

## VII. THE DISTRIBUTION AND TREND OF NEGRO POPULATION IN CENTRAL OKLAHOMA

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Oklahoma, as compared with the older Cotton Belt States, has a small Negro population. In 1920, the last date for which complete statistics are now available, there were 149,408 Negroes in Oklahoma, or 7.4% of the total number of residents in the state. On the same date the percentage of colored persons in Mississippi was 52, in South Carolina 51, in Louisiana 38, in Arkansas 27, and in Texas 15.9. Okfuskee county has a higher percentage of colored population than any other county in the state, yet even here the percentage was only 34.4 in 1920.

### Colored Population of Central Oklahoma

The colored population of the eleven most centrally located counties in Oklahoma (Fig. 1) was, in 1920, only 31,858 or 7.9% of the total population of the area. This was only 216 more than resided in the same area in 1910. The following table indicates the percentage of the total population classed as colored in each county in the Federal censuses of 1910 and 1920, and the total Negro population on each of these dates.

## Negroes in Central Oklahoma.

County	Percent colored		TOTAL NEGRO POPULATION		Percent of decrease 1910-1920
	1920	1910	1920	1910	
Logan	23.3	25.8	6,422	8,196	-21.6
Lincoln	11.18	11.30	3,955	3,945	-.002
Kingfisher	10.40	12.7	1,623	2,392	-32.1
Oklahoma	9.8	10.8	11,401	9,227	+23.6*
Garvin	6.2	8.7	2,006	2,318	-13.5
Grady	4.4	5.7	1,478	1,731	-14.6
Pottawatomie	4.2	4.6	1,916	2,017	-5.0
Payne	4.0	6.1	1,208	1,456	-17.0
McCain	4.0	6.9	776	1,081	-28.2
Canadian	2.8	3.5	614	823	-25.3
Cleveland	2.4	2.4	460	456	+ .08*
Central Okla.	7.9	8.9	31,858	33,642	+ .056*
Oklahoma City	9.0	10.1	8,241	6,546	+25.8*
Oklahoma State	7.4	8.3	149,408	137,614	+ 8.57*

\*Increase of percent from 1910 to 1920.

A glance at the above table reveals the fact that in none of the central Oklahoma counties did Negroes constitute as high a percentage of the total population in 1920 as in 1910. Only in Oklahoma county was there an appreciable increase in Negro population. Nearly four-fifths of this increase was in Oklahoma City. Thus there appears to be a definite tendency in central Oklahoma for Negroes to leave the farms; some of them migrate to nearby cities, other as is general throughout the South, to northern industrial centers.

The detailed distribution of rural Negroes in central Oklahoma is indicated by Fig. 1. This map is based on the enumeration of persons in the various school districts between the ages of six (6) and twenty-one (21) years on January 15, 1927. The map reveals a much denser Negro population in the northern than in the southern portion of the area. This contrast appears to have been due in part to the more favorable location of the northern counties for infiltration from the areas of relatively dense Negro population in the Creek Nation to the east; and to the predominance of northern white stock in the section. An important edaphic influence, however, is revealed by the marked localization of Negroes in the scrub timbered sandstone hills section of northeastern Oklahoma county, eastern Logan county, and the sandy transported soil belt north of the Cimarron River in Kingfisher and Logan counties. These timbered areas of high Negro population are, because of hilly surface or sandy soil, not so well suited to the production of wheat as are the prairie areas where the soil texture is heavier. They produce fair crops of cotton, but, in general, are less desirable agriculturally than are the adjacent lands where white population predominates.

