

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### 1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Langston Jail

Other Names: NA

Name of Related Multiple-Property Listing: Calaboose (Early Jails) in Oklahoma

### 2. Location

Street and Number: 205 Drexel Street

City or Town: Langston State: Oklahoma County: Logan

Not for Publication: NA Vicinity: NA

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B X C \_\_\_ D

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____	_____
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
_____	_____
<b>Title:</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_ entered in the National Register
- \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_ removed from the National Register
- \_\_\_ other:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

- Building
- District
- Site

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

Structure

Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously in the National Register: NA

---

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

GOVERNMENT/correctional facility

**Current Function**

VACANT/not in use

---

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

---

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

OTHER/vernacular

### Materials

Foundation: CONCRETE

Walls: STONE/sandstone

Roof: OTHER/built-up

Porch: NA

Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE/sandstone

## Narrative Description

---

### Summary Paragraph

The 1935 Langston Jail is a one-room jailhouse in Langston, Logan County, an All-Black Town in Oklahoma. The building retains character-defining features and the physical and historical integrity to convey its historical and architectural significance.

---

### Description

Langston is a rural community in central Oklahoma within Logan County, approximately 12 miles from the county seat of Guthrie, in former Oklahoma Territory. The eastern boundary of the town is Indian Meridian Road, which was once the division between Oklahoma and Indian Territories. Old State Highway 33 divides the town grid from Langston University to the northwest. East Washington Avenue, running east–west, bisects a grid containing the dispersed dwellings, churches, and small businesses that comprise the town (**Figure 1**).

The 1935 Langston Jail faces south on Drexel Street, one block north of Washington Avenue (**Figure 2** and **Figure 4**). The parcels immediately surrounding the jail are undeveloped, and there are residential properties dating to about 1970 on the block to the west. The jail is set back approximately 30 feet from Drexel Street, which is a rudimentarily paved one-lane facility. Between 2013 and 2015, an approximately five-foot-wide poured concrete sidewalk perimeter and approach path were added to the jail parcel.

The rectangular, single-room jailhouse has a flat roof with a low parapet. The structural sandstone walls are rubble masonry set in an uncoursed pattern. The entrance is centered on the windowless façade and has an outward-swinging security door composed of metal bars in front of an inward-swinging, wooden door with vertical planks on the back and horizontal planks on the front. An inscription reading “1935 Trotter” (for Mayor Anthony Trotter) is etched into a concrete cornerstone on the façade. There is one small window near the roofline on both the rear and east elevations, each containing a set of unglazed metal bars.

Inside, the masonry walls are partially clad in horizontal wood boards, which cover the window on the east elevation. There is a set of simple, built-in wooden bunks on the east and west walls of the building. The floor is unfinished concrete.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

In 2002, the Langston Community Development Corporation fundraised to restore the jail. Roof repairs, tree trimming, interior wall repair, and repair of the exterior sandstone walls and mortar stabilized the building for long-term preservation (**Figure 3**).<sup>1</sup> Other alterations include repointing with incompatible mortar. The building's physical condition is stable. The massing, openings, masonry units, and roof are intact.

The Langston Jail is an example of a native-stone calaboose, one of the distinctive types of calaboses identified in the "Calaboose (Early Jails) in Oklahoma" Multiple-Property Listing and is significant for its architecture and a property type that reflect local law practices in the early twentieth century. As such, its one-room form, programming as a secure holding facility, and sandstone construction are essential physical features. The jail is in its original location. The setting has changed little since at least 1937, the date of the earliest available aerial imagery after construction of the jail (**Figure 7**).<sup>2</sup> In 1937, Drexel Street appears unpaved, and the jail is relatively isolated, with no adjacent development. The building's rectangular form is intact with no additions, and its fenestration pattern is unaltered, preserving integrity of design. Although the masonry has been repointed and the interior finishes are somewhat deteriorated, the building possesses integrity of materials and workmanship. The building also retains integrity of feeling and association, as the intact essential physical features convey the aesthetic of native stone construction and historic sense of its period of significance.

---

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

---

<sup>1</sup> Carrie Pagley, "Revitalization Progressing in Langston," (*Oklahoma City*) *Daily Oklahoman*, May 20, 2002, 34.

<sup>2</sup> United States Department of Agriculture Agricultural Adjustment Administration, Logan County, Oklahoma, McCasland Maps and Spatial Data: Aerial Photos, Oklahoma State University, Edmon Low Library & Branch Libraries, 1937.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

**Criteria Considerations NA**

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Langston Jail

Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma

County and State

**Areas of Significance**

ARCHITECTURE

LAW

**Period of Significance**

1935

**Significant Dates**

1935

**Significant Person**

NA

**Cultural Affiliation**

NA

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Statement of Significance**

---

**Summary Paragraph**

The Langston Jail in Langston, Logan County, Oklahoma, is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture and under Criterion A in the area of Law. The period of significance is 1935, the date of construction. The building is a rare surviving example of a one-room native-stone jail constructed through a New Deal-era federal program. It reflects the practice of local law enforcement for temporary detainment as punishment and/or in preparation for transfer to another facility. The Langston Jail is one of the earliest-known extant federal relief program small jails built in Oklahoma, and the only one-room jail known to be funded by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) in the state. Furthermore, it is the only known extant New Deal program-funded jail in an All-Black Town. Information from the Multiple-Property Listing "Calaboose (Early Jails) in Oklahoma" supplements this nomination with survey data for this property type and a historic context.

---

**Narrative**

**Oklahoma's All-Black Towns**

Between the Civil War and the early twentieth century, about 50 All-Black Towns were established across Oklahoma.<sup>3</sup> Similar in character to freedmen's communities that developed across the South during Reconstruction, Oklahoma's All-Black Towns emerged in the Oklahoma and Indian

---

<sup>3</sup> Larry O'Dell, "All-Black Towns," in *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, Oklahoma Historical Society, 2024.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

Territories populated by enslaved Native American groups and free Black people. Acquisition of property was considerably easier in the territories than other parts of the country for these marginalized groups.<sup>4</sup> Motivated by access to opportunities for land and livelihood and less racial discrimination and persecution than other parts of the United States, free Black Americans and Native Americans, freed from enslavement by the 1866 treaties with the Five Tribes, settled into early iterations of the All-Black Town community. During the 1870s and 1880s, freedmen from the South and Black settlers moving through Kansas arrived. Little is known about most nineteenth-century All-Black Towns until the arrival of the railroad at the turn of the century after which deliberately planned communities are evident.<sup>5</sup>

All-Black Towns develop with shared attributes of autonomous communities. Typically, some early All-Black Towns emerged in the eastern Indian Territory, while the majority and those in western Oklahoma, were founded around or after the 1899 arrival of the railroad. Cheap land grants and marketing efforts attracted freedmen to the burgeoning communities.<sup>6</sup> Early institutions included the post office, a service of rare equality; local newspapers that encouraged shared and distributed information, healthy debate, and regional news; schools to educate new generations of Black residents; social organizations; and churches.<sup>7</sup> A variety of businesses supplied goods and services to in-town residents and farmers cultivating adjacent land. To achieve full autonomy, local governments facilitated elections and elected officials managed public works and local order. City halls and jails were constructed, as possible.<sup>8</sup>

Few All-Black Towns were formed after Oklahoma's 1907 statehood, and the Great Depression led to widespread depopulation of the communities. Most of the towns were centers for Black farmers, many of whom grew cotton. Boll weevil, disease, unfavorable weather conditions, collapsing railroads, and low prices for agricultural products inhibited the growth, sale, and profitability of farming during the 1930s. Residents left in search of employment opportunities. Although some federal relief programs, like the Works Progress Administration (WPA), funded projects in All-Black Towns, typically schools and infrastructure, these projects were limited in the small communities.<sup>9</sup> Additional job opportunities, like manufacturing, during and after the Second World War also led to residents moving away. Diversified economies and varied services allowed some towns to continue through the mid-twentieth century. Nevertheless, All-Black Towns remain a distinctive social movement in Oklahoma where Black Americans thrived in an environment of respect, support, and self-sufficiency.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Emily Reed et al., *Architectural and Historical Survey of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns, Phase I*, Stantec Consulting Services (2023).

<sup>5</sup> Reed et al., *Architectural and Historical Survey of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns, Phase I*, 43–45.

<sup>6</sup> Reed et al., *Architectural and Historical Survey of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns, Phase I*, 48.

<sup>7</sup> Reed et al., *Architectural and Historical Survey of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns, Phase I*, 49–50.

<sup>8</sup> Reed et al., *Architectural and Historical Survey of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns, Phase I*, 48–52.

<sup>9</sup> O'Dell, "All-Black Towns"; Reed et al., *Architectural and Historical Survey of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns, Phase I*, 54–55.

<sup>10</sup> Reed et al., *Architectural and Historical Survey of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns, Phase I*, 55–56.



Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

## Launching Langston, Oklahoma

### Introduction

In central Oklahoma's Logan County, the All-Black Town of Langston was founded approximately 12 miles northeast of the county seat of Guthrie during the late nineteenth century. In October 1890, Charles H. Robbins, a white man, surveyed, platted, and owned most of the land that would become Langston on the first hill south of the Cimarron River next to the unassigned lands of the Kiowa, Sac, Iowa, and Fox Indians.<sup>11</sup> Logan County was formerly county "One" of the lands opened for settlement in the Oklahoma Territory on April 22, 1889, under the Organic Act.<sup>12</sup> Robbins and his principal agent, a Black man named Edward Preston McCabe, promoted the town to Black settlers.<sup>13</sup> McCabe, a Kansas politician and advocate for Black colonization of Oklahoma, marketed himself as the town's founder.<sup>14</sup> The Langston plat map identifies the newly founded community as "The Only Distinctively Negro City in America/Founded by E. P. McCabe Oct. 22, 1890." In addition to 24 lot-filled residential blocks, Robbins and McCabe dedicated space for a cemetery, public school, hotel, cotton gin, and gristmill (**Figure 3**).<sup>15</sup> The town was named for noted Black politician John Mercer Langston (1829–1897), who, among many accomplishments, organized the law department at Howard University and was the first Black congressman elected to the Virginia House of Representatives.<sup>16</sup>

### Edward P. McCabe and Langston

During the late nineteenth century, McCabe became an influential Black leader in Oklahoma and neighboring Kansas, and his work in Langston was pivotal. He was the essential leader for the settlement of thousands of southern Black people in Oklahoma Territory during the 1890s.<sup>17</sup> The New York-born McCabe clerked for a Wall Street investment firm during his teens in the late 1860s. He then moved to Chicago and clerked for a hotel before working in the Cook County treasurer's office. In the 1870s, he was drawn to the Exoduster movement of Black people to the homestead states on the Plains, and he relocated to Nicodemus, Kansas, in 1878. He was appointed county clerk, and subsequently was elected state auditor in 1882, holding the highest political position of any Black person in the northern states at the time. After losing an 1888 Kansas election, McCabe took a position as a federal representative of the Oklahoma Immigration Society, an organization of Black Kansans encouraging migration to and real estate investment in Oklahoma. After founding Langston with Robbins, McCabe promoted the town through a real estate office. He advertised lots in Black newspapers and through traveling salesmen, and he

<sup>11</sup> Kenneth M. Hamilton, "The Origin and Early Developments of Langston, Oklahoma," *Journal of Negro History*, Volume 62, No. 3 (July, 1977): 270.

<sup>12</sup> Arthur L. Tolson, "A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890–1950" (Thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1946), 3. The Organic Act was a statute enacted by the United States Congress allowing for the establishment of a territorial government in an area that would become a state. The Oklahoma Organic Act of 1890 defined boundaries of the Oklahoma and Indian Territories that would eventually encompass the state.

<sup>13</sup> Hamilton, "The Origin and Early Developments of Langston, Oklahoma," 270.

<sup>14</sup> Hamilton, "The Origin and Early Developments of Langston, Oklahoma," 270; Jere W. Roberson, "Edward P. McCabe and the Langston Experiment," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Volume 51, No. 3 (1973).

<sup>15</sup> Logan County, Langston, Document 10684038, Logan County Clerk, Guthrie, 1892, Plat Map.

<sup>16</sup> Roberson, "McCabe and Langston"; Hannibal B. Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration: The All-Black Towns of Oklahoma* (Eakin Press, 2002).

<sup>17</sup> Jack Rummel, *African-American Social Leaders and Activists* (Facts on File, 2014), 135.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

included a train ticket to Oklahoma with each purchased lot.<sup>18</sup> The *Langston City Herald* advertisements read: “FREEDOM, Peace, Happiness and Prosperity. Do you Want all of These? Then Cast Your Lot With Us & Make Your Home in Langston City” (Figure 5).<sup>19</sup>

### Settling the Black Mecca

In April 1891, the *New York Times* described Langston as a “black Mecca.” Its almost 200 residents included a preacher and a doctor, plus a schoolteacher conducting classes in “the academy.”<sup>20</sup> Thirty dwellings and a small store were complete, and Black carpenters, masons, bricklayers, and mechanics were actively constructing more. An adjacent 83 acres were reserved for a co-operative community garden. The *New York Times* reports that “the principal object in establishing this town on the eastern border was to be near the lands of the Iowas, which are expected to be open to settlement before Fall. When these lands are opened Langston will be the supply depot for all of the black race...”<sup>21</sup> McCabe and others, like his Kansas friend and colleague William L. Eagleson, “hoped to establish a black majority [in Langston] in the Unassigned Lands and thus secure black political and economic control of the area.”<sup>22</sup>

Early Langston homesteaders settled into their new community, and they built simple homes from available materials. Like much settlement across the Plains, dugouts or cellars that could be cheaply and easily constructed by hand were erected by early settlers for rudimentary shelter. A one-room log building became the common permanent building type for homesteads when time allowed for construction; however, some residents lived in dugouts through the 1940s.<sup>23</sup>

### Government and the First Jail

Langston residents voted to incorporate the town in September 1891 and held its first Board of Trustees election several weeks later. On October 22, 1891, officers elected included James B. Robinson, an early Langston settler, as First Ward trustee and President of the Board of Trustees; A. R. Roberts, as Second Ward trustee; and William L. Eagleson as justice of peace, among other positions. Elected officials held the first city council meeting in late December 1891 and appointed D. J. Wallace as city attorney.<sup>24</sup> Subsequent elections were held every year until 1914 to select positions like city clerk, marshal, and police judge, and typically held every two or three years through 1950.<sup>25</sup> Langston never had a town charter, nevertheless, community leaders sought order and safety through ordinances.

The first ordinances were established in November 1891 to “define certain offices and fix penalties thereafter,” with more added over time. The first ordinance stated that “Whoever shall in the Town of Langston be found in a state of intoxication in any public place or in any private house to the

<sup>18</sup> Rummel, *African-American Social Leaders and Activists*, 135–136.

<sup>19</sup> Edward P. McCabe, “Langston City,” *Langston City Herald*, November 17, 1892, 3.

<sup>20</sup> *New York Times*, “The Black in Oklahoma: Flocking to the Territory in Large Numbers,” April 9, 1891, 9.

<sup>21</sup> *New York Times*, “The Black in Oklahoma: Flocking to the Territory in Large Numbers.”

<sup>22</sup> Hamilton, “The Origin and Early Developments of Langston, Oklahoma”; M. Jeff Hardwick, “Homesteads and Bungalows: African-American Architecture in Langston, Oklahoma,” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, Volume 6 (Shaping Communities, 1997): 21.

<sup>23</sup> M. Jeff Hardwick, “Homesteads and Bungalows: African-American Architecture in Langston, Oklahoma,” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, Volume 6: Shaping Communities (1997): 22–24.

<sup>24</sup> Tolson, “A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890–1950”, 18–19.

<sup>25</sup> Tolson, “A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890–1950,” 20, 74–82.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

annoyance of any person, or shall be drinking, carousing, swearing, or creating any disturbance whatever in any place or part of the town shall be fined in a sum not less than two or more than ten dollars.”<sup>26</sup> The ordinances granted city trustees powers and compensation, regulated property use and business conduct, and allowed electric connections from the Public Service Company of Oklahoma. Twenty-eight ordinances governed the town until 1899. Additional ordinances were passed in the early twentieth century.<sup>27</sup>

Because their occupants desired autonomous civic affairs, some All-Black Towns had a city hall and a jail. Public facilities like jails afforded residents a sense of security and assured legitimacy and agency as an established community. The Town of Langston constructed a jail within a few months of its founding. The building was considered more of a deterrent than a holding facility. The *Langston City Herald* reported in August 1892 that “We have not seen a drunk or disorderly person on the streets since the city prison was finished.”<sup>28</sup> Three accused people were held in the jail in the first six months. Two thefts—a door stolen from a rural construction site and a ring stolen by the suitor of a young woman—occurred before the first murder in 1893. A few instances of drunkenness, disorder, and assault were recorded.<sup>29</sup>

Crime appears to increase following the prohibition of alcohol associated with Oklahoma’s 1907 statehood. In May 1915, the county sheriff seized 200 pints of alcohol at two locations in Langston. The operators were arrested and taken to the Guthrie jail.<sup>30</sup> The following month, the *Guthrie Daily Leader* reports an attack on Marshal John Collins<sup>31</sup> by four Black residents who were “angry because booze joints were closed by the county officials.”<sup>32</sup> Although arrested in Langston, the accused were also taken to Guthrie and held for trial by the “town court.”<sup>33</sup> In response to the events, the *Cimarron Valley Clipper* reports that “Langston seems to be getting pretty bad here of late.”<sup>34</sup>

From newspaper reports, it appears that most noteworthy crimes resulted in confinement at county, state, or federal holdings in the county seat of Guthrie. Local Langston newspaper *The Western Age* describes two arrests of “colored men” in summer 1908 and one is held in county jail, while the other is in federal jail.<sup>35</sup> However, it is evident from newspaper reports that there was active enforcement of laws and ordinances in Langston.

### Commerce

Despite an unsuccessful bid for the railroad—Langston was approximately 1.5 miles from the Eastern Oklahoma Railroad and 4 miles from the Rock Island Railroad—the community experienced commercial development and established community amenities for the growing

<sup>26</sup> Tolson, “A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890–1950.”

<sup>27</sup> Tolson, “A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890–1950,” 21.

<sup>28</sup> Hamilton, “The Origin and Early Developments of Langston, Oklahoma,” 278.

<sup>29</sup> Hardwick, “Homesteads and Bungalows: African-American Architecture in Langston, Oklahoma,” 278.

<sup>30</sup> *Guthrie Daily Leader*, “County Officials Raid Negro Joints,” May 22, 1915, 1.

<sup>31</sup> John Collins is not listed as an elected Langston marshal and was likely a United States or county marshal.

<sup>32</sup> *Guthrie Daily Leader*, “Blackamoors are Sore over Joint Raids,” June 21, 1915, 1.

<sup>33</sup> *The Guthrie Daily Leader*, “Blackamoors are Sore over Joint Raids.”

<sup>34</sup> *Cimarron Valley Clipper*, “Slugged Langston Marshal,” June 24, 1915, 1.

<sup>35</sup> (*Langston*) *Western Age*, “Congressional Announcements,” June 19, 1908, 2.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

population.<sup>36</sup> The post office opened in 1891 on Washington Boulevard and operated for nearly 50 years.<sup>37</sup> A total of 25 businesses were open in 1892. Six grocery stores, two liquor stores, two blacksmiths, two barber shops, one wholesale grocery, one feed store, one restaurant, one church, and a public water well served Langston's residents.<sup>38</sup>

Early community planning instigated local entrepreneurship by the turn of the century. The Town of Langston organized a Board of Trade, which resulted in the opening of three grocery stores, three saloons, two meat markets, two brick yards, two hotels, several shoe and boot stores, and a bakery. An ice cream parlor, agricultural implement warehouse, feed store, grist mill with steam-operated corn sheller, soap factory, saddle shop, watch shop, barber shop, billiard room, two-story bank, opera house, broom factory, and cooperative yeast powder factory opened.<sup>39</sup> The *Langston City Herald*, edited by Eagleson, reported town happenings starting in 1890, and encouraged Black settlement from elsewhere.<sup>40</sup> In 1895, a telephone line was planned.<sup>41</sup> On surrounding rural lands, cotton farming was a common livelihood.<sup>42</sup> In 1907, Langston businesses continued to thrive and it had several grocery stores, a cotton gin, confectionary, blacksmith shop, meat market, hardware store, and saloon.<sup>43</sup>

### Education

In a time of segregation and limited educational opportunities for Black students, the citizens of Langston advocated for an institution of higher education. In 1892, Langston had a school system for younger students with almost 200 pupils.<sup>44</sup> For several years, Black citizens advocated before the Oklahoma Industrial School and College Commission for colleges to serve Black students.<sup>45</sup> The Colored Agricultural and Normal University, Oklahoma's only historically Black college or university, was founded in 1897.<sup>46</sup> The September 1898 opening dedication attracted at least 400 people. By 1904, the student body had increased enough to open the Morris House for student boarding.<sup>47</sup>

### A Community Planning Success

By the end of the century, community planning, led initially by McCabe, resulted in an autonomous Black town for its 250 residents.<sup>48</sup> Across the Oklahoma Territory, Black people had achieved ownership of an astounding 1.5 million acres, constituting more land than that owned by Black

<sup>36</sup> *(Langston) Western Age*, "Opportunity for Negroes," June 7, 1907, 3.

<sup>37</sup> Tolson, "A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890–1950," 10.

<sup>38</sup> Hamilton, "The Origin and Early Developments of Langston, Oklahoma"; Tolson, "A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890–1950," 9.

<sup>39</sup> Hardwick, "Homesteads and Bungalows: African-American Architecture in Langston, Oklahoma," 276.

<sup>40</sup> Hardwick, "Homesteads and Bungalows: African-American Architecture in Langston, Oklahoma."

<sup>41</sup> *Langston City Herald*, "City News," April 13, 1895, 4.

<sup>42</sup> *(Guthrie) Oklahoma State Capital*, "Langston Light," March 23, 1898, 3; *Langston City Herald*, "Cotton at Langston," February 6, 1897, 4.

<sup>43</sup> *(Langston) Western Age*, "Opportunity."

<sup>44</sup> McCabe, "Langston," 3.

<sup>45</sup> Zella J. Black Patterson and Langston University, "History: A Timeline of Our Legacy," 2024.

<sup>46</sup> Listed in the NRHP in 1994.

<sup>47</sup> *(Guthrie) Oklahoma State Capital*, "Langton Light."

<sup>48</sup> Norman L. Crockett, *The Black Towns* (University of Kansas Press, 1979).

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

people in the rest of the United States combined.<sup>49</sup> Langston had the structure and amenities for civic autonomy from white communities. Their elected officials who regularly met, their ordinances, their jail, their post office, their schools, and their major university set Langston apart. Black professionals, like doctors and lawyers, supported residents and businesses. Social and religious needs were met with fraternal organizations and churches—including African Methodist Episcopal, Missionary Baptist, Catholic, and Presbyterian church congregations by the early twentieth century.<sup>50</sup> The many businesses—restaurants, groceries, and specialty merchants—and locally owned factories offered a variety of opportunities for commercial exchange and employment. Langston residents could rely on its community for governmental, commercial, educational, employment, and institutional needs.<sup>51</sup>

### Langston's Twentieth Century Architecture

After the turn of the century, Langston residents constructed more complex houses following the availability of dimensional lumber and building plans; most were constructed from wood and few from native stone. The one-room log house led to two-room frame houses built from lumber available at one of the twenty-two lumber companies in Guthrie or merchants supplied by the Santa Fe railroad in Coyle. Bungalows, with plans and materials mass-produced and available from companies like Sears and lumber merchants, soon became popular in town. Locally, there is a distinction between “old style” square-plan bungalows from pre-1914 and newer, rectangular-plan bungalows from 1914 to 1973. Bungalows comprise about half of the building stock in Langston, and most of wood-frame construction.<sup>52</sup> As an exception, several larger houses were also constructed during the early twentieth century. Professor Taylor built the Tay-Lo-Rest house on Tolson Street in 1931. The one-story, Tudor-style house was constructed from locally quarried red rock and had a stone fireplace and stone garage; it is one of the few native-stone buildings in the community.<sup>53</sup>

### **Langston and the Great Depression**

#### Agricultural Prices Plummet and Langston Sustains

Like the rest of the country, Langston faced a terrific challenge when the Great Depression hit in 1929. Most All-Black Towns were economically dependent on agriculture, particularly cotton, but its overproduction caused plummeting prices that discouraged farmers. The 1933 Agricultural Adjustment Act had farmers plow 1.2 million Oklahoma acres of the crop and plant fewer acres, limiting yields in return for income protection. This, plus drought throughout the 1930s, decreased the state's cotton farms 30 percent.<sup>54</sup> Consequently, small communities depopulated as residents left in search of work. Two important attributes of Langston allowed the town to sustain its population: Langston University and oil royalties.

---

<sup>49</sup> Ken Raymond, “Endangered Black History: Langston,” *Oklahoman*, February 5, 2012.

<sup>50</sup> *(Langston) Western Age*, “Opportunity.”

<sup>51</sup> Reed et al., *Architectural and Historical Survey of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns, Phase I*.

<sup>52</sup> Hardwick, “Homesteads and Bungalows: African-American Architecture in Langston, Oklahoma,” 25–27.

<sup>53</sup> Hardwick, “Homesteads and Bungalows: African-American Architecture in Langston, Oklahoma,” 27–28.

<sup>54</sup> Gary L. Nall, “Cotton,” in *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, Oklahoma Historical Society, 2024.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

First, the Colored Agricultural and Normal University was steadily expanding as the curriculum transitioned from manual and technical programs to the liberal arts and sciences. Langston's population had hovered between 250 and 350 through 1930, but in the subsequent decade, the university's 500 students were a boon to the local economy.<sup>55</sup> In the 1930s, the school owned 320 acres and had nine main buildings. Improvements were made to the library and the science department, and another \$40,000 went to campus repairs. Two dormitories, six teachers' cottages, and a home economics building, an administration building, an annex to the men's dormitory, and Sanford Hall. In 1941, the name officially changed to Langston University.<sup>56</sup>

Second, oil production also sustained Langston's economy. In 1934, the city leased a drilling block for \$150 and received royalties of \$25,000 in Spring of 1937. In the same transaction, they received \$6,000 in royalties for another drilling block. In total, oil drilling permit fees were in place for 143 drilling blocks in the 1930s. In 1937, the city's operating budget was \$430.43, and the only public buildings under its management were the second jail, the subject of this nomination, and a postal office. City council had visions of using the newly generated royalties for a city hall, waterworks and sewer system, park, and a motorcycle for the marshal.<sup>57</sup>

### Federal Response

Many Oklahomans relied on federally funded projects for employment during the Great Depression, and as a result, public projects were completed across the state. President Roosevelt established the first major agency to address the impacts of the Great Depression, the FERA, in May 1933 to provide relief grants to the state; the WPA replaced FERA in May 1935. By the end of 1935, the agency employed 92,000 Oklahomans.<sup>58</sup> The two agencies had similar goals, most notably improving public buildings, structures, and objects.<sup>59</sup> More than 4,000 schools were built; miles of storm drains, sewer lines, and roads were laid; and more than 24 million trees were planted to mitigate erosion. The federal agency financed labor and supervision, and the local sponsor supplied materials. As a result, local materials were frequently used, resulting in many native-stone buildings and structures in Oklahoma, including the Langston Jail.<sup>60</sup>

### Inconsistent Elections

The town of Langston inconsistently held elections during the 1920s and 1930s. No elections took place between 1919 and 1925. In 1925, A. W. Lothlen was elected mayor<sup>61</sup> and both W. L. Scharborough and A. C. Callin were elected marshals. I. B. Gerrain was elected deputy. This appears to be the only time between 1890 and 1950 when two marshals were elected, although the

---

<sup>55</sup> Crockett, *The Black Towns*, 178; O'Dell, "All-Black Towns."

<sup>56</sup> Listed in the NRHP in 1998.

<sup>57</sup> Ben Kaplan, "Fortune in Oil Not as Exciting to Langston as Is Question of What to Do About the Boom Town's Unfinished Hoosegow," (*Oklahoma City Oklahoma News*, April 2, 1937, 13.

<sup>58</sup> William H. Mullins, "Works Progress Administration," in *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, Oklahoma Historical Society, 2024.

<sup>59</sup> John P. Deeben, "Family Experiences and New Deal Relief: The Correspondance Files of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, 1933–1936," *Genealogy Notes*, Volume 44, No. 2 (Fall, 2012).

<sup>60</sup> Reed et al., *Architectural and Historical Survey of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns, Phase I*, 55.

<sup>61</sup> Tolson records the Langston elections from 1890 through 1950 in "A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890—1950," and the mayor is listed as "Ward 1 (mayor)." The term mayor used throughout this document refers to that elected title.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

reason is unclear. No elections were held in 1926, 1927, or 1928. Reverend G. W. McLawson, N. B. Smith, and Anthony Trotter were elected mayor in 1929, 1931, and 1933, respectively.<sup>62</sup>

### **The Langston Jail**

Langston Mayor Anthony Trotter, an Arkansas-born World War I veteran and well-known community member, devised the idea to construct a jail as a work relief project during his elected tenure.<sup>63</sup> Near the Baptist church where the city council met during the 1930s, the jail was constructed out of native stone in a natural hollow using \$500 of FERA funds for labor (**Figure 6**).<sup>64</sup> There were 10 project classifications for federally funded projects, most of which local subdivisions managed. Classification D for public buildings and equipment involved repair and maintenance of courthouses, city halls, bridges, firehouses, hospitals, museums, police stations, schools, and jails.<sup>65</sup> The state's FERA headquarters approved the Langston Jail for immediate construction in January 1935. The design had a concrete floor and incorporated utilities—electricity, gas, and water.<sup>66</sup> As was typical of New Deal-era projects, the walls were native stone. Inscribed on the jail's cornerstone is "Trotter/1935." A. W. Lothlen was reelected mayor in 1935 as construction began, partly due to dissatisfaction with Mayor Trotter's approved spending.<sup>67</sup>

Two years into construction, the jail was unused and unfinished. The cost had risen to \$700, and the jail had no bunks, locks, or interior plaster. Langston marshal W. C. Hodge took prisoners to the jail in Guthrie for confinement. In April 1937, the *Oklahoma News* reported the Langston Jail as a debate topic for the upcoming mayoral election, citing "...it was [the jail] that put A. W. Lothlen in office as mayor on a platform of the alleged reckless extravagance of the Trotter administration."<sup>68</sup>

Law enforcement was present in Langston before, during and after construction of the new jail; however, archival references to incarcerations at the building are limited. In 1937, Henry Andrews was elected city marshal and considered himself to be Langston's first constable.<sup>69</sup> His career included constable in the 14<sup>th</sup> district, deputy sheriff, and police officer for 14 years. In an

---

<sup>62</sup> Tolson, "A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890–1950," 80.

<sup>63</sup> Kaplan, "Fortune in Oil Not as Exciting to Langston as Is Question of What to Do About the Boom Town's Unfinished Hoosegow," 13; (*Tulsa Oklahoma Eagle*, "Ex-Langston Mayor Trotter Passes Away," August 27, 1981, 4B.

<sup>64</sup> (*Guthrie Oklahoma State Register*, "New Langston Jail," January 24, 1935, 1; Kaplan, "Fortune in Oil Not as Exciting to Langston as Is Question of What to Do About the Boom Town's Unfinished Hoosegow," 13.

<sup>65</sup> Federal Emergency Relief Administration, *Index of Monthly Reports of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, June 1933 through December 1933* (Government Printing Office, 1937).

<sup>66</sup> (*Guthrie Oklahoma State Register*, "New Langston Jail."

<sup>67</sup> Tolson, "A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890–1950," 81.

<sup>68</sup> Kaplan, "Fortune in Oil Not as Exciting to Langston as Is Question of What to Do About the Boom Town's Unfinished Hoosegow," 13.

<sup>69</sup> The 1940 census lists Andrews as the City Marshal. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Inhabitants, Enumeration District 42-16, Langston, Logan County, Oklahoma, Ancestry, National Archives and Records Administration, 1940, Manuscript Census. Tolson, "A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890–1950"; Tolson, "A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890–1950," 81.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

interview, Andrews stated that he was the first Black constable in the state.<sup>70</sup> Newspapers report Andrews making arrests of burglars, including a pair who committed a string of five burglaries in Langston in 1954, and bringing accused into Guthrie for trial.<sup>71</sup> Although newspaper research did not reveal any crimes resulting in stays at the Langston Jail, possibly due to the temporary and minor nature of these arrests, it was evident that Langston had an established law enforcement presence during and after construction of the jail building with elections of city marshal and justice of the peace positions starting in 1892 and continuing regularly through at least 1950.<sup>72</sup>

## Jails in Oklahoma

### Calabooses

The one- or two-room jail, also informally known as a calaboose, hoosegow, lockup, or holdover, was prevalent in small and large communities alike through the mid-twentieth century to solve the issue of containing prisoners.<sup>73</sup> Local government, like cities or counties, constructed most of these compact buildings. They replaced earlier practices of tying prisoners to trees or retaining them at the sheriff's residence for holding overnight.<sup>74</sup> Although a county might have had both a county jail and local jails, it was difficult to transport accused persons quickly after the arrest from a city to a county seat or even onto a state or federal facility. Horses, wagons, training, and cars, when eventually available, were typically required. Depending on the mode of transport, moving a prisoner could be weather-dependent.<sup>75</sup>

Limited governance and funds also impacted these facilities. Some small towns had formal law enforcement, while others did not. A deputy or marshal may be a position in name only to deter crime.<sup>76</sup> The complexity of the calaboose may reflect funding available. While some towns might be able to afford prefabricated metal cells and locks; others could only support crude buildings constructed of locally available, low-cost materials.<sup>77</sup> Early calaboooses in Oklahoma were constructed from milled boards or sod.<sup>78</sup> Dirt floors and lack of water, electricity, or sanitation were common.<sup>79</sup>

Often held in the hostile calaboose environment for minor offenses, many tried to escape the small buildings. Many prisoners held in a town jail were accused of disorderly conduct and drunkenness,

---

<sup>70</sup> Dennie Hall, "Oldest Langston Resident Active," *Daily Oklahoman/Oklahoma City Times*, August 9, 1995, Section 6:8. Election records transcribed in Tolson's "A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890–1950" show Sam Carter elected as marshal in 1931 and 1933 and Mr. Brook elected as city marshal in 1935; however, a newspaper interview with Andrews reports his recollection as the first constable.

<sup>71</sup> Andrews was reimbursed mileage for bringing Matt Smith to county jail in May 1941. (*Guthrie*) *Leader*, "Complete Text of Grand Jury Report," July 9, 1942, 2; *Oklahoma Weekly Leader*, "Burglaries at Langston Are Solved," June 10, 1954, 1.

<sup>72</sup> Tolson, "A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890–1950", 75–82.

<sup>73</sup> William Moore, *The Texas Calaboose and Other Forgotten Jails* (Texas A&M University Press, 2019), 2, 11; Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calabooses (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*, Oklahoma History Center (2023), 50.

<sup>74</sup> Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calabooses (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*, 50.

<sup>75</sup> Moore, *The Texas Calaboose and Other Forgotten Jails*, 1–3.

<sup>76</sup> Moore, *The Texas Calaboose and Other Forgotten Jails*, 17.

<sup>77</sup> Moore, *The Texas Calaboose and Other Forgotten Jails*, 2.

<sup>78</sup> Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calabooses (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*.

<sup>79</sup> Moore, *The Texas Calaboose and Other Forgotten Jails*, 2.



Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

thievery, counterfeiting, illegal firearms, or prostitution. Alcohol-related disturbances were a common cause of a night in the local calaboose.<sup>80</sup> In most cases, the unsanitary jail interior and lack of ventilation or insulation led to frequent jailbreaks, by digging out, prying bars on windows, or taking a “French leave” which involved setting the building on fire. This latter method of escape was particularly dangerous in wood-frame calabooes but reported in various places across the country.<sup>81</sup> Most calabooes were ventilated through bars over openings or windows, and tools or other implements could easily be passed inside for escape.<sup>82</sup> In August 1895, the *Langston City Herald* reported that only two towns in the state of Oklahoma had been spared from jailbreaks.<sup>83</sup>

Oklahoma’s jails built after statehood in 1907 responded to the increasing need for protecting the population, but they continued to be unorganized, unsanitary, and ill-equipped to house and process the accused. Jails in towns and cities were considered “holdovers” for transfer to county facilities and most lacked water, bunks, or night buckets. Only about one-third of county jails were evaluated as sanitary, and many spent months waiting for trial.<sup>84</sup> In the “First Annual Report of the Commissioner of Charities and Corrections of the State of Oklahoma for the Year Ending December 31, 1908,” Commissioner Kate Barnard listed 16 “good jails,” which included that in Guthrie.<sup>85</sup> Cities and towns typically built calabooes on public property near other civic buildings, like a city hall, water tower, or other public work.<sup>86</sup>

Around the prohibition of alcohol, enacted in 1907 along with statehood, calabooes constructed by locals from nearby quarried stone or formed concrete became increasingly popular.<sup>87</sup> Due to the small scale of the buildings, the stone may be left over from another, larger project in town.<sup>88</sup> In Oklahoma, native stone jails are concentrated in the eastern part of the state and constructed from rectangular cut stone with wood plank or reinforced-metal bar doors. They have bars on windows for ventilation, often fabricated by a local blacksmith, and plumbing is rare.<sup>89</sup>

In 1919, Oklahoma Bill 263 included a clause that granted county commissions authority to use specific sinking funds to build or repair courthouses and jails. This bill coupled with an increased number of oil workers during the 1920s boom led to the construction of one- and two-room jails in many small towns. Concrete jails could be quickly constructed and fitted with prefabricated secure doors or metal cells purchased through catalogs and transported to Oklahoma’s towns via

---

<sup>80</sup> Moore, *The Texas Calaboose and Other Forgotten Jails*, 12–13.

<sup>81</sup> Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calabooes (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*, 51.

<sup>82</sup> Moore, *The Texas Calaboose and Other Forgotten Jails*, 15–16.

<sup>83</sup> *Langston City Herald*, “In the New Country: Brief Bits of General News from the Territories,” August 17, 1895, 2.

<sup>84</sup> Michael Mayes, “Calabooes (Early Jails) in Oklahoma,” Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office (2024), National Register of Historic Places Multiple-Property Documentation Nomination, 6–7.

<sup>85</sup> Mayes, “Thematic Survey of Calabooes (Early Jails) in Oklahoma 1904–1940,” 7–8; Oklahoma Department of Charities and Corrections, *First Annual Report of the Department of Charities and Corrections for the Year Ending December 31, 1908*, Oklahoma Department of Libraries (1908), 47.

<sup>86</sup> Mayes, “Thematic Survey of Calabooes (Early Jails) in Oklahoma 1904–1940,” 6.

<sup>87</sup> Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calabooes (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*, 54.

<sup>88</sup> Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calabooes (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*, 17.

<sup>89</sup> Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calabooes (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*, 15.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

rail.<sup>90</sup> The cell structures were intended to be inserted into wood-frame or concrete buildings that provided shelter from the elements.<sup>91</sup>

Mabel Bourne Basset, Oklahoma Commissioner of Charities and Corrections, instigated reforms when she brought the poor conditions of small-town jails to the forefront during the 1920s and 1930s. As Basset identified insanitary or insufficient jails and practices, like tying incarcerated persons to trees, small towns attempted to construct suitable jails. Many single calabooes were square or rectangular with a flat or barrel roof, of stone or concrete construction, with a wood and fabricated metal door. Small openings, covered in bars at the sides or rear, ventilated the space.<sup>92</sup> The popular concrete form construction persisted through the 1940s with concrete latrines, plumbing and electricity added to later buildings.<sup>93</sup> Concrete construction could easily expand to two rooms.<sup>94</sup> A minority of calabooes were brick, concrete block, or clay tile construction, likely from locally available materials.<sup>95</sup>

### New Deal–Era Jails

Federal relief programs during the 1930s and 1940s sponsored limited jail projects.<sup>96</sup> Between 1934 and 1943, the WPA funded construction of more than 35,000 public buildings, additions to 4,762 buildings, and reconstruction or improvement of 85,254 buildings. Schools, libraries, and recreational facilities made up a large portion of these federally funded projects, and penal institutions made up a small portion of this effort. During the period, only 101 new penal institutions were built, 38 received additions, and 543 were reconstructed or improved.<sup>97</sup>

Five extant calabooes are known to be constructed in Oklahoma with New Deal relief funding.<sup>98</sup> The Langston jail was built in 1935 with \$500 allocated by the FERA.<sup>99</sup> Two other buildings are the only known extant standalone WPA-funded calabooes in Oklahoma: the 1939 two-room concrete jail in Boswell with nearly \$700 in funding and the ca. 1940 cannonball<sup>100</sup> jail in Garfield. Otherwise, the WPA funded an Art Deco–style combined city hall/jail in Durant in Bryant County and the Public Works Administration sponsored the 1935 jail in Freedom, Woods County.<sup>101</sup>

In Oklahoma, WPA construction was plain and relied on vernacular forms. Due to use of local labor, some of which was unskilled, "...building projects had to be simple in design and uncomplicated in construction technique."<sup>102</sup> Since the local sponsor typically apportioned

<sup>90</sup> Mayes, "Thematic Survey of Calabooes (Early Jails) in Oklahoma 1904–1940," 7.

<sup>91</sup> Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calabooes (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*, 52.

<sup>92</sup> Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calabooes (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*, 56.

<sup>93</sup> Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calabooes (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*, 16.

<sup>94</sup> Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calabooes (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*, 18.

<sup>95</sup> Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calabooes (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*, 19.

<sup>96</sup> Anonymous, "Boswell City Jail, Choctaw County, Oklahoma," Oklahoma Historic Preservation Society (1984), Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory Nomination.

<sup>97</sup> U.S. Federal Works Agency, *Final Report on the WPA Program, 1935–1943* (Government Printing Office via the Library of Congress, 1947), 131.

<sup>98</sup> Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calabooes (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*, 57.

<sup>99</sup> (*Guthrie*) Oklahoma State Register, "New Langston Jail," January 24, 1935, 1.

<sup>100</sup> This refers to the small, spherical stones on the exterior of the jail.

<sup>101</sup> Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calabooes (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*, 57.

<sup>102</sup> W. David Baird, *Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey, Phase III*, Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office (1987), 12.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

construction costs, this often came in the form of materials, most of which were local. WPA construction projects frequently incorporated native stone where natural availability in Oklahoma was feasible.<sup>103</sup>

The small-scale small-town calaboose lost favor as an approach to incarceration by the early 1940s and was entirely obsolete within about 20 years. As roads and transportation between cities and to better facilities improved during the mid-twentieth century, calaboooses became uncommon.<sup>104</sup> With alcohol-related disturbances being a common use for the village calaboose, the end of Prohibition contributed to the demise. Also, county and local law enforcement consolidated in some areas.<sup>105</sup>

### Comparative Analysis

The Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office/Oklahoma Historical Society has completed statewide thematic surveys of extant calaboooses (early jails), historic resources in All-Black Towns, and WPA resources that provide data to understand the rarity of this property type.<sup>106</sup> A 2023 survey of Oklahoma's calaboooses identified 105 extant small, early jails, and the related report notes that the Langston Jail was recommended eligible for the NRHP as part of the separately conducted 2022–2024 All-Black Towns survey.<sup>107</sup> There are five extant calaboooses in All-Black Towns, including the one in Langston; each of which is NRHP-listed or eligible. They include a ca. 1924 native stone jail in Grayson, Okmulgee County, listed in the NRHP in 2024; a ca. 1907 native stone wall remnant of a jail in Lima, Seminole County; a ca. 1930 concrete form jail in Redbird, Wagoner County; and a ca. 1910 NRHP-listed brick jail that shares a building with city hall in Taft, Muskogee County.<sup>108</sup> There are two other extant small jails in Logan County. These include the 1913 two-room stucco calaboose in Coyle and an undated standalone metal cell manufactured by Liberty Jail Company in Guthrie.

Few surveyed calaboooses in Oklahoma are native stone or known to be constructed with federal relief funds. Almost half of the 105 surveyed jails (47 percent) are built of formed concrete, and a minority, only 18 percent, were constructed of native stone, like sandstone. Jails were rare property types to receive New Deal-era funding. The statewide calaboose survey documented only six other standalone calaboooses constructed during the 1933–1945 era of federal relief programs, including the FERA and WPA, but none are in an All-Black Town. Of these, three jails are eligible for or listed in the NRHP, and three of them constructed of native stone between 1939 and 1940. Furthermore, a 1987 SHPO Thematic Survey of WPA structures in Oklahoma (Phase III) found no WPA structures in Langston and no WPA jails in Logan County.<sup>109</sup> As a result, the Langston Jail is one of the earliest-known extant federal relief program jails. Based on the statewide

<sup>103</sup> Baird, *Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III)*, 14–15.

<sup>104</sup> Moore, *The Texas Calaboose and Other Forgotten Jails*, 2.

<sup>105</sup> Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calaboooses (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*, 58.

<sup>106</sup> Each of these studies was limited to including resources with year built dates known or uncovered through research. There were several calaboooses surveyed statewide with unknown build dates.

<sup>107</sup> Reed et al., *Architectural and Historical Survey of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns, Phase I*; Emily Reed et al., *Architectural and Historical Survey of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns, Phase II*, Stantec Consulting Services Inc. (2024).

<sup>108</sup> Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calaboooses (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*, 45, 47.

<sup>109</sup> Baird, *Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III)*.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

calaboose survey, this is the only known small jail funded by the FERA, and the only other surveyed calaboose constructed during the operating years of the FERA of 1933 to 1935 is the 1935 jail in Freedom, Woods County, which is a Public Works Administration project.<sup>110</sup> Based on a the statewide surveys of calabooses, WPA resources, and All-Black Towns, the Langston Jail is also the only All-Black Town jail funded with New Deal-era programs.<sup>111</sup>

### **Additional Research**

Research conducted for this nomination—which included archival newspapers, secondary source histories of Langston and All-Black Towns, thematic surveys and historic contexts, and governmental reports—did not yield evidence to support a multi-year time span for the period of significance or substantial information to include additional areas of significance. Politics/Government was considered as an area of significance for the Langston Jail’s construction as a purpose-built facility to hold those who did not adhere to state and county laws or city ordinances; however, concrete evidence of accused or convicted held in the Langston Jail was limited. Additional research, including undigitized Black newspapers, oral histories, court records, and other archival documents, may yield new information to support additional areas of significance, like Politics/Government, and/or an expanded period of significance.

### **Architectural Significance**

The Langston Jail is significant under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, as a rare, if modest, surviving example of a New Deal-era jail in an All-Black Town. Under the Multiple-Property Listing “Calaboose (Early Jails) in Oklahoma,” a calaboose may be eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C if it “embodies distinctive characteristics of a specific jail type.” Extant calabooses identified in the survey were one- or two-room buildings locally constructed of local materials. Typical materials included stone, lumber, or concrete. Restored in the early 2000s, the one-story one-room jail in Langston is an excellent example of the property type and retains integrity.

### **Law Significance**

The Langston Jail is significant under Criterion A, in the area of Law, as a rare property type that reflects the “interpretation and enforcement” of local law practices in Oklahoma during the early to mid-twentieth century.<sup>112</sup> This small-scale facility reflects the common practice of holding accused persons for temporary punishment and/or prior to transit. The Multiple-Property Listing “Calaboose (Early Jails) in Oklahoma” identifies Law as the “most applicable area of significance” under Criterion A. The Langston Jail is one of only three extant calabooses in Logan County to represent the use of a one- or two-room jail in the county’s early communities, and it retains integrity.

---

<sup>110</sup> Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calabooses (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*, 24–47, 57.

<sup>111</sup> Reed et al., *Architectural and Historical Survey of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns, Phase I*; Reed et al., *Architectural and Historical Survey of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns, Phase II*; Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, *Thematic Survey of Calabooses (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*.

<sup>112</sup> Linda Flint McClelland, *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, National Register of Historic Places, 1997), 41.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### References Cited

- Anonymous. Logan County, Oklahoma, McCasland Maps and Spatial Data: Aerial Photos, Oklahoma State University. Edmon Low Library & Branch Libraries. 1937.  
<https://info.library.okstate.edu/map-room/aerial-photos>.
- Anonymous. "Boswell City Jail, Choctaw County, Oklahoma." Oklahoma Historic Preservation Society, 1984. Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory Nomination.  
<http://thehistoryexchange.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/boswellcityjail.pdf>.
- Baird, W. David. *Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey, Phase III*. Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, 1987.  
<https://www.okhistory.org/shpo/docs/wpaphase3pt1.pdf>.
- Black Patterson, Zella J., and Langston University. "History: A Timeline of Our Legacy." *Langston University*. 2024. <https://langston.edu/about/history/>.
- Cimarron Valley Clipper*. "Slugged Langston Marshal." June 24, 1915, 1. Newspapers.com.  
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/664264645/>.
- Crockett, Norman L. *The Black Towns*. University of Kansas Press, 1979.
- Deeben, John P. "Family Experiences and New Deal Relief: The Correspondance Files of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, 1933–1936." *Genealogy Notes*, Volume 44, No. 2 (Fall 2012). <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2012/fall/fera.html>.
- Federal Emergency Relief Administration. *Index of Monthly Reports of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, June 1933 through December 1933*. Government Printing Office, 1937.  
[https://books.google.com/books?id=gc1u6X8ymz0C&newbks=1&newbks\\_redir=0&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=gc1u6X8ymz0C&newbks=1&newbks_redir=0&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false).
- Guthrie Daily Leader*. "Blackamoore are Sore over Joint Raids." June 21, 1915, 1. Newspapers.com. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/665126684/>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "County Officials Raid Negro Joints." May 22, 1915, 1. Newspapers.com.  
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/354592069/>.
- (*Guthrie*) *Leader*. "Complete Text of Grand Jury Report." July 9, 1942, 2. Newspapers.com.  
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/743956531/>.
- (*Guthrie*) *Oklahoma State Capital*. "Langston Light." March 23, 1898, 3. Newspapers.com.  
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/657783488>.
- (*Guthrie*) *Oklahoma State Register*. "New Langston Jail." January 24, 1935, 1. The Gateway to Oklahoma History. <https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc1599259/m1/1/>.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

- Hall, Dennie. "Oldest Langston Resident Active." *Daily Oklahoman/Oklahoma City Times*. August 9, 1995, Section 6:8. Newspapers.com. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/453734270/>.
- Hamilton, Kenneth M. "The Origin and Early Developments of Langston, Oklahoma." *Journal of Negro History*, Volume 62, No. 3 (July 1977): 270–282. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2716955>.
- Hardwick, M. Jeff. "Homesteads and Bungalows: African-American Architecture in Langston, Oklahoma." *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, Volume 6 (Shaping Communities 1997): 21–32. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3514360>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Homesteads and Bungalows: African-American Architecture in Langston, Oklahoma." *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, Volume 6: Shaping Communities (1997): 21–32. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3514360>.
- Johnson, Hannibal B. *Acres of Aspiration: The All-Black Towns of Oklahoma*. Eakin Press, 2002.
- Kaplan, Ben. "Fortune in Oil Not as Exciting to Langston as Is Question of What to Do About the Boom Town's Unfinished Hoosgow." (*Oklahoma City*) *Oklahoma News*. April 2, 1937, 13. The Gateway to Oklahoma History. <https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc2010231/m1/13/>.
- Langston City Herald*. "City News." April 13, 1895, 4. Newspapers.com. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/665474427>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "In the New Country: Brief Bits of General News from the Territories." August 17, 1895, 2. Newspapers.com. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/665474988>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Cotton at Langston." February 6, 1897, 4. Newspapers.com. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/78188087>.
- (*Langston*) *Western Age*. "Opportunity for Negroes." June 7, 1907, 3. Newspapers.com. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/665471333>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Congressional Announcements." June 19, 1908, 2. Newspapers.com. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/665472489/>.
- Logan County. Langston. Document 10684038, Logan County Clerk. Guthrie. 1892. Plat Map. <https://okcountyrecords.com/>.
- Mayes, Michael. "Calabooses (Early Jails) in Oklahoma." Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, 2024. National Register of Historic Places Multiple-Property Documentation Nomination.
- McCabe, Edward P. "Langston City." *Langston City Herald*. November 17, 1892, 3. Newspapers.com. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/78174960>.
- McClelland, Linda Flint. *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, National Register of Historic Places, 1997. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB16A-Complete.pdf>.

Langston Jail

Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma

County and State

- Moore, William. *The Texas Calaboose and Other Forgotten Jails*. Texas A&M University Press, 2019. <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=74iFDwAAQBAJ&hl=en&pg=GBS.PR4>.
- Mullins, William H. "Works Progress Administration." In *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*. Oklahoma Historical Society, 2024. <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=WO022>.
- Nall, Gary L. "Cotton." In *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*. Oklahoma Historical Society, 2024. <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=CO066>.
- New York Times*. "The Black in Oklahoma: Flocking to the Territory in Large Numbers." April 9, 1891, 9. <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1891/04/09/issue.html>.
- O'Dell, Larry. "All-Black Towns." In *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*. Oklahoma Historical Society, 2024. <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=AL009>.
- Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office. *Thematic Survey of Calabooses (Early Jails) in Oklahoma*. Oklahoma History Center, 2023. <https://okhistorycenter.org/shpo/docs/calaboosesinOK.pdf#:~:text=This%20report%20represents%20the%20findings%20of%20the%20thematic%20survey%20of>.
- Oklahoma Weekly Leader*. "Burglaries at Langston Are Solved." June 10, 1954, 1. Newspapers.com. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/744178791/>.
- Pagley, Carrie. "Revitalization Progressing in Langston." (*Oklahoma City*) *Daily Oklahoman*. May 20, 2002, 34. Newspapers.com. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/453874813/>.
- Raymond, Ken. "Endangered Black History: Langston." *Oklahoman*. February 5, 2012. <https://www.oklahoman.com/story/news/nation-world/2012/02/05/endangered-black-history-langston/61099015007/>.
- Reed, Emily, Kory Van Hemert, Jenya Green, Amy E. Dase, Izabella Nuckels, Tori Raines, and Laura Kviklys. *Architectural and Historical Survey of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns, Phase I*. Stantec Consulting Services, 2023. <https://www.okhistory.org/shpo/docs/ABT-Pt1-2023.pdf>.
- Roberson, Jere W. "Edward P. McCabe and the Langston Experiment." *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Volume 51, No. 3 (1973): 343–355.
- Rummel, Jack. *African-American Social Leaders and Activists*. Facts on File, 2014. <http://www.factsonfile.com>.
- Tolson, Arthur L. "A History of Langston, Oklahoma, 1890–1950." Thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1946.
- (*Tulsa*) *Oklahoma Eagle*. "Ex-Langston Mayor Trotter Passes Away." August 27, 1981, 4B. The Gateway to Oklahoma History. <https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc1806134/m1/12/>.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Adjustment Administration. Logan County, Oklahoma, McCasland Maps and Spatial Data: Aerial Photos, Oklahoma State University. Edmon Low Library & Branch Libraries. 1937.  
<https://info.library.okstate.edu/map-room/aerial-photos>.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Inhabitants, Enumeration District 42-16, Langston, Logan County, Oklahoma, Ancestry. National Archives and Records Administration. 1940. Manuscript Census.  
[https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2442/images/m-t0627-03307-00477?usePUB=true&\\_phsrc=jgZ2](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2442/images/m-t0627-03307-00477?usePUB=true&_phsrc=jgZ2).

---

**Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other/Name of repository: NA

**Historic Resources Survey Number: NA**



Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

---

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre (0.1 acre)

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

Latitude: 35.943394

Longitude: -97.250634

### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary encompasses less than 1 acre within Section 13, Township 17N, Range 01E of the Langston Lot 13 Block 67. The city-owned property is at the northeast corner of the Drexel Street/Michigan Avenue intersection and comprises the entirety of Logan County Parcel 420015809.

### Boundary Justification

The nominated area includes the property historically associated with the Langston Jail.

---

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Emily Reed, Principal, and Izabella Nuckels, Historic Preservation Specialist

Organization: Stantec Consulting Services Inc.

Street & Number: 8401 Shoal Creek Boulevard, Suite 100

City or Town: Austin State: Texas Zip Code: 78757

Electronic mail: emily.reed@stantec.com

Telephone: 512-328-2223

Date: October 14, 2024

---

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

**Additional Documentation**  
**Maps**

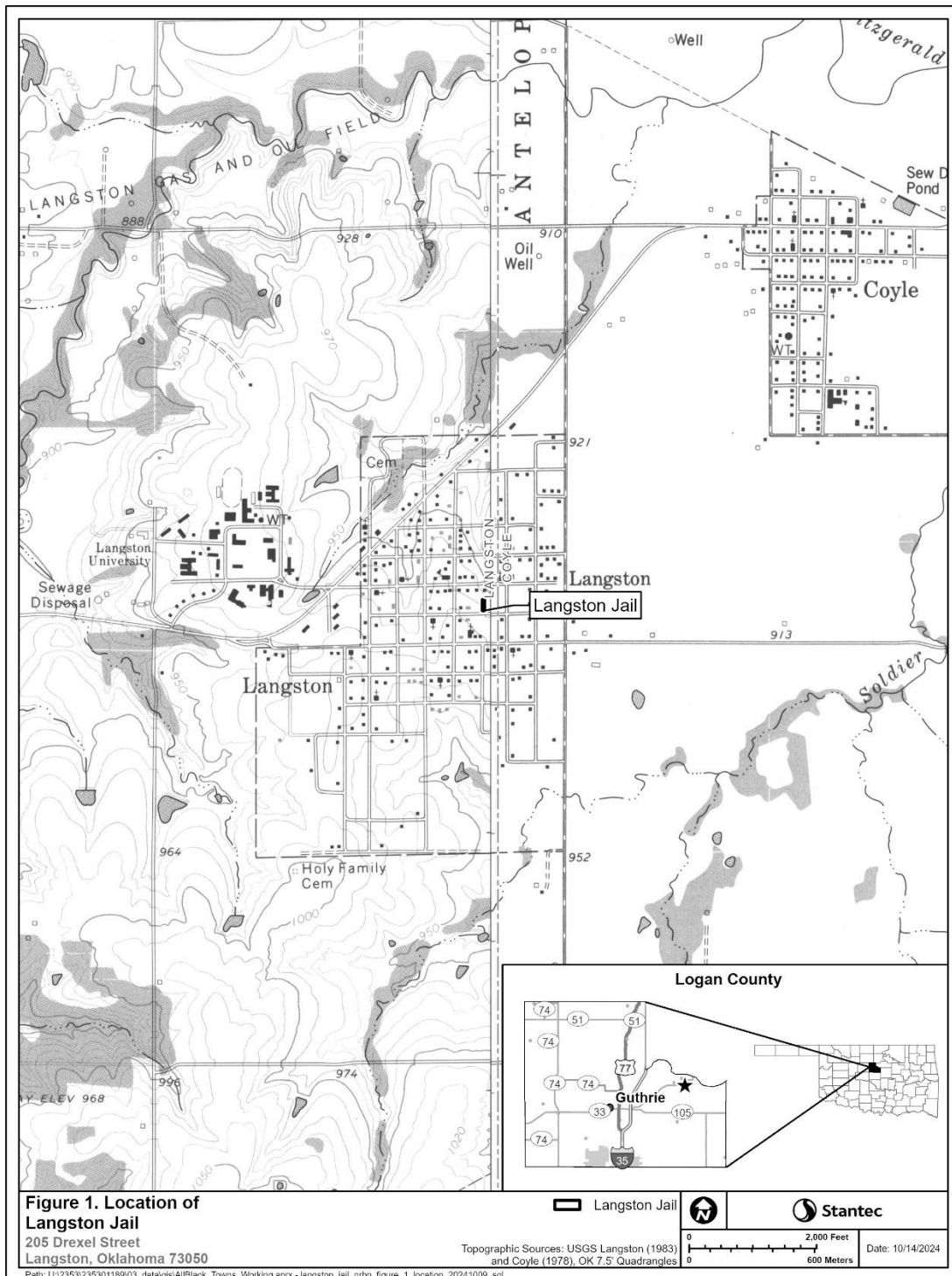


Figure 1. Location of the Langston Jail. Source: Stantec 2024.

Langston Jail  
 Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
 County and State

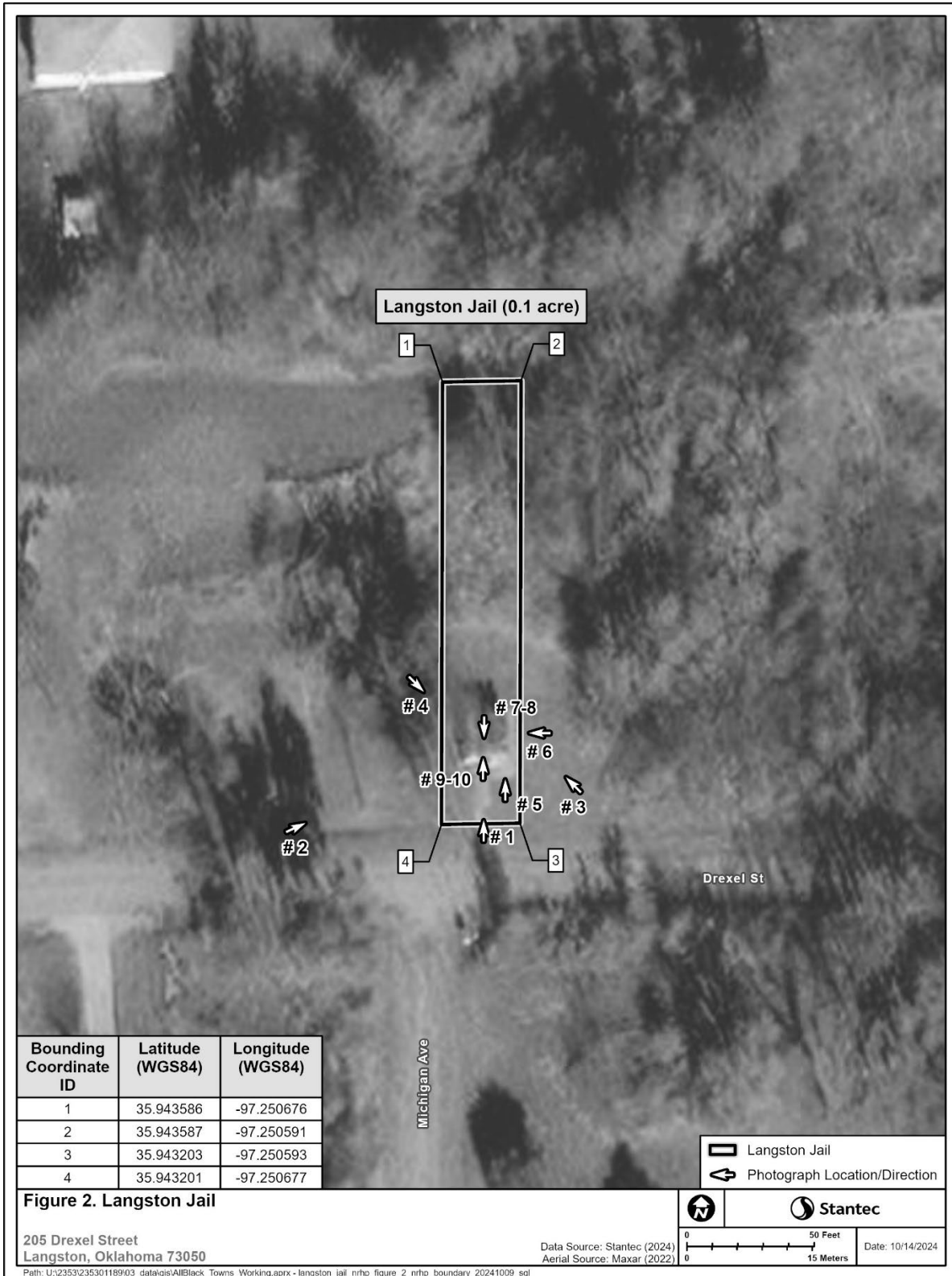


Figure 2. NRHP Boundary and Photograph Arrows for the Langston Jail. Source: Stantec 2024.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

## Photographs

### Photograph Log

Name of Property: Langston Jail

City or Vicinity: Langston

County: Logan

State: Oklahoma

Photographer: Elisif Dorsey, Stantec Consulting Services Inc.

Date Photographed: October 7, 2024

Photograph	Description	Camera Direction
0001	Front (south) façade, jail entrance	North
0002	Setting, Drexel Street west of Michigan Avenue looking northeast	Northeast
0003	Oblique of front and east façades	Northwest
0004	Oblique of north and west façades	Southeast
0005	Detail of cornerstone, stonework, mortar repairs, and concrete pad	North
0006	Detail of east window, metal window bars, and stonework	West
0007	Interior east, south, and west walls; wood door and bunks	South
0008	Interior detail, floor and lower bunks	South
0009	Interior, west and north (rear) walls	North
0010	Interior, north and east walls	North

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

Figures

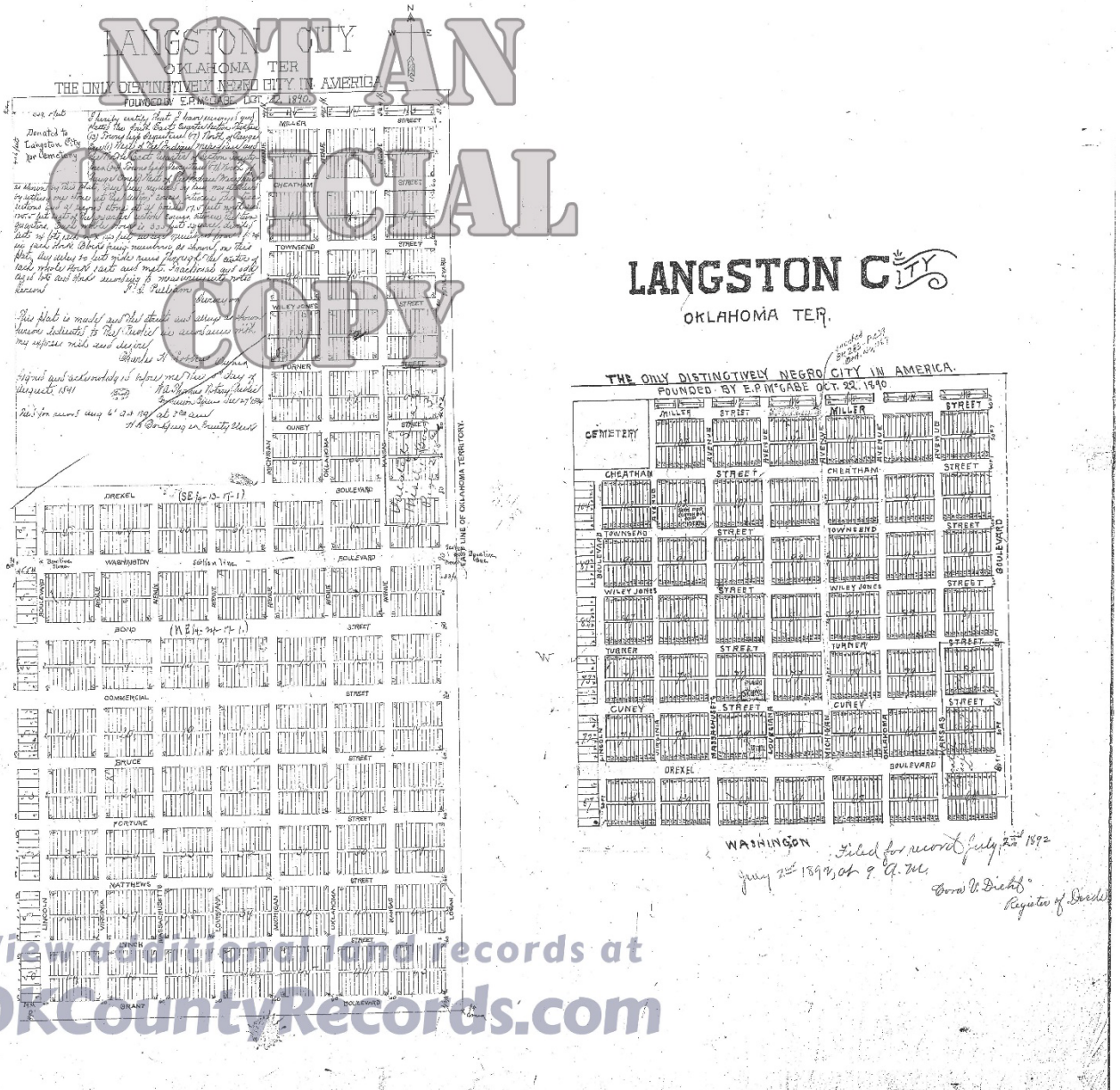


Figure 3. The 1890 Langston City plat map shows rows of parallel and perpendicular blocks filled with lots ready for improvements. Source: OKCountyRecords.com.

Langston Jail  
 Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
 County and State

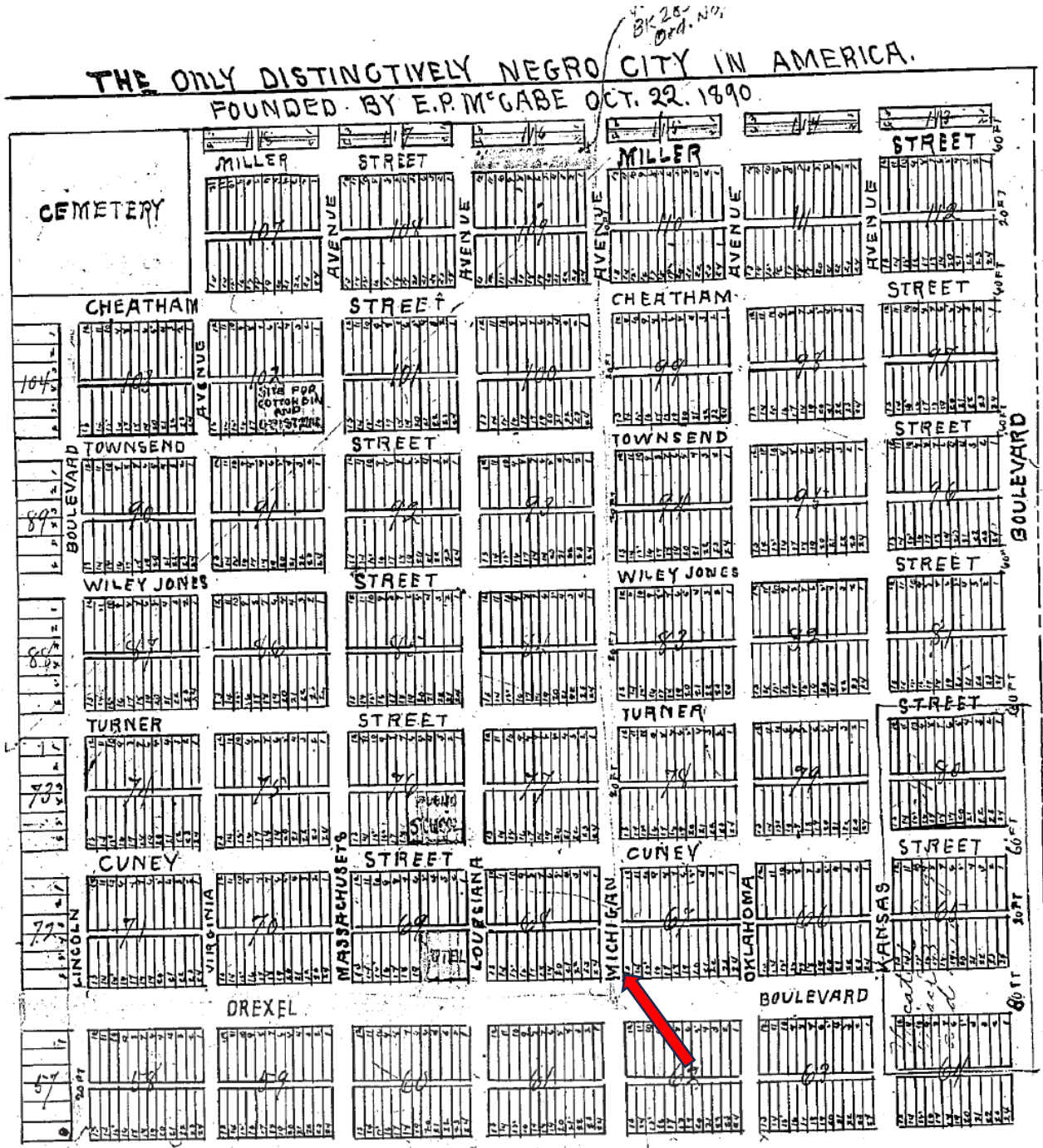
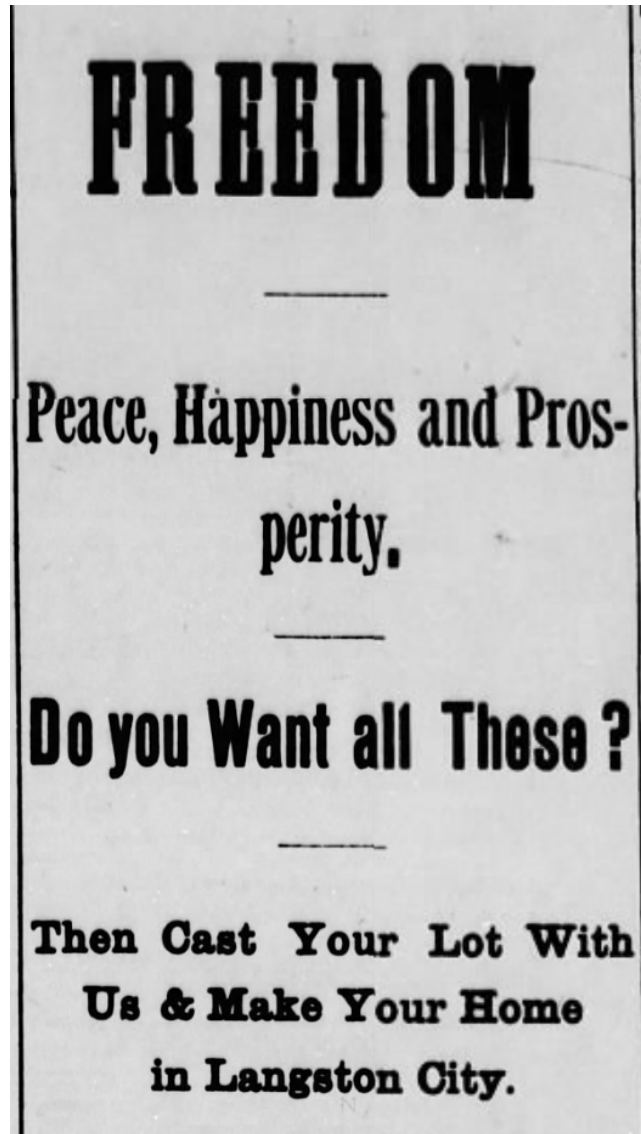


Figure 4. Excerpt of the 1890 Langston City plat map with arrow pointing to Block 67, Lot 13 where the Langston jail is located. Source: OKCountyRecords.com.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State



*Figure 5. Advertisement Promoting Langston City in the November 17, 1892, issue of the Langston City Herald.*

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State



Figure 6. Announcement for the new Langston jail on the front page of the January 24, 1935, issue of the Oklahoma State Register.



Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State

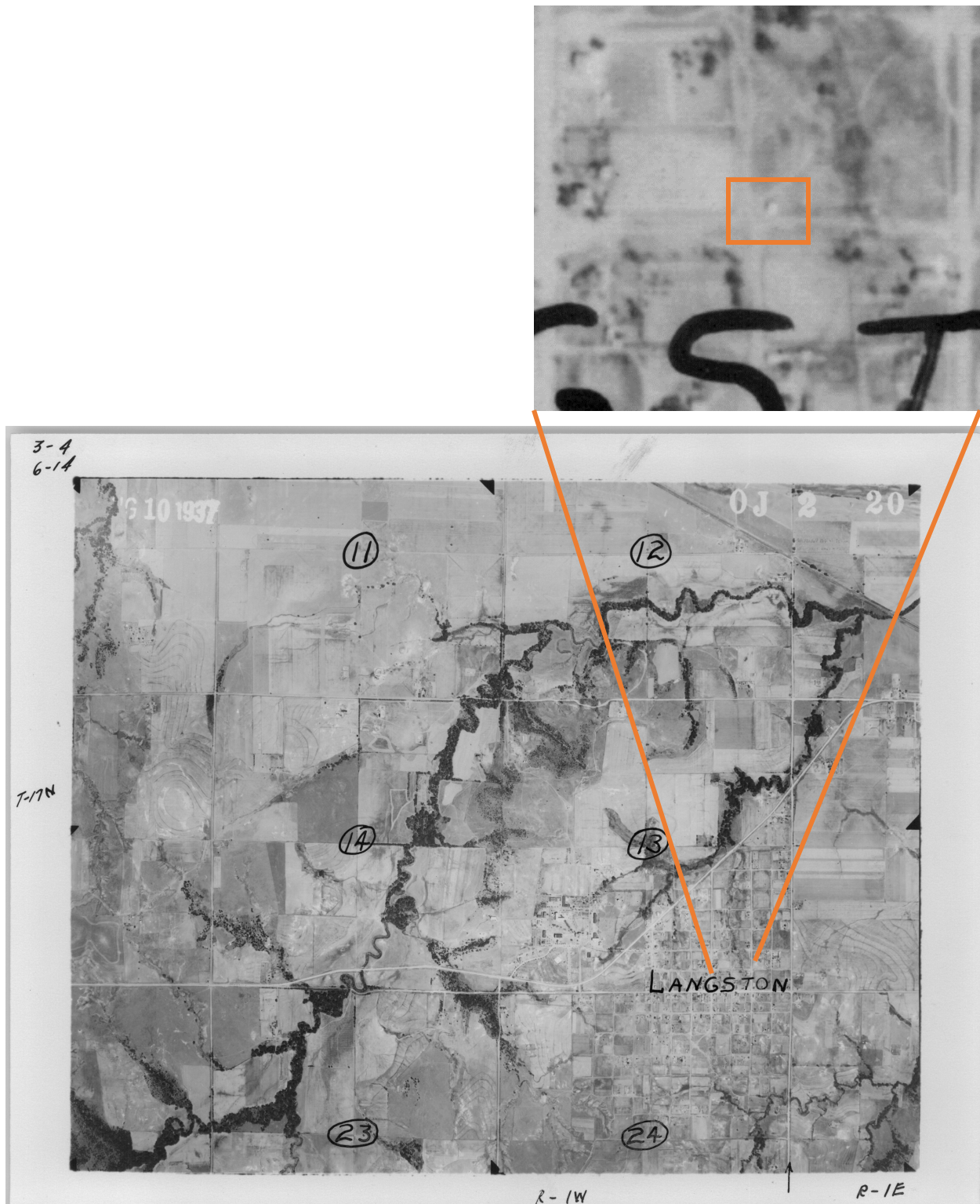


Figure 7. The Langston jail shown on a 1937 aerial photograph. Source: Oklahoma State University.

Langston Jail  
Name of Property

Logan County, Oklahoma  
County and State



*Figure 8. The jail interior in 2002. Source: Daily Oklahoman 2002.*



1935  
A. TROTTER









1935  
A. TROTTER











