

## Black History Month

### P continued

popularity of the "Dam News" outside its home in Harlem.

*Pittsburgh Courier.* A man who made his living as a security guard, Edwin Nathaniel Harleston, started this paper in January 1910. Before the year was out, however, he pulled out of the enterprise. The Courier's new chief was the attorney who had handled its incorporation, Robert L. Vann, who made this newspaper the smart and extremely popular

### P for Professional Black

#### Baseball

By CLAUD ANDERSON, Ed.D.

On April 10, 1947, Jackie Robinson broke the color-barrier when he left the Kansas City Monarchs to join the Brooklyn Dodgers, an all-white National League team. Although Moses Fleetwood Walker, a Black man,

had been a catcher in the American Baseball League in 1884, Jackie Robinson was the first Black baseball player in modern baseball. He was an outstanding player and the first Black player in the white Baseball Hall of Fame. Other Black baseball players and fans followed Jackie to the white baseball leagues. Within a few years, Black baseball leagues and teams disappeared. Black America had traded away its baseball leagues, teams, hundreds of players, equipment, support staffs, buildings, and hundreds of thousands of fans just to get one Black onto a white team.

### R for Rhythm and Blues

By SCHOMBURG CENTER

Rhythm and Blues, also known as R&B, is a catchall phrase used to describe several styles of music produced by African American musicians and intended mainly for an African American audience. The term came into vogue during the 1940s as an alternative to the term *race music*. At this time, the main practitioners of R&B were small combos that often added jazz and blues elements to the popular

songs of the day. The presence of a strong dance rhythm distinguished the work of R&B artists from the styles played by blues and jazz musicians. Rhythm and blues also had a distinctly urban style, reflecting the desire of many young African Americans to distance themselves from the rural associations of the traditional blues. Successful performers emerging from this tradition included the saxophonist and band leader Louis Jordan and "blues shouters" such as Big Joe Turner, La Vern Baker, Ruth Brown, Big Mama Thornton, and Wynonie Harris.

### R for Rosewood Massacre

By CLAUD ANDERSON, Ed.D.

Something terrible had happened in the little Black Florida town of Rosewood in 1923. A mass murder of Blacks took place. The massacre started with a lynching and ended with the entire town burned to the ground, its middle-class Black residents killed or chased into the swamps.

Nearly a century ago, Rosewood was a town of about 200 Black people. The massacre of Blacks started when a white woman in a nearby town claimed to have been raped by a Black man. A mob of armed white men headed straight for Rosewood.

They knew that because of gun control laws, most Black communities were unarmed and defenseless. For a week the white men ravaged and burned the Black town of Rosewood. Newspaper reports from the time listed eight dead, six Blacks and two Whites. But reports of mass graves filled with Black bodies persisted through the years.

Some sources charged that more than 100 Blacks were slain. No one will ever know the true number of the dead. But the property records could not be clearer. Land that had been owned by Black men and women was confiscated and sold for taxes to White buyers. The Black families of Rosewood lost all they had spent their lifetime earning.



African Americans were excluded from the professional basketball leagues that sprang up during the 1920s and 1930s, but Black teams were able to barnstorm against Whites throughout the country. Though Jackie Robinson (shown above) is properly credited with breaking the color line in modern major-league baseball by joining the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947, he was not the first African American to play in the major leagues. That distinction belongs to Moses Fleetwood "Fleet" Walker, a college educated catcher.

### R for Roaring Twenties

By JANUS ADAMS

Paris in the Roaring Twenties. Life between the wars, when Black was in and hot, "when people with money but no talent helped people with talent but no money," when European nobility hobnobbed with American royalty – the Kings and Dukes and Earls of jazz – and life was a "beautiful thing" for the stylishly bored, rakishly disenchanted, and Blacks who had known better and lived far worse in the USA.

When the stock market crashed, it ushered in the Great Depression of the 1930s. It was the moment that brought the dancing,

glory days of the Paris Noir Black chic to an end. It was grand while it lasted. Before long, Hitler had invaded Poland, and Paris night life saw the light of day. In 1939, a new play by white playwright William Saroyan, *The Time of Your Life*, was the toast of New York. Paris had been that. For now it was done. *C'est la vie.*

### S for Scottsboro Boys

By TONYA BOLDEN

On March 25, 1931, a scuffle broke out among some young men copping a ride on a freight train bound for Memphis, Tennessee. It was a black-white thing, back of which was probably

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