



During the fifty years following the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation, in 1863, and the end of the Civil War, in 1865, a number of promoters sought to establish and build what were variously called All Black Towns, Freedmen's Towns, and Freedom Colonies at the frontiers of what was then a newly reunified thirty-six-state nation. Persons newly freed from slavery departed for what would become very difficult circumstances in semi-urban centers and small towns founded by and for Black individuals and families.

These settlements were described in the Reconstruction period as "defensive communities," intended to protect their residents against the ravages of racist Jim Crow laws. Often founded in conjunction with Native American inhabitants, many of these towns flourished until 1915, when mandates began to diminish the congregation of Black and African American communities. This map, while not complete, illustrates (in green) the breadth of these towns across an undivided America.