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African-American Social Science Baseline Essay

by

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Biographical Sketch of the Author

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INTRODUCTION

Africa and its people are the most written about and the least understood of all of the world's people. This condition started in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries with the beginning of the slave trade and the colonialism system. The Europeans not only colonized most of the world, but also began to colonize information about the world and its people. In order to do this, they had to forget, or pretend to forget, all they had previously known about the Africans. They were not meeting them for the first time; there had been another meeting during the Greek and Roman times. At that time the Africans and Europeans complemented each other.

The people and the cultures of what is known as Africa are older than the word Africa. According to most records we know about, old and new, Africans are the oldest people on the face of the earth. The people now called Africans not only influenced the Greeks and the Romans, but they also influenced the early world before there was a place called Europe.¹

When the early Europeans first met Africans, at the crossroads of history, it was a respectful meeting and the Africans were not slaves. Their nations were old before Europe was born.² In this period in history what was to be later known as "Africa" was an unknown place to the people who would someday be called "Europeans." Only the people of a few of the Mediterranean Islands and some states of the areas which later became Greek and Roman States knew about parts of North Africa, the land of mystery. After the rise and decline of Greek civilization and the Roman destruction of the City of

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Carthage, they made the conquered territories into a province which they called, "Africa," a word derived from "afri," and the name of a group of people about whom little is known. At first the word applied only to the Roman colonies in North Africa. There was a time when all dark-skinned people were called Ethiopians, for the Greeks referred to Africa as "the land of the burnt-face people."³

If Africa, in general, is a man-made mystery, Egypt, in particular, is a bigger one. There has long been an attempt on the part of some European "scholars" to deny that Egypt was a part of Africa. To do this they had to ignore the great masterpieces on Egyptian history written by European writers, such as Gerald Massey's **Ancient Egypt: Light of The World**, Volumes One and Two, and a whole school of European thought that placed Egypt in proper focus in relationship to the rest of Africa.⁴

The distorters of African history also had to ignore the fact that the people of the ancient land, which would later be called Egypt, never called their country by that name. It was called TA-MERRY or KAMPT and sometimes KEMET or SAIS. The ancient Hebrews called it MIZRAIN. Later the Moslem Arabs used the same term but later discarded it. Both the Greeks and the Romans referred to the country as the "Pearl of the Nile." The Greeks gave it the simple name, AEGYPTCUS. Thus the word we know as Egypt is of Greek origin.⁵

Until recent times most Western scholars have been reluctant to call attention to the fact that the Nile River is four-thousand miles long. It starts in the South, in the heart of Africa, and flows to the North. It was the world's first cultural highway. Thus, Egypt was a

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composite of many African cultures. In his article, **The Lost Pharaohs of Nubia**, Professor Bruce Williams infers that the nations in the South could be older than Egypt.⁶ This information is not new. When rebel European scholars were saying this one hundred years ago, and proving it, they were not taken seriously.

It is unfortunate that so much of the history of Africa has been written by conquerors, foreigners, missionaries, and adventurers. The Egyptians left the best record of their history written by local writers. It was not until near the end of the eighteenth century when a few European scholars learned to decipher their writing that this was understood.

The Greek traveler, Herodotus, was in Africa about 450 B.C. His eyewitness account is still a revelation. He witnessed African civilization in decline, partly in ruins, after many invasions. However, he could still see the indications of the greatness that it had been.⁷ In this period in history, the Nile Valley civilization of Africa had already brought forth two "Golden Ages" of achievement and had left its mark for all the world to see.

Invasions from Western Asia (now called the Middle-East) had reduced this once great land to ruin and sadness. One invader after the other would rule this land for the next two-thousand years. Egypt's place in world history is still being debated, mainly because a large number of Western scholars do not want to accept the fact that this was a nation and that its great achievements in history was the collective achievement of an African people.

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Slavery and colonialism strained, but did not completely break, the cultural umbilical cord between the Africans in Africa and those who, by forced migration, now live in what is called the western world. A small group of African-Americans and Caribbean writers, teachers and preachers, collectively developed the basis of what would be an African-consciousness movement over one-hundred years ago. Their concern was with Africa, in general, Egypt and Ethiopia, and what we now call the Nile Valley.

In the years before emancipation of slaves in the United States and in the Caribbean Islands, these "free" blacks had barely mastered their conqueror's language, however; in spite of the lack of formal training, their first writing reflected a concern for Africa as their homeland. The great African-American scholar, W. E. B. DuBois, describes the situation in this manner:

From the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries, the Africans imported to America regarded themselves as temporary settlers destined to return eventually to Africa. Their increasing revolts against the slave system which culminated in the eighteenth century, showed a feeling of close kinship to the motherland and even well into the nineteenth century they called their organizations "African" as witness the "African Unions" of New York and Newport, and the African Churches of Philadelphia and New York. In the West Indies and South America there was even closer indication of feeling of kinship with Africa and the East.⁸

In approaching this subject, preference is given to writers of African descent who are generally neglected. African scholars are the final authority on Africa. The writings of W. E. B. DuBois, George Washington Williams, Drusilla Dungee Houston, Carter G.

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Woodson, Willis N. Huggins, and John G. Jackson are given major consideration. I have also read the manuscripts of some of the unpublished books of Charles C. Seifert, especially manuscripts of his last completed book, **Who Are The Ethiopians?** Among Caribbean scholars, like Charles C. Seifert, J. A. Rogers (from Jamaica) is the best known and the most prolific. Over fifty years of his life was devoted to documenting the role of African personalities in world history. His two-volume work, **World's Great Men of Color**, is a pioneer study in the field.

Among the present day scholars writing about African history, culture and politics, Yosef ben-Jochannan's books are the most challenging. He belongs to the main cultural branch of the African world, having been born in Ethiopia, Africa, and he grew to early manhood in the Caribbean Islands and has lived in the African-American community of the United States for over twenty years. His major books on African history are: **Black Man of the Nile** (1979), **Africa: Mother of Western Civilization** (1976), and **The African Origins of Major Western Religions** (1970).

The southern African origins of Egypt and the importance of the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty have been referred to by a large number of writers, both African and European. Charles C. Seifert calls attention to this in his manuscript, **Who Are the Ethiopians?** He says:

Its fame reached Europe long before the Christian epoch. In his "Historical Research," Arnold Heeren (1760-1842) wrote the following about the Ethiopians:

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Except the Egyptians, there is no other people in Africa with so many claims upon their attention as the Ethiopians, from the remotest times to the present one of the most celebrated and most mysterious of nations. In the earliest traditions of nearly all the most civilized nations of antiquity the name of this distant people is found. The annals of the Egyptians were full of them. The nations of inner Asia, on the Tigris and the Euphrates have interwoven the legends of Ethiopia with their own traditions of conquests and the wars of their heroes; and, at a period equally remote, they glimmer in Greek mythology.⁹

This description about the Ethiopians was only one of the many tributes given to the people of Ethiopia by many objective foreign scholars. There is also the great work of Count Volney, *The Ruins of Empires*, in which he describes the Ethiopians in the following glowing language:

Those piles of ruins which you see in that narrow valley watered by the Nile are the ruins of opulent cities, the pride of the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia. These, a people now forgotten, discovered, while others were barbarians, the elements of the arts and the sciences. A race of men now rejected from society founded, from the study of the laws of nature, those civil and religious systems which still govern the universe.

The survival of the kingdom of Ethiopia in Africa is a source of great inspiration to the African continent. This survival has cost the people of Ethiopia on behalf of Africa as a whole great sacrifices. The people of Ethiopia have resisted the destruction of their kingdom by foreign powers in full knowledge that Ethiopia may bequeath to a future re-emerging Africa a source of inspiration and pride and thus help to be a continental throbbing heart of PanAfrican and African Unity.¹⁰

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The past Golden Ages are part of the history that the exploiters of Africa want the world to ignore. The great Ghanaian scholar, Dr. Joseph B. Danquah, outlined the pre-slavery history of Africa in his introduction to the book, **United West Africa (or Africa) at the Bar of the Family of Nations**, when he said:

By the time Alexander the Great was sweeping the civilized world with conquest after conquest from Chaeronia to Gaza, from Babylon to Cabul; by the time this first of the Aryan conquerors was learning the rudiments of war and government at the feet of philosophic Aristotle; and by the time Athens was laying down the foundations of modern European civilization, the earliest and greatest Ethiopian culture had already flourished and dominated the civilized world for over four centuries and one-half. Imperial Ethiopia had conquered Egypt and founded the XXL! Dynasty, and for a century and one-half the central seat of civilization in the known world was held by the ancestors of the modern Negro, maintaining and defending it against the Assyrian and Persian Empires of the East. Thus, at the time when the first European (Grecian) Olympiad was as yet to be held. Rome was nowhere to be seen on the map, and sixteen centuries were to pass before Charlemagne would rule in Europe and Egbert become first King of England. Even then, history was to drag on for another seven hundred weary years, before Roman Catholic Europe could see fit to end the Great Schism, soon to be followed by the disturbing news of the discovery of America and by the fateful rebirth of the youngest of the world civilizations.¹¹

Our own great historian, W. E. B. DuBois, tells us, "Always Africa is giving us something new ... On its black bosom arose one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of self-protecting civilizations, and grew so mightily that it still furnishes superlatives to thinking and

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speaking men. Out of its darker and more remote forest vastnesses came, if we may credit many recent scientists, the first welding of iron, and we know that agriculture and trade flourished there when Europe was a wilderness."

Dr. DuBois tells us further that, "Nearly every human empire that has arisen in the world, material and spiritual, has found some of its greatest crises on this continent of Africa. It was through Africa that Christianity became the religion of the world. In Africa the last flood of Germanic Invasions spent itself within hearing of the last gasp of Byzantium, and it was again through Africa that Islam came to play its great role of conqueror and civilizer."

Egypt and the nations of the Nile Valley were, figuratively, the beating heart of Africa and the incubator for its greatness for more than a thousand years. The human traffic from the South renewed the creative energy of Egypt and helped it meet one of the greatest challenges in history. Egypt gave birth to what later became known as Western civilization, long before the greatness of Greece and Rome.¹²

AFRICAN HISTORY, A FACTOR IN WORLD HISTORY

African history is a part of world history, a very old and very important division of the total study of man. Because it is an essential segment in this field of learning, scholars today consider it to be worthy of considerable attention in the schools. In recent years, intensive research has opened up new vistas in our understanding of the African continent, and students at all levels can profit by a better appreciation of the contributions of African culture to the culture of the world.

Old and new research on Africa and its place in human history has proved that Africa is the birthplace of mankind and was, for many centuries, in the forefront of human progress. African history must be looked at anew and seen in its relationship to world history. What we usually refer to as world history is only the history of the first and second rise of Europe. Yet, the history of Africa was already old when Europe was born. Until quite recently it was rather generally assumed, even among well-educated persons in the West, that the continent of Africa was a great expanse of land, mostly jungle, inhabited by savages and fierce beasts. It was not realized that great civilizations could have existed there, or that great kings could have ruled there in might and wisdom over vast empires. It is true that there are some current notions about the cultural achievement of Egypt, but Egypt was erroneously conceived as a European land rather than as a country of Africa. Although a glance at an atlas or a globe would show Egypt to be in Africa, the Sahara Desert was seen as a formidable barrier that divided Africa into two parts: one, North of the Sahara, inhabited by a European-like people of high culture and noble history; the other, South of the Sahara, was inhabited by a dark-skinned people who had no culture, and were incapable of having done anything in

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their dim and distant past that could be dignified by the designation of "history." Such ideas, of course, are far from the truth, as this essay will prove. But it is not difficult to understand why they persisted, and unfortunately, why they still persist in one form or another in the popular mind.

Europeans have long been in contact with Africa, that is, Northern Africa. The names of Aesop and Memnon, of Terence and Cleopatra, are the names of Africans who have figured in the legend, literature, the arts and history of Greece and Rome. Indeed, the land of Africa was a land of wonders for the ancient Greeks and Romans, and this to such an extent that among them it was a proverb that, "Out of Africa there is always something new." The concept of "darkest Africa" refers to the comparative ignorance of Europeans regarding that continent and its people over the last four centuries. An English writer, Jonathan Swift, made a sharp but witty comment on his fellow Europeans' lack of knowledge of Africa when he wrote:

Geographers in Africa maps
With savage pictures fill their gaps,
and o'er uninhabitable downs
Paint elephants instead of towns.¹³

There is another reason why the people of Africa, with the notable exclusion of Egypt, were depicted as uncivilized, and lacking in cultural attainments. A number of pious people in Europe would have been struck with horror if they knew the cruel and bloody acts of their countrymen in the course of the inhumane slave trade. Ruthless European adventurers promoted the destruction of complete villages in order to capture the inhabitants and sell them like cattle. Therefore, slave traders would invent

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fantastic tales of savagery about Africans so that their capture and their transportation to labor on the plantations of the Americas would appear to be acts of Christian concern and high-minded enlightenment.

To justify the enslavement and the exploitation of Africans, the Europeans began in the fifteenth century to read them out of the respectable commentary of human history. Many achievements of black people were attributed to white people. Misconceptions die slowly, but eventually they die. In an essay on **The Changing African Historical Tradition**, Dr. Charles H. Wesley calls attention to the reason for some of the changes in attitudes toward Africa. He says:

The dramatic emergence on the world scene of African people seeking self-government and independence has been accompanied by a change in the tradition that Africa is without history. This tradition created by non-Africans made Africa into a dark continent. This designation with its connotations was continued through centuries not only on account of the dark hues of the people but also because little was known of Africa except that it was a land of unknown, of mystery and legend. It was in its first discovery the land of "Sheba," and of "Prester John," and "King Solomon's Mines."¹⁴

Of course, there was another reason writers of African descent throughout the world were, at last, being given serious attention. The major project involving African writers in the proposed eight-volume **General History of Africa**, sponsored by UNESCO, was a product of this new attention. The idea for an eight-volume history, with major emphasis on the African point of view, was first announced at the inaugural meeting of the International Congress of African Studies in Accra in 1961.

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This was a radical departure from the opinion on Africa, its history and its people then prevailing in the Western academic community. The colonizers of Africa had repeatedly proclaimed that the African people had no history. The African independence explosion, starting with Ghana in 1957, and the proliferation of African states speaking for themselves, helped to influence this change.

In the booklet entitled **Preparation For a General History of Africa**, published by UNESCO in 1979, the following description of the project is given:

In 1964, the General Conference of UNESCO, as part of the Organization's effort to further the mutual understanding of peoples and nations, authorized the Director-General to take the necessary measures for the preparation and publication of a General History of Africa.¹⁵

It was considered that such a project would add significantly to our knowledge of the history of mankind. In particular, it was felt to be a matter of urgency to study the past of Africa at a time of intense and rapid change when the continent's traditional institutions and their forms of expression were being threatened by an economic, social and cultural evaluation that was, in great measure, unplanned and uncontrolled. It was also felt that the project could provide a factor of cultural continuity among peoples and nations which had recently ascended to independence by enabling them to have a clearer understanding of their own identity with the past and with the present.

Because the second volume of this work is devoted mainly to the relationship of Egypt with the Nile Valley nations in the South, there is a need to extend this information in

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order to identify Egypt and its civilization as a distinct African creation, with no original indebtedness to Western Asia (called the Middle East) or to Europe, which did not exist during the formative years of Egypt's development. If Egypt is an enigma in world history, it is an enigma by design created by Western historians, travelers and adventurers. There are notable exceptions to this charge, beginning with the eyewitness account of the great Greek traveler, Herodotus.

Herodotus was the first writer to refer to the probable Southern African origins of the people who would later be called Egyptians. He and other European writers (who are generally neglected) saw the Nile River as a great cultural highway bringing people and creative talent out of inner Africa. Migrations constantly renewed the energy and genius of Ancient Egypt until it became the greatest nation the world has ever known.¹⁶

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THE ANTECEDENTS OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

It is generally conceded in most scholarly circles that mankind originated in Africa. This makes the African man and the African woman the FATHER and MOTHER of humankind. No one knows, for sure, the exact color of the people who became known as Africans. Physically, they have always been known to the world as a people of black or brown complexion.

In Africa there is evidence of one of the earliest organized societies. In his book, **The Progress and Evolution of Man in Africa**, Dr. L. S. B. Leakey has said:

In every country that one visits and where one is drawn into conversation about Africa, the question is regularly asked by people who should know better: "But what has Africa contributed to world progress?" These critics of Africa forgot that men of science today are, with few exceptions, satisfied that Africa was the birthplace of man himself, and for many hundreds of centuries thereafter Africa was in the forefront of all world progress.¹⁷

A primary myth has been developed in Western thought and culture which depicts Africa as the "dark continent." This darkness was not only a physical description of the inhabitants of Africa, but also an insinuation that Africa and Africans had never produced a high level of civilization and had existed in isolation and savagery from the rest of the world. The myth maintains that only in the modern period, when Europeans came to Africa to explore and colonize, was it civilized. Such a position is patently untrue and, historically speaking, unsupportable. The growing body of scientific knowledge produced in this century has made such clumsy fabrications no longer tenable.

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The dark continent myth was a product of the European's desire in the modern period to explain and justify the often exploitive relationships they were forming with the non-white world as the whites rose to global dominance. In general, the theories and discoveries of the Western world functioned to support the presumption of Caucasian superiority. Within this context, it became important that the Western world be acknowledged as the origins of both humankind and civilization; such simply was not the case.

Human development occurred almost exclusively on the African continent according to archaeologist J. Desmond Clark:

There is a great need today to stand back, as it were, and to consider this record of our past in the light of the long-term viewpoint that the radiometric chronology and recent prehistoric studies are now making possible. If we do this, we cannot fail to achieve a more realistic and balanced appreciation of the role played by the huge continental land mass of Africa in the history of mankind.

From this long-term standpoint, we can see that about the first two-thirds of that record have been found solely in Africa. Indeed, the researches of the last few years have produced a large, still growing, body of evidence strongly suggesting that, not only was it in Africa that the human race first began, but that just about every significant biological and cultural advance - at least for the first two and one-half million years - took place in Africa.¹⁸

New research by Richard E. Leakey, son of Dr. L. S. B. Leakey, in East Africa and by Donald Johanson and Maitland Edey in the hills and valleys of Ethiopia have put to

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rest many of the myths and misconceptions relating to Africa. There is now some reconsideration for some old information on the subject that was previously ignored.

In his pamphlet, **The African Contribution** (1966), the scholar researcher, John W. Weatherwax, speaks of the African contribution to the early development of mankind in this manner:

The early Africans made hooks to catch fish, spears to hunt with, the bola, with which to catch birds and animals, the blow-gun, the hammer, the stone-axe, canoes and paddles, bags and buckets, poles, bows and arrows...

The pre-history of mankind is called the old Stone Age. It may have lasted half a million years ... canoes made it possible for men to travel farther from his early home. Over many centuries, canoes went down the Nile and the Congo and up many smaller rivers and streams...

From the blow-gun of ancient Africa there followed, in later ages, many devices based on its principles. Some of them are the bellows, bamboo air pumps, the rifle, the pistol, the revolver, the automatic machine gun, and even those industrial guns that puff grain ... African hunters many times cut up game. There still exist, from the old Stone Age, drawings of animal bones, hearts and other organs. The early drawings are a part of man's early beginnings in the field of anatomy.¹⁹

The Western scientist, until very recently, maintained that the birthplace of the human species had been in Asia, specifically the Java area of Southeast Asia. The first modern man to suggest that Africa was the birthplace of man was Charles Darwin in his **Descent Of Man**, as early as 1871. Darwin, of course, had shaken the scientific world earlier with his theories of evolution and natural selection. His prophecy in 1871

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that Africa would be found to be the origin of the human species was rejected out of hand by the scientific community and considered heresy in the social and political world.

Conversely, the scholars of the ancient world, uncontaminated by the need to conform to the presumption of Caucasian superiority, had routinely hypothesized that Africa had been the birthplace of man. Diodorus Siculus, a Roman writing in the first century B.C., for example says:

The Ethiopians say that they were the first men that ever were in the world and that to prove this they have clear demonstrations. It is most probable that those who inhabit the South were the first living men that sprang out of the earth. It is rational to conclude that those places nearest to the sun should have been the first parents of all living creatures.²⁰

Herodotus, a Golden Age Greek, found no problem in identifying Africans in very positive terms as well:

Here (Ethiopia) gold is found in great abundance and huge elephants and ebony, and all sorts of trees growing wild. The men, too, are the tallest in the world, the best-looking and the longest-lived.²¹

The modern Western world mightily resisted the movement to recognize Africa as the birthplace of man. Through the work of several dedicated scholars, the evidence finally became too strong to deny. The process, however, took nearly a half a century. It began when Miss Josephine Salmons, a student of noted scientist Raymond A. Dart, was searching for primate fossils in South Africa in 1924. Instead she found fossil

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remains of an early ancestor of mankind from approximately one million B.C. Dart verified her discovery which greatly predated any previous samples. Dart's discovery, like Darwin's prophecy, was ridiculed and soundly rejected in the general scientific community as late as 1955.

Robert Broom was a scientist who worked in Africa from 1936 to 1945. His research provided the foundation of fossil evidence for mammal evolution from reptile form. Broom strongly supported Dart's position.

Finally, overwhelming evidence of the African origin of humans was provided through the painstaking and tenacious work of the Leakey, family and their native Kenyan researchers in the Olduvai Gorge area of Eastern Africa. This team discovered over 600 specimens of the oldest fossil remains of early humans. Perhaps the most important of which was skull 1470, found by Bernard Nyeneo, an African member of the Leakey team, in 1972.

Although much remains to be learned, and several academic controversies continue to boil concerning specific details of these early ancestors, the broad outline of early human history has become increasingly clear. It includes the following beliefs:

1. As recently as 600,000 B.C. there were only Africans. That is, the only ancestors of humans alive, lived on the African continent.
2. Between 500,000 - 400,000 B.C., Africans began to migrate to other parts of the world.

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3. Isolation and environmental differences worked to produce differing physical characteristics within migrating groups.

This is an expanding field of research and some of the old myths **are** falling faster than new ones can be created. There was a period of migration within Africa and some migrations out of Africa. This accounts for the appearance of African physical-type people in widely scattered areas outside of Africa. It may, at least in part, explain the basis of Professor Ivan Van Sertima's book, **They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America.**²²

The reason for these migrations is not known. Organized societies came into being in spite of the movement of people to other lands. These societies were in the midst of change. New things were being learned and new challenges were being met. In the early development of man in Africa, the family was the most important social unit. The survival needs of the family determined the activity and movement of each group.

The women of early Africa did more to develop farming than the men. The men were often away for long periods of time searching for supplies of food or a new hunting ground. During the old Stone Age, men and women lived a very simple life and continued to utilize the environment around them. Tool making and the discovery of fire brought some security to the lives of these early Africans.

What is called the New Stone Age started when man learned to farm. Many families began to stay in one place for a long time because they had enough food to feed

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themselves. With this new stability, clusters of villages began to grow into what would later be cities.

By the New Stone Age, all of Africa had benefitted from the introduction of iron, new building methods, new methods of animal husbandry, and a new use of the land through irrigation. For thousands of years, Africans had neither help nor interference from other nations and people. Europe was not yet a factor in developing cultures and civilizations when these events were unfolding in Africa. Organized societies had already started along the banks of a long river that would later be called the Nile. This river became Africa's first great cultural highway. In early world history a distinct African people moved down that highway, settled in the delta area at the end of the river and built a nation that is best known to the world as Egypt.²³

AFRICAN ANCIENT WORLD: THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CIVILIZATION IN THE ORIGINS OF EGYPT

Egypt has long been an area of primary attraction for students of the past. The high level of civilization which grew and flourished in the Nile Valley in many ways symbolizes the emergence from the animal kingdom of the human species onto a level of behavior exclusively its own. The designation of Egypt as the first great civilization is so well supported by documents and physical evidence that not even white supremacists have attempted to deny the fact. But because the concession of Egypt's achievements would seriously undermine theories of white superiority in the modern period if Egyptians were black Africans, traditions of treatment of the Egyptian past have been created and preserved in Western thought that conceal and distort the true nature of the Egyptian experience.

The typical treatment of the Egyptian past, which functions to make it acceptable in the context of Western concepts of civilization, contains the following ingredients:

1. A disconnection of Egypt from the African continent. This disconnection is accomplished in both a geographic and chronological framework. Egypt is typically presented not as a part of Africa, but standing either alone or as a part of some hybrid middle-eastern entity. This ignores the obvious fact that Egypt is now and always has been located on the African continent. Chronologically, Egypt is always presented in the "immaculate conception" context. This is as if it had no antecedents. This approach is necessary because the antecedents to Egyptian culture were even further into the interior of Africa and thus even more obviously African and, therefore, more troublesome to the white theories of civilization.

What the creators of these theories seem to have forgotten (if indeed they knew), is

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that Egypt's greatest achievement was a fact long before the creation of the first nation-state in Europe. In their book, **A History of The Modern World**, the writers R. R. Palmer and Joel Colton made the following admission:

Europeans were by no means the pioneers in human civilization. Half of man's recorded history had passed before anyone in Europe could read or write. The priests of Egypt began to keep written records between 4000 and 3000 B.C.... While the Pharaohs were building the first pyramids, Europeans were creating nothing more distinguished than garbage heaps.²⁴

With this stated, there is a need to continue to ask the probing question about Egypt's proper place in Africa and in human history. What and who are the Egyptians? To begin with we must reject the assumption that Egypt is an extension of Europe, or at the very least Asia. The ancient Egyptians were distinctly African people. They were not Hamites as most history books tend to indicate. The manners, customs and religions of the historic Egyptians suggest that the original home of their prehistoric ancestors was south in a country in the neighborhood of Uganda and Punt. (The Biblical land of Punt was believed to be in the area now known as Somalia.)

In many ways, Egypt is the key to ancient African history. African history is incomplete and distorted until Egypt is looked at as a distinct African nation. The invasions of Egypt that started about 450 B.C. and continued until after the Roman period brought into Egypt large numbers of people who were not indigenous to the country. The bulk of the Arab population in present-day Egypt has no direct relationship to ancient Egyptian history. Most of these people came into Africa in the 7th and 8th centuries during the rapid spread of Islam.

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The Edfu Text is an important source document on the early history of the Nile Valley. This famous inscription, found in the Temple of Horus at Edfu, gives an account of the origin of Egyptian civilization. According to this record, civilization was brought from the South by a band of invaders under the leadership of King Horus. This ruler, Horus, was later deified. His followers were called "The Blacksmiths," because they possessed iron implements. This early culture has been traced back to Somaliland, although it may have originated in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa. In Somaliland there are ruins of buildings constructed with dressed stone, showing a close resemblance to the architecture of early Egypt. The Nile River played a major role in the relationship of Egypt to the nations in Southeast Africa. The Nile in ancient times was a great cultural highway, bringing elements, of civilization out of and into inner Africa. If Egypt can be credited with creating the world's first civilization, that credit must be shared with people of other parts of Africa.

In calling attention to Egypt's Golden Age, the intent is to look at a collective achievement. Egypt had many Golden Ages. This is best reflected in the lives of the great personalities that made the splendid ages of achievement possible. The nation that became known to the world as Egypt was a creation of a special circumstance of history. Its civilization was a blend of many cultures, mostly coming from within Africa. The following quotation emphasizing this fact is from the book **A Tropical Dependency**, by Lady Lugard. She says:

The ancient civilization of Egypt spread, as we know, from South to North and without venturing to accept or reject the assumption of some learned writers that it

came originally by way of the Arabian Gulf from India, there is seemingly no doubt that the earliest seat of civilization in Africa was the country watered by the upper Nile, which was known by the name of "Ethiopia," to the ancients ... The principal state of this Ethiopian country bore the well known name of Meroe. The capital of Meroe was a city of the same name, which stood a little below the present Shendy, under 17 N. latitude and in 32 E. longitude ... This is not the place nor am I competent to discuss the arguments which form the ground of belief that the civilization of Meroe preceded that of Egypt. It is enough to say very briefly, that on the site of the city of Meroe there exist remains of temples and pyramids, from which archaeologists have drawn the conclusion that the pyramid was a form of architecture native to Meroe, and only afterwards brought to perfection in Egypt. It is evident from the decoration of the temples that they were dedicated to the worship of Ammon. It is believed that the remains of the temple of the most famous oracle of Jupiter Ammon are to be found in ruins at about eight hours' journey to the northeast of Shendy. This temple of the oracle was known to exist within a few hours of Meroe, and the priestly traditions of Ethiopia and Egypt assert that the worship of Ammon and Osiris, with its feasts and processions, was settled at the metropolis of Meroe. This remarkable spot is regarded by ancients as "the cradle of the arts and sciences, where hieroglyphic writing was discovered, and where temples and pyramids had already sprung up while Egypt still remained ignorant of their existence."²⁵

There is a small library of neglected literature on this subject. In the book **The Destruction of Black Civilization**, Professor Chancellor Williams refers to Egypt as, "Ethiopia's Oldest Daughter."²⁶ Evidence has been discovered that clearly showed that there were nations in Africa whose culture was older than the existence of Egypt, and that the culture that is thought of as solely Egyptian-created had its origin in Nubia and

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other nations South of Egypt. Professor Bruce Williams makes the following statement about the new evidence:

A newly discovered ancient kingdom is always a matter of intense interest, but when it precedes the earliest known monarchy, the unification of Egypt in the fourth millennium B.C., then history itself is reborn. The place is ancient Nubia at Qustul, where there investigation of archaeological materials recovered during the great 1960's rescue effort has recently unveiled a birthplace of pharaonic civilization several generations before the rise of the first historic Egyptian Dynasty. This finding is rendered even more startling by the fact that advanced political organization was not believed to have come to Nubia, or anywhere south of Egypt, for another 2,500 years.²⁷

THE HISTORY OF EGYPT

It is time now to look, though graphically, at the historical chronology of Egypt and how it developed into the world's first enduring nation. The controversy around Egypt has been over the fact that Egypt is located at the crossroads of three continents. It is at the back door of Europe, the side door of Asia, and the front door of Africa. When the years of envy attracted invader after invader to its shores, it became part of a Mediterranean melting pot.

There is a need to look at Egypt before these invaders came and assess why they came, the consequences of their coming, and the harm they did to the internal structure of Egypt and to other parts of Africa. Generally speaking, most of this harm was done to Egypt. The first population of Egypt came from the South, within Africa. There were later populations from the Northwest after the drying-up of the Sahara. For over one thousand years, Egypt became the beneficiary of the best talent and craftsmanship of the world of its day. Its achievement, at its height, was the achievement of a combination of nations and people and not that of one nation. Because of its early development of agriculture, it could feed a massive population, and because Egypt is literally the gift of the Nile, the flow of this river has determined its destiny. For convenience, Egypt's history has been divided into a number of main periods which can be summarized as follows:

1st The dawn of Pre-Dynastic Period (Paleolithic Period) - undated

2nd Pre-Dynastic Period - ended about 3200 B.C.

3rd Dynastic Period - 3200 B.C. - 332 B.C.

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4th The Greek Period (or Ptolemaic) - 332 B.C. - 30 B.C.

5th The Roman Period - 30 B.C. - 640 A.D.

Each one of these periods will be examined graphically, and separately, knowing full well that this condensation is an injustice to a subject that needs far more attention than is being given here. In looking at the dawn of the Pre-Dynastic period and its subtitle, The Paleolithic Period, this period is also called the, "Age of Chipped Stone," when metals were not widely used, and to some extent, weren't known. This was a period of building with crudely-shaped instruments before the Egyptians had perfected the art of construction. The "Age of the Finished Stone," was a leap forward. It was not only their desire to improve building but also it was their desire to search for things of exquisite beauty. This might have been the beginning of what may have been the artistic period in Egyptian history.

PRE-DYNASTIC PERIOD

The Pre-Dynastic period was nota period when there were no established rulers, but a period when there was a lack of decision as to who exactly would be the rulers, and what methods would be used to choose them. Intellectual advances had already started and the Egyptians had discovered the solar year consisting of 365 days. By most evidence, it seems that the calendar was introduced in 4241 B.C. Building in stone was not widespread at this time. Inhabitants lived in reed and wattle huts near the Nile River. When the erratic temperament of the river changed and it began to overflow with some regularity, the people learned to build their homes on the highlands away from its banks, and how to come back after the overflowing and plant their crops in the rich, black soil that was deposited along its shores. This was the beginning of massive agriculture. The Pre-Dynastic period began to come slowly to an end once

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the arguments among small kingdoms gave way to the concept of a feudal state. It was agreed that one of the ruling families would lead the state. A Dynasty was really the rule of the state by a specific family with, of course, the consent of councils and other representatives of the people. These states grew out of communal societies with little emphasis on who was rich and who was poor. They practiced collective ownership and collective distribution of goods within their society. This was the dawn of the Dynastic Period. It might have taken nearly 1,000 years to prepare for it.

THE DYNASTIC PERIOD: THE MAINSTREAM OF EGYPTIAN HISTORY

The most quoted chronology of Egyptian history was left by an Egyptian historian who lived through the last of the Dynastic Period. His name was Manetho. A lot of the material used by modern historians of Egyptian history is taken from the chronicles of Manetho. The Dynastic Period includes the pyramid-building period, which according to Manetho, extended from the third through the sixth Dynasty, giving the exact dates of 2778-2270 B.C. What is called the First Intermediate Period includes the Dynasties from the Sixth to the Tenth and a part of the Eleventh Dynasty, 2270-2060 B.C. The Middle Kingdom includes the second part of the Eleventh Dynasty and the Twelfth Dynasty, 2060-1785 B.C. The Second Intermediate Period extended from the Thirteenth to the Seventeenth Dynasty, 1785-1580 B.C.

New evidence about the First Dynasty, sometimes referred to as The Archaic Period, 3200-2980 B.C., proves that there is a need for a re-assessment of this period. Both Herodotus and Manetho identify Menes as the first Pharaoh of this dynasty. Other

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historians say that the name means Na'rmer. He is reported to be the founder of the city of Memphis at the juncture of the two lands before the unification of the Upper and Lower Nile to form the Greater Egypt that was still to come.

The Second Dynasty, 2990-2778 B.C., was not particularly outstanding and not a great deal is known about it and its personalities. This was a period when the previous consolidation of power was contained, but not expanded. But it did make way for the Third Dynasty that was spectacular. This dynasty left a mark on Egyptian history that reverberates to this very day.

With the Third Dynasty, Egypt's place in world history was finally established. This was an age of intellectual outpouring. The Pharaoh of this dynasty was Zoser, 2778-2723 B.C. This was also the period of the emergence of Imhotep, the world's first multi-genius. He was the real father of medicine and lived 2,000 years before the Greek Hippocrates who is given this credit. He was also called the Prince of Peace. Shrines were erected in his name. In Sir William Osler's book, **The History of Modern Medicine**, he refers to Imhotep as, "The first figure of a physician to stand out clearly from the midst of antiquity." His building of the step-pyramid set in motion the massive building of temples and other structures in the Egypt of his day. To a great extent, his name and his fame overshadows that of the Pharaoh Zoser whom he served as The Grand Vizier.

The Fourth Dynasty, 2723-2563 B.C., built on the foundations of the Third. The pyramid-building period was still in its main thrust of achievement, but the name and the

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achievements of the Third Dynasty would record over the Fourth and a number of dynasties still to come.

During the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties there were rumors of threats from Western Asia (now called the Middle East). The nations and people in the other river valley, the Tigris and the Euphrates, were laying the foundation of Sumerian civilization. At this time, Asia was no threat to Egypt; later on it would become one. What is referred to as the Old Kingdom was noted for leaving behind numerous temples, tombs, and pyramids, indicating that they had also built on previous foundations and preserved the spiritual structure that would later be the foundation of the three major religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

What is called the First Intermediate Period, 2270-2060 B.C., came after the Old Kingdom. It was a transitional period and a period of internal disputes and weaknesses within one monarchy that would not go unnoticed by the Asians who for many years envied the stability and wealth of Egypt.

The Seventh and Eighth Dynasties were very short, according to Manetho. He mentioned that the Seventh Dynasty consisted of seventy kings. Some ruled for very short periods. The Eighth Dynasty lasted for about thirty years. The rulers displayed no particular strengths.

The first part of the Eleventh Dynasty still reflected some of the weakness of the previous dynasties; mainly, the inability of the ruling families to decide on who would

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be Pharaoh and where the ruling seat of power would be. This weakness brought about a civil war that came to an end at the time of the Middle Kingdom, 2060-1785 B.C. New strength began to be reflected during the second part of the Eleventh Dynasty, 2060-2000 B.C.

During the Twelfth Dynasty, 2000-1785 B.C., new strength was reflected in the fact that, "This is considered to be one of the most glorious dynasties of Egyptian history." The country was back on the high road of dealing, building again and dealing successfully with a number of envious enemies who would not let its armies rest. During this time, the safety of Egypt was secure on all sides by successful treaties with Libya and Nubia.

The Second Intermediate Period might be called the period of trouble. This was the period of the first massive invasion of Egypt from Western Asia. It was the period of invasion by the Hyksos, sometimes referred to as the "Shepherd Kings." It was also the period of the first Hebrew entry into Africa that we have a record of. That Hebrew entry is described by Reverend A. H. Sayce in the book, **The Egypt of the Hebrews and Herodotus:**

Abraham went down into Egypt to sojourn there. When he entered the country the civilization and Monarchy of Egypt were already very old. The pyramids had been built hundreds of years before and the origin of the Sphinx were already a mystery. Even the great obelisks of Heliopolis, which is still the object of an afternoon drive to the tourist of Cairo, had long been standing in front of the temple of the Sun God.

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The monuments of Babylonia enable us to fix the age to which Abraham belongs. Arioeh of Ellnar has left memorials of himself on the bricks of Chaldaeae, and we now know when he and his Elamite allies were driven out of Babylonia and the Babylonian states were united into a single monarchy, this was 2350 B.C.²⁸

This period in African history is often misinterpreted. There are misconceptions about the role the Hebrews played in Africa during that period. They came originally from Western Asia, escaping famine. They literally entered world history during this period and were treated much better in Africa than history tends to indicate. NonBiblical history of the period indicates the Hebrews were not slaves in Egypt. Some of the Hebrews mistakenly took sides with the enemies of Africa and were punished. This punishment did not consist of slavery. The Hebrews, like the Greeks, Romans, Hyksos, and other foreigners, benefitted religiously and intellectually from their sojourn in Africa. What they learned there would influence all of their future history.²⁹

The future religious foundations of the world were being strengthened at this time. The social thought and the main elements that would, in the future, go into the making of the world's major religions already existed in Africa. A number of writers, both of African and European extraction, have been very clear in explaining this misunderstood aspect of religious history.

Professor Yosef ben-Jochannan explains this subject, in-depth, in his book, **African Origins of the Major Western Religions**, and again in a larger work, **Africa: Mother of Western Civilization**. Another scholarly explanation can be found in two books by Dr.

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Alvin Boyd Kuhn, **Who is This King of Glory**, and **Shadow of the Third Century**. The main works on this subject by European writers are: **Ancient Egypt, Light of the World**, by Gerald Massey, in two volumes, and **The Folklore of the Old Testament**, by Sir James Frazer, in three volumes. The African-American writer, John G. Jackson, author of **Man, God and Civilization**, has recently published another book on this subject under the title, **Christianity Before Christ**.³⁰

The Hyksos Period, 1680-1580 B.C., left its mark, mostly negative, on Egyptian history. As a people, they did not have great skills in nation-building or nationmanagement. If it can be said that any good at all came from the Hyksos occupation, it was that the internal strife between the indigenous rulers of Egypt abated and they developed a sense of national unity during this occupation. It was this national unity that gave them the strength and organization to ultimately expel the Hyksos from Egyptian soil.

The Hyksos had adopted many of the customs of the Egyptians and assumed Egyptian royal titles. This assumption did not give them the Egyptian culture that they never could fully understand. During the reign of the Hyksos in the Delta and in the internal part of Upper Egypt, they continued their crude imitation of Egyptian culture while Egyptian military friends, to the south, prepared to come to her assistance. Gradually, the indigenous Egyptian royal families were coming back to power and true Egyptian pharaohs were again occupying the throne of Egypt in the face of the weakening power of the Hyksos. A warrior pharaoh named Ahmose succeeded in driving the Hyksos out of Egypt after his son had initiated the action.

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The expulsion of the Hyksos ended and the period of the New Kingdom began. This period was one of great wealth, prosperity and a widening of the Egyptian empire. Monument-building started again and the army was reinforced. Some of the former colonies of Egypt came back under its influence. The Period of the New Kingdom, 1580-1085 B.C., extended from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Dynasties. Egypt was then a powerful united kingdom and reached the apex of her greatness in wealth and political influence.

More needs to be said about this period and the great personalities that came out of it. Administratively, the King was the head of the state. The business of government and the duties of kingship were such that he appointed two viziers. One resided at Thebes for the administration of the South, the first cataract as far downstream as the town of Asyirt. Nubia was then under Egyptian influence so the King appointed a viceroy of Nubia who was given the title, "King's Son of Kush." This post grew in importance and the Kings took interest in the lands to the far south.

Another important official of this period was the High Priest Amun, who was the supreme head of the great body of priests. This was, in essence, the political, religious, and cultural position of Egypt as it approached the mighty Eighteenth Dynasty spoken of by some writers as the most able dynasty ever to occupy any throne, of any country, at any time in the history of the world. It was in this dynasty that the last remnants of the foreigners were driven from Egyptian soil. Egypt was fully herself again and the master of her own destiny.

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By the time of the Eighteenth Dynasty, all elements of a feudal state had completely disappeared. The government was, in the main, centralized and the administration was in the hands of the first King of the Eighteenth Dynasty (Ahmose, 1580-1558 B.C.). The most outstanding King of the Eighteenth Dynasty was Thutmose, 1530-1515 B.C., sometimes called Thutmoses. The first Thutmose was the son of Amenhotep I and, because his mother was not of royal blood, he was not the legal successor to the throne. He directed armies against some of the remaining foreign soldiers and pursued them as far as the Euphrates River. Thutmose II, the son of Thutmose I, married his half-sister, Hatshepsut, who was a legitimate daughter of Thutmose I. Hatshepsut was not well-treated by him and she did not begin to pursue power until after his death, although her father had fully trained her for power. Another brother, Thutmose III, aspired for the throne of Egypt. He was young and inexperienced and the forces of Hatshepsut came to power in the middle of this controversy. The Nile Valley was now her domain and she began at once to put Egypt's house in order. She did not forget the heritage that her family had left behind. So many of them tried hard to remove the stamp of foreign domination from Egypt, and yet she was determined to continue in this tradition. Her influence spread to the South where she had relatives and she made it clear to the people of Western Asia that Egypt was strong enough to repel any army coming from that region. She strengthened Egypt's position with Kush and Nubia and according to most records, Hatshepsut ruled Egypt for 21 years and ruled it well.

Hatshepsut's demise came abruptly and mysteriously. She may have died a natural death, but some historians believe that Thutmose III had her murdered. After her death,

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he tried to destroy all memory of her in Egypt. He defiled all of her statues that he found. Fortunately, he did not discover all of them and Hatshepsut comes down to us as one of the outstanding women of all times.³¹

The writers of the book, **Brief History of Ancient Egypt**, describe the early part of Thutmose III's reign in this way:

When Thutmose was left sole ruler, he proved to be energetic, and he is justly considered as the greatest pharaoh in the history of Egypt.

At the beginning of his reign by himself, the Asiatic rulers, having seen no Egyptian troops during the coregency, had united under the direction of the Prince of Kadesh, and rebelled against the king. As mentioned in the "Annals of Thutmose I II" at Karnak, Thutmose carried out seventeen campaigns against them in Palestine and Syria which he subdued, and pushed the frontier of Egypt as far back as the Euphrates. He also led a military expedition into Nubia and thus during his reign the Egyptian Empire extended from the Fourth Cataract in the South to the Euphrates in the North. He brought the sons of the Asiatic rulers with him to Egypt, where they were educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.³²

Sometime around 1386 B.C., Queen Tiy of Egypt gave birth to a boy who was first named Amenhotep after his father. Very little is known of his childhood, except that he was sickly from birth and developed an interest in art, poetry, and religion. His closest companion was said to be Nefertiti, his beautiful little cousin. (Some archaeologists have referred to her as his sister.) When the Crown Prince was about 21, he and the lovely Nefertiti were married. Three years later, his aging father,

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Amenhotep III, named him coregent of Egypt and crowned him Amenhotep IV. After the death of his father, he came into full power in Egypt and took the name Akhenaton. He produced a profound effect on Egypt and the entire world of his day.

Akhenaton, often referred to as "The Heretic King," is one of history's most extraordinary monarchs. Thirteen hundred years before Christ, he preached and lived a gospel of love, brotherhood and truth. He has been called the world's first idealist, the first temporal ruler ever to lead his people toward the worship of a single god.³³

When Akhenaton came to the throne in 1362 B.C., Egypt dominated the world. But behind this panoply of power was a cowering citizenry plagued by gods and demons conjured up by a sinister priestcraft. Akhenaton created his own priesthood and proclaimed a new religion that centered on the worship of a single god. This visionary Pharaoh, more interested in philosophy than in power, was unlike any other Egyptian ruler. When he introduced the concept of monotheism, Akhenaton was at an historic crossroads, for, at that point in time, the Hebrews were in Egypt.

The story of Akhenaton is not complete without the story of his beautiful wife and full partner, Nefertiti. She was a woman of fabled beauty and grace. A magnificent treasure remains to remind us of her loveliness, a painted bust which is considered one of the great works of Egyptian art. In some of the many portraits of Akhenaton, he is shown in affectionate poses with Queen Nefertiti. Although she presented him with seven daughters, and he longed for a son, he did not take another wife, as was the custom. The

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relationship between Akhenaton and Nefertiti was one of history's first well-known love stories. The Egyptian artist and sculptors of the day left more than ample proof of this fact. Akhenaton and Nefertiti humanized the Egyptian monarchy. And after his death, Nefertiti, almost single-handedly, tried to keep alive the new religion that he had founded.

The pharaoh that came after Akhenaton, Smerkhkare, 1352-1341 B.C., was outstanding, principally because he kept order in the Egypt of that day and held warfare to an absolute minimum. One of the best-known pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty was Tutankhamun, known as King Tut. As an administrator and pharaoh, there was nothing outstanding to his credit. And sometimes he is unkindly spoken of as a minor king who had a major funeral. The fortunate circumstance of his tomb's discovery is that its finding advanced curiosity and world study of Egyptian history and his name became synonymous with splendor in the ancient world. His was one of the few tombs found intact, principally, because it was buried close to previously built tombs and was overlooked by grave robbers who ravished Egypt after the decline of its great dynasties. The tone of the finery and the ornamentation and the number of objects taken from his tomb, made his name known to nearly every school child in the United States. He was the last well-known king of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

The Nineteenth Dynasty, 1341-1200 B.C., is sometimes called the Rameses Dynasty, although a number of pharaohs with other names ruled with some success. The Eighteenth Dynasty had lasted for 260 years. The period from the reign of Akhenaton to the end of this dynasty is known as the "Heresy Period" because it was a time of

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repeated disputes over the changing nature of religion. This dynasty got the full attention of the Egyptian people during the reign of the great Rameses II, 1279-1213 B.C.

At the beginning of his reign, Rameses II led a successful campaign against the armies of Syria who were again threatening the borders of Egypt. He led another campaign into Western Asia and forced the Hittites to retreat. Copies of the treaty of peace that was signed on that day still survive and can be found in Egypt at the Temple of Karnak, in Thebes. These campaigns are further recorded in a recent book, **When Egypt Ruled the East**.

Rameses II made the City of Tanis, in the eastern Delta, the capitol so that he could be near the Egyptian possessions in Western Asia. While Rameses and the magnificence of his reign seemed to overshadow the other pharaohs of the Nineteenth Dynasty, he was not the only capable pharaoh. Both Seti I and Seti II were able pharaohs, as were many of the others. But the name Rameses would extend into the Twenty-first and Twenty-second Dynasties by virtue of his numerous children. He had married many wives, the most notable being the Queen Nefertari, whose magnificent tomb is in the Valley of the Queens at Thebes.

The Twentieth Dynasty, 1185-1085 B.C., had many Rameses, III through XI. But it can be said with fairness that Egypt's great genius in state building had reached its peak by the Twentieth Dynasty. Its Pharaohs were holding the great state together, without advancing it as previous pharaohs had done.

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The next four dynasties were not remarkable; in fact, the Twenty-first Dynasty is referred to as, "The Decadent Period," 1085-715 B.C. While Egyptian influence extended into Kush, to the south, it was not very effective.

On the eve of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, Egypt had grown somewhat indifferent to power and the people in the south who had been under Egyptian control began to question Egypt's right to control them. This challenge was led to Kashta, who came to power in 751 B.C, followed by Piankhi, who ruled from 744-712 B.C., and continued by Taharka, who ruled from 686-663 B.C.

Egypt and the nations of the Nile Valley had been the beating heart of Africa and the incubator for its greatness for more than a thousand years. The human traffic from the south renewed the creative energy of Egypt and helped it meet some of the great challenges in history. The weakness and internal strife of the Twenty-fourth Dynasty, 730-715 B.C., caused a number of the priests and commercial rulers of Egypt to move to the south. Egypt was then ruled by contemporary kinglets who had no real power that was widely respected. Under these conditions, Egypt was invaded by the Nubians or Ethiopians.

From the research notebooks of William Leo Hansberry, comes the following quote:

Seven hundred and twenty-three years before the birth of Christ, Piankhy, King of Ethiopia, commanding a large army and a numerous fleet of war-boats, left Napata, his distant capital near the heart of Africa, swept down the Nile to Egypt,

and in a few months made himself the indisputable master of the entire kingdom of the ancient pharaohs. For nearly 100 years after the event, standards symbolizing Ethiopian sovereignty waved triumphantly over the verdant valley of the Nile from the Sixth Cataract on the South, as far northward as the Mediterranean, or ... as the ancients called it, "The Great Green Sea."

At the time when Ethiopia entered upon this her greatest venture in the difficult art of imperialism, Egypt's fortunes, waning for well over 300 hundred years, had ebbed to a very low tide.³⁴

Dr. Hansberry states further:

An objective analysis of the principals and precepts which prompted and guided the Ethiopian occupation of Egypt, as well as an impartial appraisal of the national and international results, would seem to justify the conclusion that this entire undertaking was one of the most blameless and beneficent ventures in imperialism ever attempted in the ancient world. Compared with it in method and spirit, Assyrian and Babylonian warfare and domination were adventures in cruelty and exploitation of the rankest kind, and by the same criteria, the history of Greek imperialism and the story of Pax Romana are tales of gore and greed personified.

Far reaching assertions are these indeed, and they will no doubt provoke serious challenge from many sides but a careful and dispassionate review of the available evidence will reveal that they are as well grounded as any thesis can be which is founded upon recorded events of former times. A comparative study of the annals of the early world seems to indicate, for example, that with one or two possible exceptions, the Ethiopian occupation of Egypt was the instance in recorded ancient history where imperialistic

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endeavor on such a grand scale was not motivated primarily by a desire for plunder and in an insatiable thirst for military renown.³⁵

The Kushite kings restored the declining culture and economy of Egypt and took this nation to unprecedented heights of leadership in the way it cared for its people. Though a colony, Egypt was once more a world power. The Twenty-fifth Dynasty was the last purely African Dynasty to rule Egypt.

The Assyrian invasion of 671 B.C. drove the Kushite forces to the south and began the disorganization and misrule that destroyed the grandeur that was once Egypt. Egypt continued to decline while a young nation on the other side of the Mediterranean, Greece, began to gather its power, around 500 B.C. The aftermath of this invasion and the new European interest in dominating the trade of the Mediterranean world, led to the Punic Wars and the invasion of Africa by the Romans.

The other Dynasties were mixed with Western Asians, Greeks, and subsequently Romans. These invaders did not understand the people and the cultures of Egypt and did more harm than good. We refer to this period in Egyptian history as the Dynasties of the Mixed-Breeds.

The time of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty is referred to as "The Static Period," and for good reason. No progress was made during this period. The Twenty-seventh Dynasty was the period of the first Roman domination, 525-404 B.C. The Twentyeighth Dynasty, 392-378 B.C. lasted for only six years, 404-398 B.C., during which time only one King, Amyrtoeos, reigned over Egypt. The Twenty-ninth Dynasty, 398-378 B.C., originated

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at Menes. The most important of the four kings of this dynasty is Achoris, sometimes referred to as Hagar who repelled a Persian invasion after three years of resistance. At the time of the Thirtieth Dynasty, 378-341 B.C., the Persians still had desires to retake the country. The founder of this Dynasty was Nectanebo I, one of the last of Egypt's great rulers.

The rulers of these last dynasties had lost the art of holding the state together and they were too taken with foreign ideas. This was the condition in Egypt on the eve of the Greek invasion.

THE PTOLEMAIC PERIOD - 332-47 B.C.

In 332 B.C. Alexander the Great of Macedonia, a student of Aristotle, conquered Egypt. This was the first purely European invasion of Africa. As his capital, he constructed Alexandria and installed one of his generals, Ptolemy, as ruler of Egypt. This was the beginning of the Ptolemaic Dynasty which included Cleopatra in the time of Roman Julius Caesar. While Ptolemy himself was European in appearance, the subsequent Ptolemaic pharaohs increasingly reflected the African nature of the Egyptian location and experience. J.A. Rogers states:

The earliest Ptolemaic rulers are in appearance white, but as time went on, the physiognomies changed more and more towards the African one. The African strain in Alexander II is apparent, and still more so in Ptolemy XIII. Cleopatra herself, is known through tradition as having been of a tawny, or mulatto color, and is so described by Shakespeare.³⁶

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The Cleopatra best known to history is Cleopatra VII. She was of mixed African and Greek parentage. If she were alive today, there is no way she could pass for Caucasian. If living today, she would probably be living in one of the Black communities of the United States. Both in the movies and in the plays by Shakespeare, she was portrayed as a distinctly African person, in color, until recent modern times. More nonsense has been written about Cleopatra than about any other African Queen, mainly because it has been the desire of many writers to paint her white. She was not a white woman, she was not fully a Greek. Let us dispose of this matter before explaining the most important aspects of her life. Until the emergence of the doctrine of white superiority, Cleopatra was generally pictured as a distinctly African woman, dark in color. Shakespeare in the opening line of **Anthony and Cleopatra** calls her "tawny." In his day, mulattos were called "tawny Moors." The word "Moor" came into the European languages meaning black of a Blackamoor.

Born in 69 B.C., Cleopatra came to the throne that she shared with her brother, Ptolemy XIII, when she was 18 years old. Egypt, now a Roman protectorate, was beset with internal strife and intrigue. Cleopatra aligned herself with Julius Caesar, who reinforced her power. Their political and sexual relationship was a maneuver to save Egypt from the worst aspects of Roman domination. After Julius Caesar was murdered, Cleopatra, still in her early twenties, met Mark Anthony and a love affair strongly motivated by politics began.

Her effect on Mark Anthony was profound. This noble Roman turned traitor to his own people when he attempted to save the country of this fascinating African queen

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from Roman domination. After Anthony's death, the victor, Octavius, assumed full control of Egypt and Cleopatra, now without a protector or champion, committed suicide.

After Cleopatra's death, Egypt became a Roman colony and the harsher aspects of Roman rule settled over Egypt and the Middle East. To the south, in the lands untouched by Rome, new proud civilizations were rising. And, in the centuries that followed, African women once again began to play major roles in the theatre of history.

Cleopatra died on the eve of the Christian era and it can-be said that the heavy hand of Roman domination caused African and Western Asians to question old gods and turn to new gods and this was the basis that would lead to the formation of a religion. Roman taxation and its repeated burdens on the people and the folk stories about the . coming of a Messiah merged into hopefulness until what a large number of people . were, later, willing to accept as the Messiah appeared.

At first the Romans did not take this new religion seriously and entertained themselves by killing Christians in the arenas of Rome and in the Amphitheaters of North Africa. The martyrdom of these early Christians drew converts to their cause, including some Romans, until in essence, large numbers of Romans stopped killing Christians and became Christians. This religion which was supposed to halt the decline of the Roman Empire came in conflict with the Roman personality and the internal disputes between different groups proclaiming belief in this new religion,

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destroyed some confidence in the Church and in the people's belief in the religion on the eve of the emergence of Islam.

Africans had made an able contribution to this religion before the rise of Islam. There had been three African popes: Victor, Pontificate C. 189-199, Miltiades, Pontificate C. 311 January 10, 314, and Gelasias, Pontificate March 1, 492-November 21, 496.

ISLAMIC EGYPT 642-1798 A.D.

Following the Roman conquest, Egypt was under Roman control for six centuries. Then in 642 A.D. the Muslims under Amr-ibn-al-As conquered Egypt as the Islamic religion swept across Northern Africa and eventually into Southern Europe through Spain and Portugal. The Islamic influence remains strong in Egypt today, although various groups and cultures within that tradition have dominated at different points.

ISLAM IN WEST AFRICA

By the year 711 A.D. the forces of Islam had moved westward into inner West Africa, known as Western Sudan, and had converted a large number of Africans. Some of these Africans joined the army of Islam and were instrumental in the conquest of Spain, that, militarily, was an African conquest. The power of Islam literally pushed the Europeans out of the Mediterranean, ended the last phase of the Roman Empire and literally prevented the Europeans' powers from penetrating the Mediterranean for the next 800 years. This might have, to some extent, been the underlying cause of the Europeans going into what they called, "The Middle Ages."

This lethargy on the part of the Europeans and the fear and hatred of the (infidel) Arabs was not partly broken until the period of the Crusades. While these Crusades, beginning in the Eleventh Century, were far from military successes, the Europeans gained information about the world beyond their shores they would not otherwise have known. They discovered nations that had produced creature comforts that the Europeans of that day had not known, such as: softer fabrics and more comfortable shoes. The Crusaders brought back into Europe some of the human necessities that the Europeans had not enjoyed as well as information about parts of the world that had, literally, moved ahead of them.

The Arabs, Berbers, and the Africans were still dominating the Mediterranean. The Portuguese freed themselves from Moorish dominance in about 1240 A.D., but Spain did not free herself from Moorish rule until about 1450. Five years later, in 1455, Spain and

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Portugal approached the Pope in Rome to settle some of their basic disputes, because these two European nations that had been dominated by the power of Islam now had imperial ideas of their own. Thus, Mediterranean Europe was awakening from its years of "Middle-Age Lethargy."

The ideas and intentions that would ultimately go into the European slave trade had already been set in motion by the Portuguese to be followed by the Spanish.

Inside Africa, itself, a great drama had been unfolding for over 1,000 years. After the decline in power and the decline in the state-building genius of Egypt, the Western Sudan of Africa brought into being great states and empires that lasted for 1,000 years and did not begin to decline until the eve of the slave trade and some existed into this period, in spite of it. The best known of this period were Ghana, Mali, and Songhay.

WEST AFRICA'S GOLDEN AGES

GHANA

The first of the great empires of the Western Sudan to become known to the outside world was Ghana. It began as a small settlement during the second century of the Christian era. It would later develop into a state with a known history more than 1,000 years old. In Europe and in the Arab countries, Ghana was known as a country rich in gold. This was a natural attraction for the Arabs and later the Europeans. The country reached the height of its greatness during the reign of Tenkamenin, one of its greatest kings, who came to power in 1062 A.D. The king lived in a palace of stone and wood which was built to be defended in time of war. The Empire was well organized. The political progress and social well-being of its people could be favorably compared to the best kingdoms and empires that prevailed in Europe at this time. The country had a military force of 200,000 men.

In one of the holy wars, or jihads, Ghana was invaded by the Almoravides under the leadership of Abu Bekr of the Sosso Empire in 1076 A.D. This conquest brought an end to Ghana's age of prosperity and cultural development. The character of the country was slow to change. Nearly 100 years later the Arab writer, Al Idrisi, wrote of it as being "the greatest kingdom of the blacks." In a later account, Al Idrisi said, "Ghana ... is the most commercial of all the black countries. It is visited by merchants from all the surrounding countries and from the extremities of the West."³⁷

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In 1087 Ghana regained its independence, but without regaining its old strength, state organization, and grandeur. The ruins of the Empire of Ghana became the Kingdoms of Diara and Sosso. The provinces of Ghana became a part of the Mali Empire and were later absorbed into the Songhay Empire.

The great drama of state-building, trade, and commerce and power brokerage unfolded in Timbuctoo, the queen city of the Western Sudan. Two hundred miles down the Niger from Timbuctoo the competing city of Gao stood. It was founded about the Seventh Century and was the capital of the large African Empire of Songhay. Like Timbuctoo, it was in a favorable position for the trans-Saharan trade in the days of the regular caravans from North Africa. Also, like Timbuctoo, the greatest days of Gao came in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In the years when Timbuctoo was the great intellectual nucleus of the Songhay Empire, African scholars were enjoying a renaissance that was known and respected throughout most of Africa and in parts of Europe. At this period in African history the University of Sankore was the educational capital of the Western Sudan. In his book, **Timbuctoo the Mysterious**, Felix DuBois gives us the following picture:

The scholars of Timbuctoo yielded in nothing to the saints and their sojourns in the foreign universities of Fez, Tunis, Cairo. They astounded the most learned men of Islam by their erudition. That these Africans were on a level with the Arabian savants is proved by the fact that they were installed as professors in Morocco and Egypt. In contrast to this, we find that the Arabs were not always equal to the requirements of Sankore.³⁸

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MALI

The famous Emperor of Mali, Mansa Mussa, stopped at Timbuctoo on his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324. He went in regal splendor with an entourage of 60,000 persons, including 12,000 servants. Five hundred bondsmen, each of whom carried a staff of pure gold, marched in front of the Emperor. Two hundred eighty camels bore 2,400 pounds of gold which this African monarch distributed as alms and gifts. Mussa returned from Mecca with an architect who designed imposing buildings in Timbuctoo and in other parts of his realm.

To the outside world of the late medieval period, the Emperor Mansa Mussa was more than an individual. He was Africa. He conquered the Songhay Empire and rebuilt the University of Sankore. He figured, by name, on every map. In his lifetime he became the symbol of the mystery and the fabulous wealth of the unknown African continent. He was the most colorful of the African kings of the fourteenth century. He still held his position nearly two centuries after his death.

After the death of Mansa Mussa, the Empire of Mali declined in importance. Its place was taken by Songhay, whose great king was Askia the Great (Mohammed Toure). Askia came to power in 1493, one year after Columbus landed in America. He consolidated the territory conquered by the previous ruler Sonni Ali and built Songhay into the most powerful state in the Western Sudan. His realm, it is said, was larger than all of Europe.

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SONGHAY

The German writer, Henry Barth, in his famous work, **Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa**, calls Askia the Great, "One of the most brilliant and enlightened administrators of all times." He reorganized the army of Songhay, improved the system of banking and credit, and made the city-states of Gao, Walata, Timbuctoo, and Jenne into intellectual centers. "Timbuctoo, during his reign, was a city of more than 100,000 people, a city, filled to the top," says a chronicler of that time, "with gold and dazzling women."

Askia encouraged scholarship and literature. Students from all over the Moslem world came to Timbuctoo to study grammar, law and surgery at the University of Sankore; scholars came from North Africa and Europe to confer with learned historians and writers of this African empire. Many books were written and Sudanese literature developed. Leo Africanus, who wrote one of the best known works on the Western Sudan, says:

In Timbuctoo there are numerous judges, doctors, and clerics, all receiving good salaries from the king. He pays great respect to men of learning. There is a big demand for books in manuscript, imported from Barbary (North Africa). More profit is made from the book trade than from any other line of business.³⁹

Askia has been hailed as one of the wisest monarchs of the Middle Ages. Alexander Chamberlain, in his book, "The Contribution of the Negro to Human Civilization," says of him:

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In personal character, in administrative ability, in devotion to the welfare of his subjects, in open-mindedness towards foreign influences, and in wisdom in the adoption of enlightened ideas and institutions from abroad King Askia was certainly the equal of the average European monarch of the time and superior to many of them.⁴⁰

After the death of Askia the Great in 1528 A.D., the Songhay Empire began to lose its strength and its control over its vast territory. When the Songhay Empire collapsed after the capture of Timbuktoo and Gao by the Moroccans in 1591, the whole of the Western Sudan was devastated by the invading troops. The Sultan of Morocco, El-Mansur, had sent a large army with European firearms across the Sahara to attack the once-powerful empire of Songhay. The army did not reach Timbuktoo until 1591. The prosperous city of Timbuktoo was plundered by the army of freebooters. A state of anarchy prevailed. The University of Sankore, which had stood for over 500 years, was destroyed and the faculty exiled to Morocco. The greatest Sudanese scholar of that day, Ahmed Baba, was among those exiled. Baba was a scholar of great depth and inspiration. He was the author of more than 40 books on such diverse themes as theology, astronomy, ethnography, and biography. His rich library of 1600 books was lost during his expatriation from Timbuktoo.

Timbuktoo provides the most tragic example of the struggles of the West African states and towns as they tried to preserve what was once their Golden Age. The Arabs, Berbers, and Tuaregs from the North showed them no mercy. Timbuktoo had previously been sacked by the Tuaregs as early as 1433 and they had occupied it for thirty years. Between 1591 and 1593, the Tuaregs had already taken advantage of the situation

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to plunder Timbuctoo once more. Between 1723 and 1726, the Tuaregs once more occupied the looted Timbuctoo. Thus, Timbuctoo, once the queen city of the Western Sudan, with more than 200,000 inhabitants and the center of a powerful state, degenerated into a shadow of its former stature.

Now, West Africa entered a sad period of decline. During the Moorish occupation wrack and ruin became the order of the day. When the Europeans arrived in this part of Africa and saw these conditions they assumed that nothing of order and value had existed in these countries. The past Golden Ages are part of the history that the exploiters of Africa want the world to ignore.

The discovery of America and the birth of the youngest of world civilizations had an unforeseen effect upon African people. This young civilization created a need for slavery, the magnitude of which continues to be experienced by Africans to this present day. When the Europeans first came down the West Coast of Africa, they were treated as guests by the unsuspecting Africans whom they would later enslave. When the Africans began to suspect that the intentions of the Europeans were not good, in most cases, it was too late and they did not have the modern weapons of that day to defend themselves.

In his book, **Ghana the Morning After**, K. Budu-Acquah explains the effort of one king of the country that would later be called The Gold Coast (now Ghana), to save his people from the slave trade. His name was Nana Kwamena Ansa. His attempt to discourage the Portuguese from settling in his country was met with force. The following is

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Budu-Acquah's explanation of his efforts:

Our forefathers' antipathy to Imperialism is exemplified by the speech of Nana Ansa, who foresaw clearly that they were going to be called upon to prey on one another, to be left helpless, disorganized, and demoralized. His speech has been quoted by the late Mr. Mensah-Sarbah, Dr. deGraft Johnson and others, and it is worth quoting once more from W.E. Claridge's **History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti** for it shows equally well the development of the Akan language, its poetry which is, "as perfect and musical as any Latin or Roman language," and "if the richness of a language to be an index to the natural eloquence of the Akan people it is a sure indication of a balanced and highly developed mental equipment."⁴¹

In his speech to Diego de Azambua, commander of the Portuguese expedition, King Ansa said:

I am not insensible to the high honour which your great master the Chief of Portugal has this day conferred upon me. His friendship I have always endeavoured to merit by the strictness of my dealings with the Portuguese and by my constant exertions to procure an immediate landing for the vessels. But never until this day did I observe such a difference in the appearance of his subjects; they have hitherto been meanly attired; were easily contented with the commodity they received; and so far from wishing to continue in this country, were never happy until they could complete their landing and return. Now I remark a strange difference. A great number, richly dressed, are anxious to be allowed to build houses, and to continue among us. Men of such eminence, conducted by a commander who from his own account seems to

have descended from the God who made day and night, can never bring themselves to endure the hardships of this climate; nor would they here be able to procure any of the luxuries that abound in their own country. The passions that are common to us all men will therefore inevitably bring on disputes; and it is far preferable that both our nations should continue on the same footing as they hitherto had done, allowing your ships to come and go as usual; the desire of seeing each other occasionally will preserve peace between us. The sea and the land being always neighbours are continually at variance and contending who shall give way; the sea with great violence attempting to subdue the land; and the land with equal obstinacy resolving to oppose the sea.⁴²

The Portuguese were not impressed by the eloquence King Ansa's speech. They forced their way into his country and built the first permanent slave trading settlement in West Africa. The year was 1582. K. Budu-Acquah explains the tragedy in the following statement:

This was the beginning of European colonization, the beginning of the hunting-ground for procuring slave labor, the disruption of our religion, our social systems, the loss of respect for our forefathers; all these things being taken away without anything of value being put in their place.⁴³

It is evident that the European colonization was instrumental in bringing about the decline of the third of Africa's Golden Ages. Therefore, this history of exploitation and the responsibility for the present condition of the societies of the Third Golden Age are understandably attributed to the greed and imperialistic goals of the European nations.⁴⁴

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THE AFRICAN PRESENCE IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Americans who came from Africa were not immigrants in the usual sense. If they were immigrants at all, they were immigrants against their will. Therefore, in looking at the African-Americans and their impact on the English colonies that became the United States, a different vantage point and frame of reference must be used. First, there is a need to locate the Africans on the maps of human geography, history and culture, and then explain how and why the slave trade started.

The Africans are a very old people, and they have played many roles in history, from saints to buffoons. They have been both the makers and destroyers of great nations. The Africans have met the Europeans many times on the crossroads of history. In the closing years of the fourteenth century, Europeans began to recover from the confusion of the Middle Ages, and once again pushed outward.

During the latter half of the fifteenth century, European nationalism was reflected in the expansion of trade in both slaves and manufactured goods. The marriage of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand gave Spain the unity to drive out the Moors. Portugal, likewise, was becoming a powerful Mediterranean and Atlantic nation.

European skill in shipbuilding had improved and, in search of new worlds to conquer and souls to convert, Europeans began to venture beyond their shores. There are many reasons why the Europeans had not embarked upon worldwide

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exploration before this time: their ships were small and unsafe for long sea journeys; while oars were sometimes used to propel these ships, the outcome of all voyages depended largely on the wind; there were few good maps or instruments to guide sailors through unknown waters. Furthermore, at that time most Europeans were ignorant of the shape of the world. Indeed, some of them thought it was flat. The Portuguese sought to disprove this, and, about the middle of the fifteenth century, they began trading with the people along the West coast of Africa, to which they gave the name "Guinea" after the Sudanic Empire of Ghana.

In 1488, Bartholomew Diaz had sailed around the southern tip of Africa. About ten years later, another Portuguese sailor, Vasco da Gama, sailed past the point reached by Diaz. With the help of an Arab pilot, Vasco da Gama reached India in 1498. For Europe, the door to the vast worlds of Asia and Africa was open.

Initially, the Europeans did not come to Africa to find slaves. For years they had heard stories of the great riches of Africa. At the Battle of Ceuta against the Moslems in 1416. Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal heard about the prosperity of Timbuctoo and the wealth of the great states along the West coast of Africa. He also heard stories about a great African Christian King named Prester John.

Before the end of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese sailors had come to know the general shape of the continent of Africa. They traded regularly with African countries

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from 1471 on. Forts were built along the coast of West Africa. The most famous of these forts, still in existence, is Elmina Castle in what is now Ghana. This fort was started in 1482 by a Portuguese captain, Don Diego D'Azambuja. Because of the large profits gained by the Portuguese in their trading in this country, they called it the Gold Coast.

Social and political unrest began to develop among some of the nations of Africa at the time Europe was regaining its strength and a degree of unity. The first Europeans to visit the West coast of Africa did not have to fight their way -- they came as guests and were treated as such. Later they decided to stay as conquerors and slave traders. In order to gain a position strong enough to attain these ambitions, they began to take sides in tribal disputes. They used racist as well as religious arguments to justify their subjugation of the Africans. .

During the latter half of the fifteenth century, Spanish ships began to interfere and challenge the dominant position of the Portuguese in the slave trade. This caused the Portuguese to build a cluster of forts along the West coast of Africa to protect their interests. They landed in Elmina early in the year 1492. The leader of the expedition, Diego D'Azambuja, wasted no time in asking to see the country's reigning king, Nana Kwamena Ansa.

As the Spanish began to seriously compete with the Portuguese in the slave trade, the Pope intervened and attempted to define their respective spheres of influence. Europe's Reformation and the subsequent conversion of England and Holland to

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Protestantism in the sixteenth century also had repercussions in Africa. Protestant kings no longer felt bound to obey the authority of the Pope and his division of the world. Owners of ships in these countries felt free to enter the slave trade in areas that the Pope had assigned to the Portuguese and the Spanish in 1493. Francis I of France voiced his celebrated protest:

The sun shines for me as for others, I should very much like to see the clause in Adam's will that excludes me from a share of the world.⁴⁵

The king of Denmark refused to accept the Pope's ruling as far as the East Indies was concerned. Sir William Cecil, the famous Elizabethan statesman, denied the Pope's right to "give and take kingdoms to whomsoever he pleased." England, France and Holland began to challenge Spain and Portugal. They insisted that they too had a right to colonize in South America and the Caribbean Wands. They also insisted that . they had a right to the slave labor that was needed in order to develop the sugar, tobacco and cotton plantations of the New World.

The fact that a form of domestic slavery existed in West Africa prior to contact with Europeans is often used to excuse the European slave trade. The two systems had few similarities. The tragic and distinguishing feature of the slave trade that was introduced by the Europeans was that it totally (dehumanized the slave and denied his *basic personality*. *This crucial act was supported by a rationale that was created, in part, by the Christian church and later extended by the writers and pseudo-scientific racists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The myth of a people with no history and culture emerged from this period.*

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The slave trade prospered, and Africans continued to be poured into the New World. Figures on the subject vary, but it has been estimated that during the years of the African slave trade, Africa lost millions of her sons and daughters. This was one of the most tragic acts of protracted genocide.

Contrary to popular belief, the first Africans who came to the New World were not in bondage. Africans participated in some of the early expeditions mainly with Spanish explorers. The best known of these African explorers was Estevanico, sometimes known as Little Steven, who accompanied the de Vaca expedition during six years of wandering from Florida to Mexico. The remarkable thing about Estevanico, who came to America in 1527, is that he was an extraordinary linguist. He learned the language of the Indians in a matter of weeks. Because of his knowledge of herbs and medicines, he was accepted as a deity by some Indian tribes. In 1539, Estevanico set out from Mexico. in a party with Fray Marcos de Niza in search of the fabulous Seven Cities of Cibola. When most of the expedition, including Fray Marcos, became ill, .Estevanico went on alone and opened up what is now known as New Mexico and Arizona.

A number of historians have stated that Pedro Alonso Nino, one of the pilots of the command ship of Christopher Columbus, was an African. In the discovery of the Pacific in 1513, Balboa carried thirty Africans who helped to clear the road across the isthmus between the two oceans. In the conquest of Mexico, Cortez was accompanied by a number of Africans. Incidentally, one was a pioneer of wheat farming in the new world. ⁴⁶ in the exploration of Guatemala, Chile, Peru, and Venezuela, Africans

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arrived nearly a hundred years before they reappeared as slaves in Jamestown, Virginia in 1619. Thus, Africans were major contributors to the making of the New World, and they did not come culturally empty-handed. Many of the Africans brought to the New World such skills as ironworking, leatherworking, and carpentry.

Before the breaking up of the social structure of the West African states such as Ghana and Songhay, and the internal strife that made the slave trade possible, many Africans, especially West Africans, lived in a society in which university life was fairly common and scholars were held in reverence. It is quite clear that there existed in Africa prior to the beginning of the slave trade a cultural way of life that in many ways was equal, if not superior, to many of the civilizations then existing in Europe. The slave trade destroyed these cultures and created a dilemma that the African has not been able to extract himself from to this day.

The greatest destroyer of African culture, the greatest exploiter of the African, was the plantation system of the New World. The African was transformed into something called a "Negro." He was demeaned. Myths were created that nearly always read the African out of human history, beginning with the classification of the African as a lesser being. The Church's justification for slavery was that the Africans were being brought under the guidance of Christendom and that they would eventually receive its blessings.

There were several competing slave systems on the personality of the African. We have to look at each separately. In Cuba and Haiti, the Africans were often a majority of the

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population. This is also true of certain portions of Brazil. Therefore, the system operated differently in these areas, and although it was still slavery, the Africans in it had some cultural mobility.

In South America and in the West Indies, the slave maker did not outlaw the African drum, African ornamentations, African religion, or other things dear to the African, remembered from his former way of life. This permitted a form of cultural continuity among the slaves in the West Indies, Cuba and South America that did not exist in the United States.

In the Portuguese areas, in the West Indies, and often in South America, the plantation owner would buy a shipload or half a shipload of slaves. These slaves usually came from the same areas of Africa, and they naturally spoke the same language and had the same basic culture. Families, in the main, were kept together a slave on an island was sold to a plantation owner at the other end of the island, he could still walk to see his relatives. This made for a form of cultural continuity among the slaves in South America, Cuba and Haiti that later made their revolts more successful than revolts in the United States.

In the United States, an attempt was made to destroy every element of culture of the slaves. No other system did so much to deny the slave's personality or to ruthlessly sell family members away from each other. The American slave system operated almost like the American brokerage system. If a person bought twenty slaves at the beginning of the week and found himself short of cash at the end of the week, he might, if the price

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was right, sell ten. These ten might be resold within a few days. The family, the most meaningful entity in African life, was systematically destroyed. In spite of these drastic drawbacks, the Africans in the United States made a meaningful contribution to the preservation of the country in which they were slaves.

Another neglected aspect of the African in the New World is the role of African women. Many families of the New World originated from cohabitation between the white slave master and the African woman. Later, this same slave master, especially in the United States, made and supported laws forbidding his own children to have an education or to sit beside him on public transportation. In Haiti, the African woman sometimes had kind of semi-legal status. In South America, especially in Brazil, sometimes the white slave master married the African woman and she became a free person. This condition did not prevail in the United States.

The mentality, the rationales, and the various ways of justifying the slave trade had already started in Europe with the attempt to justify the enslavement of other Europeans. It is rarely recalled that at first there was a concerted effort to obtain European labor to open up the vast regions of the New World. It is often forgotten that, in what later became the United States, white enslavement started before black enslavement.

African-American historian Lerone Bennett, Jr., gives the following information about this period:

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When someone removes the cataracts of whiteness from our eyes, and when we look with unclouded vision on the bloody shadows of the American past, we recognize for the first time that the African-American, who was so often second in freedom, was also second in slavery.

Indeed, it will be revealed that the African-American was third in slavery. For he inherited his chains, in a manner of speaking, from the pioneer bondmen, who were red and white.⁴⁷

The enslavement of both red and white men in the early American colonies was a contradiction of English law. It contained no provision for slave labor. Yet, forced labor was widely used in England. This system was transferred to the colonies and used to justify a form of slavery that was visited upon red and white men.

It was decreed that the apprentice must serve his master seven years, and take floggings as his master saw fit; the hired servant must carry out his contract for his term of service. Convicts of the state, often including political offenders, were slaves of the state and sometimes sold to private owners overseas. The colonists claimed those rights over some of the white fellow countrymen. A large class of "indentured" servants bought by their masters under legal obligation to serve for a term of years and subject to the same penalties of branding, whipping and mutilation as African slaves. These forms of servitude were supposed to be limited in duration and transmitted no claim to the servant's children. In spite of this servitude, the presumption, in law, was that a white man was born free.

As the English settlers began to enslave their Indian neighbors, they settled their

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conscience with the argument that it was right to make slaves of pagans. In large numbers, the Indians fled or died in captivity, leaving few of their descendants in bondage. The virgin soil of the new English settlements continued to need more labor. This led to a fierce search for white labor that subsequently led to a search for black labor.

By the end of the seventeenth century, Europeans saw in African manpower the means to secure free labor for the building of the Americas. The Africans, upon entering into the slave system of the Americas, became exposed to a diabolical and consistent application of mental and physical torture. As the Africans reflected on their miserable state, and the strange and brutal hell surrounding them, they became creatures of conflicting emotions caught in the throes of nostalgia. Very often the Africans would recklessly gamble their lives away in suicidal attempts to destroy the entire slave system. These attempts only had limited success - but enough to drive fear into the hearts of the slave-owning hierarchy. The prime targets of the Africans during these attacks were the slave masters and their families.

As a consequence of these spasmodic attacks, the slave owners soon realized that they were losing face and money, and sometimes their lives. They decided that a full course of action, spiritual and physical, and psychological, must be implemented if the Africans were to be transformed from proud rebellious men to docile servants. The plans of the slave owners entailed some of the most extreme forms of torture. Despite the atrocities inflicted on the Africans as a means of breaking their spirit, the slave masters soon realized that this alone would be useless as long as the Africans

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retained their proud spirit. The Christian church came up with a design to bring about complete subversion of the Africans to the desired slave code of conduct demanded by the feudal societies of the Americas.

Reverend Kyle Haselden, Editor of the magazine **Christian Century**, made the following statement on the role of the church in the planting of racism in the United States:

The religious community in American society produced and sustained -sometimes on Biblical grounds-the anti-Negro bias which has permeated the American mind from the beginning of the nation until the present day. Out of the nation's religious community come Biblically and doctrinally supported theories of racial inferiority, and from this same source came immoral ethical codes which justified the exploitation of the Negro and demanded that the white man hold himself in sanctifying aloofness from the Negro.

Moreover, the patterns of segregation which divide the common life of the country racially had their beginning in the church before they found their perfection in the secular society. It was not the secular world which infused the church with its contemptuous views of the Negro and imposed a segregated life on the Christian community. These offenses appeared first in the religious community in its narrowest definition.

The white man distorted the Bible into a defense for slavery and taught the Negro the passive virtues of Christianity, partly in the hope of making him tractable and content with his servile life. The white Christian, in developing American culture, confused Christianity with morality, morality with gentility, and gentility with aloofness from the Negro. As early as

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1630, a bare ten years after the arrival of the first Negro slaves, white Christians condemned the crossing of the racial line as an "abuse to the dishonor of God and shame of Christians."⁴⁸

RESISTANCE TO SLAVERY

Blacks did not submit without a fight. As early as 1663, a group of slaves joined white indentured servants to plan a rebellion. Later too, some slaves took the Christian version of the Bible literally and believed that God meant all men to be free. Such a slave was Gabriel Prosser, of Virginia, who felt in 1800 that he was divinely inspired to lead his people out of bondage. Over 40,000 slaves were involved in the revolt before it was betrayed.

While different manifestations of resistance to slavery and colonialism existed throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the best organized resistance came in the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century freedom movements in Africa and the West Indies, and in the United States made the present-day twentieth century movement possible. In fact, the whole of the nineteenth century for us can justifiably be called "The Century of Resistance." Concurrent with the slave revolts in the United States there were anti-colonial revolts in Africa. The new Western capitalist class was demanding more profits from the slave system while the British were actually changing from one form of slavery to another. In the United States there was no such pretending. In his essay, "A Brief History of the Negro in the United States," John Hope Franklin gives us this picture of that period:

By the beginning of the nineteenth century there were unmistakable signs of profound economic and social change taking place in the United States. The commercial activities of the new nation were expanding; and there were those who already were beginning to think in terms of promoting industrial development similar to that which was occurring in England and on the Continent. Beyond the areas of settlement, rich new land was beckoning settlers who could plant staple crops and enjoy the freedom offered by the frontier. In 1803, the United States purchased the vast Louisiana Territory, and although it would be many years before the entire area would be settled, Americans and European immigrants were rapidly moving beyond the mountains. The greater portion of the people who moved from the Atlantic seaboard were committed to the institution of slavery, and if they had any slaves they took them along. Not even the War of 1812, in which several thousand blacks fought, halted the march of Americans and slavery into the New West.⁴⁹

There were two distinct freedom movements among African-Americans during the first part of the nineteenth century. One represented by continuous slave revolts and the other by "free" black men and women who were engaged in a concerted effort to free their enslaved brothers and sisters. The movement, led by "free" black petitioners for freedom, was started during the latter part of the eighteenth century by men like Prince Hall. He was ably abetted by others in the nineteenth century.

When Hall arrived in Boston that city was the center of the American slave trade. Most of the major leaders of the revolutionary movement of that day were, in fact, slaveholders or investors in slave-supported businesses. Hall, like many other Americans, wondered "What did these men mean by freedom?" The condition of the "free" black man, as

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Prince Hall found them, was not an enviable one. They were free in name only. Discriminatory practices severely circumscribed their freedom of movement.

In 1765, he saw little change in the condition of the blacks, and though free men at least in theory, he saw them debased as though they were still in bondage.

In 1788, he petitioned the Massachusetts Legislature, protesting the kidnapping of "free" Africans. This was a time when American patriots were engaged in a constitutional struggle for freedom. They had proclaimed the inherent rights of all mankind to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Hall dared to remind them that the Africans in the United States were human beings and as such were entitled to freedom and respect for their human personality.

Many other Africans aided the cause of Abolition. Frederick Douglass was the noblest of all. This great abolitionist's civil rights views are as valid today as they were a century ago. Samuel E. Cornish and John B. Russwurm started a newspaper in order to tell the African-American's story from his point of view. Russwurm, talented editor and politician, is generally credited with being the first African-American graduate of an American college (Bowdoin, 1826). Henry Highland Garnet, a fiery Presbyterian minister, was a leader of the militant abolitionist wing. Sojourner Truth, the first African-American woman to become an anti-slavery lecturer, was also a strong leader in the feminist movements of the nineteenth century. Harriet Tubman was a pioneer rebel and slave activist who later served as a nurse, scout and spy in the Civil War. John Brown, called "God's Angry Man," was the first white martyr to die for black freedom. Among other white men

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who helped to create the first freedom movement, Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison were outstanding.

In 1857 the famous Dred Scott Decision theoretically opened all territories to slavery. But before any considerable number of slaves could be taken to them, the Civil War began and Congress, in 1862, prohibited slavery in the territories. After four years of conflict, Northern victory in the Civil War resulted in the emancipation of the slaves. The slaves had played an important part in the achievement of their freedom. Some 186,000 African-American troops took part in one hundred and ninety-eight battles and skirmishes and suffered 6,000 casualties. The total number of African Americans including servants, laborers, and spies, amounted to more than 300,000. President Lincoln acknowledged that the war could not have been won without the help of African troops.

In the opening chapter of his book, **Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880**, Dr. W.E.B. DuBois has stated "Easily the most dramatic episode in American history was the sudden move to free four million black slaves in an effort to stop a great Civil War and forty years of bitter controversy, and to appease the moral sense of civilization."⁵⁰ The appeasement, if it was an appeasement at all, was short-lived. For eleven years following the end of the Civil War, African-Americans participated in the political life of the nation on both state and national levels. For the first time in the nation's existence it seemed as if its democratic promise was going to be kept. By 1875, the tide turned against the African in the South and in the rest of the country. The Republican Party bargained away the political rights of African-Americans in order to

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pacify the brooding white South. Some African politicians held on for a few more years but their heyday in American politics was over.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST RACISM

The period in African-American history from 1877 to 1901 is called the Nadir - the lowest point - the time of the great depression. This is the period when Africans lost the right to participate in the government of this country. It was during this period that lynching became the order of the day. Most of the Jim Crow laws also came into being during these years.

By the early part of the twentieth century, the African-American people had produced an intellectual class that was in revolt against the second-class citizenship that had been fastened upon their people. This revolt, led by the great scholar W.E.B. DuBois, did not stop the solidification of disenfranchisement and segregation in the South. Southern politicians and Northern philanthropists had already anointed Booker T. Washington, of Tuskegee Institute, and declared that he was the leader of the African people. The people themselves were never consulted in this matter. The African-American journalist, Loren Miller, in a speech, "The Call for Leadership," delivered in 1962 at Stanford University in California, makes the following appraisal of Dr. DuBois for this period:

When W.E.B. DuBois won the battle for the minds of Negroes in his historic conflict with Booker T. Washington, his victory signalized the triumph of his concept of the talented tenth as the leaders of, and the

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spokesmen for American Negroes. We believed that members of this talented tenth, educators, ministers, lawyers, editors, doctors and dentists, political leaders, would, in the very process of securing an education to fit them for their professions, furnish pragmatic proof of the invalidity of the then current doctrine of racial inferiority. He was confident that this educated and select minority would lead the masses in a sustained and purposeful assault on the restrictions that doomed the Negro to poverty and degradation; it was an essential aspect of the DuBois credo that the talented tenth would accept its role as servants of the other ninety percent, just as he believed he had done . . . DuBois and his contemporaries fashioned the NAACP as the chosen instrument of the elite to whom he believed the masses should look for guidance and salvation.⁵¹

The concept of the Talented Tenth failed because the African elite did not assume the responsibility expected of them. They were too busy imitating the white middle class and retreating from their own people. DuBois, without their assistance, embarked upon a more radical course of action. During the early part of this century, he became the intellectual father of this people. After the death of Booker T. Washington in 1915, his leadership was unchallenged until the emergence of Marcus Garvey in the early twenties. Dr. DuBois, more than any other person, sowed the seeds of what is now called "The Black Revolution." Near the end of the nineteenth century this intellectual giant took up the fight and ably carried it to the middle of the twentieth century. He is the father of the present struggle against racism and for African redemption. Men like Marcus Garvey, though they differed with DuBois, would draw in part from his intellectual conclusions.

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There is now an international struggle on the part of people of African descent against racism and for a more honest look at their history. On university campuses and in international conferences they are demanding that their history be looked at from an African perspective or from an Afro-centric point of view. This has taken the struggle against racism to the world's campuses, where the theoretical basis of racism started. This has helped to create new battlelines and a lot of fear and frustration on the part of white scholars. They still do not recognize that removing this racism is the healthiest thing that present-day African scholars can contribute to the world; that in the cry for power and a knowledge of their history, African people are saying a very powerful, complex, yet simple thing, "I am a man." The struggle against racism all along has been a struggle to regain the essential manhood lost after the European expansion into the broader world and the attempt to justify the slave trade.

THE EDUCATION OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS

The struggle within the African educational institutions had centered, in most cases, on how to remove the stigma of slavery and make African-Americans, the immigrants against their will, think better of themselves and prepare to demand full-citizenship status. African-Americans came into the twentieth century with some of the unresolved educational problems of the nineteenth century. Carter G. Woodson called attention to this in two near classic, though still neglected books, **The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861**, and **The Miseducation of the Negro**. Dr. Woodson tells us:

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It required little argument to convince intelligent masters that slaves, who had some conception of modern civilization and understood the language of their owners, would be more valuable than rude men with whom one could not communicate. The questions, however, as to exactly what kind of training these Negroes should have and how far it should go, were to the white race then as much a matter of perplexity as they are now.⁵²

Often the motive of the slave owners who agreed on some education for their slaves, was to make them more productive workers on the plantation. From the beginning, the African-Americans were educated to serve others, and not themselves. In **The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861**, Woodson outlines the beginning of African education in this country.

The history of the education of the antebellum Negroes, therefore, falls into two periods. The first extends from the time of the introduction of slavery to the climax of the insurrectionary movement about 1835, when the majority of the people in this country answered in the affirmative the question whether or not it was prudent to educate slaves. Then followed the second period, when industrial revolution changed slavery from a patriarchal, to an economic institution, and when intelligent Negroes, encouraged by abolitionists, made so many attempts to organize insurrections that the pendulum began to swing the other way. By this time most Southern white people reached the conclusion that it was impossible to cultivate the mind of Negroes without arousing over much self-assertion.

The early advocates of the education of Negroes were of three classes; first, masters who desired to increase the economic efficiency of their labor supply; second, sympathetic persons who wished to help the oppressed; and third,

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zealous missionaries who, believing that the message of divine love came equally to all, taught slaves the English language that they might learn the principles of the Christian religion. Through the kindness of the first class, slaves had their best chance for mental improvement. Each slaveholder dealt with the situation to suit himself, regardless of public opinion. Later when measures were passed to prohibit the education of slaves, some masters, always a law unto themselves, continued to teach their Negroes in defiance of the hostile legislation. Sympathetic persons were not usually reformers, who not only did not own slaves, but dwelt in practically free settlements far from the plantation on which the bondsmen lived.⁵³

The Spanish and French missionaries had different approaches to the education of the slaves. Some of them were anxious to see the Africans enlightened and brought into the church. This was a change from their previous position when they had originally advocated the enslavement of the African rather than the Indians. The position of these Catholic missionaries forced the English into a more positive stance in matters relating to the education of Africans. Dr. Woodson tells us that, "The English were put to shame by the noble example of the Catholics. They had to find a way to overcome the objections of these who, granting that the enlightenment of the slaves might not lead them to servile insurrection, nevertheless feared that their conversion might work manumission." This situation forced the English to deal with a contradiction within the Christian Church that still exists. Can a Christian hold another Christian as a slave and still be a Christian? In order to deal with the urgency of this matter the colonists secured, through legislation by their assemblies and formal declaration of the Bishop of London, the abrogation of the law that a Christian could not be held as a slave. After the approval of the Church of

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England, the missionaries sent out by the Society for the propagation of the Gospel among "Heathen" in the Foreign Parts, undertook to educate the slaves for the purpose of extensive proselytizing.

Reaction to this plan was not slow in coming. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, especially in the South, reactionaries forced public opinion to gradually prohibit the education of the Africans, except in some urban communities where progressive Africans were able to provide their own schools. The massive slave revolts that came during this period, convinced a large number of whites, some of them former allies of the Africans, that the educating of Africans was a dangerous thing. This opinion continued until the Civil War when Africans began to build new institutions, mainly schools. Most of these new schools soon began to fall into old traps. They were imitations of white schools whose teachings were offensive to African people. Now the education of African Americans began to move on several levels. Education in churches, community centers, and in homes began to supplement the education in the schools. In these independent institutions, lay historians began the formal search for the African heritage

In what can still be referred to as "The Booker T. Washington Era, 1895 – 1915," new men and movements were emerging. The Niagara Movement, under the leadership of W.E.B. DuBois and Monroe Trotter, was born in 1905. Some of the ideas of the Niagara Movement went into the making of the NAACP in 1909.

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During the years leading to the eve of the First World War, and those that immediately followed, the flight from the South continued. Over a half million Africans migrated Northward in search of better-paying wartime jobs, better schools for their children, and better housing. For a short while, they entertained the illusion that they had been improved and that they escaped from the oppression of the South. The illusion was short-lived. Race riots in wartime St. Louis and in post-war Chicago wakened the new urban settlers to reality. In Washington, D.C., President Woodrow Wilson and the Southern Democrats who had come to power with him, had introduced segregation in federal facilities that had long been integrated. Booker T. Washington died in 1915. An investigation into his last years revealed that he had privately battled against disenfranchisement and had secretly financed lawsuits against segregation, but publicly maintained his submissive stance. With Washington gone, and the influence of the "Tuskegee Machine" in decline, a new class of African radicals came forward. For a few years DuBois was at the center of the school of leadership. As the founder-editor of the NAACP's **Crisis** magazine, urged in 1918: "Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close ranks shoulder to shoulder with our fellow citizens ...". The continued discrimination against African-Americans, both soldiers and civilians, soon made W.E.B. DuBois regret having made this statement. The end of the war brought no improvement to the lives of African Americans. The then prevailing condition made a large number of them ripe for the militant program of Marcus Garvey. This was the beginning of the heroic and troubled years of the African urban ghetto.

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African people, in America and the rest of the world, now stand at the crossroads of history, seeking new definition of themselves and new directions. In the book, **Tom-Tom**, the writer John.W. Vandercook has said, "A. race is like a man, and until it uses its own talents, takes pride in its history, and loves its memories, it can never fulfill itself completely." ⁵⁴ Today African-Americans are beginning to use their talents more creatively in their struggle for total liberation and nationhood. This is why they are taking pride in their own history and loving their own memories. They are searching for a way to better relate to Africans in Africa and in other parts of the world. There are clear indications that they will move beyond Pan-Africanism and help to build a world union of African people, This will not make the African-American relate less to America, but more, and in a different way.

Now that we are becoming more aware of our history and how to use it as an instrument for our liberation, we know that we are the only immigrant group who were invited here. Those who invited us waited anxiously for our arrival, They sent large ships to bring us here, manned by well-armed thugs. We faced no unemployment problems, there were plenty of jobs waiting for us. The jobs that we did helped to make America.⁵⁵

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