A State Imagined

Migration, political hopes, and the making of Oklahoma

OKH.C.4.2 "Examine the continued migration of African Americans to the region and describe the outcome of a proposed all-Black state, as advocated by Edward McCabe."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two reasons African Americans continued to move to the region, circle McCabe's goal, and number two details that show what happened instead.

Migration and McCabe's Vision

1. In 1889, the opening of land in Oklahoma Territory drew people looking for farms and new beginnings. African Americans joined this movement, and migration continued through the 1890s and into the early 1900s. Some came from Southern states where segregation, violence, and limits on voting made daily life dangerous. Others sought land, jobs, or the chance to build communities with greater control over local schools and businesses. Black settlement in the wider region also had older roots in Indian Territory, including people who had been enslaved by members of Native nations and their descendants. New arrivals entered a region that was never empty.

2. Edward P. McCabe, a Black political leader who had lived in Kansas, saw these new arrivals as a source of political power. He promoted settlement in Oklahoma Territory and helped establish Langston, an all-Black town, in 1890. McCabe urged African Americans to move there in large numbers. His larger goal was an Oklahoma state where Black residents formed a majority and elected Black leaders. He hoped population growth would turn a network of thriving towns into statewide political influence. For migrants, a town with Black-owned businesses and local leadership could offer real opportunities, even if the broader territory remained contested.

3. McCabe's statewide vision did not become reality. African Americans kept moving into the region, and towns such as Langston and Boley became important centers of Black community life. Yet migrants did not become a majority across the territory. In 1907, Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory joined as the state of Oklahoma, but it was not an all-Black state. White political leaders held statewide power, and segregation soon gained the force of state law. Migration had lasting local effects, including Black-run towns and institutions, while the proposed state under Black political control never emerged. Those two outcomes are different and both matter.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did conditions in the South help drive continued African American migration to the region?

2. How did McCabe expect continued migration to help create the state he wanted?

3. How did the state formed in 1907 differ from McCabe's proposal?

4. What lasting local outcome of migration contrasts with the failure of McCabe's statewide plan?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label explaining how continued migration supported McCabe's plan, why it did not produce his proposed state, and one lasting result in a Black town. Include one reason people moved.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.4.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two reasons African Americans continued to move to the region, circle McCabe's goal, and number two details that show what happened instead. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did conditions in the South help drive continued African American migration to the region?	**Segregation, violence, and limits on voting led some African Americans to seek safer lives and greater opportunity in the region.**
2	How did McCabe expect continued migration to help create the state he wanted?	**He hoped enough African Americans would move to Oklahoma Territory to form a majority and elect Black leaders to statewide office.**
3	How did the state formed in 1907 differ from McCabe's proposal?	**Oklahoma was not an all-Black state. Black residents had not become a majority, and white leaders held statewide power.**
4	What lasting local outcome of migration contrasts with the failure of McCabe's statewide plan?	**Black-run towns and institutions grew, with Langston and Boley becoming centers of Black community life.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Some African Americans moved to the Oklahoma region to seek land and escape violence and segregation in the South. McCabe hoped continued migration would give Black residents a majority and the power to elect state leaders. Migrants did not become a majority, so Oklahoma was not the all-Black state he proposed. Even so, Langston grew as a center of Black community life.

Accept other passage-supported reasons for migration, such as jobs or greater control over local institutions. Distinguish the growth of Black towns from McCabe's unrealized goal of statewide Black political control.