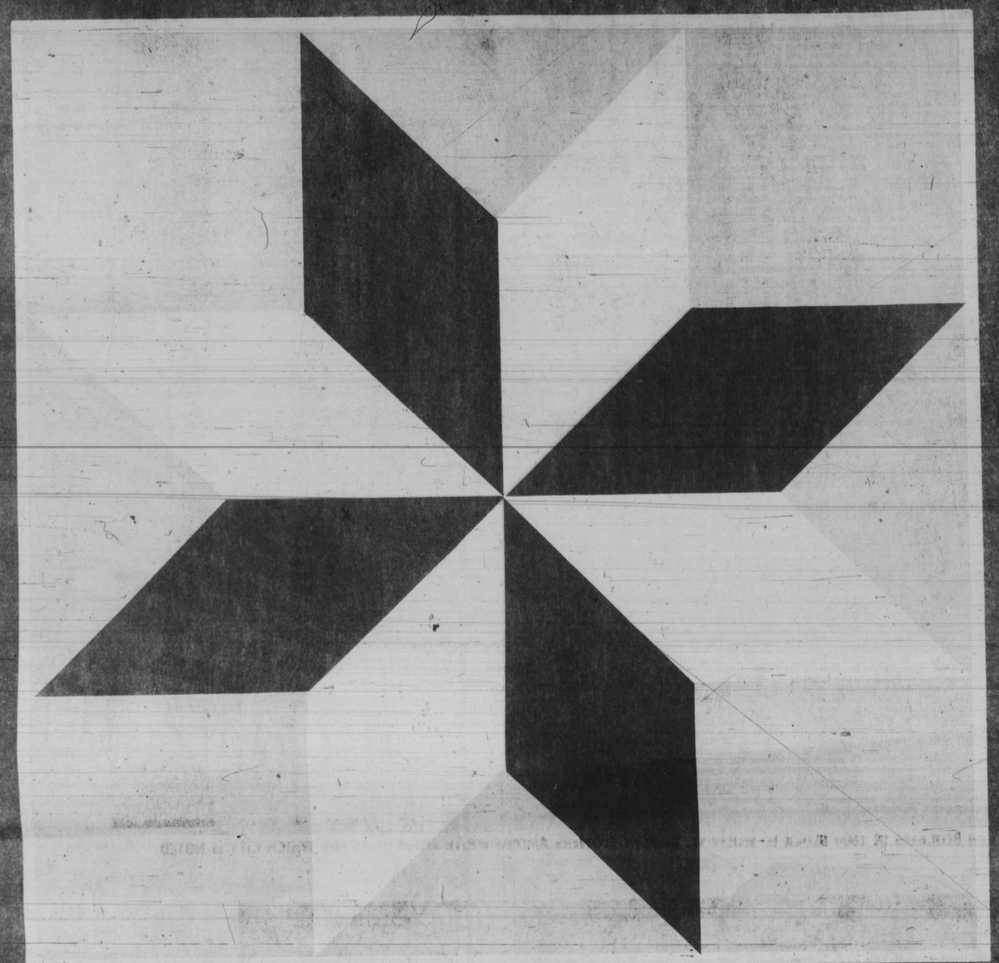

The United States of America is 200 years old but she sure doesn't look her age. There's still a spring in her step... still a smile on her face... still an eager anticipation of what tomorrow will bring in greater fulfillment for all. And our very special birthday wish is that the next 200 years may be as exciting as the last.

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AFRO photo by Newson

AFRO CLEAN BLOCKERS IN 1600 BLOCK N. WOLFE ST. DISPLAY FLOWERS AMONG WHITE STONE STEPS FOR WHICH CITY IS NOTED

AFRO photo by Newson

SPRINGTIME IN BALTIMORE FEATURES LOVELY FLOWERS IN SHERWOOD GARDENS

AFRO Clean Block Campaign now in its 42nd year

This Bicentennial year sees the AFRO Clean Block Campaign move into its 42nd year.

Under the direction of Mrs. Ida Peters and Mrs. Arnetta Lottier, the goal of the Clean Block Campaign this year is to have over 500 blocks join.

The purpose of the campaign is to get all residents in each block to keep a clean block in summer and beautify the block.

According to campaign directors, a clean block is one in which steps and sidewalks are washed once a day and the street kept free from trash.

Woodwork is kept free from fingerprints and vestibules are scrubbed. Windows are kept clean and curtains hung evenly.

The AFRO Clean Block Campaign began in the summer of 1934 by Miss Frances L. Murphy daughter of the AFRO founder John H. Murphy Sr.

Developed with the idea that children engaged in keeping their neighborhoods clean would inspire others likewise the clean block movement grew rapidly under her direction.

With a few blocks and 3,880 children and adult workers to start with in 1934, the clean block campaign developed to 239 blocks and 20,000 workers when she retired from its active direction in 1946.

Many blocks were transformed into beautiful scenes almost overnight and soon word spread all over America. Tourists traveling through the city noticed the gleaming white marble steps that made the city famous.

When Miss Murphy retired in 1946, she was succeeded by the late Mrs. Frances Mackay who continued the drive until her death in 1962.

Mrs. Jeannette B. Leath inherited the title of director who passed it on to Mrs. Paula Brooks Guest who passed it on to the current director Mrs. Peters.

In 1974 the Clean Block opened with 117. blocks and 1,254 workers.

As a sidebar to the campaign the AFRO established the trashball contest which all winners received $1 and a record album showing how Booker T. Bumble uses basketball shots in the white and orange trash-ball baskets that were all over town.

Other prizes were given to clean block workers who showed the most improvements.

At times there are some blocks that show the ingenuity of its workers.

In 1975 the 1300 block Homewood Ave. faced a problem when they discovered that their block was too long.

What they did was to divide the block into four units. Each unit had a supervisor. It was his responsibility to contact each member of the unit as to plans. It was also his responsibility to attend all meetings.

No Clean Block Campaign runs smoothly. Every once in a while during its 42 year history problems have arisen that had to be handled.

While Miss Murphy was director she went straight to the person concerned and explained the problem.

Today the AFRO advertises the problems the block workers face and asks for help. It also has established the Clean Block Prize Fund Drive which solicits funds from business firms, clubs and organizations.

The prize fund is used to purchase seeds and paints for needy blocks. All the contributions are tax deductible.

The Clean Block lady

By ELIZABETH M. OLIVER

The AFRO-AMERICAN Newspaper Clean Block Campaign established the summer of 1934 transformed many Baltimore blocks almost overnight into beautiful scenes.

Word soon spread all over America and tourists passing through noticed marble steps gleaming white row on row were set off by blooming flowers.

The founder and director, Miss Francis L. Murphy, began to receive letters from Canada, and various states in the union, "Tell us about the AFRO's Clean Block Campaign that has made Baltimore lovely in summer," they said.

The story of how Miss Murphy, the daughter of the AFRO founder, John H. Murphy Sr., started the beautification effort has become legendary.

Today in 1976, years after her death in 1958, it is still an integral part of the 45-year-old annual clean-up drive.

Miss Murphy was born in 1874 in Baltimore, one of the five daughters and five sons of Mr. and Mrs. Murphy.

She died in 1958.

AT THE age of 60, she retired after 39 years as teacher in Baltimore Public schools.

She was one of 11 graduates of the high school class of 1894, and became what was known as "a floating teacher" in 1895.

During her career, she gained prominence as an exacting and lovable model teacher and later theory instructor of education in what is now known as the Coppin State Teachers' College.

Miss Murphy lived by the formula that there was much to be done. "I can't sit down idly and watch things which need to be done and do nothing about it," she once said.

SO, A year after her retirement from a long and illustrious career in the classroom, she consented to direct the AFRO's Clean Block Drive.

Developed with the idea that youngsters engaged in keeping their neighborhoods clean and beautiful would inspire others to do likewise, the clean block movement grew rapidly under her direction.

From a beginning of a few blocks and 3,880 children and adult workers in 1934, it developed to 239 blocks and 20,000 workers when she retired from its active direction in 1946.

DESPITE HER small stature — she was barely five feet tall and weighed less than 100 pounds — Miss Frances, or the "Clean Block Lady," as many called her, had indefatigable energy.

It was not unusual for

(Continued on C-4)

MISS FRANCES L. MURPHY, the late founder of the AFRO Clean Block Campaign was also a leading educator in her day. She is shown in an AFRO 1947 file photo.

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