

Our next public program

## ‘From Back Streets to Major Civic Event: City’s Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration’

The El Cerrito Historical Society invites you to “From Back Streets to Major Civic Event: El Cerrito’s Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration,” a free online program on Aug. 21.

Patricia Durham, one of the founders of the 32-year old El Cerrito Martin Luther King Jr. Parade and Rally, will discuss how this event came to be.

“Back then Martin Luther King Day was not a holiday in El Cerrito. Back then we were only allowed to walk the back streets of the city,” recalls Durham, a historical society board member.

Founders of the event, which was originally not sanctioned by the city, came from St. Peter Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and the El Cerrito branch of the NAACP.

Today, Durham notes, “Not only is Dr. King and the Dream recognized as a holiday in El Cerrito, we now walk/drive down San Pablo Avenue.”

The talk will be held online via Zoom at 4 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 21. The link to the talk will be on our website, [www.elcerritohistoricalsociety.org](http://www.elcerritohistoricalsociety.org).

For more information contact Dave Weinstein at (510) 524-1737 or [davidsweinstein@yahoo.com](mailto:davidsweinstein@yahoo.com).



*The Mighty High Dreamers Drill Team and Drum Guard from Oakland performs at the 2021 Martin Luther King Jr. rally at the El Cerrito Plaza BART station. (Photo by David Weinstein)*



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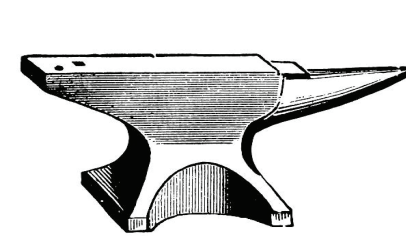
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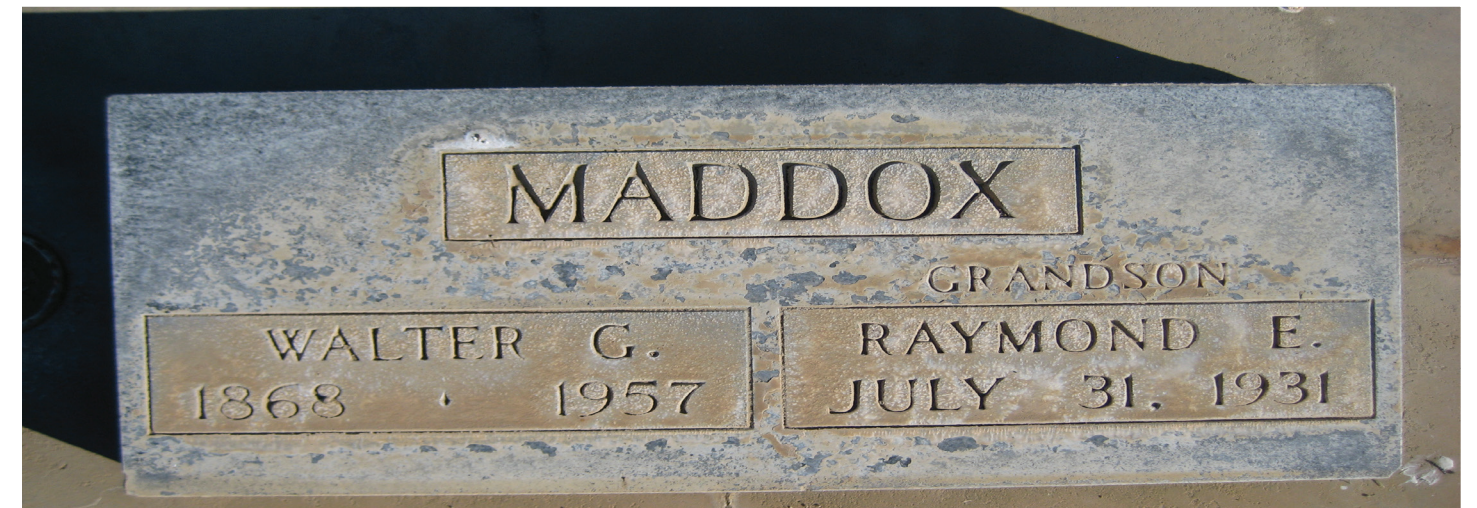


# The Forge

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The El Cerrito Historical Society, P.O. Box 304, El Cerrito, CA 94530  
[echistoricalociety@gmail.com](mailto:echistoricalociety@gmail.com), [www.elcerritohistoricalsociety.org](http://www.elcerritohistoricalsociety.org)

## Early Black resident helped found weekly newspaper



*The gravestone for Walter Maddox is in the IOOF cemetery in Orland, Calif.*

### A glimpse of the legacy of El Cerrito pioneer Walter G. Maddox

By Jon Bashor

*El Cerrito Historical Society members were introduced to Walter George Maddox in the December 2020 issue of this newsletter.*

*Maddox and his wife, Mary E. White Maddox, were the earliest Black family to live in El Cerrito, as Joanne Rubio wrote.*

In 1971, Albert Butler sat down for a recorded conversation with Ruth Beckford, a noted African-Haitian dancer, teacher and author. Butler was the grandson of Alfred J. White, a member of a pioneering Black family and the father of Walter Maddox’s wife, Mary “Mamie” E. White Maddox. White was the owner of a barber shop in San Francisco. A recording of their 90-minute conversation is available online, while the original tape is held by the African American Museum and Library at Oakland.

Butler’s recollections tell of Maddox’s hospitality, innate talents and his as a Black man who rose to a high position

in an industry dominated by white men: railroads.

About 10 minutes into the recording, Butler talks about going to live with his uncle and aunt, Walter and Mamie Maddox, in Stege, part of which became part of El Cerrito years later. Butler said he was “sort of raised by him.” Butler describes himself as a “puny, under-developed kid,” skinny “like a skeleton” and prone to crying. “They took me out to Stege, a little town, just a hamlet” where Maddox had obtained a plot of land, built a house and raised a couple of cows, Butler recalled. There was

*Continued on page 2*



fresh air, Butler could run wild and soon life in the country “built me right up.” Butler lived with the Maddoxes for three to four years. During that time, Maddox took the ferry to San Francisco for his job with Southern Pacific and Butler drove him to West Berkeley every morning in a horse drawn cart at 7 a.m. and picked him up at 5:30 p.m. After returning from the morning run, Butler did his chores around the house and then went to school. “I was a kid, I was about as big as his leg when I was 10 years old.”

**All in the timing**

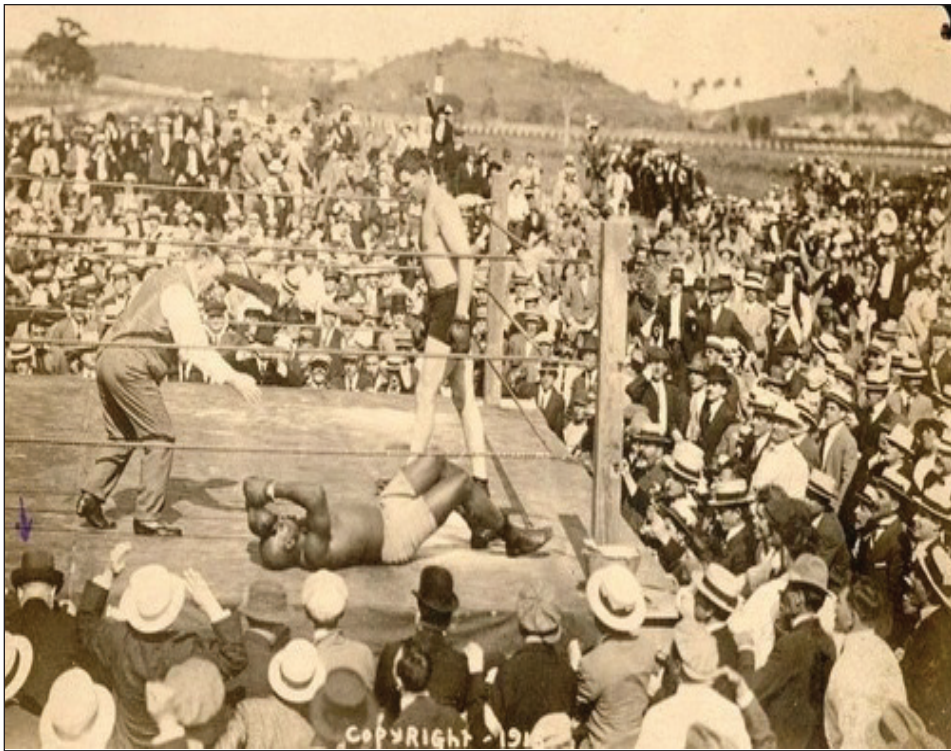
Maddox worked his way up from the ground floor at the railroad and became an expert on timetables and offered new ideas on how to improve them, Butler said, becoming the subject of envy and jealousy over his rise up the corporate ladder. Butler recalled one story about how Felix S. McGinnis, who was appointed traffic manager for Pacific Coast Lines in 1925 and then became vice president in charge of traffic in 1929, convened SP executives from Chicago, New York and other cities for a conference. The men wore suits with white carnations in their lapels, white kid gloves and had fancy walking sticks.

They offered a number of suggestions to improve service and to assess them. McGinnis called in Maddox, who said they would never work and would in fact slow down service. When asked why, Maddox explained that the route in question was single-tracked and increasing the number of trains meant traffic would back up as each waited for others to pass. “He showed them that they were wrong, in a nice way,” Butler recalled. “They were amazed that a colored man would make that suggestion.”

As he adjourned the meeting, wishing the executives a safe ride home, McGinnis said “Mr. Maddox, fix those timetables as you see fit,” Butler recalled.

Although Maddox never rode any of the longer distance trains, he “knew every spur, every track, every single track, every double track, every station, every hamlet,” and how the trains using them made connections with the eastbound trains, Butler recalled.

He described Maddox as unassuming, adding that he usually picked out



Referee gives the count in the 1915 boxing match in which champion Jack Johnson was upset by Jess Willard.

a corner seat on the ferry so he could read his newspaper. When other men gathered around to ask questions, he would politely answer, then go back to his paper.

But he was also a good orator when the occasion called for it. “He had good diction, knew how to use his words,” Butler said. In fact, this skill led him to being named president of the Stege school district and its four schools, Butler recalled.

**Signs of success**

In addition to owning his land and home in Stege, Maddox was also able to purchase a 20-acre ranch in Orland, a small town 20 miles west of Chico, where he eventually retired. In 1894, Maddox also provided financial backing to start the Western Outlook newspaper. As stated on its front page banner, the Outlook was “A Journal Dedicated to the Interests of the Negro on the Pacific Coast and the Betterment of his Position.”

The Western Outlook was founded Sept. 1, 1894, by Maddox, Joseph S. Francis and J. Lincoln Derrick. From 1894 until it ceased publishing in 1928, Derrick and Jesse E. Wysinger were the editors and proprietors. In 1928, they

had agents in San Francisco, Fresno, Marysville, and Red Bluff. According to the 1902 edition of N.W. Ayer & Son’s American Newspaper Annual, the offices were at 425 Montgomery St. in San Francisco, but later moved to offices on 7th Street in Oakland.

In 1900, a one-year subscription cost \$2.50, a six-month subscription \$1.25 and a three-month subscription was 75 cents. Published every Saturday, it went out via “the early morning mails,” according to the paper’s masthead. It began as a four-page broadsheet measuring 24 by 18 inches and had evolved to eight pages measuring 22 by 16 inches by the time it ceased publication.

One of the few, if only, online archives of the Outlook is housed by The Portal to Texas History, a gateway to rare, historical, and primary source materials from or about Texas. Created and maintained by the University of North Texas Libraries, the portal contains just 81 issues from the Outlook’s 38 years of publication. Many of them are torn or have pieces cut out. The oldest is from Saturday, Jan. 27, 1900, 1915 is the most complete with 42 issues and there are 12 from 1928, the last year of publication. All of the content described

*Linda Shehabian leads children in the annual Halloween parade. (Courtesy Keystone Montessori School)*



When Sycamore church no longer wanted to extend the lease in 1993, Farrokh and I bought property in El Cerrito, where most of our students lived, and built a new school. The site at the corner of Blake and Elm housed a small farmhouse owned by the Bonini family. The house was beyond repair.

Our architect was Peter Braun from Alameda, who designed the school with high ceilings and lots of windows, one of the first buildings in El Cerrito based on a passive solar design.

Another feature of the building design was the plumbing. There were child-size toilets and sinks that were essential to a Montessori program. They amazed families who visited the school.

When Farrokh Shehabi, who had become a building contractor, built the school in 1994, it was one of the first Montessori schools in El Cerrito and remains one the longest running Montessori schools in the city.

We named the school “Keystone” after the wedge-shaped piece at the crown of an arch that locks the other pieces in place, since this would be a Montessori preschool that would serve as a foundation for the rest of the child’s education.

To this mix I made a fundamental change to traditional Montessori classrooms by providing smaller classroom size with a low student/teacher ratios of one teacher for eight students.

We named each class after birds, Sand-

pipers for the youngest, “Blue Herons,” for ages 2.5 to 4 years, and “Snowy Egrets” for ages 4 to 6.

Now to get back to the horses, the Halloween Parade, the Persian New Year Celebration, the Holiday Show and the “Sound of Music.”

Every year Farrokh would bring one of his horses from our ranch, Rancho del Paraiso in Vacaville, and give the children rides around the playground, with one of the teachers on saddle and one child on the teacher’s lap to take home a photo. This was one of the most memorable times for children and teachers.

Farrokh also used his ceramics skills to create clay pots with the children. He fired the wares at his ceramics studio in Berkeley.

And for Halloween we had a party, with the children doing trick or treat inside the school by knocking on classroom doors. Then all 60 of the children and all 15 of the staff would walk through the neighborhood playing and banging on drums.

One year we had a hailstorm on Halloween and a big pile of what looked like snow came down the slide in the backyard.

And on the first day of Spring, Persian New Year, the school celebrated with songs, food, and Persian costumes.

In June I would play guitar with music teacher Jonathan Green for the children to sing an operetta for the graduation

ceremony, “The Snowy Egrets Take Flight.”

These productions included a “visit” to each of the seven continents, the names of which children learned in our “Continent Song.” The children at Keystone were always very multicultural, often with 10 or more languages spoken.

An important part of Montessori education is diversity:

A typical Graduation Ceremony would include, for North America, “This Land is Your Land;” from South America, “La Mariposa” in Spanish; from Asia: “Zhao Pengyou” in Mandarin; “Do-Re-Mi” from the “Sound of Music,” from Europe, the Beatles’ “The Yellow Submarine,” played with kazoos; and from Africa: “Pata Pata,” originally sung by Miriam Makeba, with all of the Keystone children and teachers dancing.

All of these songs sung by 4 -and 5-year-olds!

We always ended graduation with “So Long It’s been Good to Know You.”

Montessori wrote: “We are the sowers—our children are those who reap. We labor so that future generations will be better and nobler than we are.”

My husband and I graduated from Keystone in August 2019 upon our retirement.

The new owners of the school are Rohini and Ajay Pathak, who are dedicated to continuing the legacy of Keystone Montessori School.



# A look back at 40 years providing Montessori education in El Cerrito

*By Linda Googe Shehabi*  
If you’ve ever driven past 6639 Blake Street in El Cerrito and seen a horse trailer it’s not your imagination.  
Or if you’ve ever walked by in June and heard children singing songs from the “Sound of Music” or the Beatles, that’s the graduation program.  
Or if you live in the neighborhood and heard a parade going by your house at Halloween, that was the children of Keystone going by.

And in November and December you would hear the children practicing for the annual Holiday show with the Walden Marionettes. Jack Fredericks and his grown son Christopher were still making their own marionettes and would perform at the Unitarian Church to the delight of all of our children.

Then the children would sing holiday songs: Jingle Bells in English and Mandarin, Rudolph, Feliz Navidad, Dreidle, Ocho Kandelikas, Oh Chanukah, We Wish You a Merry Christmas.

Ever since my husband, Farrokh Shehabi, and I started Keystone Montessori School in 1981, it’s always been something different. I served as director and Farrokh as business manager. We had as many as 60 children from ages 18 months through kindergarten during any given school session. Altogether some 2,400 families, mostly from El Cerrito, sent their children to our school.

The very first Montessori school started in 1906 when Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian educator and physician, was invited to create a childcare center in Rome to work with some of the area’s most disadvantaged children.

Her school opened on Jan. 6, 1907 and was called “Casa dei Bambini,” (Children’s House). The children, although unruly at first, gradually exhibited focus and concentration through working with hands-on materials.

Dr. Montessori designed these unique learning materials, many of which are



*Keystone Montessori School on Blake Street has served children of the community since 1981. (Courtesy Keystone Montessori School)*

still used in classrooms today. Montessori created materials to teach concepts of dimension, language, math, science, and “practical life.”

By 1910 Montessori schools could be found throughout Western Europe, and by 1911 the first Montessori school opened in the United States.

In 1913 Maria Montessori lectured in Carnegie Hall. She returned to the United States in 1915 to demonstrate her method at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco and to train teachers.

At the exposition a “Glass Classroom” let spectators observe children working with such focus and concentration that they didn’t even notice the people looking at them through the glass.

By 1916 there were more than 100 Montessori schools in the United States. Today in the United States there are approximately 5,000 Montessori schools serving more than one million children.

After graduating from UC Berkeley in 1969 and earning a teaching credential in early childhood education at Hayward State, I moved with my husband and son Arman to Houston in 1976 when Farrokh, a sales engineer for an Emeryville firm, was transferred there.

There, Arman, who was 2 ½, attended a Montessori school in Houston and I was invited to work as an assistant teacher. I became excited about this method of education. Rather than the chaos I had found at California pre-schools, here the children were absorbed in their work and the teacher calm and organized.

After gaining certification in Montessori training in Houston, I found a job teaching at El Cerrito Montessori school on Potrero Avenue, only half a mile from our home in the Richmond hills, when we returned to California after two years in Texas.

When El Cerrito Montessori closed in 1981, another teacher and I opened a new program in a rented space of Sycamore Church on Navellier Street and called it Cerrito Vista Montessori since it was near Cerrito Vista Park.

In 1987 Farrokh and I leased a space in Temple Beth Hillel at Richmond’s Hilltop neighborhood, and converted it to a Montessori center and called it Keystone Montessori School Hilltop.

I was now directing and teaching at both Cerrito Vista Montessori in El Cerrito, and the newly established Keystone Montessori in Hilltop.

below is from this archive.  
In many instances, the articles published a century ago reflect that many of the civil rights issues being fought over then are still with us today. But many of the articles also point toward improved conditions for the Black community.

**On voting rights and violence**  
Looking at the current trend of Republican-dominated states adopting restrictive voting measures that are expected to put roadblocks in the way of Black voters, an article in the Jan. 27, 1900 edition shows that history does indeed repeat. The truncated article on page two headlined THE RIGHTS OF THE NEGRO with the subhead Theme of Senator Pritchard of North Carolina.

It begins “Washington, January 22.—At the conclusion of routine business Pritchard, of North Carolina, called up his resolution relating to the proposed amendment to the constitution of North Carolina, which, if adopted, it is alleged, disenfranchises a large class of voters in the State. After reading the resolution Pritchard addressed the Senate in support of it, his address being in answer to that delivered several days ago by Senator Morgan.

“Pritchard said the question involved the peace and welfare of the Nation and the stability of our institutions...He said the Democrats of North Carolina were attempting to deprive certain citizens of guaranteed rights, just as the Democrats of Louisiana had done. Pritchard said that if Senator Morgan was right, then the Democratic party ought to have the courage to propose the abrogation of the fifteenth amendment, which give the Negro the right of franchise.”

Another short article illustrates that trying to use federal laws to criminalize racial crimes has also long been an uphill battle. Under the headline Aimed at Lynching with the subhead Sweeping Measure Introduced by the Colored Congressman reads “Washington, January 20th. — Representative White, of North Carolina, the colored representative in the House, today introduced a bill for “the protection of all citizens of the United States against mob violence,” etc.

It provides that all persons shall be protected from being murdered, tortured

or burned to death by mobs known as ‘lynching bees,’ whether spontaneous or premeditated, and all parties participating or abetting in such affairs are guilty of treason against the United States Government and subject to prosecution in the United States courts.”

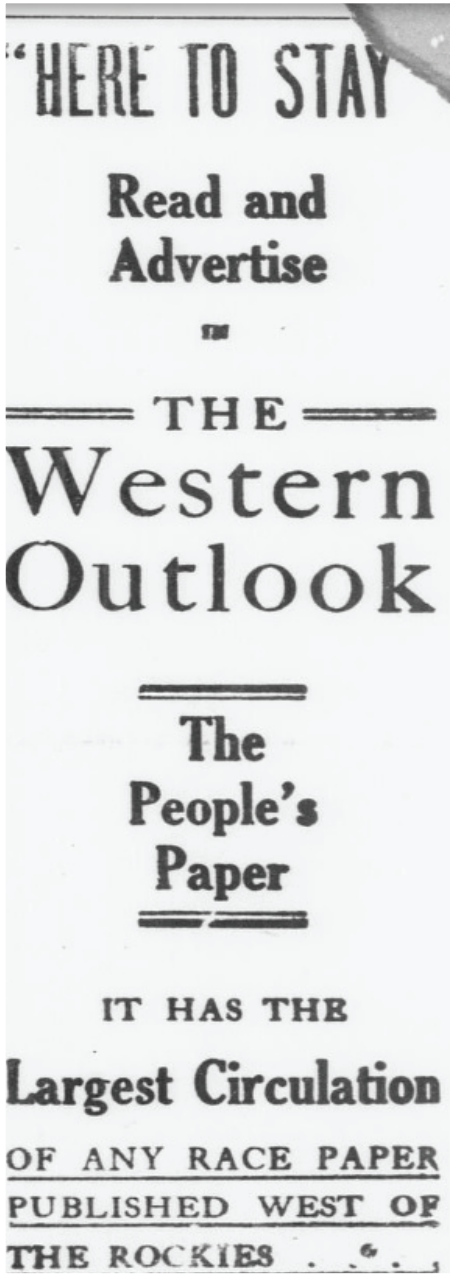
An apparently related item on page three is headlined An Anti-Lynching Petition and states “A petition, handsomely bound, and signed by 3,200 colored persons, asking for such legislation as will protect the colored men of this country from the ‘barbarous practice of lynching and burning,’ and which was presented in the Senate on Tuesday, Jan. 16, by Mr. Cullom of Illinois, caused an interesting debate. In the course of the discussion, Mr. Chandler, the chairman of the committee on privileges and elections, thought it desirable to be perfectly frank.

“There is no power in Congress,” said he, “to prevent or punish crimes in the various States. If the States do not punish crimes, for the punishment of which they have enacted laws, no Federal law can take the place of useless State laws. Mr. Chandler added that there is no Federal law under which the violator of even the suffrage law could be punished.”

While such news would probably make today’s front pages, the items were inside. The front page ran mainly feature stories, such as lengthy pieces on how to build your own windmill for pumping groundwater and the history and use of chopsticks. These were accompanied by a compendium of short news items from around the world.

**Fast forward 15 years**  
Fifteen years later, the Jan. 2, 1915 edition led with a feature on LONELY MIDWAY ISLAND where two dozen men and women were stationed, connected to the rest of the world only by a telegraph cable and a supply ship that arrives every three months. In 1942, the island was the center of a massive air battle between the U.S. and Japanese navies, leading to the destruction of much of Japan’s ship-based air attack capability.

The front page also featured ads from the Oakland Bank of Savings, offering 4 percent interest on savings



accounts, and “High Grade Beers” from Oakland’s Golden West Brewing Co., “The most soothing, bracing beverage brewed.” Southern Pacific touted three trains daily to Portland, Tacoma and Seattle, with “Mount Lassen in Plain View from Car Windows.”

The first item on page 2 is this perspective: “Our race equipment is not complete. Every colored man with a purpose who finds it necessary to come in contact with a certain class of white men should carry with him a pair of leather knee-pads. It differs not whether it be a Democratic Wilson or a Progressive Roosevelt, you cannot properly absorb their wisdom unless on your hands and knees. They tell us we will have to



use pads for 100 years to come.”

At the bottom of page 3, an item from the Fresno Republican headlined No Lynching Excuse reads: “Every report of Negro lynching in the South demonstrates the fictitious nature of the usual excuse. Shreveport parish, Louisiana, for instance, just reports its eighth lynching within the year. Seven of these eight lynchings were for supposed murder and robbery. In only one case was there any charge of the offence for which lynching is usually justified. The other cases were all sheer and unmixed barbarism.

“There is no more excuse for lynching a Negro for murder or stealing than there is for lynching a white man for the same crimes. The law provides its sure and effective remedy in both cases and in Louisiana at least there is little danger of a guilty Negro escaping.

“Lynching does not prevent or even lessen crime: it merely brutalizes the population. Its only actual explanation is the feeling that Negro criminals are not entitled to be punished by the law...”

The April 17, 1915 edition contained a short item reprinted from the Oakland Tribune that spoke to race in sports and underscored the rivalry between Oakland and San Francisco after a boxing match between reigning champ Jack Johnson, who was Black, and Jess Willard, touted as a “Great White Hope.”

“One of the excitable newspapers in San Francisco (a city where excitement comes easy) declares in tremendous head-lines, anent the victory of Jess Willard over Jack Johnson, “that the honor of the white race is saved.” Behind this bit of hysterics is the curious conception that somehow there is involved an issue of real seriousness in the question of supremacy in the prize ring of a white man as compared with a black man. This idea has long prevailed in certain circles without support either in logic or experience. . .Has anybody ever been able to discover that the honor of one race or another has been in any wise involved in this competition? The thing is ridiculous. Our San Francisco contemporary would do well to calm its mind.”

Many of the pages through the years

# WESTERN OUTLOOK

VOL. XXXVI    SAN FRANCISCO AND OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 1927    NO. 14

## OSCAR HUDSON

Arrived in New York

**WARNS NEGROES WITHOUT FUNDS TO STAY AWAY FROM THE BLACK REPUBLIC**

Amsterdam News, N. Y.

After spending what he describes as the most delightful trip of his life Oscar Hudson, a prominent California attorney, arrived from Liberia last Tuesday. Soon after his arrival in Monrovia, the long desired Liberian national bank was made a fact. The bank was capitalized at \$1,000,000. Officials desire that at least 40 per cent. of the stock be subscribed for by American Negroes. He says there are many Western Negroes stranded there which has caused the Liberian government to issue orders to deny passports to emigrants without funds. Mr. Hudson will remain in New York for about two weeks before leaving for San Francisco. Besides being an attorney, he is also a poet.

Attorney William Patterson received his early training in Mr. Hudson's office; also the late F. McCants Stewart.

## OSCAR J. RAMEY

In a Class of His Own

About sixteen years ago there arrived in this city from New Orleans, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Ramey and family, two boys and a girl. "Joe" as the boys call him, after graduating from the Oakland Hi. got the idea in his head that he would like to be a photographer. His mother encouraged him to the extent of buying a kodak. He began taking pictures of his school friends and developing them.



## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

### COSMOS SOCIAL CLUB

Of San Francisco

Another year has rolled around and another milestone has been passed in social events since the above named popular club of San Francisco sent New Year's greetings to its friends and Merry Christmas to its members. It is not necessary to state how the club was organized but we will briefly state that on Feb. 12, 1918, a number of gentlemen including Messrs. Lewis, Lashley, and J. Barnett, entertained a prominent visitor to the city, Mr. Cowen, of Central America, and it was from this congenial gathering that the Cosmos Social club idea sprang forth, and this club is now enjoying the most progressive era of its existence, and has proven to be the longest lived organization of its kind in the history of San Francisco. It is composed of some of the most prominent members of the race—residents of the bay cities, and its honorary membership list includes widely known celebrities, such as Chandler Owen, editor; Charles Gilpin, actor; Mme. Sadie Cochran Chadwick, lyric soprano, and Wm. Farrell, composer.

Through the untiring efforts of its wise-awake president, Wm. Lashley the following celebrities were entertained by the club during the past year: William Robinson, the noted terpsichorean artist; Captain W. P. Sedee, special attache to Abyssinia during King Menelik's regime, and Hon. Tso-Yan Wang, the world renowned Chinese educator of Fekin. We have felt honored by the privilege of being host to these and other distinguished guests, but expect to rise to higher planes of social activity during the ensuing year.

The club is governed by a board of directors, which, in co-operation with its eight-term president, Wm. H. Lashley, has elevated the status of the club to an enviable position among the clubs of the Pacific coast. Its anniversary reception, given at the California Women's Club, is recognized as the outstanding annual

social event of the bay cities' social calendar.

They have a very efficient secretary in the person of Mrs. Gertrude Hobson, and that means everything to a club



## MRS. W. A. BUTLER

Who Leads the Ten Columns in the Drive for Bringing in the Post Members to the N. A. A. C. P.



## SIR S. W. GREEN

Supreme Chancellor

Who is making Pethum history by erection of the \$100,000 temple in Chicago. All members of N. A. A. C. P. and O. O. F. of California should subscribe for one share of stock. Write the Grand Chancellor of your State about it.

## THE EDITOR'S REWARD

The editor died and went to heaven, But stood outside the gate, But he hadn't the nerve to knock. And thought that he would wait Till some other mortals came along. He'd see what they would do. And if they entered the pearly gate, He thought he might slip through. He watched the vast procession pass Up to the portals wide. While Peter told some they were up too high. And others he took inside. The editor, weary of waiting so long. Finally got in line To see if Peter would accept him then. Or would with thanks decline. His eyes filled to the brim; He shivered and shook in agony. Knowing his chances were slim. "Ah, ha!" said Peter, "an editor here!" (He laughed with pure delight, "Why certainly, you may come right in; For all you did was write.") —O. N. Smith, Oakland, Cal.

## NEW YEAR HOPE

That—The Home for Aged and Tired will see another angel like I saw Kline-Newman.

also had short jokes, like this from July 22, 1916:

“The Value of Learning.” A precocious child who had been attending one of the public kindergartens fell from a ladder. Her mother caught her up from the ground in terror, exclaiming: ‘O darling, how did you fall?’ ‘Vertically’ replied the child, without a second’s hesitation.”

At the very bottom of page 3 of the same edition is this item: ‘Birth of a Nation’ Loses Fight. COLUMBUS, Ohio.—Due to the matchless argument of the

State’s attorney-general E. C. Turner, the suit brought by the ‘Birth of a Nation’ films to compel the State board of censors to give the film company a permit to show in Ohio, was dismissed by the State supreme court. Colored people in Ohio are greatly indebted to Mr. Turner for the fight he made, which finally and for all times bars the ‘Birth of a Nation’ films from Ohio.”

#### Last words

The last chronological issue in the North Texas University archive was

published May 26, 1928. By this time, the front page was filled with local news items, including a note about a smoker at the Athens Lodge of the Improved Benevolent Protective Order of Elks of the World (a Black fraternal organization modeled on the all-white Elks Club), at which 150 guests dined on squab, chicken, peas, mashed potatoes, spaghetti, French rolls and coffee.

Another item announced a fund-raising effort to rebuild the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Berkeley. The church, located at McGee and Stuart streets, “was gutted by fire of unknown origin several weeks ago.”

On the editorial page, several items still resonate loudly today, including the use of firearms by police and disillusionment among younger generations.

The lead paragraph reads “It looks as though citizens will have to be protected from the guardians of the peace. It is a question whether men who are so ready to use their guns should be entrusted with the authority to carry arms.”

A second item addresses recent graduates of the University of California at Berkeley: “The University of California has just turned out its usual grist of young men and women who will go forth with the idea that the world is waiting to be conquered. It is too bad that many will be disillusioned when they go up against things that are and not what they seem. To those students whose influential connections will smooth their way to success, the road will not be so rugged.

“The student of our group who dedicates his life to the high ideals of service and devotion to racial solidity will be the future leaders of the coming race in this country. Let us hope that our young people have visioned the future, and that the foundation of their education has been laid so deep and enduring in honesty and clean living that they may be living monuments to the less fortunate of our group. Discard that air of superior complex towards your fellows who do not have diplomas. Remember, there is such a thing as an educated fool. Avoid shortcuts to success. It were better that you have the confidence of your fellow man than to be objects of distrust and suspicion.”

## Black newspapers have a long history in the Bay Area

The Western Outlook, co-founded by Walter Maddox, was one of a number of newspapers focusing on the Black community in the Bay Area and other parts of California, stretching back to the early days of statehood.

Sean Dickerson, the acting archivist at the African American Museum & Library at Oakland, said that archives of the Black press are critical to telling the story of civil rights in California. Among the museum’s collection is an archive of Western Outlook issues from the latter part of its existence.

“Many people think that the history of Blacks in the state began with the great migration during World War II and that it is mostly a post-war story,” Dickerson said. “But African Americans were here from the start, and preserved copies of the Western Outlook and other papers help track their experience over the years.”

In an article posted on the Colored Conventions Project website created by a history class at Occidental College, Lindsay Drapkin described the first two such papers that were published in the Bay Area or elsewhere in Northern California.

The first, established in 1856, was The Mirror of the Times, which grew out of the first of three California Colored Conventions, held in 1855. More than 200 of these conventions were held across the U.S., offering opportunities for free-born and formerly enslaved Blacks to organize and strategize for racial justice.

Unfortunately, the paper ceased publication in 1858 when the publisher, frustrated with the lack of progress for Black in the Golden State, joined other Blacks in moving to Canada.

Subsequent papers included The Pacific Appeal, launched in 1862, and The Elevator, which was also publishing at the same time.

The weekly Western Appeal was

founded later and its publication overlapped with the Outlook. It was founded in Minnesota in 1885 and eventually expanded to six editions across the country. In an interview with the FoundSF history website, Thomas C. Fleming recalled “I had seen that paper when I first came to California in 1919 because you would see copies of it from Oakland all the way up to Sacramento and all the other small towns in the Sacramento Valley where there were Blacks living.”

The California edition was owned and edited by George Watkins Sr. Fleming himself went on to become editor of the Sun-Reporter newspaper in San Francisco between 1944-94.

Another Bay Area paper targeting the Black community was the San Francisco Spokesman, a weekly newspaper published by John Pittman, who was a Black graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley.

“One of the things that attracted the attention of a lot of Blacks in the Bay Area was one column that was by John’s lady friend Gladys, called “I Have Eyes,” recalled Fleming, who began his newspaper career writing for the Spokesman. “Any little gossip, whether it was dirty or clean, she would put it in this column. It was about what people were doing in the bars and other places like that. Well, a lot of people bought that paper, quite a few anyway, to see if their name was in there.”

Today, the Oakland Post carries on the tradition of covering the Black community in the East Bay, along with its sister papers, the Berkeley Tri-City Post, the Richmond Post, the San Francisco Post and the South County Post. The weekly Sun-Reporter, founded in 1944, continues to publish in San Francisco. The San Francisco Bay View has been published since 1976.