

Willis Nathaniel Huggins (1886-1941): historian, activist, and community mentor.

Author: Crowder, Ralph L.
Article Type: Biography
Geographic Code: 1USA
Date: Jul 1, 2006
Words: 10464
Publication: Afro-Americans in New York Life and History
ISSN: 0364-2437

INTRODUCTION

On Tuesday, July 15, 1941, New York City detectives supervised the recovery of a male body from the Hudson River near 72nd Street. After contacting the Missing Persons Bureau, it was determined that this unfortunate person was Dr. Willis Nathaniel Huggins. His sister, Mrs. Roberta Goldsby and his wife, Rosetta, identified the body at the city morgue on Wednesday morning. Huggins had been missing since December 23rd and last seen by friends and relatives at his home located at 1890 Seventh Avenue. He was reported to have \$500 in his wallet at this time. This was not unusual, since Huggins owned the Blyden Bookstore and had been associated with several independent Black publications. The only clues to his whereabouts was an overcoat that had been found on the George Washington Bridge and a letter that Huggins sent to his wife stating that "Something is going to happen." At the time of his disappearance, Huggins was teaching history and economics at Bushwick High School in Brooklyn and serving as Assistant Principal at Harlem's Union High School in the evening. (1)

The Harlem community was both shocked and saddened to hear confirmation of Huggins's death. In the past six and half months, his disappearance had been a hotly debated mystery. The press, his family, and his lawyer all publicly declared that Huggins had committed suicide. His students at the Blyden Society and the street community believed that Huggins had met with foul play from a gangster element due to unpaid business loans. The competing versions of his death have not been reconciled nor does firm documentation exist to disprove either version. Huggins had been associated with the Garvey movement since 1919 and recognized as a dedicated and talented "Race Man" by Harlem's leadership for more than two decades. In addition, he was the former president of the New York branch of the Association for the Study for New York Life and History; the executive secretary for the Friends of Ethiopia In America (FEA); a tireless advocate for including African and African American history in public school curriculums; and an articulate voice for the Black history movement. In addition, he had a network of national and international friends and contacts that included: J. A. Rogers, Carter G. Woodson, W.E.B. Du Bois, Arthur A. Schomburg, Charles S. Johnson, Claude McKay; Jesse E. Moorland, Amy Jacques Garvey, Dantes Bellegarde (the Haitian Ambassador to the United States), President Stenio Vincent of Haiti; Ras Desta Damtew of Ethiopia, and scores of former students in West Africa, Ethiopia, and London. On the community level,

his leadership of the Blyden Society facilitated the education of such noted self-trained historians as John Henrik Clarke and John G. Jackson. These accomplishments and his mentorship of a generation of young self-trained Black historians have sadly been neglected and forgotten by contemporary scholars of the African American experience. This paper will rescue and briefly discuss the life and contributions of this Black activist intellectual from his family roots in Alabama to his mysterious death in the early 1940s. (2)

THE EARLY YEARS

Willis Nathaniel Huggins was born February 7, 1886, in Selma, Alabama. His father, Reverend A. Z. Huggins, was a respected Baptist minister. As a youth, Huggins received his first education at the Selma Training School. The Huggins family then joined the wave of Black migrants to the North and moved to Washington, D.C. Huggins, an excellent student, attended Armstrong High School for colored youth. During his senior year he won a scholarship to Columbia University. His outstanding academic record and probably one of the Black faculty members who graduated from Columbia facilitated this connection. The M Street School, later renamed Dunbar High School and Armstrong's sister institution, had a great track record of placing its top students in Ivy League and other prominent private white schools. Under the leadership of Anna J. Cooper this tradition flourished. In 1906, Cooper was forced out as principle of M Street High after supporting an educational curriculum that favored Du Bois' ideas of liberal arts education over Booker T. Washington's industrial education during the 1904-1905 academic year. Huggins must have benefited from this tradition when he landed a spot in the Columbia freshmen class of 1910. (3)

Huggins earned his B.A. from Columbia in 1914. After graduation he became Chairman of the Department of History, Alabama A & M College, Huntsville, Alabama. While teaching history in Alabama, he developed a reputation as a community activist. Huggins led local protests against the showing of D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, organized the Alabama chapter of the National Urban League, and supported educational activities for Black youth. Through the assistance of Channing H. Tobias, assistant to the National Director of the Colored YMCA, and wealthy white contributors, Huggins helped establish a Black YMCA just four miles from the A & M campus. The relationship with Tobias eventually led to a friendship with John G. Jackson, the nephew of Tobias. In a few short years, Huggins and Jackson would become close friends and fellow advocates for the Black history movement. (4)

LIFE IN THE WINDY CITY

In 1917, Huggins moved to Chicago, Illinois. He began teaching at Wendell Phillips High School and stayed at this post until 1922. During his summer breaks, he returned to Columbia to work toward a Masters degree. Huggins completed this degree in 1919. He also attended classes at Northwestern's Modill School of Journalism while teaching in Chicago. During his Chicago years, he contributed articles to *New York Age*, the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, the *Baltimore Afro-American* and the *Pittsburgh Courier*. Although Huggins's name is not mentioned in the John E. Bruce Papers, he must have made contact with Bruce, a nationally respected Black journalist who voiced similar race sentiments in his columns and independent publications. It is not unrealistic to conclude that this prospective contact put Huggins in touch with Arthur Schomburg. Schomburg and Bruce were close associates who were always on the look out for talented young Black

thinkers who could join their campaign for the popularization of African American history and after 1918, the Garvey movement. (5)

As the spirit of the New Negro Movement sweep across African America, the Black community's sentiments for self-defense and retaliatory violence were particularly alive in Chicago. These forces exploded in Chicago's race riot of 1919. Huggins sought to contribute to this passion for racial renewal and self-definition by publishing and editing the *Searchlight* and the *Upreach Magazine*. Both publications were started in Chicago and concentrated on providing information for teachers and social workers who were attempting to teach African and African American history in schools and independent study groups. Huggins relocated to New York City in 1922 and was assisted in his efforts to keep the *Upreach* alive by Arthur Schomburg, Charles S. Johnson and John H. Pernel. (6)

THE HARLEM STRUGGLE: CONFRONTING THE SCHOOL BOARD & THE ITALIAN-ETHIOPIA WAR

In 1924 Huggins was selected for a teaching position in the New York City public school system. Black educators in the city system were quite rare, according to the *New York Times*, since Huggins was only the sixth African American to be hired by the Board of Education. Almost immediately, he sought to have African and African American history included in the curriculum of the public school system and struggled with the Board of Education to approve this initiative. Schomburg and Joel A. Rogers supported his efforts but the board rejected their proposals. They then held community history classes at the Harlem YMCA located on 135th Street and occasionally in their private homes. In 1925, Huggins studied geography, history, and French in Europe. He received certificates from the *Guilde Internationale* and Oxford University for his efforts. In addition, Huggins traveled throughout Europe and recorded his observations on European race relations. (7)

In 1932, Huggins became the first Black student to earn a Ph.D. from Fordham University. He had attended Fordham from 1925 to 1932 and his dissertation was entitled "The Contribution of the Catholic Church to the Progress of the Negro in the United States." For the next eight years, Huggins dedicated himself to the defense of Ethiopia, The Blyden Society, and his efforts to promote the serious study of African history. (8)

On the evening of March 7, 1935, the Provisional Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia (PCDE) held its first public meeting at Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church. This organization was a "united front" of Garveyites, communists, journalists, streetcorner orators, liberal Black organizations, socialists, clergymen and Africana scholars who were seeking to mobilize community outrage into a disciplined force to support Ethiopia and challenge American neutrality to the Italo-Ethiopian war. Huggins was one of six speakers that thrilled a crowd of approximately 3,000 who filled Harlem's largest Black church in spite of foul and inclement weather. Four months later, the PCDE in cooperation with the American League Against War and Fascism, sent Huggins to Geneva, Switzerland "with a petition from the concerned black and white masses in the United States." His task was to "urge the League (of Nations) to adopt strong measures to restrain Italian aggression, to assure Ethiopia of its support, and to send a neutral commission to East Africa to report on the boundary disputes between Italian and the Ethiopian governments." Prior to leaving, Huggins, Schomburg, and some of his closer Black colleagues formed the FEA and Huggins was designated the executive secretary. Apparently this was an effort to further legitimize Huggins's leadership credentials and deepen the organizational base

representing African American and particularly Harlem's Black community. (9)

Huggins was a perfect choice for this international assignment. He had recently completed his doctorate at Fordham University, he had often lectured on Ethiopian history at the Harlem YMCA, and his bookstore was a storehouse of Africana information. He was known for promoting African Studies in the public school system, and he had publicly challenged the school board's failure to institute courses on African civilizations. As a Garveyite, his ties to Ethiopia were solidified during the glory days of the UNIA influence upon the Harlem community. Huggins had coordinated a Harlem visit of Ethiopian diplomats while the delegation was in the United States on official business and, in 1932, he had developed a friendship with Ras Desta Damtew, the governor of Sidamo Province and son-in-law to Emperor Haile Selassie. In addition, from the PCDE's inception in February 1935, Huggins had been praised for his dedication, hard work, and his ability to coordinate Black and interracial organizations concerned about Italian aggression toward Ethiopia. (10)

In route to Switzerland, Huggins conferred with Ethiopian officials and European supporters in London and Paris. In Paris, Huggins met with Minister Teclé Hawariate, and in London, he met with William H. Moody, a Jamaican national and director of the League of Colored Peoples of the World, Wargneh Martin, the Ethiopian minister to Great Britain, and Quaker leaders who were considered influential with the British parliament. Huggins was able to meet with the Ethiopian minister to Britain through exploiting his contacts with C.L.R. James, the Trinidadian activist and founder of the London-based International African Friends of Abyssinia, Amy Jacques Garvey, and Lapido Solanke, leader of the West African Students Union. After meeting with Minister Martin on August 7, 1935, Huggins received the Ethiopian's government authorization to solicit "medical supplies, nurses, doctors, veterinarians, and other trained civilian personnel." Martin also encouraged Huggins to campaign for a "public loan arranged through ... a reputable banking house." All African Americans who decided upon relocation would be "expected to join the government's effort to build the Ethiopia of the future." Martin concluded a public interview by stating "Dr. Huggins has my full approval to proceed in the organization of such activities in connection with committees which may be arranged." (11)

On August 15, 1935, after conferring with Ethiopian representatives in London and Paris, Huggins spoke before a committee of the secretariat of the League of Nations. His presentation called for the League to intercede and restrain Italian aggression and prevent any invasion of Ethiopia. Huggins began his plea to this international body by declaring, "Africans and persons of African descent throughout the world, have always looked with pride at the Empire of Ethiopia, which alone of all ancient empires of black men in Africa, still maintains its independence." The concentration of Italian "men and munitions on the Ethiopian frontier" according to Huggins, "is viewed with righteous indignation by the blacks of the western world that are bound by racial kinship to the ancient and illustrious Ethiopian people." He further argued that an invasion and defeat of Ethiopia would threaten world peace, encourage the spread of fascism, make a mockery of Christian principles, and "increase the guilt of modern Christian nations" who had participated in the historical rape of Africa and the enslavement of "millions of her children." Huggins called for the League to "act decisively and resolve the Italo-Ethiopian dispute peacefully." His presentation was concise; it linked the destiny of Ethiopia with the African Diaspora and clearly identified Italy's aggression as a critical challenge to the League's goals of maintaining world peace and justice. (12)

When Huggins returned to Harlem in late August 1935, he launched a campaign to organize African American communities throughout the country. The national office of the all Black FEA was established on Harlem's Seventh Avenue and by December, the organization reported 106 local chapters in nineteen cities. In addition, the FEA had affiliated itself with a collection of national and international organizations that included: the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History; the Ethiopia Research Council; the American Pro-Falasha Committee; the Universal Ethiopian Students' Association; the International African Friends of Ethiopia (London); La Revue de Monde Noir (Paris); the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Geneva); and Jeunes Ethiopiennes (Addis Ababa). During the first months of Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, Harlem's activist community acknowledged the FEA as the most important of the "black Ethiopian aid societies." In addition, through his presentation to the League of Nations, his efforts to organize African American support of Ethiopian resistance, and by winning the endorsement of Ethiopian ministers, Huggins had ushered Black America into an unprecedented era of international influence and diplomacy. (13)

In November 1935, George Schuyler, the conservative Black journalist, praised Huggins and the FEA. "Dr. Huggins is a cultured, accomplished, brilliant and honest Negro," according to Schuyler, "who for very long has seen clearly the fundamental issues at the bottom of world wide imperialism from the view point of the Negro." As Huggins was praised in Black newspapers, celebrated on the lecture circuit, and daily noticed by Harlem's working class, he gradually opposed communist involvement in the Ethiopian aid campaign. He had previously established a working relationship with the communists during his association with the PCDE. As his commitment to "united front" politics declined, old tensions that characterized the clash between Garveyites and the New York Marxist community led to communist efforts to discredit Huggins. He had solid nationalist credentials stretching back to early years of the Garvey movement and he enjoyed the support of moderate Black organizations such as the NAACP and the National Urban League; however, Huggins was vulnerable on the use and allocation of the funds collected by the FEA. (14)

"The extent of fund raising by the FEA," according to the Pan-African scholar Joseph E. Harris, "is undocumented. Minutes and reports for the organization are unavailable, and public reports on money collected or supplies sent to Ethiopia are few." Huggins may have funneled FEA funds through the Ethiopian consul-general, the American Red Cross, or several of the other organizations affiliated with the FEA including the International Friends of Abyssinia, the Save the Children Fund, the American Pro-Falasha Committee, and the Ethiopian Research Council. By the spring of 1936, the United Aid to Ethiopia, a collection of Harlem's Ethiopian support organizations, and the work of Robert F. S. Harris, secretary of the biracial Committee for Ethiopia, overshadowed the activities and notoriety of the FEA. Willis Huggins was a flamboyant and controversial figure in the efforts to rally and organize African American support for Ethiopia's defense, however, his shortcomings on the fund raising issue do not undermine the critical role that he and the FEA played in the history of African American's attempt to focus international and national attention upon the plight of the Abyssinian struggle to confront Italian aggression. (15)

THE BLYDEN SOCIETY: HUGGINS AS A MENTOR TO JOHN G. JACKSON & JOHN HENRIK CLARKE

One of the most overlooked and under appreciated aspects of Huggins's life was his role as leader and mentor of the Blyden Society and the Harlem History Club. With few surviving primary sources, scholars are largely dependent upon oral interviews and piecing together small historical leads to understand the significance of these Harlem institutions. When Huggins began to teach African and African American history courses at the Harlem YMCA this gathering was first called the Harlem History Club. Huggins had an established community reputation as an Africana scholar; he was a vocal advocate for incorporating African and African American history in the New York City Public School curriculum; his bookstore had been a gathering venue for Black history enthusiasts and self-trained Black historians; Harlem's legion of street orators also frequented the Blyden Bookstore to read, purchase or simply discuss an assortment of classic and new publications; and Huggins had an impressive following of young Black thinkers who knew him as a teacher and administrator in the night school program at Harlem's Union High School. All of these factors made the Harlem History Club an immediate success and the perfect intellectual resource for Black working-class youth and older community activists who could not afford a formal college education or attend day-time high school programs because they conflicted with their job obligations.

Harlem also had a tradition of supporting independent literary clubs, booklovers gatherings, and public forums that encouraged debate and discussion of political, economic, and social issues that captured the community's attention. Huggins continued this legacy by contacting and encouraging his many colleagues and associates to lecture and participate in the weekly activities of the Harlem History Club. In addition, his roots in Garvey's UNIA, the experience of publishing and editing Black periodicals in Chicago and New York City, and the rich international contacts cultivated through his association with Ethiopian defense efforts during the Italo-Ethiopian war provided an impressive list of potential Black history supporters to stimulate the minds of his community students.

Two long-term friends and self-trained Black historians who worked closely with the Harlem History Club and supported Huggins's efforts to popularize African American and African History were Arthur Schomburg and Joel Augustus Rogers. Prior to moving to Harlem, Huggins had been friends and associates with both of these men since his publication of independent Black journals in Chicago. All three men were important collaborators in the international and domestic efforts to galvanize a united front for the material and political support of Ethiopia during the 1930s. They also lectured on Pan-African and African topics at the 135th Street Library, Book Lover's Clubs, the Harlem YMCA, and at local UNIA forums during the glory days of the Garvey movement in the 1920s. Both Rogers and Schomburg admired the persistence that Huggins demonstrated in his failed attempt to persuade the New York City Public School board to add Black history courses to city's high school curriculum. Huggins represented a solid contact for Rogers and Schomburg within the university-trained Black academic community that respected the contributions and intellectual achievements of self-trained Black scholars. In addition, these two self-trained scholars believed that Huggins lacked the pretentiousness and erudite behavior that lay intellectuals often associated with their university-trained colleagues. (16)

As the Harlem History Club grew, Huggins changed the organization's name to the Blyden Society. This name honored the great Pan-African scholar activist Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912). Although Blyden had been dead for more than a generation, his well articulated views on religion, education, and Pan-Africanism were still fresh in the minds of

Black scholars throughout America, the Caribbean, and Africa. Blyden's two most important publications, *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race* (1987) and *African Life and Customs* (1908), were among the assigned readings. This decision also aligned his research collective with the Blyden Bookstore, a community enterprise owned and operated by Huggins. He identified outstanding students and began to hold smaller sessions on African history, historical research techniques, and the craft of writing history at his home. The only known address of the Blyden Society was 1890 Seventh Avenue; this was also Huggins's home address. In addition, meetings of this research group met at the Blyden Bookstore, located at 2296 Seventh Avenue.

The Blyden Bookstore and Huggins's home were also situated near the locations of Harlem's celebrated street orators and the former and current offices of Harlem's radical publications. In the 1930s, contingents of street speakers were concentrated on Lenox and Seventh Avenues. According to one observer, "The speakers on Lenox Avenue were considered to be junior to or 'undergraduate' speakers" while "the speakers on Seventh Avenue were the senior ... speakers--the elite." These men stood on street corners expounding on relevant topics that related to working-class residents. They created an outdoor venue that allowed knowledgeable and articulate orators to criticize Harlem's middle-class leadership. Regardless of their topics, street orators demonstrated an excellent command of history and especially used African American history to underpin and legitimize all of their arguments. Young and aspiring working class students who studied under Huggins were certainly impressed with the vocal and powerful presentations of such fabled Harlem street orators as Arthur Reed, Ira Kemp, Ras DeKiller, Sufi Abdul Hamid, Carlos Cooks, and Richard B. Moore.

Sprinkled through this outdoor theater of street orators were the current and former offices of the *Negro World*, the *Messenger*, the *Challenger*, and the *Crusader* newspapers. These weekly publications and their editors were keenly aware of the Blyden Bookstore, and the work of Willis Huggins as a master teacher, an independent journalist and publisher, and a mentor to aspiring self-trained historians. Students affiliated with the Blyden Society were motivated and inspired by a community environment that encouraged creative thinking, political activism, oratorical skills, and the importance of mastering history as a serious tool for the interpretation and analysis of social problems. (17)

John Henrik Clarke (1915-1998) and John G. Jackson (1907-1993) are excellent examples of the type of students who were recruited by Huggins and studied under his direction during the life of the Blyden Society. Both of these men were young and aspiring southern migrants who relocated to Harlem in the 1920s and the 1930s. Jackson was born in Aiken, South Carolina on April 1, 1907 and dropped out of Schofield School in Aiken after finishing the seventh grade. He completed one year of high school in Augusta, Georgia and then joined the wave of southern migrants moving to New York City at the age of fifteen. He arrived in Harlem during the same year that Huggins established the Blyden Bookstore. Similar to many other young Black men without the support of family and lacking a formal education, Jackson worked his way through New York's Stuyvesant High School. Even with the pressure of working part-time and low paying jobs, Jackson excelled academically at Stuyvesant High School by winning a scholarship certificate for proficiency in English Composition during his senior year in 1925. After finishing high school Jackson periodically registered for Creative Writing courses at City College and published articles in the *Truth Seeker Magazine* and the *Negro World*. (18)

Jackson arrived in New York City at the height of the Garvey movement and the excitement of the Harlem Renaissance. It is not clear when Jackson and Huggins first met but there are some historical clues that provide an early connection between the scholar and his future student. During the years between 1925 through 1930, Jackson lectured at the Ingersoll Forum and the Harlem Unitarian Church, two of the many community venues that provided public forums for self-trained Black historians. Huggins certainly knew of these locations and possibly made his first connection with Jackson during one of his presentations on Egypt's contribution to world religion. It is also possible that Jackson's maternal uncle, Channing Tobias, arranged a meeting between Huggins and young Jackson. Tobias and Huggins had known one another since 1914 when they both worked together to establish a YMCA facility for Black youth in Huntsville, Alabama. Tobias served as an assistant to Dr. Jesse E. Moorland, head of the YMCA's work among urban Blacks. He also was a Phelps-Stokes Fund director, chairman of the NAACP's board and according to Richard Bardolph, a "perennial intermediary between Negroes and the White House." This appeared to be an excellent contact but Jackson has been quick to point out that "Tobias was a conservative man that was reluctant to assist the career of a young radical." (19)

Considering Jackson's appraisal of his connected uncle, it is more likely that he and Huggins met at the Blyden Bookstore or he may have been introduced by Arthur Schomburg who was a regular fixture at the 135th Street Branch Library of the New York Public Library. This facility was Harlem's primary research center and Schomburg was the curator of Division of Negro History, Literature, and Prints located on the library's third floor. Jackson, similar to other self-trained scholars, spent his free hours researching in the library's Africana collection and soliciting advice and suggestions from Schomburg. This relationship was the more likely connection to Huggins and Jackson's participation in the Blyden Society. (20)

Jackson was only twenty-five years old when he began to work closely with Nathan Huggins. They collaborated on research projects, an assortment of publications, and developed a close personal relationship. His research interests included the United States and the Caribbean but Africa and its influence upon the history of religion became his area of concentration. In 1934, he and Huggins co-authored *A Guide to the Study of African History*. Following this effort they jointly published *An Introduction to African Civilizations* (1937). From 1938 to 1941, Jackson authored three pamphlets which received wide acclaim among Harlem's Street Scholar community. These included *Christianity before Christ* (1938), *Ethiopia and the Origin of Civilization* (1939), and *Pagan Origins of the Christ Myth* (1941) (21) Just prior to Huggins's death, Jackson was clearly his star student and an important contributor to the popularization of African and African American history.

Similar to many other aspiring Black intellectuals and artists, Jackson had often held unrelated jobs to his academic interest to meet his personal expenses and assist his family. This situation eventually led him into labor politics. During the 1930s, Jackson became a member of District 65, Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union. This organization eventually affiliated with the National Council of Distributive Trades. For more than twenty years, Jackson battled company bosses and served as a catalyst for his fellow union colleagues. As the Black history movement matured during the 1970s and 1980s, Jackson's admirers within traditional academic circles orchestrated faculty appointments for him. From 1970-1974, Jackson served as a Lecturer, Black Studies Department, Newark College of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers University. During this period he published

Introduction to African History (1970), and *Man, God, and Civilization* (1972). In 1975 Jackson relocated to Chicago. Largely through the support and encouragement of Professor Jacob H. Carruthers, a Jackson disciple and younger colleague, he received an appointment as a Visiting Professor, Center for Inner-City Studies, Northeastern Illinois State University, in Chicago. After a prolonged illness and declining health throughout the late 1980s, John G. Jackson died in 1993. (22)

John Henrik Clarke migrated to Harlem in 1933 at the age of eighteen. He was born in 1915 in the small town of Union Springs, Alabama and raised in Columbus, Georgia. He was one of thousands of Black southerners who looked forward to a better life in the North. His sharecropping parents had little hope for economic success during the Depression and were unable to financially support their son's desire to continue his education past the eighth grade. Clarke was always considered bright and intellectually gifted by his family and the network of extended kin and friends that were his love ones in his community. Nonetheless, the segregated South and the anti-Black violence that was prevalent in Georgia in the 1930s restricted any advancement for a poor but ambitious Black youth. Clarke and his boyhood friend, James Holmes, decided to hobo their way to New York City by riding an unattended railroad boxcar. (23)

In February 1933, Arthur Schomburg and Ulysses S. Poston, former associate editor of the *Negro World*, engaged in a public confrontation that caught the attention of the *New York Age*. During the celebration of Negro History Week a community forum on Abraham Lincoln was sponsored by the Carlton Avenue Branch of the Brooklyn Colored YMCA. As the hour-long presentation progressed, Schomburg characterized the Civil War President "[as] a man without prejudice ... very interested in our people. It was because of [Lincoln's] unbiased attitude toward the black race that today many of the southern states have not seen fit to honor his memory." Poston was chairman of this event and a recognized lay historian since his days with the Garvey movement in 1922. He undiplomatically challenged Schomburg's interpretation of Lincoln and contended that Lincoln "was weak of character as far as colored people were concerned. If it had been left to [Lincoln] it is more probable that we would still be slaves." Poston further stated, "Lincoln favored the African Civilization Society which openly expressed hostility to the Negro. Lincoln only freed us to win the war." According to Poston, Blacks should honor "Charles Sumner, [William Lloyd] Garrison and [Frederick] Douglass. Schomburg emotionally responded to his younger critic by calling him a "communist." He informed the audience that he would have nothing further to say on the subject and left for his Brooklyn home. The events of this controversy were covered for several weeks in the Black press. Some reports labeled Poston's remarks as an attempt of a "neophyte critic ... to dispute" the wisdom of a proven historian. While Poston called Schomburg a "reactionary" who sought Lincoln's "canonization." (24)

It is not clear if young Clarke attended the Brooklyn forum on Abraham Lincoln but certainly the extensive coverage by Harlem's newspapers attracted his attention to the debate between Poston and Schomburg. During his school days in Georgia, Clarke had shown an interest in African American history and had read Schomburg's important essay entitled "The Negro Digs Up His Past" prior to relocating to New York City. This article appeared in Alain Locke's *The New Negro*, an edited text that was published in 1925 during the heyday of the Harlem Renaissance. Clarke had a brief association with the Young Communist League and developed a friendship with Henry Winston, a young Black activist with the Brooklyn Communist Party and future theoretician who would publish *Strategy for a Black Agenda*. This friendship would last for several years but according to

Clarke, he "always had a difference of opinion" with what he called "party cultism. I resented the fact that Karl Marx had all the answers," Clarke declared, "and that nothing else was to be considered. I always had conflict with that" position. Clarke continued to explain this tension in the following manner:

During this era, I began an examination of the position of the world in relationship to what it could do for my own people. A small antagonism between the left and myself, began to emerge based on the fact that I saw no contradiction on placing the love of my people first. I basically believed that, ultimately, a sharing society would have to come into being to have any society at all, because capitalism is without humanity, without heart, and without concern for people. People who are willing to work should have a decent way of life for having done so. My beliefs came out of my experience as a sharecropper in Alabama and Georgia. I didn't need to read Karl Marx to think this; it just made sense. (25)

Clarke met Schomburg and Willis Huggins during his many research visits to the 135th Street Library. His initial interest in the library's Africana collection may have been heightened by the debate over Lincoln's position on African Americans but he also knew that these older scholars respected and nurtured his desire to understand the contribution of Blacks to the course of world history. He became one of the youngest members of the Blyden Society and spent all of his free hours listening to lively debates at the Harlem YMCA, the Blyden Bookstore, and the third floor of the 135th Street Library. During this period he also became close friends with John G. Jackson, who Clarke characterized as a Huggins "protege". Jackson's research, according to Clarke, emphasized the role of religion and the interplay of history as a power in human existence. John ... had taken the origins of the Christ myth, and the African origin of the Legend of the Garden of Eden and presented these works in the Chapel of the Harlem Y...." This presentation motivated Clarke to deliver a lecture called "An Inquiry into the Ethnic Identity of Jesus Christ" to his Blyden Society colleagues and teachers. Out of this material, Clarke would find both the historical data and creative energy to publish a short story entitled "The Boy Who Painted Christ Black." (26)

In addition to Schomburg, Huggins, and Jackson, Clarke also met and befriended Kwame Nkrumah, the future president of Ghana; Claude McKay, the well-known Harlem poet and novelist; William Leo Hansberry, an expert on Ethiopian history and Howard University Professor; and J. A. Rogers, the self-trained historian and close friend of Huggins and Schomburg. Also the great pacifist, John Hayes, and C.L.R. James, Huggins's friend and fellow Ethiopian advocate, would periodically visit and lecture at the Blyden Society when their travel schedules brought them to New York City. (27)

Clarke viewed his association with the Blyden Society as "literally a graduate level history department with some of the most important figures in black history right ... in the middle of Harlem." He described Huggins as a "great master teacher" who "talked not just history" but taught him "the political meaning of history." However, it was Schomburg and Clarke who developed a father-son relationship that flourished during the last four years of Schomburg's life. Clarke believed that Schomburg was "never too busy to talk to" him. During the four years they were close, "he showed me how history was stolen" and shared primary documents to reinforce this perspective. He rarely refused a speaking

engagement when Clarke solicited Schomburg's expertise as a lecturer for the many community groups and clubs that filled his life during Harlem's Depression years. Clarke also debated historical topics with Schomburg as he regularly walked his senior mentor back and forth to the subway before and after his working hours at the 135th Street Library. According to Clarke, Schomburg saw in him "a kind of potential and something special." He encouraged Clarke to "first study European history in relationship to the history of African people and their culture; and said that" he "would never fully understand the history" of Blacks until he "had studied world history." When Schomburg died on June 10, 1938, Clarke was profoundly saddened by his death but committed his life to carry on the research and mission that was instilled in him by this generous and caring self-trained Black scholar. Nearly two and half years later, Clarke felt the sting of death and the loss of his second mentor, Willis Huggins, just a few days before Christmas 1940. These two scholars provided an intellectual environment and the personal motivation that eventually made Clarke an important figure in Harlem's literary world and the probably the most respected self-trained Black scholar of the second half of the twentieth century. In 1992, Clarke reflected upon his association with Schomburg and Huggins by stating:

I followed these men with great devotion, and read most of the books they recommended. See, when I look back on it, I now realize that I was learning from these masters outside of college, certain things no college would ever give me, all of which I have since tried to give my students. I am talking about not just the recitation of facts, but what it means in relation to the world. (28)

After the death of Huggins in December 1940, Clarke's interest in African American history was seriously challenged by a prospective career in literature. During the 1940s Clarke became close friends with the author and essayist, John O. Killens and an active member of the Harlem Writers Guild. He also began publishing a syndicated book review column for the Associated Negro Press. In 1948, he published his first book, *Rebellion in Rhyme*, a collection of poetry. During the same year, he drafted the highly successful short story entitled "The Boy Who Painted Christ Black." This publication was eventually translated into fifteen different languages with a positive reception in Europe and the Orient. In 1949, he co-founded the *Harlem Quarterly* with Ernest Kaiser, Benjamin Brown, Julian M. Mayfield, and Killens. By the end of the decade, Clarke had become a featured writer on African American and African subjects for the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *Ghana Evening News*. (29)

From 1950-1964, Clarke began to emphasize his interest in Black World History. Although he held no formal university degrees, this period witnessed his progression into the mainstream of Black academic life. He served as the book editor for the *Negro History Bulletin* and Associate Editor of *Freedomways: A Quarterly Review of the Negro Freedom Movement*. In 1958, Clarke published his second book, *The Lives of Great African Chiefs*. He also became a frequent contributor to the *Journal of Negro History*, *Negro History Bulletin*, *Freedomways*, *Phylon*, and *Presence Africaine*. (30)

By 1964, Clarke's reputation as a teacher, lay scholar, and public orator began to attract attention outside of the Black community. With the advent of President Lyndon Johnson's anti-poverty program, Clarke was appointed Director of the Heritage Teaching Program affiliated with the Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, a government funded initiative.

The public exposure of this position and the mounting pressure of the Black Power Movement created opportunities in New York's white academic community. In 1966, Clarke became a Lecturer specializing in African history, at the New School for Social Research. New York University also tapped Clarke to teach African American and African history in the Head Start Training Program. From 1964 to 1980, Clarke became a major force in the efforts to legitimize African American history as an accepted academic discipline. His close association with Malcolm X, mentorship to the leaders of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, and the personal ties he established with younger Black historians opened doors to the college lecture circuit. (31)

This period also witnessed an increase in Clarke's scholarly output. He edited the following books during the 1960s: *Harlem, A Community in Transition* (1964); *Harlem, U.S.A.* (1965); *American Negro Short Stories* (1966); *William Styron's Nat Turner: Ten Black Writers Respond* (1968); and *Malcolm X: The Man and His Times* (1969). Clarke closed the 1960s by becoming a co-founder of the African Studies Heritage Association in 1969. He also worked as an advisory editor for *Black Scholar* while authoring scholarly articles for *Negro Digest* (re-named *Black World*), *Crisis*, *Core*, the *Massachusetts Review*, and scores of popular articles that appeared in the Black press. In 1968, Clarke served as Special Consultant and Coordinator of the CBS Television series *Black Heritage: The History of Afro-Americans*. (32)

In the 1970s, Clarke served on the advisory boards of the *Western Journal of Black Studies*; *First World*; *Black Books Bulletin*; and the *Journal of Inner City Studies*. These publications reflected one dimension of the explosion in Black Studies that rocked the foundations of traditional academia. In 1970, the University of Denver awarded him a Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters for his contributions to Black history. He also edited *Slavery and the Slave Trade* (1970); *Harlem: Voices From the Soul of Black America* (1970); *Black Titan: W.E.B. DuBois* (1971); and *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa* (1973). As the public and students demanded additional materials related to African American and African history, Clarke edited the reissuing of J. A. Rogers's two volume text, *The World's Great Men of Color*, first published by Clarke's former mentor in 1946. Throughout the decade, Clarke presented a legion of conference papers and traveled to numerous colleges championing the necessity for young students to study African and African American history. (33)

With such an active schedule, the decade of the 1980s was bound to take a toll on Clarke's health. He continued his extensive commitments to professional associations and freely assisted young doctoral students who solicited his advice or simply wanted an interview for their research. Clarke retired from Hunter College as a Distinguished Professor, Department of Black and Puerto Rican Studies, but continued his college and community lecture schedule. During this era, Clarke played an important role in the formation of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations and the National Council for Black Studies. In 1985, his nonstop schedule led to a stroke. As he recovered, Clarke completed his fourteenth book entitled *The African World at the Crossroads: Notes for an African World Revolution* (1991). Declining health finally terminated the life of this activist scholar in July 1998. Clarke's life and contributions were a testimony to the dedication of forgotten self-trained Black historians who envisioned African American history as an accepted discipline and an important tool for the empowerment of an oppressed people. (34)

CONCLUSION: THE MYSTERY OF HUGGIN'S DEATH

When Willis Nathaniel Huggins disappeared on a cold winter night in December 1940, the Harlem community and Black America lost a truly unique Black scholar. Huggins had battled racism within the mainstream academic community and became the first Black student to finish a doctorate at Fordham University. He simply refused to accommodate himself to the traditional isolation of a southern Black college and the limited opportunities of the segregated South. Huggins established his permanent home in Harlem and eventually joined the small community of Black educators who were employed by the New York City's public school system.

Throughout his life, he sought to address community and race problems while carving out a professional career. This sentiment was first expressed in his efforts to promote Civil Rights issues and the establishment of a YMCA facility for Black youth in Huntsville, Alabama during his short tenure as a faculty member at Alabama A & M College. In Chicago and Harlem, Huggins established independent Black publications, contributed articles to the regional Black press, and joined the small group of Black book store owners who campaigned and promoted reading and alternative publications that challenged the prevailing scientific racism of his time. During the mid 1930s, when Ethiopia was struggling against Italian aggression, Huggins became an international leader for the defense and support of Ethiopian sovereignty and an articulate voice for international Black solidarity.

Huggins also was a dedicated participant in the Black history movement. He supported the efforts of Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History by leading the New York branch of this organization. However, it was through his teaching skills and community mentorship that Huggins made his greatest contribution to the popularization and professionalization of African American and African history.

Shortly after being hired to teach by the New York Board of Education, Huggins launched a campaign to introduce African and African American history courses into the public school curriculum. When this effort failed, he established an independent research collective first called the Harlem History Club and then renamed the Blyden Society. In the eight years that he was associated with this organization, Huggins trained, promoted, and encouraged talented younger Black intellectuals who lacked the financial resources to attend traditional university programs. During this period, Huggins co-authored two books on African history financed the publication of several smaller pamphlets that addressed African and African American historical themes, and linked together his community students with some of the best self-trained and university-trained Black intellectuals of the 1930s. At least two student members of the Blyden Society, John Henrik Clarke and John G. Jackson, became prominent self-trained Black historians who continued long after Huggins's death to make important contributions to Black historiography, teaching on the university and community level, and to the popularization of African and African American history, especially within Black urban communities.

The untimely death of Willis Huggins still reminds one of Harlem's unsolved historical mysteries. Huggins was only fifty-four years old when he allegedly committed suicide by jumping from the George Washington Bridge. He was employed by two New York City high schools, for almost twenty years he had been the proprietor of the Blyden Bookstore, he had established reputation as a community activist and international advocate on behalf of African independence, and he was a respected educator who was considered a

master teacher by a legion of community students. Huggins embodied many of the characteristics that Harlem residents considered essential for a "Race Man."

It took more than six months for his body to be accidentally recovered by police authorities. This circumstance indicates that there was a calculated effort to keep the body submerged probably through the use of weights. The Huggins family quickly endorsed the suicide theory while those who lived and worked among Harlem's street community believed that their beloved teacher was killed by gangsters who had grown weary of unpaid business loans. Regardless of these competing theories of Huggins's death, Harlem prematurely lost an exceptionally dedicated educator and an activist scholar who passionately believed that critical thinking and intellectual achievement was not reserved for the privileged in society.

* Ralph Crowder is a member of the Department of Ethnic Studies, the University of California at Riverside.

(1) "Negro Educator Is Found Drowned," *New York Times*, July 19, 1941; "Body Identified," *New York Sun*, July 19, 1941; "Educator's Body Taken from Hudson," *New York World-Telegram*, July 19, 1941; "Body in Hudson Is Negro Educator," *New York Post*, July 19, 1941; and private discussions with John Henrik Clarke, Atlanta, Georgia, November, 1993. Bushwick High was a predominately white school while the evening program at Harlem's Union High attracted older Black students who were completing their high school degrees while usually working full-time jobs during the day. The Blyden Bookstore, a popular gathering spot for Gaveyites and book lovers, was located at 2296 Seventh Avenue. Additional background information on Huggins can be found in *The Crescent*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (November, 1938), 38; Rosario De Paul, "Negro Gets Catholic Doctorate," *The Colored Harvest* (October-November, 1932), 9; and Florence Murray, editor, *The Negro Handbook* (New York: Wendell Malliet and Company, 1942), 8. John Henrik Clarke, a member of the Blyden Society and a Huggins student, believed that his mentor was killed by gangsters do to unpaid business loans. This information came from several discussions with Clarke during the 1970s through the early 1990s.

(2) Contemporary scholars have recorded Huggins's role in the African American support for Ethiopia during the Italian invasion. The best sources for further information on this topic are Joseph E. Harris, *African-American Reactions to War in Ethiopia, 1936-1941* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994) and William R. Scott, *The Sons of Sheba's Race: African-Americans and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-1941* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993). Scott's Chapter IX: Harlem Mobilization is especially useful to position Huggins's activities within the divergent collection of Marxist, nationalist, and traditional community organizations. Both of these sources fail to discuss or acknowledge Huggins's influence upon a legion of self-trained Black scholars. Joel A. Rogers, Carter G. Woodson, and W.E.B. Du Bois supported Huggins's efforts to pressure the New York City board of education to include courses on African civilization within the high school curriculum. Arthur A. Schomburg, Charles S. Johnson, and Rogers had supported and published articles in the *Upreach Magazine* and the *Searchlight* while Huggins was living in Chicago. Both publications were edited and financed by Huggins. Claude McKay, an important novelist and poet, often collaborated with Huggins on his views of racial affairs and politics in Europe. Jesse E. Moorland and Schomburg were celebrated bibliophiles and supporters of the Black history movement along with Du Bois, Woodson, and Rogers. Huggins had strong ties in Haiti through his relationship with this

country's President and diplomatic representatives to the United States. This relationship was cemented during Huggins's 1934 visit to Haiti. Huggins began to develop an international network of contacts in 1919 while he was closely associated with Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). In 1919, he coordinated a Harlem visit of Ethiopian dignitaries and diplomats while on official business in the United States. In 1933, he also befriended Ras Desta Damtew, the governor of Sidamo Province and son-in-law to Emperor Haile Selessie. See Scott, 113; many more of Huggins's international contacts are discussed in Huggins and John G. Jackson, *Introduction to African Civilization with Main Currents in Ethiopian History* (New York: Avon House Publishers, 1937), and the *New York Times*, July 19, 1941

(3) James G. Spady, "Willis N. Huggins: Educator, Diplomat, and Historian," *Black History Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 8 (1971), 1-10. This detailed but undocumented article and several newspaper clippings covering the life and death of Huggins are located in the Arthur Alfonso Schomburg Vertical File, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York, New York; and Louise Daniel Hutchinson, *Anna J. Cooper: A Voice from the South* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981), 67-84.

(4) Spady, "Willis N. Huggins," 1-2; and personal discussions with John G. Jackson, Minneapolis, Minnesota, March, 1976. It is unclear when Jackson and Huggins first met. Jackson was born in Aiken, South Carolina on April 1, 1907. He attended the Schofield School in Aiken, dropping out after finishing the seventh grade. He then completed one year of high school in Augusta, Georgia and then relocated in New York City at the age of fifteen in 1922. He completed his secondary education at New York City's Stuyvesant High School winning a scholarship certificate for proficiency in English Composition in his senior year. Jackson may have met Huggins at history discussions sponsored by Harlem's Blyden Bookstore or through association with the *Upreach Magazine*. Both businesses were established and managed by Huggins. The *Negro World* announced the appearance of *Upreach Magazine* on August 14, 1920. Jackson also periodically attended classes in creative writing at New York's City College, wrote articles for the *Truth Seeker Magazine* and lectured at the Ingersoll Forum and the Harlem Unitarian Church. These venues could have also provided an opportunity for Huggins and Jackson to have met. It is also possible that Channing Tabius introduced young Jackson to Huggins in an arranged personal meeting. Huggins was twenty one years older than Jackson and clearly played the role of a mentor and older but wise friend. For additional details see jacket notes, John G. Jackson, *Man God and Civilization* (New Hyde Park, New York: University Books, Inc., 1972) and Tony Martin, *Literary Garveyism: Garvey, Black Arts and the Harlem Renaissance* (Dover, Massachusetts: 1983), 37 and 170.

(5) Spady, "Willis N. Huggins," 2; Ralph L. Crowder, "John Edward Bruce, Edward Wilmot Blyden, Alexander Crummell, and J. Robert Love: Mentors, Patrons, and the Evolution of A Pan-African Intellectual Network," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (July, 1996), 59-91; and Elinor Des Verney Sinnett, *Arthur Alfonso Schomburg: Black Bibliophile & Collector* (Detroit: The New York Public Library and Wayne State University Press, 1989), 39-72. Additional information on Bruce and Schomburg's attempts to locate young Black talent can be found in Crowder, "From Slavery to Freedom: John Edward Bruce's Childhood and Adolescence," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (January, 2002), 39-74 and Ralph L. Crowder, *John Edward Bruce: Politician, Journalist, and Historian of the African Diaspora* (New York: New York

University Press, forthcoming winter, 2003).

(6) Spady, "Willis N. Huggins," 6-7; Charles S. Johnson (1893-1956) received a Ph.d. in Sociology from the University of Chicago in 1918. He also served as the Executive Director of the Chicago Commission on Race Relations after the Chicago riot of 1919. In the capacity, he directed the commission's classic study, *The Negro in Chicago: A Study in Race Relations and a Race Riot*. In 1921, he moved to New York City to become the director of Department of Research and Investigations, the National Urban League. In 1923, he assumed editorship of *Opportunity: A Journal of Negro Life*, published by the League. Through this journal he promoted African American history and culture throughout the 1920s. In 1928, he left New York City to become chairman of the Social Science Department, Fisk University. From the 1921 through 1938, Johnson and Arthur Schomburg were close friends and advocates for the Black history movement. Although primary records do not speak to his association with Huggins, they shared a passion for Black history and the desire to further develop a primary and secondary curriculum that promoted African American history and culture for Black youth. For further information see: Preston and Bonita H. Valien, "Charles Spurgeon Johnson (1893-1956)," in Rayford W. Logan and Michael R. Winston, *Dictionary of American Negro Biography* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982), 347-349; and Sinnette, Arthur Alfonso Schomburg, 111-112, 136, 149, 188, 196 and 192-193. Huggins's *Searchlight* was a weekly similar to the *Chicago Defender* that was published for only two years. The best source to understand the emergence of the New Negro Movement in post war Chicago is William M. Tuttle, Jr.'s *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970 and 1996), 208-241.

(7) Spady, "Willis N. Huggins," 7-8; *New York Times*, July 19, 1941; and Huggins and Jackson, *An Introduction to African Civilizations*, review selectively.

(8) Scott, *The Son's of Sheba's Race*, 243.

(9) Scott, *The Sons of Sheba's Race*, 112-113. These events were also covered by the *Baltimore Afro-American*, July 27, 1935, the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, August 3, 1935, and James R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary: George Padmore's Path from Communism to Pan-Africanism* (London: Pall Mall, 1967), 40-41. The five other speakers at the PCDE gathering were Alfred L. King, a UNIA leader, Joel A. Rogers, self-trained historian and journalist; James W. Ford, Harlem's premier Black communist leader, Arthur Reid, a well known Harlem nationalist, Garveyite, street orator, and president of the African Patriotic League; and Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., Abyssinian's associate pastor and community activist. For additional information on the Harlem's tradition of "united front" politics review Ralph L. Crowder, "'Don't Buy Where You Can't ': An Investigation of the Political Forces and Social Conflict Within the Harlem Boycott of 1934," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (July, 1991), 7-44.

(10) *Ibid.*, 111-114.

(11) *Ibid.*, 113-114. The statements from Minister Warqneh Martin and Minister Teclé Hawariate are republished in Huggins and Jackson, *An Introduction to African Civilization*, 89-91. Hawariate was also a Delegate to the League of Nations and probably assisted Huggins in the final wording of his statement to the League.

(12) Huggins and Jackson, *An Introduction to African Civilizations*, 91-93; Joseph E. Harris, *African-American Reactions to War in Ethiopia*, 64-65; and Scott, *The Sons of Sheba's Race*, 113-114.

(13) Joseph H. Harris, *African-American Reactions to War in Ethiopia*, 65; William R. Scott, *The Sons of Sheba's Race*, 114-115; and the *New York Times*, October 6, 1935, 10.

(14) *The Pittsburg Courier*, November 23, 1935, 10; Harris, *African-American Reactions to War in Ethiopia*, 66; and Scott, *The Sons of Sheba's Race*, 115-116.

(15) Harris, *African-American Reactions to War in Ethiopia*, 66-67; and Scott, *The Sons of Sheba's Race*, 116.

(16) For an overview of the relationship between university-trained and self-trained Black historians read Ralph L. Crowder, "Chapter V: The Popularization of African American History: John Edward Bruce as Historian, Bibliophile, and Black History Advocate," in Crowder, *John Edward Bruce: Politician, Journalist, and Self-Trained Historian of the African Diaspora* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 91-133.

(17) Benjamin Bowser, "Portrait of a Liberation Scholar," *The Afro-American History Kit*, 1992 (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, Inc., 1992), 5-6; and W. Burghardt Turner and Joyce Moore Turner, editors, Richard B. Moore, *Caribbean Militant In Harlem: Collected Writings, 1920-1972* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 30-31. For additional information on Harlem's street speakers during the 1930s read Ralph L. Crowder, "'Don't Buy Where You Can't Work': An Investigation of the Political Forces and Social Conflict within the Harlem Boycott of 1934," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (July 1991), 7-44; Roma Barnes, "Harlem Street Speakers in the 1930s," in Christopher Mulvey and John Simons, editors, *New York: City as Text* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1990), 106-130; Claude McKay, *Harlem: Negro Metropolis* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1940); Wilbur Young, "Activities of Bishop Amiru Al-Mu-Minin Sufi A. Hamid," and "Sufi Abdul Hamid: The Black Hitler of Harlem," *Federal Writers Project, Negroes in New York City, 1939-1941*, Reel I; and Winston James, "Being Red and Black in Jim Crow America: Notes on the Ideology and Travails of Afro-America's Socialist Pioneers, 1877-930," *Souls*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Fall 1999), 45-63.

(18) Ralph L. Crowder, "John G. Jackson: Labor Activist and World Historian," *Minneapolis Spokesman and Recorder*, July 26, 1979; and book jacket notes, *John G. Jackson, Man, God, and Civilization*; and conversations with John G. Jackson, February, 1977.

(19) Richard Bardolph, *The Negro Vanguard* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 184-185 and conversations with John G. Jackson, February 1977.

(20) Schomburg's relationship with the 135th Street Branch of the New York Public Library is detailed in Elinor Des Verney Sinnette, *Arthur Alfonso Schomburg: Black Bibliophile & Collector* (Detroit: The New York Public Library & Wayne State University Press, 1989), 131-160; and conversations with John G. Jackson, February, 1977.

(21) John G. Jackson and Willis Nathaniel Huggins, *A Guide to the Study of African History* (New York: Federation of History Clubs, 1934); Jackson and Huggins, *An Introduction to African Civilization* (New York: Avon Publishers, 197, Reprint: New York:

Negro Universities Press, 1969); Jackson, *Christianity Before Christ* (New York: The Blyden Society, 1938, Reprint: Chicago: Third World Press, 1978); Jackson, *Ethiopia and the Origins of Civilization* (New York: The Blyden Society, 1939); and Jackson, *Pagan Origins of the Christ Myth* (New York: The Truth Seeker Press, 1941; Second edition, 1976).

(22) Crowder, "John G. Jackson: Labor Activist and World Historian," 3; and conversations with John G. Jackson, February 1977. Jackson's *Introduction to African Civilization* (New Jersey: Citadel Press, 1970) and *Man, God, and Civilization* (New Hyde Park, New York: University Books, Inc., 1972) are generally considered his most popular and financially successful publications by self-trained Black historians and those university-trained scholars who are aware of his contributions to the Black history movement.

(23) Barbara Eleanor Adams, *John Henrik Clarke: The Early Years* (Hampton, Virginia: United Brothers and Sisters Communications, 1992), 21-22.

(24) *The New York Age*, February 18 and 25, 1933 quoted in Elinor Des Verney Sinnette, Arthur Alfonso Schomburg, 174; and Tony Martin, *Literary Garveyism: Garvey, Black Arts and the Harlem Renaissance* (Dover, Massachusetts, 1983), 71-72. Schomburg's "The Negro Digs Up His Past," first appeared in *Survey Graphic*, Vol. 6 (March 1925), 670-672 and then reprinted in Alain Locke, editor, *The New Negro* (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1925), 231-237.

(25) Barbara Eleanor Adams, *John Henrik Clarke: The Early Years*, 24-26; and Henry Winston, *Strategy for a Black Agenda; A Critique of New Theories of Liberation in the United States and Africa* (New York: International Publishers, 1973).

(26) Adams, *John Henrik Clarke: The Early Years*, 26-27 and 31.

(27) *Ibid.*, 26; Benjamin Bowser, "Portrait of a Liberation Scholar," 6; and conversations with John Henrik Clarke, October, 1988.

(28) Adams, *John Henrik Clarke: The Early Years*, 27-31.

(29) John Henrik Clarke, *Rebellion in Rhyme* (Prairie City, Illinois: The Dicker Press, 1948); Abraham Chapman, *Black Voices: An Anthology of Afro-American Literature* (New York: The New American Library, 1968), 631-632; John Henrik Clarke, editor, *Malcolm X: The Man and His Times* (New York: Collier Books, 1969), 357; and Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: William Morrow, 1967), 219.

(30) Chapman, editor, *Black Voices*, 631-632 and Clarke, editor, *Malcolm X*, 357.

(31) John Henrik Clarke, editor, *Malcolm X: The Man and His Times*, 357; and conversations with John Henrik Clarke, October 1988. Some of the first generation of post-Civil Rights movement historians that Clarke counseled included James Turner, Tony Martin, Sterling Stuckey, Vincent Harding, Mary F. Berry, John Blassingame, Edgar Toppin, John H. Bracey, Jr., Leonard Jeffries, Jacob H. Carruthers, Hollis R. Lynch, Ivan Van Sertima, Anderson Thompson, Asa Hillard, and Ralph L. Crowder. This only a partial list of those scholars who solicited Clarke's assistance and scholarly advice.

(32) "John Henrik Clarke: Distinguished Professor Emeritus of African World History, Hunter College, C.U.N.Y., New York," Twentieth Anniversary Conference and Special Tribute to Dr. John Henrike Clarke, African Heritage Association, April 38-30, 1988, 2. For Clarke's role in the African Heritage Studies Association review Clarke, "The African Heritage Association: Some Notes on the Conflict with the African Studies Association and the Fight to Reclaim African History," Issue: A Quarterly Journal of Africanist Opinion (1969), 5-11 and Cyprian Lamar Rowe, Crisis in African Studies: The Birth of the African Heritage Studies Association (Washington, D.C.: African Heritage Studies Association, 1988).

The full citations for Clarke's edited volumes published in the 1960s include: Harlem, A Community in Transition (New York: Citadal Press, 1964; enlarged edition, 1970); Harlem, U.S.A. (Berlin: Seven Seas Publishers, 1965); American Negro Short Stories (New York: Hill and Wang, Inc., 1966); William Styron's Nat Turner: Ten Black Writers Respond (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968); and Malcolm X: The Man and His Times (New York: Macmillan, 1969).

(33) The full citations of for Clarke's edited volumes published in the 1970s include: Slavery and the Slave Trade, edited with Vincent Harding (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970); Harlem: Voices From the Soul of Black America (New York: New American Library, 1970); Black Titan: W.E.B. DuBois, edited with the editors of Freedomways (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971); Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa (New York: Random House 1972); and World's Great Men of Color, Vols. 1 and 2, by J. A. Rogers, revised and updated edition with commentary, (New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1972).

(34) John Henrik Clarke, The African World at the Crossroads: Notes for an African World Revolution (Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press, 1991).

Ralph L. Crowder*

COPYRIGHT 2006 Afro-American Historical Association of the Niagara Frontier, Inc.

Copyright 2006, Gale Group. All rights reserved. Gale Group is a Thomson Corporation Company.