BLACK MIGRATION AS A RESPONSE TO REPRESSION: THE BACKGROUND FACTORS AND MIGRATION OF OKLAHOMA BLACKS TO WESTERN CANADA 1905-1912, AS A CASE STUDY.

ROBERT BRUCE SHEPARD

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BLACK MIGRATION AS A RESPONSE TO REPRESION:
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BY
ROBERT BRUCE SHEPARD
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The Head of the Department of History,
The University of Saskatchewan,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7N 0W0.
ABSTRACT

Between 1905 and 1912 several hundred black men, women, and children migrated from the United States to Western Canada. They came principally from Oklahoma, although there were some individuals and families from Kansas and Texas; and they settled in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Their exact numbers are difficult to determine, but the Canadian Census of 1921 showed one thousand four hundred and forty-four blacks living in the two prairie provinces in that year. 1 Their small trek was part of the larger movement of Afro-Americans out of the older Southern states from the Reconstruction period until after the First World War. They were former slaves and the descendents of ex-slaves who had moved west in the 1870's, 1880's, and 1890's trying to escape racial oppression, and find land.

This thesis argues that black migration was a response to repression, and was but one manifestation of Afro-American resentment at their condition. On the more immediate reasons for the black trek to Canada, the thesis examines why white Oklahomans sought to segregate and then disfranchise their black neighbours, and how they went about it. The black reaction to these developments, and how some black Oklahomans came to see Western Canada as a possible haven are scrutinized. The popular Western Canadian reaction to the black influx, and the Canadian Government's ultimately successful attempts to halt the flow are then examined.
FOOTNOTES

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PREFACE

Any discussion of slavery in the United States must take into account the two elastic factors of time and space. Slavery pre-dated the founding of the United States by over a century. It developed and changed as the English colonies evolved and as the United States grew. Geographically, slavery both expanded and receded. Whereas white Southern planters expanded the slavery domain as far west as Texas by the eve of the Civil War, their northern countrymen eradicated the institution in every state north of Virginia and spread the free territory to the edge of the great plains, and even to the west coast. The bloody confrontation on the Kansas plains showed how divergent the development had been. Racial slavery, then, when it reached the peak of its development in the United States, was peculiarly a Southern institution.

Even with the vagaries produced by shifting time and space some generalizations about slavery in America are possible. First, it was both a system of economic exploitation and a means of racial control. The black slaves' colour marked their inferiority in the minds of their white masters, and legitimized their use as chattels. Furthermore, slavery had a ruthless logic for the slaves' depressed condition in relation to the rest of society fed the view that they were inferior. The longer they were kept down, the more each generation of Southerners could feel that slavery was both right and proper. The natural conservation of human institutions took over to the point where many Southerners accepted and defended slavery for fear of change.

Secondly, it is clear that black men and women did not simply acquiesce in the exploitation of their bodies and their minds. They actively resisted. They fought in groups and single-handed; they ran away, pilfered, and started fires, and they suffered for it. Every sign of overt
resistance was swiftly and unhesitatingly punished by the masters who saw in each action a challenge to their entire system. Such punishment did not totally relieve the chilling fear of rebellion and murder, however, so the white masters sought and enforced daily submissive behaviour among the servants, and to a certain extent such behaviour became internalized. The simple fact that they were human gave the slaves the element of choice, however, and even the harshest task master had to make concessions in the face of intransigence or outright hostility. Submissive behaviour did ease the masters' consciences somewhat, for they could claim that their servants were in fact docile, and thus convince themselves that they were acting in a manner befitting white, Christian Americans.

When the slaveowners' system was threatened, and from within their own country, they at first entrenched themselves and ultimately took up arms to protect what they saw as the only sane system for their situation. Their eventual defeat unleashed the old fears of a black uprising, and the actions of their former bondsmen in serving in the Union Army, leaving their old homes, and attempting to begin their own separate existence refuted the claims of "black docility". Yet rather than face the new order, many Southern whites began a frantic search for a new docility among their black countrymen, and when they did not find it, they enforced it with violence, legislation, and economic pressure. They attempted to make a reality of "Sambo", the faithful, loving, old black servant.

Black men and women replied to this circumscription of themselves in much the same way as they had fought slavery. They resisted physically where they could, ran when they had to, and accommodated to the situation when there was no other choice. Freedom allowed some new alternatives and various back-to-Africa movements sprang up in response to the repression. While some blacks succumbed to the lure of their ancient home-
land, others took another avenue of escape which had been opened with freedom. Migration to the west became the route of many and, imbued with the American dream of free land, they headed first to Kansas, and then to the Oklahoma and Indian Territories. When the new state of Oklahoma moved to join the rest of the South in enforcing racist legislation some blacks looked to Canada as yet another escape route.
CHAPTER ONE
I have seen a land right merry with the sun, where children sing, and hills lie like passioned women wanton with harvest. And there in the King's Highways sat and sits a figure veiled and bowed, by which the traveller's footsteps hasten as they go. On the tainted air broods fear.


Early in 1861, on her way to visit her mother in Florida, Mary Boykin Chesnut recorded in her diary the reaction of her fellow white Southern railway passengers to the news of Lincoln's election. Referring to John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry which tried to spark a slave rebellion, one person exclaimed, "'Now that the black radical Republicans have the power I suppose they will Brown us all.'" This individual expressed the sentiments of many Southerners, and throughout the war talk of slave upheavals was both serious and widespread. 1

There was not a full-fledged slave rebellion during the Civil War, however, and this led some whites to renew their claims of "black docility." They confused rebellion and rebelliousness and, while there was none of the former, there was plenty of the latter. This ignorance derived partly from a lack of information for during the war Southern newspapers imposed self-censorship, and the Confederate government suppressed any news of trouble among the slaves. But trouble there was, as Mrs. Chesnut well knew. On January 4, 1862, her diary noted the existence of a black rebel community; and her cousin, Betsey Witherspoon, was slain by her servants. There were constant rumours of trouble, as well as some actual outbreaks. 2

If whites were forced to live with black rebelliousness, even in wartime, then blacks were also forced to contend with the ever present white vigilance and repression. It would be a mistake to assume that since it was
at war the white South was unable to maintain its control system. Many areas took extra precautions, and many women took on extra duties. Lincoln himself observed that, "The society of the Southern states is now constituted on a basis entirely military. It would be easier now than formerly to repress a rising of unarmed and uneducated slaves."  

Control did not always wear a grey uniform either. Several Union generals made it known that they would use their forces to quash any insurrection, and in Union held areas strict control policies were undertaken which differed little, if at all, from slavery. In the early stages of the war it was not at all uncommon for Union troops to return runaway slaves. It must be remembered that until the Emancipation Proclamation the only declared Northern war aim was the preservation of the Union. Northerners and Westerners did not like blacks, and many went to war to stop slavery from expanding because they did not want black men in the West. The treatment of blacks in the mid-West was designed to prohibit them from migrating there and Lincoln, himself a mid-Westerner, promised not to interfere with slavery where it existed. The President clung to a belief in overseas colonization until well into the war, ordering the investigation and implementation of several schemes. But, like so many other similar ideas they died, a lack of black support being an important deterrent.  

The slaves knew about the control, the Union threats, and even of the African schemes, so they bided their time. They adopted a "wait and see" attitude, and went on working as they had before. It was obviously foolish to rebel if even the North would fight you and, besides, most slaves did not want revenge, they just wanted their freedom. It was best to wait, and find out how best to get it.  

As in the ante-bellum period, the most popular way to gain your free-
dom was with your feet. No sooner did Union troops enter an area then they were beset with hundreds of runaways. There were deterrents to running off, as always, but that did not stop some. Union officials first put these freedmen, as they came to be called, to work on non-combatant jobs, but a movement grew to employ black troops and soon blacks were fighting to free their brethren. The South responded by declaring any such soldiers "outlaws," and ordered them executed, if captured, for taking part in a slave rebellion. 6

The use of black troops spread rapidly, and virtually in proportion grew Southern fear of them. A shudder went through the Confederacy, and the spectre of a black regiment became what Mrs. Chesnut called one of the Southern "horrors." These soldiers seemed to be the fulfillment of the age-old horror of a black over white society. The shock and fear this caused is captured perfectly in the story of an old white man's reaction to the arrival of black troops in Wilmington, North Carolina. He watched as the troops entered the city, turned away, raised his hands to heaven, and cried, "Blow, Gabriel, blow, for God's sake blow." 7

The pounding wartime propaganda to which they were subject accentuated Southern fears, but they were increased tenfold with the defeat of the Confederate armies. As one observer phrased it, "Not among the Negroes does fear dwell now, nor uncertainty nor anxiety. It dwells here, haunting us, tracking us, running like an accursed discord through all the music of our existence." Still reeling from their defeat, the whites were forced to confront a "moment of truth" when they realized that they did not know the blacks as well as they thought they did. The blacks were supposed to have an instilled spirit of obedience, but now they left their old homes and appeared to pay no heed to their old owners, or to any whites. Whites came to understand that "Sambo" was a myth, and the shock struck them deeply.
Any comfort they had derived from it was replaced by more fear. Rather than face the situation, whites began an earnest search for a new docility among the blacks; and when they did not find it, they enforced it. 8

The white need for docility ran counter to the new needs and demands of the blacks. Freed from the restraints of slavery, blacks wanted the benefits of freedom. If liberty was their aim during slavery, then land became the goal afterward. Land would give them the foundation they needed, it was the base on which all of their other freedoms would rest. This land hunger derived, in part, from the longing for land which characterizes any peasantry. Part derived from their being Americans, for individual ownership of land was one of the inviolates of American society. Part came from their sense of justice -- they were the ones who had cleared and sown the land, now it was only fair that it be theirs; and they told their ex-masters so. 9 A confrontation loomed, and the next decades witnessed the bloody attempts to resolve it.

The blueprint for these coming years was drawn in the latter months of 1865 and early 1866 as blacks looked to the Federal Government to give them land, and the white South, fearing a rebellion, responded with repressive violence. Given the fear generated by the Southern anomie, when whites learned that the blacks had the idea they would all be given land over the Christmas holidays of 1865, the ex-Confederates immediately assumed that an insurrection would ensue when the blacks learned they were mistaken. Other Southerners felt it was a "black Republican" plot, while still others saw the hand of the abolitionists in the black hopes. 10

The idea of a general property division was certainly widespread among the blacks, for as early as August, 1865 the Freedmen's Bureau was issuing repudiating circular letters in North Carolina and eventually had to issue such letters in every state where it operated. Others also remarked on the
pervasiveness of the belief in free land. A traveller in several Southern states found the idea everywhere, and during his tour of the South after the war J. T. Trowbridge remarked on how many had the notion. Other Southern travellers, such as Whitelaw Reid and Carl Schurz, also commented on the phenomenon. In Texas the rumours were so rampant that the Assistant Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau for the state had to undertake a tour to try to squelch them. Alabama was likewise agitated, and a North Carolina newspaper man said a mysterious "they" had been among the blacks filling their heads with wild stories. 11

As word of the black expectations spread, fear of a rebellion increased and there were reports of anxious whites from throughout the South. The blacks knew what to expect when rumours such as this began circulating among the whites, and they took steps to counter them. Meetings were held where motions were passed and speakers strongly condemned any of their black brethren who thought or spoke of a rebellion. In Charleston a black meeting went so far as to declare they had no enmity toward their former masters. 12

Southern whites took steps to counter what they saw as impending disaster. Patrols and militia companies were organized, and in the words of one newspaper editor, "Force will be met with force, and any act of violence will be checked promptly, and the authors and leaders summarily dealt with." Not that all whites were content with just warnings, and it was their actions which blacks feared. Patrols often used their powers to terrorize black communities, by searching cabins, and frequently robbing and beating the people. A Freedmen's Bureau official in Alabama reported to his superior:

It seems in certain neighborhoods, a company of men, on the night before Christmas, under alleged orders from the colonel of the county militia, went from place to place, broke open the negro houses and searched their trunks, boxes, etc. under pretense of taking away fire-arms, fearing, as they said, an insurrection.
Strange to say, that these so-called militiamen took the darkest nights for their purpose; often demanded money of the negroes, and took not only firearms, but whatever their fancy or avarice desired. 13

An almost audible sigh escaped the whites when the holidays passed, but their relief was brief as elements of the Republican party manoeuvred in Washington to give the black man the vote. The Republicans were motivated by the fear that the infamous "Black Codes" might bring back slavery, by a partisan fear that the Democrats of the South might return to Congress stronger than ever, as well as the less noble hope that the franchise would keep the blacks in the South and out of the North and West. To much of the white South giving the vote to the black man was as horrifying as rebellion; it was rebellion, and they met it with the same brutal, violent tactics. Indeed, the ancient spectre of a black over white society drew more potency from the black franchise issue because in two states blacks actually outnumbered whites, and in several more they were a large enough minority to wield the balance of power. 14

Perhaps the South's most famous weapon in its campaign against black suffrage was the Ku Klux Klan. Founded as an adventure-seeking fraternal organization in Tennessee in 1865, the Klan soon turned to intimidating blacks and expanded greatly. While the fraternalism and regalia attracted some, by far the most important reason for the rapid expansion was the effectiveness in terrorizing ex-slaves and whites who sided with them. Too, the Klan built on a long tradition of night-riding to regulate the blacks. Slave patrols had existed until the end of the war and, as the Christmas scare of 1865 had shown, could be instantly resurrected. 15

Using the Klan, other terrorist groups, mob violence, the "economic lash", fraudulent electioneering, and agreements with splinter Republican groups the Southern whites were able to topple the Republican state regimes which black votes supported. The viciousness of the attack cannot be under-
stood apart from the image of "Sambo" which many Southern whites still had. When the blacks were given the vote not a few whites believed "their darkies" would vote as they told them to, and they were severely jolted when the blacks voted overwhelmingly for the Republicans. Slavery kept many blacks ignorant and illiterate, but it did not make them stupid and they supported the party which had given them their freedom and the vote. Whites were again forced to confront the falsity of their estimation of black character, but again they retreated for fear of facing their own depravity. 16

Violence and intimidation were not solely directed at the black man's politics; his entire standing in society came under fire as the white South sought to achieve a new docility, to make "Sambo" a reality. A black man who became too prosperous for his white neighbours' liking or who was somehow felt to be "uppity" might expect a visit from the Klan. Slavery may have been abolished, but the colour caste system it had nurtured had left a legacy. For a time after the war it was not at all clear which way social relations between the races would develop, and in certain respects the early Reconstruction period was a time of waiting and observing. As the whites regained political control, a hardening of social mores developed which increasingly separated the blacks and whites. As early as 1866 Texas tried to segregate blacks on trains, but it was only in 1875 that a fairly well established social segregation system was in operation. The rationale behind this development was that in his subservient place in society the black man could be controlled and therefore made docile. This was a contradictory logic, however, for the more the blacks were segregated the more the whites feared them. By segregating the blacks, the whites could no longer observe them totally and this caused worry and fear. This paranoia fed on itself for it brought on more segregation and, in turn, more fear. Thus was the South's "Jim Crow" society begun, and in the next decades leg-
islation would finalize social practice. In 1896 the doctrine was confirmed by the Supreme Court in the famous Plessy vs. Ferguson decision.

The ultimate segregation, disfranchisement, did not come about until the last decade of the nineteenth century. While Klan violence had stopped thousands of blacks from voting, the Fifteenth Amendment still stood and black men continued to vote, even if it was at the whim of whites. Too, black votes were often very useful to the governing Democratic cliques which established themselves in the Southern statehouses after the fall of the Republican governments. Whether through violence or economic intimidation, or a "shady" deal with an unscrupulous black politician these cliques got blacks to vote for their party or faction. Combined with yet more fraudulent election practises, these black votes allowed the "bosses" to hold power in spite of repeated assaults from insurgent political groups.

Buffeted by periodic agricultural depressions, and the machinations of railroads and the aforementioned "bosses", Southern white farmers flocked to fiscal reform groups such as the Greenbackers, or agricultural groups such as the Farmer's Alliance. They attempted to capture the Democratic party, and when all else failed founded a new People's, or Populist party. Black farmers too suffered from the agricultural crises, railroad and other corporation manipulation, and when the Greenbackers, Alliance, and later the Populists appealed for his support, he often answered. While blacks were segregated in these associations, it was obvious that a union of the poor whites and blacks could overthrow the state political machines, and the "bosses" took steps to prevent it. One such step was the removal of the black man from the political arena.

The "bosses" did not always act immediately, since their political lives often rested upon black votes. Indeed, the first disfranchisement
took place in Mississippi in 1890, before the rise of Populism. Many Mississippians had been frightened by the Republican recapture of both houses of Congress in 1888 and the introduction of the so-called Lodge "Force Bill" in 1890, which provided for federal election supervision. Too, fraud and corruption which had seeped into elections made normal political functioning difficult, and there were cries for drastic reform -- especially the removal of the object of the graft, the black voter. A convention was called to write a new constitution, and in that document the Mississippians circumvented the Fifteenth Amendment by developing a variety of franchise limiting techniques all aimed at weaknesses in the black constituency. Their poverty was focused upon in poll tax and property requirements, their high mobility in residency requirements, and their high illiteracy rates in "understanding tests". Most of these measures could also be used against poor whites, but that group's fears were quieted somewhat by the "Grandfather Clause", so called because it held that none of the suffrage requirements had to be met if you or one of your forebearers had voted before 1861. Since most blacks had been slaves, and even free blacks could not then vote, this provision allowed poor whites to qualify while still excluding blacks. 20

Racist reactionairies in other Southern states had also been jarred by the introduction of the Lodge legislation, but many hesitated to reform their fundamental documents lest some Populist doctrines be among the reforms. Several passed disfranchising legislation of some kind, but it was after the high tide of Populism that most moves were undertaken to permanently prohibit any possible union of poor white and black. For the most part the Populists fought disfranchisement, but they too had succumbed to buying black votes, and their egalitarian rhetoric was not always believed by the blacks. Black distrust was borne out in the next few
years as some white Populists took out their bitterness of defeat on the black man by championing not only disfranchisement, but even more severe segregation laws. Violence was also resorted to; in Mississippi the former Populist constituency threw up "Whitecap" groups who released their frustration and anger by driving black sharecroppers and farmers from their land. 21

The segregation and disfranchisement processes were aided by the rising international tide of "scientific" racism in the late nineteenth century. Some American men of science had used their knowledge to propose racist doctrines in the past, but had based their ideas on theories outmoded by Darwin. The new racism had Darwinism, and its offshoot, Social Darwinism, as its key elements. Spencer's adaptation of evolution to society was widely known in America, as were the doctrines of their own William Graham Sumner. Their work laid the American seedbed for the ideas of such internationally known racist thinkers as Gobineau, a Frenchman and Chamberlain, an Englishman who influenced later popular American racist writers such as Lothrop Stoddard and Madison Grant. As well, imperialism was flourishing, and America was eventually caught up in the trend to the point where she too went to war to secure her own empire of "little brown men." 22

As during slavery, blacks did not simply acquiesce to these new deprivations on their bodies, personalities, or democratic rights. They organized and fought the Klan physically, or fought it individually; they organized peaceful demonstrations and confronted segregation single-handedly; they took their pleas to the courts, but to little avail. Also comparable to slavery was the suffering experienced for these actions. Indeed, the odds they faced were often the same as in the ante-bellum period: greater white firepower and numbers, and the motivation derived from the chilling, irrational fear of the blacks. As well, the whites were selective in the choice of their black victims, murdering, lynching, running-off, or buying-
off leadership aspirants, and thus depriving the black community of a crucial ingredient for resistance. 23

The parallels to the slavery period go further. If the slave's religion laid the foundation for the Afro-American nation, then the superstructure was raised during the years after the Civil War as black churches blossomed across the South. Religion provided the ex-slaves with the comfort it always had, but in a free society it also meant a career for the ambitious and the anchor for the development of a new community. This evolution was matched by black humour which grew with changing conditions from a largely in-group, defensive instrument through to an offense-oriented social satire. Freedom also meant other openings, one of the strangest being the growth of a back-to-Africa movement among the black peasantry. 24

This new opening was a strange phenomenon because prior to the Civil War the idea of African colonization was almost entirely promoted by whites, and resisted by free blacks. In the months and years following the war, however, many poor blacks expressed an interest in their ancient homeland as a means of escaping their hellish Southern existence. Indeed, in the decade following Appomattox the American Colonization Society sent more than three thousand blacks to Liberia, almost a third as many as they had sent in the preceding forty-eight years of their existence: The interest and involvement declined drastically in the late 1870's and 1880's as blacks took another of the doors opened by freedom. The interest mushroomed again in the last decade of the century under the onslaught of segregation and disfranchisement, the urgings of Bishop Henry M. Turner, and the actual transporting of colonists by the black-controlled Congo National Emigration Company. Turner's appeal lasted into the twentieth century and competed effectively for a few years with Booker T. Washington's "stay where you were and work" approach. It was the poor black Southern farmers and sharecroppers
who heeded Turner, however, not the developing, urban and largely Northern black middle class who, indeed, continued to oppose both black nationalism and emigration, preferring to work for the "American dream." The African appeal would continue to be attractive with a minor boom in Oklahoma in 1913, when it became clear that Canada was not an alternative, and, of course, the later rise of Marcus Garvey and his variant of black nationalism. 25

The other door which freedom opened had a western exposure, and many blacks took advantage of the opportunity it presented. For approximately fifteen years after the end of the war there was a steady drift of blacks from the older, southeastern states to the newer lands of the southwest. They were driven by their desire to obtain better wages or sharecrop conditions, always with the idea of someday having enough to start on their own piece of land. These migrants were restless and frustrated with the caste system which bound them, but they were also adventurous and defiant, vowing, in their very action of leaving, never to accept the subordinate position in society which white America had allotted them. In this they followed the pattern set by their slave ancestors who had resisted the inhumanity perpetrated upon them, and who had likewise taken to foot in order to find liberty. 26

The violence of the Klan and other groups, and the shady political deals were also factors in sending these men and women westward, as were the inducements of the labour agents of Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas planters. In the late 1870's bad crops and the disillusionment with the Republican party over the Compromise of 1877 combined with the vivid memory of the Republican state regimes' overthrows and glowing advertisements from Kansas to send thousands north and west to that far state. Many Southerners and Democrats saw the movement as a plot by the Republicans to reinforce their voting strength in the mid-west, and some Southerners tried to stop the
flow with a variety of brutal techniques. These actions no doubt spurred some of the migrants to an even quicker pace, and may have caused some doubters to go along. 27

The idea of settling in Kansas was not entirely new to many blacks since that place had once been proposed as a possible refuge for discharged black soldiers who could not return to their old homes for fear of retaliation from their white, ex-Confederate neighbours. Since 1871 Tennessee blacks had been exposed to the blandishments of Benjamin "Pap" Singleton who encouraged settlement in Kansas as the only hope for the black man. By 1879 blacks in many parts of the South had been given the "word" from this self-styled "Moses of the Colored Exodus", and the word was "land." Between five and ten thousand actually moved and there were as many if not more who would have gone if reports had continued to be favourable. Kansas was not the utopia it had seemed, however, as most of the "exodusters" arrived penniless and just before winter set in. Tales of distress and poverty returned with disillusioned settlers and by 1881 the movement was in its death throes. But the interconnected ideas of land and liberty would not die easily and within a decade would be resurrected with the opening of the Oklahoma and Indian Territories to settlement. Singleton, who had escaped to Canada as a slave, did not give up his idea of a black Canaan and attempted to create interest in a northern movement to Canada, but met with little success. 28 Ironically, when Oklahoma did not emerge as the new utopia either, blacks did look north after all.

The conditions they encountered in Kansas forced those immigrants who stayed into the cities and larger towns. Some prospered, but for most the significant change was that the city Republican political machines courted their vote, and in 1882 a black man, Edward P. McCabe, was elected state auditor on the Republican ticket. But by the mid-1880's the Kansas Repub-
licans had become indifferent to the black voters, even to the point of
dumping McCabe, and turned their efforts toward capturing the new white
immigrants who were arriving in the state in large numbers. At the same
time, there was a notable rise in racist feeling, with several bloody in-
cidents including lynchings, which confirmed many blacks in their belief
that without political power they would always have to face their white
neighbours' racist hostility with no defenses. Some turned to the Kansas
Populists, but others, including McCabe, felt the only way to get the
liberty-giving political power was to create an all-black state. McCabe
began an earnest campaign to have the eventual state of Oklahoma be de-
clared black. Toward that end, he encouraged black settlement in the area
so that a black majority might be secured in each voting district. 29

It quickly became apparent that the dream of a black state was illusory
since neither the Federal Government nor the white settlers pouring into the
twin territories had any intention of letting it happen. McCabe continued
to urge blacks to migrate to the Oklahoma and Indian territories, there-
by joining others who had already been spreading literature across the
South. McCabe became associated with a land project in Langston City,
Indian Territory, founded a newspaper which extolled the virtues of the
area, and began a land company whose agents went throughout the South
carrying the paper and preaching another migration. Their appeals, as
always, were readily answered -- disfranchisement had been accomplished in
Mississippi and loomed in other states. The opportunity for liberty and
land was too much for many self-respecting black men to resist and between
1890 and 1900 the territories' black population rose from 21,609 to 55,684;
by 1910 the state's would reach 137,612 -- an increase of almost 540% in
just twenty years. 30
The evaporation of the black state idea did not deter some from trying to establish areas of black control. All-black towns serving all-black or largely black rural areas grew up, at one point reaching better than two dozen in number. Partly this congregation was a continuation of old practices developed under the old axiom of safety in numbers, but partly it was derived from a developing belief among the blacks that only away from the whites could they truly control their own lives. This latter notion was heartily endorsed by whites who occasionally aided in the development of an all-black town. Such was the case of Boley which began as an idea of Lake Moore, a white man, who was president of the Fort Smith and Western Townsite Company, a division of the Fort Smith and Western Railway. Begun in 1903, on the Fort Smith line, the town had 824 residents by 1907 and was making strenuous efforts to attract more. A newspaper, the Boley Progress, appeared in 1905 with O.H. Bradley as editor and was distributed across the South encouraging blacks to come to the town. In its own words,

The Boley Progress makes its appearance in the interest of the long-felt necessity of furnishing homeseekers and colored capitalists of the states who require cheap homes and unrestrained privilege and paying investments, information pertaining to the many advantages possessed by Boley Indian Territory -- especially the Creek Nation. 31

Later Canadian immigrants were part of the general black migration westward, as well as the specific movement into Oklahoma and Indian Territories. They did not always head to all-black areas, but certainly they came to escape oppression and find land. Mattie Mayes, who would later move to the Eldon district north of Maidstone, Saskatchewan, was born into slavery on a Georgia plantation about 1850. Sometime after the Emancipation her family moved to Tennessee where she met her husband Joe, a black preacher. Nine years later, probably in the 1880's, they moved to
Edna, Creek Nation, Indian Territory. Other Maidstone settlers had also moved to what would become Oklahoma before they came to Western Canada. James G. Gordon was born in Winona, Mississippi; William Crawford was originally from South Carolina; Peter Taler from Georgia; and Cecil J. Lane was born in Virgina. Blacks who would later settle in the Amber Valley area of Alberta had also been part of the westward movement in the United States. Jeff Edwards was from Arkansas, but his family moved because they heard there was no segregation in the territories further west. Willis Bowen's parents had been slaves, and had moved to the twin territories after the Emancipation. Having escaped demeaning segregation and disfranchisement, and tasted liberty and land for even a brief period, it was doubly hard for these people to accept them when the new state of Oklahoma moved to join its Southern brethren by implementing racist legislation. They had asserted their humanity and rather than relinquish it decided to leave for the north when Canada advertised its lands in their local papers.
FOOTNOTES


The present confines of Oklahoma were originally part of land set aside in 1830 for various Indian tribes, particularly the "Five Civilized Tribes," whose own lands further east were coveted by whites. In the 1880's pressure from white settlers forced the opening of some of the land to settlement, and in 1890 the area was split into the western Oklahoma Territory and the eastern Indian Territory. From this point onward it was obvious that either or both areas would one day be states, and this seems to have been what prompted McCabe's action. In 1907, the two regions were again reunited to form the present state. See Grant Foreman, A History of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1942), pp. 12-13, 238-241, 316. U.S. Congress, Senate and House of Representatives, An Act to Provide a Temporary Government for the Territory of Oklahoma, 51st Cong., 1st session, 1890. Printed in F.N. Thorpe, The Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws, vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1909. Reprinted, Grosse Pointe, Michigan: Scholarly Press, n.d.), vol. 5., pp. 2939-2960.


I have a great respect for an ex-slave and he could get anything from me, but the young negro who would come to me on the basis of equality and ask me to set 'em up I should feel like hitting him over the head with a club.

In the Chickasaw nation we have the best class of negroes in the state, because we have always denied them the privileges of going to our schools, voting in our elections and sitting on our juries. As a result a negro has never been known to commit the crime in our nation which commonly causes lynchings.

William H. Murray, in a speech accepting the Presidency of the Oklahoma Constitutional Convention. 1

Beginning with a suggestion by Thomas Jefferson in 1804, there were attempts to persuade and force various eastern Indian tribes to vacate their lands in exchange for new homes on the other side of the Mississippi. By the late 1820's several thousand Creeks, Cherokees, and Choctaws had left their Carolina, Alabama, and Tennesseee homelands for the west, soon to be joined by the rest of their tribes and by the Chickasaws and Seminoles from Mississippi and Florida. The removal process was accelerated by the passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830, and the support given the idea by President Andrew Jackson. While Jackson was himself an old Indian fighter he admired the red men and felt that given proper guidance away from whites, the tribes eventually could qualify as a new state in the Union. The removal process did not quite match these noble sentiments, however, for bribery, deceit, and violent intimidation played important roles and the last Cherokee migration was so brutal they called it the "Trail of Tears." 2

Jackson's program was based upon the comparatively high level of civilization attained by these Indians and their rapid adoption of white modes and practices. Indeed, so rapid was this adoption that when they moved west they were dubbed the "Five Civilized Tribes" to distinguish them from the wilder plains peoples. One white practice taken up was African slavery and, while the Indian variant was not the physically punishing work it was in its white parent form, it was a well established institu-
tion by the time of the removals and was carried west where it continued much the same until the Civil War. Treatment did vary, however, for the Creeks and Seminoles showed no aversion to intermarriage and recognized the offspring as tribal members, while the Cherokees did penalize such mixing. The Choctaws also became particularly upset at any missionary talk of abolition. 3

Since they had come from the South, modeled their governments on those of the Southern states, had a number of intermarried Southern whites in their tribes, had tribal money invested in Southern state bonds, and themselves countenanced slavery it was not surprising that a strong pro-Confederate feeling existed in the Five Civilized Tribes. Certain leaders counselled neutrality, but were undercut when the federal government removed troops from the area in the face of treaty obligations. This action rekindled old feuds among the Creeks and Cherokees who split badly; the tension increased even more when Texas troops arrived to claim the old Union posts. Guerrilla warfare erupted which ultimately decimated the Indian Territory countryside. 4

In spite of the fact that they had abandoned the Indians, the government accused the tribes of rebelling and dictated terms when the Civil War ended. Two of the most important dealt with the blacks -- slavery was abolished and the ex-slaves were to be incorporated into the tribes. The Creeks and Seminoles presented no real problem, but the Cherokees became and remained bitter toward their former bondsmen because one of their treaty provisions allowed six months for their ex-slaves to register. This meant that blacks who had never even seen Indian Territory could claim tribal membership and thus a share of the land. The Chickasaws and Choctaws refused to even give up their slaves, one Chickasaw chief threatening to strip the tribe's slaves and herd them to Texas unless compensation was given. Some of his men did not wait and
there were reports of blacks being driven from tribal lands soon after the war's end. These two tribes also refused to adopt the blacks and petitioned the government to remove the ex-slaves. 5

While these disagreements were eventually resolved they left a legacy of bitterness toward the blacks among the Cherokees, Chickasaws, and Choctaws. For example, after the war the Creeks and Seminoles allowed racial mixing in their schools, but the Cherokees attempted to enforce a rigid segregation in theirs. The Chickasaw and Choctaw would not even go that far, and their ex-slaves became so desperate for education that they offered to furnish schools if only teachers would be provided. Blacks took part in Creek and Seminole political affairs, voting freely and serving in various tribal government bodies, but among the Choctaw and Chickasaw they were denied all social and economic privileges, and only gained a political status when they were finally adopted into the two tribes in 1883 and 1893 respectively. 6

Railroad right-of-ways were another of the post-war treaty provisions and by the 1870's lines were nudging through the tribal lands. The trouble they brought was not just noisy, bawdy construction camps, for land hungry settlers now became acquainted with the rich Indian Territory lands. Beginning in 1880 with the attempts of David L. Payne and his followers to settle on unassigned lands in the centre of the Territory, settlement pressure increased dramatically until government action became inevitable. In 1887 the Dawes Act provided for the termination of tribal community holdings and the alloting of a homestead to each tribal member, the remainder to be purchased by the government and thrown open to settlement. This act applied only to other tribes who had been settled in the Territory and not to the Five Civilized Tribes; their turn would come in 1896. 7
of the Indian Territory was filled was truly astonishing; in the short span between 1889 and 1900 over sixty thousand farms sprang up on what had once been virtual wilderness. It was quickly apparent that a government was needed and in 1890 the Territory of Oklahoma was formed. White and black settlers also infiltrated the lands of the Five Civilized Tribes and the other nations who inhabited what was left of the Indian Territory. By 1890 the Cherokees, Choctaws, and Chickasaws were minorities in their own countries, while the Creeks had a bare majority. 8

Like all immigrants these settlers came equipped with "cultural baggage" which would influence the society they would create in the coming years. That society would have a noticeable Southern flavour for of the better than one million white Oklahomans who claimed another state as their birth place in 1910, fully a third were from either Texas, Missouri, or Arkansas. The next largest group were the Kansans who, by the time of the 1910 census, had contributed almost seven per cent of Oklahoma's white population. These geographical distinctions were reflected in the political alignments with the northern third of the state being Republican, the central moderately Democratic, and the Southern third of the state being dominantly Democratic. The presence of a sizeable white Republican minority was to have important repercussions for, combined with the traditional black allegiance to that party, it gave Democratic politicians constant cause for concern and ultimately led to their capitalizing on anti-black feeling and disfranchising the blacks in order to retain control of the state. 9

Whether Democrat or Republican, many white Americans shared a dislike for the black man and did not want to have him nearby. Blacks who responded to the appeals of Edward McCabe, the former Kansas auditor turned land-dealer, met with violence and intimidation at the start of the now famous 1889 "land rush." White newspapers in the Twin Territories down-
played the attempts to stimulate a black migration to try to form a black state, but some white citizens took more direct action. Racially motivated mob violence was found in both Oklahoma and Indian Territories in the last decade of the nineteenth century as white communities banded together to drive blacks from their midst. In Blackwell and Ponca City, communities along the northern border and presumably settled by Kansans, blacks were hounded and driven out. "Whetcappers" made an appearance in Norman in 1896, and in other communities in subsequent years, trying to drive blacks out with whippings, and threatening whites who employed or rented land to them. 10

As always, the violence had its effect. In the Cherokee nation it aggravated conditions already upset by the influx of settlers. Racial antipathy was increased to the point where a local black leader convinced almost eighty of his Cherokee-black and black neighbours to head for Liberia. The potential colonists became so agitated that they sold their land for paltry sums in spite of the prevailing high prices. Upon arrival in New York the group found that their supposed leader had tricked them in order to secure their land. The victims stayed in New York, along with other blacks from Arkansas also Liberia bound, hoping something would happen to alleviate their situation. 11

There is bitter irony in the fact that prejudice towards them increased in direct proportion to the blacks' increasing numbers in the Territories. They came west to find liberty and better themselves, but by their very presence stimulated the racism of the whites. In 1901 the white residents of Sapulpa gave the town's black population two days warning and then drove them out. In Clinton notices were posted threatening violence to the owners of a cotton seed oil mill if they employed blacks. Racial slurs could be put to use in the economic war: a black doctor who went to Muskogee to write his medical exams was told to "play nigger" by
the President of the Examining Board -- he had to be forcibly restrained from beating the examiner. Blacks protested the attempts to relegate them to a second class economic level as when J. C. Leftwich, editor of the black Baptist paper *The Western World* of Muskogee, complained:

Of all the grievances that distress ambitious Negroes the most galling is the disadvantage of their own race in the matters of earning a living. None but menial positions are open to the black man, they say. 12

When whites were desperate and it was felt that the job suited blacks, even die-hard racists made exceptions and would even protect the blacks.

No blacks had ever been allowed to live in Greer County, but when the 1905 cotton crop was threatened due to a shortage of pickers one hundred and fifty blacks were brought in. The action was resisted by some, who made threats serious enough to scare some of the workers away. The county attorney, Chas Thacker, a staunch Southern Democrat, warned the culprits and was joined by Sheriff Jasper Nelson who pledged to take action if necessary. The county became rather more peaceful thereafter. Some would not even give blacks a job in a cotton field -- the citizens of Hobart, Kiowa County voted not to employ blacks that year, even for a short time. 13

Economics was but one area where the blacks of the Territories had to fight for their basic rights; they even had to fight to be recognized as human beings. Ernest D. Lynwood, editor of the Clearview Tribune, called attention to, and challenged the traditional white image of the "black rapist beast" which had been brought to the Territories. No man would defend a white woman faster than the black man, argued Lynwood, and he had proven that during the Civil War. It was the image of his own sins which the white man saw, for it was he "...who commits rape upon the helpless and ignorant Negro woman and it is the white man of the South who commits the unpardonable sin under the very noses of his women and child-
These sentiments were echoed by the editor of the Muskogee Daily Search-light who asked why outrages on black women by white men did not meet with the same punishment as the reverse. According to O.H. Bradley of the Boley Progress the black man's rights were being destroyed all over the country. He asked, prophetically, how long they would stay and live under the existing conditions. 14

The areas of greatest racial controversy before the election for the constitutional convention was the segregated Indian and Territorial schools. In Oklahoma a bitter debate arose early in the Territorial legislature, but segregationists successfully carried a bill which provided for a local option on the question. While all of the Five Civilized Tribes had a segregated school system, the arrival of racially opinionated whites hardened attitudes. In the Creek nation, for example, conditions in some locales permitted black children to attend the regular schools, but by 1904 citizen and non-citizen blacks were required to attend separate schools. Blacks protested this development claiming that Southern sentiments and attitudes were overcoming the "Western spirit" of fair play. In any case the Indian was getting a bad deal, one black editor claimed in a display of reverse prejudice, for the offspring of "poor white trash" were,

...mean and overbearing, they lie and use all kinds of bad language, at home and at school; they are filthy of their person and many of them would wade through hell to steal a dinner pail with one biscuit in it. What they add to civilization don't count for much... 15

A white newspaper took up these censures and sanctimoniously charged its black counterpart with being "scurrilous." The black paper was on dangerous ground abusing the white man's children, even those of the lower classes, the Okemah Independent said, and it would have thought that a black paper would be the last place to find words designed to incite racism. In a later issue the Independent told the black paper
to "...take a broader view of the question"; it was a universal human trait for the strong to oppress the weak, not simply a characteristic of the white race, it said. 16

This questionable philosophy was challenged by a group of Pauls Valley black parents who went to court against the local school board for not allowing their children into the public schools. While these parents were temporarily successful, the odds the blacks faced on the school question were formidable. Even their supposed white political allies, the Republicans, were against them on this issue -- one white Republican editor arguing that anyone who favoured mixed schools lacked ordinary intelligence. Man was the only animal, he said, who wilfully breaks nature's law against mixing the species and, besides, "Mixed schools breed contempt, jealousy, and race war." 17

As they had in other states and in other times blacks in the Territories organized to protect themselves and to try to achieve their goals. Early in 1905 black teachers met at Guthrie and passed a resolution endorsing compulsory attendance, and asking that all people be allowed uniformity in education. A call was issued in 1904 for the construction of an Afro-American Protection League, and in November, 1906 an anti-lynching bureau was created. Traditional organizations, such as the church, were also utilized. On November 2, 1906 the Oklahoma Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church passed a strongly worded anti-lynching statement at its annual meeting. Churchmen also played leading roles in secular organizations. Parson H. L. Storms headed the Afro-American Independent Suffrage League which organized during the constitutional convention to protest any possible discrimination by that body. To the Boley Progress the best protection was still in numbers and it urged blacks to come to that town so that they controlled a county before statehood was achieved. 18
election of the constitutional convention indicates how concerned blacks in the Territories were with the coming statehood. Well they might be, for while they desired their own government as much as other Americans, they knew that unless they organized and had their claims and position recognized they might well be drowned in a flood of racist legislation. They knew the composition of the state's population, and many had come from states where their rights had been infringed in the very documents which supposedly protected them. When the Enabling Act was finally issued, and the campaign for delegates began, the blacks' fears were soon realized.

The first whites who settled in what became Oklahoma Territory immediately began to agitate for statehood. They had been preceded by a bill which was introduced in the House of Representatives in 1889 which would have admitted part of the Indian Territory as the state of Columbia. Andrew Jackson's dream was not to be, however, for the two national parties were at odds over the admission of new states from the southwest. The Republicans felt that Oklahoma and Indian Territories should be admitted as one state, as should New Mexico and Arizona, since they would all probably be Democratic in sympathy. Southern Democrats in particular wanted four separate states to balance the new ones created in the northwest. Residents in the Twin Territories were themselves badly divided. Republicans in Oklahoma Territory felt that their national leaders were wrong and that while the Indian Territory would probably be Democratic, they could carry a separate Oklahoma since they had sent a Republican to Congress as their representative in every election, save one, since the territory was created. Indian Territory Democrats were concerned that the politically organized Oklahoma Territory would dominate any joint arrangement, while the Five Civilized Tribes feared that if they were
grafted onto the dominantly white Oklahoma Territory they would lose their identity in a sea of whites. 19

The Indians' hand was being forced, however, for one of the provisions of the Curtis Act of 1898 was the termination of all tribal governments in the Indian Territory on March 4, 1906. This meant, in effect, that the Indian Territory would have to organize along regular territorial lines like Oklahoma, or become a state. A call for representatives went to each of the Five Civilized Tribes and on August 21, 1905 they met at Muskogee where a three thousand five hundred word constitution was drafted which, among other things, provided for universal suffrage, but separate schools for blacks. This "Sequoyah Constitution" was submitted to the people who approved it 56,279 to 9,073. A delegation took the document to Washington and bills for statehood were introduced in both Houses. 20

The prevailing sentiment of Congress was now for single statehood, however, and the Sequoyah Convention did not accomplish its task. It did have an important impact on the future state for it had given a number of Indians and whites vital political experience. In particular, it had given William H. Murray, better known as "Alfalfa Bill", a priceless baptism in running a convention, which held him in good stead when the Oklahoma constitutional convention was called. Moreover, Sequoyah brought together Murray and Charles N. Haskell, a white delegate for the Creeks, and cemented a political partnership that would last through Haskell's term as first Governor of the new state. 21

Blacks in the Twin Territories had made it fundamentally clear that they wanted no part of statehood unless adequate guarantees were given that their voting rights were protected, "Jim Crow" coach laws were forbidden, and segregated schools were banned. The Enabling Act approved
by President Roosevelt on June 16, 1906 for the most part met the blacks' hopes. While Section three, article five allowed segregated schools, Section three itself held that the constitution should, "...make no distinction in civil or political rights on account of race or color..." 22 Totally ignoring this latter provision, the Democrats campaigned for constitutional convention delegates on the plank that they were the only party that could be trusted to write segregated schools and a "Jim Crow" coach law into the constitution.

One of the Democrats' greatest weapons in the delegate campaign was the major Oklahoma City newspaper the Daily Oklahoman. Edited by R.E. Stafford, the paper boasted a circulation of almost fourteen thousand five hundred in October, 1906, but probably reached many times that number since small town Democratic weeklies could pick up and reprint its editorial comments. Stafford and the Oklahoman campaigned whole heartedly for "Jim Crow" and constantly taunted the Republicans for their black following. For example, when the Republicans held a nomination meeting in Coweta, which a large number of blacks attended, the Oklahoman painted a "spectacle" of "black domination" with blacks "arrogantly" naming their own ticket and, "...driving white men with the party lash." 23

The Democratic party's stance on the "Jim Crow" and separate schools questions were neatly summarized by the Oklahoman in its editorial columns. Whites, it said, "...are compelled to suffer the indignity of either riding with colored passengers or standing up." The Republicans, it charged, knew the whites' feelings on this matter, but remained silent hoping to convince blacks that they would not enact any more discriminatory legislation, while at the same time giving whites the false belief that they favoured "Jim Crow." Consequently, "...that party is not to be trusted
in handling this question." On the schools question it was, if possible, even more direct. After noting that the Democratic party had pledged separate schools in Oklahoma Territory, the Oklahoman declared:

In all the districts where the politicians are running the party, the republicans have not declared for separate schools and separate coaches. They must have the negro vote to win... Summed up it is the old story. The republican politician cannot be separated from the 'nigger'. 24

The Democrats' message was well received in some parts of the Territories. One M. Fulton contacted the Oklahoman and observed, "It will not elevate or in any manner materially aid the white people to be compelled to assemble and associate with the negro." W.D.G. Hinds of South McAlester knew that the southern whites would never submit to "negro domination". The black man had a right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, but the whites were determined that he should have no political voice in any state. An "Alabama Boy" felt that anyone who said that the blacks were the equal of the whites had a depraved mind. For him the Bible was all of the proof needed: "Are we not told in the book of our God that the negro is the inferior of the white man? Has he not been, since Biblical days, under a curse? (Gen. 9:10)..." 25

The Democrats' campaign was substantially aided by the incompetence of the Republican party leaders who, since they were apparently opposed to statehood, decided to allow their candidates to run independently with no platform. To make certain of their victory, the Oklahoman delivered a final blow on the very day of the election by raising the ancient spectre of a black rebellion. Quoting the black Topeka Plaindealer which had urged blacks in Kansas to arm themselves against encroachments on their liberties and had pointed to the Territories as an example, the Oklahoman argued,

Here is reflected pretty aptly the sentiment of the average
negro. It shows that he is vigorously opposed to the democratic proposition of 'Jim Crow' laws, and is willing to use force, if need be, to prevent the enactment of the same. 26

Republicans charged the Democrats with using another nefarious tactic known as the "affidavit system" to disfranchise black voters. A Democrat would challenge the voting credentials of a black man, thus forcing him to get from one to four affidavits setting out his qualifications as a voter. The problem was that many blacks could not afford the notary public fees involved and, even when they could, successive challenges made them discouraged and they left the polls without voting. 27

While it is impossible to calculate the success of such tactics, they had their place in the Democratic sweep of the constitutional convention delegates. Of the one hundred and twelve elected, ninety-nine were Democrats, twelve Republicans, and one Independent; moreover, fully seventy-five had come from former slave holding states. Democrats felt that their stand on "Jim Crow" was the key to their victory, and that a number of otherwise loyal Republicans had voted for them because of it. The Oklahoman gloated that the new state would soon be part of the "solid south", and that Texas was proud of them because they had chosen its path and not that laid out by Kansas. 28

The delegates convened at Guthrie on November 20, 1906 in a climate not at all advantageous to the black man. Only a few months before black troops stationed at Brownsville, Texas had been implicated in a disturbance which had killed one white and wounded two others. After several investigations it was concluded that while several soldiers were guilty, their identities could not be determined because their comrades remained silent. President Roosevelt decided to discharge the entire regiment without honour, but did not announce his decision until just before the November elections thereby not allowing enough time for the newspapers to report it before
the vote was taken. Roosevelt was accused of playing politics with the men's careers since if he had issued his decision earlier the blacks' allegiance to the Republican party would have been severely tested. As it was he was castigated by black Americans and his popularity with them, due to his famous luncheon with Booker T. Washington among other things, declined considerably. Oklahoma and Indian Territory newspapers, both Democratic and Republican, were filled with reports about Brownsville and the investigations which followed Roosevelt's decision during the months when the constitutional convention was in session. The incident may merely have confirmed some prejudices, but the impact on the delegates may be judged from a speech made by "Alfalfa Bill" Murray accepting the Presidency of the convention in which he stated, "The President of the United States has just certified that the negro is not a success as a soldier, that (sic) though he may be good as porters or barbers, and in some other occupations." 29

Blacks responded quickly to the threat posed by the constitutional convention. Parson Storms' aforementioned Afro-American Independent Suffrage League began in South McAlester in late November, 1906 and scheduled a meeting for Muskogee on December 27. The Parson was back in Muskogee in mid-January, 1907 hoping to garner support for his association, and claiming that blacks had been tools of the Republicans for too long. Shortly after the constitutional convention met, black newspaper men met in Guthrie and issued resolutions asking for a reorganization of the Republican party in view of the recent disastrous defeat, and favouring a state constitution which would give equal rights to all men. Blacks showed their feelings in other ways. When it was declared that the galleries at the convention were to be segregated, and several thousand dollars were spent to construct new ones, blacks respond-
ed by not attending any sessions.

Whenever whites felt, or knew that the blacks were worried or upset, the apparition of a black rebellion soon appeared. Muskogee and the Arkansas River Valley were swept with just such a rumour in early December 1906. Deputy marshals of the section reported finding circulars among the blacks which told them to get arms to stop their destruction by whites from Arkansas and Texas. The broadsheet was apparently issued by the Topeka Plaindealer and was circulated just after the election. It stated that whites from Texas and Arkansas who had settled in the Indian Territory were bent on reducing the blacks to a condition worse than slavery, and that the blacks must resist. Whites were anxious because it seemed that the area's black population was buying more guns and ammunition than they would ordinarily. Furthermore, according to the officers some of the worst blacks in the country lived in that area, and they were concerned that a riot would soon begin.

Fears of a black rebellion subsided as quickly as they had arisen due largely, no doubt, to the announcement by a Democratic party leader that the new state could not have "Jim Crow" in its constitution. Charles N. Haskell, Muskogee entrepreneur and Democratic floor leader in the convention, had made a careful examination of all enabling acts since the Civil War and had found that all contained provisions prohibiting racial discrimination. Oklahoma's was no exception, and Haskell felt that the President could conceivably reject the document, and thus postpone statehood, if it contained an article permitting discriminatory coach laws.

Haskell was supported on this issue by his powerful ally Bill Murray, and managed to gain more from his home city where one editor claimed that it would be "impolitic" to include "Jim" in the constitution. Roosevelt
would probably reject the document, so why risk statehood when subsequent legislatures could provide all the necessary laws? R.E. Stafford and his powerful Oklahoman stood opposed to this interpretation, however. Stafford reminded the delegates that most of them were elected on a "Jim Crow" pledge, and wondered whether Roosevelt had the right to refuse. Never mind leaving it for the first legislature, Stafford urged, put it in the constitution.

The confrontation between Stafford and Haskell added more fuel to a feud that was already developing. Stafford had publicly accused Haskell of "rigging" his election to the convention by arranging with a few Muskogee Republican leaders to have a black man run along with the regular white Republican candidate. The white man was induced to withdraw, "...leaving no one opposing him but the nigger. In that manner he slipped in." Haskell countered by accusing the Oklahoman of being in the grasp of monopoly grafters, a serious charge in a "radical" agrarian area, and of not being truly Democratic.

Haskell's stance found favour with several Democratic Senators in Washington who felt that Roosevelt could very well reject the document. Their reasoning is not difficult to follow. Roosevelt had lost a good deal of black support because of his actions on the Brownsville affair and he could recoup his fortunes by rejecting a "Jim Crowed" Oklahoma constitution. Certain Oklahoma Democrats realized this and, as one of them phrased it,

There is no necessity of antagonizing the president on this subject and giving him an opportunity to make a grand stand play, which he surely would do, for the sole purpose of re-habilitating himself with the negroes at the expense of the democrats.

Nor was the segregation issue the only racial element in the constitution that Roosevelt disliked. He was personally repelled by the defining of
"colored race" as anyone of African descent which had been introduced into the document by none other than C.N. Haskell. 35

Stafford and the ardent segregationists responded to this pressure from within their own party by renewing their cry for fulfillment of campaign promises, challenging the delegates, attacking Roosevelt, and calling upon an important party figure. Lee Cruce, an Ardmore banker, who would later run unsuccessfully for the Democratic nomination for Governor against Haskell, said that the convention delegates owed it to the people to include separate schools, and segregated coaches and waiting rooms in the constitution. Stafford, in a fiery editorial, wanted to know,

Since when did the president become our dictator? Where does he get his authority for telling us what to do and what not to do? And why should our constitutional convention seek to incorporate provisions which conform to his wishes rather than the wishes of the people who elected it?

John B. Talbut, in a letter to the Oklahoman, wanted to know, "...why do some of our delegates stand like weak-kneed serfs, trembling on account of a rumor as to what Roosevelt's action in regard to signing the proclamation if this clause is inserted?" No doubt in order to counter the Federal Senators' influence, Stafford contacted William Jennings Bryan for his opinion on "Jim Crow." Bryan, a frequent Democratic candidate for President, was the idol of the mid-western farmer and had already exerted a great deal of influence on the convention. His telegraphed answer to Stafford read, "Make constitution to suit the people and let republicans take responsibility for defeating it." 36

Democrats in Washington, meanwhile, tried to determine once and for all whether Roosevelt would in fact refuse to sign a statehood proclamation because of "Jim Crow". Roosevelt, however, gave them no hint, which caused Territorial Republicans to crow that Teddy knew the Democrats' purposes and kept them guessing. The affair sparked one anonymous new state wit to pen
a descriptive poem which became rather popular. The somewhat tortured verse, obviously lampooning a black accent, went:

Old Jim Crow! Old Jim Crow!
Lawd a massy man we love you so.
The Constitution's weak without you Jim
But dar's Teddy Roosevelt we are scared of him.
He squints, and he grins, but won't let us know
Just what to do with old Jim Crow. 37

Neither the pronouncements of Stafford, Cruce or even William J. Bryan could stop the Haskell-Murray alliance once it had determined a policy. As President of the Constitutional Convention, Murray had tremendous power over the delegates because he appointed committees, and determined county boundaries and county seats. His experience at the Sequoyah convention had taught him how to use his powers, and when he and Haskell decided to table the "Jim Crow" provision, it was tabled. Haskell first introduced a motion to draft a "Jim Crow" law and then to submit it to a panel of lawyers, chosen by the President of the convention, to review it to see if it was legal. The motion passed, and Murray proceeded to name to the committee delegates who had already announced their opposition to "Jim Crow" because it endangered statehood. Their opinion was a foregone conclusion and the provision died; at least for the time being. 38

Republicans in the Territories gloated over their enemies' troubles and could not resist pointing out the contradictions in their position. Democrats who were led to vote a straight ticket because of "Jim Crow" campaign promises were intensely indignant, it was argued, and "highly wrought up" over the matter. One writer thought it highly probable that a large group of the "simon pure brand" of Democrats would appear at the convention soon to try to resurrect "Jim." Shrewd calculations and manipulations had done their work for Haskell, and his black constituents were very happy about it, it was urged. Indeed, blacks in Muskogee felt that Haskell was now their
best friend. One prominent black was supposedly quoted as saying that Haskell knew he needed the blacks in his campaign. 39

This taunting of the Democrats for their hypocrisy on racial issues was but one manifestation of "lily whiteism", or the attempt to purge the Republican party of its black adherents. It was a blatant attempt to foist the unwanted black voter onto the Democratic party, and thereby claim "race purity." "Lily whiteism" had a long history in the Territories. In the 1896 election for Oklahoma Territorial delegate to Congress, the Democrats and Populists had combined their vote to defeat the Republican nominee. It was the first time since the founding of the Territory that they had lost the election, and the Republicans fastened the blame on their black members. A movement began to drive blacks from the party, and it developed so quickly that blacks called for their own separate convention in the fall of that year. 40

But driving out the black voter seriously undermined the Republicans' voting strength, and some white leaders knew it. They developed an alternative policy of nominating only white candidates, and holding blacks to their traditional party loyalty. The white candidates would attract more white voters, and no black votes would be lost. Blacks decried this development, arguing that the party leaders were showing their greed and total indifference to anyone but themselves. Over twenty-five percent of Oklahoma's black population had come from Texas where they had more thoroughly dominated the Republican party than in any other southern state. They would not tolerate "lily whiteism" and did not hesitate to threaten to stop supporting the party. Before the 1904 election one black editor charged that there would soon be cries for the black man to stand by "his" party, followed by declarations that it was too early for blacks to be candidates. His answer was, "If it is too soon to eat it will be too soon to vote." The problem with this tactic was that it could
be reversed. Guthrie had a long Republican tradition, but when blacks attempted to secure places on the Republican city ticket whites indicated that they would, and finally did vote Democratic. 41

"Lily whiteism" was carried into the first Republican nominating convention for state officers. A black man tried to secure the nomination for corporation commissioner, but was induced to withdraw by fellow blacks when they were promised that four blacks would be named to the state executive committee. The black representatives chose their men, but when a motion was made to elect them the chairman of the meeting ruled the motion out of order. The four chosen blacks were then invited to attend an executive meeting in Oklahoma City only to be made to wait outside the committee rooms. They never did gain formal recognition; instead, it was suggested that they form a ten member black auxiliary committee to advise the executive. Black leaders protested these manipulations in an open letter to C.E. Hunter, Chairman of the Republican State Committee, but to no avail. 42

Unlike their political foes, the Democrats held a state primary election rather than having a convention. Like their rivals they were also split, and the tabling of "Jim Crow" was an important factor. The Stafford-Haskell feud was resurrected, with the Oklahoman backing Lee Cruce, an Ardmore banker and firm segregationist, as candidate for Governor against Haskell. Stafford charged Haskell with being soft on the "Jim Crow" issue and produced an affidavit signed by two men who had attended a meeting in Muskogee in 1906 at which they swore Haskell said that once the schools were segregated that was enough. "Mud slinging" was common practice in the politics of this era, so Stafford was not stepping too far out when he also charged the Muskogee business man with tax evasion. 43

Even the powerful Oklahoma City daily, however, was no match for the superior organization and tactics of Haskell. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray was enlisted and did yeoman service among the farmers for his friend. Murray
even had his brother withdraw from the race for labour commissioner when it appeared that his candidacy might harm Haskell. Thomas H. Doyle, a standing candidate for the gubernatorial nomination, was also brought into the Haskell camp when Stafford and his friends by-passed him to support Cruce. Nor were the Haskellites above some "dirty politics" of their own. Haskell's newspaper, the Muskogee New-State Tribune, accused one of Cruce's organizers with being an ex-convict, and the Muskogeeans' people contemptuously referred to Cruce's supporters as the "damn Cruce convicts."

After Haskell had won the primary J. Doolin, Cruce's campaign manager, charged that a conspiracy had existed to steal the election for Haskell, and Cruce himself said that ballot box stuffing had been practiced. He pointed to McIntosh county where four hundred more votes had been cast for Governor than for any other office. In Webbers Falls the ballot boxes had been mysteriously burned and Cruce supporters cried foul.

Even before Oklahoma Territorial Governor Frank Frantz announced the election for ratification of the constitution and the choosing of state officers, Democrats had indicated what strategy they would use in the campaign. A story was circulated that Muskogee had experienced a sudden influx of blacks from other southern states, who claimed they had been lured by promises of good wages. The real source of the migration was quite different, it was argued, for there was a "secret agitation" going on by the Republican campaign managers to bring in enough black voters to defeat the Democrats and perhaps even vote down the constitution and thus the much desired statehood. On the day following the election announcement, Stafford sharpened his pencil and removed any doubt as to the Democrats' tactics by delivering an impassioned negrophobic tirade. After noting a number of recent violent incidents, including a lynching, he argued that the new state was quickly becoming aware of the gravity of the race problem. The blacks had been freed,
he said, but interpreted that freedom as license. Taking a slightly different approach, he then argued that race prejudice was a natural condition since God had endowed whites with superior brains and talents while leaving the "Ethiopian" a "mental bankrupt". Then, returning to his original theme of black violence, he fused the two lines of thought and concluded with an envenomed outburst:

The law is as powerless to curb the debased, ignorant and brutal negro as it is to restrain vicious animals that attack man.

Does not this alone explain the hangings, burnings and horrible forms of mob vengeance visited upon those of the black race who shatter the law?...

The doctrine of Christian Spirit and Mercy appeal to theoretical minds, but -- practical north and south people will likely continue to use harsh methods to suppress the growing peril. 45

When they faced a common enemy even Stafford and Haskell could sound a truce and pursue a common plan of attack. Haskell used the threat of a black migration in his attacks on the Republicans' nominee Frank Frantz, as a justification for bringing in a "Jim Crow" segregation law during the first legislature. In a keynote speech delivered at South McAlester, Haskell said he desired to be neither extreme nor radical on the race question, but wished to call attention to a serious situation. Nothing, he emphatically urged, would destroy the great prospects of the new state more than giving blacks complete social equality. Blacks throughout the south, he said, were anxiously watching developments in what would be Oklahoma. They were ambitious and wanted the excitement that they derived from politics, but the actions of whites in the southern states had curbed them. But these desires had been rekindled by the Republicans of the Territories who favoured mixed schools, coaches and waiting rooms, and who encouraged blacks to realize their political goals. Haskell warned the whites of the new state:
...If you by a majority vote, put your stamp of approval upon the men who are on the Republican state ticket and upon the state and local platforms...you thereby extend an open and cordial welcome to the negro race of other states, and it is not overestimating to say that Mississippi Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas will practically become depopulated of the negro race by their grand rush to the new state... 46

The Republicans tried to counter this attack with the stance that the Democrats always resorted to racism because they had no other arguments, and that by voting Democratic the new state would become another poverty stricken Alabama, Mississippi, or Arkansas. The Democrats frantic demagogic appeals to passion and prejudice were a clear indication, one Republican wrote, that they were desperate and were afraid to campaign on a platform of reason and intelligence. The Democratic ticket was one of populism, socialism, deceit, demagoguery, decay, and destruction, another article claimed, and all one had to do for proof was to look at the rest of the south. Republicanism, however, stood for prosperity, protection, and progress -- just look at Iowa, Illinois, Ohio or Pennsylvania. The editor of the now Republican Muskogee Daily Phoenix managed to combine both of these themes, and add a warning when he wrote,

The Democratic demagogic cry of nigger, nigger, nigger, and carpet-bagger will not prevent the members of the Republican party in Muskogee county from doing their duty September 17... It is to be expected that a party so poverty stricken for argument, so poor in past history, and so often convicted of incompetence would appeal...to the racial hatred of fanatics, and to the basest passions of radical sectionists... Oklahoma is not Mississippi and Mississippi methods will not prevail in this fair land. 47

Racist appeals were not the only weapon in the Democrats' arsenal, as the Republicans learned to their dismay in the days following the election when they counted their losses. The election machinery of the Indian Territory was in Haskell's hands by virtue of is having been created by the constitutional convention. He made the most of it. In Muskogee county it was charged that one Democratic election inspector opened the polls before
Have YOU a Daughter, Mr. Voter?

Daily Oklahoman, 13 September 1907.
the other officials got there, while in another area another Democratic inspector refused to open them until eleven o'clock, but closed them at four. This latter manoeuvre was doubtless used in a Republican stronghold since its object was to lessen the vote, while the former could boost a Democratic total at a weak polling station. The Chairman of the Republican State Committee charged "gross election frauds", and claimed that precinct judges had been corrupted, voters intimidated, and that Democratic Inspectors had entered the polling booths to stamp ballots for some voters. The State Committee itself claimed to have one hundred affidavits swearing to frauds and gross irregularities, and pledged six thousand dollars to begin legal contests in sixty-eight of the new state's seventy-five counties. 48

The peoples' desire for statehood was reflected in the majority by which the constitution was approved -- 180,333 to 73,059. The Democrats' success was likewise reflected in the seats they won in the House and Senate -- thirty-nine Democrats to five Republicans in the State Senate, and ninety-three to sixteen in the House. Charles N. Haskell won the Governor's chair by a count of 137,579 to 110,293 for Frantz. A significant development in the gubernatorial race, one that would increase in importance in the next few years especially for the Democrats, was the almost ten thousand votes for the Socialist Party candidate. It was significant because the Socialists would grow in strength, at the expense of the Democrats, at the same time that the Republicans regrouped and rebounded. This growing combined threat to their hegemony was an important factor in the Democrats' ultimately successful attempt to disfranchise the black man. And that development, more than any other, would send blacks north seeking a new promised land. 49

"Alfalfa Bill" Murray was elected to the House, and then won the Speaker's chair. His first appointments symbolized the uniting of the north and the south in the new state as well as the black man's role -- a Union and
a Confederate veteran were appointed House doorkeepers, and a black man was made janitor. Democrats virtually fell over each other in their quest to legislate into existence what Murray's action had merely symbolized. In the House the very first bill introduced was a "Jim Crow" measure, while in the Senate it was only the fourth.

"Jim Crowism" was not the only assault being made on the black man's status in the Territories in 1906 and 1907. Thomas Dixon's classic racist novel The Clansmen, which relied heavily on the "black rapist beast" image, scored a great success when it appeared as a movie in Oklahoma City. It earned glowing headlines as to its truth and authenticity. It even sprouted an imitator, and a stage play on the Ku Klux Klan also ran in Muskogee. Blacks vehemently protested these developments. The Oklahoma City black Ministerial Union condemned The Clansmen as designed to increase race prejudice, hatred, and ill will to a level not seen before. In Muskogee, blacks were successful in having the offending play removed from a local theatre. Blacks recognized that in conjunction with the segregationist assault, this "entertainment" was creating a climate in which violence against them was all too likely. Relegated to a second-class citizenship, and depicted as beasts they were once more prime targets for hate-crazed whites whose actions were tolerated by the society at large. Furthermore, as always, the violence was never long in coming.

A race riot was narrowly averted at Chickasaw when the constitutional convention was still in session after a fight between local whites and some imported black workers. In Waurika "Whitecappers" made an appearance, giving the town's black population twenty-four hours to leave. The blacks summoned the sheriff of a nearby town who arrived with a heavily armed posse to calm the situation. It took longer for conditions to settle at Holdenville in the summer of 1907 after a black man was beaten insensible by a white mob for allegedly insulting a white woman. Blacks from the surrounding area
banded together and threatened to attack the town, thereby forcing the whites to post a heavy guard. "Whitecappers" also appeared near Oklahoma City where a black farmer was threatened for identifying two whites after he had reported some missing livestock. Hobart, Kiowa County was as determined as ever in 1909 not to allow blacks to gain a livelihood, and when a dozen blacks were brought to town for a construction job they were quickly run out. 52

A particularly explosive situation developed at Henryetta, just east of the black settlements of Boley and Clearview, and just south of Edna where the Mayes family dwelt. James Garden, a black man, was accused of slaying Albert Bates, a white stable operator, for not renting him a wagon due to his colour. A mob of over one hundred formed on the day before Christmas, marched to the jail, and extracted a confession. Garden was then hauled from the jail, hung from a telegraph pole in the centre of the town in broad daylight, and his body riddled with bullets. Blacks from the town fled to Muskogee for fear of more trouble, while the whites prepared for a revenge attack as rumours abounded that blacks from the surrounding area were advancing. Every able bodied white man was sworn in as a deputy; a number of black houses were burnt and their occupants driven off. A band of heavily armed blacks was reported to have passed through the black settlement of Wildcat on its way to Henryetta, urging others to join them. Governor Haskell was fully aware of the situation and had two companies of militia ready. Fortunately they were not needed and the tension gradually eased. 53

The militia was needed a year later, however, to quell a riot at Okmulgee, just north of Henryetta. The riot began when a black man, Newt Deckard, and an Indian named Jim Grayson got into a fight. Deckard hit the Indian with a brick, and then ran to a house for refuge. He then fought off attempts to dislodge him, killing four men and wounding eight others
before he himself was badly wounded. Fire forced the black man from the house, but he was thrown back in and this apparently precipitated the riot. Three whites and four blacks were killed before the troops sent by Haskell arrived to restore order. This particular incident was a vivid memory in the minds of several black settlers who later migrated to the Amber Valley area of Alberta, and no doubt played a role in their decision to leave the new state. 54

As a number of these incidents illustrate, blacks fought with equal ferocity the vicious assaults on their persons and their rights, as well as those of their fellows. When several black homes were dynamited at Cushing, one black editor advised, "...the use of a winchester or a double barrel shot gun at close range, with nerve and pluck." They also fought the "Jim Crow" law which went into effect on February 1, 1908. A party headed by Lieutenant Governor Bellamy was attacked by a big black man who protested his segregation, and in Muskogee blacks refused to obey the new law until the county attorney ordered it vigorously enforced. When a train carrying prominent Democrats to a convention in Muskogee passed through the black settlement of Red Bird, its residents attacked the train with stones and chunks of coal. A single black man also stoned a train because he had been made to follow the "Jim Crow" law. 55

Blacks also took their plight to the courts but, as in the past, they found little sympathy there. E. H. Adams sued the Santa Fe Railroad saying that he should not have been segregated when his train reached the Oklahoma border because he had bought his ticket in Kansas; Judge Bowles of Kay County felt otherwise. E. P. Blakemore, a black attorney, deliberately violated the "Jim Crow" law so that he could sue the Missouri Pacific, and the St. Louis Iron Mountain Railroads, and hopefully take the suit to the Supreme Court. 56 Given the standing opinion in Plessy vs. Ferguson, however, this
was a forlorn hope.

When the courts failed, blacks simply complained, especially about the quality of segregated cars and the service received. It was "bad legislation" one black editor said, while W. H. Twine, editor of the black Muskogee

Cimeter declared,

In some cases our women and children are compelled to sit in a little Jim Crow apartment contaminated with the foul fumes of whiskey and tobacco smoke, while from the next apartment, which is a smoker for white men only, a constant flow of obscene and vulgar language comes from a crowd of drunken ruffians...We demand that our women be respected as much as the women of any other race.

Sometimes the stream of abuse was reversed as when E.D. Lynwood of the black Boley Progress accused American whites of never being morally right, selfish and cold-blooded, and of loving to impose on something or somebody. In another editorial Lynwood argued that, "The conglomeration of the bloods of the various peoples who have made up the thing we call an american white man has made him bestial in his social relations generally..." 57

There was, as there had been since the days of slavery, another way to proceed. No sooner had the first state election results been announced than G.W. Washington, a wealthy black of Okmulgee, announced that he was going to tour various African kingdoms to find a place to colonize his fellow black Americans. He declared that the blacks should be separated from the whites and have a government of their own, and that it was his desire to lead a movement back to Africa. After tasting the bitter "Jim Crow" experience blacks liked it even less, and in the summer of 1909 a petition to the Federal Government was begun for funds to get them to Liberia. Not that all blacks welcomed or supported these migrations. G. N. Perkins of the black Guthrie Oklahoma Guide vented his feelings on the petition movement when he declared, "We are not tired of fighting against unjust discrimination and we will never give up the fight until God says to us the victory is on the side of right lay you (sic) armor by. Right will
This argument would be heard again when other blacks headed for Canada when the state government instituted disfranchisement legislation.

While there can be no doubt that "Jim Crow" was a crucial factor in sending Oklahoma blacks north to Canada, a few black pioneers left before his arrival apparently lured by Canadian Government advertisements. The Immigration Branch of the Department of Interior had been interested enough in potential Oklahoma settlers to send an agent there, especially when it was pointed out in 1902 that more settlers were heading for the land rushes than could possibly be satisfied. The Laurier government also undertook an extensive advertising program in the Territories, combining glowing advertisements with economic inducements. These advertisements appeared in black newspapers such as the Boley Beacon, the Clearview Patriarch, and the influential Muskogee Cimeter. The black Boley Progress carried one item on March 16, 1905 stating that Western Canada was warmer than Texas, and carried numerous other advertisements in subsequent years.

The advertisements seemingly had an effect on a few black farmers. Seymour and James Lowery filed homestead applications on August 15, 1904. They apparently convinced another family member, Jesse, to go as well and he filed on November 25, 1904. The three men, along with Jesse's wife and child, left Oklahoma and took up residence in March, 1905 near Maidstone in what would soon become the province of Saskatchewan. Richard (Dick) Lawson brought his wife and two children from Oklahoma to the Maidstone area in November, 1906 after filing his application the previous year.

The correlation between the arrival of "Jim Crow" in Oklahoma, the filing of applications, and the actual migration of blacks to Western Canada is too close to be dismissed as mere coincidence. Canada had been advertising in black territorial and state newspapers since at least 1905 but had only attracted a smattering of black settlers. Yet when "Jim" appeared in 1908,
and racial violence increased, there was a spurt of migration activity. Western Canada became an attractive alternative -- it offered land and, apparently, freedom from prejudice. Tony Payne, one of the first black settlers of Wildwood, Alberta, came from Canadian County, Oklahoma in 1908. Twenty black families from the state followed in short order. Anderson N. Harper, formerly of Indiana, moved his family from Oklahoma to the Maidstone area in May, 1908. Peter Taler had been born in Georgia and moved to Oklahoma. He moved his wife and child to Canada rather quickly; filing his homestead application in August, 1908 and taking up residence in October of that year. Cecil J. Lane was born in Virginia, but had moved to Oklahoma. He and his wife Emma moved their ten children from Tabor, Oklahoma to Maidstone in September, 1910 after filing an application a year before in October, 1909.

"Jim Crow" was certainly a major factor in Jeff Edwards' leaving Oklahoma for the Amber Valley area of Alberta. He first became interested in Western Canada, he claimed, when Oklahoma began its segregation policies. The blacks who went north to eastern Canada were fleeing slavery, he said, "We in Amber Valley are here because we fled something almost as hard to bear -- Jim Crowism." Edwards did not leave until 1910, however; his interest being renewed when his future father-in-law, Jordan Murphy, went north with his two sons. One of the sons was Edwards' best friend, and he decided to join them.

On the train to Canada, Edwards met another black man, Henry Sneed, who was also headed north. They had no trouble crossing the international boundary and, after stopping in Winnipeg for awhile, headed north-west. Sneed returned to Oklahoma, however, and began organizing a larger party of emigrants. He had no trouble attracting prospects because Oklahoma was in
the throes of another political and social crisis involving the black man. Sneed would have trouble getting his charges into Canada, however, as white Canadians and their government became concerned about a possible black influx and began taking steps to stop it.

Canadian fears about black immigration were matched by white Oklahomans, who likewise began measures to try to stop their variant of the "black tide". Segregation measures did not seem to be enough as blacks continued to arrive in the new state. Some white Oklahomans had wanted to remove the black man's right to vote in the new state constitution as another deterrent, but the Enabling Act prohibited this. Less than three years later, Oklahoma Democrats were clamoring for disfranchisement as the Socialist party cut deep into their strength, the Republicans displayed an amazing resiliency and rebounded from their previous defeats, and new black Republican voters streamed in. It was obvious that the 1911 election would be close; too close for some Democrats, and they went about insuring their victory. And, as always, the black man would pay the cost for their success.
FOOTNOTES

1. Muskogee, Indian Territory New-State Tribune, 22 November, 1906. Murray later ran for the Democratic nomination for first Governor of the state but was defeated. He did serve as first speaker of the House, served in Congress, and did eventually gain the Governor's chair. See Keith L. Bryant, Jr., "Alfalfa Bill" Murray (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), pp. 74-75, 105, and 188.


The Five Civilized Tribes were not the only Indians settled in the Indian Territory. Several eastern and northern tribes were also located there, and after the Civil War the government moved certain western peoples
into it. Each nation was assigned an area, but there was an unassigned section in the centre of the Territory. Payne and his friends claimed it was part of the public domain and tried repeatedly to settle it, each time being removed by U.S. troops.


The thesis proposed by Harold Troper in his book Only Farmers Need Apply: Official Canadian Government Encouragement of Immigration from the United States, 1896-1911 (Toronto: Griffin House, 1972), pp. 132-133, and in his article "The Creek-Negroes of Oklahoma and Canadian Immigration, 1909-1911", Canadian Historical Review LIII (September 1972): 272-288, is eroded by this movement of black-Indians out of the Territory in the 1890's. Troper argued that the blacks who came to Canada were "Creek-Negroes" whose position in their society had disintegrated in the face of the influx of black and white settlers. It would appear that, in fact, their status had been challenged and some reacted by migrating almost fifteen years before the movement to Canada began. These facts, plus the evidence that a number of the immigrants to Canada had been born elsewhere and had moved to Oklahoma, make it more probable that it was blacks who found the old, out-of-state conditions being re-imposed who formed the Canadian migration.


3 November, 1906, 27 November, 1906.


23. Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman, 30 October, 1906.


27. Muskogee Daily Phoenix, 17 August, 1907.


31. Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman, 5 December, 1906.

32. Tolson, "Negro in Oklahoma Territory...", p. 120. Oklahoma City, Daily Oklahoman, 2 January, 1907.

33. Bryant, Jr., op. cit., p. 64. Muskogee Daily Phoenix, 4 January, 1907. The Phoenix was originally a Democratic paper but was sold to new owners in mid-February 1907. Thereafter it was the Republican voice in Muskogee. See 12 February 1907 issue. Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman, 8 January, 1907.
34. Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman, 27 December, 1906, 30 December, 1906.


38. Bryant, Jr., op. cit., pp. 56 and 65. Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman, 22 February 1907, 23 February 1907.

39. Oklahoma City Capitol Hill News, 28 February 1907, 7 March 1907.

40. Tolson, Black Oklahomans..., p. 112.


42. Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman, 25 August, 1907.

43. Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman, 5 April, 1907, 23 April, 1907, 3 May, 1907.

44. Bryant, Jr., op. cit., pp. 74-75. Muskogee Daily Phoenix, 7 April, 1907, 12 June, 1907, 13 June 1907, 14 June 1907, 15 June 1907.

45. Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman, 24 July 1907, 26 July 1907.

46. Ibid, 11 August, 1907.

47. Muskogee Daily Phoenix, 9 August, 1907, 30 August 1907, 5 September 1907.

48. Ibid, 18 September, 1907, 20 September, 1907, 21 September, 1907, 25 September, 1907.


50. Bryant, Jr., op. cit., p. 77. Muskogee Daily Phoenix, 4 December, 1907.


53. Muskogee Daily Phoenix, 25 December, 1907, 26 December, 1907, 27 December, 1907, 28 December, 1907, 29 December, 1907.


59. Harold Troper, Only Farmers Need Apply..., p. 107. For examples of Canadian advertisements in black newspapers see, Boley Beacon, 20 February 1908, 19 March 1908; Clearview Patriarch, 2 March 1911, 18 May 1911; Muskogee Cimeter, 8 January, 1909, 4 February, 1910, 2 December, 1911; Boley Progress 16 March, 1905, 12 October, 1905, 18 January 1906, 11 March 1909, 13 January, 1910.

The existence of these advertisements in black newspapers refutes Troper's claim that, "No advertising was submitted to the Negro press nor were special promotional publications issued from Ottawa to engage Negro interest as was done with other American ethnocultural and religious groups." (p. 124) The advertisements were there, and since they appeared in obviously all-black newspapers an inference could easily be made that blacks were indeed welcome as a group. The possibility does exist that Canadian government officials did not realize that their advertisements were finding their way into black papers, since if they contracted through a press service they may not have checked the end products too closely in their haste to attract settlers.

These advertisements also challenge Troper's argument that black farmers had no way of becoming informed about Canada because they were poorly educated and often illiterate hence, combined with the supposed lack of advertisements, it is not difficult to see why this country was never more attractive to them. (p. 123). It is true that Afro-Americans had a high illiteracy rate, but from 1865 when only one in twenty could read and write, that rate had dropped to one out of every two in 1900. In Oklahoma the figures were still lower with less than twenty percent illiteracy among blacks in 1910. (Lerone Bennett, Jr., Before the Mayflower: A History of the Negro in America, 1619-1964, revised ed. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1961, 1964), p. 240. Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920, 11 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922), vol. 3, Population, p. 814. Black illiteracy in Oklahoma had dropped to 12.4 percent by 1920.) In any case, it takes only one literate person to read a paper to a group of illiterates and once word of a movement started it spreads easily, as Singleton's "Exodus" to Kansas illustrated. Furthermore, to take one example, the Boley Progress was distributed throughout the South in an effort to attract blacks to that town, hence blacks in other states could have known of Canada's desire for settlers. (Boley Progress, 24 August, 1905. Also see Mozell C. Hill, "The All-Negro Society In Oklahoma (Ph. D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1946),"
It seems far more likely that blacks who were willing and able to migrate from the South and who were looking for land and freedom would head west or examine one of the back-to-Africa movements. Canada became an alternative when the first route was unsatisfactory. And, when we closed our doors another opened, and a back-to-Africa movement began in eastern Oklahoma.

60. Saskatchewan, Archives of the Province of Saskatchewan, Homestead Files, files no. 974641, 932470, 932469, 86519A.

61. Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alberta, F.F. Parkinson File, Interview with Tony Payne by F.F. Parkinson, March 1963. Saskatchewan... Homestead Files, files no. 2244587, 1658268, 1977533. A number of other black Maidstone settlers arrived during this "Jim Crow" period, but since they did not list a last place of residence it is difficult to determine if they started their trek in Oklahoma. Given the preponderance of Oklahoma black settlers, however, the odds are that they too were from that state. See files no. 2134943, 1478445, 1544822.


63. Grow, op. cit., Calgary Albertan, 24 April 1911.
CHAPTER THREE
The question is now squarely before the voters of the state and is one of vital importance. The fact that Oklahoma is almost the only southern state which permits ignorant negroes to vote has made it the centre of negro immigration, and every intelligent white citizen, regardless of political affiliations, realizes that in a few more years, unless some defensive step is taken to check this influx of blacks, the race question in Oklahoma will become so acute so as to overshadow all other issues.

Editorial in the Okemah, Oklahoma Ledger, June 2, 1910. 1

Black resistance to "Jim Crowism" did not simply melt away after an initial flurry of protest against the legislation. Periodic incidents continued on into the new decade, indicating that Oklahoma blacks were not resigned to the position in society that the whites had allotted them. Indeed, the new year of 1910 witnessed the filing of complaints with the state corporation commission by D. J. Westbrook, a black Oklahoma City preacher, and W.O. Stevens against the Pullman Company and the Fred Harvey Dining Service. The two black men charged the two companies with not complying with the law in that they did not provide equal accommodations for black passengers. 2

The attempts of the Muskogee Electric Traction Company to enforce segregation on new pay-as-you-enter cars it had placed on its routes caused a new round of racial confrontation, court involvement, police action, and violence in that eastern Oklahoma city. On the night of March 9, 1910 more than a dozen serious altercations took place between blacks and white street car crews over the blacks' attempts to take seats in the designated white areas of the cars. The trouble supposedly arose over two interpretations of the "Jim Crow" law, but it is readily apparent that the blacks of the city were in fact protesting segregation itself. 3

The company claimed that blacks were to take the first front seats, and when they were filled to take the ones directly behind them — in this way the space allotted the blacks expanded to meet the traffic. Trouble began when a black woman refused to follow a conductor's order to move up to the black section when room became available. A brawl started which resulted in the woman being bodily thrown from the street car after she
had drawn a knife on the crew. Fearing further violence, company officials called for police protection, and deputies were stationed on three lines. The officers made their first arrest shortly after coming on duty when A.S. McRae, one of the wealthiest blacks of the city, refused to move to the "Jim Crow" section when ordered to. McRae claimed that the area was too crowded, but continued to refuse to move even after three other blacks got off the car. It was then that he was arrested. Later in the evening a conductor was nearly felled by a large rock thrown from the darkness.

The next day blacks boycotted the street cars, claiming that they were being discriminated against. All along the tracks blacks walked in groups and loudly denounced the street car company. Some went even further, as when five black men boarded one car at 7:30 P.M., sat down in the white area, and pointedly refused to move. The conductor held up the car and called for the police; the men then left. The same tactic was used on another line to dislodge another reluctant black man.

Almost two hundred blacks attended the McRae trial in Justice W.S. Wolfenberger's court on March 11. McRae had hired the best black lawyers, while the state indicated the importance it attached to this case by having both the county attorney, W.J. Crump, and the assistant attorney, Edward Curd, appear in court. McRae's lawyers argued that the street car company was not complying with the law because the segregated sections were not of equal size or comfort. They also questioned the constitutionality of the "Jim Crow" legislation. These arguments did not impress Wolfenberger, however, who held that the street car company's compliance with the law was not an issue, and declared that the law clearly stated that blacks had to sit in the section of a car set aside for them. He found McRae guilty and fined him five dollars and costs. McRae and his lawyers immediately issued notice of appeal.

This court case, and the fact that deputies continued to ride the
street cars for awhile, put a damper on anti-segregation activities in Muskogee. As well, the blacks' attention was directed toward the Constitutional League, a semi-political black organization, which issued a call for a meeting in Guthrie on April 11 and 12. The purpose of the gathering was to consider methods of handling a "Jim Crow" case which was to go before the United States Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Paul on May 3, and to raise money for railroad expenses and legal costs. But even as they organized to fight segregation on railroads and street cars a greater threat to their liberty was unveiled. On March 28, 1910 the State Senate passed Concurrent Resolution No. 31, better known as the Taylor resolution after its leading exponent, which held that,

No person shall be registered as an elector of this state, or be allowed to vote in any election held herein, unless he be able to read and write any section of the Constitution of the State of Oklahoma; but no person who was, on January 1, 1866, or at any time prior thereto entitled to vote under any form of government, or who at that time resided in some foreign nation and no lineal descendant of such person shall be denied the right to register and vote because of his inability to so read and write sections of such Constitution.

This was the infamous "Grandfather Clause", designed specifically to disfranchise the black man. 7

Disfranchising the black voter became an issue in the state partly because the Democrats had been severely jolted by the sudden resurgence of the Republicans in the election of 1908. Regrouping, following their ineffectual campaigns of 1906 and 1907, the Republicans attacked what they saw as the waste, inefficiency, and corruption of the Haskell regime. One Republican editor responded to charges that his party was "mud slinging", and unwittingly indicated how restless the blacks were as well as his own racism, by stating,

...you must remember that this state has the most corrupt and dishonest government that any republicans here ever had to live under, or ever heard of. Even your home grown niggers are beginning to wish they were back in Africa. 8
The Republican strategy was rather successful and they increased their standing in both the State Senate and House, although the Democrats still held a majority. Even more disastrous, from a Democratic viewpoint, was the election of three Republicans to fill Federal House of Representative seats. What was even worse was the fact that the two Democrats who did win had combined pluralities of 25,155 while the Republicans' was only 6,503. Democrats were convinced that they would have won at least one more seat if the vote had been taken at-large rather than in the existing district fashion. They also recognized that the solidly Republican black voter had played an important role in the setback. The Democrats took steps to "correct" the election system problem, and they took up the task of eliminating the black voter. 9

The resurgence of the Republicans would not have been so serious for the Democrats, and they would not have had to bother with eliminating the black voter, had it not been for the fact that their own vote count was being reduced by the rise of the Socialist Party. Oklahoma had a strong "radical" agrarian tradition, having supported a vigorous People's Party until the Populists fused with the Democrats in the late 1890's. The Socialist Party continued that tradition, although it would be wrong to suggest that it was merely a continuation of Populism. The Oklahoma "Reds" were diverse in their backgrounds and beliefs, but what ultimately separated them from their predecessors was the Socialists' recruiting of landless rural workers into a movement which cast the landlord farmer as another variety of oppressor. 10

The Socialists found Oklahoma, especially the southern portion of the state, a fertile field for their endeavors. Farm tenancy in what would become Oklahoma had increased from less than one percent in 1890, to forty-four percent in 1900, and had reached an astounding fifty-four percent in the state in 1910. In Marshall County, in southeast
Oklahoma, the farm tenancy rate was eighty-one percent in 1910. Tenants relied heavily on cotton as a cash crop, paying one fourth of their cotton crop and one third of their corn as rent. Given this situation, and the attendant poverty, it is not surprising that renters flocked to the red banner and that the Socialists increased their vote in the southern counties of the state in every election from 1907 to 1914. In the gubernatorial election of 1907 their candidate polled almost ten thousand votes; an ominous sign for the Democrats.

The southern counties were the Democrats' stronghold and while they were not panic stricken, they did realize the precariousness of their political situation. The southern counties were their bedrock, and now it was being eroded by the Socialist tide. Any decline in the Democrats' strength lessened their chances of holding off the charging Republicans. The Republicans were rising, and unless something was done to stop them before the 1910 state election the Democrats might find themselves alongside the Socialists in opposition to a Republican governor or even a Republican legislature. This would be a return to "carpetbaggism" and "black domination" for Southern white Democrats, and anything was permissible in stopping that. It was in this climate that the Democratic party of Oklahoma moved to institute Mississippi's infamous "Grandfather Clause".

The "Grandfather Clause" supposedly struck at one of the weaknesses of the black electorate; its relatively high illiteracy rate. While that was the initial target, the measure in fact penalized the black man for being black. In 1865 only one of every twenty Afro-Americans could read and write, but by 1900 the rate had dropped to one of every two. Oklahoma's black population was somewhat better off, due largely no doubt to the Indian and Territorial schools, for in 1910 their illiteracy rate was less than twenty percent. Even if a black Oklahoman were literate, however, he could still lose his vote with the "Grandfather" measure. Enforcement
was the key factor and it was all too easy for Democratic appointed election inspectors of the state's notoriously partisan Election Board to find all black men illiterate; which is precisely what they did. 12

Attempts to disfranchise the black man had started early in Oklahoma's history. Late in the first session of the state legislature, Senator L.K. Taylor of Chickasha proposed a joint resolution containing a "Grandfather Clause" which passed with little debate. The measure was to have gone before the voters in the next election in the fall of 1908, but for some inexplicable reason it does not seem to have been brought forth. Perhaps the Democrats did not feel it overly important at the time, or perhaps they felt that the prohibition on restricting the franchise due to race in the State Enabling Act might be used in a long, unwanted court fight. Their situation and sentiments changed dramatically after the election when the Republicans scored their impressive comeback. Senator Taylor again went to work and during the second legislature in 1909 proposed another joint resolution which allowed for the submission to the people of a constitutional amendment changing the fundamental document to admit more restrictions on the suffrage. This was the first step on a path of legislative manipulation which would culminate, in the spring of 1910, with a full-fledged "Grandfather Clause" amendment to the State Constitution. 13

In their maneuvers the Democrats decided to use the then radically innovative measures in the State Constitution known as the initiative and referendum provisions. These allowed the electors to initiate legislation if eight percent of the voters petitioned for it, to initiate a constitutional amendment if fifteen percent petitioned, or obtain a referendum on any legislative act if five percent petitioned. To ensure "Grandfather's" victory, however, the election laws governing these provisions had to be manipulated, and once again Senator Taylor was ready. He proposed, during a special session
of the legislature which ran until early 1910, that the ballot title for a proposed constitutional change be prepared by the political party proposing the amendment. This would allow the Democrats, as the initiators of a "Grandfather Clause", to omit the text of the amendment from the ballot, stating only the title of the measure and its number. Taylor's measure also gave the State Election Board the power to designate on the ballot the place for the words "For the Amendment", thereby allowing the Democrats, who controlled the Board, to place these words directly beneath the ballot title and number with no distinguishing marks. The measure, furthermore, provided for the words "For the Amendment" to be printed in the same type as the ballot title, as well as requiring a voter to strike out every letter of the phrase with a black lead pencil otherwise his ballot would be counted in favour of the proposal. And, as if that were not enough, Taylor also included a provision prohibiting the printing of sample ballots which might have enlightened a few voters. Obviously the entire measure was designed to confuse and mislead the electorat e, and to count as many votes for a "Grandfather Clause" amendment as possible. It was an example of legislative juggling and election stealing at its worst.

Taylor and his cohorts encountered opposition to their scheme from an unexpected source when Governor C.N. Haskell objected to several of the bill's features, and vetoed it. Haskell, as in the case of "Jim Crow", was worried about possible repercussions; specifically that the bill might be declared unconstitutional. He pointed out that leaving preparation of the ballot title to a political party could lead to a prejudiced title, that the power given the Election Board was really a legislative matter, and that the provision to have the words "For the Amendment" in the same type as the title did not give the voter sufficient protection. He also objected to the prohibiting of sample ballots. Haskell did not object to
the intent of the bill, however, for he did finally sign a virtually identical one; rather, he feared that the courts would disallow it and perhaps realized that long court battles over election returns were a distinct possibility. The bill was too loose for someone of Haskell’s apparent precise legal instincts and he must have felt that it would be better to pass a sound bill now, rather than have to do it later. As one Republican critic of the Taylor measure indicated, it was difficult to determine if Haskell used his veto, "...because the bill was too rotten or not rotten enough." 15

But the "Grandfather Clause" was not "Jim Crow", and in this battle many Democrats were fighting for their political lives. They were not about to tolerate Haskell’s fears this time and, as one disgruntled Democratic Senator declared, the Senate would remain in session as long as it took to pass an election law; he also branded Haskell’s objections as "fastidious". It did not take too long for on March 8, the day after this remark was made, Senator Taylor introduced a new but little changed bill and on March 17 Governor Haskell, faced with this intransigence, signed it. That same night the Senate, on strict party lines, passed a Taylor sponsored resolution providing for a "Grandfather Clause" to be submitted to the people for initiation, and on March 28, 1910, as was previously noted, Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31 was passed. After the legislature adjourned Senator Taylor filed the proposed amendment with Oklahoma’s Secretary of State as State Question No. 17 or Initiative Petition No. 10. 16

The next step was to get approximately thirty-eight thousand voters to sign the petition, but the Democrats had to hurry. The Constitution had to be altered before the November election or the blacks would vote in it, and the only polling before that was the state primaries in early August. Unless signatures were gathered quickly there might be insufficient time to arrange for "Grandfather" to be voted on in the summer. The Demo-
crats sought to aid their campaign by using the tactic which had worked so well in Haskell's race for governor and on the "Jim Crow" issue: they raised the spectre of a massive black immigration into the state.

The Democrats were able to use this issue as an election tool because blacks, despite "Jim Crowism", continued to come to the state to take advantage of the economic opportunities it offered. Between 1900 and 1910 the black population more than doubled from 55,684 to 137,612. These figures in no way matched white population growth, however, but since blacks were still coming the element of truth necessary in any propaganda was there and could be expanded upon. The tactic was simple, and effective. For example, one Democratic editor asked his readers if they had signed the petition yet, and then went on to argue that,

...Oklahoma is the one Southern State where negroes vote and hold office. Unless you are willing for this state to continue to be the dumping ground for the ignorant negroes of the whole south, sign the petition and help preserve Oklahoma and her state government to the white race while there is yet time. 17

Black Oklahomans predictably reacted strongly to the campaign launched by the Democrats. As one black editor phrased it, the "Grandfather Clause" was, "...the paramount issue with the Negro of the state of Oklahoma," while another urged all blacks of the state to fight it. A torrent of abuse was heaped on the amendment: it was "...one of the most vicious pieces of legislation ever enacted in any state...", "Rot of the most damnable nature", and "...an unpardonable sin." One black group went even further, characterizing the "Grandfather Clause" as, "...a child of Hades and in league with the devil...a measure advocated by a set of men in furtherance of selfish ends...". 18

White Republicans were also upset with the Democrats' campaign, recognizing that their party's existence was threatened. The Chairman of the Republican State Committee fought hard to have the "liberty stealing laws" referred to a vote of the people realizing, as one Republican
editor put it, that without such a referral, "...the republican party will be a thing of the past in Oklahoma." The Republicans claimed that the prohibition on printing sample ballots was particularly unfair, and they took a firm stand against this section. They also argued that the constitutional amendment would disfranchise many Indians; an important charge since Oklahoma still had a sizeable native population. In any case, one Republican journal argued, "Such legislation is contrary to the spirit of the United States constitution...". The same journal later charged that,

The proposed grandfather clause amendment to the constitution is unfair and unconstitutional because it aims to disfranchise one class of illiterates and not all classes. The spirit of our laws is to treat all persons with equal and exact justice. Oklahoma should be the last state to think of swerving from that high ideal. 19

The Democrats did not stop to consider either the blacks' or the white Republicans' views on their petition, and forged relentlessly ahead. By the end of May they had collected over forty thousand signatures, and submitted them to the Secretary of State. The Democrats claimed it had taken them just over one month to get the required number, a record they said, and clear evidence that the voters supported their attempt to eliminate the ignorant from voting. The "Grandfather Clause", one Democrat argued in the flush of the petition's success, was the most satisfactory and the most logical solution to the race and black immigration problems. If it were adopted the massive black immigration into Oklahoma would turn elsewhere, he claimed. If it failed to carry, however, he predicted that in less than five years half of the counties in the state would be ruled by blacks. 20

Even as they filed their signatures the Democrats faced new challenges. Lawyers representing black voters, the Republican Party, and the Socialist Party protested to the Secretary of State claiming, among other things, that there were not enough signatures on the Democrats' petition, that
many people who signed were not legal voters, and that the purpose of the amendment was really to disfranchise blacks. They also argued that the "Grandfather Clause" conflicted with the State Enabling Act, the State Constitution, and the Federal Constitution, particularly the latter's Fifteenth Amendment. The protests were in vain as the Secretary, a Democrat, rejected them. The lawyers took their cases to the State Supreme Court, but on June 22, that body sustained the Secretary, and refused to give a verdict on the constitutionality issue. The justices also ruled that the Senate Bill containing the "Grandfather Clause" was not subject to referendum, thereby theoretically preventing those who opposed it from attempting a counter-petition. The Republicans tried anyway and filed a referendum petition, but the Democrats protested and the Secretary of State refused to submit the Republicans' petition for a vote. The Democrats were given another court boost when the Federal Court for Western Oklahoma dismissed a petition to prevent the "Grandfather Clause" from appearing on the primary election ballots. 21

Violence paralleled the Democrats' legislative manoeuvres and campaign for signatures. With his social status reduced, and his political rights under attack, the black man in Oklahoma became the target for more physical abuse from his white neighbours. His role as a scapegoat, as an object upon whom the fears and passions of whites could be laid, was being reinforced by legislation. A band of from twenty to thirty whites, identified as the Ku Klux Klan, appeared in the town of Mulhall. They seized a black businessman, bound him, and sent him on a train to Guthrie. Nearly one hundred blacks left Frederick, Oklahoma when the white townspeople threatened them with violence. The blacks responded quickly because their small numbers made resistance impossible. Black businessmen left their stores and merchandise, and one old man was taken to the next town for medical
treatment for an injury suffered boarding a train because his wife feared leaving him behind. 22

Even though the ballot was constructed to favour approval of the "Grandfather Clause", the Democrats left nothing to chance and campaigned vigorously for its passage. The Okemah Ledger even tried to evoke Lincoln's memory on the Democrats' side. It quoted from a Lincoln speech of 1858 in which he had stated he was not and never had been in favour of social and political equality between blacks and whites. The paper then asked, "If Mr. Lincoln could come to Oklahoma today, how would he vote on the 'Grandfather Clause'?" 23

Other Democratic newspapers simply touted the amendment, or attacked the black man. The Waurika News felt that the "Grandfather Clause" was meeting with the approval of many voters. It also noted that the Democrats were being frank in stating that they would eliminate ignorant blacks from politics. The Enid News, meanwhile, felt that although the black man deserved fair treatment and was entitled to the protection of the law, he had, "...no moral right to partake in the government of a civilized state." 24

Of course black immigration was still a useful theme for the Democrats. It was noted that in 1867 Ohio had voted down a constitutional amendment which would have given the vote to the black man. This had been done because white supremacy had to be maintained and black immigration from the South discouraged. Oklahoma was in exactly the same situation, the argument went, and when the "Grandfather" amendment was submitted to the voters it would be passed by a large majority. A similar argument held that black suffrage, equality, and domination were "eternal corollaries." If blacks were given the vote, they would take the other two; but if you denied them suffrage you escaped the last horror. White Oklahomans had to be vigilant because,
Four million southern negroes are looking towards Oklahoma. Continue our present system of negro suffrage and they will be our future neighbours. Adopt the grandfather amendment and the state will be saved from negro domination.

Shall Oklahoma be negroid or anglo-saxon? 25

The "Grandfather Clause" became an issue within the Democratic Party as well. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray was intent on following his friend Haskell in the Governor's chair, but had to contend with the challenge of Lee Cruce in the primary. Murray's campaign reflected his "little man", agrarian-oriented philosophy, as he advocated improved highways, a free textbook program in the schools, and a bank guarantee law. He assailed big business and monopolies and branded Cruce, a banker, a friend of both. Cruce's supporters countered by labelling Murray a former drunk and a dope fiend, as well as charging him with befriending the blacks and opposing all restrictions on them. 26

This last charge is rather hard to accept given Murray's instrumental role in bringing about "Jim Crow", but it is true that he initially opposed bringing in the "Grandfather Clause". Murray felt that it might be used against white voters, and he does not seem to have been overly concerned about the rise of the Socialists since he was, he thought, personally very popular in the southern counties and probably felt he could carry them. But, the Cruce faction pressed their charge and forced Murray, half way through the campaign, to change his position and come out in favour of the amendment. It did not do him any good, and Murray lost the nomination to Cruce by over fourteen thousand votes. Ironically, "Alfalfa Bill" ran poorly in the southern third of the state, except for Haskell County and his home area, Johnston County. 27

The campaign of racial animosity by which the Democrats hoped to carry the "Grandfather Clause" was aided by the publicity given the greatest of the "white hope" attempts to conquer the reigning black heavyweight
boxing champion, Jack Johnson. While it is impossible to determine the precise impact of the fight between Johnson and James J. Jeffries on the campaign and the vote on the amendment, the depth of feeling and the excitement aroused by the bout clearly influenced a great many white Oklahomans and cannot be ignored. Johnson was one of the foremost news attractions in the United States between 1908 and 1915, and his effect on American popular feeling was sharper than William H. Taft's. Partly this was due to the symbolism of black over white which was involved, but a more important factor was Johnson's lifestyle. The Galveston, Texas native either ignored or openly flaunted America's racial mores, including the ban on black male and white female contacts. Johnson married three different white women, and made no secret of his affairs with many others. 28

As soon as Johnson beat Canadian Tom Burns for the world title in Australia in 1908 there were cries for a white challenger, a "white hope", to regain the crown. Victor McLaglen and Stanley Ketchel were both unsuccessful, leaving undefeated former champion James J. Jeffries as the carrier of the whiteman's honour. Jeffries agreed to meet Johnson in San Francisco, but the bout was cancelled by the protests of various church and other anti-boxing groups. Reno, Nevada was then selected and the match was re-scheduled, not without significance, for July 4. Interest mushroomed around the world and ticket orders from Britain, Brazil, Canada, and India poured into Reno. Americans were likewise agitated, and commentaries appeared in Oklahoma newspapers as early as April. In Muskogee interest was greater than over any other such event, it was said, and "...even the fair salesladies have become thrillingly interested." The popular, and avowedly racist novelist Jack London appeared at ringside on fight day to write a syndicated description. More than thirty thousand people appeared in Times Square, New York to read posted bulletins of the bout. Over three thousand people appeared before the Muskogee Daily Phoenix offices
to hear the results of each round broadcast by megaphone; it was the largest open-air crowd in the city's history. The newspaper also sold over seven thousand copies of a special "fight edition." 29

The blacks and whites in this huge Oklahoma crowd reacted predictably to the news of Johnson's victory in a bout described by Jack London as, "... great in its significance. In itself it was not great." Blacks yelled and shouted in triumph, while whites groaned in misery. Serious trouble was barely avoided when a cousin of former white champion, John L. Sullivan, drew a knife on a black man who had yelled that he knew Johnson would beat the white man. Muskogee police arrested the two, and another black man who had tried to intervene. The white man broke away from the police several times, however, and tried to assault other blacks, and when he was released on bail he again attacked blacks with his knife. Several fights developed in addition to these, but the police were able to keep order. They were not so fortunate in other cities and rioting was widespread; injuries and deaths being reported from Pennsylvania to Colorado, and from Ohio to Georgia. In New York the huge Times Square crowd was "mute and grave" at the result, but in "Hell's Kitchen" and Harlem serious rioting began. A middle aged black man barely escaped lynching when he was attacked by a large gang of whites. 30

Varying conclusions about the fight were drawn by whites. A University of California sociologist said Johnson's victory proved to some extent that the blacks were no longer an inferior race. An Oklahoma white newspaper editor, however, warned blacks not to "get swelled heads" over the victory; rather, blacks should follow Johnson's example and work hard toward an end. Around the country a number of churchmen moved to ban the showing of motion pictures taken of the fight, and many cities complied. One prominent Roman Catholic Church official spoke against showing the pictures, arguing that the, "...resentment and ill feeling induced by the result of
the fight have passed and should not be revived..." 31

The Cardinal may merely have been hoping the animosity had gone, and to what extent resentment lingered and was carried by white Oklahomans into the polling booths less than a month later is a moot point. But, coming when it did, and given the heavy publicity, it is not unreasonable to assume the bout had an effect. Coupled with the campaign already launched by the Democrats, the fight result put blacks and their supporters on the defensive. Not that the opponents of the "Grandfather Clause" remained idle. Black newspapers kept up a barrage of denunciations, and often carried detailed instructions on how to vote against the amendment. White Republican organs likewise assailed the provision, pointing out its iniquities, and explaining how to cast a negative vote. One favourite argument was that blacks were not the ones who would be barred from voting if the measure passed; some ignorant whites and many Indians would likewise suffer. The Socialists were also involved, managing to conduct a rather active campaign in spite of internal disputes. They liked to point out the hypocrisy of the Democrats, arguing that the amendment would never rid the state of blacks as some "disfranchising Donkocrats" were arguing. 32

The Socialists' campaign was disrupted by a racist strain which appeared in their ranks. While the official party policy was against the "Grandfather Clause", and prominent leaders spoke against it, party newspapers in the southern counties openly stated that the black man could never expect to achieve full equality with the whites. Not that Socialists were the only ones hamstrung by racism. Blacks complained bitterly about continued Republican "lily whiteism" proclaiming it, "...selfish, arrogant and repugnant to the principles of the party." 33 One wonders how effective "Lily white" Republicans were championing the black man's right to vote.

The combined efforts of the blacks, white Republicans, and the Socialists could not match the Democrats' campaign and election stealing
tactics. On August 2, 1910 Oklahomans decided the fate of the blacks' voting rights for some time to come when they approved the "Grandfather Clause" amendment 135,443, to 106,222. While it is difficult to determine exactly how many blacks lost their right to vote, the best estimate is approximately twenty-one thousand. The Democrats rejoiced at their success and gloated over how well "Grandpa" ran for such an old man; black Oklahomans however, continued to fight, pausing briefly only to regroup. 34

Less than a month after the passage of the disfranchising amendment blacks from throughout the state met in Muskogee to discuss the development, and to arrange for a larger gathering to be held in Boley on September 8. Their objective was to perfect an organization to "wage war" on the "Grandfather Clause". The meeting in Boley finished before it could really begin, however, when fights involving pistols and knives developed and the police intervened. The chief organizer of the affair, A.G.W. Sango, accused the Chairman of the Republican State Committee of organizing the disturbances because he wanted any money collected to be sent to the party headquarters and not spent defending black rights. In the meantime a suit was filed in the Weleetka County Court to test the legislation. Three members of the local election board who had enforced the new suffrage regulation in a special election involving a local gas franchise, were sued for two hundred dollars. 35

Members of the Constitutional League and the Negro Protective League were asked to attend a meeting in Boley in late September to join in fighting "Grandpa." Eight hundred delegates passed a number of resolutions one of which read,

We the Negroes of the State of Oklahoma do hereby deny and condemn as false, the charge made by the Democratic press, (and) politicians...that the Negro seeks social equality but that we do ask that we be given our rights under the law and the Constitution.

Less than a week later another call was issued for a meeting to be held
in Chickasha to join the two leagues, and the Congressional Suffrage League into one large, statewide organization to fight the amendment. Other appeals were made, including one by a black editor demanding a "wave" of suits against the legislation. 36

Black Oklahomans had to deal with other, related issues. Leaving absolutely nothing to chance in ensuring their victory in the fall state election, Democrats continued their negrophobic campaign. The black man may not have had the vote, but he was still a good scapegoat. The Daily Oklahoman claimed that a black rebellion was brewing; blacks were planning to force their way to the polls, it was said. According to one black editor all such talk was part of a plot to "steal" the election by having the state militia sent to dominantly black areas to run the election machinery. Other Democratic journals relied on other forms of racist appeals, as when the Waurika News accused the Republican candidate for governor, Joe McNeal, of having appointed a black man to office in the territorial period, of having a black campaign manager in Muskogee County, of having a teacher of mixed schools as a campaign manager in Seminole County, and of collecting party slush funds from black postmasters when he was Republican Party treasurer. 37

McNeal was the target of other partisan and racist attacks as the fall election drew closer. He had contributed money to fight the "Jim Crow" law, it was said, and he helped a black candidate try to beat a white man for a legislative seat. He was also charged with helping E.P. McCabe colonize blacks in Guthrie and Langston, and of opposing separate race schools. Lee Cruce, the Democratic candidate for governor, recalled his boyhood days in Kentucky when a Republican candidate was seated in a ruthless election steal, after he had been overwhelmingly turned down by the people. He wanted to know if McNeal would join in an effort to enforce the "Grandfather Clause", thereby ensuring a "fair vote", and promised
to see to it that no disqualified voters exercised the franchise in Oklahoma. 38

Even though the "Grandfather Clause" was aimed at illiterates, black Oklahomans who could read and write still had cause to worry. How the amendment was to be applied was crucial, and Governor Haskell had made it abundantly clear before the election that in order to vote a black man must be able to, "...read like a professor." Even that was not enough for some. election inspectors, however, and one black man who could read and write not only English, but Greek and Latin as well was turned away. Black professional men presented themselves at the Paden polling station armed with affidavits testifying to their voting competency, but were turned down. Several of them began reading sections of the Constitution aloud, only still to be denied: Some finally voted after trying three or four times. Literate black men were turned away at other stations for trivial reasons. Even when a black man overcame these obstacles there was no guarantee his ballot was counted. A Deputy Sheriff in Wagoner caught a Democratic election judge stuffing black ballots into his boots instead of into the ballot box. When challenged the Democrat said he would not allow a "nigger lover" to boss him and struck the Deputy. The law man knocked him down and, presumably, took him to jail. What became of the ballots is a mystery. 39

Wagoner was not the only area to witness election confrontations. In McAlester fifteen election officers were arrested by federal authorities for refusing to allow blacks to vote. The black men involved had presented affidavits testifying to their literacy, but these were not accepted. The election officials made bond and returned to their job, but the blacks who had complained were arrested by state authorities. They made bond and were released. Then, fifteen white Republicans were arrested for false swearing in that they had instructed the blacks to get the affidavits in the first place. It was a busy day for the bondsmen -- each bond issued
was for two thousand dollars. 40

The legislative juggling, the "Grandfather Clause", the racist appeals, and the election manipulation had their intended effect as Lee Cruce and the Democrats retained their hold on power. The result was close, however, and the final returns show that the Democrats were not far wrong in their analysis of their political situation. Cruce polled 120,218 votes, McNeal garnered 99,527, while J.T. Cumbie the Socialist candidate for governor more than doubled his party's 1907 count by taking 24,707 ballots. 41 Certainly not all of the twenty-one thousand disfranchised blacks would have voted in this election, but if half of them had appeared and voted for McNeal, as they almost certainly would have, then he would have been within eleven thousand votes of topping Cruce. If three-quarters of the blacks had voted then McNeal would have been within two thousand votes of Cruce. While it is possible that some blacks would have voted for the Democrats or Socialists, and some whites voted Republican or Socialist once the black man was removed from politics, the election would still have been very close; too close for the Democrats.

Blacks who had moved west to Oklahoma to find land and liberty now found that they had come full circle. They had escaped second-class citizenship and racial discrimination only to be engulfed once more. They fought the new situation as they had the old ones; they organized and went to court, resisted physically when they could and ran when there was no other choice. Some, again, saw migration as a way to escape, and early in 1911 there were rumors of a pending black migration to New Mexico. This move was frowned upon by those who preferred to stay and fight, and one black editor argued that, "Oklahoma is alright. If we would only stand up and be men and go into court and protect our rights." 42 But some had had enough of Oklahoma and chose to express their dissatisfaction in another way; they were determined to leave thereby serving notice once more that they, like
their slave forebearers, would not patiently suffer. New Mexico was not
their destination, however, nor was any other part of the United States;
rather, they looked north to Western Canada.

Canada's thirst for settlers had not slackened since Oklahoma had
achieved statehood, and advertisements promoting Western Canadian land con-
tinued to appear in Oklahoma newspapers. Democratic, Republican, black,
and white journals all rang with the glowing qualities of the Canadian
prairies. Wheat yields of from twenty-five to thirty-five bushels per acre
were possible, it was said, and no finer wheat could be found anywhere.
Oklahomans were told that their countrymen were streaming into Canada, and
they were asked why they should rent a farm when free land was available
in the north. Many Americans had the impression that Canada was nothing
more than a snowy wasteland and a great deal of effort was put into over-
coming this image. While this sort of advertising declined somewhat over
the years as the Canadian Government turned to emphasizing other factors,
it was never totally abandoned. 43

The Canadian Government was not the only one advertising Western
Canadian land in Oklahoma at this time. The Canadian Pacific Railway Land
Company maintained an office in Oklahoma City, handing out brochures and
arranging charters to "Sunny Alberta." The editor of the Oklahoma City
Capitol Hill News was somewhat taken aback to find that a warm, sunny climate
existed north of Montana. He believed the catalogue he had been given though,
and he urged his readers to get one if only for the information it contained.
This newspaperman's opinions were reinforced by an Oklahoma farmer who had
visited Western Canada. In a front page article the editor told how Mr.
E.A. Laskey's description of the fine, cool summer weather,"...makes one
long to spread their wings and fly to the northland." Mr. Laskey also des-
cribed the fine crops, and said the only drawback was the cold winter. Even
then there was not much snow, and stock pastured out all through the year.
Alberta was settled mostly by Americans, everyone was prosperous, and any man with little capital should invest there for good returns, Mr. Laskey said. 44

Nor was this the only favourable publicity Western Canada received from Oklahoma newspaper men. Shortly after the State Legislature had introduced the "Grandfather Clause" amendment, a white editor penned a lengthy commentary which noted how pleased farmers returning from Canada were with the law enforcement there. He found it "queer" that in the United States, where everyone was in favour of vigorous law enforcement, so many laws were laxly enforced and some were even farcical. Was it any wonder there were lynchings here, he asked; and went on to argue that, "One never hears of such a thing under the British flag for the simple reason that the law is respected and enforced." People talked about the blacks, he continued, wondering what to do with them noting what brutes they were, and what unmentionable crimes they committed. Well why should we be surprised at them, he asked, when whites scoff and disregard the law? He felt that there was a promising future for a political party in Oklahoma that would stand for strict law enforcement and make the people believe it was sincere. 45

This editor seems to have developed a mild infatuation for Western Canada, for less than a month later his paper published a large, six column story on the Mounted Police. The article stated that the red coated police had brought British law to Western Canada, and established it firmly. A homesteader could go to any province, take out a claim, and be assured that he could work his land and harvest his crop without trouble. The author went on to say that the "Last frontier of America" was falling to the farmer, whose only need for a weapon was a knife to cut his tobacco twist. He concluded,

There has never been a lynching in Canada. Put that down to the credit of the mounted police, who administered justice so successfully that there was never any temptation for the work to be taken up by private enterprise. 46

The black Oklahomans' decision to migrate to Western Canada was
not brought about by propaganda and favourable publicity, however. They can show that there is an outlet, but unless conditions conducive to emigration exist that outlet will not be used. The decision to move is at once multi-faceted and inter-related; a "pull" factor is definitely necessary, but unless a decisive "push" is administered the natural inertia of humanity is not overcome. In 1907 and 1908 this latter element was supplied by the "Jim Crow" legislation, and in 1910 and 1911 it was the "Grandfather Clause" amendment. This is abundantly clear from the remarks of one black emigrant group that reached St. Paul, Minnesota in March, 1911. They asserted that they had been driven from Oklahoma by the theft of their property and the denial of their right to vote. They also said that they hoped to start anew in Western Canada, and that there were five thousand more ready to follow them. 47

These sentiments were echoed by one member of a party of Oklahoma blacks who tried to enter Canada in British Columbia. Only two were admitted, and one was reported in Vancouver as stating,

The people of Oklahoma treat us like dogs... We are not allowed to vote and we are not admitted to any of the theatres or public places. They won't even let us ride the street cars in some of the towns.

When asked why they chose Canada he answered, "We heard about the free lands here and also that everyone had the right to vote and was a free man." 48

Not that racial prejudice was the sole reason for leaving. Joe and Mattie Mayes farmed poor, low land which constantly flooded. They were ready for a move, and Mrs. Walter Lane, a child of twelve at the time, recalled Joe's mounting excitement after reading about Western Canada in a local newspaper. He discussed the move with his family, and then with the congregation which he led. These people all had their reasons for wanting to leave and a decision was made. The men undertook carpentry and farm work to get the travelling money necessary, while the women raised pigs. In ad-
dition, cattle were auctioned and all land holdings were sold. In the mean-
time, a formal application for migration was sent. When the clearance papers
arrived the group went by wagon to Tulsa, and from there went by train to
St. Paul. They changed trains in the Minnesota city before heading north
into Canada. 49

There were other ways of learning about Western Canada besides news-
papers. Henry Sneed, a Texan who had moved to Oklahoma, was a preacher
like Joe Mayes. He returned to Clearview, Oklahoma after visiting the
small black settlement in the Amber Valley area of Alberta in August, 1910.
The combination of his own impressions and the favourable reports of the
blacks already there made him decide to gather as many Afro-Americans as
possible from the southern states and bring them north. He left his partner
N. Toles in Athabasca Landing to make preparations, and returned to the
United States. Meetings were held in various parts of the south, and early
in 1911 emigrants from Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma gathered in Weleetka
to begin their trek. The first group consisted of one hundred and ninety-
four men, women, and children, and no less than nine carloads of horses
and farm implements. Another group of two hundred began gathering in the
same Oklahoma town after the first band departed, but they waited to hear
if the first party was admitted before setting out. 50

Many other Oklahoma blacks were interested in going to Canada and
said that they would follow shortly; others planned to leave in the fall
after their crops were harvested. A large number of these people were said
to be already selling what land they owned. Sneed's success may have in-
spired still others, for less than a month later a party of twenty-two black
farmers from Lincoln County, Oklahoma left Guthrie on the Santa Fe Railway.
Their families were to follow them after the men had established their claims,
built homes and started their crops. Less than a week after this group left
another party of over thirty black families, led by R.A. Hudson of Wellston,
Oklahoma, passed through Guthrie on their way to Canada. 51

What seemed to be the beginning of a black exodus to Western Canada stirred public comment both in Oklahoma and in several American cities. As the Okemah Ledger said of Henry Sneed's group, "...(they) obtained more newspaper notoriety than any bunch of colored people has received in many moons." This journal noted that this group had been delayed at Emerson, Manitoba, but was finally allowed to enter. It then argued that their admission was the signal for other blacks in Okfuske County to follow. The Boston Evening Transcript, in an even earlier statement, had said that large numbers of Oklahoma blacks were moving to Canada trying to escape "Jim Crow" and disfranchisement. It estimated that by the spring of 1911 seven thousand blacks would have left Oklahoma. 52

The Chicago Tribune described one group of emigrants as, "...sober, industrious, and comparatively well to do... good citizens in every particular..." They had found conditions intolerable in Oklahoma, and it was obvious that they were not wanted there. They felt that it was better for them to yield to prejudice, it said, since they were denied the equal protection of the laws. After noting that Canada had been the destination of many fugitive slaves who found a welcome there, this paper then argued that to their horror the Oklahoma blacks found that the prejudices which they had left in the south had followed them. The reason for this was the large number of American settlers in Western Canada; they had brought their prejudices with them and had made known their aversion to having the blacks in Canada. In the Tribune's words, "How effective that opposition is to be we shall know in time." This journal concluded that since Mexico was too different culturally, and Liberia had proven a disaster, if Canada closed its borders to blacks, "They would have to stay in this country and do their best to overcome that prejudice which would drive them out." 53 When Canada did effectively close its borders many blacks did stay to fight, but not
before others had investigated the possibility of moving to Africa.

The black Guthrie Oklahoma Guide carried a front page editorial, reprinted from the Kansas City Journal, dealing with the migration. This commentary argued that colonization agents had been at work among the Oklahoma black population, "...painting in glowing colors the attractiveness of the Canadian provinces in the Northwest." It said that the first party of ninety families, or about five hundred people, had sold their land in Oklahoma at a sacrifice before heading north. Many others were preparing to follow, as the colonization agents reported the next party would number one thousand families. They were all fairly well educated having been taught in the Indian schools of the old Indian Territory.

The Kansas City paper went on to state what it saw as the reasons for the exodus; and they were not hard to find, it said. "Jim Crow" and the "Grandfather Clause" had, "...filled their cup of bitterness to overflowing." The movement would probably continue until the black population of Oklahoma was depleted, it said. It was a sad movement, however, because the black man was being forced to leave a congenial climate for a bleak one. The black man, the argument continued, was a creature of tropical sunshine and it was hard to associate him with a land of snow; he belonged to the "land of cotton." In all probability, the paper concluded, the change would not be for the good and most of the emigrants, "...will find their way back across the border before the snows of many Canadian winters have chilled their toes." 

The newspaper coverage and commentary started other Oklahoma blacks thinking about moving to Western Canada. Further colonization movements began among blacks in Okfuskee, Muskogee, and Creek Counties when it was learned that Canada had admitted some black settlers. One Oklahoma newspaper reported that a general exodus was in the making and that one thousand black families, or about seven thousand people would soon be ready to head
north. It too identified their reasons for leaving as the "Jim Crow" and "Grandfather" laws. Not all of these prospective emigrants could have been overly excited, however, since some of the earliest reports from the international boundary indicated that not all was well. On March 2, 1911, the black Boley Progress carried a front page item, with a large headline stating, "Canada Bars Negroes." The item was datelined Winnipeg, February 24, and said that the Canadian Government had decided to stop the influx of blacks from the United States. Blacks were felt to be undesirable citizens, it said, and one party intending to go to Western Canada had been stopped at the border. It did not indicate whether they had been allowed to proceed.

The Sneed party had also been stopped at Emerson while a rigorous medical examination was carried out. Fearing that an attempt would be made to keep them out, one Oklahoma newspaper reported, the leaders of the group had appealed to Washington and the United States Consul at Ottawa was directed to determine whether black Americans, as a class, could be excluded under Canadian law. It was decided that no Canadian regulation specifically relating to black immigration existed, so the group was allowed to enter. Still, prospective black emigrants had to be uneasy; especially when the Guthrie Oklahoma Guide reprinted the Kansas City Journal's notation that, "The exodus has been bitterly opposed by a large per cent (sic) of the white population of the Canadian provinces..." That they were not wanted in Western Canada would become increasingly clear to black Oklahomans in the months ahead as Canada served notice that it intended to keep the northern plains white.
FOOTNOTES

1. Okemah, Oklahoma Ledger, 2 June 1910.


The election system problem was taken care of by gubernatorial declaration. When Oklahoma was allotted three more Federal Representatives in 1910, due to population growth, the then Democratic Governor Lee Cruce declared that they would be elected at-large instead of holding a special session of the legislature to redraw the Congressional districts. In the election of that year the Democrats won all three at-large seats and three of the five district seats. See McReynolds, p. 322.


27. Ibid, pp. 95 and 97.


40. Boley Progress, 17 November, 1910.


44. Oklahoma City Capitol Hill News, 17 October, 1908, 10 September, 1910.

45. Waurika News, 1 April, 1910.

46. Ibid, 22 April, 1910.

48. Calgary, Alberta Herald, 22 April, 1911.


Since Sneed's first group was the first large party it attracted most of the publicity, but there are a number of discrepancies in the reports and a certain amount of hypothesizing is necessary. In two separate articles in the same issue (23 March, 1911) the Okemah Ledger estimated the group at one hundred and fifty families, or approximately five to six hundred people, and at ninety-four adults and twenty-four children. Yet when the party arrived in Emerson, Manitoba it was said to consist of one hundred and seventy-three persons (Emerson Journal, 24 March, 1911), and when the Winnipeg Manitoba Free Press (27 March, 1911) sent a photographer and a reporter to cover their arrival in the Manitoba capital they numbered one hundred and ninety-four. I have chosen the Free Press' figure because theirs was the most complete coverage of this group. The Emerson number is not far removed, and it is highly possible that that reporter missed a few heads. The Oklahoma paper's second estimate is also not far removed, and the 500 to 600 it first reported may be the number of people who were initially willing to follow Sneed, since the Winnipeg coverage did report a second group of two hundred on its way. In any case, both of the Okemah Ledger articles, as well as a number of other sources, agree that a large number of Oklahoma blacks were ready to move to Western Canada.

Also, one of the Okemah Ledger reports, another Emerson story, and an item in the March 22, 1911 issue of the Manitoba Free Press identified the group as "Creek Negroes" (the latter two misspelling it perhaps to fit the more locally recognized "Cree"). It should be noted here that all three reports bear striking resemblances to each other and could have emanated from the same news service. Yet the more thorough report in the March 27, 1911 issue of the Manitoba Free Press did not mention this racial mixture; indeed, it noted that one party member, Reddick Carruthers, was originally from Texas, and said Sneed had recruited in Texas and Kansas, among other places. It is highly unlikely that these non-Oklahomans were "Creek Negroes," and Sneed himself was identified as a former Texan (Winnipeg Tribune, 22 March, 1911). One explanation for this description being erroneously applied is that since the migration originated in that part of eastern Oklahoma which had been part of the Creek Nation in the old Indian Territory, it was immediately assumed that these people were mixed Indian and black.


55. Ibid.


A party of ... negroes from Oklahoma -- men, women and pickaninnies -- reached here on Wednesday morning's Great Northern flyer and the town was quite liberally decorated with coons ever since... Probably the negro is not the most desirable class of settlers, but when they get this far with a determination to go to work on the land it makes it hard to reject their entrance into the country. It would appear more advisable that some action should be taken at the starting point, and not have a party of them waste money getting to the boundary only to be turned back, and then have to cough up more money to be transported to their former locations.


Black individuals and small family groups entering Western Canada prior to 1910 did not raise much comment, but when more blacks appeared in the Edmonton area early in 1910 the spectre of a massive black influx was raised. On January 19, the Edmonton Capital informed its readers that a black newspaper editor from Clearview, Oklahoma was at the Immigration Hall with a party of twenty-nine other blacks, and was announcing that Alberta was the "...home of the colored race." He intended to return to Oklahoma and to "set the tide" of black migration in Edmonton's direction, it said.

By the spring of 1910 the Edmonton Board of Trade felt that it was time for action on this question. At its monthly meeting on April 12, the Board unanimously passed a resolution calling the federal government's attention to the "marked increase" in black immigration into Western Canada. This movement had already created problems by deterring white settlement in localities where the blacks had settled. Furthermore, it was felt that the foundations for a "negro problem" were being laid. In the Board's opinion the blacks were a "most undesirable element",
and it urged the authorities to take immediate action to stop them from entering the country. F.T. Fisher, Secretary of the Edmonton organization, sent the resolution, along with a personal letter, and a letter from the Edmonton Chief of Police, to Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior and an Edmonton Member of Parliament. Fisher re-emphasized the Board's concern about white settlers not going to black areas, and the Chief of Police, A.C. Lancey, argued that, "...they (blacks) have taken up much more of our time and attention than any of the other foreign people residing in this city."  

The Edmontonians also contacted the Winnipeg Board of Trade on the matter, but met with little success. At their meeting on April 28, 1910, the Council of the Winnipeg group instructed their Secretary to write the Edmonton Board that the question was entirely new to them, and that they had no knowledge of the subject. It suggested that since the Minister involved was also an Edmonton representative he should be contacted. At their annual meeting held on May 10, the Winnipeg Board informed its membership of the correspondence and indicated it had asked for more material. But when the Edmontonians replied, the Council, meeting on May 13, only ordered the letter filed.  

The immigration authorities were already aware of the potential black influx that was brewing, and had had some experience with black immigration from the United States before. As early as 1899 the Immigration Branch was replying negatively to the suggestion of placing blacks on the prairies, and informed its agent in Kansas City that, "...it is not desired that any negro immigrants should arrive in Western Canada... or that such immigration should be promoted by our agents." When a black man from Shawnee, Oklahoma Territory contacted the Canadian authorities in 1902 on behalf of a group of blacks he was informed by L.M. Fortier,
Secretary of the Department of the Interior, "...the Canadian Government is not particularly desirous of encouraging the immigration of negroes." 5

Ottawa was made aware of the developing Oklahoma migration in 1910 when the Immigration Commissioner at Winnipeg, Mr. Walker, drew the attention of W.D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, to the "large numbers" of Oklahoma blacks moving into the Entwistle district of Alberta, west of Edmonton. He, Walker, objected to this class of settler because they were poor and not good farmers, in his opinion. They carried settlers certificates signed by J. S. Crawford, the Canadian Agent in Kansas City, and Walker suggested Crawford be contacted and, "... be instructed, as a general policy, to refuse certificates or any encouragement to the immigration of this class." Scott wrote to Crawford, enclosing a copy of Walker's letter, and told the Kansas City agent to, "...take immediate measures to check this class of immigrant." Crawford wrote back complaining that he could not tell white applications from those sent by blacks. He told his superior that the Oklahoma migrants had owned land, and mentioned "Jim Crow" segregation as their reason for leaving. In a second letter, Crawford said the migrants were of mixed Indian and black ancestry, and argued that the products of this mix were of a very poor quality. Scott replied by telling Crawford to check each application, white or black, before he issued certificates. 6

As the political crisis in the state deepened the Immigration Branch was faced with a flurry of inquiries from Oklahoma blacks. Letters from Taft, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Boley, North McAlester, Henryetta, Muskogee, Wewoka, Okmulgee, and Chickasha, to name a few, were all met with essentially the same reply: the Canadian Government did not desire black settlers in Western Canada. The Minister of the Interior became concerned enough with the apparent developing exodus to send W. J. White, the
Inspector of United States Agencies, on a five day trip to Oklahoma to observe the situation there. In a letter to Frank Oliver on September 13, 1910, White reported his findings. The "Grandfather Clause" was a major factor in sparking the movement he said. Perhaps because of Crawford's observations on their ethnic background, White toured both black and "Indian-Negro" areas. He was "told" in one area that most of the blacks there were of mixed blood, and that they had inherited the worst qualities of each race. He also said he believed that railroads in the state were promoting the exodus in order to secure the blacks' land and re-sell it to white farmers. The best blacks had probably already arrived in Canada, he also observed, so that, "...the risk of the emigration of a large number who would prove undesirable is so great that I feel it would be wise to take such action as would prevent any more of them making homes in Canada." 7

White's report seems to have impressed his superiors with the urgency of the situation, and they proceeded to take further action. L.M. Fortier contacted J. S. Crawford in Kansas City suggesting he contact the postmasters of the localities stamped on inquiries, asking whether the correspondant was white or black. The idea, of course, was that if they could determine which writers were black they would not send immigration material to them. Some of the postmasters' replies are instructive on the state of race relations in Oklahoma at the time; one from Keystone was tersely worded "Nigger," while another from Hominy read, "black as hell." The Emerson, Manitoba and Portal, Saskatchewan border points were also alerted, and the agents ordered to carefully scrutinize any blacks since the American agents were no longer issuing certificates to them. When several black families appeared in Edmonton late in December, 1910, Frank Oliver wanted to know who let them in and whether they had been
medically examined. On Oliver's orders, W. J. White contacted J. Bruce Walker, the Commissioner of Immigration at Winnipeg, on the matter. Walker apparently contacted his man in Edmonton, for on January 5, 1911 W. J. Webster telegraphed an answer to White telling him the blacks had gone from Oklahoma to Vancouver, and then up to Edmonton. White telegraphed J. L. Doupe, Assistant Land Commissioner, in Winnipeg the same day and told him to, "... advise your officers at Vancouver same instructions as at Portal and Emerson." W. D. Scott also telegraphed Webster that day, telling him that, "If you can discover any reason why any of the 34 from Oklahoma should be deported take action. If are suspicious that they are and who would not come up to the physical qualification call in City Health Officer to examine (sic)." 8

Clearly, the Canadian immigration authorities believed they could stop the black influx by depriving them of information, and by using vigorous medical examinations at the border as a deterrent. The first manoeuver was haphazard at best, and the latter proved to be valueless when healthy black men, women, and children presented themselves. Henry Sneed's group shattered the medical examination idea late in March, 1911 and this, plus their numbers, attracted considerable publicity; publicity which in turn provoked comment and revealed Western Canadian feelings on the subject of black immigration.

When their Great Northern train arrived in Emerson, Manitoba, Henry Sneed's group immediately elicited comment. The local newspaper, the Emerson Journal, reported the arrival of "men, women, and pickaninnies," and then commented that the town had been decorated with "coons" ever since. They had money, farm implements, and livestock, it continued, and were generally of a "good appearance". But blacks were not the most desirable class of settlers, in its opinion, although it would be difficult to reject them once they had come this far. The Journal then prophetically
suggested that it would be better to stop the migration at its source; which is precisely what the Canadian Government eventually did. 9

Their arrival, and entry once the medical examinations were completed, was noted across the prairies, and comment was instantaneous. On the day of the party's arrival in Winnipeg, a Brandon, Manitoba woman, who signed herself "An Englishwoman Who Had Lived In Oklahoma," contacted the editor of the Manitoba Free Press with her concerns. She began by regretting the invasion of "thousands" of Oklahoma blacks into Canada. Since she was concerned with the welfare of the country, and had no great interest in Oklahoma's, she was sorry that Canada was being saddled with people that the southern states were glad to be rid of. It was Canada's misfortune, if not her own fault, that it had not yet passed a law barring the blacks. Since liberty was not to be confused with license, she continued, one could only enjoy true freedom by being restrained; but everyone learned by sad experience, only usually too late. Those who had never lived in black inhabited areas and had only been in contact with "well-disposed" blacks, would find the disgust felt towards them unintelligible, she said. Those who did know their habits, however, could only see blacks as "undesirable" -- they could never be colonists or settlers. In concluding, she argued that, "As negroes flourish in a hot country and do as little work as possible, it is to be hoped that Jack Frost will accomplish what the authorities apparently cannot." 10

No doubt because of the interest stirred, when the Sneed party reached Winnipeg the local Manitoba Free Press was at the station with a reporter. In his article, the reporter noted that not one of the one hundred and ninety-four black homeseekers had been rejected at the border, and indicated that, "...a good deal of speculation is rife as to the outcome of the new movement." He then gave a brief history of how the group came to be in Canada; how Sneed had returned to Oklahoma from a visit
to an existing black settlement north of Edmonton, and recruited blacks from Oklahoma and other southern states for the migration. The present group was only the first party, and another two hundred were gathering in Weleetka. The reporter then turned his attention to the question of assimilation, after conceding that it was generally recognized that the best settlers were those who could easily be incorporated into the population. It was argued with some truth, he said, that the blacks must forever be unto themselves, and were therefore not the best class of settlers. But as the regulations then stood, "...there is absolutely no means by which the better class of negro farmer may be rejected."

The reporter continued by noting that there were four general qualities sought in immigrants to Canada: a certain amount of money, a readiness and equipment for farm work, "morals", and good health. This black party conformed on all counts, he said. They all seemed to have a good supply of ready cash, "...and this in view of the fact that nearly all were heads of large families would indicate a quality of thrift which would augur well for their success on the farms of the west." They were all farmers by occupation and came well equipped; "We are not asking favors of anyone...," H. Sneed was quoted as saying. The Dominion wanted moral people, the reporter said, and he found this group quiet and well-behaved, with a number of preachers, mostly Baptists, among them. Their ability to pass the rigid medical examinations was proof for the last demand. While some people had expressed apprehension at blacks living in the far north, the settlers themselves did not seem to be overly concerned, and pointed out that their friends had arrived in January the year before and yet were able to cope. "Although apart from race," the reporter said, "they were a very promising lot of settlers and there is little doubt they will make a success of their work in their new homes."
A "...member of the much maligned and hated race...," Samuel H. Gibson contacted the Free Press after this article appeared to thank the paper for its "...fair, candid, and impartial statement..." He wanted to thank them, he said, because as far as he was aware they were the first Western Canadian newspaper to get all of the facts and to express an "unbiased opinion." He continued by asserting that, "Much has been said and written of the matter (black immigration); but, for the most part, I opine, it has emanated from persons whose minds are warped by blind prejudice, and who, therefore, are incompetent to sit in judgment on any question of which impartiality is the principal element." 12

Like its Winnipeg counterpart, the Edmonton Journal had a reporter waiting at the station when the Sneed group arrived, indicating once again the importance attached to their appearance. At five o'clock in the morning, everyone on the train was very, very tired. But even then their spirits were not dampened, and one member of the party managed to have fun with the reporter. Alighting from the train, one black man announced to the newspaper man that he was so tired that he felt like he was turning yellow. The reporter said he, "...reeled, staggered, and leaning against the station building felt a little faint at coming on such a supposed revelation." He said he had heard the expression "yellow coon" used in jest, but never thought he would come across such a type. Approaching the black jester, the journalist was able to see under the station's lights that in fact the black man had not changed colour, and he was able to inform the Oklahoman that, "...such an affliction had not overtaken him." 13

Mr. R. Jennings, Editor and Managing Director of the Journal, noted that the black immigration was causing considerable uneasiness. He did not find this at all surprising, and in his words, "Whether well-founded or not, we have to face the fact that a great deal of prejudice
exists against the colored man and that his presence in large numbers creates problems from which we naturally shrink." Yet if the blacks met the existing immigration requirements it seemed impossible to deny them entry, in Jennings' opinion. Given these circumstances, he said, one could but wish them well in their new homes, and hope that they conducted themselves so that the ill-will directed at them was dissipated. They could become useful if they followed Booker Washington's idea of salvation through hard work. There would be plenty of that where they were going, he concluded, and if they were able to turn their wild land into productive farms they could prove more desirable citizens, "...than any of those who are now speaking so contumaciously of them and are loafing about the city streets." 14

Not all Albertans, however, were willing to be quite so liberal. In a front page news item the Calgary Herald informed its readers of the large black party's arrival in the provincial capital. They were a much talked about group, it noted wryly, "Heralded throughout their entire journey by more widespread publicity than they would have received had they been the latest thing in a minstrel show...." The men were all strong and sturdy, and the immigration hall was full of "tumbling pickaninnies" which promised another successful generation.

In the same issue, J. H. Woods, Editor and Managing Director of the Herald, concluded that the black immigration was the first fruits of reciprocity with the United States. The "color question" was soon going to agitate the public, and he found Frank Oliver's approach to the question "tepid." It seemed as if the Minister of the Interior was allowing the colony to establish itself, and then he somehow hoped to sweep them back southward. Teddy Roosevelt's question of what to do with the blacks was
being answered, Woods said, by sending them to Alberta. "Reciprocity," he concluded, "means that Canada is anxious to take all that America does not want." 15

The public did not take too long to be agitated, and on March 31, F. T. Fisher of the Edmonton Board of Trade penned a seven page letter to Frank Oliver. Fisher noted that the subject of black immigration had been broached a year before, but the influx had grown considerably. It was time for "drastic action" since there was evidence that "bitter race prejudice" would develop in the areas the blacks were settling. There was no room for argument, and the contention that the blacks were good people and farmers was irrelevant; one only had to look to the United States to see what would happen if too many blacks came. He had white settlers in his office, he said, the very best sort of settler, who would not go to where the blacks had located. In concluding, Fisher argued that serious trouble was brewing. In his words,

White settlers in the homestead districts are becoming alarmed and exasperated and are prepared to go to almost any length. People in the towns and cities...are beginning to realize the imperative necessity of effective action; and it only needs a slight effort to start up an agitation which would be joined in by practically every white man in the country. There is every indication that unless effective action is taken, such an agitation will be put in motion in the near future. 16

Oliver did not need Fisher's warning for he was receiving other evidence of white Western Canada's mood. The Secretary of Edmonton's Municipal Chapter of the I.O.D.E., Mrs. A. Knight, forwarded a petition from her organization to Oliver. She informed him that they had held an emergency meeting on March 27 to discuss the question of black immigration, and they were against it; as the petition indicated. As if to echo Fisher's assertion of possible trouble in areas where the blacks were locating, A.I. Sawley, Secretary of the Athabasca Landing Board of Trade, wrote that, "When it was learned around town that these negroes were coming out there
was great indignation, and many threatened violence, threatened to meet them on the trail out of town, and drive them back." Sawley also said that as there already were blacks in the area, and only a few whites had as yet located there, there was a danger of it becoming all black. He suggested that as a remedy the new black arrivals be segregated with the group that had already located near Lobstick Lake. 17

For the time being Sneed's group was unperturbed by the controversy they were creating, as they joined one of their preachers in celebrating their apparent good fortune. The black minister gathered a group of seventy-five together in one of the outsheds of the immigration hall, and sitting on wooden stumps and boxes they heard him say that God had made Canada a free country, but that it was up to them to make the best of it. The reporter covering the event was impressed by the fact that the preacher never mentioned or referred to the United States, and the journalist took this to mean that the group was very impressed with what they had seen on the northern side of the international boundary. 18

Their apparent satisfaction was to be short-lived, however, when an unfortunate accusation was made which further aroused Western Canadian anti-black prejudices, and initially reflected upon the entire group and any future black settlers.

Shortly after six o'clock on April 4, 1911, fifteen-year-old Hazel Huff was found by a neighbour lying unconscious on the kitchen floor of her Edmonton home. She had a handkerchief securely tied over her eyes and had apparently been drugged with chloroform. The neighbour immediately contacted a doctor and the police. When the girl regained consciousness she told the police that she had answered a knock at the door, and was grabbed by a black man who tried to drug her. She fought him but was overpowered, she said, and did not remember anything after that point. When
her parents returned home they searched the house and found that a
diamond ring and some money were missing. According to one report, the
father became so enraged that he took his daughter and went searching
for the assailant armed with a revolver. The police believed two
black men were involved, although they only arrested one by the name of
J.F. Witsue. He was charged with robbery two days later, but the police
refused to elaborate when pestered by reporters. 19

The news of the supposed attack spread as quickly as the pro-
verbial prairie fire, but managed to pick up a few embellishments on the
way. In addition, several newspapers immediately linked the black set-
tlers with the incident. The Calgary Albertan assured its readers that
no criminal assault other than the administering of the drug had taken
place, and in a later editorial argued that, "The assault made by a
colored man upon a little girl in Edmonton should open the eyes of the
authorities at Ottawa as to what may be expected regularly if Canada is
to open the door to all the colored people of the republic and not bar
their way from open entry here." The Edmonton Journal apparently desert-
ed its former stance since it reprinted this comment verbatim and with no
rejoinder. The Calgary Herald argued that the attempts to colonize
blacks north of Edmonton had to be carefully looked at. The drugging
of the girl in Edmonton, it said, could be taken as an indication of
what could happen in Alberta as a result of American blacks being allowed
to settle in Canada. 20

On Saturday, April 8, the Lethbridge Daily News published an ed-
torial entitled "The Black Peril". It noted that the assault upon the
Edmonton girl had come very soon after the arrival of the large party
from Oklahoma, and argued that this was a warning to the authorities of
what to expect if blacks were allowed to enter the country. Canada did
not need a "negro problem." The blacks who were in the country had to be kept away from homesteads, it continued, for in the more isolated areas, where the women were often left alone, they would be an ever present horror. "Keep the black demon out of Canada," was its stand. This was too much for a local black farmer, L.D. Brower, and he contacted the Lethbridge Daily Herald to reply. After noting the News' comments, Brower attacked its argument. He asked what that paper thought of the immorality of slavery, and whether it knew that black men had defended white women during the Civil War? The source of the News' prejudices was its jealousy at the progress the blacks had made since 1865, and thus it would deny blacks the right to freely enter Canada. The Edmonton story was probably a fake, and while waiting for the truth he would farm his land and the blacks further north would tackle the wilderness. The News, in the meantime, could continue to supply its form of "intellectual food," but, he said, "I submit to the judgment of the fair minded Canadian citizens, which of us is best improving his God-given talents." 21

The Saskatoon Daily Phoenix announced the incident to its readers in a front page item with a large headline: "A Negro Atrocity -- White Girl Flogged and Assaulted by Late Arrivals at Edmonton." It said that the first black atrocity since the large party arrived from the United States ten days before had been reported. Two blacks had tied a white girl to a post, flogged and then assaulted her. The Regina Morning Leader carried substantially the same item on its front page, which prompted a comment from the Edmonton Daily Bulletin. Perhaps because of its close association with Frank Oliver, the Bulletin had remained strangely silent on the question of black immigration in general, and on the Sneed group in particular. But the Regina report aroused the editor, John Howey, to state that,

Bad news not only travels fast, but like a snowball on the down
grade, the further it goes the bigger it grows. This particular item picked up a second negro and a flogging between Edmonton and Regina. It can hardly have been less than a murder and a lynching when it reached Toronto, and a free-for-all race war by the time it got to New York. 22

Even when it was determined that the black man charged had no connection with the settlers, feelings against the group in Edmonton remained high. Furthermore, the feeling was growing stronger, and in one journalist's opinion another such incident would push the "rowdy element" to the lynching point. Even the more sane members of the community believed that the black influx had to be stopped. J. H. Woods of the Calgary Herald editorialized that the "negro problem" was the most serious then facing the United States. Edmonton had the sympathy and support of the whole west in protesting the black immigration, he said, and it was hard to understand Frank Oliver's apathy to the situation. 23

These reports would indicate that the age-old sexual mythology surrounding the black man was being reinforced in many white Western Canadian minds. Indeed, when Fritz Freidricks of Mewassin, Alberta contacted the Immigration Branch on April 12 to voice his disapproval of black immigration, his major concern was that, "These negroes have misused young girls and women and killed them." This was tragic, but the full dimensions of the tragedy were not revealed until nine days after the supposed assault when the girl confessed to having fabricated the whole story. Or, in the Edmonton Journal's words, she, "...had not been attacked and overcome by a big, black, burly nigger who was intent on robbing the house, as was first believed." The girl had lost the diamond ring involved and, fearing punishment, had made up the tale. She became frightened with the commotion caused and, when a man was charged, decided to confess. Interestingly, the Edmonton Chief of Police had known the truth for several days, but had sworn the family to secrecy — no explanation was given for his action. 24
Before the girl confessed, however, her story had an impact and cannot be divorced from the agitation against black immigration which continued to grow. On the night of April 7, Mr. C. E. Simmonds of Leduc addressed a "representative gathering" at the Conservative Party club rooms in Edmonton. After discussing and deprecating the Liberal's reciprocity policy, he turned his attention to the subject of immigration. Just as British Columbia did not want to be called "Yellow British Columbia," Simmonds said, he did not want his province to be labelled "Black Alberta." It was time immigration reflected personal rights; they all had a right to choose who they wished to live with. He did not want Alberta to be black, he repeated, or even black in spots, and he believed that the province would not stand for a black invasion. "I can only see one way out of this difficulty," he concluded, "and this is to put the present government out of power and bring in one who will listen to our pleas.... Way down in Ottawa they do not think of the matter as seriously as we do, and therefore the interest is lacking." 25

The Edmonton Board of Trade was determined that Ottawa would listen, and it launched a vigorous petition campaign. After giving a brief account of early black immigration into Alberta, the Board's petition argued that these people were but the advance guard of several more hundreds, and that their arrival would be disastrous. It continued,

We cannot admit as any factor the argument that these people may be good farmers or good citizens. It is a matter of common knowledge that it has been proved in the United States that negroes and whites cannot live in proximity without the occurrence of revolting lawlessness, and the development of bitter race hatred... We are anxious that such a problem should not be introduced into this fair land at present enjoying a reputation for freedom from such lawlessness as has developed in all sections in the United States where there is any considerable negro element. There is no reason to believe that we have here a higher order of civilization, or that the introduction of a negro problem here would have different results.

It then urged that immediate steps be taken to stop any more blacks from entering Western Canada. 26
The Edmonton Board set up a special committee to oversee the distribution of the petition throughout the city. Copies were placed in several banks and hotels downtown and in the Board of Trade Office, and plans were made to canvass door-to-door. The committee was perhaps spurred by a newspaper report originating in Vancouver that a Colonel Tom J. Harris of Sapulpa, Oklahoma was planning to bring more blacks into Canada. The Kentucky-born "Colonel" was quoted as saying he would bring five thousand "niggahs" north before the summer ended. Members of the Edmonton City Council may also have seen the item for when a letter from F.T. Fisher of the Board of Trade was read at a council meeting on April 25 it was immediately acted upon. Only one alderman, Mr. McKinley, voted against endorsing the Board of Trade's action. 27

Local blacks did not tamely submit to the Board of Trade's efforts and tried to nullify the effectiveness of the petition campaign. The tactic used was to have several blacks follow a canvasser, interrupt any conversation he might have trying to get signatures, and try to dissuade anyone from signing. Secretary Fisher of the Board of Trade deprecated these efforts arguing that the blacks did not "appreciate the spirit" in which the petitioning was being done. The local blacks should recognize that the idea of excluding blacks was merely an attempt to prevent the recurrence of the situation in the United States, and that their own position would be vastly more intolerable with a larger black community. "Those negroes who have been here some time," Fisher said, "have had a square deal and been treated as whites, but if you would get a few thousand more in, conditions would be much changed. They would then be treated as they were in the south." He also claimed that nearly everyone approached was signing and, while his ninety-five per cent success rate is questionable, over three thousand four hundred Edmontonians eventually did sign. 28
And it's Too Warm in Dixie

Edmonton Journal, 5 May 1911
The Edmonton Board of Trade also had considerable success when it contacted other such groups across the prairies, and by the end of May, 1911 the Strathcona, Morinville, Fort Saskatchewan, and Calgary, Alberta Boards of Trade had either endorsed or joined the Edmontonians in urging that black immigration be stopped. They were joined by their counterparts in Yorkton and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and Winnipeg, Manitoba. On April 29, Francis C. Clare, Secretary-Treasurer of the Edmonton Chapter of the United Farmers of Alberta, wrote to the Immigration Branch to say that his group was, "...in full sympathy with the resolution passed by the Edmonton Board of Trade." On the same day, J. M. Liddell, Secretary-Treasurer of the Pincher Station, Alberta Chapter of the U.F.A., also wrote to Ottawa to register his group's disapproval of black immigration, and to urge that they be excluded permanently. In his words, "...we consider negroes undesirable as fellow citizens in this Province..." The Edmonton Builders Exchange, an organization of many contractors' groups, sent a separate petition calling black immigration a "serious menace". A.I. Sawley of the Athabasca Landing Board of Trade again wrote to Frank Oliver and, as if to echo white Oklahoma Democrats' questions of whether that state should be black or white, stated,"Canada is the last country open to the white race. Are we going to preserve it for the white race, or are we going to permit the blacks free use of large portions of it?" 29

In Saskatoon, the local Board of Trade's endorsement of the Edmonton position brought praise from the Saskatoon Daily Phoenix. The action may seem to have been rather harsh, the journal argued, but it was convinced that it was in the best interests of both Canada and the blacks. The two races could never have anything in common, and while the coming of a few might be all right hundreds would be a far more serious matter.

Several days later "Fair Play" contacted the newspaper to challenge its argument and having lived in a black town, this writer felt qualified to
speak on the subject. He argued that the blacks could be as good citizens as whites, and included some statistics from a Federal Department of Justice Report on prison inmate populations to prove his contention. Unfortunately for "Fair Play" the data he cited was open to a challenge, as the Daily Phoenix noted two days later when an editorial appeared answering his letter. The statistics proved the opposite, the paper said, since they showed blacks to have a proportionately higher inmate population than whites. The Phoenix then went on to argue that the "problem of the negro" on the North American continent was America's, and had no place in Canada. The agitation against the black man's entrance was due to the large numbers of Americans living in Western Canada, for, "...there is no inherent unfriendliness towards the black man in this country...." 30

In Winnipeg the actions of that city's Board of Trade also stirred argument. That group passed a resolution virtually identical to the Edmonton one at a general meeting on April 18. The motion was moved by H.M. Belcher and G. F. Carruthers, but an amendment was proposed. A. L. Johnson and J. Y. Reid wanted to request the federal authorities to investigate the source of the immigration and to take action there, but F.W. Drewry, President of the Board, cast a deciding vote against this idea when a tie vote was held. Drewry used his vote to break another tie when the original resolution was voted upon; however, this time he voted in favour. There apparently was some confusion on the intent of the resolution, but both the mover and seconder stated that it was not a pronouncement on black persons in general, only upon those making up the immigration. 31

Chas. Stewart did not see the move that way. In a letter to the Winnipeg Manitoba Free Press, Stewart said that the city's black residents had awakened to face the most drastic step that had yet been taken against them, and it coming from some of the city's most respected citizens.
Blacks had believed that the white man south of the border was his enemy, and that under the Union Jack the opposite was true—what were they to think now? He answered his own question by stating that they had been living in a dream, and the only consolation was that the Winnipeg Board of Trade did not speak for the whole world. Many blacks would now leave Canada, but he counselled patience to those who were once again very restless. He concluded on a Biblical note, finding some solace in the hope that God would make restitution for those who had suffered so much.

There had been, and would continue to be other voices raised against the attempts to exclude black immigrants; and not just from black Canadians. As early as March 20, 1911, M. P. Fuller of Vancouver contacted the Governor-General, Earl Grey, about stories circulating that Canada was barring blacks. Blacks were not all undesirable, Fuller argued, and he pleaded with the Crown's representative to, "...agree with me (in the name of Canadian law and order, purity, justice and civilized good-will) that there is no decent reason to refuse them entrance to a country with a great future where they'll have a chance to enjoy citizenship worthy of the name, and unmolested happiness." (Emphasis in original). Some of these concerns were re-stated by J.A. Clark of Edmonton who addressed an open letter to the Alberta press during the petition campaign in his city. After assuring his readers that he had not spoken to any blacks on the question, and noting that he risked offending the petitioners, Clark proceeded to raise several points against those protesting black immigration. In an apparent reference to the Huff "assault" case, he argued that it was, "...unCanadian, unfair, and untenable that any whole race or class should be condemned or discriminated against because of the moral lapses or proved criminality of any percentage of that class, however great." He located the source of this prejudice in former residents of the southern states, and argued that if any people had miserably failed
to handle a problem it was Southerners and the race question. Having travelled extensively in the South, Clark said that he had seen first hand the results of white treatment of blacks and he was only surprised that blacks did not react more violently more often. In his words, "Use negroes as human beings, say I, and you will find them the last people on earth to butt in or make themselves obnoxious. But attempt to import into Canada the methods and policy of the southern states and we will very likely get the same results." But these were only individual voices, and in comparison to the petitions, resolutions, and editorials had little effect. They were but isolated squeaks in the nightly chatter of a dark forest.

Clark's assertion that the anti-black feelings being expressed on the prairies were from white American settlers was not new. But this rationalization had not gone unchallenged, as when Estelle Coffey of Heilburg (?), Saskatchewan contacted the Edmonton Journal at the height of the black immigration controversy to ask why, "...the people of this country accept the negro as their equal socially, and object to them as neighbors?" Obviously a former American, this woman attempted to poke a hole in the inflated Canadian claims of racial tolerance and tried to get them to accept some responsibility for the agitation then underway. She found it hard to understand why the people of the north, who believed, preached, and practiced social equality, objected to black settlers. It would be easy to understand why a white Southerner would object to living with blacks; "We do not accept them as our equals at any time or in any way...." She wanted to know if it was right to keep blacks from settling in Canada when everyone seemed so anxious for them to have every advantage. If Southerners could live with thousands of blacks, she concluded, surely Canadians could tolerate a few hundred.

While Western Anglo-Canadians displayed a degree of hypocrisy on
the race question, this by no means indicates that other Canadians were somehow free from the taint of racism. Describing blacks as, "...that special element, the worst of all", Arthur Fortin, L.L.B., of St. Evarist Station, Beauce, Quebec, contacted Frank Oliver to assure him that any government action to stop the black influx would meet with the approval of that part of French Canada. He personally felt that they should try "... to prevent or at least control the immigration of Darkies in the Dominion. Just as it does for the Chinies -- the Hindoes -- and the Japs..."

After the Winnipeg Board of Trade passed its resolution on the black immigration question, the German language Der Nordwesten of that city, after quoting from the document, argued that,

"...dass die vielen Faelle von Lynchjustiz im Sueden der Staaten, von denen wir fast taeglich lesen, und bei denen es sich fast ausschliesslich um Verbrechen handelt, die von Negern begangen worden sind, wohl jeden, abgesehen von anderen Gruenden, ueberzeugen duerften, wie wenig wuenschenswert ein solcher Zuwachs unserer Bevoelkerung ist.

Es waere zu wuenschen, dass noch andere oeffentliche Koerperschaften von der Art der hiesign Handelskammer sich dem Protest der letzteren anschliessen. 35.

The commentary and agitation against black immigration could not but come to the attention of Parliament, and the subject was raised several times in the House of Commons. Even before the large Sneed party arrived, Frank Oliver was questioned on his Department's policy regarding black immigrants. The Minister of the Interior, perhaps forgetting the "crisis" of the previous December, assured the House on March 2, 1911 that, "... there are no instructions issued by the Immigration Branch of my department which will exclude any man on account of his race or colour..."

The subject was again broached a few weeks later, and Oliver admitted that there was a strong sentiment against the admission of blacks. He again assured the House that blacks seeking admittance to Canada would be subject only to existing provisions regarding immigration. Robert Borden,
the Conservative Party leader and Leader of the Opposition, noted that a
great deal depended upon how strictly those regulations were applied, and
he thought it would be very unfortunate if anyone were excluded because of
their colour. Not all Conservatives were quite so sympathetic to the
blacks, however, and on April 3, William Thoburn, the Conservative member
for the Ontario riding of Lanark North, asked Oliver whether the govern-
ment was prepared to stop the developing black influx, and whether it
would not be preferable, "...to preserve for the sons of Canada the lands
they propose to give to niggers?" That black immigration was linked to
other "coloured" immigration in many Canadian minds was again revealed
in the comments of William H. Sharpe, the Conservative member for the
Manitoba riding of Lisgar, who rose on May 1 to state that, like British
Columbians, he wanted a "white west" and urged the government to stop the
flow of blacks. 36

Through its previous actions it is clear that the government, like
many Westerners and several Members of Parliament, did not want blacks in
Western Canada. Action on the problem was difficult, however, since the
reciprocity negotiations with the United States had only recently con-
cluded, and remarks by President Taft on the subject had fanned Canadian
nationalism. A volatile subject like black immigration could easily be-
come involved, upsetting an already precarious situation. Indeed, as has
already been noted, one Calgary newspaper had linked the two subjects in
a very negative fashion. The American Government was likewise concerned
with what was happening, but it too faced a delicate situation. The
American Consul-General at Winnipeg, John E. Jones, had already intervened
on behalf of one group of black Oklahomans in the spring of 1911, and
later determined that the Commissioner of Immigration for Western Canada
had offered the medical inspector a fee for every black he rejected. Late
in April, Jones was in Washington to discuss the issue with Assistant
Secretary of State Wilson, and to present a memorandum from Winnipeg Immigration officials saying Canada might bar blacks because they could not adapt to the climate and therefore were liable to become public charges. Since the United States had itself banned Asian immigration, and had earlier acquiesced to Canada's decision to bar Italian-Americans, they had little room to maneuver. Given the already strained state of Canadian-American relations, the American State Department did not wish to pursue the matter. In addition, Washington's inability and reluctance to aid black Americans at home was implied by the influential New York Times when it commented on the Oklahoma migration and Canada's reaction to it. In its words,

...it is necessary to consider the facts as well as the opinions, and with a certain sentiment of toleration and humility. It is difficult to take any high view regarding the inhospitality of Canadians, both citizens and officials, toward 'nationals' who are fleeing from equal intolerance at home, and ill-treatment at the hands of both neighbors and legislators.

Canada still faced the problem of how to stop the Oklahoma blacks from coming north. The most expedient answer, as the Winnipeg memorandum indicated, was simply to bar them, and that approach had already been suggested to Oliver by W.D. Scott. It had also been proposed by the Calgary Herald, whose Ottawa correspondent had noted that Section thirty-eight, sub-section "c" of the Immigration Act of 1910 gave the government the power, with an order-in-council, to exclude for a period, or permanently, any race deemed unsuitable to the climate. There was a problem with this approach, however; the distinct possibility that it would deter white Americans from heading north once it was publicized. Indeed, Poynter Standly of the C.P.R. Colonization Department in Chicago had written to Oliver on April 28 to complain that newspaper reports citing this argument had already stopped some whites from migrating. This did not stop the Minister of the Interior and on May 31, 1911 he sent a recommendation to the
Governor-General-in-Council for an order-in-council barring blacks from entering Canada for a period of one year. The discriminatory move never came about, however, probably because of Laurier's opposition. A diplomatic storm with the United States could have resulted, and with a crucial election pending such a move would obviously alienate the previously loyal Liberal black voters of southern Ontario and Nova Scotia.

But even as Canadians pondered the best way to keep their West white, pressures were building in Oklahoma which encouraged even more blacks to consider leaving. Stripped of their social and political rights, blacks were ready targets for violence by their white neighbours. Despite its concern with black immigration, the Canadian Government continued to advertise Western Canadian lands in black Oklahoma newspapers, thereby continuing to provide an apparent escape route. Unable to close the door by other means, the Canadian authorities decided to take direct action in Oklahoma and sent two agents to the state to try to dissuade blacks from emigrating. One of these men, a black doctor from Chicago, achieved singular success and his work, in conjunction with that of his colleague, negative press reports from Canada, and the hostility to the northward movement by black newspaper editors and clergymen, spelled the end of the black Oklahoma migration to Western Canada.
FOOTNOTES

1. Emerson, Manitoba Journal, 24 March 1911.


3. PAC...Immigration Files...part 1, Unanimous Resolution of the Edmonton Board of Trade passed at the monthly meeting held on 12 April 1910; letter to Frank Oliver from F.T. Fisher, 16 April 1910; letter to F.T. Fisher from A.C. Lancey, 15 April 1910.

4. Manitoba, Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg Board of Trade Files, Council Minutes, 1907-1918, Meeting of 28 April 1910, Meeting of 13 May 1910; Thirty-first Annual Report, Adopted at the annual meeting of 10 May 1910.

5. Immigration Files...part 1, letter to P.H. Burton from Lyndwoode Pereira, 8 May 1899; letter to J.S. Crawford from L. Pereira, 23 January 1899; letter to Frank Pedley from W. H. Williscraft, 11 August 1902; letter to W. H. Williscraft from L.M. Fortier, 14 August 1902.

6. Immigration Files...part 1, letter to W. D. Scott from Mr. Walker, 14 March 1910; letter to J. S. Crawford from W. D. Scott, 22 March 1910; letter to W. D. Scott from J. S. Crawford, 26 March 1910; letter to W.D. Scott from J. S. Crawford, 1 April 1910; letter to J.S. Crawford from W. D. Scott, 6 April 1910.

7. Immigration Files...part 2, letter to J. S. Crawford from F. Glenn, 10 September 1910; letter to F. Glenn from W. D. Scott, 22 September 1910. Negative replies were also sent to letters received from Newota, 4 September 1910; Oklahoma City, 5 September 1910; Tulsa, 7 September 1910; Gatebo, 9 September 1910; Boley, 10 September 1910; Crescent, 8 September 1910; Jones, 6 September 1910; Muskogee, 26 September 1910; Lawton, 16 September 1910; Wewoka, 24 September 1910; Hydro, 18 September 1910; Okmulgee, 21 September 1910; Chickasha, 29 August 1910; Payson, 30 September 1910; Caymen, 21 September 1910.

Letter to Frank Oliver from W. J. White, 13 September 1910. White's and Crawford's observations on the mixed ethnicity of the immigrants seems to have been the basis for Harold Troper's mistaken conclusions on this subject. (Harold Troper, Only Farmers Need Apply: Official Canadian Government Encouragement of Immigration from the United States, 1896-1911 (Toronto: Griffin House, 1972), pp. 132-126; "The Creek-Negroes of Oklahoma and Canadian Immigration, 1909-1911," Canadian Historical Review LIII (September 1972): 272-288.) As has already been noted, other evidence indicates that this was not the case. Where Crawford got his information is open to speculation since if he was issuing settlers certificates by mail he would not likely have had personal contact with the blacks. White may have been the unwitting victim of local prejudices. In a news item datelined Muskogee, Indian Territory, January 26, 1907, the Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman noted that the records of the federal courts embracing the Creek and Choctaw nations showed that the largest number of murders and other "heinous crimes" were committed by blacks with some Indian
Whenever a "Creek negro" (Nigger is the general term used) gets liquor he usually wants to start trouble. He is vicious. The Indian blood does not seem to elevate the negro, but it puts the Indian fight into him and it crops out just as soon as he gets drunk... The law against inter-marriages of other nationalities with negroes is for the specific purpose of preventing the intermingling of negro and Indian blood.

Given these sentiments, it is easy to visualize white Oklahomans explaining to a visitor the "viciousness and depravity" of the black Indians, and the uninformed listener using these arguments to impress his superior with the urgency of the situation.

8. Immigration Files...part 2, letter to J.S. Crawford from L. M. Fortier, 8 November 1910; letters from Keystone, Oklahoma, 11 November 1910, and from Hominy, Oklahoma, 20 December 1910; letter to J. S. Crawford from J.L. Doupe, 30 December 1910; telegram to J. Bruce Walker from W. J. White, 30 December 1910; telegram to W. J. White from W. J. Webster, 5 January 1911; telegram to J. L. Doupe from W. J. White, 5 January 1911; telegram to W. J. Webster from W. D. Scott, 5 January 1911. Also see, Trevor W. Sessing, "How They Kept Canada Almost Lily White", Saturday Night (September 1970): 30-32.


10. Winnipeg Tribune, 22 March 1911; Saskatoon Daily-Phoenix, 23 March 1911, 24 March 1911; Regina Morning Leader, 24 March 1911; Lloydminster Times, 30 March 1911; Edmonton Journal, 24 March 1911; Edmonton Daily Bulletin 25 March 1911; Calgary, Alberta Herald, 24 March 1911, 25 March 1911; Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, Negroes In Alberta File, newspaper clipping, Calgary Alberta, 24 March 1911; Lethbridge, Alberta Daily Herald, 22 March 1911. Winnipeg Manitoba Free Press, 27 March 1911.


12. Ibid, 31 March 1911.


16. Immigration Files...part 3, letter to Frank Oliver from F.T. Fisher, 31 March 1911.

17. Immigration Files...part 3, letter and petition to Frank Oliver from Mrs. A. Knight, 31 March 1911.


19. Ibid, 5 April 1911, 6 April 1911. Glenbow-Alberta Institute...Negroes In Alberta File... Calgary Albertan, 5 April 1911.


   It is important to note at this juncture that black Americans were not the only group whose interest in the Canadian West was decried, or around whom negative stereotypes were built. "Galicians" and other Eastern and Southern European groups met with prejudice. The most severe comments and actions, and outright restrictions, however, appear to have been reserved for the "coloureds": the Chinese, Japanese, and blacks. See Howard Palmer, ed., Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1975), pp. 44-50 and 97-98. Also see Ken Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), pp. 63-85.


23. Calgary Herald, 6 April 1911.


25. Edmonton Journal, 8 April 1911.

26. Immigration Files ... part 3, Petition from Residents of Edmonton and Strathcona, 18 April 1911. Edmonton Journal, 19 April 1911.


29. Immigration Files... parts 3 and 4, Resolutions forwarded to Frank Oliver from the Fort Saskatchewan, 28 April 1911; Morinville, 29 April 1911; Strathcona, 3 May 1911; and Yorkton, 1 May 1911, Boards of Trade; letter to Frank Oliver from Francis C. Clare, 29 April 1911; letter to Frank Oliver from J. M. Liddell, 29 April 1911; Petition to Frank Oliver from the Edmonton Builders Exchange, 4 May 1911; letter to Frank Oliver from A.I. Sawley, 17 April 1911. Glenbow-Alberta Institute... Negroes In Alberta File... Calgary Albertan, 20 May 1911. Saskatoon Daily Phoenix, 26 April 1911. Winnipeg Tribune, 19 April 1911.

30. Saskatoon Daily Phoenix, 28 April 1911, 6 May 1911, and 8 May 1911.

31. Manitoba, Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg Board of Trade Files, Minutes of General Meetings, 18 April 1911; Thirty-Second Annual Report, Adopted at the annual meeting of 9 May 1911.

32. Winnipeg Manitoba Free Press, 24 April 1911.
The question of whether the prejudice manifest against the blacks arose more from white American rather than British or Canadian settlers is a moot one. While many Americans no doubt brought their prejudices north with them, it cannot be forgotten that Eastern Canada was not a utopia for its black minority (Winks, Blacks In Canada is clear on this point), and Victorian and Edwardian Britons were never free from anti-black feeling and probably brought it with them to Western Canada. In any case, in 1911 while the American born constituted almost twenty-two per cent of Alberta’s, slightly over fourteen per cent of Saskatchewan’s, and slightly over four per cent of Manitoba’s population, those claiming ancestry to one of the three British peoples were slightly over fifty per cent of Alberta’s, over fifty per cent of Saskatchewan’s, and almost fifty-eight per cent of Manitoba’s population. Even allowing for exaggeration, error, and overlapping, the Canadian prairies had an overwhelming "British" flavour in 1911. Census of Canada, 1911, vol. I, Areas and Population (Ottawa: C.H. Parmelee, King’s Printer, 1912), pp. 2, 39 and 119. Vol. II, Religions and Origins (1913), pp. iv, 162-163, 340, and 440-443. The calculations are mine.

34. Edmonton Journal, 22 April 1911.

35. Immigration Files... part 3, letter to Frank Oliver from Arthur Fortin, 5 April 1911; ... part 4, newspaper clipping, Winnipeg Der Nordwesten, 26 April 1911.

... we would like to add that the numerous instances of lynch law in the southern states, about which we read almost daily and which deal almost exclusively with crimes likely each committed by Negroes, these instances should convince us, apart from other reasons, how undesirable such an increase is to our population.

It would be wished that other public corporate bodies like the Board of Trade join in the protest.


38. Immigration Files... part 3, letter to F. Oliver from Poynter Standly, 28 April 1911; ... part 4, memo to Frank Oliver from W.D. Scott, 23 March 1911; Order-in-Council Recommendation, to the Governor-General from F. Oliver, 31 May 1911. Calgary Herald, 17 April 1911. Canada, Statutes of Canada, 9-10 Edward VII, Chap. 27, An Act Respecting Immigration, 4 May 1910, Sec. 38, sub-sec. "c". Also see Troper, Only Farmers Need Apply..., p. 140; "The Creek-Negroes of Oklahoma..."
CHAPTER FIVE
My aim in talking to these people is to not only discourage their going to Canada but to make them see that they have much to be thankful for here in this country so rich in soil and climate.

Dr. G. W. Miller, Canadian Government Agent in Oklahoma, in a report to an unidentified party in Chicago, from Weleetka, Oklahoma, June 28, 1911. 1

Buttressed by "Jim Crow" segregation and the "Grandfather Clause," anti-black feeling in Oklahoma continued unabated into 1911. And, as always, violence was never far behind the prejudices. Blacks were run out of Hominy by bands of nightriders in late January, and in April a black man was given fifty lashes in Purcell for an "insult" to a white woman. Blacks continued to organize to protest their condition even as the violence rained down upon them, and in February, 1911 an Afro-American club was organized in Guthrie. On February 2 the black Boley Progress carried a notice for a meeting of the Constitutional League at Boley on February 21. The object of the gathering was to discuss a "Jim Crow" test case then before the United States Circuit Court of Appeals meeting in St. Louis, and to determine strategy for a new campaign against the "Grandfather Clause." A week later the same journal promised Oklahoma whites there would be "...a fight to the finish..." on the segregation and disfranchisement provisions. 2

Black Oklahomans had some reason for hope due to court rulings in 1911, even though they had to suffer one more setback. In January, Judge John E. Cotteral of the United States Court for Western Oklahoma had asked for an investigation of the state's election laws regarding the application of the "Grandfather Clause." He also declared that the Fifteenth Amendment of the Federal Constitution was supreme, and therefore took precedence over state laws affecting Congressional elections. This victory for the blacks' voting rights was offset a month later when the United States Circuit Court of Appeals meeting in St. Louis upheld Oklahoma's "Jim Crow" law.
Not all was lost though, for in May Judge Cotteral joined Judge Ralph E. Emerson of the federal court for Eastern Oklahoma in handing down decisions which argued that the "Grandfather Clause" was in conflict with the Fifteenth Amendment. Even with these victories black Oklahomans could not become overjoyous for, as with so much else affecting their condition, the application of the law was crucial. White Oklahoma Democrats were not about to acquiesce and in their view the court pronouncements only affected federal elections, but were not binding on state contests. They strengthened their position in 1916 with a new election law that allowed only a very brief period for new voters, meaning blacks, to register. That legislation continued until 1939 when the Federal Supreme Court over-turned a Muskogee Federal District Court decision supporting it. ³

In 1911 the courts may have offered hope, but their actual condition in Oklahoma was only too clear to blacks, especially after an ugly lynching in May of that year. A black mother and son, arrested for murdering a deputy sheriff, were taken from the Okemah jail, dragged to a railway bridge south of the town, and hung. Blacks were predictably horror struck by the event. According to one black journal, pictures of the crime were being openly sold. It did not attempt to conceal its anguish when it cried,

Oh! where is that christian spirit we hear so much about --What will the good citizens do to apprehend these mobs --Wait, we shall see -- Comment is unnecessary. Such a crime is simply Hell on Earth. No excuse can be set forth to justify the act. 4

Western Canada was still an escape from these horrors, for in-spite of their concern with black immigration the Canadian Government had not removed its advertisements from black Oklahoma newspapers. Throughout 1911 the qualities of the northern prairies continued to be described in glowing terms. The Canadian authorities were well aware of the continued interest of black Oklahomans. On March 14, 1911 the Secretary of the
Department of the Interior, L.M. Fortier, wrote to W.W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Department, arguing that, "...if we are to prevent a large influx of these people during the next six months, some steps will have to be taken at once." 5

Another measure of the continued black interest in moving to Canada was the commentary this issue stirred in the black Oklahoma press. Little of it was favourable, however, since black editors felt that their people should stay where they were and face their problems. The Clearview Patriarch, for example, understood that it had cost in excess of five thousand dollars to transport one large party north, and argued that such a sum, if added to another, could operate a huge business which would be a "...credit to the race." It also did not feel that the best results could be obtained by moving so often. Another black journal was even a bit more emphatic. After noting that many blacks had come to Oklahoma in its early days, overcome crises, built themselves homes and farms, and now had a place where they could raise their heads, it argued that these same people were now selling everything they had without due consideration. Conditions in Oklahoma were improving, it then urged, and pointed to Judge Cotteral's decision on the unconstitutionality of the "Grandfather Clause" for proof. 6

Reports on the agitation against the black immigration into Western Canada obviously buttressed the black editors' arguments and they were noted and commented upon. In a front page editorial in its April 13, 1911 issue the Clearview Patriarch reprinted in its entirety the Edmonton Journal editorial of March 27 which recognized the existence of an anti-black prejudice in Western Canada. The black newspaper then argued that the Canadian item proved that wherever he went the black man had to face a problem. Not quite a month later the black Guthrie Oklahoma Guide carried
a front page item from an unidentified New York newspaper headlined, "Protest Against Immigration -- Race Prejudice Caused By Colored People In Canada." This piece noted the increase in anti-black feeling in Alberta and Saskatchewan due to the rise in black Oklahoma immigration, and that for the first time since they began moving north a class of American citizens was being deemed undesirable by Canada. The resolutions of the Edmonton, Winnipeg, and other Western Canadian Boards of Trade were noted, as was their argument that blacks could not adapt to the climate. This, it was felt, was but a polite way of saying that the blacks were not welcome. The Canadian government was obviously feeling the pressure of public opinion, and it could be forced to pass restrictive immigration regulations. This journal's argument concluded by noting that the American federal authorities were also in a delicate position, "... in view of the fact that although the federal government does not protect the Negro from disfranchisement at the hands of the Southerns it does hold him entitled to the same rights as the white men under foreign treaties and conventions." 7

When Joseph Clark spoke out in the Edmonton Journal's pages against the campaign to exclude blacks he probably did not anticipate his words being printed in a black Oklahoma newspaper. The Clearview Patriarch was continuing to monitor the Canadian scene and found Clark's arguments useful. After reprinting his entire letter, it commented it was obvious that the blacks' enemies were after them even in the north with such viciousness that the "fair minded men" had to speak out. Blacks were everywhere suffering injustice, but there was hope, it said. They had to concentrate their forces, organize, and work for one common goal; and since they were all citizens of the United States, they should remain in that country. The Patriarch concluded, advancing what had become its favourite argument, that the blacks' goal should be segregation away from
whites in a colony within the country that they themselves would control. 8

Black Oklahomans continued to be informed of Canada's reception of their brethren, for a week after the Patriarch's editorial appeared the Muskogee Baptist Informer carried an item on the Calgary Board of Trade's resolution against black immigration. But there was a more personal source of information, albeit somewhat biased, for blacks interested in those going to Canada or for those who were headed north. Sometime in April or May, 1911 the Canadian government sent the first of its agents to Oklahoma to report on the black situation and to take action against their migrating to Canada. The agent, C.W. Speers, contacted W. J. White, the Inspector of United States Agencies, in Ottawa on May 8 and again on May 17 to describe his visits to Muskogee, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, and Wellston. He described the blacks' poor housing and generally inferior conditions, and argued that "Jim Crow" segregation and disfranchisement were the "great source" of their problems. He had been able to discuss the emigration issue with several black preachers and felt that this was the area with the most potential for stopping the flow. Dr. S. S. Jones, President of the Oklahoma Conference of Black Baptists, and editor of the Baptist Informer, had readily agreed with Speers' assessment of the situation and had promised to use his influence to stop the blacks from leaving; several of his colleagues had joined him in this vow. Reverend Jones was as good as his word, for he publicized his meeting with Speers and the other black ministers in his newspaper. Speers was correct, the preacher argued, the blacks should stay in Oklahoma and fight for their rights. Reverend Jones also wrote to W.D. Scott to inform him that he felt the blacks should not enter Canada because of the harsh climate, and gave the Canadian official permission to use his letter in any way he saw fit. 9

The Immigration Branch became aware of Speers' success on May 15
when it received a letter from Reverend H. H. Edmond of Oklahoma City. Reverend Edmond contacted W. D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, to get information about Canada before advising his congregation on whether to leave or not. He was having second thoughts since Speers contacted him and told him not to leave, but he wanted to know for certain what the weather and the country were like. Scott replied to Edmond's queries with a letter arguing that for climatic reasons he and his black followers should not come. 10

Speers was in Chicago during the last week in May, but his interest still lay further south. On May 24 he addressed virtually identical letters to Reverend Jones in Muskogee and Reverend Hernagin in Oklahoma City, obviously following up his earlier contacts. In his letters Speers noted the recent Oklahoma courts' decisions affecting the franchise and bluntly asked whether they would make the blacks stay now? Invoking Booker T. Washington's teachings, he continued by stating,

Surely with a degree of confidence they (black Oklahomans) can let their buckets down and draw from their own resources in the midst of their own congenial surroundings.

Why should your people be driven hither and thither, through oppressive and despotic measures to climates and conditions wholly unsuitable? Why cannot they dwell in peace enjoying every privilege of full citizenship in the country and under conditions best suited to themselves?

I feel assured that your advice to the colored people will not only benefit them, but reflect credit upon yourself. 11

On May 31, the same day that Frank Oliver sent his ultimately unsuccessful order-in-council request to the Governor-General, Speers, now in Ottawa, wrote to W.D. Scott regarding other matters relating to black immigration. Speers said he had observed the agents of American railways operating in Oklahoma trying to increase traffic by encouraging blacks to go to Canada. He had spoken to railway officials when he was in Kansas City, and they had promised to stop the soliciting. He had also spoken
to D. B. Hanna, third Vice-President of the Canadian Northern Railway, when he was in Toronto, and Hanna had promised to use his influence on the southern companies. Speers then suggested that William Whyte, Second Vice-President of the Canadian Pacific Railway, be asked to likewise use his influence; "...as there is a strong international courtesy between the railway companies. I feel assured that this would have a very good effect," he said.

Speers' apparent success with the black clergymen, and continual references to Booker T. Washington's ideas, may have been the basis for a suggestion by W. H. Rogers, now the Canadian agent in Kansas City. In a letter to an unnamed superior in Ottawa, Rogers argued that the only way to stop the blacks was by striking the fear of death into them. He proposed that evidence on blacks dying in cold climates be collected and sent to Booker T. Washington, who believed that blacks should stay in the south. "I feel sure his influence would be of material advantage to us in this matter," Rogers said. While there is no evidence this proposal was ever acted upon, it did reflect a fertile mind for schemes to stop the black movement. Nor was it Rogers' only proposal; in an earlier letter to W. D. Scott the Kansas City agent had said that he was very pleased with Speers' work and recommended that he continue it. Rogers said he felt Speers' was the most effective way of dealing with the problem, but if that agent were unable to return to Oklahoma a Reverend J. B. Puckett could be used. "This man," Rogers said, "would not cost the Department nearly as much as that colored man from Chicago." 12

"That colored man from Chicago" was Dr. G. W. Miller, a black medical doctor who had been to Canada. Miller was the second agent the Canadian government sent to Oklahoma to try to stop the black migration, and he was clearly the more effective; no doubt because he was black and would thus be more readily accepted, and because he had professional qual-
ifications when a good part of the reasoning not to head north was the effect of the Canadian climate on the body. Exactly when the doctor arrived in Oklahoma is as obscure as how much he was being paid, but he was sending almost daily reports to Chicago beginning June 24, 1911. In his first report, sent from Muskogee, Miller said he had interviewed a Reverend Perkins of the Second Baptist Church and had convinced him to keep his congregation in Oklahoma. In the next day's report he said he had spoken to large audiences at the First and Second Baptist Churches, and thought that he had managed to change a number of minds. He also said he had arranged to have his address printed in Reverend Jones' Muskogee Baptist Informer, but that the clergymen-publisher wanted to be paid for the service.

Miller's first two reports are a blueprint for his activities over the next month. He would enter a town or city, contact the black clergymen and anyone he heard was interested in going to Canada, arrange to speak in the churches or at some large gathering, and have his speech reprinted in the local black newspaper if there was one. He did not waste any time either, for he criss-crossed eastern Oklahoma rather quickly. On June 26, he reported from Okmulgee that he had spoken to several black clergymen who promised to help stop the flow. On June 27 he was reporting from Weleetka, having stopped at Bryant and Henryetta "en route." He had not found any blacks in either of the latter places, but many in Weleetka seemed interested in going north and he called a meeting for the next night. "It is quite an easy matter to get the people here," he said, "as they are all anxious to hear about Canada."

On June 28, Miller described the meeting at Weleetka, and once again claimed to have convinced many not to head north. He began his talk by "describing minutely" what happened to him when he entered Canada, described a snow storm he had witnessed, and the early and late frosts he
had encountered. He found that these descriptions were new to the people. His aim, he said, was not only to discourage the northward migration, but to get the blacks to see how thankful they should be to live in Oklahoma with its bountiful soil and good climate. 13

Miller was being a bit terse in describing his talks. While no exact copy of one of his speeches exists, a newspaper article he wrote for the Guthrie Oklahoma Guide has survived and it is possible to gain an insight into his discussions. Miller began with a running commentary on what the blacks could expect when reaching Canada, and then singled out specific areas that they would be interested in. He said he felt it was his solemn duty to his race to make them aware of the conditions he found when he travelled in Western Canada, and to make them aware of the plight of those who had already headed north without question or investigation. He could not understand why people would sacrifice what they had spent their lives acquiring to go to a country, "...that is desolate, frigid, unsettled, unknown (;) to which they are climatically unfamiliar and financially unfit."

The blacks' problems began at the international boundary. A government inspector would meet them, he said, and examine their luggage. But then the entire family would be subject to a thorough medical examination, "...where your wife and daughter are stripped of their clothes before your very eyes and examined by a board of men. What man of you would desire his family undressed and humiliated in such a manner," he asked. Their livestock was also examined, but since this commonly took thirty days the extra expense was a real burden. And all of this took place, he said, even before they were allowed to enter the "...so-called promised land."

Nor should the blacks think they had escaped racial prejudice by entering Canada, for wherever there were two distinct races antipathy
occurred. Yet there were those who would disregard his warnings, who would rush off and waste their life's savings in one season, reduce their families to poverty, and do it all in a land where the winters were long and cold, and the summer, "...but a dim memory of morning..." They should stay where they were, he argued, where they had friends and happiness, and where they had bountiful harvests. Besides, their children had to go to school—and there were none in the Canadian woods. If they wanted to go to a city or to church they would have to travel great distances. They would also have to go at least seventy-five miles to find a doctor, whereas they had medical help at their door where they were. Above all, there was the intense Canadian cold—snow fell waist deep, and the ground froze to a depth of from six to ten feet. They had all been born and raised in the south and, "...it will cost your life to live one winter in Canada," he said.

Miller then turned his attention to specific areas such as food, clothing, the soil, crops, the seasons, water, and shelter, but his overwhelmingly negative tone did not change. They would find that food cost twice as much in Canada as it did in Oklahoma, he said, and because of the climate they would find they ate more. Their farms would not keep up with their demands and they would end up buying food imported from the United States. They could not get many of the foods they would want, and if it was true man lived to eat then many of them would surely die. If they did not starve, then they would freeze to death, or die of consumption or pneumonia because they lacked the proper clothing. After spending all of their money to be transported to their new homes, they would find that they did not have funds for the necessary warm clothing and furs.

The soil in Western Canada was not what they had been led to believe, he continued. It was a sand based light sod, and anyone with farming experience would know that nothing profitable would grow in it.
Their homesteads would be covered with timber and bush which was hard to clear, and in every open area grew a vegetable called muskeg. They would need to know scientific farming to raise crops in Canada, for they would have to deal with a killing frost in June and another one in August. Furthermore, there were only two seasons in Canada: winter and summer, and the winters were so long that they would start to think summer would never come. The only houses to guard against the climate were log cabins which they would have to build themselves. They would have to fill the cracks with mud, but when it rained the mud would fall out and the cold wind would blow in. And, as if all this were not bad enough, the only water they could get was a mixture of alkali which would injure their stomachs and make them ill.

Miller carried his message from Weleetka to Clearview, and on June 29 reported from the latter town that many blacks there were planning to leave for Canada. He spoke to a large gathering and arranged to have his address published in a local black newspaper. On June 30 he was in Boley speaking to a number of prominent blacks, and was informed that a local movement was underway to try to stop the movement northward. Guthrie was his next stop, and in that town he spoke to several black ministers who, being already against the emigration, were glad to meet a black man who had been to Canada. They arranged for him to speak to a large audience by announcing the meeting in all of the town's black churches. At the gathering, Miller's statements were challenged by relatives of settlers already in Canada who had written that they were doing well. Miller left, however, "...satisfied that they are convinced that such is not the case." From July 4 until July 8 he was in Oklahoma City speaking with families who had expressed an interest in moving to Canada. He again displayed confidence in having dissuaded them, but was not having quite the same success with black newspapers; apparently some
editors were reluctant to print his article.

From July 9 until July 11 he was in Watonga speaking at churches and interviewing families who were thinking of leaving. He reported his usual success, but found that some families were so poor that they did not have the means to leave in any case. He was back in Oklahoma City on July 12 and spoke to a few more potential migrants. He found that some had already heard unfavourable reports as a former black settler had returned from Canada spreading "cold winter" stories. From Oklahoma City he proceeded to Bristow, spending two days there convincing nine families not to leave. From July 15 to 17 he was in Sapulpa, and again found a returning settler with an unfavourable report had preceded him. In his last report, dated Sapulpa, July 17, Miller said,

The Canadian Boom is rapidly dying out, as the unfavourable reports relative to Canada seem to have spread over the entire state. Everywhere I go people say they have heard of me and the unfavourable report of Canada.

Miller was substantially correct and for all intents and purposes the black migration from Oklahoma to Western Canada faded as 1911 progressed. Canadian Immigration officials would again become concerned with the issue in February, 1912 when W. J. White wrote to W.W. Cory, and W.H. Rogers wrote to W.D. Scott from Kansas City that the blacks were again restless and looking to Canada as a possible outlet. Both White and Rogers recommended that an agent be stationed in Oklahoma City or Muskogee to handle the problem, and Rogers argued that legislation barring the blacks should be passed. White was back in Ottawa on February 22, writing letters to the Soo Line, Rock Island, Missouri, Kansas and Texas, Frisco Lines, and the Union Pacific asking them not to encourage blacks to emigrate from the south to Canada. He told these railways that he was also contacting the Great Northern, Northern Pacific, and Santa Fe Lines on the matter, although no record of this correspondence is in the Immigration Branch's files. White's and
Roger's fears never materialized, however, and the only concern with blacks that Canada had in 1912 was a number of friends and relatives trying to visit settlers already in the country. The Canadian officials' concern with these people was expressed by M.W.D. Scott in a reply to a query from John Foster, United States Consul in Ottawa, regarding one visiting black who had been turned back at the border. Scott answered that his branch was concerned that these people were in fact trying to settle in Canada, but were entering, "...under the guise of tourists or visitors." 16

The unfavourable press reports, the critical commentary of black editors and preachers, and the activities of C.W. Speers, but more especially Dr. G. W. Miller, no doubt stopped black Oklahomans from moving to Western Canada. It was clear that they were not wanted and would encounter trouble if they tried to enter and, given the expense and other difficulties of the journey, they put the thought out of their minds. What they could not stop thinking about, however, was the violence and intimidation which they continued to face. In mid-August, Durant was the scene of another gruesome act. An unidentified black man was alleged to have assaulted and shot a white woman, and was trailed and killed by a posse. His body was returned to the scene of his supposed crime for identification by a mob of a thousand enraged citizens, after which it was burned. This may have been the spark for the appearance of bands of "whitecappers" in the area, who were bent on driving blacks from their land. One black newspaper argued, however, that the real reason for this latter development was that the black farmers in the area were prosperous, and the "lazy whites" wanted their farms. "The Negro won't go," it added. As if to give substance to these words, the blacks of Bryan County, of which Durant was the county seat, organized to resist the nightriders. 17

Unfortunately for them, black Oklahomans were not the only ones organizing in the summer of 1911. In Paden, in eastern Okfuskee County, a
number of "Farmer's Commercial Clubs" began organizing in late August to, "...eliminate the negro from that section of the country, and in their stead get located a good desirable class of white citizens." Organizers were contacting white farmers to locate in the community, and getting land owners to rent to whites only. A number of landlords were said to be receptive to the scheme since their land's value had supposedly not increased because of the work of their black tenants. 18

The clubs were organized on a school district basis, and by the end of August eight were functioning. Each member was expected to sign an agreement stating,

For the protection of ourselves and families and for the upbuilding of a better moral and social citizenship in Oklahoma, we the undersigned citizens and land dealers of Okfuskee county, Oklahoma do hereby agree, pledge and obligate ourselves to never rent, lease or see any land in Okfuskee county to any person or persons of Negro blood, or agents of theirs; unless the land be located more than one mile from a white or Indian resident.

Furthermore we pledge ourselves to use every honorable means within our power to avoid the hiring of negro labor and by so doing curb the negro emigration to this county.

The clubs held a picnic in Paden to advance their cause, and five hundred people attended. A number of speakers addressed the gathering, and all of the talks were "...delivered with surprising earnestness." The crowd was reported to have listened intently to the descriptions of the disadvantages, undesirability, and dangers of too large a black population. The blacks of the area were also said to be listening but it must have been an old message for some of them. Quite a number were thought to be leaving as soon as they had harvested and disposed of their leases. Several black families had already moved from white to black areas. The black Boley Progress advanced a different tactic to meet the situation. It argued that, "It would be wise...for every Negro living in that neck of the woods to secure a good winchester in order that
if it ever becomes necessary he will be prepared to go rabbit hunting."

Black Oklahomans were also listening to news reports emanating from Purcell. Pete Carter, a black man, was accused of assaulting Mrs. Minnie Spraggins, fled, but was captured by three other blacks who turned him over to the authorities. A mob formed, took Carter, and locked the law officers in a room in the courthouse. As a crowd of over three thousand "gleeful" men, women, and girls looked on, Carter was stripped, had coal oil poured over his body, and laid on a pile of oil-soaked wood. A torch was applied and the mob cheered the victim's writhings until he had been burned to ashes. The black Boley Progress bitterly denounced the incident, and in a later editorial noted that while whites were always lecturing blacks not to harbour criminals, the whites did not punish lynchers who did their work in broad daylight. The Guthrie Oklahoma Guide, after noting that blacks had turned the accused in, simply asked, "What shall we do?"

One answer to this question was to leave and, while Canada had in effect closed its doors, there were other possibilities. Just over a month after Dr. G.W. Miller had sent his last report, the Hon. S. Howard, a local black orator, addressed a large gathering at Wetumka. His message was twofold: the blacks should stay out of politics, and go back to Africa. Howard argued that the United States was not, and never had been a black man's country. The black man did not have a single star or stripe in the flag, and it was best for him to stay away from politics altogether. There never would be equality for the black man in the United States, he continued, because white Americans were too proud; they were the proudest people in the world. Some whites said they would give the blacks a state of their own, but Howard knew that before that happened, "...you will see Jesus Christ coming down from above to make a share crop...."
solution was to go back to Africa, or to South America; to get a country, a land of their own. The whites had got their land by taking it, and he was in favour of using force to get his own. "Let us go with a Bible in one hand," he said, "and a sword in the other." 21

The ten black families who left Muskogee on November 11, 1911 for Liberia may or may not have been influenced by S. Howard, but they expressed their determination to escape the curtailment of their political rights in Oklahoma. Each family had one hundred dollars in cash, since that was the amount the Liberian authorities required before they would be allowed to enter. All of the blacks expected to farm in the new country. If they found conditions to their liking, an additional one hundred families were ready to join them. 22

Migration as a response to repression and as a means of fulfilling hopes entered a quiescent period for black Oklahomans in 1912, but burst forth with renewed vigor beginning in August, 1913. That was when Alfred Charles Sam, a native of the Gold Coast, began touring eastern Oklahoma selling shares in his Akim Trading Company, and organizing clubs to promote interest in his venture. The twenty-five dollar shares served the bearer as a downpayment on passage to West Africa. Sam's success gives some idea of the potential for black emigration from Oklahoma, the depth of the people's bitterness, as well as their continued faith in movement as a source of relief. He addressed one meeting of over one thousand blacks at Weleetka in October, 1913, and at another meeting in that town on December 2, several thousand people contributed more than ten thousand dollars toward his scheme. A ship carrying a "scout" party of sixty actually left Galveston on August 21, 1914, while some five hundred supporters who had travelled down from Oklahoma watched. Back in Weleetka the five hundred inhabitants of two tent cities, which had grown up waiting for the boat's arrival, also followed the party's movements. The migration eventually
failed miserably, however, and the survivors of the initial group found their way back to the United States.\textsuperscript{23}

The economic stimulus provided by the First World War was instrumental in producing the now famous black American migration, in which black Oklahomans took part, to northern cities. Once again seeking to better themselves and their offspring, blacks left the sharecrop slavery of the South for northern factories and rail yards. Social and political discrimination were somewhat overshadowed by economics as factors in this movement but they were nonetheless present. But, as always, blacks found that they could not escape racism by moving, and their disillusionment with what they encountered in the north was an important ingredient in the success of Marcus Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Association. While Garvey is perhaps better known for his black nationalist ideology, African colonization was part of his program until the Liberian government quashed his plans by disassociating itself from the U.N.I.A. and its leader in 1925.\textsuperscript{24}

Still, Garvey was one more black leader, in a line even down to the present, who struck a responsive chord in many Afro-Americans. The longevity of that reaction indicates the depth of black resentment at their condition. It is a chord born of centuries of repression and disillusionment, which has been tempered with hope and resistance. Migration to fulfill those hopes and escape repression has been one form of resistance. The migration from Oklahoma to Western Canada was but one instance.
FOOTNOTES


5. For examples of the Canadian advertisements see the Boley Progress, 2 March 1911 and the Clearview Patriarch, 13 April 1911. Both of these journals carried such material until well into 1912, and perhaps beyond. With the former see the issue of 4 January 1912, and the latter the issues of 31 October 1912, 21 November 1912. Immigration Files... part 4, letter to W. W. Cory from L.M. Fortier, 14 March 1911.


8. Clearview Patriarch, 1 June 1911.

9. Immigration Files... part 4, newspaper clipping, Muskogee Baptist Informer, 8 June 1911; letters to W. J. White from C.W. Speers, 8 May 1911, 17 May 1911; newspaper clipping Muskogee Baptist Informer, n.d.; letter to W.D. Scott from Reverend Jones, 20 May 1911.

10. Immigration Files... part 4, letter to W.D. Scott from Reverend H.H. Edmond, 15 May 1911; letter to Reverend H.H. Edmond from W.D. Scott, 19 May 1911.

11. Immigration Files... part 4, letter to Reverend Jones and Reverend Hernagin from C.W. Speers, 24 May 1911.

12. Immigration Files... part 4, letter to W.D. Scott from C.W. Speers, 21 May 1911; letter to an unidentified party from W. H. Rogers, 4 June 1911; letter to W.D. Scott from W.H. Rogers, 25 May 1911.

13. Immigration Files... part 4, letters to an unidentified party in Chicago from Dr. G. W. Miller, 24 June 1911, 25 June 1911, 26 June 1911, 27 June 1911, and 28 June 1911. Also see, Sessing, op. cit. An exhaustive search of the Department of the Interior's budgets and the Auditor-General's reports in the Canadian Sessional Papers for 1911 and 1912 failed to re-
veal Miller's salary.


15. Immigration Files ... part 4, letters to an unidentified party from Dr. G.W. Miller, 29 June 1911, 30 June 1911, 1 July 1911, 2 July 1911, 3 July 1911, 4 July 1911, 5 July 1911, 6 July 1911, 7 July 1911, 8 July 1911, 9 July 1911, 10 July 1911, 11 July 1911, 12 July 1911, 13 July 1911, 14 July 1911, 15 July 1911, 16 July 1911, and 17 July 1911.

16. Immigration Files... part 4, letter to W. D. Scott from W. H. Rogers 15 February 1912; letter to W. W. Cory from W. J. White, 16 February 1911; letters to the Soo Line, Rock Island, Missouri, Kansas, and Texas, Frisco Lines, and Union Pacific Railways from W. J. White, 22 February 1912; letter to W. D. Scott from James Veal, Junkins, Alberta, 13 April 1912; letter to the Secretary of State, Washington, D.C. from J. C. Johnson, Wewoka, Oklahoma, 25 June 1912, received by Canadian officials 9 July 1912; letter to W.D. Scott from John Foster, 8 July 1912; letter to John Foster from W.D. Scott, 11 July 1912.

17. Okemah Ledger, 17 August 1911. Muskogee Cimeter, 2 September 1911. Also see, Tolson, op. cit., p. 166.


Man is a migratory animal; indeed, he probably owes his existence as a species to movement, since if bands of apes had not descended from the forests to begin life on the African savannahs none of us would be here. Throughout his existence man has moved to find better physical conditions; better hunting grounds, better pastures for his flocks, better land for his crops. The rise of organized societies brought about other reasons for moving; he now moved to escape family and clan disputes, the effects of conquest, or religious and social persecution. Not all of these movements have been voluntary, of course, and no doubt many people would have desired to stay where they were. But the greatest example of forced migration were the estimated fifty million black Africans brought to the Americas from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries.

Once established, slavery developed its own ruthless logic; the more the blacks were debased, the more whites came to see them as less than human. Blacks fought this dehumanization in a variety of ways, not the least of which was simply leaving. Indeed, running off became so epidemic in the American slave states that it could rightly be called a condition of the institution. Nor did blacks stop moving once they had been freed. White American fears and prejudices against them continued, and if anything increased, in the decades after the Civil War, and the violence these gave rise to sent many Afro-Americans westward hoping to find more peaceful conditions, and land.

One destination was the future state of Oklahoma, and before it reached statehood thousands of blacks had migrated to it. But white Americans had also been attracted and they brought their racism and stereotypes with them. Violence resulted, and it was not uncommon. White Oklahomans also
sought to segregate their black neighbours, succeeding shortly after statehood was achieved. Black Oklahomans met these developments much as they always had; they organized, and they fought back. Others responded by leaving, and the route they took headed north. Canada was advertising homestead lands in its western provinces in black and white Oklahoma newspapers at this time, and a number of black Oklahomans took advantage of the opportunity.

Many more found the temptation to leave irresistible when the ultimate segregation, disfranchisement, was instituted in Oklahoma in 1910. A resurrected Republican Party and a growing Socialist movement drove Oklahoma Democrats to desperate measures to insure their hold on power. The method they chose was attacking the Republicans by depriving them of their black voters. This was accomplished by the "Grandfather Clause" of Mississippi fame, which supposedly struck at illiterate voters but in fact denied the blacks their right to vote. Legally segregated and removed from the political arena, black Oklahomans were targets for violent abuse from whites. They had come full circle; having left the old South because of repression, they found the old conditions being reimposed. Canada was still offering homestead lands and, while hundreds headed north, thousands eagerly watched with anticipation.

The Canadian reaction to the black migration indicated that they suffered under many of the same stereotypes and myths about the black man as did the white Americans. While Western Canadians did not resort to overt violence to stop the black flow, they did threaten it, and urged their government to undertake policies designed to stop the blacks. This was in itself a form of violence, although it was covert and rather deceiving, for it condemned other black Oklahomans to continue to face
racist violence in that state. Voices were raised in Canada against these developments, but they were from scattered individuals and were drowned in a sea of petitions, resolutions, and editorials all aimed at keeping Western Canada white. The Canadian Government anticipated its constituents and had already undertaken exclusionist policies. But careful medical examinations and depriving potential black settlers of immigration material were haphazard, and the Canadian authorities eventually sent two agents to Oklahoma. Their work, especially that of the second, was highly successful, and by the fall of 1911 the black migration from Oklahoma to Western Canada was dying.

We are less than seven decades removed from that minor migration and, while much has changed, the virus of racism which gave rise to it, and stopped it, is still all too prevalent. Racist myths beget rumours, innuendoes, and stereotyping, and these in turn generate irrational fears. Those myths have a long history, and in the case of blackness one which goes back to even before the first contacts between Englishmen and the "coloured" peoples of the world. They have long been nurtured -- from the slave plantations to the present -- and continue to poison the relationships between peoples. Thoroughly examining these myths and how they have shaped our history is necessary if we are to understand them; and we must understand them if we are to escape them.
Mary Boykin Chesnut (1823-1886). An American diarist, her Diary From Dixie is an important sourcebook on the Confederate homefront during the Civil War.

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865). Sixteenth President of the United States. His election in 1860 was considered by many Southerners to be a threat to their slave system. Lincoln is especially noted for his Emancipation Proclamation, which is generally recognized as having freed the slaves of America.

John Brown (1800-1859). An ardent believer in abolishing slavery, Brown led a raid on a federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry, Virginia in October, 1859, hoping to spark a slave rebellion. While the mission was unsuccessful, and Brown was eventually hung for his actions, he did succeed in greatly alarming the white South.

Charles Darwin (1809-1882). A British scientist, Darwin revolutionized the science of biology with his theory of evolution based upon natural selection. His ideas had a profound impact upon the later nineteenth century, and he influenced thinkers in many other fields.

Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). A British philosopher who developed a coherent philosophy based upon Darwinian concepts for the educated of the late nineteenth century. He is credited with coining the phrase "survival of the fittest."


Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855-1927). An influential Anglo-German author whose Foundations of the Nineteenth Century espoused anti-Semitic and German superiority ideas.


Madison Grant (1865-1937). An American lawyer and author, Grant is known for his influential racist work, The Passing of the Great Race.

Henry M. Turner (1833-1915). A black American clergyman and legislator, he was especially active in the civil rights area, urging blacks to move to Africa where they could achieve their complete human rights.
Booker T. Washington (1856-1915). A black American educator and social reformer, Washington was known principally for his policies of racial co-operation and urging of blacks to remain in the South.

Marcus Garvey (1887-1940). A Jamaican by birth, Garvey lived and worked in the United States for a number of years where he developed a philosophy of black nationalism. Through his Universal Negro Improvement Association he urged blacks throughout the world to work for the liberation and development of Africa.

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826). Third President of the United States, and author of the Declaration of Independence. During his term the Louisiana Purchase from France was made. Jefferson suggested removing various eastern Indian tribes to new lands on the other side of the Mississippi as a solution to recurring native-white clashes.

Andrew Jackson (1767-1845). Seventh President of the United States. Jackson came to be regarded as a symbol and a spokesman for the "common man." He favoured the removal of Indian tribes to an Indian Territory across the Mississippi, and during his administration many removals were carried out.

David L. Payne (1836-1884). An American soldier, pioneer, and adventurer, Payne became the leading figure in the "Oklahoma Movement" which sought to settle vacant lands in the Indian Territory.

Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919). Twenty-sixth President of the United States. It was during Roosevelt's administration that Oklahoma became a state.

William Jennings Bryan (1860-1925). An American political and religious leader, Bryan was the Democratic candidate for President in 1896, 1900, and 1908, but lost each time. He was the idol of many mid-Western American farmers, and his influence was felt in the deliberations of the Oklahoma Constitutional Convention.

Wilfrid Laurier (1841-1919). Prime Minister of Canada from 1896 to 1911, and leader of the federal Liberal party from 1887 to 1919. It was during Laurier's administration that the black Oklahomans arrived in Western Canada.

William H. Taft (1857-1930). Twenty-seventh President of the United States. It was during his term that the major migration of black Oklahomans to Western Canada occurred.


Earl Grey (1851-1917). Governor-General of Canada from 1904 to 1911. It was during his term that the black migrations from Oklahoma to Western Canada occurred.

Robert Borden (1854-1937). Prime Minister of Canada from 1911 to 1920, Borden was the Leader of the Opposition at the time of the major black migrations from Oklahoma.
William Thoburn (1847-?). Conservative Member of Parliament for Lanark North at the time of the 1910 black migration, he opposed the blacks' entry into Western Canada.

William Sharpe (1868-?). Conservative Member of Parliament for Lisgar at the time of the 1910 migration, he opposed the blacks' entry into Western Canada.

John E. Jones (?-?). The American Consul-General at Winnipeg, Manitoba at the time of the black migrations, Jones aided the Sneed party with the Canadian Immigration service.
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