

*THE LANGSTON CITY HERALD: RACE AND REPRESENTATION IN THE*  
CONSTRUCTION OF A BLACK PROMISED LAND

By

JORDAN P. BRASHER

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Middle Tennessee State University

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CONSTRUCTION OF A BLACK PROMISED LAND*

Thesis Approved:

Dr. Brad Bays

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Thesis Adviser

Dr. Alyson L. Greiner

---

Dr. Adam Mathews

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Abstract:

The ratification of the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment and the emancipation of African-Americans from slavery radically transformed the Reconstruction-era American landscape. Black southerners seeking to flee the institutional oppression of the south and its Jim Crow laws fled to places like Kansas and Oklahoma to form their own communities and give life a fresh start. These communities were called “all-black towns” and were established from the 1880s through the early 1900s across the American West in an effort to create socially, politically, and economically autonomous black communities. No other state or territory had as many of these all-black towns as Oklahoma Territory, with more than 50 dotting the landscape. Of these, Langston City rose to prominence due to the publication of a newspaper called *The Langston City Herald*, which was circulated throughout the Deep South. My research analyzes these newspapers to understand how Langston was represented as a black utopia and a racial haven from southern oppression. Importantly, I place this representation within the context of Booker T. Washington’s racial ethos and explore the role of Christianity in constructing a compelling racialized narrative about Langston. Ultimately, my results demonstrate the heavy influence of Washington’s identity politics and the Christian influence is so strong that I suggest Langston be thought of as an historical “black promised land.”

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

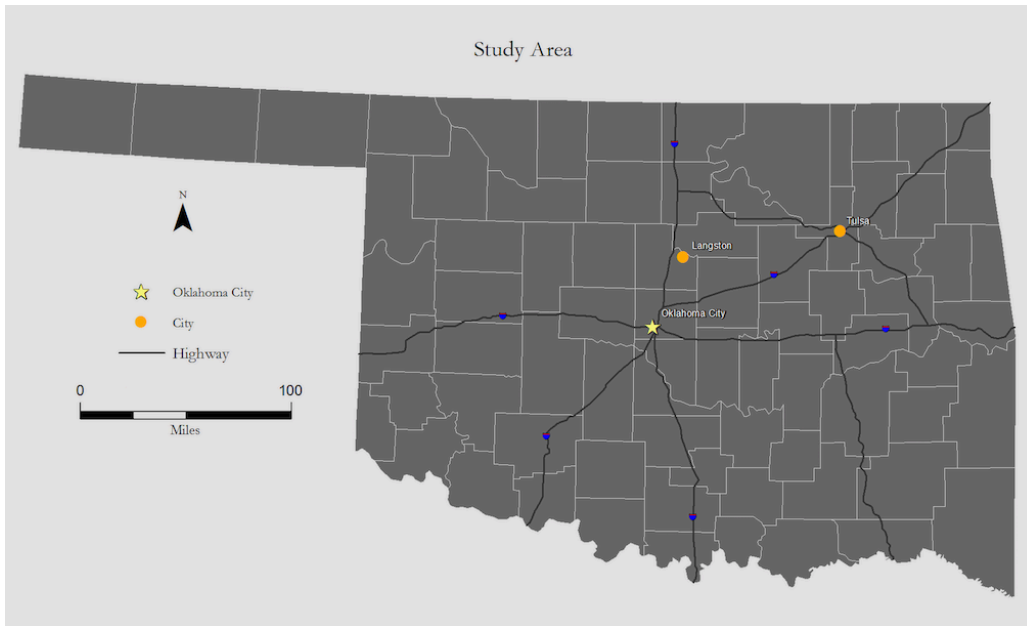
#### 1.1 Introduction

“...whether the [racial] problems are seen primarily as economic, political, or social, the solution was geographic—or, more precisely, the solution had geographical consequences.”

—David Delaney (1998), *Race, place & the law, 1836-1948*

The struggle for racial justice and equality in the American South throughout the post-Civil War Reconstruction era is a geographic one. The need to take refuge from racial violence and institutionalized segregation of public space was constant, but the ability to do so was limited. Because of this, thousands of black southerners decided that the racial problems they faced were best solved geographically, and fled to less populated areas of the American West. Many of these refugees created “all-black” towns with the intention of fostering social, political, and economic autonomy for themselves. All-black towns were the geographic solution to the racial injustice they faced in the Deep South.

One such all-black town in Oklahoma Territory, Langston, located in what is today north central Oklahoma (see Figure 1) rose to prominence quickly through its publication of a newspaper called *The Langston City Herald*, which was circulated throughout the Deep South to recruit black settlers. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze how this newspaper represented or portrayed Langston, especially in terms of its racial discourse and use of Christian language, as a “black promised land” or



**Figure 1. Study Area**

racial haven. The significance of this research is that it allows us to reimagine commonly accepted notions about black history and historical geography in Oklahoma, especially as it relates to the negotiation of black identity and Christian faith.

This analysis of *The Langston City Herald* newspaper is part of a broader body of research that focuses on the intersection of race and place, understanding *race* and *place* to be socially constructed ideas that co-create each other rather than discrete categories or static locations. It is important to note that the way we understand racial categories today, especially in terms of their social construction, is very different from how scholars, activists, and common folks understood race during the period of my study. Rather than utilizing the language of social construction, black scholars and activists emphasized the unjust power structure over racial category formation. By interrogating race- and place-based representations, we can reimagine

the way we understand the historical and geographical foundations of race relations, which in turn can foster racial reconciliation now and in the future.

## 1.2 Research Questions

This project evolved out of a reading of *The Langston City Herald's* place promotion material that ignored the influence of Christianity in constructing a compelling black utopian narrative. My upbringing in the Christian faith and knowledge of the Bible guide my ability to uncover and analyze the hidden and overt elements of Christianity that intersect with historical ideas about black equality and historical representations of Langston. Additionally, scholars have suggested that Booker T. Washington's racial philosophy, also influenced by Christianity, guided the establishment of separatist communities like Langston (Tolson 1998). These foundations guide my research questions:

1. How does *The Langston City Herald's* rhetoric match what scholars have said about Oklahoma's black press more generally?
2. To what extent is Langston represented by Washingtonian themes?
3. What is the scale of place promotion? In other words, *where* is black utopia? Is it Oklahoma in general or Langston in particular that black migrants are drawn to?
4. What is the role of Christian imagery in soliciting settlers to "black utopia"?

Answering these questions may allow for a more nuanced understanding of the black historical geographies of Oklahoma and help reimagine the historical negotiation of black identity.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

Places are the staging grounds for identities, especially when a place becomes a geographical solution (Delaney 1998) to oppression and contests racial identity. In this literature review, I discuss how geographers have conceptualized the social construction of race and the role of place in contesting and constructing racial identities through naming, remembering (forgetting) and promoting racialized discourse(s) about a place. Next, I explain the historical context in which the settlement of Langston, Oklahoma, unfolds as a politics of identity. Then, I review the relationship between Oklahoma's black press and Booker T. Washington's accommodation rhetoric and ideology (Jackson 1998; Moore 2003) during Langston's settlement period. This contextualizes Langston's status as a black utopia and provides the basis for an investigation into the identity politics of race and place in Langston.

#### 2.2 Race and Place: The Politics of Identity

In tandem with the Civil Rights movement (1960s) in the United States, geographers problematized the idea of race (Dwyer 1997). Social problems, political participation, and the development of black residential areas characterize most of the race-related topics geographers engaged with (Dwyer 1997). However, studies of race in the 1960s and 1970s

failed to recognize the socially constructed nature of race (Kobayashi 2014a), producing only geodemographic studies of concentrations of people (Kobayashi 2014b). Geodemographic studies are uncritical approaches to understanding the spatial organization of minority groups. In the 1980s and 1990s, concurrent with the emergence of poststructuralism, geographers began to recognize the socially constructed nature of race by questioning its ontological status (Kobayashi 2014b). Both race and place came to be understood as co-producing and mutually constituting each other (Anderson 1987; Bonnett 1996; Kobayashi 2014a, 2014b). Increasingly, geographers who study race examine the cultural politics of identity and how places serve as arenas for the contestation of these socially constructed racial identities (Leib 1995; Alderman 1996; Foote 1997; Webster and Leib 2001; Leib 2002; Leib 2006; Dwyer and Alderman 2008). One example of this relates to how the process of street naming serves as a symbolic text embedded within social power relations and struggles over the identity of places and people (Alderman 2010, 10; Hague and Sebesta 2011; Alderman and Inwood 2013). In particular, geographers focusing on the American South promote a “broad effort that focuses on the development of the intellectual capacity to understand the consequences of racism and racial inequality in an effort to overturn historic patterns of racism” (Inwood 2011, 565-566).

### 2.2.1 Race as a social construction

Anderson (1987; 1991; 2002; 2008) and other scholars (Jackson and Penrose 1993; Bonnett 1996) highlight the socially constructed nature of race, retrieving it from “the sphere of biological nature and positioning it in a social field of contestation” (Anderson 2002, 25). Race is understood as “a way that we imagine differences between people and make hierarchies among them seem right and natural” (Chang 2010, 1). Social constructionism does not ignore the physical differences between people, but instead suggests that people

construct racial identities by attaching meaning and value to particular physical differences (Alderman and Modlin 2014). Using biological evidence to refute the categorization of races as part of the natural hierarchy and order of the world, social constructionism “works by identifying the components and processes of [racial] category construction” (Jackson and Penrose 1993 in Bonnett 1996). The significance of the shift toward social constructionism lies in the rejection of simple descriptions of ethnic and minority groups’ spatial concentrations (i.e., geodemographics) in favor of an explanation of the structural and institutional social forces that create and maintain racial categories (Bonnett 1996; Kobayashi 2014a).

This shift is concurrent with the rise of poststructuralism in the social sciences, which calls for a more critical examination of geographic problems. Geographical research carried out in the social constructionist paradigm “focus[es] on the way ‘places’ are assigned ‘racial’ meanings” studying how “different areas of cities, and different national and international categories, have literally and metaphorically been developed and ‘invented’ through their racialized interpretation” (Bonnett 1996, 875). Anderson (1987, 1993) examines how hegemonic discourses racialize places, bestowing racial meaning upon them. In her seminal work, she explains that stereotypical myths about Vancouver’s Chinese citizens propagated by local newspapers legitimized racial stereotypes. These discourses aid the social construction of race and place by perpetuating stereotypes and (re)affirming preconceived notions about groups of people. Importantly, it is through *place* that racial categories and racial ideologies are “given a local referent, become a social fact, and aid [their] own reproduction” (Anderson 1987, 584). Put differently, place mutually constructs and reproduces categories of race and helps to rescue it from the realm of nature (as a fact) and place it in the realm of ideology (as a social construction). Race, then, is a socially

constructed discourse that does not occur in nature but is created and given meaning by people.

### 2.2.2. Relating race and place

Anderson's work (1987; 1991) on Vancouver's Chinatown uses social constructionism to elucidate how race and place are related—namely, through an iterative and “mutually reinforcing” relationship (1987, 589; Neely and Samura 2011). However, moving beyond social construction helps us understand “the dialectical conditions through which the concept of race is organized and lived” (Kobayashi 2014b, 1103). In other words, social constructionism stops at the understanding of racial category formation, not reaching to understand how racial identity is negotiated. Anderson finds that the local government in Vancouver created a white, western, Chinese racial category through enacting the “idiom of race” (1987, 584). She explains that this occurred through the formation of a health committee inspection team specifically dedicated to the harassment and inspection of Chinatown and its citizens based on the notion that Chinatown—and thus Chinese people as a category—were sleazy, dirty, and unsanitary. The formation of this committee and its subsequent regulation of Chinatown residents' behavior—targeting businesses they owned for destruction and closure and harassing citizens—was based on no concrete evidence, but solely on commonly accepted stereotypes about persons of Chinese origin. The formation of the health committee and performance of its regulatory duties reiterated those stereotypes about Chinese people. Thus, through the *place* of Chinatown and the white, Western discourse that constructed it, a racial category was created and the dominant racial ideology reinforced, demonstrating the mutually constitutive relationship between race and place that discourse creates.

Important to this social construction of a racial category is the notion of “the other”—or, that Chinese people are fundamentally different from white Europeans. Edward Said (1978) first proposed this idea in his widely acclaimed theory of Orientalism. He recognized that Western people produced knowledge about non-Western people through the discourse of “the other” (Said 1978). Construction of “the other” happens through the process of racialization, which social constructionists interrogate (Bonnett 1996; Neely and Samura 2011). Anderson (2008) describes this process of racialization as a “struggle...involving contestation and contradiction” that bestows meaning about race to people and places. Thus, race itself is a “discourse...and criteria for assessing proximity and distance between human groups” (Anderson 2008, 157). Conceptions of race are created in response to perceived differences that have no biological basis but are rather perceived and given meaning by people. Differences are conceptualized through the process of racialization that creates an “other.” An important component of this racialization occurs in and through *places* like Chinatown. However, this geographic ability to understand race as a social construction stops before reaching to understand how racial identities are negotiated. One way racial identities are negotiated is through the politics of identity.

### 2.2.3 The politics of racial identity

While social constructionism is important for understanding the creation and perpetuation of racial categories as a whole (Anderson 1987, 1991, 1993), racial identities are often negotiated (Anderson 2002, 2008; Neely and Samura 2011) beyond the establishment of otherness and difference through places by a variety of means. For example, Bobby Wilson’s (2000a; 2000b) analyses of Civil Rights-era Birmingham, Alabama, elucidate a relationship between race and place not altogether related to (instead, resulting from) this “othering process” in which a neighborhood-based citizen participation program enabled



city planners to involve underrepresented black citizens in the democratic process of neighborhood formation, delineation, and representation. Brought on by early postmodern conceptions of space in the 1970s, planners “rejected the use of census tracts as a basic planning unit” and instead opted to “incorporate residents’ subjective and objective dimensions of space in delineating neighborhood boundaries” (Wilson 2000a, 192). Dialogue between Birmingham planners and black citizens increased black participation and influence in the democratic process. Planners also eliminated appointed positions on the Citizens Advisory Board, “giving neighborhood organizations opportunities to participate” and “eliminated Operation New Birmingham [a gentrification organization intended to restructure the city into an aesthetically pleasing, neoliberal, capitalist place] as the vehicle for participation” (Wilson 2000a, 191). The neighborhood-based citizen participation programs in the decade following the Civil Rights movement in Birmingham enabled dialogue between city planners and local black citizens, fostering a more inclusive system of political representation and social change, countering the historically entrenched trend of marginalizing and discriminating against black citizens. This illustrates a relationship between race and place and represents a burgeoning body of scholarship that accounts for, yet moves beyond otherness and difference to how a “cultural politics of identity” helps racial minorities negotiate identity (Schein 2006; Hague and Sebesta 2011; Alderman and Inwood 2013).

Recently, geographers interested in identity politics examine how statues (monuments and memorials) construct whom and what are publicly remembered and forgotten (Webster and Leib 2001; Leib 2002; Foote 2003; Owen and Alderman 2008). Additionally, geographers recognize place naming as a “powerful vehicle for identity” that serves as a “symbolic text” that produces a sense of order and familiarity (Alderman 2010,

10). This sense of order is often highly contested, especially as historically marginalized groups contend for material representation in the landscape through monuments and place names.

One example of contested identity politics through monuments is the placement of a statue of Arthur Ashe, the first black male tennis player to win the U.S. Open and Wimbledon tournaments, on Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia (Leib 2002; 2006). Richmond, the former capital of the Confederate States of America, has “the densest concentration of memorials to the Confederacy of any large Southern city...” (Leib 2006, 188). Monument Avenue in particular is a white racialized southern landscape, and commemorating a black Richmond native in that place awakened heated debate about the identity of the town and the street (Leib 2006). In fact, streets and highways have become popular arenas for contesting identities (Hague and Sebesta 2011; Alderman and Inwood 2013).

The United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) have led a neo-Confederate nationalist movement to name highways across America for Jefferson Davis, Confederate general and only President of the Confederate States of America (Hague and Sebesta 2011). Though they claim to have named a highway that runs across America and into Canada for Davis, it is not formally recognized by a single state’s department of transportation; it can better be described as a disjointed series of monuments to Davis along highways throughout the country (Hague and Sebesta 2011). While the UDC claims to commemorate Davis’s role as highway expansionist, family man, and Christian soldier, among other supposedly non-race-related characteristics, that legacy was contested by Washington state representative Hans Dunshee. He sparked debate about a Davis monument in Blaine, Washington, which was eventually relocated to an historical museum from a highway in that state on the

grounds that it celebrates and commemorates the leader of a white supremacist nation (Hague and Sebesta 2011). In the senator's view, the monument belongs in the historical context of a museum rather than along the highway. The UDC's emphasis on Davis's role as U.S. Secretary of War and highway expansionist "elided the issues that came to fundamentally define Davis and that throughout his life he refused to renounce, namely that 'the domestic servitude of African slavery ...is essential' to American economic development" (Hague and Sebesta 2011, 297 quoting Davis himself). This elision of Davis's identity is a prime example of how contested identity politics perform and reinforce ideas about race in a geographical arena.

Similarly, Alderman and Inwood (2013) examine the contested identity politics of naming streets for historic Civil Rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King's historical image is "a social product open to multiple and competing constructions and interpretations" over which people disagree (Alderman 2006, 226). Though tension exists between white and black communities in terms of where streets named for Dr. King ought to be located, there is also significant disagreement among black activists as to the appropriate practice of naming streets for Dr. King (Alderman 2003). While one group in Eatonton, Georgia, wanted to use commemoration of Dr. King to challenge and change the historical consciousness of whites by renaming a major thoroughfare, others in the town felt that it should be used as a means of consolidating and focusing the black community ideologically and so the commemorative street could be justifiably confined to the black community (Alderman 2003). Importantly, this contested identity politics played out within the black community through the scale of the street used to commemorate Dr. King. Alderman (2003, 172) summarizes the politics of identity within the black community at Eatonton, Georgia, this way: "King's legacy is open to redefinition not only by opponents to

his political/social philosophy but also people who unquestionably embraced and benefited from his philosophy.” Overall, naming streets for Dr. King represents a contested identity politics reflective of the state of race relations in the United States and is at times indicative of competing ideologies within the black community as to how to remember and improve those relations.

It is this contested identity politics in which studies of race and place find relevance and significance, especially through articulating an awareness of historically ignored identities. Importantly, Langston shares a contested/negotiated identity politics from within the black community, which I describe in the next section. Additionally, I explain the settlement of utopian Langston, Oklahoma, to frame an understanding of place promotion during its settlement period. I then detail the relationship between place promotion and the press in the American West and connect Oklahoma’s black press to its racialized promotional discourse. Finally, I emphasize how its racialized promotional discourse negotiates black identity, forming the basis for a study of race, place, and the historic politics of identity in Langston.

### 2.3 Settling Utopia: E.P. McCabe and the Founding of Langston, Oklahoma

“If we situate race-connected practices within the concrete historical and geographical conditions under which they unfold, we can find out who we are, the particularity of us.”

—Bobby Wilson (2002), *Critically Understanding Race-Connected Practices*

Ideas about race remain “largely impotent” without social and historical context (Wilson 2002, 32). Langston’s settlement was part of a black westward migration movement in which all-black towns were founded across present-day Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, and California (Athearn 1978; Crockett 1979; de Graaf et al. 2001). Oklahoma and Langston in particular are especially suited for this study because in no other all-black communities did

its founders push for an all-black town or state; neither did any other state have as many all-black towns as Oklahoma (Dann 1974; Cronin 2000; Johnson 2002; O'Dell 2016). In this section, I chronicle the historical events and characters that shaped initial settlement, place promotion, and subsequent recruitment of settlers from the Deep South to elucidate the historical context in which race and place constitute each other.

Two important social “migrations” shaped the primacy for Oklahoma’s consideration as an eventual “all-black” state: the Trail of Tears and the Exoduster movement. I use the term migration carefully considering the fact that neither of these movements were wholly voluntary or unforced; the Trail of Tears was entirely involuntary. The Trail of Tears refers to the removal of Native Americans in the 1830s from southern states like Tennessee, North Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi (and more) to present-day Oklahoma (Carney 1991). Slaveholding Native Americans adopted the institution of slavery from Europeans and brought with them their black slaves and a number of “free” blacks to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma (Carney 1991). The Union’s victory in the Civil War and the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution initiated the process of assimilation for black citizens into Native American society; many would even receive land allotments (Carney 1991; Chang 2010). Thus, a black presence in Indian Territory made the area a palatable place for black settlement during and following the Exoduster movement, in which Ben “Pap” Singleton led thousands of blacks from Tennessee and other parts of the South to Kansas to form the nation’s first all-black town, Nicodemus (Athearn 1978; Crockett 1979; Franklin 1982).

Harsh winter weather in 1879 left most Exodusters destitute from crop failure, freezing temperatures, and the accompanying sickness and hunger it brought (Dann 1974; Athearn 1978; Crockett 1979; Johnson 2002). They migrated to Kansas from the South in

search of social, political, and economic autonomy, and homes on the western frontier (Littlefield and Underhill 1973; Johnson 2002). Those who survived could no longer sustain themselves and looked to black Republican Kansas politician and auditor Edward (or Edwin) P. McCabe for a way out. McCabe is credited with the idea of attempting to settle Oklahoma as an all-black state (Johnson 2002; O'Dell 2016) during the time period leading up to the creation and opening of Oklahoma Territory. This refers to the time (1884-1893) when the United States began allotting land grants for the “unassigned lands” to white settlers in the Twin Territories, as they were sometimes referred to then (Chang 2010). Though his plan to make Oklahoma an all-black state failed, McCabe quickly assumed leadership in Oklahoma Territory. In 1890, he founded Langston and became the voice for promoting it as an all-black town—a black utopia—by founding *The Langston City Herald*, a newspaper he circulated throughout the South to promote the city and recruit black settlers.

The dissemination of black newspapers to a mostly (but not exclusively) black audience played a central role in propelling the all-black town movement (Crockett 1979; Carney 1991; Tolson 1998). Emancipation initiated an upswing in black literacy rates and enabled black folks to begin to create enough expendable income to purchase newspapers, which led to the rapid growth and expansion of black newspapers during the time of the all-black town movement [circa 1880-1914] (Berardi and Segady 1998). These newspapers provided an important outlet for place promotion (Dann 1974; Crockett 1979; Cronin 2000; Johnson 2002; Leiker 2003). Newspapers like *The Langston City Herald* were instrumental in promoting Oklahoma to potential black settlers as a favorable destination (at times even called a refuge) to escape the persecution and oppression of the Deep South (Cronin 2000; Johnson 2002; Leiker 2003).

In sum, the settlement of Langston as a utopia must be understood in historical context to understand the negotiation of black identity, Wilson's (2002) "particularity of us." The Trail of Tears and Exoduster migrations of the early and late 1800s, the rise and influence of black newspapers and literacy rates, and subsequent place promotion made Oklahoma a logical destination for black settlement in the wake of conditions set by the Jim Crow South. Booker T. Washington's racial ethos helps further contextualize the particularity of Langston and set the stage for the politics of identity that produced its utopian representation.

#### 2.4 Booker T. Washington's Racial Ethos: Negotiating Identity in an All-Black Town

"Many African Americans migrated to Oklahoma, considering it a kind of 'promise land.'"  
-Larry O'Dell, Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture (2016)

To fully understand the negotiation of black identity in Oklahoma and Langston, it is necessary to explain the ongoing national discourse about equality led by two major black scholars and activists of the time: W.E.B. Dubois and Booker T. Washington. The competing discourses of these scholars can be seen as a negotiation of black identity. As such, Dubois might be considered more radical in his approach to attaining equality and his position can best be described as politically-driven, advocating for securing the black vote and black representation in government as the surest way to equality (Moore 2003). Washington, on the other hand, has been termed an "accommodationist" because he believed that the white power structure was "not prepared to extend to blacks the same rights and privileges (whites) enjoyed" and temporary accommodation of it was simply pragmatic (Jackson 1998, 111).

His strategy was to challenge black people to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and do what they could to create economic opportunities for themselves through hard work

with the hands (Washington 1904) and avoid discussing social and political equality (Moore 2003). Instead, he encouraged self-sufficiency and an internalized form of working toward equality. From this philosophy came the idea to create an all-black community like Langston. If increasing economic opportunities is considered to be the most pragmatic way to improve black persons' conditions, it is quite natural to form all-black communities so that these sorts of opportunities become possible. In this sense, Langston's separatist, utopian condition is a result of the infiltration of Washington's racial ethos into the black community and representative of a particular black identity.

Importantly, Washington's racial ethos does not stop with social and political separatism or the creation of industrial, agricultural economic opportunities. It goes so far as to regulate and attempt to modify black behavior (Washington 1902) in order to "gain white respect and lead to equality" (Cronin 2000, 77). Gaining white respect implies that equality can be earned. Much scholarship has been dedicated to the critique of Washington's ethos in comparison to Dubois', but that is outside the scope of this study. The point is that Washington's racial ethos emphasized teaching black citizens Christian virtues associated with the hard work and moral rectitude that Leiker (2003) describes as "the Protestant work ethic" (though he credits Max Weber with the idea). This emphasis on internalized racial uplift is connected to black identity and the settlement of Langston.

McCabe's promotion of Langston through *The Langston City Herald* embodies Booker T. Washington's racial philosophy (Williams 1996; Tolson 1998; Cronin 2000; Johnson 2002). He did this by promoting a, Christian Victorian morality that encouraged "hard work, moral rectitude, educational attainment, race building, and economic opportunity" (Cronin 2000, 77). McCabe also adopts Washington's ethos by publishing and promoting black



accomplishments (Cronin 2000). The promotion of Langston through Washington's accommodationist framework has important implications for negotiating black identity.

Langston's townsite promoters negotiated black identity by operating through the Washingtonian accommodationist framework for equality. This happened through the promotion of Victorian, Christian moral values and alignment with Washington's accommodation instead of Dubois' politics-driven approach. Thus, the promotion of race and place unfolds as a sort of cultural politics of identity. In fact, Langston represents a politics of identity within the black community similar to how the black community in Eatonton, Georgia, disagreed over how to commemorate Dr. King. In what follows, I describe place promotion in Oklahoma's black press and argue that this particular press serves as an important arena of investigation to understand the negotiation of black identity in Langston.

## 2.5 Place Promotion and Oklahoma's Black Press

Place promotion—also called “boosterism”—is “the conscious use of publicity and marketing to communicate selective images of specific geographical locations or areas to a target audience” (Ward and Gold 1994, 2). Generally, the aim of place promotion is to entice settlers to move to a particular place, so the embellishment of a place's desirable qualities and dismissal of the less desirable ones is common (Ward and Gold 1994). The agricultural and economic potential of places have often been the qualities used to draw settlers to the American West (Emmons 1971; Ward and Gold 1994; Wrobel 2002). In addition to these, black place promoters endorsed the potential for racial solidarity and autonomy and the peace of mind associated with the creation of a community by and for black people (Cronin 2000; Leiker 2003). In this section, I contrast place promotion in the black and white presses.

White place promotion in the American West consisted of “colorful and imaginative prose” that articulated “havens of culture, climate, and agriculture” (Wrobel 2002, 20, 38). White place promoters (or boosters) especially promoted agricultural potential, and utilized Christian rhetoric to describe the West’s Edenic landscapes (Emmons 1971; Wrobel 2002). They walked a fine line, juxtaposing romantic elements of a wild and untamed, yet agriculturally ripe frontier with the refinement and sophistication of a cultured, “superior race” of people. This “superior race” of people was allegedly created by the high plains and mountains of the West, with its “clear, elastic atmosphere and bracing, healthful climate” (Wrobel 2002, 173). That such discourse relies on the popular social Darwinism of the day yet also uses explicitly Christian rhetorical imagery like “holy land”, “promised land”, and “Canaan” (Wrobel 2002, 38) is the pinnacle of irony in white place promotion.

Black place promotion in the West has been described, too, as creating the image of “a ‘promised land’, a racial Canaan where the legacies of slavery could be forgotten and black civilization built anew” (Leiker 2003, 26). Like white boosters, black boosters also promoted the prospect of “owning affordable fertile land that would allow them to develop economic independence and in time attain a greater measure of political autonomy” (Leiker 2003, 26). While black boosters often reproduced the rhetorical tactics of white boosters in these ways, one key goal distinguished them from their white counterparts: equality. Oklahoma’s black press in particular considered equality to be “synonymous with the rise of the black towns in Oklahoma” (Williams 1996, 273). This exposes a unique connection between black newspapers and *place* for the Oklahoma Territory, since discourse about equality promoted a “geographic solution” (in the form of an all-black town) to inequality (Delaney 1998, 51). Black boosters, especially in Oklahoma and Langston, played on the need to escape the inequalities and injustices of the South: “Why not come to Oklahoma where are peace,

happiness and prosperity, coupled with that best of all blessings, absolute political liberty. You have ten chances of success here where you have one in the south” (*Langston City Herald* 1891 in Cronin 2000, 71). To summarize, black boosters used many of the same tactics as white boosters to recruit settlers, with the major exception being the focus on equality. Additionally, Oklahoma’s black press uniquely (among black newspapers elsewhere) leveraged *place* for the purpose of equality, proposing a geographic solution to southern hardship.

Place promotion communicates a selective image about a place with the intent of attracting settlers. White and black boosters have similarly promoted place by employing Judeo-Christian, biblical rhetorical strategies about the fertility of western lands and the opportunities to seize and domesticate them to attain economic independence. Even though scholars (Cronin 2000; Johnson 2002; Leiker 2003) mention the notion of promoting a “garden of Eden”, a “promised land” and a “racial Canaan”, none of them pay critical attention to the specific role of Christian rhetoric and discourse in constructing this black utopian image and in negotiating black identity, not thoroughly unpacking the religious symbolism.

## 2.6 Imagined Geographies of Oklahoma’s All-Black Towns

Research suggests that Oklahoma’s all-black towns occupy a particular place within public and local consciousness. On the one hand, popular novels like Toni Morrison’s (1998) *Paradise* dramatize the memory of the all-black town movement and shape public perceptions about the history of that movement (Jessee 2006). On the other hand, local elders often feel a strong attachment to place in all-black towns, which is mediated by the salience of race, experiences of racial discrimination outside the community, and other socio-historical

factors (McAuley 1998). In this section, I explore the ways that Oklahoma's all-black towns have been imagined in popular culture and that attachment is experienced by locals.

One way we imagine all-black towns is through popular media. *Paradise*—a complicated and layered novel— amplifies the narrative of oppression, as black women struggle to survive a patriarchal and supposedly racially pure Convent in an all-black utopia in Oklahoma. Morrison uses intersectional narratives of love and memory through the women of the Convent to create a place “out of time” and “for all time” (Jessee 2006, 85). In fact, it is this emphasis on the covenanted community where my work finds its significance. The idea of the covenanted community implies that a community is founded on religious principles with a particular set of moral values and rigid social hierarchy (Jessee 2006). My study on the representation of Langston as a black promised land—while not imagined in the same ways as Morrison's paradise—nonetheless probes the covenanted elements of religious principles and rigid social structure.

One other way we construct our imaginations about places is through our attachment to them. Attachment to place in Oklahoma's all-black towns is strongest, though inconsistent, among its elders and long-term residents (McAuley 1998). Importantly, locals report feeling attached to the town for its status as a refuge from racial oppression (McAuley 1998). Most locals' imaginations of all-black towns as places of refuge come from lived experiences like the experience of discrimination outside that community or the desire to cultivate racial pride (McAuley 1998). However, understanding representations of race and place in an historical context may allow us to learn something about the persistence of a refuge-like attachment to place.

Oklahoma's all-black towns have been imagined both through popular media and through attachment to place. The representation of all-black towns as oppressed, covenantal

communities and refuges from racial oppression contextualizes how this thesis explores the ways that Langston was imagined in the past.

## 2.7 Conclusion

This review highlights how geographers understand the relationship between race, place, and the politics of identity, offers an historical and geographical account of Langston's settlement, recounts the historical discourse about equality that produced the town, and explores the ways all-black towns have been imagined in popular media and by locals. In essence, Langston is a material outcome of the politics of black identity and the pursuit of equality through Booker T. Washington's strategy of race promotion. A highlight of this identity politics is its internal production, largely from within the black community, over how to proceed toward the attainment of racial equality.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### 3.1 Introduction

I employ thematic discourse analysis to understand how the politics of black identity is expressed and represented in *The Langston City Herald* (1891-1899), with a special interest in the theme of how Christian rhetoric forges a Washingtonian identity. I analyze all 65 editions of the *Herald*, which each have four pages, for a total of 260 pages. In this section I describe thematic discourse analysis and explain the structure of the *Herald* itself. Then, I describe how these methods work to answer my questions about the politics of black identity in Langston, Oklahoma. My questions are:

1. How does *The Langston City Herald's* rhetoric compare to scholarly interpretations of Oklahoma's black press?
2. To what extent is Langston as a place represented by Washingtonian themes?
3. What is the scale of place promotion? In other words, *where* is McCabe's utopia? Is it Oklahoma in general or Langston in particular that McCabe is representing?
4. What is the role of Christian rhetoric in portraying this "black utopia"?

Additionally, I provide some limitations of these methods and explore my own positionality as a white male interpreting black newspapers.

### 3.2 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is concerned with the making of meaning (Rose 2012). It is qualitative and is characterized chiefly by the production of knowledge (Hall 1997; Hardy, Harley, and Phillips 2004; Paltridge 2006; Rose 2012). In other words, discourse analysis is the method by which I read *The Herald* and interpret the way its words create meaning. Important in this approach is the interaction between discourse, ideology, and intertextuality. Paltridge (2006) asserts that values and ideologies underlie texts and may be hidden rather than explicitly stated. Discourses and the ideologies they imply often rely on other common knowledge and “make their meaning against the background of other texts” (Paltridge 2006, 13). This is called intertextuality. In this study, intertextuality helps me make sense of the meanings implied by Christian references in *The Herald's* place promotion that are not immediately clear on the surface. Overall, the application of discourse analysis is valuable for this study because *The Herald* was, for black southerners, a primary medium for representing Langston as a black utopia.

Based on Cronin's (2000) results of a survey of historic black newspapers in Oklahoma, I count the occurrences of Washingtonian ideology presented, namely: self-sufficiency, education, economic chauvinism or 'hard work', the publication of black accomplishments, the promotion of a positive black public image, general separatism, and a Victorian Christian morality. Counting the occurrences of these ideas serves as a way to gauge the expansiveness of their use and consider their importance in framing a 'race promotion' ideology in Langston. Importantly, I also count and record each time Langston

or Oklahoma is promoted for settlement. One additional theme included in my discourse analysis emerged from my reading of the newspapers, and that is the publication of news of racial (in)justice across the United States and internationally.

Discourse analysis works as I qualitatively read and analyze the texts with which the counts are associated. The counts also point me toward which Washingtonian concepts are most represented in *The Herald*, an example of how the quantitative methods influence my qualitative analysis. Importantly, these counts are based on my knowledge about the themes they are associated with, and may not be easily replicated by others, like a formal content analysis should allow. One way I use discourse analysis is by reading phrases, passages, and columns that occur regularly in *The Herald* to understand what their regular occurrence means. For example, the first page of each newspaper contains several slogans that identify what *The Herald* stands for and express its central narrative. Discourse analysis is especially useful for these recurring phrases and passages. Another way I use discourse analysis is by reading into the ideology that a passage may be implicitly relying on to communicate meaning. The primary way this is done is, as mentioned, through intertextuality. The interplay between discourses, Christian and separatist ideologies, and the biblical narrative is key for my study. Importantly, these methods are emergent, and the themes I initially sought to analyze changed throughout the data collection process as some became clearly irrelevant to the goals of the research and new themes emerged to replace them.

In sum, I use discourse analysis as a way to read and analyze how *The Herald* communicates meaning about Langston as a *place* to its audience. The themes of discourse are both emergent and derived from previous literature on Oklahoma's black newspapers (Williams 1996; Cronin 2000) and point toward Booker T. Washington's ideology of race promotion. I take my reading of the newspapers with my knowledge of the philosophical,



religious, and historical context in which Langston was settled. Then, I expand on my knowledge of that religious context by consulting *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (1990) to cross-reference Christian references in *The Herald* with their occurrence in the Bible.

### 3.3 Structure of The Langston City Herald

It is important to understand *The Herald's* structure because each issue of *The Herald* had four pages, and each page typically contained similar themes of information. The first page typically contained news ranging in scale from local to regional, commentary on Republican party politics and racial (in)justice. The second page usually had more news and political propaganda, and differs from the first only in scale of information, having fewer advertisements to take up space on the page that place promotion content occupies on other pages. Both the first two pages are popular places for place promotion because they contain colloquial sayings about the general conditions of Langston's or Oklahoma's crop climate and other factors that make it a suitable place for settlement. The third page is the most relevant to my study. For the first 20 (out of 65) editions, the third page contained a diagram of plots showing where land was available for purchase in Langston. Associated with this diagram are several passages that highlight the intersection of promoting race and place in Langston. The third page also ran a regular column called "Say Mister" which essentially explained the mission of *The Herald*. The fourth page was mostly reserved for advertisements and notices about land acquisition, but occasionally also contained a short news item. The key advertisement on the fourth page is the "Our Churches" column for its role in representing Langston as a Washingtonian utopia. Explaining the structure and layout of the newspaper contextualizes my findings and draws out patterns of repetition and emphasis that are important for enshrining a Washingtonian identity.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Discourse analysis is useful for understanding the relationship between race promotion and place promotion for a few reasons. First, this relationship is inherently ideological. Gauging discourse by counting the occurrence of themes offers an outline of the ideology's values and how often they occur. Second, the ideological nature of *The Herald's* content urges consideration of intertextuality, or how the newspapers' text makes meaning against the backdrop of other texts (the Bible in particular) (Paltridge 2006). Intertextuality is at the core of understanding the interconnections between place promotion and race promotion because the discourse used to attract settlers relies implicitly on Biblical texts and narratives. The use of subtle metaphors and other kinds of language only make sense and become more compelling if the reader has read the Bible and been exposed to biblical stories. Thus, the application of discourse analysis elucidates the meaning these newspapers communicate about place(s) and people by, in a way, reading between the lines. This clarifies meaning that might otherwise be opaque or obscured.

### 3.5 Limitations

One potential limitation in this study concerns my positionality. My outsider perspective may limit this study since I am white and live in the twenty-first century. However, I hope that my positionality will "enrich" the analysis rather than hinder it (Myers 2010, 376). Lifelong study of the Bible gives me an intertextual perspective to read between the lines and conduct discourse analysis.

One way I limit bias in this research is by using a biblical concordance (Thomas Nelson 1990). I cross-check my instincts about whether or not something comes from the Bible by referencing the concordance. The concordance is an exhaustive list of when, where, and how many times particular words occur in the Bible. This allows me to validate my

suspicious about whether my data is a Christian reference, and enriches my analysis by providing an exhaustive list of its occurrence in the Bible. I can simply choose a key word from my data and look up where it occurs in the Bible, which even adds to my knowledge base and helps me catch references I might have otherwise missed.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explore how my reading of *The Herald* fits with what other scholars have said about the newspaper's content, the scale at which place promotion occurs, and how Christian rhetoric structures the Washingtonian racial philosophy used to construct Langston's place-based identity as a black utopia. I identify major themes of Washingtonian thought based on Cronin's (2000) analysis and my reading of the newspaper. I count the occurrence of these themes and use intertextual discourse analysis to understand how *The Herald* communicates meaning about race that relies implicitly on an understanding of the Biblical narrative. Finally, I analyze the discourse of important regularly occurring text and use intertextuality to understand how it makes meaning against the backdrop of the Bible and Protestant Christianity.

In Table 1 (below), three columns of data demonstrate the relationship between each theme and its recurrence in *The Herald*. The first column, “Count” simply reports how many times this theme appeared throughout the entire publication period. The second column, “Percent of editions” reports a percentage near the average number of total editions that the theme occurs. It is essentially a measurement of pervasiveness over time. The themes with percentages above 100% reflect themes that were so pervasive that on average occurred more than once per edition. The third column, “Percent of total” reports the percentage of that theme in relation to all other themes. This is an attempt to show which themes are dominant and which are less important in the overall study of the intersection of race with place promotion.

#### 4.2 Discourse Analysis

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent of editions</b>	<b>Percent of total</b>
*Self-sufficiency/preparedness	19	29%	2%
*Educational promotion	55	85%	7%
*Hard work	35	54%	4%
*Black accomplishments	6	9%	<1%
*Positive black image promotion	10	15%	1%
Victorian, Christian morality	376	578%	45%
Conditions in the South	26	40%	3%
Oklahoma Territory	99	152%	12%
Langston City	110	169%	13%
Racial (in)justice	44	68%	5%
Separatism	55	85%	7%
Total	835	X	100%

**Table 1. Discourse themes**

\*-Themes taken from Cronin (2000).

The first six themes listed in Table 1 are the core themes of Booker T. Washington’s racial discourse reflected in Oklahoma’s all-black newspapers according to Cronin (2000). As such, these serve as the foundation for my discourse analysis. The other three themes, except “Langston” and “Oklahoma” are not unrelated to Washingtonian racial discourse but were

emergent and developed throughout the course of my reading *The Herald*. “Conditions in the South” proved to be less important than “Racial (in)justice” and “separatism”, which both significantly contribute to my analysis in what follows. The “Langston” and “Oklahoma” themes refer to the scale at which utopia is promoted to the target audience, and constitutes a significant portion of my analysis that is somewhat separate from Washingtonian racial discourse. It is separate because scale is not inherently related to Washingtonian racial discourse, but connected because *place* is a central promotional tool in the development of this discourse. In the next section, I address the six initial Washingtonian themes from Cronin (2000) and compare their presence in *The Herald* to her study. Then, I unpack the Christian theme in more detail and move on to my emergent theme of racial (in)justice and point to its role in re-imagining Washingtonian identity politics.

#### 4.2.1 Washingtonian Themes

Self-sufficiency narratives typically issue a warning about the harshness of climate in utopia, yet admonish settlers that the preparedness is worth the freedom to be had. Additionally, individuality is a prominent distinguishing characteristic of Washingtonian thinking, so it is no surprise that *The Herald* issues this call to settlers. The theme of self-sufficiency or preparedness does not make quite the appearance that might be expected of it based on the Oklahoma all-black town literature; however, this theme is fairly important in the early days of *The Herald's* publication during the height of settler recruitment. 15 of its 19 references come in the first 20 editions of *The Herald*, a period I identify as the initial settlement period. The concentration of self-sufficiency content within this stage demonstrates its connection to initial settlement and recruitment, which means that this theme is tied closely to black utopian image making. In short, while self-sufficiency does not

extend throughout the duration of publication, it plays a significant role in initial place promotion and is a significant Washingtonian theme.

Promotion of educational opportunities in *The Herald* is typically related to agricultural and industrial education. This is an important marker for Washingtonian discourse because it fundamentally differentiates it from Dubois' ideas, especially in the type or kind of work necessary to foster racial equality (Moore 2003). My findings indicate that the promotion of agricultural and industrial education is present throughout the duration of publication, occurring at a rate of about 85% of the 65 editions. This suggests that it is a core tenet of Washingtonian belief and reflects his vision of creating a black agricultural and industrial middle class for sustaining black society.

Hard work is a bedrock of Washingtonian discourse and appeals to the same individuality as self-sufficiency and educational promotion. It is the rallying cry to pull yourself up by your bootstraps, to make something of yourself, to not wait for political equality but go and seize the economic opportunity. In *The Herald*, it usually comes in the form of subtle colloquial sayings like "He who loafes and lies all summer must go cold and hungry during winters blast" (Vol 5., August 10, 1895). It is often associated with masculinity, taking care of the family and uplifting the race. This idea is fairly pervasive throughout the duration of publication (~53% of publications) and is a core tenet of Washingtonian discourse.

The publication of black persons' accomplishments in *The Herald* is perhaps the most surprising portion of my results. Cronin (2000) indicated that the publication of black accomplishments in black Oklahoma newspapers was an important way "they followed the example of Booker T. Washington" in the hopes of "gain[ing] white respect" which would inevitably "lead to equality" (2000, 77). However, I found scarce support for this claim.

While *The Herald* frequently touted itself as a newspaper that “credits the Negroes with what they do” (Vol. 4, August 11, 1894), I found only six individual celebrations of black persons’ accomplishments, and two of them were in the first edition. This suggests that the publication of individual black persons’ accomplishments in the hopes of winning the white majority’s approval was not an important objective for *The Herald*, as Cronin (2000) suggests is the case in most black newspapers in Oklahoma at the time. Instead, it is likely that the readership of these newspapers were almost exclusively black and needed no convincing of their collective worth.

The same conclusion can be drawn about the production of a positive black public image. I found only ten instances in which a positive black public image is directly promoted. One example is phrased this way: “The Negro has wealth, business tact, churches, and institutions of learning, in fact is schooled in everything saving politics” (Vol. 2, November 17, 1892). Again, I surmise that the scarcity of such content is due to the nearly exclusively black readership’s lack of need to find worth in their collective identity. Thus, my results indicate that Cronin’s (2000) assertion that *The Herald* tried to attain the respect of the white majority seems misguided. Instead, in keeping with Washington’s thinking, *The Herald* did not cater to the white majority, but focused on the need for internal growth and stability within black social circles and communities.

The final theme of Washingtonian discourse is the promotion of a Victorian, Christian morality that encourages all the previous themes such as self-sufficiency, hard work, and educational attainment (Cronin 2000). This theme is overwhelmingly present in a variety of forms. I categorize the 376 instances from my results into five subcategories: colloquial, regular column, metaphors, place-associations, and a combination of metaphor-place-association. These are not meant to be hard and fast classifications, but instead help



visualize the structural nature of the Victorian, Christian morality and its embeddedness within *The Herald's* Washingtonian discourse. Table 2 shows the results of my counting of this socio-religious theme.

<b>Christian references</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent of total</b>
colloquial/normative	277	74%
regular column	81	22%
metaphors	10	3%
place	6	2%
place-based metaphor	2	<1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2. References to a Victorian, Christian morality.**

#### 4.2.1.1 Colloquial Sayings

Colloquial sayings make up the overwhelming majority of this count and play a crucial role in emphasizing the idea that Langston is a “place of refuge” or “promised land”. Additionally, these colloquial sayings normalize Christianity as the standard or baseline for right living and for racial solidarity. In other words, not only are all-black spaces like Langston safe spaces for black settlers, but they are sacred spaces. The quest to form all-black utopian communities takes on a God-ordained purpose. At times, these colloquial sayings quote the Bible directly, indirectly reference it, or intersect with other Washingtonian themes. They are especially employed in relation to racial issues. One example is a general use of “prayer” to help stop lynching (Vol. 4, April 20, 1895). Another example is “...to take men and women and hang them from a tree without due process of law is more than God or man can much longer stand” (Vol. 5, May 4, 1895). Others are news items that report on the happenings within circles of faith: “Rev. White of OKC preached a soul-stirring sermon...” (Vol. 5, August 3, 1895) and “The Baptists are having quite a lively revival. We predict for them a rich harvest” (Vol. 5, August 10, 1895). These affirm the presence of the black

church as a stable and secure social institution and advertise a thriving community of faith. Additionally, they normalize the role of Christianity in constructing the morality of racial justice. The idea that Langston contains a thriving community of faith is an integral part of representing it as a black utopia.

#### 4.2.1.2 Regular Columns

Regular columns that are directly related to Christian faith are also very common. They are the “Say Mister” column, the “Our Churches” column, and the “Religious and literary” column. Since the “Say Mister” column is associated with appearing next to the “Lots” page, I analyze its discourse in section 4.3.2. The “Our Churches” column appears on the last page of each edition of *The Herald* and usually lists upcoming events or sermons to be presented by Langston’s local churches. This reassures the reader that Langston is a place with stable Christian institutions and subtly reminds readers of its suitability as a refuge for black families. Additionally, the “Religious and Literary” column usually provides some interpretation of a Biblical text and admonishes readers to follow the way of Jesus Christ. However, its appearance is clustered around the year 1894 and does not extend throughout the duration of publication. Nonetheless, this column contributes to the normalization of Christianity and the representation of Langston as a Christian refuge, much in the same way the “Our Churches” column does. However, the “Religious and Literary” column takes this a step further by providing actual Christian narratives and interpretation of sacred Biblical texts. Overall, these regular columns represent Langston as a sacred place of refuge.

#### 4.2.1.3 Christian Metaphors

*The Herald’s* use of Christian metaphors is perhaps the most intriguing part of this study, especially when these metaphors are associated with *place*. In what follows, I list Christian metaphors used within the context of place promotion and/or racial discourse and

provide brief explanations of how they make meaning against the backdrop of the Biblical text and/or Christian faith.

1. “Cast your lot with us”: This Christian metaphor shapes my analysis and provided much of the impetus for this project. “Casting lots” is a practice that dates back to Biblical times and was done to determine who would get Jesus’ belongings after His death. Essentially, it is an ancient form of casting a die or flipping a coin, used to render an unbiased decision. Additionally, prayer often accompanied it in order to ask God for the answer to a divisive question. When *The Herald* employs this Christian metaphor as a headline and uses an accompanying graphic of town “lots” to be attained, it uses the commonly known ancient practice to evoke Christian sympathies and emphasize the sureness of the decision to settle in Langston. The metaphor is so central to the intersection of Christianity, race, and place in Langston that I dedicate section 4.3.2 to unpacking it more fully.

2. “The pool of determination”: “We want our people to have some of this land... Free homes, is the pars word here in Oklahoma, and if you want to join this band, *step to the pool of determination*, and stamp your mind with hope and faith, and the initiation fee is paid.” (Vol. 3, June 15, 1893, emphasis mine). This metaphor “step to the pool of determination” is a reference to the place in the Bible when Jesus asked a disabled man if he wanted to be healed. John 5:6-7 (NIV) reads: “When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, ‘Do you want to get well?’ ‘Sir,’ the invalid replied, ‘I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.’” This pool at Bethesda was widely known as a place where sick or disabled people congregated, and healing pools and shrines were very common in the Middle East during biblical times. Some were mineral or hot

springs with edifices built around them. Their significance in this context is that they are associated with *choice*. In other words, the disabled man must choose to be healed and his coming to the pool is a sign of that choice. In the same way, *The Herald* asserts, if you want land and a free home in Langston, choose today to make that journey. This, of course, reverberates deeply with the self-help and individuality of Washingtonian discourse. Importantly, it also intersects with Christian faith by emphasizing that the choice itself is one done in faith.

3. “Fruit of the vine”: “In Langston today are to be found, the delicious *fruit of the vine* (watermelons) in almost every business house of the city...” (Vol.4, December 1, 1894, emphasis mine). The concept of “fruit of the vine” contains a diversity of meanings in the Bible. It can reference the Christian tradition of observing the “Lord’s Supper,” express the relationship between a Christian and God (i.e., God as the vine and Christians as the branches that bear fruit) or reference the “fruits of the Spirit,” which are the character traits that Christians believe God’s spirit cultivates in their lives.

One kind of use is in reference to what is called the “Lord’s Supper” or the last time Jesus ate and drank with his closest followers before He died. It reads like this:

“Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this *fruit of the vine* from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.’”

-Matthew 26:27-29, NIV, my emphasis

This “Lord’s Supper” has become an iconic, symbolic image and ceremonial practice within Christianity. Even today, Christians drink grape juice or wine to symbolically represent Jesus’ blood sacrifice for the remission of sins. *The Herald’s* use of this metaphor to describe agricultural abundance in Langston is no mistake, employing sacred language to describe a place of Christian refuge that may have been ordained by God Himself to bring about the

freedom and redemption of black southerners. Additionally, its emphasis on agricultural abundance echoes the lure of the biblical promised land's "milk and honey" (Exodus 3:17, 33:3 NIV).

Next, the concept of fruit and vine can allude to the relationship between Christians and God. This is apparent in Jesus' words in John 15:1-5 (NIV):

"I am the true *vine*, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no *fruit*, while every branch that does bear *fruit* he prunes so that it will be even more *fruitful*. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear *fruit* by itself; it must remain in the *vine*. Neither can you bear *fruit* unless you remain in me. I am the *vine*; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much *fruit*; apart from me you can do nothing."

-John 15:1-5, NIV, my emphasis

In a literal sense, Christians are fruit of the (Di)vine. Their spiritual growth is a result of the work of God in their lives as depicted in the fruit-vine-branches metaphor. When *The Herald* describes watermelons as abundant "fruits of the vine" in Langston, it employs subtle Christian language that appeals to a sense of right and wrong that parallels Washington's racial ethos. The idea that Christians "bear fruit," either good or evil, dependent on their connectedness to God, essentially relays the consequences of living a life connected to God versus one disconnected from Him. This emphasis on consequences and the production of spiritual fruit parallels Washington's separatist philosophy and internalized emphasis on self-sufficiency, personal responsibility, and character development for bettering one's conditions. In a sense, Washingtonian belief professes that hard work will produce fruit, develop character, and is the best way to move toward equality.

Lastly, "fruit of the vine" can reference the "fruits of the Spirit" from the New Testament: "But the *fruit of the Spirit* is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23, NIV, my emphasis). The characteristics listed here are the product of the inner spiritual

work God does in the life of a Christian. These closely parallel the type of character development and hard work Washington touted (Washington 1902, 1904). Forbearance implies a patient self-control or tolerance; from this we can draw a direct correlation to Washington's accommodation of the white power structure in lieu of Dubois' overt political change (Moore 2003). In fact, each of these fruits of the Spirit might be seen as supporting Washington's patient, peaceful accommodation.

In sum, the fruit of the vine metaphor references the Christian tradition of observing the Lord's Supper, demonstrates the relationship between the Christian and God, and hints at the production of spiritual fruit in the form of character traits not unlike the ones Washington taught.

4. "A Knotty Problem": In a brilliant piece titled "A Knotty Problem" *The Herald* provides discourse on "one of the most knottiest questions of the present day, the intellectual ability of the Negro race compared with that of the white." (Vol. 4, April 13, 1895). In this piece, the author rebukes the white Christian narrative that the origins of races can be traced to biblical events such as "the curse pronounced by Noah against Canaan" or as "a mark fixed upon Cain for the murder of Abel." In this, we begin to see the complex negotiation of black Christian identity emerge. *The Herald* continues:

"For myself I see strong reasons to believe that the white men are the real descendants of Cain; for I still find in them that primitive hatred, that spirit of envy and of pride and that passion for riches which the scripture informs us led him to sacrifice his brother."

-Vol. 4, April 13, 1895, *The Herald*

The author calls attention to the hypocrisy of twisting the sacred text to justify racism and instead reclaims hold of Christian faith for the liberation and redemption of his people. The metaphorical use of Cain and Abel to explain the emergence of races is turned on its head to

renounce any justification for white racism having roots in Christianity. In short, this is a reclaiming or taking back of black faith and it is deeply intertwined with racial discourse.

Black folks have been reclaiming Christianity for the poor and powerless out of the hands of their oppressors since the abolitionist undertaking. Known as the black social gospel, this movement traces its roots through the Washington-Dubois debate, and both intellectual leaders are credited with organizing flanks of the movement (Dorrien 2015). The black social gospel fused racial justice politics with religious conviction in the struggle against white racism. *The Herald's* knotty problem column can be seen as an outgrowth of this black social gospel movement.

5. “Under his own vine and fig tree”: “You will seek in vain among all this scurvy throng for the ‘sovereign of the soil’—*the man who dwells under his own vine and fig tree*, whose patriotism has taken root like his sturdy trees, deep in the soil he loves.”(Vol. 5, May 11, 1895, my emphasis). This reference comes from Mathew 4:4 (NIV, my emphasis): “Everyone will sit under *their own vine and under their own fig tree*, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken.” In Biblical times, to own your own vine and fig tree symbolized prosperity. Sitting under your own additionally symbolized peace, safety, and security. *The Herald's* use of this Biblical metaphor typifies the very essence of Victorian, Christian morality. To have one’s own plot of land, to work it, to enjoy it patriotically, is the highest of virtues to aspire to. This narrative, inseparable from the availability of land and the promise of free homes, is used to draw settlers to Langston where their dreams of owning property can come to fruition.

6. “Refuge under the shadow of her placid wings”: “Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Arnold of Memphis Tenn., arrived here a few days ago and showed that they were well pleased with Langston by *taking refuge under the shadow of her placid wings*” (Vol. 5, May 11, 1895). This

reference has its origins in many verses within the book of Psalms in the Bible that use “refuge” or “shadow of your wings.” The list below is not exhaustive; many mentions of “refuge” are nearly identical and are therefore omitted.

- Psalm 9:9 (NIV, emphasis mine): “The Lord is a *refuge* for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.”
- Psalm 14:6 (NIV, emphasis mine): “You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor, but the Lord is their *refuge*.”
- Psalm 17:8 (NIV, emphasis mine): “Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me *in the shadow of your wings*.”
- Psalm 36:7 (NIV, emphasis mine): “How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People *take refuge in the shadow of your wings*.”
- Psalm 46:1 (NIV, emphasis mine): “God is our *refuge* and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”
- Psalm 57:1 (NIV, emphasis mine): “Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take *refuge*. I will *take refuge in the shadow of your wings* until the disaster has passed.”
- Psalm 59:16 (NIV, emphasis mine): “But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my *refuge* in times of trouble.”
- Psalm 63:7 (NIV, emphasis mine): “Because you are my help, I sing *in the shadow of your wings*.”

This metaphor is central to the representation of Langston as a place of refuge from southern oppression and demonstrates the inextricable link between Christianity, racial discourse, and place promotion. If *The Herald* had simply described Langston as a place of refuge, we might not so readily draw the connection between it and Christianity, but its use of the specific language of “refuge in the shadow of her placid wings” can be traced directly to verses from Psalms. Additionally, that the visitors who sought refuge in Langston were from Memphis, a city in a southern state where Jim Crow conditions were in full effect, highlights the geographic nature of Langston’s representation as a racial haven/refuge.

7. “The scales fell from his eyes”: A column titled “The proposed convention: Noted South Carolinas oppose the plan to disfranchise the colored race” reports on a speech given by a white South Carolina Confederate veteran on the topic of “universal suffrage” (Vol. 5,



May 18, 1895). The speech Col. Dargan gave is riddled with references to Christianity and suggests that the religion ought to promote equality rather than racial discrimination within society's institutions. The author describes the white South Carolina Confederate veteran as the state's Moses, "*a friendly voice in the wilderness.*" Additionally, after describing his aristocratic upbringing and record as a slaveholder, the author deploys a very powerful Christian metaphor by asserting that "*the scales have fallen from his eyes*" in his support for racial equality. Acts 9:18 (NIV) recounts the story of the conversion of one of Christianity's most central figures and Biblical authors, Saul of Tarsus. Saul, who persecuted and killed Christians is said to have had a moment while walking on the road to Damascus in which he was blinded during a supernatural experience with God and received instructions from Him in a vision to go to a nearby town, stay for three days and meet with a man named Ananias. Ananias reportedly places his hands on Saul, who experiences "something like scales" falling from his eyes (Acts 9:18, NIV). It is at this point in Saul's life that he becomes a Christian and is given a new name, Paul. This biblical metaphor expresses Saul's conversion to Paul, to Christianity, and to a new way of seeing. Using this metaphor to describe a white Confederate veteran with a history of owning slaves who turned to become an advocate for racial equality demonstrates a powerful connection between *The Herald's* racial discourse and Christianity.

In this column, there is a parallel between Col. Dargan's conversion from Confederate veteran to South Carolina's Moses and Saul's conversion to Paul. The reference to him being a "friendly voice in the wilderness" is loaded with biblical undertones. Moses has an important biblical association with wilderness. The Israelites' journey to the Promised Land throughout much of the book of Exodus is often filled with imagery of wandering through a dry wilderness, where God provides manna from heaven (Exodus 16 NIV), Moses strikes a stone and water comes out (Exodus 17 NIV), and God gives Moses the Ten

Commandments at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20 NIV). *The Herald's* description of Col. Dargan as South Carolina's Moses and a friendly voice in the wilderness intersects with broader Promised Land imagery because it was when the oppressed Israelite people were wandering in the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land that Moses became their friendly voice in the wilderness. This contributes to the image of Langston as a black promised land because the topic of universal suffrage for black folks that led *The Herald* to refer to him this way. The subtle reference to Moses and the voice in the wilderness contribute to creating the black Promised Land image.

Also, the reference to the scales falling from his eyes is a Christian metaphor that alludes to the spiritual nature of racial reconciliation. In Acts 9 (NIV), Saul is blinded on the road to Damascus and encounters God in a vision. Then, still blind, he makes his way into town to find a place to rest. It is only after God sends a disciple named Ananias to lay hands on Saul that he receives his sight again when something like scales fall from his eyes (Acts 9:18 NIV). So, that scales fell from Col. Dargan's eyes is a reference to God making him see rightly. It is only through the agency of God that Col. Dargan could possibly turn from his persecution of black folks as a slaveholder to an outspoken ally and advocate for equal rights. This alludes to the spiritual nature of racial reconciliation through a powerful and well-known Christian metaphor.

8. "They are known by their works": "Away with the rascals, spit on them their course is to ruin. Don't you know them? If you do not then 'tis your fault and for it you too may be led in the way of havoc. *They are known, yea, by their works*" (Vol 5., June 22, 1895). This reference is to Matthew 7:16 (NIV), which says "By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?" The use of the term "fruits" to describe a person's works or actions is common throughout the Bible. Here, Jesus

admonishes His followers to beware of false teachers, saying that they will recognize false teachers from right ones by the work of the teachers' lives. In the same way, *The Herald* uses this Christian metaphor to caution its readers to discern "rascals" from ones who have their best interest in mind. It is unclear from the archive who exactly these "rascals" are, if they reference swindlers trying to steal money from eager settlers seeking land, or if the reference is more general in nature. Nonetheless, the utilization of Christian metaphorical language within *The Herald's* discourse is quite clear here yet again. It is significant because the reference to works resounds with Washington's internalized approach to racial uplift and focus on personal character development.

9. "The cornerstone": "*The stone that the builder has rejected has become the head of the corner, so has Langston*" (Vol. 5, October 12, 1895). This Christian metaphor is explicitly place-associated and demonstrates Langston's sacredness as a place of refuge. It is a reference to Acts 4:11 (NIV) in the Bible, which reads "Jesus is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.'" This scripture speaks directly to the death and resurrection of Jesus in the Biblical narrative. Paul, the author of this passage, emphasizes Jesus' rejection by the High Priests and the mob crowd who sentenced Him to death on a cross. He then contrasts this with Jesus' central role in the Christian faith by calling him the "cornerstone," because "there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12, NIV). Given this context, we can read *The Herald's* use of this Christian metaphor as an appeal to the rejection and oppression black southerners felt and a reassurance that Langston is a sacred refuge from that.

10. "Strained out a gnat and swallowed a camel": A column titled "*strained out a nat and swallowed a camel*" describes a judge who ignored mob violence against a black man in

Texas (Vol. 5, November 16, 1895). This is a reference to Matthew 23:24 (NIV), which says “You blind guides! *You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel*” and refers to Pharisees (Biblical religious leaders) who fundamentally and legalistically followed and enforced Jewish law, but (in the Christian faith and teaching) at times were resistant to the larger truth. Using this reference to describe a Texas judge’s negligence in bringing justice to the black victim of mob violence is *The Herald’s* way of reclaiming Christianity from white domination. The last sentence of this column reads “Truly the day of enlightened humanity and advanced Christian civilization will soon show itself more than a gangrevescent semblance or regarded as a diffident tumor.” Essentially, the claim is that one day true Christian judgment about right and wrong will come to light, and this is intimately connected to both Washingtonian racial discourse and representations on Langston as a place of sacred refuge.

In conclusion, these ten Christian metaphors emphasize the interconnections between Christianity, Washingtonian racial discourse, and the representation of Langston as a sacred refuge from racial oppression. Specifically, Langston is depicted as the black promised land, where Christian faith can be reclaimed from white domination and people are free to live out their utopian dreams of working and owning land to lift themselves up out of racial oppression. In the next subsection, I highlight Christian references that rely on the concept of place to make their meaning.

#### 4.2.1.4 Place

The following references make use of Christian language to describe or promote Langston for settlement:

1. “In this section of the country”: “Mr. T. Henderson led Miss Joanna Penn to the altar one week earlier, so you see *the command of the Lord is being obeyed in this section of the country*” (Vol. 5, August 31, 1895). This use of Christian language to describe the Langston

area suggests that Langston is a sacred space where settlers can rest assured that God is in control of what goes on there and its people are ardent adherents to Christian morality. In this case, the command of the Lord refers to the sacredness of marriage.

2. Langston's misrepresentation: "If all the lies and other hard things that have been spoken concerning Langston (because her citizens dare to be men who will defend themselves) were sent to hell there would not be one inch of space left in that dark pit for the souls of the damned at the last day" (Vol. 5, October 12, 1895). The use of Christian language about hell colloquially dismisses those who would speak negative things about Langston as a potential place to settle. It relies on commonly accepted religious images about hell to describe what happens to people who have lied about Langston's conditions.

3. Thanksgiving in Langston: "Thanksgiving was observed by the people of Langston, some prayed and all ate turkey" (Vol. 5, November 30, 1895). This Christian reference reinforces the idea that Langston is a distinctly Christian place, which celebrates Christian holidays and practices Christian traditions like prayer. It makes settlers feel comfortable that if they come to Langston, they will have people who pray and celebrate the same holidays and traditions as they do to share life with.

4. Good churches and schools: "There are two things that every successful town or city must have, and these are good schools and good churches, without these it is vain to hope for success, it is folly to expect an energetic and progressive people to live in a town where both the spiritual and educational interests are dead" (Vol. 5, November 30, 1895). As concisely as anything in *The Herald*, this captures the Washingtonian image of a black utopia. Black schools and black churches were the most sacred social institutions to be controlled by black people and exemplify the Washingtonian Victorian, Christian social class values of hard work, agricultural and industrial education, and Christian living.

Aiken (1998) has argued that black schools and churches in the cotton plantation South were symbols of freedom and that “the spatial segregation of them within the plantation symbolized the great economic, social, and political gulf that separated the races” (p.154). It comes as no surprise then that *The Herald*, in constructing the black promised land, emphasizes the need for good schools and good churches as staples of a thriving black separatist community.

5. Organizing Sunday School in Oklahoma: “It is proposed to organize branches of the Sunday School association in every township in Oklahoma” (Vol. 5, December 7, 1895). This line essentially performs the same normative function as the “Our Churches” regular column. It represents Oklahoma as a place where Christianity is pervasive, organized, and important.

6. Promised Land piece: One column entitled “Land of Promise” (Vol. 6, February 6, 1897) uses the biblical metaphor of the “promised land” to illustrate all the positive aspects of the area. The scale of the area this column describes is a large portion of the southwestern United States—“Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and the Indian Territory” are all included in this piece of place promotion. It describes, “a rich and varied soil,” a “genial climate where health abounds and where the industrious farmer can work every day in the year (Sunday excepted)”, where “Nature is more kindly disposed and yields up her favors with less effort on the part of needy humanity.” Additionally, social aspects of the southwestern states are touted: “Society is excellent; school facilities ample; churches and societies abound.” There is an appeal to land: “Land is plenty and cheaper than much worse land elsewhere.” The people who already live there are described as having “industrious habits and intelligence.” Finally, the column appeals to Washingtonian self-sufficiency: “Come and help us out, while helping yourselves.” This “promised land”

metaphor effectively relays Washingtonian racial discourse about Langston while promoting it for settlement.

#### 4.2.1.5 Place-based Metaphors

Table 1 indicates that there are two Christian metaphors that rely heavily on the idea of *place* to recruit settlers to Langston. They occur in the form of a poem and an editorial column. In what follows, I describe and analyze them.

##### 1. (Vol. 5, October 5, 1895)

“The snow white fields of this fair land  
Are calling for laborers of other land.  
The abundant harvest of 95 has led Oklahoma to praise her God.  
And Langston leads this happy band  
And extends to all a helping hand.  
Come all ye hungry starving poor,  
And tell to us your tale of woe  
Why stay and die in sore despair,  
When this blessed land so good so fair?  
Come while there’s room for you and me.  
Where all men and their sons are free.”

This poem employs Christian imagery to promote Oklahoma (and even Langston in particular) for settlement. The familiar essence of the “promised land”, the notion of sacred space, and a refuge for the downtrodden are present in the references to “this blessed land”, Oklahoma’s “praising God” for an abundant harvest, and the call to “Come all ye hungry starving poor/ And tell us your tale of woe.” In fact, the latter reference echoes Jesus’ words in Matthew 11:28 (NIV): “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” The poem intertwines *place* with Christian faith to depict Oklahoma in general and Langston in particular as sacred places that provide refuge from oppression.

2. “Langston wins with flying colors”: The column titled “Langston wins with flying colors” (Vol. 5, December 14, 1895) describes persons who ignored Langston’s initial opening for settlement but are now interested in settling. This is a Christian place-based

metaphor because the language used to describe these people is as follows: “These men like the *prodigal* of old do not wish to return to Langston from choice, but extreme necessity” (my emphasis). This reference is to Jesus’ parable of the prodigal son, a story about a son who runs from home, wastes his inheritance, goes hungry during a famine, and becomes so destitute he longs to eat the food given to pigs, unclean animals in Jewish culture (Luke 15: 11-32, NIV). The son returns home and is welcomed with open arms by his father, who slaughters the fattened calf to celebrate his son’s return. In short, the parable is about the unconditional love of a father for his son and is an important symbol of Christian redemption. For *The Herald* to describe people who ignored the initial opportunity to settle in Langston but by late 1895 chose to come “out of necessity” rather than by choice is quite telling. It suggests that Langston is a sacred place where redemption is to be had, in spite of having looked for “greater things and larger towns.” Langston is a place of redemption for the prodigal sons still willing to come.

These two examples demonstrate the use of Christian imagery to represent Langston as a sacred, redemptive place of refuge.

#### 4.2.2 Racial (in)justice

Table 1 indicates that the theme of racial (in)justice occurs 44 times, on average about two thirds of the 65 editions. This is significant because Washingtonian racial discourse has typically been represented as naïve to W.E.B. Dubois’ more radical solutions to racial (in)justice. In other words, Washington’s ideals are not strongly associated with racial justice issues and are thought to have been mostly “hands-off” in that regard. My findings, coupled with the lack of publications of black persons’ accomplishments discussed in section 4.2.1 problematize the idea that Washington’s racial discourse was hands-off or not justice-oriented. Instead, my results demonstrate that racial (in)justice is something *The*



*Herald* was quite committed to addressing and the publication of black accomplishments is of peripheral importance. *The Herald*, then was more justice-oriented than traditional scholarship has claimed about Booker T. Washington's racial discourse in general and about Oklahoma's all-black newspapers in particular. Rather than passively accommodating racial injustice, *The Herald* called attention to it when it happened across the nation in the form of whipping, lynching, burning at the stake, and other forms of cruel and unusual punishment. However, *The Herald* also celebrates when racial justice seems to have won, like when a white police officer is sentenced to death for the murder of a black man in Denver (Vol. 5, May 4, 1895). It also calls out the hypocrisy of a mainstream white evangelical church when they refused to baptize or welcome black Christians (Vol. 5, July 13, 1895). In short, *The Herald* breaks the mold of the commonly accepted Washingtonian idea that black people should keep quiet about matters of justice and politics in favor of internalized self-sufficiency and allows us to reimagine its orientation toward racial justice.

#### 4.2.3 Scale of Utopia

The extent or scale of black utopia is an important geographic element to consider at the intersection of race and place because it provides insight into *The Herald's* grand narrative, or their overall place promotion goals. Table 3 shows the counts of utopian references at their respective scales. These references reflect the promotion of each respective scale for settlement, mostly through the Washingtonian themes of agricultural abundance, social, economic, and political autonomy, Christian churches, and schools. However, they also make use of other themes like cheap and available land, the potential for a railroad to be built in the area, and other sure signs a place is developing economic opportunities.

Scale of Utopia	Count	Percent of Total
Oklahoma Territory	99	47%
Langston City	110	53%
Total	209	100%

Table 3. Scale of Utopia

My results suggest that it is difficult to say definitively whether or not Oklahoma Territory or Langston City are the primary scale at which utopia is represented. However, it is unsurprising that Langston has the slight advantage, given *The Herald's* vested interest in luring potential land buyers directly to the city to boost McCabe's real estate business. Additionally, one important column represents black utopia as the entire southwestern United States, outlined in section 4.2.1.4.

### 4.3 Regular Pages

#### 4.3.1 Front Page



Figure 2. Regular front page banner of *The Herald*.

There are three sections of the front page of each edition (beginning with the third edition in 1894) that hold special significance for understanding *The Herald's* racial discourse. In the top right and top left are boxes with descriptions of the paper's core values, and in the center directly underneath the title is the paper's tag line. In what follows, I analyze the discourse of the front page using these three sections to understand *The Herald's* racial discourse.

Top left: “Like the ocean steamer *The Herald* loaded with progressive ideas, fixed by human coherence, and guided by peace, piety and perseverance, glides over the sea of oppression, gathering refugees for Langston, the home of the free.”

This metaphor for *The Herald*'s mission is quite provocative. Though it lacks clear ties to Christianity, the image of an ocean steamer conveys a steadiness and sense of righteous assurance that appeals to the morality of progressive racial solidarity. This is especially clear when the ocean steamer is described as gliding over the sea of oppression. Additionally, there is a rhythm to this passage, and it is accentuated by the alliteration of “peace, piety and perseverance.” Finally, “refugees” is a key word. Much of my analysis has revealed a representation of Langston as a refuge from southern oppression, so the actual usage of that word here supports this analysis.

Tag line: “Without fear, favor, or prejudice, we are for the right, and ask no quarter, save justice.”

The tag line is important for understanding *The Herald*'s mission. McCabe's newspaper intentionally did not accept political subsidy, financially surviving off donations from its subscriber base (O'Dell 2016), in order to maintain (at least the appearance of) objectivity in reporting. However, the newspaper clearly supported Republican politics and McCabe had a vested interest in luring settlers to land due to his involvement in real estate. The tag line proclaims the bold message that (implicitly, black racial) justice was served “without fear, favor, or prejudice.” In this sense, *The Herald* boldly asserted its goals to fight for racial justice, despite the historic representation of Washingtonian rhetoric as “accommodationist.” Clearly, *The Herald* did not perceive its message to be passive.

Top right: “Like the noonday sun, *The Herald* glistens with censure upon prejudice, mob violence, and racial malediction, with fervency prey the preservation of justice, the virtues of love, human parity and brotherhood of man.”

Here, *The Herald* uses a beautiful metaphor to express its mission by painting a picture of shedding light on the darkness of injustice and inequality. Though the light/dark

metaphor is not explicitly derived from Christianity, it is a stark appeal to the morality of racial justice and equality. Even the use of “malediction” is almost religious and certainly supernatural, as it implies the presence of a magical curse, like a hex or a spell. In short, though, racial justice is again revealed to be *The Herald’s* battle cry.

In conclusion, the discourse present at the top of each front page represents *The Herald’s* racial justice-centered mission. This is an important consideration in the nuanced discussion of Booker T. Washington’s racial ethos, because it changes the tone of what “accommodation” typically means and aligns with Jacksons’ (1998) analysis. Rather than viewing accommodation as a passive acceptance of Jim Crow segregation, it can instead be viewed as active pragmatism. In short, *The Herald* portrays its mission as actively working for racial justice. This counters the common understanding of accommodation as passive and supports my previous analysis of *The Herald’s* racial justice-related reporting.

#### 4.3.2 “Lots” Page

The “lots” page is perhaps the most important piece of evidence I use to support how *The Herald’s* underlying appeals to Christianity intersect with its use of place promotion through Washingtonian racial discourse. In what follows, I unpack the biblical metaphor of “casting lots” and describe its usefulness in appealing to Christianity for the purpose of luring black settlers to Langston. Additionally, I relate the regular “Say Mister” column to the “lots” page and explain its significance for place promotion through Washingtonian racial discourse. Finally, I explain how the representation of lots as equal in size follows broader colonial patterns in planning in the United States.

# LANGSTON CITY

OKLAHOMA, TER.

**THE ONLY DISTINCTIVELY NEGRO CITY IN AMERICA.**

FOUNDED BY E.P. McCABE, OCT. 22, 1893.

## FREEDOM

Peace, Happiness and Prosperity.

**Do you Want all These?**

**Then Cast Your Lot With Us & Make Your Home in Langston City.**

Do you ask why? We will tell you. Langston City is a Negro city, and we are proud of the fact. Her city officers are all colored. Her teachers are colored. Her public schools furnish through educational advantages to nearly a hundred colored children. The country is as fertile as ever was moisture by man's falling tears, or blessed by heaven's showers. Here, too, is found a great climate—about like that of southern Tennessee or northern Mississippi—a climate admirably adapted to the wants of the Negro from the southern states. A land of diversified crops, where there need be no such thing as a total failure. A land where every staple crop of both north and south can be raised with ease.

One of the best fruit growing countries in the union. A land where a few dollars judiciously invested in real estate will yield returns in the form that cannot be estimated.

Do you want to build for the future? If so you can do no better than to invest a few dollars in Oklahoma soil. It does not matter whether you contemplate coming here at once or not. Real estate is the basis of all wealth. There is nothing in which money can be so safely invested. Do you wish to hold for the future? If you do, you cannot do anything that will be more to your advantage than a small investment in Langston City property. This property combines everything that it needs to command it to homesteaders or investors, viz.: Reasonable prices, easy payments, steady and rapid increase in value, sure return, absolute safety, good society, church privileges, school privileges, and last but not least, absolute political liberty and the enjoyment of every right and privilege every other man enjoys under the constitution of this country. What more do you want? Young men, if you will save the money that many of you now squander and invest it in Langston City property, you soon from now you will be independent.

Remember it is not a picnic we are inviting you to, but to join hands with us in an active and earnest effort to better our conditions and in open to the race we are across through which we may obtain some of the good things of life.

In another column will be found an accurate plat of the territory. All that portion north of Grand Boulevard and west of Michigan Avenue has recently been platted and put up on the market, and is known as the first addition. With the exception of perhaps a dozen, all the lots front on Washington boulevard, and all those lying south of it are sold for business purposes, all things considered, the cheapest and best property ever offered in that or these sections. The first offer is located on lot 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

Before the first of February \$2,000 worth of machinery will be on the ground for the great mill and cotton gin which is to be located on the site shown on the plat. Plans have been drawn and will commence on the hotel building which, when completed, will cost from \$1,000 to \$1,500; it will be located in block 5, or shown on the plat.

All the lots which remain unsold to this time are good ones—there is not a rough or bad one in the entire number. Washington boulevard is the leading street in the city at present, being located nearest to the center of the territory. Lots can be obtained at reasonable prices and on easy terms. For particular address.

**E. P. McCABE,**  
Cathie Oklahoma.

**NOTICE**—In purchasing lots in Langston City purchasers can pay in my duly authorized agents the amount of the first payment on any lot. All subsequent payments must be sent to Cathie as stated in the application to purchase and in the contracts which are sent from his office to the purchaser when a sale is made. No sale is binding until the application is received and approved by the owner of the land, as all property offered is subject to purchase sale, and the owners reserve the right to change prices any time without notice.

**E. P. McCABE**

**NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS.**  
In sending to the management, ALWAYS REFER TO THE ADDRESS AND ADDRESS WHERE SENT TO BE CERTAINLY IN READING THE RIGHT MAN.  
In the larger cities many papers do not reach the advertiser for want of proper direction.

**REPUBLICAN APPEAL.**  
The National Republican Appeal For Good Government, No. 4—The following address is the result of the Committee National Committee.  
The National Republican Appeal For Good Government, No. 4—The following address is the result of the Committee National Committee.  
The National Republican Appeal For Good Government, No. 4—The following address is the result of the Committee National Committee.

**REPUBLICAN CHIEF.**  
The National Republican Appeal For Good Government, No. 4—The following address is the result of the Committee National Committee.  
The National Republican Appeal For Good Government, No. 4—The following address is the result of the Committee National Committee.

Figure 3. Recurring “lots” page.

The “lots” page is important for *The Herald’s* grand narrative of place promotion because it uses powerfully metaphorical language. It explicitly advertises lots of land for sale in Langston, and includes a column alongside the figure that reads: “FREEDOM...Peace, Happiness, and Prosperity... Do you Want all These?... Then Cast Your Lot With Us & Make Your Home in Langston City.” For those unfamiliar with Christianity, “cast your lot

with us” might not seem like an important phrase other than its obvious imploring of settlers to come settle in Langston. However, delving into the Bible reveals meaning below the surface of the phrase. “Casting lots” is an ancient Judeo-Christian ritual used to render an impartial or unbiased decision akin to consulting God for the answer to a divisive problem. It is done by tossing small stones, not unlike today’s dice and is mostly familiar to Christians due to its mention in the New Testament as the method for deciding who would receive Jesus Christ’s clothes once He was crucified, but is used in the Bible in other places as well.

Proverbs 16:33 (NIV) says “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.” Proverbs 18:18 (NIV) says “Casting the lot settles disputes and keeps strong opponents apart.” Additionally, Acts 1:26 (NIV) recalls the ritual of casting lots among Jesus’ disciples to determine who would carry on Jesus’ ministry after his crucifixion. 1 Samuel 14:40-42 (NIV) also recalls the practice of casting lots, when Saul was trying to decide who was at fault among the Israelites for their defeat against the Philistines in battle. Finally, the most popular mention of “casting lots” is in Matthew 27:35 (NIV), which says “When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots.”

These sacred Christian passages imply that casting lots was vested with religious meaning, not unlike asking God Himself for the right decision to make in difficult circumstances. In fact, in the examples from 1 Samuel and Acts, the biblical characters practicing the ritual expressly prayed to God for guidance in their decision and used the practice of casting lots as a physical confirmation of supernatural guidance. The religious meaning invested in this ritual is absolutely vital for understanding *The Herald’s* metaphor of casting lots.

*The Herald* encourages readers to “cast their lot” with Langston, alongside the map of lots available for settlement. Herein lies the intersection of place and Christianity in *The*

*Herald's* racial discourse. This powerful metaphor manifests itself on two levels. The first and most obvious is that Langston simply has lots of land available for settlement. The second, less obvious, appeal is to the notion that coming to Langston is absolutely the right decision for black southerners feeling the weight of oppression. Perhaps most importantly, it is an appeal to God-ordained purpose for coming to Langston. If the ritual of casting lots was used in the Bible to call on God for guidance, black Christians would at least subconsciously know it refers to the fulfillment of God-ordained promise, an idea that fits nicely with Langston's utopian "promised land" image.

Additionally, the "lots page" is always accompanied by a regular column entitled "Say Mister!" It reads as follows:

"Do you read?  
Does any one of your family read?  
Are you inclined to foster race institutions?  
Don't you want to know of the doings of your people elsewhere?  
Wouldn't you like to hear a true, impartial and unprejudiced report when you do hear?  
Wouldn't you like to read a paper that credits the Negroes with what they do?  
Wouldn't you like to read a paper that doesn't delight in showing up the bad deeds laid at the feet of our people and leaving the good ones lay dormant?  
Would you like to keep up with the lynching, whipping, burning at the stake and outrages brutally heaped upon our law abiding citizens?  
Would you like to inspire the intellectuality of your offsprings and crown their heads with wisdom?  
Would you like to train them to perfect their wonderful conceptions by having them read good race literature and acquaint themselves with the characteristics of our great Negroes?  
Would you like to combine your efforts and help to establish businesses for the employment of your sons and daughters?  
If you have an interest in your children and the race and imbued with the propensities named above, you will send us 8 Yearly subscribers and obtain a copy for yourself One Year free, or send 8 names and obtain the paper One Year for \$1.25 each, to R. Emmett Stewart, Ed. and Bus. Man'g'r of THE HERALD. DON'T MISS OUR OFFER."

This regular column stresses many Washingtonian themes, like education, publication of black accomplishments, and the promotion of a positive public black image. Additionally, the promotion of racial justice is evident, as well as one particular reference to

Christianity. The pairing of this regular column with the “lots” map performs the same function as the “cast your lot with us” metaphor in terms of using the idea of *place* to draw out a message about Langston to compel settlers to come.

The education theme is present in the line: “Would you like to inspire the intellectuality of your offsprings and crown their heads with wisdom?” Through pairing this regular column with the “lots” map, *The Herald* implies that coming to Langston will provide black settlers an opportunity for their children to receive an education. The latter part of this same line contains the sole reference to Christianity in the “Say Mister” column: “crown their heads with wisdom.”

This is a reference from the Bible that occurs in several places, and is associated with acquiring wisdom. Proverbs 14:24 (NIV, my emphasis) says “The wealth of the wise is their *crown*, but the folly of fools yields folly.” Proverbs 16:31 (NIV, my emphasis) says “Gray hair is a *crown* of splendor; it is attained in the way of righteousness.” Additionally, the crown is symbolically used elsewhere in the Old Testament in reference to divine good (Exodus 29:6, 39:30, Leviticus 8:9). *The Herald*’s use of the phrase “crown their heads with wisdom” in tandem with “inspiring the intellectuality of your offspring” is a subtle appeal to Langston’s status as a sacred place where Christian wisdom is to be gained. Additionally, the pairing of education with Christian language reinforces the importance of black schools and black churches as the bedrock social institutions for all-black towns.

The publication of black accomplishments and the promotion of a positive public black image are also present in the “Say Mister” column, despite their overall absence from my analysis. Two lines evidence these themes: “Wouldn’t you like to read a paper that credits the Negroes with what they do? Wouldn’t you like to read a paper that doesn’t delight in showing up the bad deeds laid at the feet of our people and leaving the good ones lay



dormant?” Despite the lack of actual publication of black accomplishments and overall racial image promotion, these themes remain central to how *The Herald* envisions its own mission.

Next, the theme of racial justice is present in the “Say Mister” column. The following line evidences this theme: “Would you like to keep up with the lynching, whipping, burning at the stake and outrages brutally heaped upon our law abiding citizens?” In keeping with the results of my analysis, racial justice is an important part of *The Herald’s* discourse.

The rhetorical questions that the “Say Mister” column asks relate to the Washingtonian themes of education, publication of black accomplishments, and the promotion of a positive public black image, as well as the theme of racial justice. Additionally, the Christian reference to “crown their heads with wisdom” supports my overall hypothesis that *The Herald’s* place promotion occurs at the intersection of Washingtonian racial discourse and Christian faith.

Finally, the representation of the lots available for settlement depicts equally sized blocks of land. There are two important implications for this representation, which overlap and are interrelated. The first implication is that there is a connection to the utopian underpinnings of town settlement. Could it be that *The Herald* depicts the lots equally to subtly demonstrate the equal opportunity and treatment its settlers should receive upon arrival? It would not be farfetched to suggest that the lots are strategically representative of Langston’s utopian aspirations.

Second, and interrelated, is the idea that these lots fall into broader patterns of town planning that value a particular spatial order that is “easy to design, quick to survey, simple to comprehend, [has] the appearance of rationality, [offers] all settlers apparently equal locations for homes and business within its standardized structure” (Reps 1979, x). The gridiron pattern offers convenient planning with minimal effort or attention to ecological or

topographical detail, and its standardization reflects colonial efforts to commodify land for buying and selling (Porter 2010). Thus, one possible interpretation of *The Herald's* town lots' equal representation is that it was simply a convenient way to advertise available land, fitting the broad patterns of colonial settlement elsewhere in the United States (Reps 1979; Porter 2010).

In addition to the Washingtonian and Christian themes represented by the town lots map and its accompanying "Say Mister" column, the equal drawing of town lots connects to the utopian underpinnings of equality that the town is founded on and to broader colonial patterns of land commodification and settlement.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, my results indicate the presence of Washingtonian themes I expected based on Cronin's (2000) study, with the exception of very few counts of the publication of black accomplishments and the promotion of a positive black public image. Additionally, my discourse analysis points to the heavy influence of Christianity on *The Herald's* place promotion strategy. Making use of intertextuality, or how one text makes meaning against the backdrop of another, helped me draw out specific examples of Christian metaphors from the Bible that *The Herald* used to make their racialized and moralized narrative very compelling. Overall, my results point to the influence of black identity politics on the place promotion and settlement of Langston and highlight the importance of Christianity in understanding the Washingtonian brand of identity politics.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this thesis I have attempted to examine how *The Herald's* discourse compares to what scholars have said about Oklahoma's black press, the extent to which Langston is promoted with Washingtonian themes, the scale of that representation, and the role of Christian rhetoric in soliciting settlers to black utopia. This chapter highlights the limitations, results, and significance of this study.

#### 5.2 Limitations

The major limitation of this research is also a major contributor. My positionality as a white Christian is an important limitation, but I think it improves, rather than hinders, this thesis research. My knowledge of the Bible and of the Christian faith is an insider position, while my positionality as a white person is an outsider position. I believe that my positionality helps expose places in *The Herald* where the authors attempted to take back their faith from white hegemony and provides an inroad to understand how meaning about place gets made against the backdrop of the Bible. Without my position as a person intimately familiar with Christianity and the Bible, this research would not have been possible. However, my outsider position is one limitation to consider.

#### 5.3 Place and identity politics in establishing Langston

My first two research questions point broadly toward the role of Washingtonian identity politics in the establishment and promotion of Langston. In other words, does *The Herald* appeal to the political and racial philosophy of Booker T. Washington to recruit black settlers to Langston? The answer to this is *yes*. Cronin (2000) conducted a content analysis of three of Oklahoma's prominent all-black newspapers and found the themes I used in Table 1, with the exception of the emergent themes of racial (in)justice and general separatism and the ones related to scale. Among Cronin's (2000) themes, all of them were found to occur in more than 29% of *The Herald's* editions except for the publication of black persons' accomplishments and the promotion of a positive black image. Significantly, reference to a Victorian, Christian morality was extremely prevalent and occurred nearly six times for every edition on average. The theme of Christianity then is a central theme I unpack in the context of Washingtonian racial philosophy through intertextual discourse analysis.

My third research question draws out the scale of "black utopia" and I answer it by recording the scale at which each place promotion reference takes place. This question is significant because it articulates exactly where this black utopia is in terms of its extensiveness or scale. My results do not clearly point to either Langston City or Oklahoma Territory as the destination of black utopia, but Langston has the slight edge. This is significant because it speaks to the nature of the all-black town movement itself, and lends credit to McCabe's effort at creating an all-black state out of Oklahoma Territory. In short, neither Langston City nor Oklahoma Territory are clearly the only "black utopia," so we can

consider both scales to be represented as a racial haven for black settlers seeking the promised land.

My fourth research question is exploratory in nature and seeks to articulate the role of Christian rhetoric in recruiting settlers to black utopia. I answer this question by counting the number of Christian references in *The Herald* and by performing intertextual discourse analysis on some key images and passages of text. Some of these images and passages are recurring, and some are isolated. My results suggest that Christianity is an important way that *The Herald* promotes the idea of a black utopia and that we might even call it a black promised land instead. I explain the important role of Christianity in section 5.4.

In conclusion, my results suggest that Washingtonian identity politics heavily influenced the place promotion and establishment of Langston and represented it as the black promised land, a place to which southerners enduring institutional oppression could make their nearly religious pilgrimage. The extent or scale of the black promised land is not clearly defined based on my results, but clearly exists. Lastly, Christianity emerged as crucial to the representation of Langston as a black utopia, and my results suggest that we even call it the black promised land. In what follows, I unpack the role of Christianity in creating this image more thoroughly.

#### 5.4 Christianity and discourse in Langston's place promotion

The role of Christianity in representing Langston City or Oklahoma Territory as a black utopia or black promised land cannot be overstated. Several examples throughout the six-year publication period of *The Herald* demonstrate this crucial relationship. In what

follows, I briefly discuss the extensiveness of Christian references from my results, then use examples from intertextual discourse analysis to highlight how *The Herald* uses the Bible as a background text against which it makes its meaning.

The results of my analysis suggest that some reference to Christianity occurs nearly six times for each of the 65 editions of *The Herald*. Each edition has four pages, so on average Christian references appear more than once per page. Of course, some pages do not have any and some pages have ten or more, but on average *The Herald* references Christianity more than once per page. Nearly three-fourths of these Christian references are what I have defined as “colloquial/normative” for their abstract reference to God or prayer, or to their more concrete references to the Bible itself or the reporting of happenings in local churches. Colloquial sayings normalize the role of Christianity in representing the morality of racial justice and assure potential settlers that the black promised land contains a thriving community of faith. The extensiveness of colloquial Christian sayings, over one per page on average, emphasizes just how important this theme is to the representation of a black promised land.

The other key way that *The Herald* uses Christianity in representation is through the use of metaphors and place-associations. Perhaps the most influential, and the only recurring metaphor, is identified in Figure 3. As I discussed, “Cast your lot with us” references both the availability of land for settlement in Langston and the traditional Christian ritual of casting lots, used to render an impartial or unbiased decision. This represents Langston as a “sure bet”—but not only that—a sure sign of God’s promise to black settlers. Prayer often

accompanied casting lots in biblical times and the decision was impartial because of God's intervention in it. Thus, this striking Christian metaphor demonstrates *The Herald's* ability to make meaning about a place against the backdrop of the Bible and Christian faith.

Other uses of Christianity to appeal to black settlers occur throughout *The Herald's* publication in isolated (non-recurring) instances. One of these in particular is in reference to the free homes movement: "step to the pool of determination." This example blends both Christianity and elements of Washingtonian identity politics to make its case for *place*. "Step to the pool of determination" is used in this context to emphasize self-sufficiency and the need to act on behalf of the good of oneself and one's family to stake a claim for free homes. The Christian element of this reference is found in the New Testament, when Jesus Christ asks a sick man lying next to the town's healing pool, common in the Middle East throughout biblical times, whether or not he wants to be made well. *The Herald* appeals to both Washingtonian and Christian notions of *choice* and individuality.

The "casting lots" and "pool of determination" examples highlight how *The Herald* makes meaning about race and place against the backdrop of the Bible and Christianity. The method of uncovering how one text makes meaning against the backdrop of another is intertextuality, which is a type of discourse analysis that informs a large portion of my work. In conclusion, Christian metaphors and place-associations occur throughout the duration of *The Herald's* publication and heavily inform the meaning it makes about race and place.

## 5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, *The Herald* represents Langston with all of the key Washingtonian themes expected based on Cronin's (2000) study and incorporates subtle and not-so-subtle appeals to Christianity throughout the duration of publication. The town is clearly and compellingly depicted as a black promised land where black people can claim land and lead a quiet, hard-working life free from the oppression of the Jim Crow South.



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VITA

Jordan Paul Brasher

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: *THE LANGSTON CITY HERALD: RACE AND REPRESENTATION IN THE  
CONSTRUCTION OF A BLACK PROMISED LAND*

Major Field: Geography

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Geography at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May 2016.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Geoscience at Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee in 2014.

Experience:

Physical Geography Lab Instructor. OSU Geography.	Spring 2016
GIS Research Assistant. OSU Geography..	Fall 2015
Editorial Assistant. <i>Journal of Cultural Geography</i> .	Summer 2015, 2016
Graduate Assistant/Grader. OSU Geography..	Fall 2014-Spring 2015
GIS Intern. City of Brentwood. Brentwood, Tennessee.	July 2013-March 2014
GIS Intern. Wilson County Planning. Lebanon, Tennessee.	Sept. 2012-Dec. 2012

Professional Memberships:

Association of American Geographers  
International Society for Landscape, Place, and Material Culture