

December 1978

The Dream That Failed

by Anthony J. Seals

*Edward P. McCabe and the movement
for Black self-determination in the West*

The period of reconstruction which followed the Civil War was not at all what most black people envisioned. Instead of the freedom and land they expected, blacks found their backs once again to the wall. Lynchings, white vigilante groups and corrupt local governments forced many to leave their homes in search of a better life. Thus began the mass migration of blacks westward across the Mississippi, first to Kansas and then, several years later, to Oklahoma.

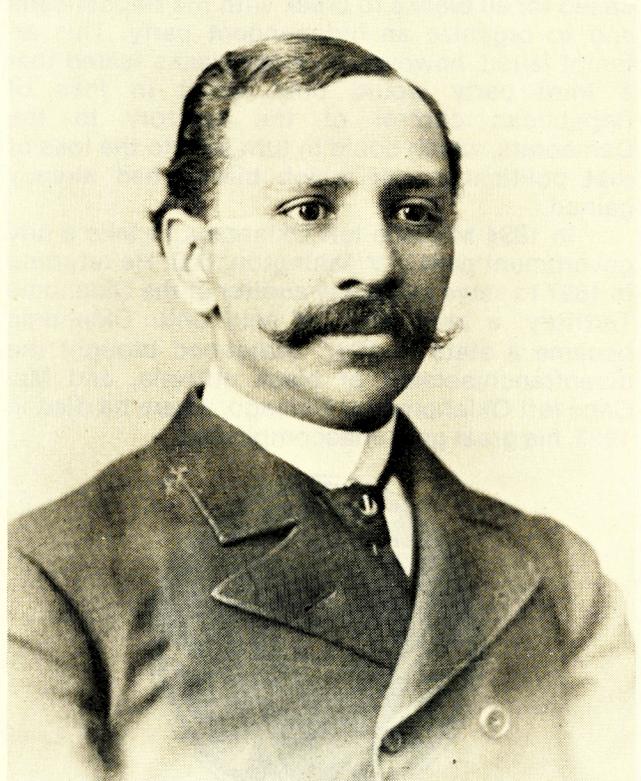
An influential voice in both movements was that of Edward P. McCabe. In the late 1860s McCabe moved from New York to Chicago, where he completed his law studies and worked in the Cook County Treasurer's Office. While in Chicago McCabe and his friend Abram T. Hall, city editor of the black newspaper **Conservator**, developed an interest in the migration of black settlers to Kansas. They planned to join a Hodgeman County colony, but upon reaching Leavenworth they decided instead to join the black colony at Nicodemus in northwest Kansas.

McCabe, a Republican, gained popularity with both black and white voters. He served as temporary County Clerk for Graham County in April and May of 1880. In November of 1881 he was elected to the same office, a position he held until 1882, when he was elected Kansas State Auditor. One of the first black men to hold a high elective office outside the South, McCabe remained in office until 1887.

In the mid-1880s, however, McCabe perceived that the prospects for black political power and independence in Kansas had taken a turn for the worse. The continued influx of black settlers had increased racial hostility, and the position of blacks was steadily deteriorating. McCabe tried to gain support for blacks from Republican leaders in Washington, but President Harrison was not in-

terested, stating that McCabe was "a colored man."

An increasing number of Kansas blacks, including some from the Nicodemus colony, chose to pack up and try again elsewhere. Seeing the opportunity for black self-determination on lands newly appropriated from the Seminole and Creek tribes, groups such as the First Colored Real Estate Homestead and Emigration Association of the State of Kansas encouraged immigration to the Oklahoma Territory. Edward P. McCabe was a major leader in this movement. In October of 1890 he established Langston City, which the **Langston City Herald** proclaimed to be "The Only Distinctively Negro City in America."



Edward P. McCabe

Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka

McCabe, however, was not content with the colonization effort. He was working toward an even greater goal—a black state, with himself as governor. The **American Citizen** of October 23, 1891, quotes McCabe as saying:

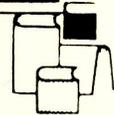
I expect to have a Negro population of over one hundred thousand within two years, and we will not only have made substantial advancement for my people, but we will by that time secure control of political affairs. At present we are republicans, but the time will soon come when we will be able to dictate the policy of this territory or state, and when that time comes we will have a Negro state governed by Negroes. We do not wish to antagonize the whites. They are necessary in the development of a new country, but they owe my race homes, and my race owes to itself a governmental control of those homes.

But problems soon arose, both for McCabe and for the black self-determination movement. In spite of the **Langston City Herald's** warning that only those with money should come, many blacks arrived in Oklahoma with no money and no means of survival. Blacks in Oklahoma met with opposition not only from whites, who adopted the terrorizing tactics of the Ku Klux Klan, but also from the indigenous Indian populations. McCabe himself lost favor with white Republican leaders after his involvement in the Langston City project, and his desire to be appointed territorial governor earned him the nickname "pushahead." Disillusioned with Republican efforts to stem the tide of black political power in Oklahoma, McCabe called for all blacks to break with the Republicans and to organize an independent party. This attempt failed, however, as most blacks feared that a third party would only result in loss of Republican control of the territory to the Democrats, which could in turn lead to the loss of that political power which blacks had already gained.

In 1894 McCabe left Oklahoma to take a city government post in Washington, D.C. He returned in 1897 to serve as deputy auditor of the Oklahoma Territory, a post that he held until Oklahoma became a state in 1907. Statehood brought the disenfranchisement of black citizens, and McCabe left Oklahoma for Chicago, where he died in 1923, his great goal unaccomplished.



NEW ACQUISITIONS



BOOKS . . .

Beautiful, Also, Are the Souls of My Black Sisters by Jeanne Noble. A history of black women.

Listen Chicano! An Informal History of the Mexican-American by Manuel A. Machado, Jr. Surveys the conflict and blending of Anglo and Spanish cultures in the American Southwest, with particular emphasis on the 1960s.

The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925 by Wilson Jeremiah Moses. Presents black nationalism as a conservative intellectual movement aimed at transmitting Anglo-American values to blacks.

Our Red Brothers and the Peace Policy of President Ulysses S. Grant by Lawrie Tatum. Reprint of an 1899 examination of the Indian policy of the Grant administration.

Chicano Politics by Maurilio Vigil. Brings together current data on Chicano organizations, voting patterns, and political leaders.

James T. Rapier and Reconstruction by Loren Schweniger. Dispels the myth that black reconstruction leaders were ignorant dupes of white carpetbaggers.

REFERENCE BOOKS . . .

American Indian Reference Book. A guide to tribes, reservations, schools, craft shops, museums, history, and resource material.

Bibliography of Articles and Papers on North American Indian Art. Listings by author, by tribe, and by name of craft. Includes articles published in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

JOURNALS . . .

The Bilingual Journal. Articles and reviews relevant to bilingual and bicultural education.

Focus. A monthly newsletter designed to provide information on issues of interest to blacks and other minorities involved in the political process.

FILMSTRIPS . . .

From Racism to Pluralism. Examines racist attitudes and institutional racism. Includes filmstrip, cassette, pictures, and discussion guide.

Hulan Jack Jr. speaks of Hulan Jack Sr.

by Valerie Pope

The large round clock read 1:00 p.m. Papers, books and computer printouts were scattered across the wood desk. My nose had to adjust to the strong odor of several chemicals while my eyes scanned over test tubes and bacteria cultures. Off to the left of the room sat a man with his legs propped up on the desk. He let his head fall back as he took a drag from his cigarette.

"My father didn't want me to go into physics," said Hulan Jack Jr., physics professor at K-State. "Back in that day black physicists just did not get hired. He could not see me making a living from it. My father was looking out for my interests."

Looking out for the interest of others was a way of life for Hulan's father, Hulan Jack Sr. He accomplished many things in his life, one of the most outstanding being the first black borough president of Manhattan, New York.

Jack Sr. was elected to the borough presidency in 1953 and resigned in 1960. While in office he did not let his blackness get in his way.

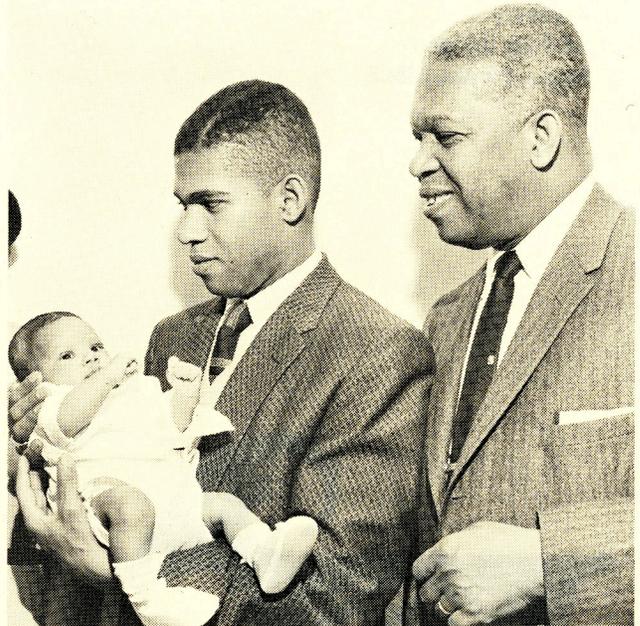
"I went into office with no chips on my shoulder. I didn't treat the office as a black borough president but as borough president. I was concerned with everyone. My whole philosophy was contact with all people and making sure the political structure was fair," Hulan Jack Sr. said during a telephone interview. Jack's strong belief and devotion to this philosophy led to his nomination.

"My nomination stemmed from devoting myself to my work. During my term as borough president I received most cordial acceptance and we (my peers) had very good relations."

Many issues came across Hulan Jack's desk during his seven-year term, some of them being the closing of the Third Avenue "L", housing, education, and improvement of highways and lighting in various areas in Manhattan.

"My father was born on the Caribbean island of St. Lucia. He came to New York in 1923 with his father, Edwin," Hulan Jack Jr. said.

In 1923 Jack Sr. started night school and



Three generations—Hulan Jack III; Hulan Jack Jr.; Hulan Jack Sr.

received his high school diploma in 1929. During that same year he entered New York University, where he obtained three years years of college credit.

While going to school Jack Sr. was employed as a factory worker for the Peerless Paper Box company. After 30 years he rose from factory worker to become one of the vice-presidents of the company. Not only did Jack Sr. fill his time with school and work but also politics. He joined the New Deal Democratic Club, a local political group.

"I wanted to know something about government, so I spent my time learning more about the city," he said.

Working in the community and establishing himself with people was rewarded by his election to the New York State Assembly in 1940. He served in the assembly until 1953 when he was elected Manhattan borough president.

Currently, Hulan Jack Sr. is retired and living in New York.

Hulan Jack Jr. has been on the faculty of the physics department at K-State since July of 1971. Before coming here he taught at Finch College, an all girls school in New York, Pratt Institute and the New York Institute of Technology. In 1971 he received his doctorate degree from New York University where he was also a speaker-in-residence for two years. Hulan and his wife, Polly, have four children; Hulan III; Moira; Jeffrey; and Cherie.

The Minorities Resource and Research Center Newsletter is a bimonthly publication.

Antonia Quintana Pigno, Director, the Minorities Resource and Research Center. Farrell Library, Kansas State University. 532-6516 Ext. 51.

Beverly Gaines and Anthony J. Seals, Editors



**MINORITIES RESOURCE
AND RESEARCH CENTER**

Farrell Library
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas 66506



INTERSESSION COURSE

January 2-16, 1979

Architecture 601 Topics in History of the Designed Environment: The Architecture of the Pueblo Indian.

An evaluation of the historical background and development of the Pueblos, their religious and cultural values, and the influences on the ancient and modern built form. Study will be concentrated under four broad headings: the Pueblo as dwelling, the Pueblo and culture, the Pueblo and social organization, and the Pueblo and modern life. The course includes visits to Mesa Verde, Aztec, Chaco Canyon, Taos, Acoma, and San Lorenzo. Course requirements include a final presentation consisting of drawings, sketches, photos, and a written report. No prerequisite. Nabeel Hamdi, Instructor.

