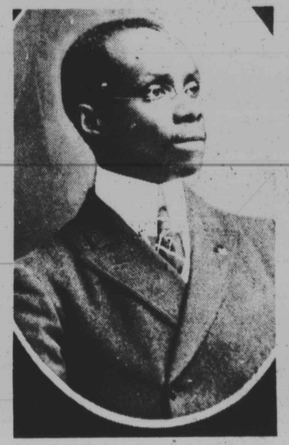
STRIKING A POSE is this handsome gentleman photographed in the 1890s



A GENTLEMAN of the 1890s sports a high celluloid collar

ALL PHOTOS on this page are from the Rose Murphy Oliver estate, restored and rephotographed by Glasco Ryales, photographer.

How we lived-

(Continued from page 10)

the disorganizing effect of segregation which easily could have contributed to its instability.

At the time, few Black persons sought equality. The search was for comfort and safety, however humble, regardless of the segregation from the white world to which he had become accustomed.

Baltimoreans of the 1890's were proud, reaching toward great respectability and filled with a taste of freedom.

A great aura of pride was sweeping Black America nationwide since there was realization that slavery was no more and, however lacking in many comforts and freedoms, a life of their own was in view.

Black communities were solidifying and things were looking up. Life was becoming beautiful.

Almost each Black man had a job, however humble, a family from two to 15 children, a respectable wife and a way to make it. What else was there at the time?

Folks were poor but never needy or down and out. Neighbors, family and friends saw to basic needs in sickness and in health.

Because nearly every white household had "colored help" there were "good white friends" who saw to it that the wolf was kept from the "colored" door.

Black persons were referred to as "colored" and "Negro" up until recently. The words will be used interchangeably here.)

There was a saying then that every smart Black person "kept a good white friend in his back pocket."

Wood sold by the wagon load or bundle and coal chunks by the basket, were used for heating in the parlor iron stove and for cooking in the kitchen range. Most houses had a fireplace or two.

Quilts for warm sleeping were handmade evenings by the fire or in quilting parties. A lady had very little recreation except sewing with neighbors and church friends.

Mattresses and pillows were of feathers.

Winters were deep and long but knitted sweaters, heavy trousers, maybe two pair, and long, skirts did the job. Underneath was long underware put on in October and not shed until after March had thawed.

Baths were certainly not called for every day. A good scrubbing in a tin tub by the fireplace or kitchen stove on Saturday was enough.

Hair was kept clean with homemade lye soap and as to ladies, a table knife just barely warm did the job for a curl or two.

One hundred strokes a night with the brush assured shining, long hair enough for braids and buns on each side.

Men used straight razors. If the wife could not cut his hair suitably, there was a barbershop somewhere in the neighborhood.

The same barber went to the white man's house and carried with him his tools, razors, clippers and bay rum and aftershave in a little black bag.

Beauty shops slowly arose after Madam C. J. Walker spread her hair pomade and hot comb treatment around. She soon made millions since everyone wanted "good hair." The performance with hot combs and curling irons was kept secret.

Also kept secret were most dreams for a beautiful light complexion, the use of lemon skins to "bleach." Almond and olive oil moisturizers for face, elbows and knees. To improve rough hands looking bad from hard work, the ladies would sleep with gloves soaked in olive oil.

For market, to sweep the front steps and certainly for church, a typical Black lady always wore her pocketbook, hat and gloves. Sundays, the purse, hat and gloves were of matching material and color. The hat sported feathers or flowers. The parasol, to keep the sun off the face, was an umbrella made of fancy cloth, lace and ruffles.

Children often wore long clothing over the knees and high buttoned or laced shoes, "for modesty" and to protect from cold. No more bare feet.

Boys' homemade outfits were fashioned from materials left from father's. The girls wore bloomers and petticoats under skirts and dresses made fancy by ruffles, lace and embroidery.

All clothes were long "for modesty" and nothing was ever sexy. . . shameful.

The Baltimore of the 1890's and early 1900's was not one of radios, TV's and automobiles.

The streets were either dirt pathways or cobblestone roads over which noisy wagons and buggies drawn by horses traveled at a slow speed.

Hucksters

The traditional vegetable and fruit horse-drawn wagons of that time still exist.

These are the same today as yesterday with the Black vendor calling out in the same musical voice the cries handed down from yesterday.

The Street Arabs or vendor still sells winter, summer, spring or fall, the freshest of greens, bananas, grapefruit, oranges, onions, beets, celery and potatoes. New peas, cabbage, carrots, strawberries, tomatoes, string beans, lettuce and little green onions.

Another traditional item the Arabs still have is seafood: crabs, clams, fish, oysters, all from the Chesapeake Bay. On the same wagon and in season were marsh rabbits.

Utter the word Baltimore then (as now) and you are saying "Seafood."

A stranger in the 1890's would, as today, expect fried oyster fritters, soft and hard crabs and clams, all accompanied by beer or rye whiskey, all cheap and plentiful.

White marble steps

The white marble steps and brass rails of yesterday still exist and are leftovers from that bygone yesterday when architects planned them to grace the small row houses lined on the terribly narrow streets.

Housewifes, Black and white, in all early neighborhoods, had as a morning duty the scrubbing of the steps and the vestibule to keep out the dust and mud from the dirt

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THE
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Education—

(Continued from page 4)

be job oriented with time.

"We want to emphasize that getting an education is like going into business; you go into it to get something out of it.

We intend to concentrate on those attitudes that will help a student become a professional.

"He should know how to handle an interview, how to do job searching," says Dr. Crew. "We want to teach him survival skills for the job market."

Brenda Johnson 38, is the mother of six children. Three are still in public school and three have graduated. Mrs. Johnson is not a professional teacher or a high paid administrator. She works as a clerk typist and what she has seen of the public schools is reflected in what she has had to deal with as a parent.

"The attitudes of some of the teachers have been difficult to deal with at times. I have had to go to school to speak with a teacher about her conduct toward one of my sons. Her conduct left a lot to be desired professionally. And she has not been the only one. Name calling. It was ridiculous."

Mrs. Johnson theorizes that better teachers and more up-to-date instruction materials and an educational approach that paid more attention to advancing all students and not just honor students, would go a long way toward eliminating some of the problems schools are having.

"One reason the schools are not preparing Black youth for the future is that they spend most of their time favoring the honor student while the average student is left unattended.

"There are more average students then honor students; a little more time with them might prepare them better and lead to more of them graduating and getting a job."

Underlying her response is the fact that one of her graduating daughters is in a class where only 41 percent of the students who entered with her three years ago completed high school.

Using her daughters and the many unemployed teenagers she sees as examples, Mrs. Johnson is convinced that school does not prepare most students for work.

"All of my daughters received trade education; one as a machinist, one as an industrial seamstress and one as a printer, None of them is working in the field they trained in. They are all selling fast food."

While her indictment of public education is not total - she spoke highly of the Survival Skills Program which she felt gave useful information about banking, budgeting, sex and family planning, and other facts pertinent to adult living - she feels that the skills training aspect of public instruction leaves a lot to be desired.

"Where are the programs that deal with the repair and operation of computers? Computers and other information systems are the big thing for the future and there is a lot of money to be made repairing them.

"Where are the training programs in word processing? Dunbar is teaching keypunch to its students on equipment they rarely use in business these days because it is outdated. Keypunch is out, word processing is in. Where are the training programs which will make our teenagers employable?"

Anthony Randall, 22, graduated from Dunbar High School four years ago and is now working as a warehouse dispatcher at Montgomery Ward. He majored in music and was good enough to get a scholarship to continue his education. Though his music education was basically sound, his career guidance, according to him, did not prepare him for the work world.

"I wasn't prepared for dealing with work or for a career while I was in school. It was like cultural shock when it happened to me. The music instructors helped me a lot. They saw my potential and helped get me a scholarship. But I didn't receive any career guidance."

When queried about the survival skills program, Randall admitted that he had had some training in resume writing and application and interviewing skills.

"But they were lectures from people who came from businesses or colleges to talk to us for an hour.

"It didn't prepare me for the degree of professionalism that was expected of you when you went job hunting. They would have needed a course to prepare you for what I found. The training wasn't realistic enough."

Randall finally found his niche when he enrolled in a computer training program.

"I really liked it. I learned a lot and I went on to take courses at Morgan in computer science."

Tony, as he is called by his friends, attributes his learning about job search skills to the computer training program of Career Services, Incorporated.

"They taught you everything about how to interview and present yourself and you had to practice it. In addition, they had the whole program set up like a real job. I felt like if I could make it in the program, I could make it on a job. I am just sorry I didn't learn it in school. It would have saved me some time."

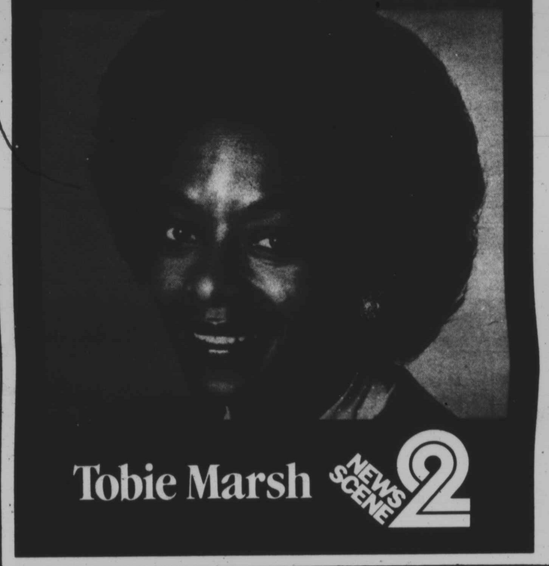
Robinson, the college instructor, Mrs. Johnson, the working mother, Randall, the recent student, all see education in light of their own experience. Their views probably represent those of thousands more in our city.

We know that there is the need for more money and more involvement by big business in the educational process.

"Education is affected by the

Continued on page 14)

Congratulations
Afro-American



Tobie Marsh NEWS SCENE 2

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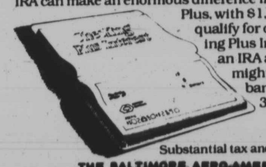

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