

Did Oklahoma African Americans Vote Between 1910 and 1943?



*By R. Darcy**

Oklahoma's short history as a territory and state is far from crystal clear despite 75 percent of it being within living memory. Living memory may even be an obstacle to historical objectivity, if such objectivity is even possible. African American history is particularly vulnerable to living memory. Concerning early Oklahoma voting John Hope Franklin in 1967 wrote, "By 1910 the Negro had been effectively disenfranchised by constitutional provisions in North Carolina, Alabama, Virginia, Georgia and Oklahoma."¹ Likewise Ralph J. Bunche wrote in 1940:

A year after the Supreme Court of the United States rendered the grandfather clause unconstitutional, the Oklahoma legislature, still bent upon the purpose of disenfranchising the Negro, enacted a statute which required registrars to enroll all those persons who had voted in 1914 and provided that other persons were to be

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registered only if the officials “shall be satisfied” of their qualifications. In 1914 few, if any, Negroes voted, since the constitutional provisions which were invalidated . . . were still in effect at that time.²

It is impossible to imagine two more distinguished and authoritative African American scholars than Bunche and Franklin. Each were contemporary witnesses but relied on their reading of the law and their perceptions of the law’s intent for their description of the facts on the ground. While the intention of the law was to disenfranchise African Americans, as we will see below, in practice African Americans were able to vote in early Oklahoma.

African Americans freely voted in the Oklahoma Territory.³ Then, after statehood, in the August 1910 primary elections, Oklahoma amended its constitution to add the “Grandfather Clause” literacy test with the purpose of disenfranchising African Americans. With *Guinn v. United States* in 1915 the US Supreme Court declared the amendment and the Grandfather Clause unconstitutional.⁴ The legislature responded in 1916 with a “temporary” registration law giving African Americans disenfranchised by the 1910 law nine working days—Sunday, April 30, through Thursday, May 11, 1916—to register. If they did not there was no provision for them to ever register. The 1916 law was not declared unconstitutional until 1939. There is no question the 1910 and 1916 provisions were intended to disenfranchise African Americans. The question addressed here is this: were Oklahoma African Americans denied the vote in practice, or, more to the point, did Oklahoma African Americans nevertheless vote between 1910 and 1940?

The 1910 disenfranchisement mechanism was a literacy test. If the literacy test was enforced objectively a relatively small number of Oklahoma African Americans would be affected. These would be elderly, illiterate former slaves such as Sampson Smith who had voted prior to 1910.⁵ If it was enforced unfairly with the intent of discriminating against African Americans all or almost all such persons would be prevented from voting.

In the eleven former Confederate states 1910 illiteracy varied from 25.5 percent (Florida) to 38.7 percent (South Carolina) to 48.4 percent (Louisiana) of the African American population age ten and over.⁶ Oklahoma’s African American illiteracy for that group was 17.7 percent.⁷ If fairly enforced, literacy tests devised in South Carolina (1895) and Louisiana (1898) would disenfranchise 38.7 to 48.4 percent of those states’ African Americans.⁸ If unfairly enforced all African Americans could lose the vote. Fairly enforced, a literacy test would not have that

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sweeping effect in Oklahoma. In 1910 Oklahoma City African American illiteracy was only 6.2 percent.⁹ Low African American illiteracy in Oklahoma cities was particularly important for how the Grandfather Clause worked because the cities required voter registration while the rural areas did not.¹⁰

Oklahoma Republican US Representative Bird McGuire commented in 1914,

So far as Oklahoma is concerned, there is a schoolhouse for every Negro, where he can go; for every Indian and every white man. You can see what it means to all white men, and . . . you will see what it has meant for every negro. They have different sentiments from those in your State, Judge [Robert F. Broussard of Louisiana]. They say, "Educate," regardless of what might be the result, and the time in my State is passed when the grandfather clause means anything if honestly enforced. That time has gone by. . . . You cannot be square with this law and get out of it what was intended by it. That time is passed.¹¹

Representative Broussard replied, "That is a remarkable showing, that these negroes make as to illiteracy under the census. . . . I quite agree with you that they will have to find some other laws than the 'grandfather clause,' to keep them from voting."¹²

About the same time Republican US Representative Dick Morgan testified,

[I]t is a matter of fact that the colored population of Oklahoma, many of them are illiterate and unlearned, but yet on an average that population is far more intelligent than the colored population of the average southern State. And that is apparent and natural from the conditions which have existed in Oklahoma for 25 years, and in the very fact that in the immigration no doubt more intelligent negroes immigrated from the Southern States rather than the less intelligent, and it seems to me rather remarkable that, taking the total population of the State of Oklahoma of persons over ten years of age, the percentage of illiteracy is 5.6 per cent, while the percentage of illiteracy in Oklahoma City, of the negroes of voting age is higher than that of the population above 10 years of age, is only 6.2 per cent. In other words, the negroes of Oklahoma City of voting age, in point of literacy, as compared with the total population of the State over 10 years of age, is only

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0.6 of 1 per cent below the average of the population of the State of Oklahoma.¹³

The 1910 census had reported 33,509 illiterate native-born whites, 3,828 illiterate foreign-born whites, 12,297 illiterate American Indians, and 17,858 illiterate African Americans.¹⁴ Democrat E. J. Giddings simply did not believe the census data on Oklahoma literacy.

[I]t would appear that within the State of Oklahoma there were more illiterate whites than blacks. The trouble is that the negro enumerator who took this census doubled up on us with all the halfbreeds and quarter breeds and everybody else and dumped them on the white side of the fence. But the position we have always taken in Oklahoma and elsewhere throughout the South is that one drop of negro blood makes a negro, and I think you will find that to have been the case here; that they dumped all these other mixed bloods on our side and put all the pure blood of the Ethiopian on the other. It is not true that the percentage of illiteracy in the State of Oklahoma is merely among the whites, or that there are no more white illiterates in that race than in the colored race.¹⁵

J. J. Carney, a Democratic congressional candidate in 1912, explained,

Now, I have no doubt that a great number of those negroes, probably a majority of them, can write their name, so that you might be able to read them. They might, perhaps, if you give them a sufficient length of time, be able to read a little; and I submit to you gentlemen that in the contemplation and study of our election laws of Oklahoma and of every other southern State in the Union, in view of the negro's natural stupidity and of his inability to grasp political questions and political subjects and every other subject with which the negro has to deal, that something more should be required of him than the mere qualification of him writing his name or reading from the primer.¹⁶

Regarding literacy test enforcement, Democratic Governor Lee Cruce had issued a statement in 1912, saying,

I believe in the enforcement of the grandfather clause, but I believe in a sensible enforcement. The negro in this State who can

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read and write has just as good a right to vote as you or I, and where the judges of election know that a negro is a qualified voter there is no more reason for applying the test than there is for making me swear that I am 21 years old.¹⁷

For Cruce, the trouble over the Grandfather Clause was a result of “overenforcement,” as he said, “In addition the recent decision of the State supreme court will not permit any election official to assume too much authority in the examination.”¹⁸ Thus, for example, African American territorial legislator Green I. Currin was not challenged.¹⁹

We have some evidence of how literate African Americans were treated by election officials at the November 8, 1910, and subsequent elections. As we shall see below, contemporary newspaper reports and Ralph Bunche’s 1940 survey suggests many literate and possibly some illiterate Oklahoma African Americans were able to vote.

The question of African American voting in the period between 1910, when the Grandfather Clause was voted into effect, and 1939, when the US Supreme Court declared the last of Oklahoma’s restrictive voting laws unconstitutional, cannot be addressed by simply examining the law’s intention. The practice on the ground needs to be examined.

The first test of disenfranchisement was the November 1910 elections. Republicans, under President Taft, controlled the federal government. Republican federal attorneys and marshals sought to guarantee African American votes against the efforts of state and local Democrats. Two Democratic election officials, Joe Beal and Frank Guinn, were accused of not allowing African Americans to vote. The two were arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced to the federal prison in Leavenworth, Kansas. This was done by an Oklahoma prosecutor, judge, and jury. They lost their final appeal in 1915 before the US Supreme Court.²⁰ Eventually they were pardoned by Democratic President Woodrow Wilson.²¹

The November 5, 1912, election was close in the First and Second Congressional Districts. Republican Bird McGuire defeated Democrat John J. Davis by 579 votes in the First District and Dick T. Morgan defeated Democrat J. J. Carney by 576 votes in the Second Congressional District.²² Davis and Carney contested the election to the US House of Representatives. The losing Democrats charged that the election officials did not enforce the Grandfather Clause by allowing a large number of African American votes. The number of African American voters, almost all assumed to be Republican, were alleged to be far in excess of the Republican margin. Democrats Davis and Carney asked the House of Representatives to throw out the African American votes,

thus declaring them winners. Democrats argued the intent of the law was to disenfranchise African Americans. Since most Oklahoma African Americans were, in fact, literate, they assumed the law was intended to be enforced unfairly and with discriminatory effect.²³ While the House of Representatives heard the Democrats' challenge, the US Supreme Court was considering *Guinn v. United States* and the constitutionality of the Grandfather Clause. Oklahoma Democrats were in an anomalous position. In one venue, the House of Representatives, they argued the intent and purpose of the law was to disenfranchise African Americans and in the other, the US Supreme Court, they argued that the amendment had no discriminatory purpose at all. The Democrats lost their contest in the House of Representatives and in the Supreme Court.²⁴ These 1914 US House of Representatives election contest hearings were an early indication of African American voting patterns in 1912 Oklahoma.

Both losing Democratic candidates argued that Republicans had sent Democratic election officials in precincts with African American voters a letter authored by Republican Homer Boardman, federal district attorney for Oklahoma's Western District, along with an unsigned circular reminding them of the conviction of Joe Beal and Frank Guinn and threatening that, as election officials, they, too, would be prosecuted if they attempted to keep African Americans from voting.²⁵ Further, this was widely circulated in newspapers immediately prior to the election. Democrats claimed Republicans had intimidated election officials so that they did not enforce Oklahoma's Grandfather Clause. One problem facing election officials was that the Supreme Court of Oklahoma had declared the Grandfather Clause constitutional while the federal courts in both the Eastern and Western Districts had declared the Grandfather Clause unconstitutional. Which courts were the officials to obey? The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals had sent Beal and Guinn's 1910 case to the US Supreme Court.²⁶

Of interest here is the evidence brought forward by both sides as to African American voting in the November 5, 1912, Oklahoma election. The Democrats claimed the Grandfather Clause had not been enforced when it should have been. As a result, large numbers of African Americans voted who should not have voted and their votes should be subtracted. Republicans presented evidence the Grandfather Clause had been enforced, but only to test actual literacy. African Americans who should not have voted did not, or such African Americans voted in very small numbers. Republicans noted only illiterate African Americans, of which there were few, could be legally excluded.

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What, exactly, the Grandfather Clause was to accomplish and how it was to accomplish it was a key point of disagreement. Democrats spoke generally of their desire to keep the African American vote at an absolute minimum to preserve white supremacy. Practical questions however, arose. There was no mention of race in the law. Rather, there was a literacy test from which everyone but African Americans and many Native Americans were excused.²⁷ If an inspector knew an African American could read and write he should be permitted to vote. Many African Americans were so known and given a ballot. A number of African Americans who could “barely” write their names were allowed to vote. For example, in Dewey Township in the Second Congressional District African American J. B. Smith was vouched for by the election clerk. Justice of the Peace Y. A. Watson, school teacher W. A. Anderson, and another man named Brite were allowed to vote without being tested, despite their race.²⁸

Other African Americans were denied the vote. Republican Representative Bird McGuire told the following story about Joe Beal and Frank Guinn in 1910:

It made no difference how well a man could read or write, they did not intend to let him vote. And the evidence in the case shows that one man went on the stand, and I think the United States district attorney asked him one question, “Can you read and write?” “Yes.” “Were you turned down?”—and left him at that. When they took him up on cross examination, it was developed that he was a college professor and could read and write in two or three different languages; and I think he has since taken the examination and has gone into the consular service.²⁹

In 1910 the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the US Constitution were seen as applying to federal elections, not state and local elections.³⁰ Oklahoma provided separate ballot papers for the federal elections of president, US senators, and US representatives. To remain within the parameters of both state and federal law the attorney for the Democratic State Committee, E. J. Giddings, contacted Democratic election officials and advised them to offer African Americans a federal, but not a state and county, ballot.³¹ While there was court testimony that this was done in certain instances, it is not clear how widespread the practice was. In any case, the advice indicates African Americans were continuing to vote, at least in federal elections, despite the Grandfather Clause.

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On the November 5, 1912, ballot was State Question Forty. It would move the state capitol from Oklahoma City, in Oklahoma County, back to Guthrie, in Logan County. For the two counties the stakes were enormous. Within each county sentiment, both Republican and Democrat, was united. Leaders in each county wanted to maximize their county's vote. That could not be done by turning away the numerous African American voters, between 1,400 and 1,500 in Oklahoma County and 1,500 in Logan County.³² The desired vote, obviously, also could not be achieved by giving African Americans only the federal ballot paper.³³

An Oklahoma election, as most American elections, typically involved a number of issues. As was the case with the state capitol vote, the need for African American votes, in turn, can, and did, override a felt need to disenfranchise African Americans. Oklahoma African Americans had voted from the first territorial election in 1890. With about 10 percent of the population, Oklahoma African Americans could not dominate, as African Americans could, and did, in parts of the former Confederacy during Reconstruction.³⁴ But there were enough Oklahoma African Americans to swing a close vote. As votes in play, either as one block or as parts, Oklahoma African Americans came to be politically depended upon, catered to, and anticipated. The Grandfather Clause was motivated by a desire to eliminate or minimize that vote. Other interests, such as the state capitol vote, prompted seeking, and even mobilizing, African American voters.

There was considerable patronage for Oklahoma African Americans. Republican authorities cemented their alliance with Oklahoma African Americans with federal patronage. Republicans were not the only officials providing patronage to African Americans. Democrats, creating segregated structures from the territorial period through statehood, staffed the Colored Agricultural and Normal University at Langston and the Industrial Institute for the Deaf, Blind, and Orphans of the Negro Race in Taft. These institutions provided positions for educated African American leaders expected to politically support their Democratic sponsors. Other African Americans were employed in Democratic patronage positions in various state institutions.³⁵ Thus, African American S. Douglass Russell, superintendent of the Industrial Institute, was a political enemy of Republican Representative Bird McGuire and, in 1937, African American H. C. McCormick, then superintendent of the Industrial Institute, physically attacked African American newspaper publisher Roscoe Dunjee "because Dunjee wrote critical editorials about him."³⁶ African Americans were involved in the activities of both Democrats and Republicans.

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While there is much conflicting evidence from the November 5, 1912, general election, there is no doubt African Americans voted, but there is also little doubt some illiterate African Americans voted and some literate African Americans either were turned away or failed to have their votes counted.

Oklahoma African Americans voted from the first territorial election in 1890 through the adoption of the Grandfather Clause in 1910. African Americans were a key part of the Republican Party, serving in a number of appointive and elective positions. Two African Americans were elected to the territorial legislature and one to the state legislature.³⁷ At the Carney–Morgan election dispute hearings there was this exchange among Ohio Democrat Stanley Bowdle, Louisiana Democrat Robert Broussard, and the losing Democratic congressional candidate J. J. Carney:

Mr. Bowdle: Mr. Carney, let me suggest this proposition, and ask you whether or not it is correct. As I gather it, the tendency of colored men in the South is not to vote unless invited to vote. Is the tendency of the negroes of Oklahoma to vote unless prevented from voting?

Mr. Carney: Decidedly so.

Mr. Bowdle: Does that state the political and social situation there?

Mr. Carney: Decidedly so.

Mr. Broussard: Let me follow Mr. Bowdle's question with another one. I understand that in inviting population into Oklahoma, by people who are interested in disposing of lands, that in some sections of the South negroes were invited to go there because they could not vote in the States from which they came, but they could vote if they went to Oklahoma. Is that a fact?

Mr. Carney: Yes, sir; they have always voted without any restrictions until the adoption of the grandfather clause through an amendment to the constitution.

Mr. Broussard: So, that might explain the tendency that the negroes have had, and their desire to vote, by moving into that locality with a view to exercising the franchise which they could not do in the State from which they formerly came.³⁸

In the July 3, 1934, Republican primary for corporation commissioner an African American candidate, Frank A. Anderson, gained 15,436 votes to 22,363 for E. R. Hughes, 7,553 for J. W. Bonner, and 6,099 for Roy Leas. As no candidate had a majority, Anderson and Hughes

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were scheduled for the July 24 runoff. Hughes, however, withdrew and Anderson won the uncontested runoff with 30,204 votes. In the general election on November 6, 1934, Anderson lost to Democrat A. S. J. Shaw, 157,263 to 357,131 votes.

Anderson's success gained the legislature's attention and election laws were changed in 1937 to require that "(Negro)" be placed next to the names of African American candidates on the ballot.³⁹ This was part of a larger effort to exclude African Americans from office. "To avoid confusion or misunderstanding among the voters, The Election Board shall have the right to place after any candidate's name in parentheses any words not exceeding five in number, which shall identify or distinguish said candidate."⁴⁰ In 1955 the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals declared the law unconstitutional.⁴¹ There were at least twenty-three state races between 1937 and 1954 in which Oklahoma candidates were designated "(Negro)" on the ballot.⁴² None were elected. The failure to elect more black public officials can, in part, be attributed to a mean-spirited ballot law.⁴³ Candidates for public office were required to be registered voters, thus the presence of African American candidates indicates at least some limited African American political efficacy and involvement in Oklahoma.⁴⁴

Ralph Bunche, as part of the *American Dilemma* study of southern African Americans, engaged in extensive Oklahoma fieldwork. In 1940

Table One: 1940 Oklahoma Voting Age, Population, and Voting Rates by Race (US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940 Population, Volume II Part 5: New York-Oregon (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1943), 797; Marquis Childs, "The Big Boom from Oklahoma," Saturday Evening Post 221, no. 41 (April 9, 1949): 119; Ralph J. Bunche, The Political Status of the Negro, book four, 1940, unpublished research memoranda for use in the preparation of Gunnar Myrdal's American Dilemma (New York: Harper and Brother Publisher, 1944), Carnegie-Myrdal Study of the Negro in America Research Memoranda Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York, NY; Oklahoma State Election Board, Oklahoma Elections Statehood to Present, volume I, (1994), C-288. African American estimates from Childs and Bunche; white estimates calculated by subtracting African American estimates from total reported vote).

	Estimated Voters 1940			Estimated Voting Rate 1940	
	Population Age 21+	Low African American	High African American	Low African American	High African American
African American	97,137	50,000	60,000	51.47	61.77
White and Other	1,272,059	776,212	766,212	61.02	60.23
Total	1,369,196	826,212	826,212	60.34	60.34

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Ward	1920 Population Age 21+		Estimated 1930* Population 21+		Estimated 1940* Population 21+	
	White	African American	White	African American	White	African American
# 1 Silk Stocking	13,836	436	28,501	706	36640	809
# 2 African American	11,139	3,581	21,831	7,225	22331	10490
# 3	18,263	715	28,670	901	28719	891
# 4 Working Class	10,516	635	31,402	649	36309	795
Total	53,754	5,367	110,404	9,482	123998	12986

Table Two: US Census 1920–40 by Race and Oklahoma City Ward. The 1930 and 1940 census did not break down age twenty-one and over group by race. The 1920 census found the ratio of whites age twenty-one and over to total white population to be .647582 and the ratio for African Americans .6512559, a difference of only .0044193. It can therefore be assumed the ratios for the two races in 1930 and 1940 were the same. The ratio of age twenty-one and over to total population in 1930 was .646673 and in 1940 .671296. Multiplying these values by the total populations of whites and African Americans in the two censuses gave the estimated white and African American populations age 21 and over. Other racial groups made up only 0.200 percent of the population in 1920 and were ignored in all calculations. Values shown are rounded to nearest whole number (author's calculations from US Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930 Population, volume III, part 2: Montana-Wyoming (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1932), 605; United States Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940 Population, volume II, part 5: New York-Oregon (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1943), 927; Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920 Volume III Population 1920 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1922), 828; Ward type from Ralph J. Bunche, The Political Status of the Negro, book four, 1940, unpublished research memoranda for use in the preparation of Gunnar Myrdal's American Dilemma (New York: Harper and Brother Publisher, 1944), 277, Carnegie-Myrdal Study of the Negro in America Research Memoranda Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York, NY).

he wrote, "The Negro vote in Oklahoma has been estimated to be as high as 60,000 or more, and should show a steady increase. A conservative estimate of the total Negro vote in the state today would be about 50,000, I think."⁴⁵ This would be roughly the state's white voting rate. Bunche's estimates bring 1940 African American voting rates to between 84 and 102 percent of the white rate.⁴⁶ This is one year after the last of Oklahoma's voting disenfranchisement laws was declared unconstitutional. The estimate suggests considerable numbers of African Americans were voting prior to 1939.

In Oklahoma City the Second Ward, Deep Deuce, was primarily an African American enclave. According to Roy Rowen, attorney for the Oklahoma City chapter of the National Association for the Advance-

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Ward	Estimated 1940 Population 21+		Voting				% Voting if all voters were White
	White	African American	Hefner %	Hall %	Total %	Total Votes	
# 1 Silk Stocking	36,640	809	69.65	30.35	100	9,694	26.46
# 2 African American	22,331	10,490	49.51	50.49	100	7,111	31.84
# 3	28,719	891	47.24	52.76	100	8,528	29.69
# 4 Working Class	36,309	795	39.10	60.90	100	8,841	24.35
Total	123,998	12,986	51.97	48.03	100	34,174	27.56
Votes			17,759	16,415			34,174

Table Three: April 4, 1939, Oklahoma City Mayoral Runoff Election by Ward (author's calculations from Daily Oklahoman, April 5, 1939, 7; United States Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940 Population, volume II, part 5: New York-Oregon (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1943), 927. Ward type from Ralph J. Bunche, The Political Status of the Negro, book four, 1940, unpublished research memoranda for use in the preparation of Gunnar Myrdal's American Dilemma (New York: Harper and Brother Publisher, 1944), 277, Carnegie-Myrdal Study of the Negro in America Research Memoranda Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York, NY).

ment of Colored People (NAACP), "All precinct officials in the Second Ward are colored."⁴⁷ This is unlikely, as in 1940 African Americans represented only 32 percent of the Second Ward population. More likely, in some Second Ward precincts the officials were African American. Before the 1960s interstate construction dispersed them, many Oklahoma City African Americans lived in the Deep Deuce area. Ralph Ellison's poem "Deep Second" captured the romance of this section of Oklahoma City.

Between two frontier hills, that world bounded by Walnut and
Byers . . .
And from that past we knew,
Would make for their children a dew-fresh world.⁴⁸

The US census gives Oklahoma City ward populations for people age twenty-one and over, who were the eligible voters for 1920, 1930, and 1940.⁴⁹ For 1920 it gives the number of African Americans and whites in each ward age twenty-one and over, and for 1930 and 1940 the number of African Americans and whites of any age. From these 1930 and 1940 population totals the numbers of whites and African Americans, age twenty-one and over, in each ward are estimated in Table Two.

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Percent Voting in Oklahoma City Mayor Elections if All Voters were White

Ward	April 1, 1919	April 3, 1923	April 5, 1927	April 7, 1931	April 2, 1935	April 4, 1939	March 16, 1943
# 1, 3, 4	32.56	16.15		35.79	24.53	26.62	9.59
# 2 African American	43.04	41.52		45.72	33.10	31.75	13.40
All Wards	34.73	21.40	22.99	37.75	26.23	27.56	10.28
Votes	18,671	11,506	25,379	41,682	28,954	34,174	12,747

Table Four: Oklahoma City Mayoral Elections 1919–43 Voter Turnout by Ward Type If All Voters Were White (author’s calculations from census data in Table One; “Democrats Win All Three Seats,” Daily Oklahoman, April 2, 1919, 1–2; “Cargill Winner by 4,891 Votes,” Daily Oklahoman, April 4, 1923, 1–2; “Dean Elected by Margin of 1,700” and “How the City Voted Tuesday,” Daily Oklahoman, April 6, 1927, 1, 21; “Complete Ballot Totals From City,” Daily Oklahoman, April 8, 1931, 1; “Martin Wins,” Daily Oklahoman, April 3, 1935, 1; Daily Oklahoman, April 5, 1939, 7; “Street Leads Moore, 4 to 1; Incumbent Trails in Ward 2,” Daily Oklahoman, March 17, 1943, 1).

In the April 4, 1939, Oklahoma City mayoral runoff election business interests supported Robert Hefner and labor C. Ed. Hall.⁵⁰ Roscoe Dunjee’s African American *Black Dispatch* newspaper supported Hefner. Hefner won by 1,344 votes.⁵¹ Hall expected strong Second and Fourth Ward support, but his plurality in the Second Ward was only sixty-nine votes. Bunche reasoned that had Dunjee and other like-minded African Americans supported Hall, Hall would have taken the election.

If we assume no African Americans voted on April 4, 1939, given that the US Supreme Court did not declare Oklahoma’s “temporary” disenfranchising registration law of 1916 unconstitutional until May 22, 1939, we can calculate the white voting rates in the four wards. The Second Ward stands out with the highest voting rate, significantly different from the other three wards.⁵²

Under the assumption that only whites voted, the voting rate in the Second Ward would be calculated based only on the white population and would consistently exceed that of the other wards over a twenty-four-year period. There is no immediate sociological or political explanation for this enhanced turnout. Indeed, we can assume a mixed African American and white Deep Deuce would have a lower socioeconomic status than the rest of the city.⁵³ We would expect lower, not higher, voting rates there.⁵⁴

The obvious explanation for the high relative turnout in the Second Ward is that some African Americans were voting there and the African American population needs to be included when calculating the ward turnout percentage. If African Americans were voting between 1919 and 1943 we need to ask how many. To answer that, we need two

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Voters	April 1, 1919	April 3, 1923	April 5, 1927*	April 7, 1931	April 2, 1935	April 4, 1939	March 16, 1943
Total Vote in Wards 1,3,4 = $t_{1,3,4}$	13,877	14,625	23,982	31,700	21,729	27,063	9,755
Total Vote in Ward 2 = t_2	4,794	4,625	7,987	9,982	7,225	7,111	2,992
White Population 21+ in Wards 1,3,4 = $w_{1,3,4}$	42,615	42,615	88,573	88,573	88,573	101,668	101,668
White Population 21+ in Ward 2 = w_2	11,139	11,139	21,831	21,831	21,831	22,331	22,331
African Am. Pop. Age 21+ in Wards 1,3,4 = $b_{1,3,4}$	1,786	1,786	2,256	2,256	2,256	2,495	2,495
African Am. Pop. Age 21+ in Ward 2 = b_2	3,581	3,581	7,225	7,225	7,225	10,490	10,490
$p_b = \frac{[t_2(w_{1,3,4}) - t_{1,3,4}(w_2)]}{[b_2(w_{1,3,4}) - b_{1,3,4}(w_2)]}$ Probability African American age 21+ voted	0.375	0.258	0.311	0.325	0.280	0.117	0.085
$p_w = \frac{[t_2(b_{1,3,4}) - t_{1,3,4}(b_2)]}{[b_{1,3,4}(w_2) - b_2(w_{1,3,4})]}$ Probability white age 21+ voted	0.310	0.332	0.263	0.350	0.238	0.263	0.094
African American % of White Vote Probability	120.882	77.500	118.454	93.016	117.684	44.570	91.026
Estimated African American Votes Cast	2011	1383	2952	3083	2658	1524	1109

Table Five: Estimated White and African American Voting Rates in Oklahoma City Mayoral Elections, 1919–43 (author’s calculations from same sources as Table Four).

**Mayoral results available only for Ward One and the total for all wards. Therefore, the data reports city council totals, reported for all wards*

assumptions: that the probability of a white voter in Oklahoma City voting in a given election is the same regardless of ward, and that the probability of an African American Oklahoma City voter in any given election is the same regardless of ward.⁵⁵ With these assumptions, the numbers of white and African Americans voting in a ward can be calculated.

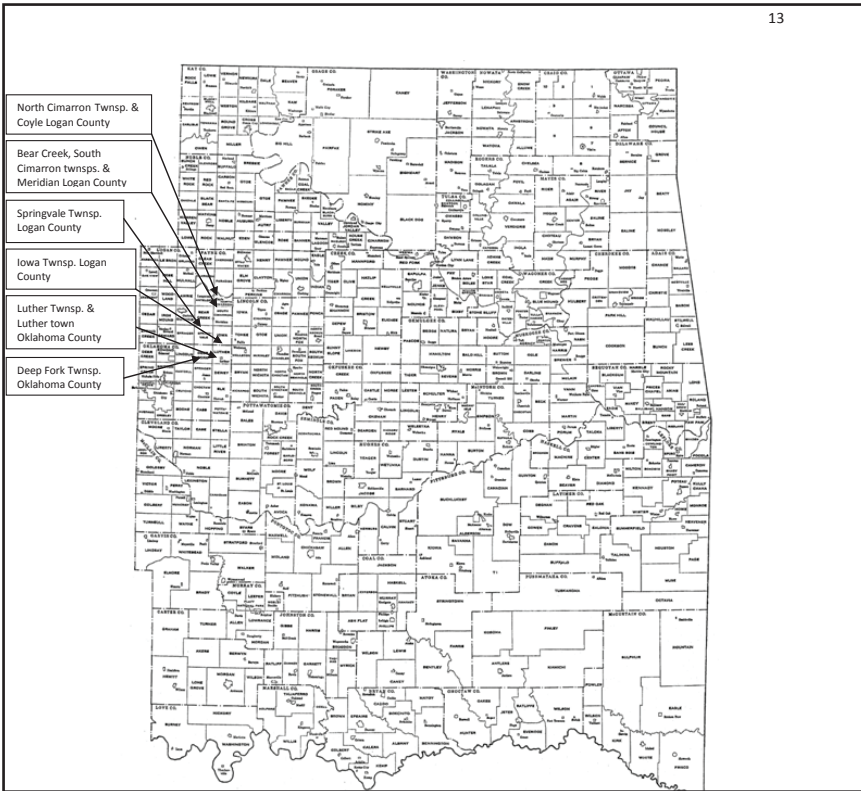
It is curious to note that in the 1939 election African American participation was the lowest compared to whites. This suggests Roscoe Dunjee’s endorsement of the business candidate, Hefner, over the working class candidate, Hall, did not result in African Americans voting for Hefner. Rather, the response was not to vote. Had African Americans voted for Hall at the rate they turned out in the preceding election (.280 i.e. 28 percent) they would have cast an additional 1,417 votes, enough for Hall to win. We also can note the drastic drop in voting rates in the 1943 election. Likely this was due to World War II.

There is also anecdotal evidence from the 1919 and 1927 elections. In 1919 Roscoe Dunjee was arrested for “soliciting votes of negroes within 50 feet of the polling place in Precinct 133 of ward 2.”⁵⁶ The *Daily Oklahoman* reported in 1927 that “in ward two the negroes voted almost solidly for B. E. Corrigan and Sam S. Gill, opponents of U. M. Baughman and Claude Stephens [councilmen candidates]. The lead given to Stephens and Baughman in ward one and the north part of ward two, however, offset the lead given to their opponents in the remainder of the city.”⁵⁷

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	African Americans	Whites	Other	Total	% African American
Logan County					
Iowa Township	384	171	5	560	68.57
North Cimarron Township	423	86	3	512	82.62
South Cimarron Township	500	203	9	712	70.22
Springvale Township	345	93	0	438	78.77
Langston Town (Antelope Township)	351	0	0	351	100
Meridian Town (Bear Creek & S. Cimarron)	90	75	0	165	54.55
Seward Town (Seward Township)	63	43	0	106	59.43
McCurtain County					
White Township	2623	1808	196	4627	56.69
McIntosh County					
Rentiesville (Checotah Township)	148	6	0	154	96.10
Muskogee County					
Agency Township	2303	997	38	3338	68.99
Sutton Township	1095	761	1	1857	58.97
Taft Town (Agency Township)	688	2	0	690	99.71
Okfuskee County					
Castle Township	598	434	76	1108	53.97
Paden Township	2149	901	32	3082	69.73
Boley City (Paden Township)	874	0	0	874	100
Oklahoma County					
Deep Fork Township	534	419	0	953	56.03
Luther Township	578	322	0	900	64.22
Seminole County					
Lima Town (Lincoln Township)	147	91	1	239	61.51
Wagoner County					
Tulahassee Township	1537	298	21	1856	82.81
Red Bird Town (Gatesville Township)	218	0	0	218	100
Tulahassee Town (Tulahassee Township)	154	10	0	164	93.90

Table Six: African American Majority Towns and Townships, 1930 (author's calculations from US Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930 Population, volume III, part 2: Montana-Wyoming (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1932), 587-604).



Map showing the location of townships analyzed (US Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, 1942).

The Oklahoma City mayoral results are particularly compelling because they are from off-year local elections. There was some legitimate fear of denying African Americans a federal ballot but not, at least initially, of denying them a state or local ballot. Federal statutes of the day referred only to federal elections, not state or local.⁵⁸ The evidence is strong that disenfranchisement affected little, if any, Oklahoma City African American voting and political involvement.

The 1907, 1930, and 1940 censuses, but not the 1910 and 1920 censuses, gave the African American and white populations of villages, towns, cities, and townships. The 1910 and 1920 censuses gave populations only for towns and cities. Twelve townships were majority African American in 1930. In addition, there were nine majority African American towns and cities. Generally, for the majority African American communities, elections were reported by township size

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Logan County Township	Total Population			1907 Estimated White Males 21+*	1907 Estimated African American Males 21+*	Votes Cast in September 17, 1907 US Representative Election	Minimum Probability of Voting**		Overall Probability of Voting
	White	African American	Male 21+				White	African American	
Iowa Township	251	900	231	50	181	215	0.682	0.911	0.931
North Cimarron Township	469	562	265	121	144	236	0.759	0.799	0.891
South Cimarron Township	420	676	271	104	167	224	0.547	0.719	0.827
Springvale Township	325	389	189	86	103	147	0.512	0.592	0.778

Table Seven: Estimated 1907 African American Voting Rates in Four Logan County Townships (author's calculations from Department of Commerce and Labor Bureau of the Census, Bulletin 89: Population of Oklahoma and Indian Territory (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1907), 12-19; microfilm of precinct-level election returns available at the Oklahoma State Election Board).

**Calculated by the number of males age twenty-one and over multiplied by the proportion of African Americans or whites in the total civil division population. Town, city, and village populations included within the township totals.*

***Calculated by assuming every eligible person of the other race voted.*

precincts. Six townships, four in Logan County and two in Oklahoma County, correspond to identifiable voting precincts. This provides some evidence of African American voting in the period 1907 through 1940. These adjacent townships start just south of the Cimarron River at Coyle, excluding Langston Town, and extend south, just crossing the Oklahoma County border to include Luther Town and Arcadia. Arcadia, an African American majority community in Deep Fork Township, was not reported separately by the census or the election board in the period 1907 through 1940. Coyle, Meridian and Luther were reported separately in some census years and were added here to appropriate township totals.

Charting the number of votes cast between 1907 and 1940 in the African American majority townships is instructive. The US House of Representatives races occurred every two years and, in the years studied, always had contests. Yet, like an old-time clock face behind which is a complex of springs and gears, a number of influences worked to produce the voting results. Generally, Oklahoma rural population declined over the years and the mix of African Americans with the other racial categories changed. Voter registration laws changed and changed again, and the legislature made efforts to disenfranchise African Americans while the federal judges and district attorneys worked in the opposite direction. Women did not vote between 1907 and 1918 and did vote after 1918, but not in the proportions men did.⁵⁹ The vote jumps in presidential election years and falls in the off-year elections. This is a national trend that continues today.

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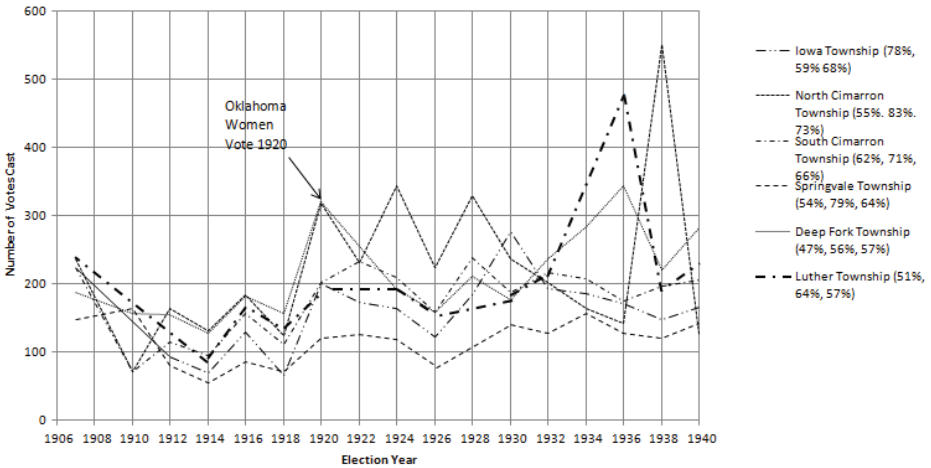


Chart One: Votes Cast in Six African American Townships, 1907–40 (courtesy of the author).

Oklahoma African Americans voted without restriction in the Oklahoma Territory from the first election in 1890 to the last candidate election in 1904. African American Green I. Currin was elected to the First Territorial Legislature from Kingfisher and David J. Wallace to the second from Langston.⁶⁰ This political involvement carried through to the second statehood election in 1908 in which Langston African American A. C. Hamlin was elected to the legislature.⁶¹

In 1907 four Logan County townships had majority African American populations with corresponding precincts reporting election returns for US representative. The census reports the number of whites and African Americans in each township and the number of males age twenty-one and over (whites and African Americans combined), which was the group eligible to vote. It does not give the separate number of whites and African Americans eligible to vote, however. This can be estimated by assuming whites and African Americans had the same age distribution. Thus, the number of qualified males of each race can be estimated by calculating, from the number of males age twenty-one and over, the appropriate proportion of each race in the total population (see Table Seven).

African American voting rates in 1907 were high. In Iowa Township 215 votes were cast. There were only fifty white males age twenty-one and over. Therefore, at least 165 votes were cast by the African Americans meaning at least 91.1 percent of the eligible African Americans voted.

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By the November 8, 1910, election the Grandfather Clause was in effect. Voting rates over four black townships declined by 40 percent. However, Springvale Township increased its voting by more than 10 percent. It was also an off-year, which is normally be expected to produce a drop in voting. In 1912, a presidential election year, voting in the townships went up again and continued to go up and down through 1940. In 1920 there was a jump in voting with women voting in Oklahoma partisan elections for the first time.⁶² From looking at the number of votes cast alone, it is difficult to gauge the impact of disenfranchisement as each township included considerable numbers of whites who, after 1907, could have cast all or almost all the votes.

To coax more from the limited township census data several steps were used to calculate or estimate the age-eligible voters.⁶³ Regression equations were used to estimate the age-eligible persons (male before 1920, all persons 1920 and afterwards) in each township for each of the twelve election years for which direct census data was unavailable. Separate sets of equations were used for 1912–18 (males twenty-one and over) and 1922–28, 1932–38 (all persons age twenty-one and over). From this the probability an age-eligible person in each township voted in each US House of Representatives election was estimated. Historians and statisticians call this ecological analysis.⁶⁴ To put these estimates in perspective, statewide census and US House of Representatives election data from 1907, 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940 was used to estimate the probability that an age-eligible Oklahoman voted for the US House in the eighteen elections from 1907 through 1940. The age-eligible population for the noncensus years was estimated by taking the difference between the two census years, dividing that by five and adding the result, incrementally, for each between census election year.

Through this analysis, the general trend of voting in the African American majority townships and overall can be seen. From Ralph Bunche's data we know Oklahoma African Americans were voting in 1940 at about the same rate as whites. The 1940 African American data from six townships shows two townships (Luther and North Cimarron) voting at substantially lower rates than Oklahoma generally; one (Deep Fork) voting at the same rate; and three (Springvale, South Cimarron, and Iowa) voting at substantially higher rates. In 1940 the two low-voting and the three high-voting townships averaged the same proportions of African American citizens, 65 percent and 66 percent. Thus, the data from the six African American townships is in conformity with Bunche's 1940 estimates.

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**Chart 2. Probability of Voting for U.S. House of Representatives in Six African American Majority Townships:
1907 - 1940**

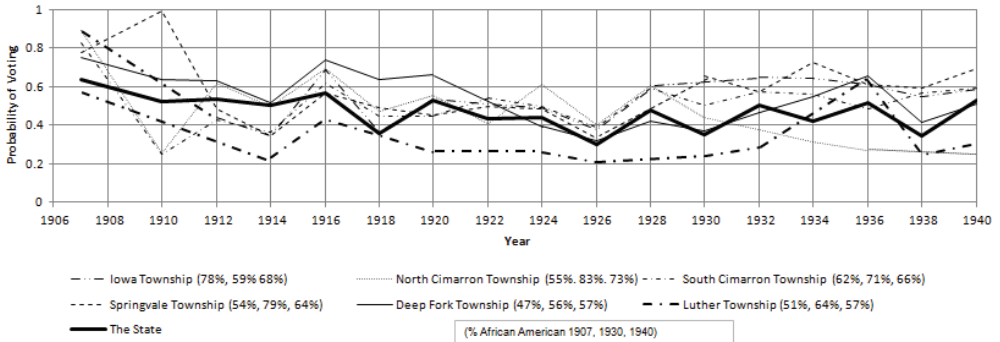


Chart Two: Probability of Voting for US House of Representatives in Six Majority African American Towns, 1907–40 (author’s calculations from Oklahoma State Election Board Precinct Level Election Returns microfilm files, Oklahoma State Election Board, 1994; Oklahoma Elections Statehood to Present, volume I, Oklahoma City, C-3, C-4, C-28, C-115, C-197, C289; US Department of Commerce and Labor Bureau of the Census, Bulletin 89 Population of Oklahoma and Indian Territory 1907 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1907), 8; “Population 1910 Reports by States for Counties, Cities and other Civil Divisions Nebraska-Wyoming Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico,” in US Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910, volume III (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1913), 467; US Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920, volume III (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1922), 813; US Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930 Population, volume III, part 2 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1932), 546; US Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940 Population, volume II, part 5 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1943), 997).

In 1920 only Deep Fork voted at above the state rate. North Cimarron and Iowa were at the state rate while Springvale and South Cimarron were slightly below. Luther was voting at about half the state rate. In 1930 only Luther Township voted below the state rate, Deep Fork was again at the state rate, and the other four African American townships were voting at substantially higher rates than the state as a whole.

November 1910 was the first election after the Grandfather Clause. There were no precinct returns from Iowa and Luther Townships. Voting rates in North and South Cimarron Townships were substantially down, about half the state rate, while Deep Fork and Springvale were substantially up, Springvale by almost 100 percent. We can speculate that for 1910 Iowa Township voters cast their votes in nearby Springvale and Luther Township voters in neighboring Deep Fork, likely in

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Arcadia. If this surmise is correct, the probability of voting in the combined Iowa-Springvale township was .39, i.e. 39 percent of those eligible voted and in the combined Deep Fork-Luther townships .27 i.e. 27 percent of those eligible voted. These would be the voting rates South and North Cimarron Townships had in 1910.

The overall impression of African American 'disenfranchisement' summarized in Chart One is this: before the 1910 Grandfather Clause went into effect African Americans in the six townships were voting at well above the state rate. With disenfranchisement in 1910 the African American voting rate dropped to about half the state rate. It quickly rose again, however, to at or above the state rate by 1916 and stayed there through 1940.

There is a weakness to the analysis presented in Chart One. There were six majority African American townships, but all have substantial numbers of white voters. Given the high voting rate in 1907 we are confident African Americans had to have cast a large number of votes—white voters were not numerous enough to produce even a fraction of the reported votes. It is possible, however, that whites cast the bulk of the votes in the subsequent elections—that is, African American disenfranchisement was substantial even after 1914 and enormous between 1910 and 1914. Given the large numbers of African Americans this is implausible. For the observed voting rates to be due substantially or wholly to whites in the townships the whites would have to have voted, in these townships only, at impossibly high rates compared to whites elsewhere. In Iowa Township the 276 votes in 1930 could not be cast by the 79 whites. In South Cimarron township the 187 votes in the 1930 election could not have been cast by the 112 whites. In the other townships white voting rates would have had to range between .5 or 50 percent (Luther Township) and .84 or 84 percent (Deep Fork Township), compared to the statewide rate of .35 or 35 percent. We have absolutely no reason to expect this. It is more reasonable that whites in the African American majority townships voted at roughly the state rate or at the same rate as their African American neighbors.

A great deal of election and census data exists for the period 1907 through 1940. Alongside this is a mass of anecdotal information and scholarly and professional surmises. The surmises tell us African Americans were substantially disenfranchised between 1910 and 1940. Anecdotal evidence, at first glance, tells the same story. But when more carefully examined, the anecdotes suggest, perhaps, Oklahoma African American were effectively involved as voters.

We know white politicians, Republican, Democrat and nonpartisan, came to African Americans, openly and behind the scenes, seeking

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votes. We know some African Americans were nominated in primaries and one, Frank A. Anderson, gained the 1934 Republican nomination for corporation commissioner.⁶⁵ Between 1910 and 1914, despite strong African American and Republican resistance it appears there was substantial African American disenfranchisement—although even in those years many African Americans voted. After the US Supreme Court's June 21, 1915, decision declaring the Grandfather Clause unconstitutional and the August 1, 1916, Oklahoma voter rejection of the replacement Old Soldier Clause disenfranchisement, African American voting rates consistently exceeded the overall state rate.⁶⁶ High African American voting rates in 1916 and after must be attributed both to Democrats changing from disenfranchising African Americans to seeking African American support, tentatively at first and then openly, and African American political awareness and motivation. Despite the enactment of disenfranchisement legislation during the First Oklahoma Legislature, African Americans voted in significant numbers during early statehood.

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Endnotes

* R. Darcy is regents professor emeritus of political science and statistics at Oklahoma State University.

¹ John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans*, third edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 340–41; R. J. Bunche, unlike Franklin, is referring only to the 1914 election.

² Ralph J. Bunche, *The Political Status of the Negro*, book 1, 1940, unpublished research memoranda for use in the preparation of Gunnar Myrdal's *American Dilemma* (New York: Harper and Brother Publisher, 1944), 277, Carnegie-Myrdal Study of the Negro in America Research Memoranda Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York, NY.

³ R. Darcy, "Constructing Segregation: Race Politics in the Territorial Legislature: 1890–1905." *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 86 (Fall 2008): 260–89.

⁴ *Guinn v. United States*, 238 U.S. 347 (1915).

⁵ Petition of Sampson Smith opposing the "Grandfather Clause" referendum on the grounds of its unconstitutionality, June 1910, Oklahoma State Archives, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, OK.

⁶ US Department of Commerce Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1930*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1930), 34.

⁷ "Reports by States for Counties, Cities and other Civil Divisions Nebraska-Wyoming Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico," in US Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, volume III* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1913), 463 (hereafter cited as *Thirteenth Census*).

⁸ Robert C. Brooks, *Political Parties and Electoral Problems*, third edition (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1933), 400.

⁹ *Hearings before the Committee on Elections No. 2, House of Representatives, Sixty-Third Congress, Second Session, on the Contested Election Case of John J. Carney, Contestant vs. Dick T. Morgan, Contestee from the Second Congressional District of Oklahoma, April 29, 30, May 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6, 1914* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1914), 55 (hereafter cited as *Contested Election Case of John J. Carney*). See Table OSS-6 for state literacy rates.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹¹ *Hearings before the Committee on Elections No. 2, House of Representatives, Sixty-Third Congress, Second Session, on the Contested Election Case of John S. Davis, Contestant vs. Bird S. McGuire, Contestee From the Second Congressional District of Oklahoma, May 7, 8, and 9, 1914* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1914), 49 (hereafter cited as *Contested Election Case of John S. Davis*).

¹² *Ibid.*, 51.

¹³ *Contested Election Case of John J. Carney*, 56.

¹⁴ "Reports by States for Counties, Cities and other Civil Divisions Nebraska-Wyoming Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico," in *Thirteenth Census*, 463.

¹⁵ *Contested Election Case of John J. Carney*, 117.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 145.

¹⁷ *Contested Election Case of John S. Davis*, 11. The statement was taken from the Sunday, November 3, 1912, *Guthrie (OK) Daily Star*; the *Chandler (OK) Tribune* is similarly quoted on page 12.

¹⁸ *Contested Election Case of John S. Davis*, 12. Cruce reportedly advised election officials to arrest any interfering federal officials.

¹⁹ *Contested Election Case of John S. Davis*, 39.

²⁰ *Guinn v. United States*, 238 U.S. 347 (1915).

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²¹ “Beal and Guinn Granted Pardons.” *Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City, OK), January 18, 1916, 1–2; “Legislature Up Against it Now.” *Tulsa (OK) Daily World*, January 22, 1916, 7.

²² *Oklahoma Elections: Statehood to Present*, volume 1 (Oklahoma City, OK), C-48. The difference in votes, however, is counted differently in *Election Case of John J. Carney*, 89, where Morgan claims to have won by 891 votes; *Contested Election Case of John S. Davis*, 50, 89, takes 579 as a base from which to add or subtract votes.

²³ The Oklahoma African American illiteracy rate was 17.7 percent. US Department of Commerce Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce. *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1930* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1930), 34.

²⁴ *Contested Election Case of John J. Carney*; *Contested Election Case of John S. Davis*; Guinn v. United States, 238 U.S. 347 (1915).

²⁵ *Contested Election Case of John J. Carney*, 5, 15, 42.

²⁶ Guinn v. United States, 238 US 347 (1915).

²⁷ Not all American Indians were excused from the Grandfather Clause, although there seems to be some debate on this. *Contested Election Case of John J. Carney*, 50.

²⁸ *Contested Election Case of John J. Carney*, 64–65. Oklahoma women did not vote except in school elections until after the November 5, 1918, general election.

²⁹ *Contested Election Case of John J. Carney*, 65.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

³² *Contested Election Case of John J. Carney*, 6; *Contested Election Case of John S. Davis*, 23.

³³ For Oklahoma and Logan counties see *Contested Election Case of John S. Davis*, 12, 23. See page 37 for contrary testimony.

³⁴ William Archibald Dunning, *Reconstruction Political and Economic, 1865–1877* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1907), 281, 203–19; Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution 1863–1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 294 and *passim*.

³⁵ Ralph Marsh with Gene Stipe, *State Senator Gene Stipe’s A Gathering of Heroes* (Heavener, OK: Spring Mountain, 2000), 104; See also Danney Goble, *Progressive Oklahoma: The Making of a New Kind of State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 144; William H. Murray, *Memoirs of Governor Murray and True History of Oklahoma* (Boston: Meador, 1945), 14.

³⁶ *Contested Election Case of John S. Davis*, 48; “Negro Editor is Attacked by Official,” *Daily Oklahoman*, December 16, 1937, 1.

³⁷ See Darcy “Constructing Segregation,” 260–89; R. Darcy, “Origins and Development of State Politics: The Oklahoma Territorial Legislature: 1890–1905,” *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 83 (Summer 2005): 144–77.

³⁸ *Contested Election Case of John J. Carney*, 147.

³⁹ J. William Cordell, *Primary and General Election Laws of the State of Oklahoma Annotated* (Oklahoma City: State Election Board, 1938), 38.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ McDonald v. Key, C.A. 224 F.2d 608 (1955).

⁴² See Basil R. Wilson, *Directory and Manual of the State of Oklahoma 1969* (Oklahoma City: State Election Board, 1969), 199–225.

⁴³ “Elimination of the Negro as a voter also eliminated him as a competitor in industry. There would be no solution to the Negro problem until the Negro in the South could cast a free and intelligent vote. Disenfranchisement, limitation to vocational education, curtailment of civil freedoms—all these were part of a systematic effort to instill in others contempt for the Negro, to kill the Negro’s self-respect, and to force him into a ‘new slavery.’” in Charles Flint Kellogg, *NAACP: A History of the National Association for the*

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Advancement of Colored People, Volume I 1909–1920 (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), 20.

⁴⁴ *Oklahoma Constitution*, Article V, Section 17 requires members of the legislature to be “qualified electors,” as does Article VI, Section 3 for statewide offices.

⁴⁵ Ralph J. Bunche, *The Political Status of the Negro*, book 4, 1940, unpublished research memoranda for use in the preparation of Gunnar Myrdal’s *American Dilemma* (New York: Harper and Brother Publisher, 1944), 959, Carnegie-Myrdal Study of the Negro in America Research Memoranda Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York, NY; see also Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), 483.

⁴⁶ Calculated by subtracting the estimated African American vote from the total cast vote to estimate the white vote.

⁴⁷ Ralph J. Bunche, *The Political Status of the Negro*, book 4, 1940, unpublished research memoranda for use in the preparation of Gunnar Myrdal’s *American Dilemma* (New York: Harper and Brother Publisher, 1944), 990, Carnegie-Myrdal Study of the Negro in America Research Memoranda Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York, NY.

⁴⁸ Ralph Ellison, “Deep Second,” in Albert Murray and John F. Callahan, ed., *Trading Twelves: The Selected Letters of Ralph Ellison and Albert Murray* (New York: Modern Library, 2000), 53–55.

⁴⁹ In 1910 Oklahoma City had eight wards and the census did not break the population into wards.

⁵⁰ “Hefner and Hall in Runoff for Mayor, Campbell and Gers Lead for Council,” *Daily Oklahoman*, March 22, 1939, 1; “Hall Draws Class Lines at Election,” *Daily Oklahoman*, March 31, 1939, 4.

⁵¹ Ralph J. Bunche, *The Political Status of the Negro*, book 4, 1940, unpublished research memoranda for use in the preparation of Gunnar Myrdal’s *American Dilemma* (New York: Harper and Brother Publisher, 1944), 990, Carnegie-Myrdal Study of the Negro in America Research Memoranda Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York, NY. Bunche describes the election as taking place in 1938.

⁵² The voting rate in Wards One, Three, and Four was 26.58 percent compared to 31.75 percent in Ward Two. $X^2=246.28$, $df=1$, $p=5.09E-56$.

⁵³ Robert H. Haverman, ed., *Understanding Poverty* (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 2001).

⁵⁴ Raymond E. Wolfinger and Steven J. Rosenstone, *Who Votes?* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980).

⁵⁵ For each election let:

t1,3,4 = The total vote cast in Wards One, Three and Four.

t2 = The total vote case in Ward Two.

w1,3,4 = The total white population age twenty-one and over in Wards One, Three, Four.

w2 = The total white population age twenty-one and over in Ward Two.

b1,3,4 = The total African American population age twenty-one and over in Wards One, Three, Four.

b2 = The total African American population age twenty-one and over in Ward Two.

pw = The probability a white person will vote.

pb = The probability an African American person will vote.

Then:

$t1,3,4 = pw(w1,3,4) + pb(b1,3,4)$

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$$t2 = pw(w2) + pb(b2)$$

From this we can see:

$$pb = [t2(w1,3,4) - t1,3,4(w2)] / [b2(w1,3,4) - b1,3,4(w2)]$$

$$pw = [t2(b1,3,4) - t1,3,4(b2)] / [b1,3,4(w2) - b2(w1,3,4)]$$

As we know all values are known except pw and pb these can be calculated. These formulas should yield a realistic estimate of African American and white voting rates in the elections between 1919 and 1943. Depending on the election, Oklahoma City African Americans had a higher probability of voting than whites (three elections) or were within 90 percent of the white voting rate (two elections).

⁵⁶ "Negro Publisher Taken at Polls," *Daily Oklahoman*, April 2, 1919, 1.

⁵⁷ "Dean Elected by Margin of 1,700," *Daily Oklahoman*, April 6, 1927, 1.

⁵⁸ *Contested Election Case of John J. Carney*, 21.

⁵⁹ R. Darcy, "Woman Suffrage in Oklahoma," in R. Darcy and Jennifer Paustenbaugh, et al., *Oklahoma Women's Almanac* (Stillwater and Edmond: OPSA Press, 2005), 18.

⁶⁰ R. Darcy, "The Oklahoma Territorial Legislature," 144-77.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² R. Darcy, "Woman Suffrage in Oklahoma," *Oklahoma Politics* 14 (November 2005): 3-37.

⁶³ The 1907 census provides the number of males aged twenty-one and over for each township. Nothing further was required. The 1910 census provided the total population for each township but combined North and South Cimarron Townships. The 1907 proportion in each township was multiplied by the 1910 joint population to estimate the 1910 North and South Cimarron populations. To estimate the number of males age twenty-one and over in 1910 townships the proportion of males twenty-one and over in 1907 for each township was multiplied by the 1910 township total population. Coyle Town (North Cimarron Township), Meridian Town (half in South Cimarron Township, half in Bear Creek Township), and Luther Town (Luther Township) were reported separately, thus it was necessary to add their totals to the township totals. In the case of Meridian Town half the population numbers were added to South Cimarron Township.

The 1920 census has no township population data. To estimate the total population age twenty-one and over and the male population twenty-one and over the average of the 1910 and 1930 populations were calculated.

The 1930 census provides the number of persons aged twenty-one and over for each township. Coyle Town (North Cimarron Township), Meridian Town (half in South Cimarron Township, half in Bear Creek Township), and Luther Town (Luther Township) were reported separately and thus it was necessary to add their totals to the township totals. In the case of Meridian Town half the population numbers were added to South Cimarron Township.

The 1940 census provides the number of persons aged twenty-one and over for each township. Coyle Town (North Cimarron Township), Meridian Town (half in South Cimarron Township, half in Bear Creek Township) and Luther Town (Luther Township) were reported separately and thus it was necessary to add their totals to the township totals. In the case of Meridian Town half the population numbers were added to South Cimarron Township.

⁶⁴ R. Darcy and Richard C. Rohrs, *A Guide to Quantitative History* (Westport CT: Praeger, 1995), 219-32.

⁶⁵ Anderson's success gained the legislature's attention. The law was changed to require "(Negro)" to be placed on the ballot next to the names of African American candidates. This requirement was removed between the 1954 and 1956 elections. See Cordell, *Primary and General Election Laws of the State of Oklahoma Annotated*, 38. As late as 1969 "(Negro)" was listed next to African American candidates when election results were reported. There were twenty-three state and federal races between 1937 and 1954

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in which a candidate was designated “(Negro).” Many more legislative and local races also had African American candidates. See Wilson, *Directory and Manual of the State of Oklahoma 1969*, 196–224. In 1955 the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals declared the law unconstitutional in *McDonald v. Key*, C.A. 224 F.2d 608 (1955).

⁶⁶ “. . . the ‘old soldier clause’ . . . which admitted [to the vote without a literacy test] nonproperty-owning soldiers and sailors who had fought on either side in the Civil War or in other wars prior to 1901, and also their descendents.” Brooks, *Political Parties and Electoral Problems*, 400, note 17.