How we lived—

(Continued from page 31)

practice before the Maryland Bar was Everett J. Waring, a Howard University graduate who also was the first Negro to practice before the Supreme Court.

The first Negro to secure elective office in Maryland, Harry Scythe Cummings in 1891 when he won the Republican seat in the Baltimore City Council was also the first Negro to graduate from the Law School of the University of Maryland in 1889.

Cummings gave the seconding speech for the nomination of Theodore Roosevelt at the Republican Convention in 1904.

The first office building erected solely for Negro professionals was in 1903 when Attorneys George McMechen, W. Ashbie Hawkins and W. C. McCard dedicated the Banneker Building located, 14 East Pleasant Street.

DEAVER SMITH SR., founder and owner of the Tea and Spice Co. on Pennsylvania Avenue, 1903-1975, the date of his death. Deaver Smith Sr. was the son of Stanley Lloyd Smith.

Housing

As to housing, when Black persons migrated from the South to the city, history notes that in Baltimore as well as other cities, white people were determined to segregate them in one section.

The exploitation of the newly arrived Black citizens was made easier for the white landlords who gave them no choice of where to live.

Baltimore, Richmond, Louisville and Atlanta had housing segregation rules that were simply "understood" at first.

Later, in 1912, Baltimore passed a law that required "white blocks" and "Negro blocks."

John Hope Franklin's research reveals:

Public accomodations

The same applied to hotels, eating places, recreational facilities.

Until the Public Accommodations Laws were passed in the Civil Rights era, Baltimore whites refused to allow Black persons to use any public swimming pools, parks, golf courses, playgrounds or clubs. Until suits were won in the courts; the libraries and ten cent stores were not open nor could Black persons work where they buy.

The urban problems of Black citizens were increased as the years passed.

This accounts for the rise of more Black businesses and newspapers.

The 1890's found lynchings increasing and the Ku Klux Klan stepping up activities.

Maryland experienced many lynchings.

August, 1906 is the date of the Brownsville, Texas riots and Baltimoreans were among the three companies of the 25th Regiment (all Black) dispatched to location of the racial conflict.

Newspapers

The Black newspapers, including the AFRO, took to crusading against discrimination, segregation, lynchings and violence.

The AFRO small as it was, rapidly grew as "The Voice of Black Baltimore" from its beginning in 1892 through the opening of the 1900's and on up to World War I.

In 1892, there were 100 Black persons lynched alone.

Before the outbreak of World War I, the number had soared to 1,100 lynchings.

The fact that there were no hotels suitable for Black citizens brought about the YMCA and the YWCA during the AFRO era.

In Baltimore the YWCA housed Black women and served their cause for getting jobs and hopefully a better place to stay.

Among the founders of the Madison Avenue YWCA was Mrs. Martha Elizabeth Howard Murphy, wife of AFRO publisher John H. Murphy Sr.

Forced back into their own world, the Black world, Black citizens had to have their own newspapers so that they could hear the "true side" of news that concerned their well being and status.

Here the accent comes on the AFRO's reason to exist in the 1900's in Baltimore.

Black citizens (as today) needed not only a black voice. They needed their news on funerals, social events, weddings, births, churches, graduations and family affairs published.

Even until the 1980's, the white newspapers failed to have interest in Black persons' affairs "except crime and adverse conditions."

The AFRO encouraged Black persons to fight for jobs, educational institutions, equality in all areas.

In this era were other newspapers in other cities, all crusading.

The editors including the AFRO devoted their headlines to demands for full and equal rights for Black citizens.

The AFRO which began as a Sunday School newspaper to publish education, literary and religious matters, had little trouble in branching out without hesitation to see that fight for the Black citizen to get a larger share of the democracy.

The AFRO founded in 1892 by John H. Murphy Sr. was carried on by his 10 children in printing, sales, advertising reporting. More and more employees were added.

By World War I the AFRO had grown to one of the nation's largest newspapers printed for a predominantly Black readership.

(Continued on Page 35)

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We also wish you continued success in the service you perform for, and in the interests of, both the Baltimore business community and public sector."

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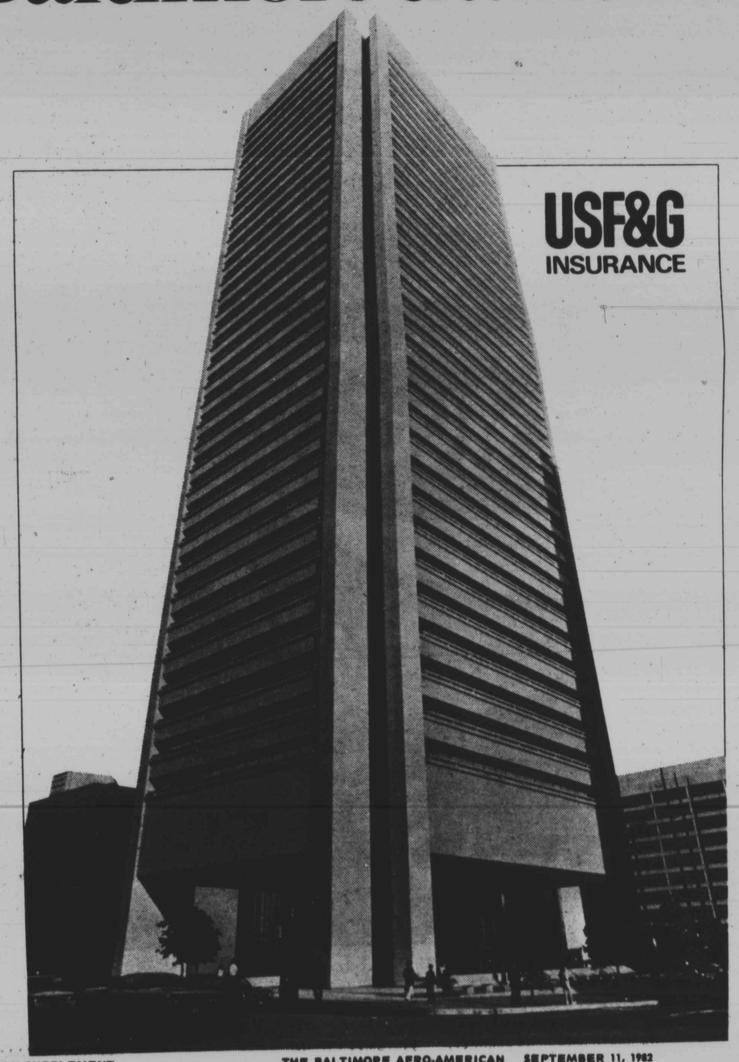
Congratulations to the Afro-American from another fine Baltimore tradition.