

NAACP Executive Secretaries, Executive Directors and Presidents & CEOs --1909 – Present

Frances Blascoer

Secretary

February 1910 – March 7, 1911

Mary White Ovington

Secretary

May 16, 1911 – June 4, 1912

Mary Childs Nerney

Secretary

June 1, 1912 – January 3, 1916

Mary White Ovington

Acting Secretary

January 10, 1916 – February 15, 1916

Royal Freeman Nash

Secretary

February 15, 1916 – September 1, 1917

James Weldon Johnson

Acting Secretary

May 14, 1917 – January 1, 1918

John R. Shillady

Secretary

January 1, 1918 – May 10, 1920

James Weldon Johnson

Acting Secretary

September 13, 1920 – December 13, 1920

Secretary

December 13, 1920 – January, 1931

Walter White

Secretary

January, 1931 – April, 1955

Roy Wilkins

Executive Director

April 1955 – August 1977

Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks

Executive Director & CEO

August 1, 1977 – May 1993

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Executive Director & CEO

May 1993 – August 1994

Earl T. Shinhoster

Acting Executive Director & CEO

September 1994 – January 1996

Kweisi Mfume
 President & CEO
 February 1996 – December 2004

Dennis C. Hayes
 Interim President & CEO
 January 2005 – July 2005

Bruce S. Gordon
 President & CEO
 August 2005 – March 2007

Dennis C. Hayes
 Interim President & CEO
 March 2007 – September 2008

Benjamin T. Jealous
 President & CEO
 September 2008 - Present

TURN OF THE CENTURY: DISENFRANCHISEMENT, LYNCHING, AND THE GREAT MIGRATION

1877

Withdrawal of Federal troops from patrols in the South. Reconstruction begins to “retreat” setting the stage for violence and Jim Crow.

1896

Segregation reached a defining pinnacle when **HOMER PLESSY** refused to leave a “whites only” rail car in New Orleans. The case was brought before the United States Supreme Court under the title of **PLESSY V. FERGUSON**. The high court went on to establish the “**SEPARATE BUT EQUAL**” doctrine in declaring that segregation had been “*universally recognized as within the competency of states in the exercise of their police power.*” Equality of treatment under the law exists as long as the races are accorded equal facilities. Justice John Marshall Harlan was the sole dissenter declaring that the ruling “*would stimulate aggressions, more or less brutal, upon the admitted rights of colored citizens.*”

As if to emphasize Harlan’s prophesy, reports of racial violence in the south reached an average of 180 lynching per year between 1890 and 1896

Violence became the norm to prevent blacks from voting and gaining an economic foothold

- Lynching increased enormously as a means of terrorism
- In the 1890's blacks had begun the **Great Migration** in great numbers Northward for work in factories and to escape Southern violence

“Jim Crow” Laws

- Disfranchisement of black voters: Poll Taxes and Literacy Tests required to vote in Southern States
- Segregation laws named for a character in a popular minstrel show

IDA B. WELLS

- Born in 1862, the first of eight children born to former Mississippi slaves of Native American and African ancestry. After attending Holly Springs High School, she began teaching school in rural Mississippi at age 14.
- Refused to accept southern segregation laws and in 1887 carried a desegregation suit to the Tennessee Supreme Court, where she lost her case.
- Under the pen name of **“Iola,”** she wrote articles exposing the inferior schools that had been provided for African American pupils by the city of Memphis, Tennessee. As a result school board members fired her as a teacher.
- January 1892, Wells bought a half-interest in a paper called the **Memphis Free Speech**. By March, she was using its pages to expose the lynching of three young African American men she knew. Though they had been accused of raping three white women, she revealed that their white business competitors had planned their murder and had concocted the charge of rape as a justification.
- Wells’ articles urged her people to resist discrimination by boycotting the segregated streetcars in Memphis or migrating to the West. By this time, Wells walked to work each day carrying two revolvers for protection.
- May 1892, while Wells was out of town, a mob destroyed her Free Speech press. Far from discouraged, she decided to launch her life’s work – an antilynching campaign.
- In 1893 and 1894 she visited England to organize international opinion against lynching. One clergyman reported that not since Uncle Tom’s Cabin had the British been so aroused by an issue and speaker.
- An attractive, dynamic speaker, Wells reached thousands with her call for justice. She relied on documentation to prove that the charge of rape was used as a smoke screen to justify lynching. She wrote pamphlets in 1892 and 1895 that used white sources to prove that Blacks were lynched not for rape but for “offenses” such as challenging segregation, talking back to whites who insulted them, or “being uppity.”
- Her first two pamphlets carried introductions by the famous African American statesman Frederick Douglass. He said, **“Brave woman! You**

have done your people and mine a service which can neither be weighed nor measured.”

- After rioters and police rampaged through African American neighborhoods in 1900 in New Orleans, Wells wrote ***Mob Rule in New Orleans*** to chronicle the white violence. She hoped that when ***America’s “conscience wakes and speaks out in thunder tones, as it must, it will need facts to use as a weapon against injustice, barbarism, and wrong.”***
- Wells took a prominent role in efforts to enroll black women in their own clubs and fellowship leagues. She became a secretary of the National Afro-American Council, and she and other radicals challenged Booker T. Washington for his conservative views. Wells also chaired the Anti-Lynching League and in 1909 she was among the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).
- Wells was an advocate of women’s suffrage and founded the first African American women’s suffrage club. In 1913 she served as co-chair of a delegation to President Woodrow Wilson that protested his segregation of the civil service.
- More than anyone else, Wells exposed lynching as a crime against humanity. Her 40 years of unrelenting effort failed to stop the crime and did not produce a federal anti-lynching law. However, lynching decreased by 80% after her campaign began, and her documented evidence on the crime of lynching and her commitment to justice roused the world’s conscience.

WILLIAM E. B. DU BOIS

- Born in 1868 just as his people gained the right to vote with the XV Amendment to the Constitution. He died in Ghana, Africa the day before Dr. Martin Luther King gave his “I have a dream” speech in Washington, D. C. in 1963. To inform the world about the accomplishments of Africans and African Americans, he wrote 30 books including historical and sociological studies and novels.
- Du Bois believed that a “talented tenth,” an elite of educated African Americans like himself, had to lead the struggle for racial justice. In 1905 he and his followers organized a conference at Niagara Falls, Canada. They did not meet in the U. S. because hotel managers denied them rooms on the American side of the falls. By 1909, W. E. B. Du Bois’ “**Niagara Movement**” had laid the foundation for the NAACP.
- Du Bois also began the pan-African movement in 1900, took part in the first World Races Conference in 1911, and organized a Pan-African Congress in Paris during the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919.
- Du Bois was also the editor of ***The Crisis*** in which he detailed racial crimes, published fiction and poetry by African Americans, and recounted tales of little known heroes of Africa and African America. He listed every black man or woman who graduated from college at the time or wrote a

book. Du Bois' first editorial launched a drive against segregated schools with these words: ***"This is wrong and should be resisted by black men and white."***

- He devoted his life to the fight for peace and equal justice around the globe and to educating people about the role African Americans played in American history. He took a leading part in efforts to free Africa from colonial rule and in campaigns against European imperialism in the world.

1909

On February 12th The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was founded by a multiracial group of activists, who answered "The Call," in the New York City, NY. They initially called themselves the National Negro Committee.

FOUNDERS

Ida Wells-Barnett, W.E.B. DuBois, Henry Moscowitz, Mary White Ovington, Oswald Garrison Villiard, William English Walling led the "Call" to renew the struggle for civil and political liberty.

1910

In the face of intense adversity, the NAACP begins its legacy of fighting legal battles addressing social injustice with the Pink Franklin case, which involved a Black farmhand, who unbeknowingly killed a policeman in self-defense when the officer broke into his home at 3 a.m. to arrest him on a civil charge. After losing at the Supreme Court, the following year the renowned NAACP official Joel Spingarn and his brother Arthur start a concerted effort to fight such cases.

1913

President Woodrow Wilson officially introduces segregation into the Federal Government. Horrified that President would sanction such a policy, the NAACP launched a public protest.

REBIRTH OF THE KU KLUX KLAN

- ❑ Industrialization, corporate farming, and world political economics caused many people to feel alienated
- ❑ In 1915 the Ku Klux Klan had begun a revival
- ❑ By the 1920's the Klan was reborn with 3 million members
- ❑ They claimed to be preserving traditional rural family Christian values that were being threatened by blacks, immigrants, radicals (unions, socialists, and civil rights advocates), Catholics, Jews, and foreigners

- The Klan not only ruled the South, but held power in Illinois, California, Oregon, Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Kansas

“BIRTH OF A NATION”

- The Klan was assisted by Hollywood. In 1913 D. W. Griffith completed **Birth of a Nation**, a three-hour epic movie that depicted the Ku Klux Klan as heroes, while stereotyping Blacks. Birth of a Nation was the first film classic, the first American feature length film, and the first blockbuster. It also offered audiences a Ku Klux Klan version of American history and put its message across through innovative film techniques. Birth of a Nation turned Klan members into heroes. The film’s villains were the former slaves who advocated democracy in the post-Civil War South. It was not enough that African Americans were victimized by society, now they were being strung up by Hollywood.
- When the film was shown at the White House, President Wilson called it ***“history written in lightning.”*** For the first time a movie had a **PRESIDENTIAL STAMP OF APPROVAL**. The next night **Supreme Court Chief Justice Edward White** was so thrilled at a showing that he proudly announced he rode with the Klan in Louisiana.
- African American groups protested Birth of a Nation’s distortion of history, particularly its effort to label leading black officials as rapists. Protests had it banned in 5 states and 19 cities. However, the picket lines and the scholarly refutations of the movie only increased its white audiences. Subsequently, black producers formed their own film companies to make movies that would more accurately reflect black life

1915

The NAACP organizes a nationwide protest D.W. Griffiths racially-inflammatory and bigoted silent film, "Birth of a Nation."

1917

In Buchanan vs. Warley, the Supreme Court has to concede that states can not restrict and officially segregate African Americans into residential districts. Also, the NAACP fights and wins the battle to enable African Americans to be commissioned as officers in World War I. Six hundred officers are commissioned, and 700,000 register for the draft..

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE WAR

- Because of the War effort, blacks began to abandon the “service” occupations and get work in factories

- In many cases, whites, fearful of losing their jobs in the North, resorted to violence
- **Booker T. Washington** had died in 1915, but his earlier thoughts on “patriotism” had caused him to look with favor on blacks joining the war effort
- **W. E. B. Du Bois** originally called for blacks to boycott the war effort because of inequality and continued violence against blacks in the North and the South ~ he later changed his stance and called for blacks to “***pull together***” & “***close ranks***” & fight for American freedom overseas
- In the beginning, recruiting offices refused to accept black volunteers
- In the end, 370,000 blacks were accepted into the Armed Forces
- Segregation was maintained during training in the U.S., and when they landed in Europe
- General Pershing advised the French to maintain segregation ~ German leaflets were dropped reminding the black troops that they were not free nor equal
- In the end, when France sent a desperate cry for reinforcements, Pershing sent in black troops
- The black troops were welcomed by the French on the Front Line, where the blacks fought hard and won more French medals than any other American unit
- Upon returning home blacks expected a new era of freedom and equality
- Du Bois declared a new day for democracy, with blacks demanding their equal rights
- Whites were not impressed:
 - ◆ riots and lynching increased after the war
 - ◆ some blacks were lynched while still wearing their uniforms
 - ◆ segregation remained in tact
 - ◆ factories fired blacks after the war ended
- America offered no medals to blacks until 1991 when Corporal Freddie Stowers, who charged a German Hill in 1918, was given the Medal of Honor: his sister accepted the Medal from General Colin Powell, the first black Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

1918

After persistent pressure by the NAACP, President Woodrow Wilson finally makes a public statement against lynching.

1920 - 1922

1920

To ensure that everyone, especially the Klan, knew that the NAACP would not be intimidated, the annual conference was held in Atlanta, considered one of the most active Klan areas.

1922

In an unprecedented move, the NAACP places large ads in major newspapers to present the facts about lynching.

THE NEW NEGRO AND THE HARLAM RENAISSANCE

One major destination of the vast black migration out of the South was to Harlem, a part of Manhattan in New York City. People of color had begun moving to Harlem after 1900 when rioting had shattered their neighborhoods in lower Manhattan. Harlem had once been a one-horse town and then a center of fashion for wealthy white Americans. It once had been home to white immigrants who had “made it” as bankers and businessmen, and polo was played in the Polo Grounds. Then white families began to leave Harlem, and it became African America’s shimmering cultural Mecca in America.

Thousands of African American families arrived to rent Harlem’s sturdy, durable houses. In 1914 Harlem offered what the Urban League called **“life in grand style, with elevators, telephone and hall boy service.”** By World War I, almost every major black church, YMCA, business and insurance company, settlement house, and civil rights organization had a home there. In 1920 Harlem had 80,000 residents and by 1930, 200,000. It held more Blacks than Birmingham, St. Louis, and Memphis combined.

Thousands of people from the Caribbean came to Harlem. By 1920 about 50,000 West Indians entered America. Many settled in Harlem. Immigrants came from Martinique, Haiti, and Guadeloupe. Puerto Ricans also flooded into New York to settle in East Harlem, today known as Spanish Harlem or **El Barrio**.

Thomas Fortune was born in 1856 in slavery in Florida to parents whose ancestors were African, Native American, and Irish. He later attended Howard University and worked on the **People’s Advocate**, an African American paper. By 1884, he was the new owner of the **New York Freeman**, which he renamed **The Age**.

Fortune’s powerful editorials on racism in **The Age** made it the country’s leading African American paper. Though some whites criticized him for being radical, Fortune was a Republican even if he was often defiantly independent of the party. In the 1890’s he began to write for the popular **New York Sun**.

During the 1890s Fortune helped found civil rights organizations. He also objected to the United States gaining colonies since this would mean white American control over peoples of color in distant islands.

By 1900, Fortune had become the country’s most well known African American radical. Yet, he also managed to remain an ally and advisor to the conservative black leader, **Booker T. Washington**. In 1923, Fortune became the

editor of ***Negro World***, the popular weekly issued by **Marcus Garvey** and his **Universal Negro Improvement Association**. One scholar has called Fortune, ***“the best journalist the Negro race has produced.”***

Marcus Garvey arrived from Jamaica in 1916 to preach black pride and to help save Africa from colonialism. Garvey formed the Universal Negro Improvement Association and preached “Africa for the Africans.” His paper, ***Negro World***, in English, Spanish, and French, sold 200,000 copies weekly. Garvey exhorted people to study their history, rejoice in their blackness, and build a sturdy motherland in Africa. He called whites “devils” and was critical of African Americans who entered the middle class or who had light skins. He promised Africa’s deliverance as agents of his Black Star Steamship Company sold stock across the country.

In 1920 Garvey declared himself Provisional President of Africa and soon began an African Orthodox Church, an African Legion, the Black Cross Nurses, a hotel, and a publishing company. He traveled to black slums in 48 states with his message of “Up, you mighty people.” He urged people of color to plan their own destiny.

J. Edgar Hoover of the U.S. Justice Department was alarmed by Garvey’s ability to unite millions of people of African descent. To Hoover, a person with Garvey’s following was a threat to national security. In 1922 Garvey was indicted for mail fraud, tried, sentenced, convicted, and sentenced to 5 years in an Atlanta prison. In 1927 he was deported to Jamaica. Garvey died poor in London in 1940. W. E. B. Du Bois, once a critic of Garvey, praised his ***“tremendous vision, dynamic force, stubborn determination, and an unselfish desire to serve.”***

The 1920s witnessed the Harlem Renaissance as authors, artists, entertainers, musicians, scholars, and poets used music, poetry, short stories, works of art, and novels to capture the beauty of African Americans and to protest racism.

Claude McKay, a Jamaican author credited with initiating the Harlem Renaissance, wrote ***Harlem Shadows*** in 1922. He later wrote ***Home to Harlem*** and ***Banjo***. His poem ***“If We Must Die”*** promised black retaliation against mob lynchings.

Zora Neal Hurston was born in Florida in 1901 in the all-black town of Eatonville. She graduated from Morgan College and then Columbia University where she studied anthropology with Dr. Franz Boas, who led the scientific fight against racism. Her colleague was Langston Hughes, the Poet Laureate of Harlem, with whom she wrote the play ***Mule Bone***. Her most famous works are ***Mules and Men***, ***Tell My Horse***, and ***Dust Tracks on a Road*** her autobiography.

Countee Cullen was born in New York in 1903 and won writing prizes at De Witt Clinton High School and New York University. He taught in Harlem schools for 20 years and published a novel and 9 books of verse including **Color**.

Langston Hughes, the “**Poet Laureate Of Harlem**,” was born in 1902 in Joplin, Missouri and could trace his Native American ancestry back to Pocahontas, and his African ancestry to one of John Brown’s raiders and a Virginia congressman. His family later moved to Kansas where Langston won a poetry contest at his high school. However, he was denied the award because of his color.

In 1921 Langston Hughes entered Columbia University, New York on a scholarship. He was however, denied a dorm room because he was black. He became discouraged and his grades suffered. Yet, Harlem was the **Promised Land** for Langston Hughes. He was dazzled by the different shades of brown in Harlem, the nightlife & the jazz, and he visited the library and devoured books upon books. He later stated that he had “**wanted to see Harlem, the greatest Negro city in the world.**” “**I was in love with Harlem,**” said Langston, “**long before I got there, and I still am in love with it. Everybody seemed to make me welcome. The sheer dark size of Harlem intrigued me.**” Indeed, when he arrived, he felt he “**was HOME!**”

While in Harlem, Hughes was approached by W. E. B. Du Bois who invited him to submit a poem for **The Crisis**. Langston submitted “**The Negro Speaks of Rivers,**” a poem about the historical roots of African Americans. Langston Hughes left Columbia after just one year, joined the Merchant Marines and traveled around the world for 4 years. Upon visiting Africa, Langston exclaimed, “**My Africa, Motherland of the Negro peoples! And me a Negro! Africa! The real thing, to be touched and seen, not merely read about in a book.**”

In 1925 Langston returned to America and entered Lincoln University where he finished his degree. During this time he spent every summer in Harlem at the height of the Renaissance a “**period when the Negro was in vogue.**” In his autobiography he stated that, “**I was there. I had a swell time while it lasted. But I thought it couldn’t last long . . . For how long could a large and enthusiastic number of people be crazy about Negroes forever?**”

Unlike the elitist W.E.B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes celebrated the “**everyman,**” or “**common Negro and low-down folk,**” who created what he considered to be the essence of black artistic achievement. This included “**Jazz,**” which to Langston was “**one of the inherent expressions of Negro life in America; the eternal tom-tom beating in the Negro soul – the tom-tom of revolt against weariness in a white world, a world of subway trains, and work, work, work; the tom-tom of joy and laughter.**”

During the 1930s Langston Hughes was, like Du Bois, attracted to socialism. He never joined the Communist Party, but wrote for *New Masses*, a socialist newspaper, and like Du Bois, traveled to the Soviet Union and Spain. He abandoned socialism in the early 1940s, and made Harlem his home for the rest

of his life. For 20 years he wrote a column based on the folk character **Jesse B. Semple**, or “**Simple**,” a sort of black everyman whose observations combined mother wit, cynicism, naivete, and insight. Hughes collaborated with Zora Neal Hurston on the play **Mule Bone**, and has authored novels, short stories, poetry, plays, articles, and even 12 children’s books. Hughes remained active until his death in 1967, and witnessed the “**rebirth of the Negro**” through the Civil Rights Movements of the 1950s and 1960s.

Richard Wright was born near Natchez, Mississippi in 1908. He was the son of a sharecropper and schoolteacher, and the grandson of slaves. After his father left the family, Richard was shuffled around from relatives to orphanages and back again.

In 1925, Richard Wright moved to Memphis, Tennessee, after graduating from 9th grade, and then in 1927 to Chicago where he found odd jobs during the Depression. It was in Chicago that Richard Wright pursued his goal of becoming a writer. Wright joined the Communist Party and published poems in Communist papers such as “New Masses,” “Anvil,” and “Left Front.” Finally, in 1935, Richard Wright’s first piece of journalism, “**Joe Louis Uncovers Dynamite**,” was published.

In 1937, Richard Wright moved to New York and became the editor of the Communist “Daily Worker.” That same year one of his most famous essays, “**The Ethics of Living Jim Crow**,” was published. Wright’s first book, “**Uncle Tom’s Children: Four Novellas**,” was published in 1938 and “**Native Son**” in 1940.

In 1947, weary of persistent racism in America, Wright moved to Paris, France, and traveled to other such as Africa and Asia. In 1960, Langston Hughes visited Wright in Paris; Wright died two days later.

1930 - 1939

The Great Depression

- Agricultural produce stood idle
- Factories were closed ~ no unemployment insurance
- 9,000 banks closed ~ people lost their savings
- Unemployment went from 3.1 % to 25 %
- Jobless & homeless wandered the streets looking for work ~ “hoboes” road the rails, heading west & south to keep warm
- Food prices increased ~ people searched garbage cans for food
- The Mid-west suffered a drought ~ Banks foreclosed & small rural farmers lost their homes ~ tenant farmers & sharecroppers could not pay the rent & were kicked out
- **Racism and prejudice caused people to seek scapegoats in blacks, Mexicans, and Asians**

- Thousands of people headed west to California looking for work ~ Shantytowns were built from scraps of wood called “HOOVERVILLES”

Escapism & Communism:

- Alcohol use increased
- Movies reflecting a desire to return to the Golden 20's: musicals filled the screen like “Forty-Second Street” and “Gold Diggers” in 1933
- Labor Unions continued to fight for jobs and their rights

The American Communist Party fought for the rights of blacks including saving the Scottsboro Boys of Scottsboro, Alabama from the electric chair & preventing black tenant farmers from being evicted ~ during the 1930's black membership in the Communist Party rose from 50 to 10,000

Unfortunately, when the Depression hit, blacks were the first to be fired, and when recovery was promised, the last to be hired. African Americans voiced their anger and used black organizations such as the **Negro Industrial League**, the **NAACP**, and the **National Urban League** to garner political attention.

By 1935, FDR, who realized that his political future depended on the black vote, appointed a number of African Americans to government offices:

- Robert L. Vann in the office of attorney general
- Robert C. Weaver in the Department of Interior
- William Weaver in the Department of Interior
- Lawrence A. Oxley in the Department of Labor
- Edgar Brown in the Civilian Conservation Corps

Mary McLeod Bethune, founder of the Bethune-Cookman College in Florida, as head of the Negro Division of the National Youth Administration

African Americans in the South During the Depression:

- Black sharecroppers and wage laborers suffered as cotton prices dropped from 18 cents per pound to 6 cents by 1933.
- Machines had already begun to replace farm workers, but with the depression corporate controlled farms viewed machines as a necessary replacement instead of paying wages. Richard Wright stated that ***“as plantation after plantation fails, the Bosses of the Buildings [northern industrialists] acquire control and send tractors upon the land, and still more of us are compelled to search for ‘another place.’”***

- Sharecroppers were unable to gain credit for needed supplies: one sharecropper asked his landlord for an advance to buy overalls, but the landlord claimed that he too was in need of overalls.
- Ironically, poor southern blacks again began a migration northward seeking employment.

Depression In the Industrial North:

W. E. B. DuBois and A. Philip Randolph proclaimed that during the Depression, blacks were first to be fired and last to be re-hired. In fact, blacks had been losing jobs long before the Stock Market Crash of 1929. Months before the Crash, the Chicago Defender warned:

“Something is happening . . . and it should no longer go unnoticed. During the past three weeks hardly a day has ended that there has not been a report of another firm discharging its employees, many of whom have been faithful workers at these places for years.”

By 1931, 40% of Chicago’s black men and 55% of black women were unemployed compared to 23% of white males and 13% of white females. Many black females were forced to stand on city street corners and accept work from white women who drove up seeking domestic help, at a discount. Indeed, black domestics were lucky to earn \$5 per week during the Depression. Millie Jones proclaimed:

“Did I have work? And how! For five bucks and car fare a week . . . Each and every week, believe it or not, I had to wash every one of those windows [fifteen in a six-room apartment] . . . There were two grown sons in the family and her husband. That meant that I would have at least twenty-one shirts to do every week. Yeah, and ten sheets and at least two blankets, besides. They all had to be done just so, too. Gosh, she was a particular woman.”

Because of the desperate need to retain a job, employers could revert to exploiting their workers by cutting wages, forcing workers into longer hours, and demanding greater performance. Black women in New York’s commercial laundry worked 50 hours per week, ***“ten hours each day on their feet . . . sticking their hands into almost boiling starch,”*** and for reduced wages. If an employee complained, the boss threatened to fire her and hire one of the many women waiting for a job.

After a decline in lynching during the 1920s, violence again escalated in the North and South during the Depression as whites used intimidation to keep blacks away from jobs. In Southern cities, signs proclaimed, **“No Jobs for Niggers Until Every White Man Has a Job”**; **“Niggers, back to the cotton fields – city jobs are for white folks.”**

The Demise of the New Negro:

The black professionals of the urban North who had proclaimed a new day for the “New Negro” were now feeling the despair of the Depression. Earnings in Harlem between 1929 and 1932 dropped 37%. One observer noted:

“The Negro professional and business man had prospered upon the earnings of the black masses in northern cities . . . Then, suddenly, the purchasing power and savings of the masses began to melt. Doctors’ and lawyers’ fees dwindled and finally ceased, and the hothouse growth of Negro business behind the walls of segregation shriveled and died, often swallowing up the savings of the black masses.”

Furthermore, many of the black artists and writers became prosperous because of a trend within fashionable white society to buy “black primitive art,” and sponsor black writers. In fact, many of the Harlem Renaissance writers and artists benefited from white patrons who literally supported them while they pursued their craft. The Depression quickly put an end to that practice. As Langston Hughes declared, the 1920s were a ***“period when the Negro was in vogue.”*** ***“I was there. I had a swell time while it lasted. But I thought it couldn’t last long . . . For how long could a large and enthusiastic number of people be crazy about Negroes forever?”***

Even W.E.B. Du Bois joined in the labor movement declaring that as white merchants began to recover from the depression, they were happy to sell to black consumers; however, these same merchants refused to hire black workers. Du Bois initiated a campaign called **“DON’T BUY WHERE YOU CAN’T WORK”**

1930

The first of successful protests by the NAACP against Supreme Court justice nominees is launched against John Parker, who officially favored laws that discriminated against African Americans.

1935

NAACP lawyers Charles Houston and Thurgood Marshall win the legal battle to admit a black student to the University of Maryland.

1939

After the Daughters of the Revolution barred acclaimed soprano Marian Anderson from performing at their Constitution Hall, the NAACP moved her concert to the Lincoln Memorial, where over 75,000 people attended.

1940 - 1948**AFRICAN AMERICAN PROFILE: H. ASA PHILIP RANDOLPH**

- Born in 1889 in Florida to a clergyman. He helped build railroads, sold newspapers, and operated a delivery wagon.
- Left for New York after high school and worked as a porter. He also studied economics and preached political activism on the streets of Harlem, helping to usher in the Harlem Renaissance.
- 1917 Randolph and Chandler Owens began a newspaper called The Messenger that denounced racism and called World War I white Europe's fight for colonies. U.S. government agents raided his offices twice seeking evidence that Randolph was a German agent. He was finally arrested for making an antiwar speech. Upon his release, he continued to criticize the government that labeled him "**THE MOST DANGEROUS NEGRO IN AMERICA.**"
- In the 1920s A. Philip Randolph had become a socialist/communist and with Levee Fort-Whitman formed the **AMERICAN NEGRO LABOR CONGRESS**. That same year Randolph helped to form the **BROTHERHOOD OF SLEEPING CAR PORTERS** in an attempt gain increased wages, improved working conditions, and better treatment of black workers. The Brotherhood's motto was "**SERVICE NOT SERVITUDE.**"
- Soon, the wives and relatives of the Brotherhood workers formed organizations, or Ladies' Auxiliaries to help the cause of "civil rights" and "workers rights." The first was the **HESPERUS CLUB OF HARLEM**, but others formed in Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, Los Angeles, and other cities.

During the Depression, **A. Philip Randolph** was still fighting for the rights of workers. In 1935 he helped to convince the AFL, one of the most powerful unions in America, to finally recognize the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters as the legitimate union for railroad porters. The AFL granted the Brotherhood the first charter ever awarded to an all-black union. And, in 1937, the Pullman Company signed a contract with the Brotherhood granting it full official recognition.

When war was declared in Europe in 1939, the United States, though declaring its neutrality, soon went into "war production" to assist its allies the British. But as the industries and businesses reopened and began to rehire, African Americans were again absent. A. Philip Randolph denounced the International Association of Machinists (IAM) as the most conspicuous example of labor union discrimination against African Americans. Accepting only white members, the IAM reinforced the exclusion of blacks from the metal trades and aircraft industry, including the huge Boeing Aircraft Corporation in Seattle.

In July 1940 the *Crisis* ran a feature story with the title: **“FOR WHITES ONLY: WARPLANES – NEGRO AMERICANS MAY NOT BUILD THEM, REPAIR THEM, OR FLY THEM, BUT THEY MUST HELP PAY FOR THEM.”**

In 1941 Randolph organized the **MARCH ON WASHINGTON MOVEMENT** to protest discrimination and the refusal of government to seek a solution to black unemployment in the midst of increasing war production. By June 1941 the March on Washington Movement had established offices in Harlem, Washington, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, and San Francisco. Afraid of the repercussions of an enormous protest by blacks, and whites who had joined the movement, during a time when the government was seeking unity against Germany and continued aid for Great Britain, FDR issued **EXECUTIVE ORDER 8802** establishing the **FAIR PRACTICES COMMISSION** to enforce the ban of racial discrimination in government employment, defense industries, and training programs.

1941

During World War II, the NAACP leads the effort to ensure that President Franklin Roosevelt orders a non-discrimination policy in war-related industries and federal employment.

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND WORLD WAR II

- In April 1945, the **761st Battalion**, the only African American tank unit in the U. S. Army, liberated the Nazi death camps at Buchenwald and Dachau. Guards were machine-gunning Jewish prisoners at Buchenwald, so the 761st opened fire and then entered the camp. Sergeant Bill McBurney, commanding the 761st Battalion recalled: ***“You might be trained for combat. But nobody was trained for what we saw. I never saw anything like that. They were skin and bones. My men and I got out and started to hand them food.”***
- ***“They were our savior,”*** recalled Abe Chapinick. Writer **Elie Wiesel**, one of the rescued, later recalled his liberation: ***“The most moving moment of my life was the day the Americans arrived, a few hours after the SS had fled . . . I will always remember with love a big black soldier. He was crying like a child – tears of all the pain in the world and all the rage. Everyone who was there that day will forever feel a sentiment of gratitude to the American soldiers who liberated us.”***

1945

NAACP starts a national outcry when Congress refuses to fund their own Federal Fair Roosevelt Employment Practices Commission.

1945

Kerr v. Enoch Pratt Free Library argued by Charles H. Houston creating the "**Kerr Principle**". A Baltimore library refused to admit Louise Kerr to a training program because she was black. Not that it had anything against blacks, but its patrons did. When Kerr launched a civil suit against the library alleging a violation of equal protection of the laws, the courts credited the library's claim that it had no racist purpose, but Kerr still prevailed. The Kerr principle forced us to address when and why is the state responsible for enabling exclusive preferences, whether by an overextended applicable rule that assist them or by state inaction that fails to block them.

1946

The NAACP wins the Morgan vs. Virginia case, where the Supreme Court bans states from having laws that sanction segregated facilities in interstate travel by train and bus.

POST WAR AMERICA**AFRICAN AMERICANS AND AMERICAN SOCIETY**

African Americans returned home expecting a "**hero's welcome**," but again encountered renewed racism and discrimination. However, the struggle that Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells, A. Philip Randolph, Langston Hughes, and Mary McLeod Bethune had begun was now at boiling point.

- Upon returning home from overseas, one African American soldier exclaimed, "***I spent four years in the army to free a bunch of Frenchmen and Dutchmen, and I'm hanged if I'm going to let the Alabama version of the Germans kick me around when I get home.***"
- A. Philip Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, had threatened a march on Washington during the war if blacks were not hired in factories
- W. E. B. Du Bois had encouraged blacks to join the war to fight racism
- When black troops returned home, they faced discrimination, segregation, and increased violence
- 1946 the NAACP approached Truman to discuss these issues. Truman responded with **EXECUTIVE ORDER 9808**: "***The action of individuals who take the law into their own hands and inflict summary punishment and wreak personal vengeance . . . is subversive to our democratic system of law enforcement and gravely threatens our form of government.***"

- Truman established the **PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON CIVIL RIGHTS**, the first ever governmental committee to investigate lynchings, unfair employment practices, and voting rights limitations
- **1948: EXECUTIVE ORDER 9981** on **EQUALITY OF TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE ARMED SERVICE**
- Voting in the South was restricted: Mississippi refused to allow **MEDGAR EVERS** and other veterans to vote
- In Georgia, a mob lynched Isaac Nixon for voting ~ an all-white jury acquitted the alleged murderers ~ even governors & senators threatened black voters

1948

The NAACP was able to pressure President Harry Truman to sign an Executive Order banning discrimination by the Federal government.

1950 – 1955

EXODUS IN A LAND OF PLENTY

- The **SECOND GREAT MIGRATION** occurred in the 1950's when hundreds of thousands of African Americans, pushed out of tenant farming by the new farm machinery, headed northward. There, they faced discrimination and poverty in the rising urban centers
- Others, were seeing a different America: the baby boomers increased the population that resulted in an increase in the demand for products
- **CREDIT** allowed families to purchase homes, cars, new appliances, and **Televisions**
- **SUBURBS** began to blossom and cities began to "decline," burdened by overpopulation, the loss of people and industry to the suburbs, poverty, and the influx of large numbers of African Americans
- In the 1950's the black population in cities grew by 50%
- **Washington, D.C.** became the first major city with a **BLACK MAJORITY**

1951

December 25, Harry T. Moore was killed when a bomb was placed beneath the floor joists directly under his bed; his wife, Harriette, died nine days later.

1954

After years of fighting segregation in public schools, under the leadership of Special Counsel Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP wins one of its greatest legal victories in *Brown vs. the Board of Education*.

1954: BROWN VERSUS THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, TOPEKA, KANSAS

1954 **Brown vs. the Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas** and the emergence of **Thurgood Marshall** who led a delegation of NAACP lawyers in urging the Court to overturn the long standing precedent of Plessy v. Ferguson of 1896 that maintained the doctrine of “separate but equal.” In May 1954 Chief Justice Earl Warren issued the historic unanimous opinion of the Supreme Court. The decision declared that the segregation of children in public schools based on race ***“deprived the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities.”*** ***“In McLaurin [a 1950 case], the Court required that a Negro admitted to a white graduate school be treated like all other students,”*** and thus consider only if he has the ability to study, engage in discussions, and exchange views with other students. The separation of students based on race ***“generates a feeling of inferiority as to [the minority group’s] status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds . . . In the field of public education the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal . . .”***

1955

NAACP member Rosa Parks is arrested and fined for refusing to give up her seat on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Noted as the catalyst for the largest grassroots civil rights movement, that would be spearheaded through the collective efforts of the NAACP, SCLC and other Black organizations.

1960 - 1979**1960**

In Greensboro, North Carolina, members of the NAACP Youth Council launch a series of non-violent sit-ins at segregated lunch counters. These protests eventually lead to more than 60 stores officially desegregating their counters.

1963

After one of his many successful mass rallies for civil rights, NAACP's first Field Director, Medgar Evers is assassinated in front of his house in Jackson, Mississippi. Five months later, President John Kennedy was also assassinated.

1963

NAACP pushes for the passage of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act.

1964

U.S. Supreme Court ends the eight year effort of Alabama officials to ban NAACP activities. And 55 years after the NAACP's founding, Congress finally passes the Civil Rights Act.

1965

The Voting Rights Act is passed. Amidst threats of violence and efforts of state and local governments, the NAACP still manages to register more than 80,000 voters in the Old South.

1979

The NAACP initiates the first bill ever signed by a governor that allows voter registration in high schools. Soon after, 24 states follow suit.

1980 - 1989**1981**

The NAACP leads the effort to extend The Voting Rights Act for another 25 years. To cultivate economic empowerment, the NAACP establishes the Fair Share Program with major corporations across the country.

1982

NAACP registers more than 850,000 voters, and through its protests and the support of the Supreme Court, prevents President Reagan from giving a tax-break to the racially segregated Bob Jones University.

1985

The NAACP leads a massive anti-apartheid rally in New York.

1987

NAACP launches campaign to defeat the nomination of Judge Robert Bork to the Supreme Court. As a result, he garners the highest negative vote ever recorded for a 1989 Silent March of over 100,000 to protest U.S. Supreme Court nominee.

1989

Silent March of over 100,000 to protest U.S. Supreme Court decisions that have reversed many of the gains made against discrimination.

1990 - 1999**1991**

When avowed racist and former Klan leader David Duke runs for US Senate in Louisiana, the NAACP launches a voter registration campaign that yields a 76 percent turn-out of Black voters to defeat Duke.

1992

The number of Fair Share Program corporate partners has risen to 70 and now represents billions of dollars in business.

1995

Over thirty years after the assassination of NAACP civil rights activist, Medgar Evers - his widow Myrlie, is elected Chairman of the NAACP's Board of Directors. The following year, the Kweisi Mfume leaves Congress to become the NAACP's President and CEO.

1997

In response to the pervasive anti-affirmative action legislation occurring around the country, the NAACP launches the Economic Reciprocity Program... And in response to increased violence among our youth, the NAACP starts the "Stop The Violence, Start the Love" campaign.

1998

Supreme Court Demonstration and arrests

2000 - Present**2000**

TV Diversity Agreements. Retirement of the Debt and first six years of a budget surplus. Largest Black Voter Turnout in 20 years

2000

Great March. January 17, in Columbia, South Carolina attended by over 50,000 to protest the flying of the Confederate Battle Flag. This is the largest civil rights demonstration ever held in the South to date.

2001

Cincinnati Riots. Development of 5 year Strategic Plan. Under the leadership of Chairman Bond and President Mfume, the NAACP continues to thrive, and with the help of everyone - regardless of race - will continue to do so into the next millennium...

How The NAACP Began



Mary White Ovington
By Mary White Ovington
(Originally Written in 1914)

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is five years old?old enough, it is believed, to have a history; and I, who am perhaps, its first member, have been chosen as the person to recite it. As its work since 1910 has been set forth in its annual reports. I shall make it my task to show how it came into existence and to tell of its first months of work.

In the summer of 1908, the country was shocked by the account of the race riots at Springfield, Illinois. Here, in the home of Abraham Lincoln, a mob containing many of the town's "best citizens," raged for two days, killed and wounded scores of Negroes, and drove thousands from the city. Articles on the subject appeared in newspapers and magazines. Among them was one in the Independent of September 3rd, by William English Walling, entitled "Race War in the North." After describing the atrocities committed against the colored people, Mr. Walling declared:

"Either the spirit of the abolitionists, of Lincoln and of Love-joy must be revived and we must come to treat the Negro on a plane of absolute political and social equality, or Vardaman and Tillman will soon have transferred the race war to the North." And he ended with these words, "Yet who realizes the seriousness of the situation, and what large and powerful body of citizens is ready to come to their aid?"

It so happened that one of Mr. Walling's readers accepted his question and answered it. For four years I had been studying the status of the Negro in New

York. I had investigated his housing conditions, his health, his opportunities for work. I had spent many months in the South, and at the time of Mr. Walling's article, I was living in a New York Negro tenement on a Negro Street. And my investigations and my surroundings led me to believe with the writer of the article that "the spirit of the abolitionists must be revived."

The NAACP is Born

So I wrote to Mr. Walling, and after some time, for he was in the West, we met in New York in the first week of the year of 1909. With us was Dr. Henry Moskowitz, now prominent in the administration of John Purroy Mitchell, Mayor of New York. It was then that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was born. It was born in a little room of a New York apartment. It is to be regretted that there are no minutes of the first meeting, for they would make interesting if unparliamentary reading.

Mr. Walling had spent some years in Russia where his wife, working in the cause of the revolutionists, had suffered imprisonment; and he expressed his belief that the Negro was treated with greater inhumanity in the United States than the Jew was treated in Russia. As Mr. Walling is a Southerner we listened with conviction. I knew something of the Negro's difficulty in securing decent employment in the North and of the insolent treatment awarded him at Northern hotels and restaurants, and I voiced my protest. Dr. Moskowitz, with his broad knowledge of conditions among New York's helpless immigrants, aided us in properly interpreting our facts. And so we talked and talked voicing our indignation.

Lincoln's Birthday

Of course, we wanted to do something at once that should move the country. It was January. Why not choose Lincoln's birthday, February 12, to open our campaign? We decided, therefore, that a wise, immediate action would be the issuing on Lincoln's birthday of a call for a national conference on the Negro question. At this conference we might discover the beginnings, at least, of that "large and powerful body of citizens" of which Mr. Walling had written. And so the meeting adjourned. Something definite was determined upon, and our next step was to call others into our councils. We at once turned to Mr. Oswald Garrison Villard, president of the N. Y. Evening Post Company. He received our suggestions with enthusiasm, and aided us in securing the co-operation of able and representative men and women. It was he who drafted the Lincoln's birthday call and helped to give it wide publicity. I give the Call in its entirety with the signatures since it expresses, I think, better than anything else we have published, the spirit of those who are active in the Association's cause.

"The celebration of the Centennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, widespread and grateful as it may be, will fail to justify itself if it takes no note of and makes no recognition of the colored men and women for whom the great Emancipator labored to assure freedom. Besides a day of rejoicing, Lincoln's birthday in 1909 should be one of taking stock of the nation's progress since 1865.

"How far has it lived up to the obligations imposed upon it by the Emancipation Proclamation? How far has it gone in assuring to each and every citizen, irrespective of color, the equality of opportunity and equality before the law, which underlie our American institutions and are guaranteed by the Constitution?"

Disfranchisement

"If Mr. Lincoln could revisit this country in the flesh, he would be disheartened and discouraged. He would learn that on January 1, 1909, Georgia had rounded out a new confederacy by disfranchising the Negro, after the manner of all the other Southern States. He would learn that the Supreme Court of the United States, supposedly a bulwark of American liberties, had refused every opportunity to pass squarely upon this disfranchisement of millions, by laws avowedly discriminatory and openly enforced in such manner that the white men may vote and that black men be without a vote in their government; he would discover, therefore, that taxation without representation is the lot of millions of wealth-producing American citizens, in whose hands rests the economic progress and welfare of an entire section of the country.

"He would learn that the Supreme Court, according to the official statement of one of its own judges in the Berea College case, has laid down the principle that if an individual State chooses, it may 'make it a crime for white and colored persons to frequent the same market place at the same time, or appear in an assemblage of citizens convened to consider questions of a public or political nature in which all citizens, without regard to race, are equally interested.

"In many states Lincoln would find justice enforced, if at all, by judges elected by one element in a community to pass upon the liberties and lives of another. He would see the black men and women, for whose freedom a hundred thousand of soldiers gave their lives, set apart in trains, in which they pay first-class fares for third-class service, and segregated in railway stations and in places of entertainment; he would observe that State after State declines to do its elementary duty in preparing the Negro through education for the best exercise of citizenship.

"Silence? Means Approval"

"Added to this, the spread of lawless attacks upon the Negro, North, South and West ? even in the Springfield made famous by Lincoln ? often accompanied by revolting brutalities, sparing neither sex nor age nor youth, could but shock the author of the sentiment that 'government of the people, by the people, for the people; should not perish from the earth.'

"Silence under these conditions means tacit approval. The indifference of the North is already responsible for more than one assault upon democracy, and every such attack reacts as unfavorably upon whites as upon blacks.

Discrimination once permitted cannot be bridled; recent history in the South shows that in forging chains for the Negroes the white voters are forging chains

for themselves. 'A house divided against itself cannot stand'; this government cannot exist half-slave and half-free any better today than it could in 1861.

"Hence we call upon all the believers in democracy to join in a national conference for the discussion of present evils, the voicing of protests, and the renewal of the struggle for civil and political liberty."

This call was signed by: Jane Adams, Chicago; Samuel Bowles (Springfield Republican); Prof. W.L. Bulkley, New York; Harriet Stanton Blatch, New York; Ida Wells Barnett, Chicago; E. H. Clement, Boston; Kate H. Claghorn, New York; Prof. John Dewey, New York; Dr. W. E. B. DuBois, Atlanta; Mary E. Dreier, Brooklyn; Dr. John L. Elliott, New York; Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Boston; Rev. Francis J. Grimke, Washington, D.C.; William Dean Howells, New York; Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch, Chicago; Rev. John Haynes Holmes, New York; Prof. Thomas C. Hall, New York; Hamilton Holt, New York; Florence Kelley, New York; Rev. Frederick Lynch, New York; Helen Marot, New York; John E. Milholland, New York; Mary E. McDowell, Chicago; Prof. J. G. Merrill, Connecticut; Dr. Henry Moskowitz, New York; Leonora O'Reilly, New York; Mary Ovington, New York; Rev. Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst, New York; Louis F. Post, Chicago; Rev. Dr. John P. Peters, New York; Dr. Jane Robbins, New York; Charles Edward Russell, New York; Joseph Smith, Boston; Anna Garlin Spencer, New York; William M. Salter, Chicago; J. C. Phelps Stokes, New York; Judge Wendell Stafford, Washington; Helen Stokes, Boston; Lincoln Steffens, Boston; President C. F. Thwing, Western Reserve University; Prof. W. I. Thomas, Chicago; Oswald Garrison Villard, New York Evening Post; Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, New York; Bishop Alexander Walters, New York; Dr. William H. Ward, New York; Horace White, New York; William English Walling, New York; Lillian D. Wald, New York; Dr. J. Milton Waldron, Washington, D.C.; Mrs. Rodman Wharton, Philadelphia; Susan P. Wharton, Philadelphia; President Mary E. Wooley, Mt. Holyoke College; Prof. Charles Zueblin, Boston.

Conference

It was thus decided that we should hold a conference, and the next two months were busily spent arranging for it. Among the men and women who attended those first committee meetings were, Bishop Alexander Walters, Mr. Ray Stannard Baker, Mr. Alexander Irvine, Dr. Owen M. Waller, Mr. Gaylord S. White, Miss Madeline Z. Doty, Miss Isabel Eaton, besides many of the New York signers of the Call. It was agreed that the conference should be by invitation only, with the one open meeting at Cooper Union. Over a thousand people were invited, the Charity Organization Hall was secured, and, on the evening of May, 30th, the conference opened with an informal reception at the Henry Street Settlement, given by Miss Lillian D. Wald, one of the Association's first and oldest friends.

The next morning our deliberations began.

We have had five conferences since 1909, but I doubt whether any have been so full of a questioning surprise, amounting swiftly to enthusiasm, on the part of the

white people in attendance. These men and women, engaged in religious, social and educational work, for the first time met the Negro who demands, not a pittance, but his full rights in the commonwealth. They received a stimulating shock and one which they enjoyed. They did not want to leave the meeting. We conferred all the time, formally and informally, and the Association gained in those days many of the earnest and uncompromising men and women who have since worked unflinchingly in its cause. Mr. William Hayes Ward, senior editor of the Independent, opened the conference, and Mr. Charles Edward Russell, always the friend of those who struggle for opportunity, presided at the stormy session at the close. The full proceedings have been published by the Association.

Membership in the Hundreds

Out of this conference we formed a committee of forty and secured the services of Miss Frances Blascoer, as secretary. We were greatly hampered by lack of funds. Important national work would present itself which we were unable to handle. But our secretary was an excellent organizer, and at the end of a year we had held four mass meetings, had distributed thousands of pamphlets, and numbered our membership in the hundreds. In May, 1910, we held our second conference in New York, and again our meetings were attended by earnest, interested people. It was then that we organized a permanent body to be known as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Its officers were:

- National President, Moorfield Storey, Boston
- Chairman of the Executive Committee, William English Walling
 - Treasurer, John E. Milholland
- Disbursing Treasurer, Oswald Garrison Villard
 - Executive Secretary, Frances Blascoer
- Director of Publicity and Research, Dr. W. E. B. DuBois

The Role for Dr. Du Bois

The securing of a sufficient financial support to warrant our calling Dr. DuBois from Atlanta University into an executive office in the Association was the most important work of the second conference.

When Dr. DuBois came to us we were brought closely in touch with an organization of colored people, formed in 1905 at Niagara and known as the Niagara Movement. This organization had held important conferences at Niagara, Harpers Ferry, and Boston, and had attempted a work of legal redress along very much the lines upon which the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was working. Its platform, as presented in a statement in 1905, ran as follows:

Freedom of speech and criticism.
An unfettered and unsubsidized press.

Manhood suffrage.

The abolition of all caste distinctions based simply on race and color.
The recognition of the principle of human brotherhood as a practical present
creed.

The recognition of the highest and best training as the monopoly of no class or
race.

A belief in the dignity of labor. United effort to realize these ideals under wise and
courageous leadership.

In 1910 it had conducted important civil rights cases and had in its membership
some of the ablest colored lawyers in the country, with Mr. W. Ashbie Hawkins,
who has since worked with our Association, on the Baltimore Segregation acts,
as its treasurer.

The Niagara Movement, hampered as it was by lack of funds, and by a
membership confined to one race only, continued to push slowly on, but when
the larger possibilities of this new Association were clear, the members of the
Niagara Movement were advised to join, as the platforms were practically
identical. Many of the most prominent members of the Niagara Movement thus
brought their energy and ability into the service of the Association, and eight are
now serving on its Board of Directors.

"The Present Crisis"

Our history, after 1910, may be read in our annual reports, and in the numbers of
The Crisis. We opened two offices in the Evening Post building. With Dr. DuBois
came Mr. Frank M. Turner, a Wilberforce graduate, who has shown great
efficiency in handling our books. In November 1910 appeared the first number of
The Crisis, with Dr. DuBois as editor, and Mary Dunlop MacLean, whose death
has been the greatest loss the Association has known, as managing editor. Our
propaganda work was put on a national footing, our legal work was well under
way and we were in truth, a National Association, pledged to a nation-wide work
for justice to the Negro race.

I remember the afternoon that The Crisis received its name. We were sitting
around the conventional table that seems a necessary adjunct to every Board,
and were having an informal talk regarding the new magazine. We touched the
subject of poetry. "There is a poem of Lowell's," I said, "that means more to me
today than any other poem in the world? *The Present Crisis*."