Paul E. Fowler III

HOMETOWN
Lawrence, Kansas

MAJOR
History

ACADEMIC LEVEL
Senior

RESEARCH MENTOR
Clarence Lang
Associate Professor of African & African-American Studies

Q&A

How did you become involved in doing research?
I applied to join the McNair Scholars Program and was accepted in my junior year. A major component of McNair is that all scholars complete at least one significant research project prior to graduation. I had always enjoyed finding out why people and things were the way they were when I was a child, so I was excited about this program that gave me the opportunity to do that as an adult. At KU, there were several other organizations and professors who encouraged me along the way.

How is the research process different from what you expected?
I was surprised by how enjoyable and rewarding it can be. I know research in any field is a lot of work, but the end result is well worth the effort. It was surprising to see how many different parts go into the books on our library's shelves and how long it can take to have a single question answered. I also didn't expect I could spend so much on coffee.

What is your favorite part of doing research?
I enjoy opportunities to explore new ways of looking at the past, which has influenced the world around us. I am also extremely fascinated with the way in which our present shapes our view of the past. The history of any topic evolves as the times and historians themselves do, which is exciting for me. The opportunity to research and share my findings with others has been a lifelong goal.

Breaking ground in Canaan: African-American community in Lawrence, 1870–1920

Paul E. Fowler III

ABSTRACT

This article chronicles the migration of African-Americans to Lawrence, Kansas from the South, and their creation and maintenance of a black community in a small Midwestern town in the wake of three major migration periods. African-Americans identified Kansas as a bastion of abolitionism and a place they could exchange the harsh economic and racial conditions of the post-bellum South for the opportunity to realize the full panoply of citizenship rights in the"free state." The realities experienced by the black population in Lawrence seldom lived up to their ideal. Black migrants experienced similar forms of Jim Crow in Lawrence they had fled the South to escape, such as economic depression, segregation, and violence. Despite this racial animus, African-Americans in Lawrence found ways to carve out a viable community that featured churches, benevolent organizations, schools, and a class of entrepreneurs that helped African-Americans cope with the realities of Jim Crow in their land of Canaan.

EARLY COMMUNITY & INITIAL MIGRATION

The African-American community of Lawrence, Kansas began formation in earnest as early as the beginning of the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865). The black population of Kansas reached its highest proportion to whites by the end of the war because of the confiscations and escapes of Missouri and Arkansas slave property. Former slaves supplemented the lack of available farm labor in the state because of troop enlistments for the war. By 1865, Lawrence represented the second highest concentration of urban blacks in the state, following Leavenworth. This initial black population of Lawrence was composed mostly of able-bodied men capable of escaping slavery.

Several Kansas towns served as stations along the Underground Railroad during the state's territorial period (1854-1861), including Leavenworth, Quindaro, Osawatomie, Topeka, and the abolitionist stronghold of Lawrence.[1] Escaped slaves came to Lawrence because it offered protection against slave-catchers from those who sought to return them to slavery—Lawrence further offered the possibility of paid employment and, in the eyes of many blacks, the chance for social equality.[2]

Once in Kansas, a primary concern for blacks and whites became where and how to house large numbers of former slaves in urban and rural areas. Former slaves clustered in contraband camps—neighborhoods that blacks maintained themselves.[3] Despite often-deplorable living conditions, these camps provided a sense of community for African-Americans and the opportunity to seek liberty and self-improvement in Kansas.[4] The contraband camp in Lawrence was located on Massachusetts Street. Despite the abolitionist sentiments of the townspeople, the sudden concentration of blacks within city limits alarmed many whites. Despite their unease with large numbers of blacks then residing in Lawrence, whites believed that education would help to make blacks responsible enough to enjoy citizenship rights and promote the safety of Kansas towns.[5]

Schools and churches were often located in these camps or close by. Most blacks believed the only way to attain full citizenship was through education. Whites shared this belief and most citizens in the state were willing to assist in the education of former slaves. An abolitionist named S.N. Simpson founded the first school for blacks in Lawrence, which held classes in the courthouse.[6] The charity of whites helped keep the school open through the donation of a meeting place, bibles to teach reading and writing, and monetary assistance. Whites expected that education for blacks would instill a self-helping nature in former slaves to reduce reliance on charity. The Kansas State Journal observed of Simpson's school, "Indeed this school may be regarded as an experiment, and much that affects the negro race is to be settled by its success or failure," and " "…they will be living exponents of the doctrine of the race to own itself."[7]

Labor scarcity allowed former slaves to find employment in unskilled and agricultural labor roles. Former slaves gained pay for their work, and the Lawrence community gained a low-cost labor to supplement manpower shortages. Blacks worked in skilled and semi-skilled occupations, as blacksmiths, barbers, stonemasons, carpenters, woodcutters, preachers, and schoolteachers. From 1863 onwards, the largest single employer of blacks in Lawrence and the state was the army. Black women found employment as domestics—as washerwomen, cooks, housekeepers, and servants.[8]

African-Americans from other Northern states migrated to Kansas during this period to help recently freed slaves adjust to their freedom and pursue citizenship rights within the state. John M. Langston and his brother Charles H. Langston came to Kansas from Ohio during the Civil War to assist the transition of blacks to their newfound freedom in Kansas. Through their assistance, the Kansas Emancipation League, founded in 1863, sought increased political inclusion for African-Americans and helped blacks find employment and housing in Kansas.[9]

The initial black population of Lawrence, Kansas arrived in the state dependent on the charity of the white population while fulfilling the labor requirements of the state. Various factors caused blacks to become increasingly independent of the white population and resulted in a heavier reliance on intra-community support—financially and socially. The tradition of Kansas as the "Free Stare" was established by the end of the Civil War. Subsequent decades saw the growth of the African-American community in actual numbers due to successive waves of migrations from the South to escape the degradations of Jim Crow. Kansas represented a land of promise for many black migrants, who viewed Kansas as an American version of the biblical Land of Canaan.

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[1] Richard B. Sheridan, From Slavery in Missouri to Freedom in Kansas: The Influx of Black Fugitives and Contrabands into Kansas, 1854-1865, Kansas History 12 (Spring 1989): 31.

[2] Ibid, 37.

[3] Priscilla F. Clement, Growing Pains: Children in the Industrial Age, 1850-1890 (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), 24.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Leavenworth Daily Conservative, February 7, 1862.

[7] "The Contraband School," Kansas State Journal (Lawrence, Kansas), March 20, 1862.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Sheridan, From Slavery in Missouri to Freedom in Kansas, 40.

[9] Sheridan, "Charles Henry Langston and the African-American Struggle in Kansas," Kansas History 22, vol. 4 (Spring 1999): 274.

POST-WAR MIGRATIONS (PRE-EXODUS, EXODUS, & THE GREAT MIGRATION)

During the Reconstruction Era, increasing racial violence and economic insecurity provided the primary "push" impetus for thousands of African-Americans to leave the South in favor of Northern destinations. Lawrence seemingly offered migrants the possibility for economic advancement and social inclusion. Many of the migrants who arrived in Kansas came because of their mythological interpretations of the state's history as the birthplace of the conflict that resulted in their freedom. Similar to the war era migrations of escaped slaves, the migrations of 1870-1920 resulted in the arrival of hundreds of African-Americans in Lawrence who were financially destitute and initially dependent on the charity of the existing white and black communities of Lawrence.

Prior to 1870, Missouri was the primary contributor to the black population of Kansas. By the mid-1870s, Kentucky and Tennessee became the first states to provide sustained migration of African-Americans to Kansas since the Civil War, followed by the Exodus of blacks from Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas.[10] The pre-Exodus migration of African-Americans to Kansas totaled an estimated 9,500, while the Exodus itself accounts for approximately 4,000.[11] These combined migrations caused the black population of Lawrence to grow from 933 in 1865 to 2,000 by 1880.[12] In slightly more than ten years, the black population of Lawrence more than doubled, which caused strain on the existing population of the town and its resources. Many migrants went to great lengths in preparation for their journey, while others arrived in the state financially destitute and only in possession of what they could carry. Migrants received assistance along their journey from organizations led by Radical Republicans upset by the racial violence perpetrated against blacks by Southern Democrats. One organization was the Colored Refugee Relief Board of St. Louis, Missouri that aided Exodusters with food and shelter as they journeyed to Kansas.[13] Whites and blacks alike wrote to Governor John P. St. John (Gov. 1879-1883) to request advice and assistance with the migrations. For example, Henry and Clara Smith of Marshall, Texas wrote to Gov. St. John on behalf of the black residents of their town with inquiries about where to settle and the reception they could hope for in Kansas.[14] The white population of Lawrence also decided to assist the Exodus migrants when they voted to extend charity at a meeting held at Fraser Hall in 1879.[15] John M. F. Stinger, a Kentucky Radical Republican, also wrote letters to Gov. St. John requesting he convince others in the North of their moral duty in assisting the black refugees.[16]

In slightly more than ten years, the black population of Lawrence more than doubled.

The Great Migration caused the black population of Lawrence to grow, yet not as dramatically as the migrations of the 1870s had. Blacks did not leave the South in sizeable numbers because the black elite, those termed the "talented tenth" by W.E.B. DuBois, were unable to convince other blacks that a flight from the South was worth the risk because of the ambivalent attitudes of Northern employers.[17] Many blacks simply believed it was better to remain in familiar surroundings rather than brave new locations. The Great Migration, however, did cause a momentary growth in the black population of Lawrence. There were 1,764 black residents in Lawrence as of 1910, and this grew to 1,849 by 1915.[18] By 1920, the black population of Lawrence fell to 1,432, which historian William Tuttle Jr. attributes to the disgust many young African-Americans in Lawrence felt at the racial realities in Kansas and the belief that their dreams could not come true because they would be "stymied by white racism."[19] Rather than escape Jim Crow, migrants from the South found the racial animus they had fled existed in Kansas as well.

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[10] Nell Irvin Painter, Exodusters: Black Migrations to Kansas After Reconstruction (Alfred A. Knopf Inc.: New York, 1977), 147.

[11] Painter, Exodusters, 147.

[12] Kansas State Census, 1865: Douglas County Population Schedule. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society: Microfilm, K-3; Federal Census for Kansas, 1880: Douglas County Population Schedule. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society: Microfilm, K-9; see chart in Appendix I.

[13] Colored Refugee Relief Board, "untitled pamphlet" (KSHS DaRT ID: 218449, St. Louis, MO, 1879), 1-4.

[14] Henry and Clara Smith, letter to Gov. John P. St. John (KSHS: Governor's Records, St. John Correspondence Received, Box 14, Folder 1), May 7, 1879.

[15] "Action of Other Cities on the 'Exodus' Question," Wyandotte Gazette (Wyandotte, KS), April 25, 1879.

[16] John M.F. Stinger, letter to Gov. John P. St. John, (KSHS: Governor's Records, St. John, Correspondence Received, Box 14, Folder 1), May 18, 1879.

[17] Sernett, Bound for the Promised Land, 26.

[18] Federal Census for Kansas, 1910: Douglas County Population Schedule. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society: Microfilm, K-8; Kansas State Census, 1915: Douglas County Population Schedule. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society: Microfilm, K-75, K-76, K-77, K-78.

[19] Tuttle Jr., "Separate but Not Equal," Embattled Lawrence, 139.

JIM CROW IN KANSAS: SEGREGATION & RACIAL ANIMUS IN LAWRENCE

Although never codified by law, Lawrence experienced varying degrees of de facto segregation since the Civil War era. Upon their first arrival in Kansas, the first concern for blacks and whites was where to house the influx population. The vast majority of blacks that came to reside in Kansas during the Civil War era lived in segregated camps within white communities. The contraband camp in Lawrence was located on Massachusetts Street and drew the ire of the editor of the Kansas State Journal: "We already see more colored men than we ought about our street corners."[20] In the wake of the Civil War, Exoduster Migrations, and the Great Exodus, African-Americans in Lawrence experienced segregation in several social areas that included schools, theaters, restaurants, employment, and business transactions.

The educational sphere exemplifies the racial ambivalence of whites toward blacks in Lawrence. The segregation experienced by black schoolchildren resulted from the white inclination for a belief in "parallel development." The logic used to defend their view reflected white attitudes of racial superiority and paternalism, which assumed blacks and whites would pursue the same citizenship rights, but would do so separately as much as possible. Lincoln Elementary, located in North Lawrence, was the only school in Lawrence attended and staffed solely by African-Americans.[21] Other elementary schools offered all-black classes, occasionally taught by African-American teachers, yet only when there were enough students in a single age group.[22] When there were too few students to form a full class, black children would attend the same classes as white children; however, administrators and teachers used segregated seating charts to physically separate the students.[23] Racial segregation assumed several forms in education, often more subtle than segregated seating charts. Discrimination also presented itself in the handing out of assignments and the grading of homework.[24]

Segregation was experienced on sports teams and other after school activities in addition to classes. Blacks could not be teammates with whites, and Lawrence schools did not provide coaches for all-black athletic teams.[25] Volunteers from the African-American community coached all-black squads, which were typically basketball teams since there were never enough black students to form football teams.[26] George Bivens, the owner of a black billiards hall in Lawrence, devoted much of his free time to coaching an all-black basketball team.[27] Although blacks could not be teammates with whites, they sometimes played against each other. This further alienated blacks and whites, and reinforced prejudices that the two races had against each other. Another clear example of the second-class citizenship experienced by blacks in Lawrence was evident in school-sponsored dances, clubs, and other social functions that restricted participation to whites. For example, the senior banquet at Lawrence High school, paid for by the senior fees that were required of all seniors, only allowed whites to participate.[28] Such discrimination in schools reinforced perceptions of black inferiority held by many whites that had also been instilled in former slaves since birth.

Socially oriented businesses, such as theaters, pool halls, and restaurants, also experienced discriminatory practices as well. African-Americans experienced complete exclusion from all but two of the six theaters in Lawrence; the only two exceptions were the Bowersock Opera House and the Patee.[29] The Bowersock allowed black attendance, but required them to sit in the second balcony, commonly referred to as "Coon Hill."[30] The Patee was more progressive by far and had a liberal racial policy; blacks were permitted to sit anywhere in the theater, which also employed a black projectionist.[31] Nearly all white restaurants in Lawrence refused service to blacks, yet specific exemptions to this rule existed. In most establishments, it was permissible for African-Americans to enter through a back door and take meals served by black cooks in the kitchen.[32] Muzzy's, a white-owned café located in the 700 block of Massachusetts Street, was the only white-owned café in Lawrence that openly served African-Americans.[33] Muzzy's allowed blacks and whites to eat in the same dining room, though still segregated by a wooden partition that separated the lunch counter; whites ate on the side nearest the door while blacks ate on the side furthest from the door and out of sight for passers-by on the street.[34]

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[20] Kansas State Journal (Lawrence, Kansas), January 9, 1862.
[21] Zavelo, 12-13.
[22] Ibid, 12-13.
[23] Ibid, 13.
[24] Ibid, 13.
[25] Ibid, 13.
[26] Ibid, 13.
[27] Ibid, 14.
[28] Ibid, 14.
[29] Ibid, 14.
[30] Ibid, 14-15.
[31] Ibid, 15.

African-Americans had difficulty in acquiring insurance and loans as well. Banks showed little interest in extending loans and lines of credit to blacks; when African-Americans were able to get loans, they were at extremely high interest rates.[35] Insurance companies were also extremely hesitant to do business with blacks, although they weren't completely unwilling to do so. Insurance companies were hesitant to insure African-Americans because of the poor health and financial situations that prevailed in the black community.[36] Blacks were able to gain insurance from Metropolitan Life, but only at high premiums, which suggests that only the black middle-class was able to afford their premiums.[37] The largest local insurance company, the Charlton Agency, refused to do business with any African-Americans under any circumstances.[38] Poor living conditions resulted from the mal-distribution of wealth and prevailing racial attitudes in Lawrence that served to isolate blacks from whites.

Racial separatism evolved that created predominately-black neighborhoods, which reflected the economic situation of most African-Americans who lived in Lawrence from 1880 to 1920. Based on the City of Lawrence Directories, state censuses, and the sociological survey conducted by Frank W. Blackmar through the University of Kansas sociology department in 1917, it is possible to understand the physical boundaries of predominately-black neighborhoods, as well as the living conditions experienced by the residents of these areas.

Kansas state censuses show that by 1900, African-Americans in Lawrence numbered 2,032, which represented approximately 20 percent of the city population.[39] By 1910, the number of blacks in Lawrence fell to 1,764, and accounted for 14.2 percent of the total population.[40] This reduction was likely due to the outmigration of blacks for urban centers further north in search of more promising financial opportunities in industrialized Northern cities.[41] By 1915, there were 1,849 African-Americans in the city of Lawrence, which reflected 14.4 percent of the 12,884 residents.[42] Despite the lack of de jure segregation in Lawrence, the financial realities of African-Americans in Lawrence determined where blacks decided to live. The areas with the highest concentration of black settlement were in North Lawrence and an area known as the East Bottoms that was located adjacent to the Kaw River.

The main living arrangement for blacks was with the family or as a lodger. In Lawrence, 64 percent of blacks lived with family, compared to 71 percent of whites that resided with family.[43] The higher percentage of whites that lived with family is because black residents were more likely to take in lodgers to supplement family income. The Blackmar study found that 20 percent of blacks were individuals living with family members or as a lodger.[44] Cousins, nephews, and nieces were one form of lodger. Additionally, there were lodgers who were not related to the other members of the household. The study found an example of one such household on

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[32] Ibid, 15.
[33] Ibid, 15.
[34] Ibid, 15.
[35] Ibid, 15.
[36] Ibid, 16-17.
[37] Ibid, 16-17.
[38] Ibid, 16-17.
[39] Kansas State Census, 1905: Douglas County Population Schedule. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society: Microfilm, K-45, K-46, K-47.
[40] Federal Census for Kansas, 1910: Douglas County Population Schedule. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society: Microfilm, K-8.
[41] Donald B. Zavelo, The Black Entrepreneur in Lawrence, Kansas Collection, RH MS D168, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, 2; D.B. Zavelo was a graduate student at the University of Kansas in the History Department who investigated the formation of the African-American Entrepreneurial class in Lawrence, Kansas that formed during the Great Migration. Zavelo has conducted several interviews that serve as the basis for much of this case study of early community formation in Lawrence.
[42] Kansas State Census, 1915: Douglas County Population Schedule. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society: Microfilm, K-75, K-76, K-77, K-78.
[43] Frank W. Blackmar, Lawrence Social Survey: Report of F.W. Blackmar, Director, and E.W. Burgess, Field Surveyor, University of Kansas, To the Lawrence Social Survey Committee, Lawrence, Kansas, Frank W. Blackmar Collection, University Archives, PP 53, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas Libraries, 12-14; Blackmar was a professor of sociology and anthropology at the University of Kansas, as well as the first Dean of the Graduate School from 1889 to 1929 and conducted this survey as "A Study of Social Conditions and Agencies in Lawrence as a Basis for a Constructive Program of Community Advance." The survey was conducted as a community enterprise for the betterment of Lawrence and was initiated through the enterprise of eight local committees.
[44] Ibid, 12-14, a "lodger" was any person living with a family where they were not a member of the immediate nuclear family.

New Jersey Street, where twelve people "cooked, ate, lived, and slept in a single room."[45] These twelve people were members of three unrelated families that had to live together because of difficulty finding work due to the mal-distribution of wealth in the city of Lawrence at the time of the survey.

Blackmar's survey found that blacks in Lawrence tended to live in the poorest neighborhoods, which contributed to the high mortality rate experienced by African-Americans. These were not all-black ghettos: 21 percent of residents lived in these areas compared to the 39 percent of blacks in racially mixed neighborhoods.[46] In North Lawrence, there were 25 housing units surveyed. Of these homes, 11 received characterizations as "shacks," more than half of them had three rooms or less, and all but one residence relied on privies because of the primitive sewage system there.[47] African-Americans occupied 20 of these homes in 1915.[48] Living conditions in the East Bottoms were worse. In this area, 76 structures were surveyed which show the poor financial situation of blacks in the area. In this area, 28 of the housing units surveyed received characterization as "shacks": the study reported 12 of these homes as "beyond repair" and "in need of immediate destruction" for health reasons, and the study only rated 13 homes positively.[49] Few of the residents in this area actually owned the homes in which they lived: [54] of the residences rented at an average of $5.50 per month, with interest rates for late rent as high as 12.5 percent.[50] Over two-thirds of the homes in this area relied on privies and experienced inadequate garbage collection.[51]

Inadequate garbage collection caused many residents to discard their waste on lawns, which attracted rodents. This, coupled with the reliance on privies, was a contributing factor that resulted in a tuberculosis epidemic in 1913 which devastated the African-American community of Lawrence.[52] Dr. Frederick Harvey, an African-American physician and resident of Lawrence, stated that there were two to seven times more deaths from consumption among the blacks in Lawrence than any other race.[53] The mortality rate of blacks in North Lawrence and the East Bottoms was indeed higher than for whites at this time. The annual death rate for Kansans in 1913 was 10.6 per 1,000 people; in Lawrence, it was 14.36 per 1,000 people.[54] The death rate for blacks in Lawrence was even higher at 22.2 per 1,000 people, which reflects the sub-standard living conditions in predominately-black neighborhoods.[55] The death rate in the East Bottoms was 35.9 per 1,000 people, and tuberculosis claimed 26.9 per 1,000 lives in this area.[56] The close proximity of wells and privies that blacks in these areas were required to use because of the lack of adequate plumbing was a major cause of illness in the predominately black neighborhoods. The rodents attracted to the refuse left on lawns because of inadequate garbage removal, poor clothing, and dark rooms in windowless homes all acted as contributing factors to the high incidence of sickness and death in North Lawrence and the East Bottoms.

The black community responded to this problem in 1907 by devoting entire sessions of the Sunday Forum to tuberculosis awareness. The Forum was an educational and cultural program that met weekly at the Warren Street Baptist Church and was organized by the church's leadership.[57] Dr. Harvey and other physicians warned attendees against "…dressing too thinly and expectorating on the streets…" yet were powerless to improve the living conditions that would have allowed a decrease in the mortality rate of black neighborhoods in Lawrence.[58]

Lawrence in the early twentieth century was a poverty-stricken community.

Lawrence in the early twentieth century was a poverty-stricken community. Because of the discrimination they faced, African-Americans had difficulty in

[45] Ibid, 56.
[46] Ibid, 56.
[47] Ibid, 56.
[48] Ibid, 56.
[49] Ibid, 56.
[50] Ibid, 56.
[51] Zavelo, 4.
[52] Blackmar, 44-46.
[53] 54 Zavelo, 5-6.
[54] Ibid, 6.
[55] Ibid, 6.
[56] Blackmar, 44-46.
[57] Topeka Plaindealer, February 28, 1907.
[58] Ibid.

overcoming the conditions that made the tuberculosis epidemic possible in the first place. The Blackmar survey team estimated that $650 per year was necessary to feed, clothe, and shelter an urban family in Kansas, yet studies from 1913-1915 showed that 75 percent of Kansans, regardless of race, earned less than $625 per year.[59] The Blackmar survey also conducted an occupational survey of the 4,049 registered voters in Lawrence, Kansas that showed African-Americans generally resided to the most menial jobs in the city.[60] The relationship between city wards with large percentages of blacks corresponded to high numbers of persons employed in low-wage, unskilled work.[61] A similar correlation existed between wards with low percentages of blacks and high numbers of businessmen and professionals.[62] These findings further show that blacks typically found employment in unskilled labor roles at low pay and this reflected the de facto segregation that occurred in Lawrence along financial fault lines in addition to racial ones. The primary beneficiaries of this reality were the businessmen who employed workers, as they were able to use black labor as a bargaining counter against the demands of white laborers for higher pay. The African-American community was able to rely on their institutions to cope with the various forms of discrimination they experienced. Churches, clubs, and the celebration of anniversaries relevant to the black community helped blacks to resist the racism they experienced.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY, CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS, & WOMEN'S CLUBS

Church and spirituality were central features to the formation of the African-American community in Lawrence, Kansas and a means of coping with the discrimination blacks experienced in their daily lives. Historically, the black church in Lawrence and nationally has been one of the few institutions that blacks have participated in which allowed them a sense of independence and the ability to exercise control over their lives. As a cultural institution, the church has been a primary instrument through which blacks in Lawrence developed a collective identity and a sense of place in society. "The black churches in Lawrence became the forum for the sharing of language representing the experiences of blacks past and present."[63] Blacks in the North had several religious denominations to choose from, however, the black churches of Lawrence are of two distinct kinds, Holiness, and non-Holiness churches.[64]

E. Franklin Frazier, in The Negro Church in America, described Holiness church members by his assertion that, "They insist that Christians shall live free of sin and in a state of holiness. They refuse to compromise with the sinful ways of the world. By sin they mean the use of tobacco, the drinking of alcoholic beverages, cussing and swearing, dancing, playing cards, and adultery. All of such activities are regarded as 'carnal mindedness.'"[65] Holiness churches were typically more informal in their style of worship than non-Holiness churches. Leaders of Holiness churches were "traditionalists" who feared a loss of "the old time religion" that they brought with them from the South, and tended to focus on purely religious matters.[66] Conversely, non-Holiness church leaders were both religious and secular leaders of their congregations; these "traditionalists" were concerned with both religious fulfillment and social change. Milton C. Sernett observed that the ideological differences between the two churches are comparable to the debate between W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington.[67] Holiness and non-Holiness churches—much like DuBois and Washington—pursued different means to the same end and were often at odds concerning the proper way to worship. Black migrants from the deeper South tended to attend Holiness churches, while the established black community of Lawrence and the immigrants from further North or the Midwest tended to attend non-Holiness churches. Both styles of churches had a common goal, however, and created similar church institutions to service the needs of the community.

One institution that grew from within the church was the Sunday Forum, such as that at the Warren Street Church. The Sunday Forum was an educational and cultural program that acted as a means of disseminating information throughout the community.[68] Prominent speakers from Lawrence,

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[59] Blackmar, 37-39.
[60] Ibid, 38.
[61] Ibid, 38.
[62] Ibid, 39.
[63] Dorothy L. Pennington Collection, The Histories and Cultural Roles of Black Churches in Lawrence, Ks, Kansas Collection, RH MS P508, Kenneth Research Library, University of Kansas, 37.
[64] Ibid, 35.
[65] E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro Church in America (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), 56.
[66] Milton C. Sernett, Bound for the Promised Land: African American Religion and the Great Migration (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 4.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Pennington, The Histories and Cultural Roles of Black Churches in Lawrence, Ks, 35.

Topeka, Atchison, Kansas City, and beyond often came to speak at these forums. Typical topics at these forums were spiritual, political, and health awareness. Spiritually, these Sunday Forums were indistinguishable from the Sunday Schools of churches today, and acted to provide spiritual refreshment to their congregations. Politically, they served as a means to educate African-Americans on issues relevant to the black community of Lawrence and the nation. Issues such as solutions to the "negro problem" and local elections were frequent topics. Health concerns were another topic of these forums because of the poor sanitation conditions in predominately-black neighborhoods. For example, in 1907 the Warren Street Church invited Dr. Frederick Harvey to speak to the congregation of Warren Street Church to educate members on the best means of resisting the tuberculosis outbreak that occurred in Lawrence that year. Good advice and visits to the sick members of the community proved to be the best the church could provide to combat health problems, as it was powerless to change the living conditions in black neighborhoods.[69] Children sometimes became the focus of these Sunday Forums. One such children's day held at St. James A.M.E. church featured an "instructive address" given to the children by T.M. Ward, after which the children exhibited recitations and dialogues interspersed with music.[70] These forums also held oratorical contests that showcased the advancements in education within the black community.[71]

Lawrence churches also regularly held basket meetings—often in tandem with the Sunday Forums—that focused on the children and less fortunate members of the black community. Basket meetings were akin to picnics and held to bring the community together or to celebrate dates special to African-Americans and church anniversaries. For example, the black community of Lawrence hosted a celebration at a local meeting place known as Bismarck Grove to celebrate the emancipation of slaves in the West Indies on August 1, 1839.[72] Planned by the Grand Council of the Independent Benevolent Society, this event attracted African-Americans from population centers throughout northeastern Kansas.[73] Entertainment was a central feature of these basket meetings. Basket meetings assisted members of the black community who were not members of the congregations that hosted them, and thus helped to bring the entire black community of Lawrence together to care for the less fortunate and to celebrate special dates and anniversaries.

The Sunday Forums and basket meetings held at churches also served as the basis for community-oriented organizations, such as women's clubs. As early as 1864, the African-American women of Lawrence had formed the Ladies' Refugee Aid Society to help former slaves acclimate to their freedom in Kansas through the charity. These women collected funds to help smooth the transition of migrants from Missouri and Arkansas to Lawrence financially. This organization also helped incoming migrants by providing Bibles to help educate former slaves.[74] At the turn of the century, because of their exclusion from white women's clubs, African-American women formed federations to coordinate their efforts.

In 1900, African-American women in Kansas formed the Kansas Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. Lawrence was the site of a convention of these women's clubs in 1913, where fifty-one clubs attended.[75] Blanche K. Bruce of Leavenworth explained, "The purpose of this Federation is to elevate our women to a higher standard in the art and musical world, and it is also a lesson that we must educate the hand as well as the brain."[76] These clubs sought ways to help the African-American race in the face of increasing discrimination and the rise of Jim Crow in Kansas. The Kansas women's clubs promoted an ideology of "self-help" influenced by Booker T. Washington that worked for mutual assistance within the community rather than forced integration into the mainstream white society.[77] Despite discriminatory exclusion from state and national club federations, African-American clubwomen provided several forms of "racial uplift" to black communities throughout the state while they attempted to promote interracial harmony.[78] Marilyn Dell Brady observed that, "For them, the national motto, 'Lifting as We Climb,' did not simply mean educating 'peasant women'…but raising their daughters and those of their friends to be powerful, responsible women, proud of themselves and of their race."[79] Although their efforts were limited in scope because of discrimination and the exclusion of black men from positions of financial and political power that restricted their available resources, these women's clubs worked for the collective advancement of African-Americans. Through art and music contests, clubs were able to gather the finances they used to provide charity to the less fortunate and scholarship funds for black youth.[80] The African-American women's clubs of Kansas performed a role of "racial uplift" for the black community, which was in tandem with that of the church.

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[69] Topeka Plaindealer (Topeka, KS), February 28, 1907.

[70] W.I. Grant, ed., "Children's Day at A.M.E.," The Historic Times (Lawrence, KS), July 11, 1891.

[71] C.H.J. Taylor, "Declamatory Contest at 2nd Baptist," The Historic Times (Lawrence, KS), July 25, 1891.

[72] Ibid, "A Great Celebration," The Historic Times (Lawrence, KS), July 11, 1891; Sheridan, "From Slavery in Missouri to Freedom in Kansas," 47.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Sheridan, From Slavery in Missouri to Freedom in Kansas, 40; Annie Firor Scott, Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 67.

[75] Brady, "Kansas Federation of Women's Clubs," 21.

[76] Topeka Plaindealer, June 14, July 12, 1901 in Marilyn Dell Brady, "Kansas Federation of Women's Clubs, 1900-1930," Kansas History 9 (Spring 1986), 22.

[77] Brady, "Kansas Federation of Women's Clubs, 1900-1930," 28-29.

[78] Ibid, 28.

Dorothy Pennington capably enumerated the cultural roles of the church within the black community: "The black churches in Lawrence have played a major role in meeting the needs of blacks for status and recognition, exercising leadership, self-esteem, social and spiritual acceptance, and the need for having a sense of territory or 'space' that blacks could call their own."[81] Religion proved to be the central mechanism by which the black community coped with ingrained and pervasive discrimination experienced by African-Americans in Lawrence throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Black churches in Lawrence acted as an engine for "racial uplift" that served to educate African-Americans while it provided a social space where experiences common to congregations and the wider community could shape and address the needs of the black community of Lawrence. The church worked in combination with black newspapers and businesses to provide a connectedness between the black community of Lawrence and that of Kansas and the nation.

POLITICAL ACTIVISM

The African-American community of Lawrence exhibited a long tradition of political activism that pushed for the advancement of equality within the state. As early as 1865, the interracial organization of the Kansas Emancipation League helped find work for blacks and lobbied the state legislature to strike the word "white" from the state constitution to expand the civil liberties and political inclusion of African-Americans in Kansas.[82]

The African-American community of Lawrence exhibited a long tradition of political activism.

Aided by the efforts of black entrepreneurial newspaper owner-editors C.H.J. Taylor, who founded the Historic Times, and John L. Waller, who founded the Western Recorder, African-Americans in Lawrence remained politically aware and engaged in political activism that was occasionally extremely effective. Each of these papers—founded in Lawrence before the turn of the century—shows a connectedness between the African-American community of Lawrence and black communities in other Northern towns as well as an awareness of issues, organizations, and political events relevant to the African-American community of the United States. For example, the Historic Times featured a section titled "Racial Hits" in each of its weekly publications that highlighted the activities of black publishers, preachers, organizations, and orators throughout Kansas and nationally.[83]

The legacy of African-American political activity in Kansas that began with the interracial Kansas Emancipation League continued through the 1920s and beyond. Blacks in Lawrence attained a degree of political relevance because of two important factors. First, the concentration of blacks in identifiable neighborhoods in Lawrence increased the power of their vote because Lawrence, modeled on the ward system, allowed blacks to mobilize their vote to achieve local political successes. Second, the rising dissatisfaction with the Republican and Democratic parties that resulted in the rise of the Populist Party in Kansas meant that three separate parties, all willing to make some concessions to remain in power, courted the black vote.

In April 1883, the hotly contested city elections for Lawrence concluded.

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[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid, 22, 30.

[81] Pennington, The Histories and Cultural Roles of Black Churches in Lawrence, Ks, 37-38.

[82] Sheridan, Charles Henry Langston and the African-American Struggle in Kansas, 274; White Cloud Kansas Chief (White Cloud, Kansas), September 14, 1865.

[83] C.H.J. Taylor, "Racial Hits," The Historic Times (Lawrence, Kansas), July 24, 1891.

These elections saw the elevation of John L. Waller—editor-owner of the Western Recorder—to a seat on the local Board of Education by "a good majority" by the electors of the sixth ward.[84] The same issue thanks the African-American women of Lawrence for their effort in securing the elections of black officials and whites friendly to African-Americans. Although not allowed to vote themselves, they hosted dinners for friendly candidates and assisted in ensuring their men voted on the day of the election. The Western Recorder printed, "These ladies deserve much praise for their fidelity to principle. They labored the live long day for the success of the Republican ticket, on behalf of the colored voters of this city."[85] Despite victories, J.D. Bowersock was re-elected mayor of Lawrence to the chagrin of the Western Recorder's editors—the paper's editors believed that Bowersock had accepted "hush money" and circumvented city statutes banning saloons in the city for his friends. "We do not believe that Mr. Bowersock polled to exceed fifty colored votes in this city."[86] J.D. Bowersock owned the Bowersock Opera House on Massachusetts Street mentioned earlier. Bowersock's ownership of a segregated opera house and allowance of saloons in town angered Waller. Waller wrote, "The colored people of this city will contend to the bitter end for the enforcement of the law, for we have seen it violated to our sorrow; it operates heaviest on us, therefore we cannot afford too [sic] violation of any law on the Statute's book."[87] Geographic concentration of blacks and the ward system frustrated the political ambition of Mr. Bowersock for a time.

CONCLUSION

The influx of thousands of African-Americans into Kansas as early as the Civil War created a tense, racially charged atmosphere in Kansas, a state then known for its seemingly egalitarian opposition to slavery. Racial tension was deepened by the migration of southern African-Americans from 1870-1880 and the First Great Migration that lasted roughly from 1910-1930. Racial tension caused fears of job competition and pervasive racial attitudes forced African-Americans who migrated to Lawrence into second-class citizenship. Unable to realize the full panoply of citizenship rights enjoyed by whites, the black community of Lawrence turned inward and relied upon itself for sources of support and identity.

Hundreds of Southern blacks came to Kansas for the perceived promise of racial egalitarianism and the possibility of economic advancement from social conditions tantamount to slavery. They arrived in Kansas destitute of many of the necessities of life during three migration periods, a deplorable situation that sometimes caused black migrants to become dependent on the charity of whites and the existing black community.

Because of racial and class isolation, African-Americans became targets of discrimination in employment, education, social enterprises, and extra-curricular activities. Blacks were the focus of racial discrimination in social businesses such as diners and theaters that either excluded them completely or segregated blacks from white patrons as much as possible—with few exceptions. The result of racial isolation was a black community that came to rely upon itself and looked inward for social acceptance and pride.

The church became a cornerstone of the African-American community. Whether attendees of Holiness or non-Holiness churches—and even non-members or irregular attendees—the church provided blacks in Lawrence with a sense of community based upon a shared past and present, and a common hope for the future of the African-American race. Through basket meetings and Sunday Forums, the black community was able to discuss issues relevant to them and address concerns that intimately affected African-Americans locally and nationally. The church provided an educational element that allowed blacks to stay informed of issues and the knowledge to protect themselves against problematic issues such as disease. This institution provided a coping mechanism for Lawrence blacks to cope with the constant racial discrimination they faced. Women's clubs also grew from the sewing circles and leadership positions within the church; these clubs celebrated the music and art of African-Americans, and strove for the educational advancement of the African-American community.

Black-owned newspapers became another way of disseminating information and philosophies

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[84] John L. Waller, The Western Recorder (Lawrence, KS), April 4, 1883.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

throughout the African-American community. These newspapers kept blacks in Lawrence informed of what other African-Americans throughout the country were able to accomplish and the dangers faced by their brethren elsewhere. The Lawrence newspapers The Historic Times, The Western Recorder, and the Topeka based Plaindealer, also featured socialite columns that allowed the black community of Lawrence to keep themselves aware of the actions of their own "elite." Newspapers also promoted a sense of community pride and élan within the African-American community because it allowed blacks to see they were indeed capable of accomplishing all the things that racial animosity and exclusion had taught them were impossible. A combination of black-owned newspapers and churches also allowed blacks in Lawrence to remain aware of political and social trends that affected blacks in America, and thus allowed blacks in Lawrence and elsewhere in Kansas to organize into a political force that the white-dominated political sphere had to account for—Republicans, Democrats, and Populists alike. Blacks also kept aware of black-owned businesses they could patronize as an alternative to the exclusion experienced in the business world—economically dominated by a small segment of the white community.

Thus, in the face of discrimination and isolation from the dominant white community, the African-American community of Lawrence created for itself a viable social framework that promoted a sense of pride in individual members and their community as a whole. Based on a shared past, contemporary realities, and hopes for improved future, blacks in Lawrence remained politically relevant within a political establishment dominated by a white majority that sought to marginalize the African-American community. African-Americans became increasingly self-reliant and utilized strategies of "self-help" to advance the needs and concerns of the black community. Breaking ground in the land of Canaan was difficult, yet African-Americans who came to Lawrence into the 1920s found the ability to create a viable community despite the challenges faced.

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