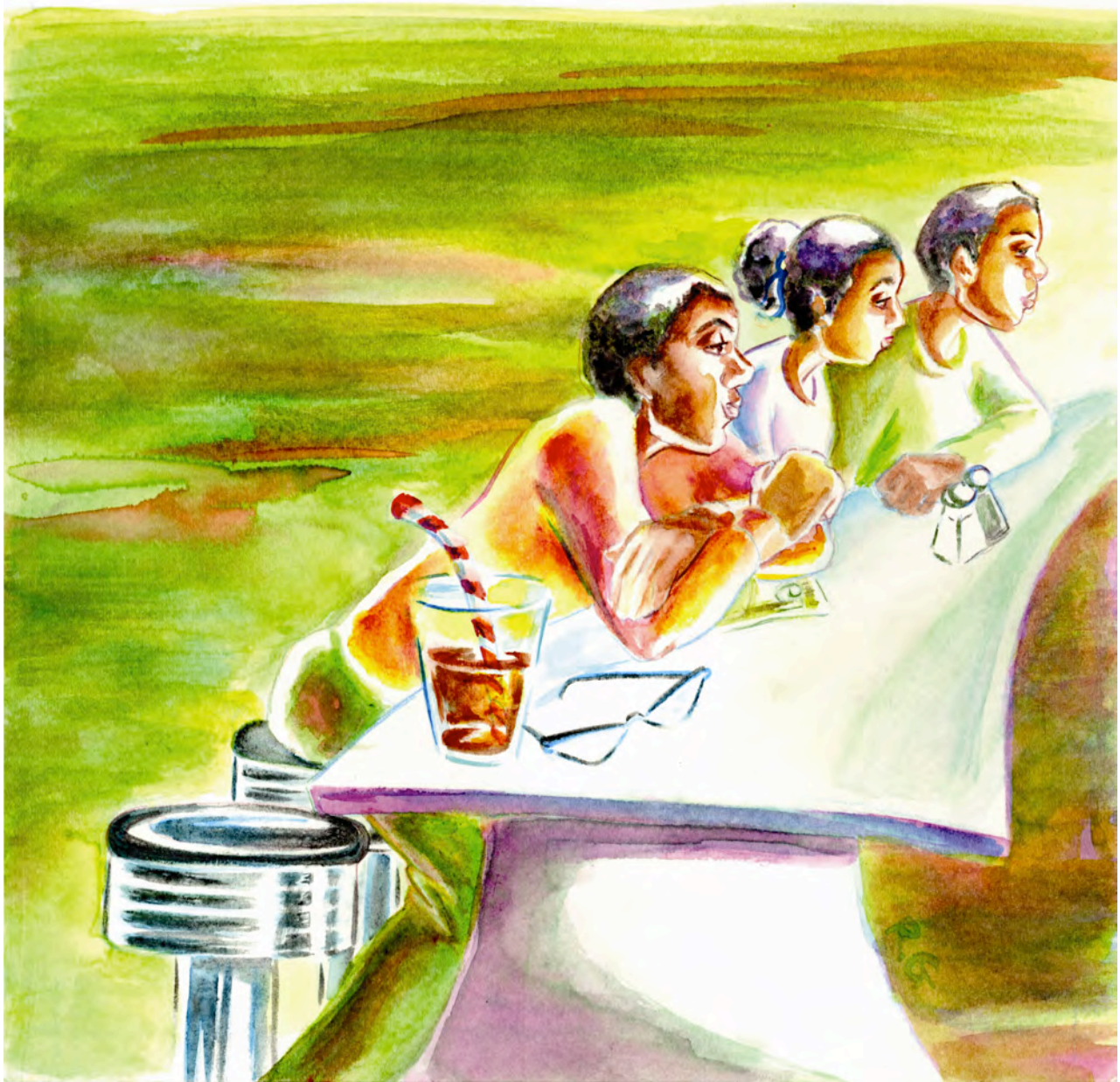


“Things Ain’t What They Used To Be”




**THE
OKLAHOMAN**



THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE: THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN OKLAHOMA

Hard-working, tough, African-Americans helped build Oklahoma. African-Americans were on the Trail of Tears, they were Boomers and they were Sooners. African-American Buffalo Soldiers guided early settlers and African-American lawmen kept order. Out of the fires of segregation, Depression and Dust Bowl, African-American women and men, artists, scholars, laborers, industrialists and political leaders, helped transform Oklahoma while continuing to share their rich, deep and wonderful heritage with the world. "Things ain't what they used to be" recalls the old African-American saying, "We are not what we ought to be, we are not what we want to be, we are not what we will be, but thank God, we ain't what we used to be." It is the title of an African-American jazz standard from 1942 recorded by Tulsa's Ernie Fields. Thanks to generations of African-Americans, things in Oklahoma ain't what they used to be.

R. Darcy and Jennifer Paustenbaugh
Editors

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CREDITS

"Things ain't what they used to be" is an educational supplement written by Oklahoma State University faculty joined by students from Oklahoma State and Langston University.

R. Darcy, Jennifer Paustenbaugh

With assistance from:

Ayanna Bell, Kate Blalack, Leslie Echalk, Melissa Hayer, Chris Hills, Jasmine Johnson, Wendy K. Kleinman, Linda Lynn, Rich Paustenbaugh, Lisa Riley, Lynne Simpson-Scott, Latasha Wilson

And special thanks to:

Mechelle Brown, Bettie Downing, Victor Driver, Eddie Faye Gates, Regina Goodwin, Clarence Harkins, Christy Johnson, Frances Jordan, Earl D. Mitchell, Jr., David Peters, John Phillips, Chyla Rucker, Cornell Thomas, Valerie Thompson, Mary Walker, Congressional Medal of Honor Society, Greenwood Cultural Center, Langston University, Oklahoma Heritage Association, Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame, Oklahoma Historical Society Research Division, *The Oklahoman* Archives

Cover artwork © 2009 Regina Goodwin

About the cover artist: Regina Goodwin is a Tulsa native, and she received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Kansas and completed graduate work at Chicago's Columbia College. She has created artwork and animation for various television spots including McDonald's, Captain Crunch, Fruit Loops and the Tiny Toons series. Her artwork engages and evokes joy.

About the cover art: "She Sat...We're Served." Look closely and notice the empty seat. Clara Luper, with her trademark cat glasses, led hundreds of African-American children and adults in lunch counter sit-ins that eventually led to end of segregated eating establishments in Oklahoma City. The rest of the state soon followed. Those participating would seat themselves at the lunch counter and place a five-dollar bill on the counter indicating that they were not loiterers; they had come for a lunch they could pay for. Because of Luper's efforts, the kids at this counter know that they will be served.

LETTER FROM REPRESENTATIVE JABAR SHUMATE

Jabar Shumate (1976-), is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma, where he was the Student Union president and the university's press secretary. In 2005 he was elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives, where he has focused on education.

JABAR SHUMATE
State Representative
District 73

State Capitol Building
2300 N. Lincoln Boulevard
Room 510
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-4885
(405) 557-7406



House of Representatives

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

Assistant Democratic Floor Leader

COMMITTEES:

Appropriations Subcommittee on
Education

Business & Economic Development
Higher Education & Career Tech
Common Education

January 29, 2009

Dear Friends:

On a cold January morning in 2009 a man, little known to America six years ago, raised his hand and said; "I Barack Hussein Obama do..." and the world changed. The gap between February 2008 and February 2009, the last time this supplement was published is great. Nonetheless, as I am sure our President would concur, it is of even greater importance we highlight the trailblazers in Oklahoma and abroad who made January 2009 possible.

It is Oklahoma that is noted for having more black townships than any other state in the nation. It is Oklahoma that is noted by the National Civil Rights Museum for having been the host of the nation's first sit-in. It is Oklahoma that was home to the "Black Wall Street of America": boasting more African American millionaires than any other concentrated area in the 1920's. It is Oklahoma civil rights pioneers like Clara Luper who made January 20th such a special day for this country.

I applaud the producer of this supplement for reminding us that Oklahoma's African American History is Oklahoma History. Enjoy this piece and I'm proud to know that we belong to this diverse land and the land we belong to is grand!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jabar Shumate".

Jabar Shumate
State Representative
House District 73

GENERATIONS OF BLACK LIFE RECALLED

Barack Obama's Oklahoma Roots

With his father being Kenyan, Barack Obama gives our nation its first African-American president. On his mother's side Obama's roots are in Oklahoma.

Jacob Dunham (1824-1907) and his wife, Louisa (1837-1901), came to the Oklahoma Territory and operated restaurants in Oklahoma City and Okmulgee. Louisa is buried in Wellston. Their son Jacob (1863-1936) moved to Wichita, Kansas, and had a son, Ralph Dunham (1894-1970), who had a son named Stanley (1918-1992).

Harbin McCurry (1823-1899) and his wife, Elizabeth (1827-1918), came to the Indian Territory where Harbin worked as a blacksmith around Ada and Stratford in the Chickasaw Nation. Harbin and Elizabeth are buried in the area. Their son, Thomas (1850-1909), moved to Kansas. His daughter Leona (1897-1930?) married Rolla Payne (1892-1968). They had a daughter named Madelyn (1922-2008) who married Stanley Dunham. Their daughter was Ann (1942-1995), who was Barack Obama's mother. Young Barack was raised by his grandmother Madelyn, who died in Hawaii during her grandson's presidential campaign.



President Barack Obama, Aloah Kincaid and Rep. Jabbar Shumate. Shumate met Obama through Kincaid, who was Shumate's high school debate coach.

Oklahoma City resident reflects upon election



Robert Jones

Robert Jones saw something on November 4th, 2008, he'd never thought possible. The 103-year-old — a lifelong voter and a grandson of slaves — saw a black man elected president. "Not in my day. Not in my day," he said. "I never thought I would see it in my time." The Oklahoma City man voted for Barack Obama and watched the election unfold on the big screen TV in his den. It was, Jones said, the most historic day of his life.

Jones registered to vote in the early 1930s, but it wasn't easy in Jim Crow days. The clerk had a habit of being unavailable for new black registrants. Jones finally caught up with the man and registered. He was determined to vote. He said he is grateful he lived long enough to have the privilege of voting for someone of color as president.

Read more and watch a video about Robert Jones' story at <http://www.newsok.com/richmedia/robertjones>.

Fast Fact

In the last census taken in 2000, there were 260,968 African-Americans living in Oklahoma, comprising 7.6 percent of the state's population. In a special census taken at the time of statehood (1907), there were 112,160 African-Americans living in Oklahoma, or 7.9 of the population.

Activities

Visit the Oklahoma Territorial Museum in Guthrie and the Oklahoma Historical Society in Oklahoma City to view concepts of folk art and crafts created by African-Americans during the post Civil War period.

Imagine yourself talking to your grandchildren many years from now. Describe the memories of school or a family event that you would share with them.

THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN PRESS

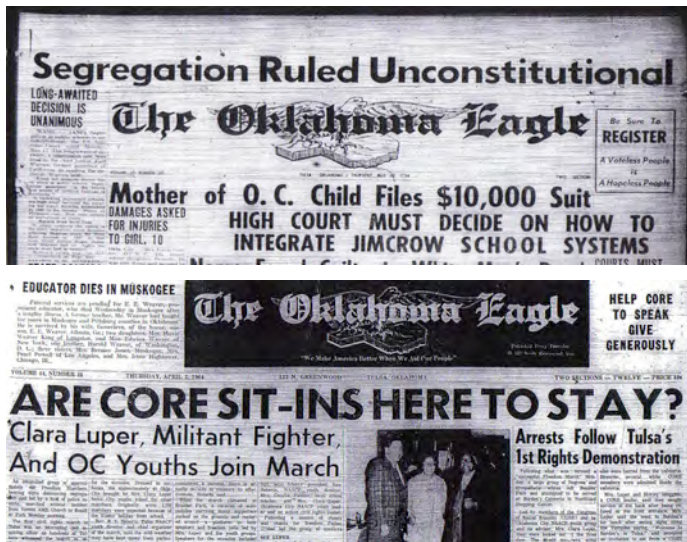
In 1891, E.P. McCabe started the Langston Herald. The newspaper regularly encouraged African-Americans to migrate to Oklahoma, file for their own homesteads and, more importantly, to come in large groups so they would be a political force. Some historians believe that as many as 8,000 African-Americans came to Oklahoma in response to editorials and stories in these early territorial newspapers.

The editors of these newspapers exerted enormous influence in the African-American community and beyond. African-American editors fought against statehood, arguing that the federal government better protected African-Americans than a state government would. Roscoe Dunjee, editor and publisher of Oklahoma City's Black Dispatch, and Edward L. Goodwin, Sr., editor of the Tulsa Oklahoma Eagle, were the most influential editors.

Today, Tulsa's Oklahoma Eagle and Oklahoma City's Black Chronicle, the state's largest African-American newspaper, continue to inform their readers of important issues and events to African-Americans on a weekly basis.

Profiles

- **Russell M. Perry** founded Oklahoma City's Black Chronicle in 1979. In 1993 he purchased Oklahoma City's KVSP radio and later Tulsa's KJMM and eight additional Oklahoma stations. In 2001 he began broadcasting cable television in Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Lawton. In 1999 Governor Frank Keating appointed Perry as Secretary for Economic Development and Special Affairs.
- **Edward Lawrence Goodwin Sr.** came to Tulsa in 1912, graduated from Booker T. Washington High School and went on to Fisk University. In 1936 he bought Tulsa's Oklahoma Eagle and published African-American newspapers in Muskogee and Okmulgee. He stressed education and common sense as the way forward for African-Americans.



Fast Facts

Oklahoma's African-American newspapers are read by almost 50,000 readers weekly.

Activities

Look at Oklahoma City's Black Chronicle online at <http://news.mywebpal.com/index.cfm?pnpid=356>.

What does the newspaper cover? How does it differ from stories in *The Oklahoman*?

Visit your public library. Ask about African-American newspapers. Do they have any microfilm copies of these old papers? Write a description of one story that interests you.

EDUCATION



Langston University was founded in 1897 as the Colored Agricultural and Normal University. Former slaves and their children raised the money to purchase the land for the university. Langston's first president, Inman Page, was born into slavery.

Today, Langston University boasts an enrollment of nearly 4,000 students and awards degrees from associate to doctoral.

Clara Luper remembers that the segregated schools of Okmulgee County used discarded white-school textbooks with missing pages. In spite of dismal

funding, the teachers at these schools exposed their students to rigorous curriculum, encouraging many to become educators themselves.

Some African-American schools remain vital parts of their communities. Among these are Dunjee High School in Spencer; Douglass High School in Oklahoma City; and Booker T. Washington High School in Tulsa.

Tulsa writer Eddie Faye Gates remembers the "little peeling wooden desks ... [and] no real library" at Douglas Elementary. She also remembered her teacher, Mrs. Pete, "instilled in us a great love of learning and a confidence in ourselves that could not be shaken by poverty, racism, lack or any other abject situation. [She] gave us a sense of stability in the midst of an unstable, segregated world; she gave us a sense of pride and respect in a location where prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping flourished."



Colored High School, Boley, Okla.

Colored High School in Boley

Dr. Frederick Douglass Moon (1896-1975), a native of Fallis, was a principal at Oklahoma City's Frederick Douglass High School. Moon became the first African-American elected to the Oklahoma City Board of Education and served as its president in 1974.

Fast Facts

At the end of segregation, there were 1,622 African-American educators in Oklahoma's schools.

Cornel West was born in Tulsa. At age 17 he entered Harvard. He earned his Ph.D. from Princeton University, where he is a professor of religion. West is the author of 19 books including "Race Matters," which sold more than 400,000 copies. He has been awarded more than 20 honorary degrees.

Melvin B. Tolson, played by Denzel Washington in the Great Debaters, taught at Langston and is buried in Guthrie.

Hobart Jarrett is a survivor of the Tulsa Race Riot 1921 and a graduate from Booker T. Washington High school. Jarrett attended Wiley College and became a member of the famous Great Debaters team and won the national debate championship against University of Southern California. Jarrett then went on to become the first African-American Professor of English at Brooklyn College.

Activity

Learn about your community's African-American schools by going to the library and looking through old newspapers, yearbooks and other materials. Discuss with your class what you find.

BLACK TOWNS AND SETTLEMENTS

African-Americans came to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears, after the Civil War and when the Territory was opened to settlement.

The Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminoles all brought their African-American slaves along on the Trail of Tears. African-Americans made up between 10 and 20 percent of those making the journey. After emancipation, the Freedmen were entered onto tribal rolls and allocated shares of tribal lands. Angie Debo tells us of “20 or 30 Negro cabins on the rich land around Muskogee about 1913 ... only two persons of this group had retained their land. Most of them were tenants....” As a result of tribal slavery, the African-American population proportion in the Indian Territory was about twice that of the Oklahoma Territory, and, by 1907, African-Americans actually outnumbered Native Americans in the Indian Nations.

African-Americans participated in the land rush, some settling in the new cities such as Guthrie, Oklahoma City, Kingfisher and Stillwater. Other towns, such as Norman, became “sundown” cities where African-Americans were not allowed after dark. Oklahoma City’s Deep Deuce became famous for jazz and night life; Tulsa’s Greenwood was “The Negro Wall Street” and featured prominent millionaire African-American businessmen.

In 1890 Edward P. McCabe led one group of settlers to found one Black town, Langston, named after Virginia’s African-American Congressman John Mercer Langston. T. M. Haynes founded Okfuskee County’s Boley in 1903. By 1911 Boley was thriving with the first African-American-owned electric company.



Boley Town Council

Fast Facts

Rentiesville, an all-black town in northern McIntosh County, is the original home of historian John Hope Franklin as well as the home of noted guitarist, singer and bluesman D.C. Minner.

Free slaves of Indian Territory spoke both English and the language of their American Indian slave owners.

Between 1865 and 1915 there were at least 60 black towns in the nation, 20 of them were right here in Oklahoma.

Activity

Did your town have an African-American section? Where? Describe the African-American section as it was between about 1920 and 1950. What schools were there? What were some cultural features? Are any left? You may need to go to your public library for information. Visit <http://www.african-nativeamerican.com/6-towns.htm> to learn about black towns in Oklahoma prior to statehood.

FROM SEGREGATION TO CIVIL RIGHTS: SEGREGATION, JIM CROW AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS BATTLE

In 1890, Oklahoma Republicans pledged “the enactment of laws guaranteeing to colored citizens the same rights and privileges as those enjoyed by whites.” Democrats declared “theirs was a party of white supremacy.” Between 1890 and 1936, Republicans favored civil rights, and Democrats opposed them.

Timeline

- 1890 The territorial legislature rejects African-American Green Currin’s civil rights bill by one vote and passes a county-option segregated school system instead.
- 1897 Territory requires separate schools for white and African-American children. The Territorial Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional. / An anti-miscegenation law prohibits “all marriages of persons of the white race with persons of the negro race.”
- 1906 Oklahoma’s Constitution defines “white” as anyone not of “African descent.”
- 1907 Oklahoma requires Jim Crow railroads. E. P. McCabe sues and wins partial victory in US Supreme Court. / Oklahoma sets up separate schools and separate school boards.
- 1910 Vote of the people enacts the “Grandfather clause,” to deny African-Americans the right to vote. An estimated 63,005 blank ballots are counted as ‘For’; without blank ballots, the measure fails 40.5 percent to 59.4 percent. / Federal attorneys prosecute officials enforcing the grandfather clause.
- 1915 The U.S. Supreme Court declares Oklahoma’s Grandfather Clause unconstitutional.
- 1916 Oklahoma requires African-American to register during a month-long period or be perpetually disenfranchised.
- 1934 African-Americans in Wagoner County sued, and in 1939 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled Oklahoma’s 1916 registration law unconstitutional. / African-American Jess Hollins is sentenced to death for rape by a Creek County all-white jury. NAACP lawyers appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, which overturns such convictions where African-Americans were kept off juries.
- 1937 The legislature provides that African-American candidates for elective office must have (Negro) placed after their names on the ballot.
- 1946 Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher is denied admission to University of Oklahoma Law School based on race. The U.S. Supreme Court rules in her favor. She is admitted, although the school provides her with special ‘colored’ areas in the class and other places.
- 1950 George McLaurin is denied admission to a University of Oklahoma Ph.D. program. The federal court orders he be admitted. OU provides McLaurin with separate areas, and the U.S. Supreme Court orders OU to remove all restrictions.
- 1955 Oklahomans vote to amend the Constitution to implement integration. The vote was 76 percent in favor and 24 percent opposed.
- 1958 Oklahoma City African-American school children aged 7 to 15, led by Dunjee High School teacher Clara Luper, begin the nation’s first non-violent lunch-counter sit-ins at Katz Drug Store on August 19.
- 1961 African-American A. L. Dowell sues Oklahoma City Public Schools, claiming Oklahoma City intentionally segregated its schools. This begins an era of Federal Court supervision of the city’s public schools.
- 1963 – 1965 The ban on marriage between races, Jim Crow, separate schools, separate telephone booths and segregation of institutions of higher learning are repealed.

FROM SEGREGATION TO CIVIL RIGHTS: SEGREGATION, JIM CROW AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS BATTLE

Profiles

- **Amos Hall** (1896-1971) was a leading civil rights attorney. When Oklahoma claimed segregation was for the public peace, Hall told the U.S. Supreme Court, “No place Negroes ever studied or lived endangered the public peace.” In 1970 he became the first Oklahoma African-American elected Associate District Judge.
- **Roscoe Dunjee** (1883-1955) published the Black Dispatch in Oklahoma City, was a founder of Oklahoma’s NAACP, a leading opponent of Jim Crow and segregation and a leader for civil rights. He helped take the Hollins and the Sipuel cases to the U.S. Supreme Court.
- **Clara Luper** taught social studies at segregated Dunjee High School in Oklahoma City. On August 19, 1958, she and her students headed to the downtown Katz Drug Store to begin America’s sit-in movement. The sit-ins continued until 1964, when Oklahoma City passed an ordinance guaranteeing the end of segregated eating places.
- **Jimmy Stewart** (1912-1997) was an Oklahoma NAACP and Urban League leader and executive with Oklahoma Natural Gas. He worked for equal pay and facilities for African-American teachers and students, the end of segregation in parks and hiring African-American firefighters.



Clara Luper

Fast Facts

Jake Simmons Jr. was born in the Indian Territory Sawokla, which is now Haskell. In the 1920s he became the first African-American oil broker in eastern Oklahoma. During the Depression he sold farms in Muskogee to African-Americans from East Texas. In the 1960s he was sent over to African countries to broker large deals with Liberia. Simmons later expanded his oil lease-trading business into Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Kansas. By the end of the 1960s he became a multimillionaire.

Activities

Oklahoma’s civil rights struggle was carried out in the legislature, the courts, in sit-ins and in demonstrations. Why were the courts necessary? Why were sit-ins and demonstrations necessary?

Oklahoma was segregated from the time of statehood into the 1950s. African-Americans were denied education, jobs, and service in retail establishments and restaurants. Discuss the effects of this segregation in Oklahoma today.

Visit the Oklahoma History Center near the state Capitol and check out historic monuments dealing with Black History, like the Katz Drug Counter that Clara Luper sat at.

Go to the Black Chamber of Commerce Web site and view the opportunities offered to black students.

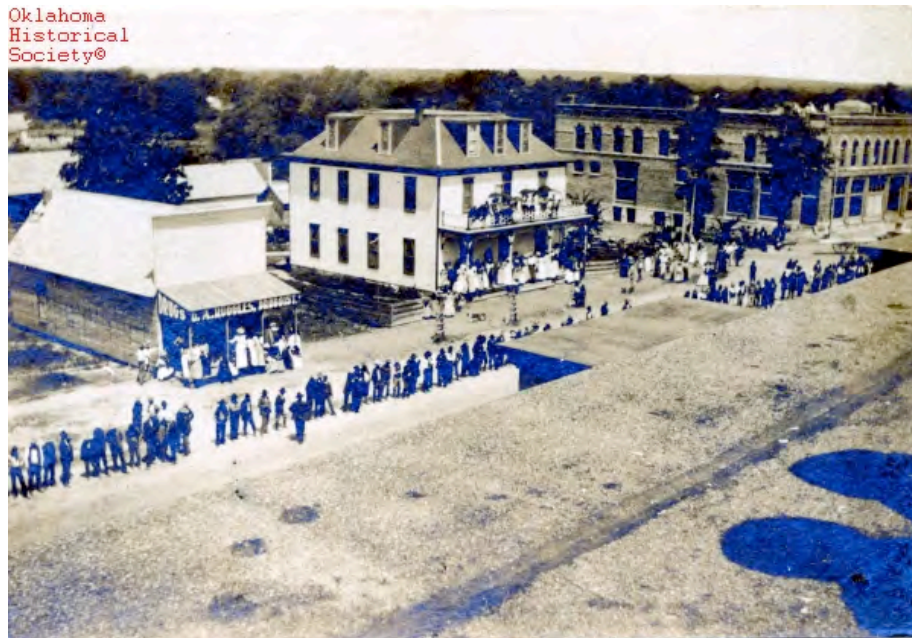
POLITICS

African-Americans were part of Oklahoma political life well before Congress established the Oklahoma Territory in 1890. E.P. McCabe (1850-1920) served two terms as Republican State Auditor in Kansas, organized African-American settlement, helped found Langston and was heavily active in Republican territorial politics. In the territorial period, two African-American Republicans were elected to the legislature: Green Currin from Kingfisher County in 1890 and David J. Wallace from Logan County in 1892.

With statehood, Langston Republican A.C. Hamlin was elected to the State House of Representatives in 1908. After 1910, Jim Crow and voting discrimination limited African-American political participation; nevertheless, Republicans nominated Frank A. Anderson for Corporation Commissioner in 1934. The legislature responded by requiring that African-American candidates be identified with the word 'Negro' in parentheses on ballots and official returns. With the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the re-drawing of state legislative districts, African-Americans once again successfully ran for elective office in Oklahoma.

E. Melvin Porter was the first African-American Democrat in the Oklahoma legislature. As the Oklahoma City NAACP President, he participated in Clara Luper's sit-ins and helped defend those who were arrested. Porter was a legislative champion for civil rights, introducing the state's anti-discrimination act, a requirement that African-American history be included in textbooks and a repeal of Oklahoma's anti-miscegenation law. Other first African-Americans to re-enter the Oklahoma legislature were John B. White, Curtis Lawson and Archibald Hill, in 1965. Today's state legislature has six African-Americans.

THEN: Voting in Wewoka



Fast Facts

Lelia Foley-Davis (1942-) became the nation's first African-American woman mayor when she was elected mayor of Taft in 1973.

Test Your Knowledge!

Who was the first African-American from Oklahoma elected to the U.S. Congress?

Answer: J.C. Watts, a Republican, was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1995 and served until 2001. In 1991, he also became the first African-American elected to the Oklahoma Corporation Commission.

POLITICS

African-American Republicans Green Currin and David J. Wallace were elected to the territorial legislature and A.C. Hamlin to the state legislature in 1908. Since then, more than 20 African-Americans have served in the state legislature. Republican J.C. Watts was elected Corporation Commissioner in 1990 and to Congress in 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2000.

Currently Serving African-Americans

- Constance N. Johnson, (Democrat) State Senate, 2005-present
- Judy Eason McIntyre, (Democrat) State House, 2003-2004; State Senate, 2005-present
- Anastasia Pittman, (Democrat) State House, 2007-present
- T.W. Shannon, (Republican) State House, 2007-present
- Mike Shelton, (Democrat) State House, 2005-present
- Jabar Shumate, (Democrat) State House, 2005-present

NOW: Voting in the 2008 presidential election



Profiles

- **Hannah D. Atkins** is the first African-American woman elected to the Oklahoma legislature. She described herself as a “flaming moderate.” In 1980, President Jimmy Carter appointed her a U.N. delegate. State Governor Henry Bellmon appointed her Secretary of State and Secretary for Social Services.
- **Maxine Horner** and **Vicki Miles-LaGrange** became the first African-American women elected to the Oklahoma Senate. Horner helped found Tulsa’s Jazz Hall of Fame and establish the OLAP which gives college and university scholarships to students from low income families. Miles-LaGrange went on to be a Federal Attorney and then Federal Judge.

Fast Facts

J.C. Watts a native from Oklahoma played quarterback for the University of Oklahoma before entering politics. Watts was the first African- American to be elected to Congress from a southern state in over 120 years and served as congressman from Oklahoma from 1995-2003. Since retiring from Congress he has been a business consultant.

Activity

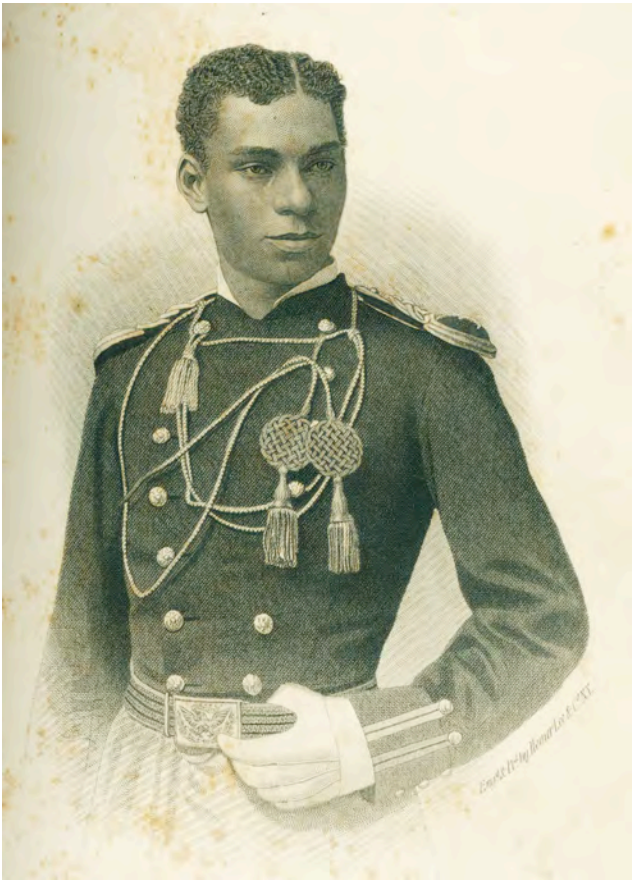
How would you describe the election and inauguration of Barack Obama to someone in the upcoming generation not yet born?

Test Your Knowledge!

Who was the first African-American appointed to the Oklahoma Supreme Court?

Answer
Tom Colbert in 2004. Colbert was born and raised in Oklahoma and received his law degree from the University of Oklahoma.

BLACKS IN THE MILITARY: TO WIN AND MAINTAIN FREEDOM



Henry Flipper

In June 1877, Henry Ossian Flipper, a freed slave from Georgia, became the first black to graduate from the U.S. Military Academy (West Point). He also became the first black officer to command regular troops in the U.S. Army when he was assigned to one of the four all-black Buffalo Soldier regiments in the army. Flipper served at Fort Sill in Indian Territory. Among his duties as an engineer at this Army outpost, he supervised the construction of telegraph lines and roads as well as the drainage of malaria-infested ponds.

In 1968, Army Capt. Riley L. Pitts, born in Fallis, became the first African-American to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. A graduate of Oklahoma City's Douglass High School, Pitts showed exceptional heroism during an airmobile assault in Ap Dong, South Vietnam. Capt. Pitts lost his life in the assault.

Staff Sgt. Rubin Rivers, a native of Tecumseh, was one of seven black soldiers who served in World War II to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Rivers, who spent two days fighting with his thigh exposed to the bone from an exploded land mine, was killed in his tank while trying to hold a bridge from German soldiers. Staff Sgt. Rivers' medal citation said, "[his] fighting spirit and daring leadership were an inspiration to his unit and exemplify the highest traditions of military service."

Fast Facts

Senate Bill 659, signed by Gov. Henry in May 2005, honors the African-American soldiers in the Civil War known as the Buffalo Soldiers.

In August 1973, Roscoe Conklin Cartwright became only the third African-American promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and was the first black field artillery officer to achieve this rank. Cartwright spent his youth in Tulsa, where he graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in 1936.

In 2005, there were a total of 48 African-American general or flag-grade active-duty officers in the U.S. armed forces. These are commissioned officers of the Army, Air Force, or Marines who have reached the rank of general or of the Navy who have reached the rank of admiral. In total, there were only 893 men and women of the more than 210,000 officers of the active-duty armed forces who had reached this rank.

Activity

Interview someone in your family, church or community who has served or is serving in the military. Find out what kind of training have they received, where and when they served, what kind of hardships they may have faced and whether they would recommend military service to others.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHURCHES

"The black church ... represented not only a place to worship, but a valuable social outlet in an era when Oklahoma limited black access to publicly supported facilities. By the mid-twentieth century, roughly eighty thousand blacks had membership in the nearly eight hundred churches that dotted the Oklahoma landscape"

~ Jimmy Lewis Franklin. "African Americans," Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History & Culture

The First Baptist Church - North Tulsa started in 1899 with 10 people in a one-room building with a wood-burning stove. In 1921, when much of North Tulsa was burned by mobs, First Baptist was spared because the mob apparently thought it was a white church. Today the Church is a magnificent building with a sanctuary that can seat 1,200 people.

Elizabeth Chappelle recalled Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1960 visit to Tulsa. "One of the happiest church duties I ever had was to prepare dinner for [him]. ... Oh I fixed my Sunday-best dinner that day! I prepared my usual 'feast food' or Sunday dinner — chicken, roast, potatoes, greens, salad, cornbread, apple pie, coconut cake, tea and coffee. Martin just relished that meal!"

African-American religious leaders fought for civil rights. The Rev. Ben Hill of Tulsa's AME Vernon Chapel led local civil rights drives and organized participation in national marches. In 1968 he was elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives. B.S. Roberts, Church, led demonstrations at Picadilly's and other elected in 1990 to Tulsa's first organization.

minister of Tulsa's St. Johns AME North Tulsa's Borden Cafeteria, segregated restaurants. Roberts was city council after a municipal re-



First Baptist Church - North Tulsa

Activities

Is there an African-American church in your community? Is the African-American church different from churches you know? How?

Did the churches in your community participate in the civil rights movement to end Oklahoma's discrimination? How?

WRITERS, ARTISTS & ENTERTAINERS

1. **Bessie Coleman** was the first African-American woman airplane pilot. Bessie studied at Oklahoma Colored Agricultural and Normal University (Langston). American flight schools would not accept a black woman so she learned to fly in France. She returned to the United States to participate in air shows and lecture.
2. **Leona Pearl Mitchell** is an operatic soprano from Enid. She received her bachelor's degree in music from Oklahoma City University in 1971. She has performed in London, England; Paris, France; Rome, Italy; Vienna, Austria; Berlin, Germany; and Buenos Aires, Argentina.
3. **Alfre Woodard** was born in 1952 in Tulsa and attended Bishop Kelley and Booker T. Washington high schools. She has appeared in more than 40 feature films including "Cross Creek," "Star Trek: First Contact" and "K-PAX." She has four Emmy Awards, two Screen Actors Guild Awards and a Golden Globe.
4. **John Hope Franklin**, author of "From Slavery to Freedom," was born in 1915 in the African-American town of Rentiesville. He earned a Ph.D. from Harvard University and worked with Thurgood Marshall on the court case Brown vs. Board of Education. In 1995 he received the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.
5. **Joyce Carol Thomas** is a native of Ponca City, which is the setting for many of her award-winning books. "Inside the Rainbow" (1982) won an American Book Award.
6. **Ralph Ellison**, born in Oklahoma City in 1913 and a graduate of Douglass High School, wrote the famous "Invisible Man" (1952). Ellison, in essays and short stories, returned many times to Oklahoma, helping to illuminate and give shape to its history and culture.
7. **Wayman Tisdale** played basketball at Tulsa's Booker T. Washington High School and at the University of Oklahoma. He won a gold medal in the 1984 Olympics and played 12 years in the NBA. Today he is a jazz bass guitarist with several No. 1 Billboard Top Ten Albums, Bassist of the Year award, National Smooth Jazz Awards and election to the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame.
8. **The Blue Devils**, an Oklahoma City jazz band in the 1920s, included Lester Young, William "Count" Basie and Buster Smith. The Blue Devils had evolved into Count Basie's Orchestra by 1933.
9. **Charles "Charlie" Christian** (1916–1942) grew up in Oklahoma City. In the 1930s he became an electric guitar pioneer with Benny Goodman and helped usher in the swing era.
10. **Bill Pickett** (1870-1932), one of thirteen children born to former slaves, was a rodeo performer with Buffalo Bill, Will Rogers and Tom Mix. He invented bulldogging and is featured on a U.S. postage stamp.
11. **Ernie Fields** (1905-1997) played the trombone in Tulsa clubs before forming his own band, the Royal Entertainers. In 1959 he recorded "In the Mood," which sold one million copies and earned him the gold record displayed at the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame.

Fast Facts

Bill Spiller was born in Tishomingo, Oklahoma but later moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School class of 1933. Spiller became the first pro African-American golfer to break the color line in the PGA.

Thomas C. Allen of Oklahoma City and J. Herman Banning of El Reno became the first black pilots to cross the continent by air when they flew from Los Angeles to New York in 1932. Remarkably, their plane, which was put together from junkyard parts, lasted through the 3,300-mile trip. The trip took 21 days because the young pilots had to make 25 stops to raise money to finance the trip.

Activities

Select a topic such as television, movies, music or literature. What contribution have Oklahoma African-Americans made?

Visit a play at the Black Liberated Arts Center Inc. to explore the influences the African-American culture has on artistic disciplines.