of antebellum gentility. There was an incident in which State Auditor Frank Carter stopped Jim Noble’s salary for some technical reason. As the eighth Session of the legislature opened Carter presented Noble with a new frock coat as a peace offering. Jim Noble became the best dressed person in the building.190 Waldo Phillips tells another story.

“On one occasion in 1944 the State employees and their friends ... arranged a party at which they were to give Jim a one-way ticket to Camden, Arkansas. Jim at this timed refused. He stated that he would rather stay at Oklahoma City and never see his home again if he had to accept a one-way ticket. They explained to him that this was a joke and gave him a round-trip
ticket and spending money. This kind of party and gifts was always happening to Jim. He would accept them in his stride. As the fun subsided he would return to his favorite chair in front of the governor’s chambers and rock away the remaining part of the day.”

Adam E. Patterson

There are inconsistencies in the available biographical information for Adam Edward (A. E.) Patterson. He was born, 1877 or 1880, in Walthall, Mississippi. His father worked there for the father of the future Oklahoma Senator Thomas P. Gore, born nearby. He attended public schools in Kansas City and Pueblo, Colorado. He earned an LL. B. in 1900 from Kansas University. In 1900 he arrived as an attorney in Guthrie to practice with R. Emmett Stewart before moving to Muskogee, Indian Territory. Or he was admitted to the Illinois Bar and practiced in Cairo, Illinois in 1902. He was elected an alternate delegate to the August 1905 African American Territorial Suffrage League Muskogee convention. The fifteen regular delegates included Muskogee luminaries W. A. Rentie, W. H. Twine and A. G. W. Sango. He joined W. H. Twine and R. Emmett Stewart, along with seventy-one other Muskogee lawyers and the Muskogee Republican Club writing President Theodore Roosevelt supporting the re-nomination of federal judge Charles W. Raymond. In 1907 Patterson was one of 19 African Americans, Including A. W. G. Sango, R. E. Stewart as well as 20 white delegates to the 1907 Tulsa Republican State Convention.
With statehood Patterson became a wealthy “lifelong Democrat,” was “prominent in democratic political circles [in Muskogee] through his having organized many democratic negro clubs in Oklahoma.” Democrat governor Haskell appointed Patterson to the first Board of Regents for the Colored Blind, Deaf and Orphans School in Taft.

Woodrow Wilson, inaugurated President in March 1913 got around to appointing African Americans to the positions traditionally theirs in July. Most prominent was the Registrar of the Treasury. This African American’s signature would appear on all United States paper currency. For an African American this was the plum of plums, the highest ranking African American in the federal government. After a careful vetting, Wilson sent Patterson’s name to the Senate for confirmation.

The *Sapulpa Evening Democrat*’s headline “President names Muskogee Coon to Succeed Vernon as Registrar of Treasury” signaled the nomination may not sit well with Oklahoma Democrats. In 1913 Oklahoma had six Democrat representatives and two Democrat senators, Robert L. Owen and Thomas P. Gore. Each of these made it clear they did not support the nomination. Representative Claude Weaver:

“... the God of Nature created the African race to be subordinate to the higher races. That the negro shall not govern in Oklahoma is written into the organic law. An amendment to the constitution of the state of Oklahoma was proposed, the sole purpose being to disfranchise the negro voter and it was carried by an overwhelming majority. Deep rooted alike as a primal instinct in the brain and the blood in the Indian and the Caucasian is the belief, and I share in that belief, that the enfranchisement of the negro is not only a menace to good government, but it is a crime against civilization. Thousands of white and Indian democrats of Oklahoma are humiliated at the thought that an Oklahoma negro shall be exalted above them to this high station.”

Congressmen C. D. Carter, Scott Farris, James Davenport:

“We were not consulted about the appointment of Patterson as Registrar of the Treasury and as soon as we learned of his appointment we entered a vigorous protest and have succeeded in getting the president to promise the withdrawal of the negro’s name.”

Apparently Congressman Joe B. Thompson did not need to burnish his white supremacist bona fides over the Patterson appointment. His energy was being directed toward segregating District of Columbia
African Americans and purging Oklahoma Republican postmasters. Senator Owen reaction was mild. In a phone call with Treasury Secretary McAdoo

“I answered the secretary that the appointment of Patterson from Oklahoma would be agreeable to me. But I advised the department by letter ... the appointment was objectionable to many of my colleagues and that I did not approve the policy of appointing a negro to this place.”

This left Congressman William H. Murray and Senator Thomas P. Gore. Murray took it upon himself to investigate how Adam Patterson’s name got to the President and who in Oklahoma sponsored him. Murray’s target was Senator Gore. Murray solicited letters from federal officials involved in the appointment showing Senator Gore, given the opportunity, failed to sufficiently oppose the nomination. Blind Senator Gore’s response was the quip “I can smell a negro if I cannot see him.” Gore elaborated

“I have been accused of being the father of the grandfather clause. While the charge is not entirely true, in as much as I did not believe it was strong enough, I labored for the adoption of the amendment.”

Republican congressmen Byrd McGuire and Dick T. Morgan left the ugly episode entirely to the Democrats.

Patterson said he withdrew “to make possible reelection of senatorial friends.”

By 1915 Patterson had formed the law firm Patterson and Wilson in Chicago. With the First World War he was commissioned one of 104 African American captains, subsequently promoted major with the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) African American 92nd Infantry Division. He was the first African American Army Judge Advocate. He was elected to the Cook County Democratic Central Committee in 1922 and served as Assistant Corporation Counsel for Chicago for over 25 years. He died in Chicago, age 70, in 1949.

**African American Democrats Within White Supremacy**

What of what Roscoe Dunjee called “those of our group who are the best prepared to represent the race”? A number of Territorial and early statehood African American leaders were or became Democrats. Generally, these were rewarded with patronage. A. J. Smitherman’s *Tulsa Star* was supported by Democrat political advertising. S. Douglas Russell got, as he desired, the headship of Industrial Institute for the Deaf, Blind, and Orphans of the Colored Race in Taft. Adam E. Patterson got
an appointment to that school’s board of regents. John R. Hogan got a professorship at Langston. Democrats, in the form of Commissioner of Charities and Corrections William D. Matthews came to the rescue of J. C. Leftwich after a devastating Tulsa World exposé. Okfuskee County Democrats gave O. H. Bradley local appointments Boley voters would never award a Democrat. Jim Noble had a life sinecure from territorial days through his death in the 1940s. But when Woodrow Wilson fulfilled a campaign promise to name an African American Registrar of the Treasury, Adam E. Patterson, Oklahoma African Americans discovered the limit of their place within White Supremacy.

There was a pattern to White Supremacy largess. Unlike Republicans who were willing, in form at least, to treat African American elites as equals. Democrats were able rarely, if ever. Under White Supremacy African Americans were allowed authority or influence only within the context of African American institutions. If African Americans were to participate in Democrat party politics it was through African American ad hoc organizations whose influence worked downward to the grassroots, not upward to party leadership. An exception to this rule must be S. Douglas Russell. His masterful use of an obscure African American newspaper extended his reach, decisively, to the highest level of state politics.

We can capture the White Supremacist vision of the proper relationship between the races. This was achieved with Jim Noble at the capital, the faithful ‘house darky’ with whom the Democrat officials could act out their Antebellum fantasy. Could other educated African American leaders be brought into the fantasy? The answer was yes. A. J. Smitherman, Jeff Randolph, O. H. Bradley and John R. Hogan were all brought into the Capital as janitors. Smitherman left after a few months. Hogan gained an appointment as Langston Professor. The others stayed on.

Consider the question Harlow’s Weekly raised in 1920. Did Oklahoma Democrats offer the consideration to be expected from a race superior in civilization to their own African American Democrats? There was no uplifting, no encouragement. Only pushing down those they could. That implies a fragile White Supremacy, indeed. How were talented, ambitious African Americans to navigate smug oppression? Hogan and Leftwich crossed lines they should not have crossed. That was on them and no one else. We can wonder if things would have been different in a less oppressive environment.

There was a price to pay for apostasy. Those fiercely Republican territorial African American leaders – could they be trusted by the yet Republican African American masses? Their speeches and editorials
rang false in the context of Democrat Jim Crow and disfranchisement. Lily white Republicans? Did Democrats bring African Americans into party delegations and nominations? Secretary of War William Howard Taft and the 25\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Regiment ill treatment at Brownsville? What about Woodrow Wilson, who defeated Taft for President only to segregate the Civil Service, forced the 92\textsuperscript{nd} and 93\textsuperscript{rd} Infantry Divisions to fight under French, not American command? Could the apostates point to a single instance of the Democrat march to White Supremacy they were able to mitigate? Russell tried and failed to ameliorate Jim Crow through the Corporation Commission. When Russell asked politely for Democrats to stop publicly humiliating his people, Democrat Attorney General Charles West advised African Americans should stop trying to vote or seek public office. Smitherman fled with his family to places unknown in fear of Democrat Attorney General Freeling’s extradition warrant.

Why, then, did some Oklahoma African Americans come to the Democrats? Other than reasons already outlined there is this reality. People find it difficult to foresee the extent to which their world could be turned upside down and shaken by ideology made manifest. Could African American college presidents, newspaper editors, elected officials imagine their place in the new order would be capital janitor?

1 I capitalize White Supremacy to distinguish the ideology and system implemented by Democrats from the then almost universal general belief whites were a superior race.


5 McCabe was from the African American community Nicodemus in Graham County where he served in local offices.


*Historic Preservation in Kansas Black Sites: A Beginning Point.* 1977. Topeka, KS: Kansas State Historical Society Page 23. Green Currin was born in Tennessee about 1847 and arrived in Kansas in 1877. He was a member of the Topeka Police Department.


This is an unfamiliar position in many states. Georgia statutes provide “The messenger shall perform such duties for the office of the Governor and for other state officers and such other service connected with the state business at the capitol as the Governor shall prescribe and he shall be governed by such rules and regulations as the Governor may adopt.” 2010 Georgia Code. TITLE 45 - PUBLIC OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES, CHAPTER 12 - GOVERNOR, ARTICLE 3 - APPOINTMENTS AND VACANCIES, § 45-12-58 - Governor’s messenger – Duties.


The *Langston City Herald* eulogized Eagleson: “ ... the old war horse associated with the intrepid McCabe instituted Langston and paved the way for much in freedom and experience and millions in money and homes. The Herald recognizing the present effort of its early day friend ...” “To Start Negro Town.” 1896. *Langston City Herald.* Saturday 7 March Page 1.


These were S. C. Younger, Okeene; J. A. Rouse, Hitchcock; O. E. Banks, Enid; Dr. R. W. Brown, Kingfisher; P. F. Tyler, Watonga; R. Emmett Steward, Guthrie; S. D. Russell, Langston; John C. Leftwich, Oklahoma City; Miss Parale Thompson, Watonga; G. N. Perkins, Guthrie; F. K. Bell, Altoona; A. J. Foster, Altoona; E. P. McCabe, Guthrie; C. T. Taliferro, Perry; Prof. Inman Page, Langston; W. H. Sampson, Wellston; Harry E. Lott, Chandler; Wiley Sexton, Pawnee; Greenberry Walbruff, Pawnee; S. Lucas, Jennings; G. W. T. Sawner, Chandler. “Delegates Named.” 1902. Labor Signal (Oklahoma City). Friday 30 May Page 8.


“Sango Baptist College.” 1904. Muskogee Phoenix. Sunday 25 December Page 8. Many of these youth were African American freedmen.


38 “Negroes Have Church College.” 1916. *Inola Register.* Thursday 28 September Page 3. R. H. Wilson earlier protested the appointment of an African American to a federal position. “If Oklahoma has not enough white men to fill her quota of appointments, give this place to some other state. Oklahoma democrats have always stood for a white man’s government. For God’s sake, let’s be consistent since we are in power.” “Wilson Opposes Negro Appointee.” *Britton Weekly Sentinel* Page. Thursday 31 July Page 3.


41 The white, Indian and negro numbers total 136, not 156 in the source. *Okfuskee County Race Problems.*” 1920. Harlow’s Weekly (Oklahoma City). Wednesday 18 February Pages 7-8.


46 “We Must Educate.” 1921 *Black Dispatch* (Oklahoma City. Thursday 22 September Page 8.


Judge George Napier Perkins - From Slaves to Soldiers and Beyond - Williamson County, Tennessee's African American History: Nancy Perkins Gardner: 1855-1944 - "I will be with you always!" (usctwillcotn.blogspot.com/2020/04/Nancy-perkins-gardner-1855.html).


For George Napier Perkins to be Nancy’s uncle, he had to be the brother either of her father or her mother, Proffit or Callie. For Cornelius Bradley to be her cousin, one of Cornelius’ parents needed to be a sibling of one of Nancy’s.


“Results of City Election.” 1904. *Oklahoma State Register* [Guthrie]. Thursday 7 April Page 1.


72 See Chapter on Okfuskee and Wagoner County voting.


80 “Governor’s Road Bill is Defeated.” 1919. Okfuskee County News [Okemah]. Thursday 8 May Page 1, 4.


82 Likely David J. Turner, Boley druggist and, by 1918, turned from Republican to Democrat. See chapter on Wagoner-Okfuskee voting.

83 Chambers v. State 1919 OK CR 231 Pages 243 – 245.  We may surmise should Chess Chambers been white he would have been acquitted or convicted of some misdemeanor on the evidence.


James S. Sherman was Taft’s Vice President, re-nominated in 1912. He died less than a week before the 1912 election. Columbia University President Nicholas Murray Butler replaced him on the ticket.


125 Haskell also took credit for removing the capital from Guthrie, a center of African American political influence, to Oklahoma City. Scales and Goble note the last years of Haskell’s governorship were marred by his subsequently dropped federal criminal indictment. James R. Scales and Danney Goble. 1982. Oklahoma Politics: A History. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press Page 50.


132 The biographical entry has Centerville, La, not la – which is obviously a typographical error. There is no Centerville, Louisiana. Frank Lincoln Mather. 1915. Who’s Who of the Colored Race: A General Biographical Dictionary of Men and Women of African Descent. Chicago, IL. Page 250.


Advertisement. 1922. The Black Dispatch (Oklahoma City) Thursday 31 August Page 6.

“Nash Cancels Fraudulent Teachers Certificates.” 1923. Oklahoma State Register (Guthrie) Thursday 26 April Page 3.

“Politics for Oklahoma City Schools?” 1929. Harlow’s Weekly (Oklahoma City) 16 March Pages 12 – 14.


“Hogan Comes to Town.” 1920. Black Dispatch (Oklahoma City). Friday 22 October Page 5.


Harry M. Dreyer’s interview with Jeff D. Randolph is preserved in the University of Oklahoma’s Western History Collections Indian Pioneer Papers, Volume 74 Pages 234 – 238. For our purposes Dreyer’s account is confusing. https://digital.libraries.ou.edu/whc/pioneer/ accessed 12 September 2021.


“Citizens Denounce Separate Library Scheme.”  1921. *Black Dispatch* (Oklahoma City) Thursday 29 September Page 1; “Patience on Library is Asked of Negroes.”  1921. *Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City). Saturday 29 October Page 3; “City Halts on Negro Request.”  1921. *Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City). Friday 28 October Page 14; For party control in Oklahoma City see “Democrats Win all Three Seats.”  1919 *Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City). Wednesday 2 April Page 1; however in 1921 Republicans won two commission races. “In the Commissioners race, party lines were completely obliterated. Negroes registered as republicans came out almost solidly for Mark H. Kesler and Ollie S. Wilson, the mayor’s candidates, while ‘dyed in the wool’ democrats boasted of ‘scratching the ticket’ for the first time in their lives.” “Parman and Moore Win in Landslide.”  1921. *Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City). Wednesday 6 April Page 1. Democrats won all five school board seats that year.


PoliticalGraveyard.com (1900, 1932, 1940). The delegate lists are incomplete. I had to rely on name recognition to identify African Americans.


Waldo B. Phillips. 1959. “Jim Noble: Oklahoma’s Negro ‘Governor’.” *The Phylon Quarterly* Volume 20, No. 1 (First Quarter) Pages 90 – 92, quote from Page 91. Phillips has the Convention in 1905. It was actually in 1906. “State House News.”  1920. *Black Dispatch* (Oklahoma City). Thursday 7 February Page 2. Messenger is an unfamiliar position in many states. Georgia statutes provide Georgia statutes provide “The messenger shall perform such duties for the office of the Governor and for other state officers and such other service connected with the state business at the capitol as the Governor shall prescribe and he shall be governed by such rules and regulations as the Governor may adopt.”  2010 Georgia Code. TITLE 45 - PUBLIC OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES, CHAPTER 12 – GOVERNOR, ARTICLE 3 - APPOINTMENTS AND VACANCIES, § 45-12-58 - Governor’s messenger – Duties.

“Commission Issued to James Noble, a Negro, As Member of Murray’s Squirrel Rifle Band.”  1910. *Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City). Saturday 23 July Page 6. The Chickasaw Squirrel (sic.) Rifles had its origin in the Constitutional Convention. William H. Murray told of a disputed Texas election won by a faction with a group called the Squirrel Rifles. Republican editor Walter Ferguson suggested Murray form a similar group to support Murray and the Constitution. It was done with Murray, General commanding and Ferguson, Adjutant. Keith L. Bryant tells us
Murray would hold periodic reunions and they remained faithful to Murray for decades. Keith L. Bryant, Jr. 1968. *Alfalfa Bill Murray*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press Pages 68, 89. The 1910 *Oklahoman* article was a complaint. “‘Suppose it required the Squirrel Rifles to prevent the election being stolen from Murray by these horrid, unprincipled election boards ... wouldn’t we have to mess in camp with Jim Noble? ... The very thought is horrifying ... Bill Murray ain’t on the square with me. He never told me that I should fight with nigger soldiers ...’”


190 “Jim Noble’s Also There.” 1921. *Oklahoma Leader* (Oklahoma City). Wednesday 5 January Page 3. The Victorian – Edwardian (1820 – 1920) frock coat extended to the knees with a tight waist, double breast, reverse collar and lapels cut from different cloth. The black coat was worn with charcoal grey pin-striped trousers.


195 “Muskogee Negro to be Registrar.” 1913. *Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City). Saturday 26 July Page 1. If at age 26 Patterson worked for a Colorado governor that would have to be roughly 1903 or 1906, depending on the year he was born. The governor would be Republican governors James H. Peabody or Jesse F. McDonald. However, Oklahoma newspapers report Patterson arriving in Guthrie to practice law with R. Emmett Stewart in 1900 and then moving to Muskogee. “Registrar Patterson Former Guthrie Man.” 1913. *Oklahoma Leader* (Guthrie). Thursday 31 July Page 3.


199 “Muskogee’s Delegation.” 1907. *Hartshorne Sun*. Thursday 8 August Page 5. The Hartshorne Sun called the white delegates “The lilly whites,” mocking the charges of some African Americans Republicans were Lilly White.


201 “Board of Regents.” 1909. *Muskogee Cimrter*. Friday 18 June Page 1. The other regents were E. J. Sadler and E. E. McAlister. S. Douglas Russell had been appointed President.


203 William Tecumseh Vernon, appointed by Theodore Roosevelt and continued under William Howard Taft. Taft appointed Vernon Supervisor of Indian and Negro Schools on a Reservation in Oklahoma in 1912.


205 “Patterson’s Name to be Withdrawn.” 1913. *Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City) Thursday 31 July Pages 1, 2.


210 Oliver Owen Kuhn. 1913. “Patterson’s Name to be Withdrawn.” *Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City). Thursday 31 July Page 1.

Most units of the division served alongside the French Army. The Wilson administration would not allow African American soldiers to serve alongside American white units.
