THE FILES OF DR. CARL J. MURPHY:

A Chronicle of the Struggle

and Ilbraries give an accurate picture of black history?

These questions are asked and answered in the 30,000 letters of Dr. Carl Murphy, publisher and/or editor of the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers from 1918 until his death in 1967.

The Murphy letters are the primary source for the seen-to-be published book by his daughter, Frances L. Murphy II, which is entitled, "Kindest Regards, Carl Murphy."

By Frances L. Murphy II Port II

In the book, "Kindest Regards, Carl Murphy," readers will find the list of 103 names submitted to President John Kennedy for presidential appointments to combat the lie that qualified blacks could not be found;

A list of 63 books which he felt all libraries should own; transcripts of conversations with Paul Robeson, the Rev. Olive Brown of the 1954 school desegration case, and Bishop Joseph Healy; letters from five presidents, congressmen, judges, civil rights workers;

The minutes of the 1886 meeting of the American Press Association and the \$602,024 estate of Sarah Spencer Washington Logan, founder of Apex Beauty Company who died in Atlantic City in 1953.

Historians will delight in tracing the results of letters like this one from a man who wrote Murphy:

"John H. McCray has as much chance of getting justice in Greenwood, SC as a celluloid cat in hell trying to catch an asbestos rat. So am writing John Sengstacke (Chicago Defender) and you, suggesting that you get in touch with Hon. Morris L. Ernst, 285 Madison Ave., New York and Hon. Arthur Garfield Hays, 120 Broadway, NY and ask them to get into the case."

(This letter came to Murphy because he served on the National Board for 35 years and chaired the legal redress committee of the Baltimore Branch.)

Dr. Murphy wrote James B. Herzog in New York, July 22, 1960 this history lesson on

"Too any students concern themselves with the progress of the independence of African nations without looking at the total picture of history as can be found in Rand-McNally's 'Histomap of the World,' the rise and fall of peoples and nations for 4000 years.

"Looking at such a Histomap of History, anyone is immediately struck by the fact that Africans ruled a large section of the known world 4000 years ago (2000 B.C.), and they then developed agriculture, shipbuilding, law, writing and and mathematics.

"One might be struck also by the fact that Egypt was not only African but black. As Herodotus says, the Egyptians were black with wooly hair', which was nothing to talk about since many other nations were so too, after the decline of Egypt the rise of the Syrians, Persians, Greeks, Islands, the Byzantine Empire, Roman Empire, the Turks, and then Britain,. France and Germany.

"It is plainly evident that Africans, who most of the experts say have no history and tradition, have largely impressed the world. the fact that the Europeans are 'come latelies' doesn't alter that judgement.

"In the past 2000 years, we have all been busily engaged in making the Africans white . . . appropriating their philosophy, their learning and afterwards destroying their books and libraries.

"Except for thefact that their Sphinx, Pyramids and Temples were almost indestructible, we would have little evidence today of Africans' tremendous contributions to the

(No library in the District of Columbia, including the Library of Columbia, has a copy of the Histomap of History published by Rand McNally. A query sent in September 1985 to the Rand McNally Archives elicted the reply that the Histomap "Unfortunately has been out of print for many years" and no copies are available for sale.)

July 1, 1959, he wrote to Asa T. Spaulding the then new president of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Co. in Durham, N.C.

"I am sending you a copy of a new translation of the Greek historian, Herodotus. You may not be interested in reading all of it but, I would like you to especially look at Chapters 2 and 3 in which Herodotus, father of history and one of the world's greatest story tellers, traveled all over the world about the year 450.

"It says quite frankly that the Africans excelled in everything. Herodotus picks out three people who belonged to one race — the Colchians in Asia, the Ethiopians, and the Egyptians, and all three of these, he says, plus some others, are black with wooly hair."

"How can we teach pride if the average American school boy thinks the history of the colored people begins with the landing of the first slave ship in Virginia. The average white man looks at the history of the colored man in American and say he had never done

"But a native of Nigeria or Ghana arises in his African Parliament and states boldly our people sat on the throne of the Pharaoh while all Europe was sunk in barbarism "

To the American Heritage Magazine in New York he wrote this letter Oct. 1, 1958 to set the facts straight:

"I call your attention to the fact that the participation of the colored people in the Revolution in your announcements seems to be limited to photograph of a colored child.

"Maryland records show that out of some 2000 citizens of this state who enrolled in the Revolution armies, at least 600 were colored.

"Bancroft talks about the free Negros of the colonies. He said their representation at the Battle of Bunker Hill include Peter Salem, a man named Prince, besides Crispus Attucks and and numerous others.

"Williams" 'History of the Negro Race in America' published by Putnam in 1812, records some of these exploits.

"You, with your matchless facilities, can certainly do something about the participation of this minority group in the War of the Revolution, treating them equal with the participation of all

Murphy wrote that President Lincoln freed the slaves because he had no other choice in this letter to Benjamin Penn, Washington, DC dated March 28, 1955.

"I am obliged to you for your letter of March 15 in the matter of the (Frederick) Douglass-Lincoln article.

"If you will read the final installment, you will see the purposes of the whole series. Among those purposes were to clear up a great deal of the myth and legend about Lincoln and recite the facts as taken from his political speeches and from his own writing while he was President to indicate: First, as Douglass said, that he was neither our man nor our model, and

"Secondly, that if he were President today, we would consider him a 'time is not ripe President' who believed neither in immediate



tagon Building in Washington, D.C. on

exercises honoring him at the Pen- 83; and Carl Murphy. Henson could miral Peary. speak the language of the Eskimos, and

First black man at the North Pole in April 6, 1950. First row, from left: Ad- made all of the sleds, stoves and other 1909 was Matthew Henson, shown at miral Koeler, Matthew Henson, then equipment in the expedition led by Ad-

emancipation of the slaves nor in their right to serve in the Army, nor to their promotion as officers, nor their rights to vote or to sit on juries; nor to their civil, political or social rights as citizens.

"Whatever Lincoln did, he was forced to do by the necessity of war. In all that we have said, we quote Lincoln himself and there was no heresay involved in it. Anyone can find the same facts by reading Lincoln's collected and speeches and writings.

"To my knowledge no one had heretofore quoted Mr. Lincoln's utterances in which he said that he thought gradual emancipation should be affected over the next 100 years.

"He said that in 1858, and using his own figures, the slaves would not be emancipated until 1958.

"The only thing that him change his opinion was the fact that he was losing the Civil War and had to change.

"The facts involving Lincoln's birth out of wedlock and that his mother, are historical.

"Since they are true, why shouldn't they be as well known as the same facts about Frederick Douglass."

The Rev. Daniel Ridout of Baltimore submitted an article to the AFRO on "Music-Sacred and Secular — Sublime and Ridiculous" in December 1959. Murphy made this comment in a letter of praise to the Rev. Mr. Ridout."

"Some of the earliest Christian hymns were folk songs adapted to Christian hymnology. Our own spirituals have become important additions to every Christian hymnal. Listen to the Lamb' is an anthem unparalleled.

"Let Us Break Bread Together" is sung as a communion hymn in most of the evangelical churches, and 'Where You There When They Crucified My Lord' has become an Easter rendition in churches of many races

"There is no hymn more popular and appropiate in our assemblies than 'Mine Eyes Have Seen The Glory of the Coming of The Lord" for which the tune is a camp meeting

Black newspapers campaigned to win recognition for Matthew Henson who went to the North Pole with Admiral Peary in 1909. Henson had been with Perry on his Artic trips in 1891, 1893, 1900, 1902 and 1906.

Dr. Murphy spoke at the exercises honoring Henson at the Pentagon in 1950 and followed it up with a thank you letter to the explorer. There are numerous letters in this collection to and from Herbert Frisby, the Baltimore science teacher and explorer, who fulfilled a life-long dream to be the second black man to reach the North Pole.

Frisby made over 15 trips to the Arctic area. In 1956 he flew over the North Pole and dropped a bronze plaque in memory of Henson.

Brig. Gen. B.O. Davis, Washington, DC was sent this letter Feb. 8, 1950. following his retirement from the Army, to encourage him to write his memoirs.

"Some years ago you sent me a letter in which you told me that it would be a long time before the United States Government would name officers to freely command colored

"At that time I talked with you about the matter of a larger number of officers in the 9th and 10th Calvary and the 24th and 25th

"Neither you nor I foresaw a great war in which our country would name hundreds of these officers

"You have helped to bring much of that about. In addition you held the highest commissioned office in the Army during the en-

"Frequently we have had men in the Army in the Civil War, the War of 1812 and even the Revolution, but they have kept no diaries and all historical references to them have almost

"I hope you will give this matter a favorable decision. Your services have been too valuable to us and to ourselves not to have a complete record." (Samples of letters to and from AFRO war correspondents during World War II, Vietnam and the Korean War are also included in the collection.)