

# All Black Towns: Edward P. McCabe and Annie Peters

1. Read and discuss the stories of Annie Peters and Edward P. McCabe.
  - Discuss vocabulary words. Students will use contextual clues to guess the meaning and use dictionaries or the definitions included to find the actual meaning.
  - On an Oklahoma map, students will locate the towns that Edward P. McCabe and Annie Peters helped settle.
2. Students will write short papers comparing and contrasting the stories of Edward P. McCabe and Annie Peters
3. Students will use an online search engine or library resources to research a topic of interest related to the passages about Edward P. McCabe and Annie Peters (land runs, all-Black towns, home demonstration agents, etc.) Students will write short papers based on their research.

## Vocabulary

**canning clubs**—clubs formed for the purpose of teaching girls to can foods for preservation

**commercial**—something produced with the primary objective of making money

**crude**—planned or done in a rough or unskilled way

**conservation**—a careful preservation and protection of something

**efficient**—capable of producing desired results especially without waste

**enterprising**—bold, active, and energetic in undertaking or experimenting

**Five Civilized Tribes**—the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek (Muscogee), and Seminole, the first five tribes that Anglo-European settlers generally considered to be “civilized” according to their own world view, because these five tribes adopted attributes of the colonists’ culture, for example, Christianity, centralized governments, literacy, market participation, written constitutions, intermarriage with white Americans, and plantation slavery practices. The Five Civilized Tribes tended to maintain stable political relations with the Europeans.

**home-demonstration agent**—a person responsible for disseminating educational information related to agriculture and home economics to individuals who did not attend college

**homestead**—settled and farm land, especially under the terms of the Homestead Act

**immigrant**—relating to those who have come to settle in another country

**implement**—an article intended for use in work

**market**—a meeting together of people to buy and sell

## Oklahoma Academic Standards

### GRADE 3

Economics: 1,2,3.

Geography: 1E; 2B. History: 10,11

Speaking and Listening:

R.1,2,3; W.1,2. Reading

and Writing Process: R.2,3.

Critical Reading and Writing:

R.7; W.2. Vocabulary:

R.1,3,5. Research: R.1,2,3,4;

W.1,2,3

### HIGH SCHOOL

Oklahoma History: 4.2

Speaking and Listening:

R.1,2,3; W.1,2. Critical

Reading and Writing:

W.2. Vocabulary: R.1,3,5.

Research: R.1,2,3; W.1,2,3

**migration**—the act or process of moving from one region or country to another  
**predominantly**— for the most part  
**self-sufficient**— able to take care of oneself without outside help  
**slave**— a person who is owned by another person and can be sold at the owner’s will  
**subsistence**— the minimum (as of food and shelter) necessary to support life  
**unsophisticated**— not complex

Source for the following information about Annie Peters: Scholl, Jan, Associate Professor, Penn State University, and Tanya Finchum, Professor/Oral History Librarian, Oklahoma State University, “Annie Peters, one of the first Extension home demonstrators” (abstract), *The Forum for Family and Consumer Issues*, May, 2012, North Carolina State University. <http://ncsu.edu/ffci/publications/2012/v17-n1-2012-spring/index-v17-n1-May-2012.php>

# Edward P. McCabe and Annie Peters

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## EDWARD P. MCCABE

African Americans first came to Indian Territory as **slaves** owned by members of the **Five Civilized Tribes**. The next Black **migrations** were the result of organized efforts by people like Edward P. McCabe. McCabe was an African American businessman who helped found the all-Black town of Langston and later the Colored Agricultural and Normal University (now Langston University).

McCabe and a partner began publication of the *Langston City Herald* in 1890. Copies of the paper were **circulated** throughout the South. Each **issue** included **homesteading** instructions to help **immigrants** understand the procedure before they arrived in Oklahoma Territory. McCabe advised homesteaders to come with enough money to support themselves for one year.

As a result of the advertisements Langston's population swelled to nearly 2,000 people in the weeks before the 1891 Sac and Fox opening. Approximately 1500 African Americans made the run from Langston. An estimated 1,000 secured land.

The first crops grown by African American homesteaders were **subsistence** crops of corn, sweet potatoes, turnips, peas, melons and beans. Black farmers also raised hogs for pork. They planted large **orchards** of peach, plum, apricot and apple trees. As they became more established, Black farmers produced enough eggs, butter, fruits and vegetables to sell to grocers in nearby towns. Peaches grew well in the area around Langston, and some Black farmers took advantage of new **markets**, both local and national. Other **commercial** crops were wheat, oats, hay and cow peas.

Edward P. McCabe went on to have some success in the politics of the new state, but he did not remain in Oklahoma. He sold his holdings and left for Chicago in 1908.

## ANNIE PETERS: FIRST FEDERALLY-APPOINTED BLACK HOME-DEMONSTRATION AGENT

Boley, Oklahoma, was incorporated in 1905 as Boley, Creek Nation, Indian Territory, before Oklahoma became a state in November 1907. In the early 20th century, Boley was the largest **predominantly** black town in the US. Booker T. Washington declared it "the most **enterprising** and in many ways the most interesting of the Negro towns in the US." In 1912, with a population of 4,000, the town had five grocery stores, five hotels, seven restaurants, four cotton gins, three drugstores, a jewelry store, four department stores, two insurance companies, photographer studios, and an ice plant. It had the first black-owned bank and electric company in the state.

Annie Peters, with her husband, William H. Peters, was a Boley pioneer. She would become the first federally-appointed Black **home-demonstration agent** in the country. She began her home demonstration career in 1912, two years before the Smith-Lever Act established federal funding for the program, and paved the way for other home-demonstration educators.

Educational programs were needed for both the Black farmer and his wife. Wives were considered business partners. Most homes at that time did not have electricity, running water, refrigeration, or a reliable source of heat. Annie Peters was hired to help black farm families become self-sufficient by teaching them to raise gardens and **preserve** enough food to get them to the next growing season.

Although food **conservation** was the chief line of work of home demonstration agents, they also taught **rural** women to make or install a variety of labor-saving devices, including fireless cookers, iceless refrigerators, home water systems and more.

Annie first worked with girls through **canning clubs**. Her instructions for canning demonstrations remained in use until the 1940s. Although the **implements** were **unsophisticated**, the procedure was moderately **efficient**. Her canning method was copied in churches and schools and spread to the homes of many Black families as well.