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Newspapers
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We at Hecht's salute the Afro-American newspapers, and wish you continued success as a leader and inspiration in black economic and cultural development.

HECHT'S

How we lived —

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the territory then called Baltimore Town, now known as Baltimore City.

During the beginning period, both Negro and White worshippers attended this Church on Dallas Street near Eastern Avenue until 1801, when the White membership relocated and built a church at Eastern Avenue and Bethel Street, calling themselves the Wilkes Street Chapel.

The Negro congregation took over the Strawberry Alley Chapel and organized the Dallas Street Methodist Episcopal Congregation, so named because of its location at Dallas and Fleet Streets.

The Rev. Henry A. Carroll was sent to the Dallas Street Church in March, 1874 as Pastor.

In March, 1877, Rev. Martin Spriddle, then pastor, brooke ground.

The cornerstone was laid May 6, 1877.

On Nov. 24, 1877 the congregation marched into the new edifice.

Arthur J. Smith was the first child baptized in the new church in the spring of 1878.

The church was renovated in 1901 under the pastorship of Rev. Daniel W. Hays.

Myrtle and Wheeler Smith, two children of Arthur Smith, were the first baptized in the newly renovated structure.

Many outstanding events took place during the years the congregation worshipped at Caroline and Bank Streets.

Douglas A Member

Included in the membership at that time was the great Rights leader and orator, Frederick Douglass, whose fame has been recorded in the vast history of our United States.

Also included in the membership was the late Isaac Roles who was an agent for the Underground Railroad and it was he who helped Frederick Douglass escape.

A "Centennial Celebration" took place in 1876 at the Church commemorating a century of worship at the old site and also the Centennial Anniversary of America.

The church appropriately adopted the name of Centennial Methodist Episcopal Church. During the year Centennial purchased ground at Caroline and Bank Streets for the new edifice.

LODGES, FRATERNAL ORDERS

There is not sufficient space to record the history of early Baltimore lodges.

The lodge and fraternal orders arose like the churches, to fulfull the yearning for a social and recreational and religious life in the Black World.

Black persons were barred from the white lodges.

The Elks, the Masons and the Knights of Pythias were thriving organizations at the turn of the century.

The AFRO published glowing accounts of their meetings and conventions which were some of the most brilliant affairs (moreso than now) ever recorded.

The Galilean Fishermen, a lodge still in existance, flourished in the 1800's and early 1900's and is yet today the oldest such organization in the United States.

All the fraternal organizations became the leaders on the civil rights and political front and, as they are today, were powerful in helping the Black citizen get an edge on integration.

CLUBS

The lodge halls were forerunners of the men's clubs such as South Baltimore's Arch Social Club founded over 100 years ago and still in existence.

The lodge halls and social club rooms were where the gentlemen of the era got a drink or two of fine Maryland rye and whiskey.

Ladies were not allowed. They had their own lodges and small quilting and sewing clubs but there was no drinking nor smoking, unless secretly.

The lodges also allowed Black persons to save up dues for burial and thus they became wealthy institutions.

The Masons, Elks, Knights of Pythias members were sure of a glorious and beautiful funeral and to that end they "paid in" fully.

The history of these groups could be written in volumes and would reveal further insight into the Black World of Yesterday. These activities also formed the bulk of the news of the early AFRO.

These activities made the AFRO of that era a great necessity.

NAACP

The NAACP evolved in 1909 following the Niagara Movement in Boston in 1907.

The Niagara group was called by Dr. W.E.B. DuBois at Niagara Falls Canada for agressive action to secure full citizenship for Black citizens. With several Baltimoreans attending, the group met in Harpers Ferry, Va. near Baltimore in 1908, the scene of John Brown's martyrdom.

Kelly Miller, also many times on the Baltimore scene, was also one of the leaders. Among them were Baltimoreans, ministers, and educators.

Baltimore fast became a leading NAACP chapter and in the 1930's under leadership of Lille Mae Jackson and Dr. Carl Murphy became the No. 1 branch in the nation.

Chic Webb, an East Baltimore musician born 1902 was also a favorite and high on the scene was Billy Holiday 1917 and Joe Gans, the fighter, Eubie Blake, born in 1883 in Baltimore, was becoming popular in the era in which the AFRO began.

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