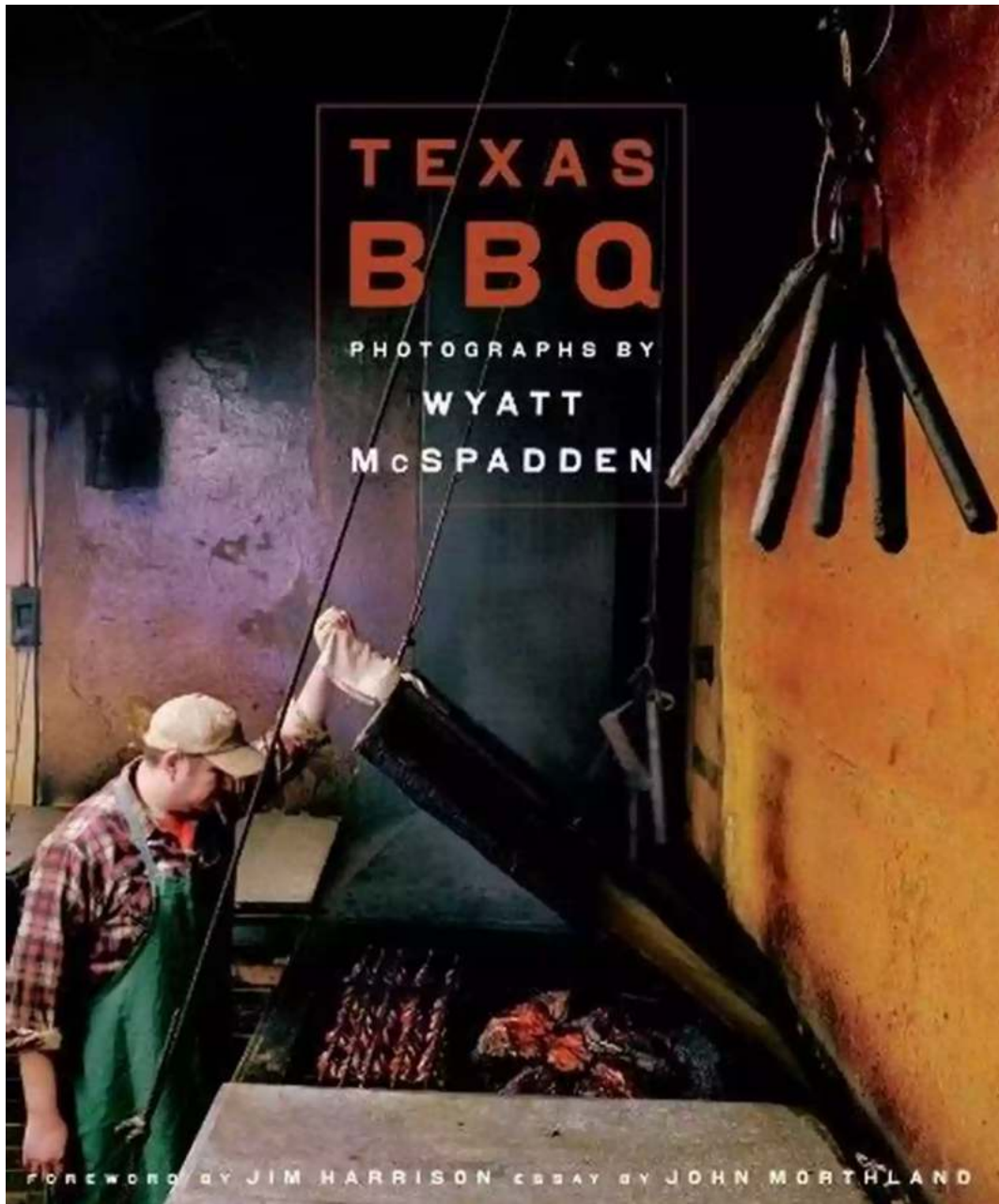


# Independent Black Texans In The Time Of Jim Crow: Jack And Doris Smothers In

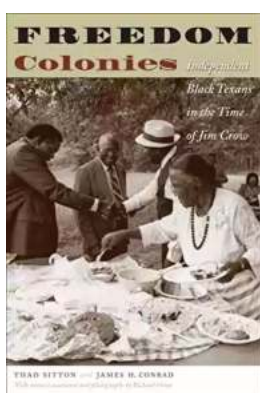


In the era of Jim Crow segregation, African Americans faced numerous challenges in their pursuit of a better life. However, despite the systemic racism and discrimination, some individuals managed to carve out a path of independence and success for themselves. One such inspiring example is the

story of Jack and Doris Smothers, who defied the odds and flourished in Texas during this tumultuous time.

## Breaking Barriers: From Humble Beginnings to Entrepreneurship

Jack and Doris Smothers were born in the late 19th century in rural Texas. They both grew up in impoverished families and were intimately familiar with the hardships faced by the black community in their area. However, instead of succumbing to adversity, they embarked on a journey to build a better future.



### Freedom Colonies: Independent Black Texans in the Time of Jim Crow (Jack and Doris Smothers Series in Texas History, Life, and Culture Book 15)

by Thad Sitton(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 7024 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 257 pages

Lending : Enabled



Jack, a charismatic and highly intelligent man, developed an interest in entrepreneurship from a young age. He recognized the potential in his community and the need for goods and services that were often inaccessible to African Americans due to segregation. With sheer determination and unwavering resilience, Jack set out to establish his own business.

Doris, an equally driven and passionate individual, fully supported Jack's vision and soon became his partner in both life and business. Together, they built a formidable duo that would go on to challenge societal norms and improve the lives of many in their community.

## **The Birth of an Empire**

Jack and Doris started small, opening a modest one-room grocery store in their hometown. They faced significant obstacles, from obtaining loans to managing competition from white-owned businesses. However, their unparalleled work ethic, exceptional customer service, and commitment to providing quality products at affordable prices began to attract a loyal customer base.

As their business grew, Jack and Doris expanded beyond the grocery industry and ventured into other sectors such as clothing, hardware, and even transportation. They recognized the importance of providing a wide range of services to cater to the diverse needs of their community, ensuring that African Americans had access to choices previously denied to them.

## **Empowering the Community: Social and Philanthropic Initiatives**

Jack and Doris understood that their success meant nothing if they didn't actively contribute to the betterment of their community. Not only did they provide employment opportunities to fellow African Americans, but they also became vocal advocates for civil rights and equality.

Jack and Doris actively supported local organizations fighting for racial justice and education for the black youth. They donated a significant portion of their profits towards these causes and were passionate about improving access to quality education and equal opportunities for all African Americans.

## **Legacy and Impact**

The legacy of Jack and Doris Smothers continues to inspire generations of African Americans. Their determination, perseverance, and belief in equality allowed them to thrive in a deeply segregated society. Their businesses served as safe havens and gathering places for the black community, providing a sense of empowerment and unity.

Jack and Doris Smothers were not only entrepreneurs; they were beacons of hope, resilience, and progress in a time of darkness and injustice. Their story serves as a reminder that the pursuit of independence and success is possible regardless of societal challenges, and their impact reverberates to this day.

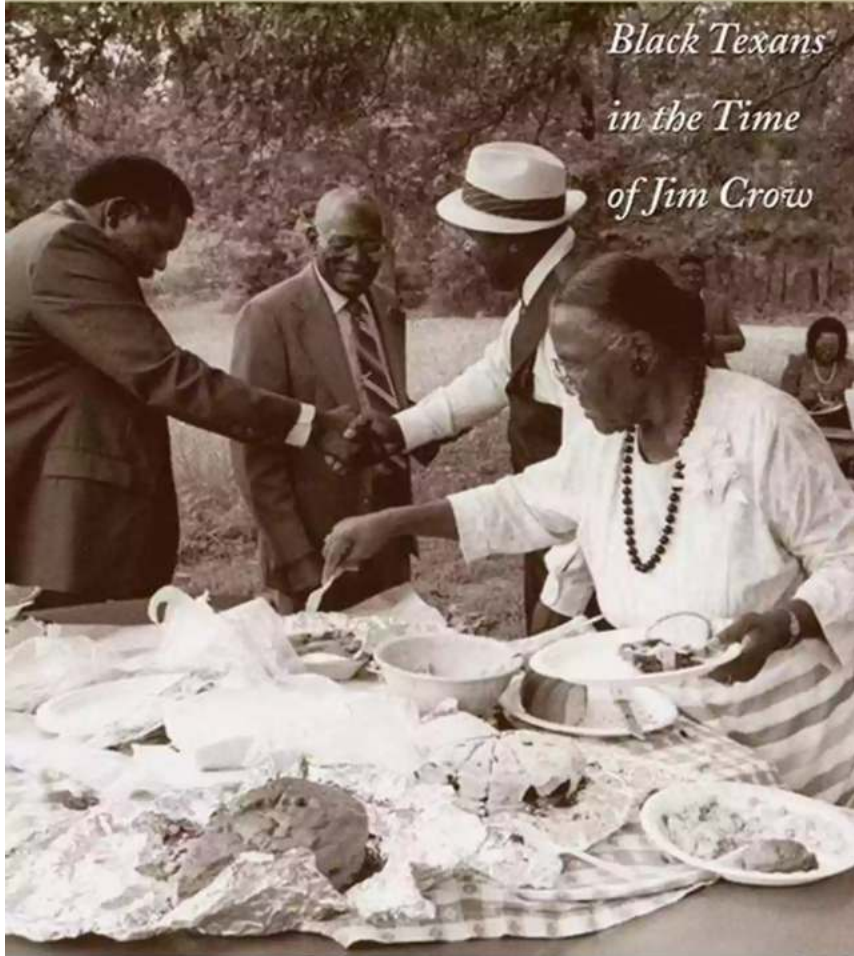
### **Inspiring Change: The Legacy Lives On**

The story of independent black Texans like Jack and Doris Smothers illuminates the often overlooked contributions of African Americans during the Jim Crow era. Their ability to thrive amidst adversity reminds us of the indomitable spirit and resilience within the black community.

As we continue to navigate the complexities of our present world, we must draw inspiration from those who fought against injustice and discrimination. The legacy of Jack and Doris Smothers should encourage us to challenge the status quo, create opportunities for all, and promote inclusive societies where everyone can pursue their dreams, independent of their race or background.

# **FREEDOM** **Colonies** *Independent*

*Black Texans  
in the Time  
of Jim Crow*



**THAD SITTON and JAMES H. CONRAD**  
*With research assistance and photographs by Richard Orton*

In the end, it is through stories like that of Jack and Doris Smothers that we can uncover the hidden narratives of courage and triumph. Let their story inspire us to seek progress, empower our communities, and celebrate the strength of the human spirit.

Remember, change begins with us.



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A history of independent African American settlements in Texas during the Jim Crow era, featuring historical and contemporary photographs.

In the decades following the Civil War, nearly a quarter of African Americans achieved a remarkable victory—they got their own land. While other ex-slaves and many poor whites became trapped in the exploitative sharecropping system, these independence-seeking individuals settled on pockets of unclaimed land that had been deemed too poor for farming and turned them into successful family farms. In these self-sufficient rural communities, often known as “freedom colonies,” African Americans created a refuge from the discrimination and violence that routinely limited the opportunities of blacks in the Jim Crow South.

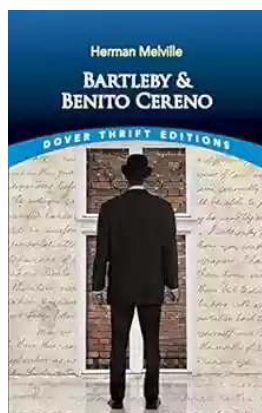
Freedom Colonies is the first book to tell the story of these independent African American settlements. Thad Sitton and James Conrad focus on communities in Texas, where blacks achieved a higher percentage of land ownership than in any



other state of the Deep South. The authors draw on a vast reservoir of ex-slave narratives, oral histories, written memoirs, and public records to describe how the freedom colonies formed and to recreate the lifeways of African Americans who made their living by farming or in skilled trades such as milling and blacksmithing. They also uncover the forces that led to the decline of the communities from the 1930s onward, including economic hard times and the greed of whites who found legal and illegal means of taking black-owned land. And they visit some of the remaining communities to discover how their independent way of life endures into the twenty-first century.

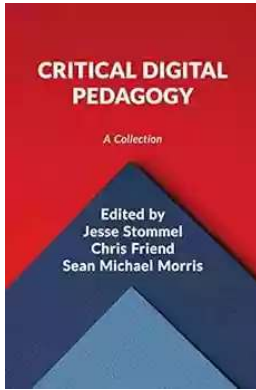
“Thad Sitton and James H. Conrad have made an important contribution to African American and southern history with their study of communities fashioned by freedmen in the years after emancipation.” —Journal of American History

“This study is a thoughtful and important addition to an understanding of rural Texas and the nature of black settlements.” —Journal of Southern History



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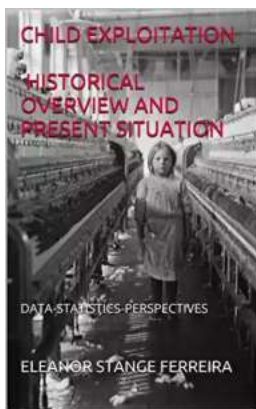
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