

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910482008803321
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Titolo	The Black Towns / Norman L. Crockett
Pubbl/distr/stampa	University Press of Kansas, 1979 Lawrence : , : Regents Press of Kansas, , 1979 ©1979
ISBN	9780700630820 0700630821
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (244 Seiten) : Illustrationen
Disciplina	973/.04/96073
Soggetti	Stadt Schwarze Gründung USA
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di contenuto	Cover -- Title Page -- Copyright Page -- Dedication -- Table of Contents -- List of Illustrations -- Preface -- 1. Promoters and Settlers -- 2. Image and Ideology -- 3. Politics and Discrimination -- 4. Economy and Society -- 5. Frustration and Failure -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index -- Back Cover.
Sommario/riassunto	From Appomattox to World War I, Blacks continued their quest for a secure position in the American system. The problem was how to be both black and American—how to find acceptance, or even toleration, in a society in which the boundaries of normative behavior, the values, and the very definition of what it meant to be an American were determined and enforced by whites. A few black leaders proposed selfsegregation inside the United States within the protective confines of an allBlack community as one possible solution. The Blacktown idea reached its peak in the fifty years after the Civil War; at least sixty Black communities were settled between 1865 and 1915. Norman L. Crockett has focused on the formation, growth and failure of five such communities. The towns and the date of their settlement are: Nicodemus, Kansas (1879), established at the time of the Black exodus

from the South; Mound Bayou, Mississippi (1897), perhaps the most prominent Black town because of its close ties to Booker T. Washington and Tuskegee Institute; Langston, Oklahoma (1891), visualized by one of its promoters as the nucleus for the creation of an all-Black state in the West; and Clearview (1903) and Boley (1904), in Oklahoma, twin communities in the Creek Nation which offer the opportunity to observe certain aspects of Indian-Black relations in this area. The role of Blacks in town promotion and settlement has long been a neglected area in western and urban history. Crockett looks at patterns of settlement and leadership, government, politics, economics, and the problems of isolation versus interaction with the white communities. He also describes family life, social life, and class structure within the black towns. Crockett looks closely at the rhetoric and behavior of blacks inside the limits of their own community—isolated from the domination of whites and freed from the daily reinforcement of their subordinate rank in the larger society. He finds that, long before “Black is beautiful” entered the American vernacular, Blacktown residents exhibited a strong sense of race pride. The reader observes in microcosm Black attitudes about many aspects of American life as Crockett ties the Blacktown experience to the larger question of race relations at the turn of the century. This volume also explains the failure of the Blacktown dream. Crockett cites discrimination, lack of capital, and the many forces at work in the local, regional, and national economies. He shows how the racial and townbuilding experiment met its demise as the residents of all-Black communities became both economically and psychologically trapped. This study adds valuable new material to the literature on black history, and makes a significant contribution to American social and urban history, community studies, and the regional history of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Mississippi.

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