BLACK HISTORY

Black dailies have existed since 1935

Robert S. Abbott, an 1899 graduate of Kent College of Law in Chicago, probably would have made a fine attorney. Indeed, he probably would have excelled in any field to which he put his mind.

But when he was discouraged from pursuing a law career in Chicago because of his color, he turned his energies to the area in which he had been trained at Hampton Institute — printing.

This was also the area in which he had early experience as a boy in Savannah, working with his stepfather, a minister, who published the *Woodville Times*.

Thus, in 1905, inspired by a deep need to speak to the masses of African - Americans, Abbott borrowed money and published from his living quarters 300 copies of a four - page 16 - by - 20 - inch newspaper called the *Chicago Defender*.

The *Defender* would catch on almost immediately and eventually make its founder a millionaire and be credited by some historians with being the single most influential factor in the great migration of tens of thousands of African - Americans from the deep South to Chicago.

Abbott had his own printing press and for a brief period in the heart of the Great Depression — from 1930 - 1933 — would also publish a fine 60-page magazine called *Abbott's Monthly*.

But Abbott's first love was the *Defender* and he developed it into the first truly independent, national African - American newspaper.

During the period between the World Wars, it would reach a peak paid circulation of more than 230,000, with a "pass - around" circulation of four times that number.

Throughout this period, it was compared to the Hearst newspapers because of its bold strident headlines and slashing editorials.

But the objects of the *Defender's* wrath were those who exposued segregation and discrimination.

It became such a strong advocate for racial equality and condemned racism so staunchly, that it was banned by officials in many Southern municipalities.

These officials would even intercept the *Defender* at local post offices when it was mailed to southern towns.

Consequently, the paper had to be secretly distributed by railway porters who belonged to the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

These daring African - Americans would take the chance of being fired from their jobs — or assaulted in southern towns — and distribute the paper to towns and municipalities all across the nation.

This porter's network proved to be more efficient than the postal service.

The *Defender* set the tone for other African - American newspapers. They too spoke out boldly against discrimination, crusaded for equal employment opportunities in the inner cities, and supported African - American inclusion in politics, education and economics.

C. A. Scott, publisher, and visitors outside the Atlanta Daily World.

The *Defender* would also take the lead with the creation of a children's section, which led to the creation of the Bud Billiken Clubs for children who read and distributed the paper all across the country.

In short, it would become one of the great influences on African - American newspapers and a pioneer in the struggle for African - American civil rights from 1910 to the advent of World War II.

In 1956, in the hands of Abbott's nephew, John H. H. Sengstacke, it became a daily newspaper and remains only one of a few in the country. In 1988, it had a circulation of 18,000.

* * *

In the South, Georgia had been one of only two states to have an African - American newspaper published before emancipation.

The *Colored American* was published in Augusta in 1865, before ratification of the 13th Amendment. By 1928, a score of African - American newspapers had been published in the state.

More than a dozen had been published in Atlanta.

Thus, when W. A. Scott and his older brother arrived in Atlanta from Jackson State College, Mississippi to attend Morehouse College, the city had a long tradition with the African - American press.

Indeed, in 1925, when the Scott's arrived, at least three African - Newspapers were being published there.

The Scotts, meanwhile, were no strangers to publishing. Like Charles S. Abbott, they too got their first taste of publishing by working with their father, a minister, who published a church paper in Mississippi.

And the brothers practiced the craft at Morehouse, when they edited the Morehouse yearbook.

Thus, when W. A. Scott got word in 1928 that one of the Atlanta newspapers was on the verge of going out of business, he jumped at the opportunity.

He assumed a lien against the machinery, brought the press and began publication of a weekly that in 1932 would become a daily.

Today it is the country's oldest continuously run African - American daily newspaper.

The *World*, in its first editorial, championed the struggle of African - Americans against police brutality. It also promised to fight for voting rights and to report the news and accomplishments of African - Americans across the country.

In the mid - 1940s, it would lead the fight to get African - Americans on the police force in Atlanta.

The Scott brothers (there were six of them) would also turn the paper into a major national distribution and printing enterprise.

W. A. Scott expanded the *World* newspapers to Birmingham and Memphis, and worked out agreements with more than 40 other newspapers across the country.

He would publish their papers and provide them with an eight - page *World* wrap that included national advertising, an *Atlanta World* inside, with local news on sports, church and front page.

The *World* charged fees for publishing and distribution, and kept the national advertising revenues.

It was responsible for the publication of African - American newspapers from as far away as Iowa, Texas and Louisiana.

It was also responsible for publishing a Negro Business Director in Atlanta, south Georgia and Jacksonville, Florida.

W. A. Scott, III, son of the founder, remembers that the *World* presses ran continuously on three eight - hour shifts, with another brother, Daniel M. Scott, working fulltime as head pressman.

The son also remembers driving with his father to Chicago and back, stopping briefly in Alabama and Tennessee as the tireless elder Scott oversaw his growing empire. Otherwise, the son remembers, they stopped only for food and drink.

The father also recruited editors and publishers — convincing them to start an African - American newspaper — and established a rail system for distribution across the country.

In March, 1932, the operation was so successful, the *World* went daily. And when W. A. Scott died in 1934, another brother, C. A. Scott, took over as editor and general manager.

The *World* is still run today by the Scott family and continues with a circulation of 20,000, as one of the leading voices for African - Americans in the South.

One man, one idea, and life gets better.

On the day of their high school graduation each of the young men below was made an extraordinary offer. A full engineering scholarship to Florida A&M University, and an airline ticket to Detroit to begin a challenging summer internship assignment at General Motors.

Dr. Frederick S. Humphries, the man in the middle, is President of Florida A&M and the scholarship was his brainchild. He called it the "Life Gets Better" program, and we thought it was one great idea, so we helped fund it. Because at General Motors we believe that supporting the people who buy our Chevrolets, Pontiacs, Oldsmobiles, Buicks, Cadillacs and GMC Trucks is more than just a corporate responsibility—it's good business.

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Black Cabinet

During the administration of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, African-Americans for the first time in history were appointed in large numbers to fairly high level positions considered important by the African-American community.

Many of these were patronage positions, given to those who had abandoned "the party of Lincoln," to work for FDR and the Democrats.

But, for the first time, there were also a number of non-party people who were appointed because of the training and skills they brought with them.

The African-American big wigs in the Democartic Party would be referred to in the African-American press as the "Democratic Big Four."

The non-patronage appointees would be known as the "Black Cabinet" — sometimes disparagingly referred to as the "kitchen Cabinet," because they presumably were not full-fledged members of the White House.

African-American press publishers and editors played a significant role in leading African-Americans to the Democratic Party and establishing the Black Cabinet.

One of these publishers, the **Pittsburgh Courier's** Robert L. Vann, is frequently credited with being the most influential of these.

The Courier, with a national circulation of around 200,000, had succeeded the **Chicago Defender** as the nation's largest circulation African-American weekly newspaper.

Moreover, Van had a long history of political involvement. He had worked with the Republican Party since 1903 and was active in its affairs in Pennsylvania and in Washington, D.C. He had also done publicity work in the Harding, Coolidge and Hoover campaigns.

Thus, when he left the Republicans to join forces with the Democrats, it was a major statement and had a significant affect on the African-American community.

He and his **Courier**, more than any other publisher or paper, helped convince FDR that he needed the African-American vote.

For his efforts in support of FDR, Vann became one of the "Big Four" named in 1932 to the newly established Colored Advisory Committee to the National Democratic Committee.

Another publisher, William J. Thompkins of the Kansas City American, was also one of the Four, along with Julian Rainey of Boston and Dr. Joseph L. Johnson of Wilberforce University.

Vann went public with his switch to the Republican Party in his famous "Patriot and the Partisan" speech of September 1932 in which he said he saw "millions of Negroes turning the picture of Lincoln to the wall," and voting for FDR.

"Negroes who know the difference between blind partisanism and patriotism," would vote for the Democrats, Vann concluded.

Vann's speech was picked up by the African-American press and opened the debate to the entire African-American community.

"Negroes who know the difference between blind partisanism and patriotism," would vote for the Democrats, Vann concluded.

Vann's speech was picked up the African-American community.

He also used the **Courier** to campaign for FDR and lambast Herbert Hoover, and persuaded J. Max Barber, publisher of the **Philadelphia Independent** to do likewise.

BLACK HISTORY

—Afro-American History

(Continued from Page E7)

news, mailing, writing, or selling AFRO's.

College in those days for poor Blacks and Whites were out of the question and Black children only attended school thru the eighth grade. George B. Murphy, the second oldest of the children was 16 when he finished the eighth grade.

He was learning the Blacksmith trade for two years before a colored high school was completed in 1885. He was one of two graduates in 1890 . . . the other being Miss Ada Trusty.

He lived at home with his parents helping out with the younger children and was a big help with his $33 a month, day job teaching at School No. 9 at Riggs and Carrollton Ave. and principal of the first night school for colored adults earning $2.50 a night.

He married Grace Lee Hughes, nine years after he started teaching and had seven children. Of them, Howard H. Murphy, James H. Murphy and George B. Murphy, Jr. all served with distinction as AFRO executives.

The girls in the family, Eva Sue Purdy of Somerset, Pa., Frances Murphy, Lilly Thompson, Rose Oliver of Brazil, Ind. and Harriett Gilbert all attended the Colored Teacher's College to supplement the family income and all as young women, before marriage, played piano at different churches.

In 1922, John H. Murphy, Sr. saddened by the death of his second youngest son, Dan, that same year, called his family together and especially his sons, gave them a mandate.

His legacy to them was a family business, with all stock owned by family members where any member of his family would always have a place to work . . . down to his children's children, down to the last generation.

In 1918, Carl, with a BA from Howard University, MA from Harvard joined the AFRO family as editor. John, Jr. who was teaching printing at Douglass High School with a degree from Hampton Institute joined Arnett, the baby of the family.

Carl was writer, editor and publisher, John Jr., became circulation director who from 1918 through the 1960's pushed circulation to 200,000 plus.

Arnett became the Advertising Director under whose administration AFRO Cooking Schools were started in Baltimore, Washington and Richmond, Career Supplements, Christmas Gift Guides, Vacation Guides were all started.

In 1944, he organized Associated Publishers, a national advertising agency to represent 33 Black newspapers.

Howard Murphy joined the AFRO with his accounting skills from Brown University. Jim Murphy brought his circulation skills from Lincoln University.

Mae Murphy Dyson, became the firt child of the brothers to graduate cum laude with a degree in Journalism from Ohio State University. She joined the AFRO as Corporate Secretary and the right hand of her father, Arnett.

Martha Howard Murphy (1846-1917) AFRO Founding Mother. Co-founder of Colored Young Women's Christian Assoc. (YWCA) and was President 17 years.

John Murphy, III, (1937-1986) son of Dan Murphy became President of the AFRO In 1961, Chairman in 1977. A graduate of Temple University he was publisher of the Washington Tribune when acquired by the AFRO. He worked in purchasing, bookkeeping, president and Assistant to Chairman Carl Murphy.

Elizabeth Murphy Phillips Moss came in from Howard University and the University of Minnesota. She joined her father Carl in 1938 working as reporter, City Editor, Managing Editor, Publisher until 1974.

From Indiana, Rose Murphy's children, Elizabeth Murphy Oliver, a graduate of Fisk University came in as a reporter, writer and Baltimore City Editor.

Her brother, John J. Oliver, Sr., a graduate of DePauw, Greencastle, Ind. came to the AFRO in the 1930's as Mechanical Superintendent, Composing Room Foreman and President in the 1970's.

His son, John J. Oliver, Jr., grad of Fisk University, with a Juris Doctor from Columbia Law School is presently AFRO Board Chairman, elected in 1986. He is a member of New York and Maryland Bar.

Ida Murphy Peters joined in 1940, Carl's daughter, the first Black woman to graduate in Advertising and Commerce from the School of Journalism, University of Wisconsin. She served as Advertising Salesman; Washington Advertising Manager; Subscription Manager, Clean Block and Mrs. Santa Director, Entertainment Editor and Public Relations Director.

Frances Murphy, a 1944 graduate of the University of Wisconsin with a MA from Johns Hopkins joined in 1945 as writer; Editor, Richmond AFRO; Editor-Manager Washington AFRO; Chairman of Board of AFRO Group;

Professor State University of New York and currently Professor in Communications, Howard University and Publisher of Washington AFRO.

Her daughter, Frances Murphy Draper, grad of Morgan State U with an MA from Johns Hopkins and U. of Baltimore and MBA and is currently president of the AFRO Group, and Chief Operating Officer.

In "Thoughts of Founder" published on the Editorial Page of the AFRO December 25, 1920, John H. Murphy, Sr. said:

It was a hard thing to educate the people up to the standard of reading a Negro newspaper. Much hard work had to be done to overcome the ignorance and prejudice against it.

It was a long time before the pulpit, the bar and the medical practitioner found that it was a help rather than a hinderance to them. It was a longer time before the business man found that his business could be increased by its advertising columns: and we are sorry to say that a number of them have not found it out to this day.

Nevertheless in all these years, it has been doing work for the advancement of the race that was not being done through any other channels. It made a bold stand for the rights that were being denied the people and presented the claims of the race for better things.

BALTIMORE
The City That Reads
The AFRO-AMERICAN
Newspaper

Father of Baltimore's Black power engineers

By Ida Peters

Henry Hall — 1896-1979

The ichthyologist, Henry Hall, a man often called "the father of Baltimore's Black power engineers" and chief engineer at Provident Hospital from 1927 to 1952, began the National Aquarium of Baltimore's exhibits by contributing his rare collection of freshwater tropical fish worth $10,000 to the institution in 1977.

The world-famous $21 million dollar structure in the Inner Harbor, which attracted more than one million visitors in 1989, established a $700,000 endowment fund on August 6, 1982 in his name.

The Henry Hall Funds was to encourage minority Baltimore youth in careers unique to the aquarium industry by scholarships and internships; and to encourage inner city communities in Baltimore in National Aquarium activities through visitation and volunteers.

Henry Hall

Henry Hall served as a consultant to the National Aquarium in Baltimore's Board of Directors and was later appointed to the Board.

He was recognized in Baltimore as a man who contributed greatly to the intellectual and cultural development of the city's residents.

Started Collecting at 5

"Fish are the numbers I didn't play,
The whiskey I didn't drink.
The horses that were

(Continued on Page E15)

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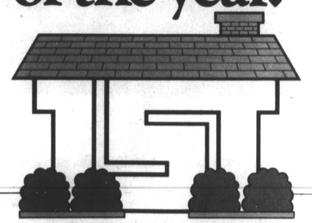

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