

## Entries

ABBOTT, ROBERT S. JOURNALIST

**Born:** November 28, 1868, Frederica, GA

**Education:** Beach Institute, Claflin College, 1886–89; Hampton Institute, graduated 1893 (printing), 1896 (academics); Kent College of Law LL.B., 1899

**Died:** February 22, 1940, Chicago, IL

Establishing the *Chicago Defender* in 1905, Abbott made it the largest and most outspoken black weekly before the 1920s.

Initially, he printed, folded, and sold copies. By 1912 he had expanded to paperboy deliveries and newsstand sales for a circulation of 20,000. To sell ads and collect news, he solicited churches and organizations on the South Side, a destination of southern black migrants. Circulation began spiraling with his coverage of the Brownsville, Texas riot (1906). Accused of killing one white man and wounding another, three companies of the all-black 25th Infantry Regiment were discharged dishonorably without court martial. Abbott's editorials denounced army racism.

His reputation soared. He vitalized newspaper publishing with an eight-column, eight-page extra on Booker T. Washington's death (1915). Decrying segregation, disfranchisement, and lynching in the South, he initiated "The Great Northern Drive" editorial series (1917). Print runs peaked at 230,000 during World War I and averaged 180,000 after the "Red Summer" of 1919, which witnessed twenty-five major riots, including the one in Chicago. A member of the Chicago Commission on Race Relations, whose report deplored that conflict, he also founded *Abbott's*

*Monthly* (1933). In the meantime, unlike most of its competitors, the *Defender* raised revenue mainly from subscriptions.

#### Further Reading

Reed, Christopher Robert. *Knock at the Door of Opportunity: Black Migration to Chicago, 1900–1919*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2014.  
 Rice, Myiti Sengstacke. *Chicago Defender*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2012.

#### ABELE, JULIAN F.      ARCHITECT

**Born:** April 29, 1881, Philadelphia, PA

**Education:** Cheyney University, 1896; Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art, 1898; University of Pennsylvania, B.S., 1902

**Died:** April 23, 1950, Philadelphia, PA

The first black graduate of Penn’s Architecture Department, Abele was the first black architect to impact large building design. In spite of the “color line” at Penn, he won designing awards and was the Architectural Society president in his senior year. But after graduating, he was ignored by Philadelphia architects, except for nightwork. To survive, he exhibited designs, moved to Idaho with his sister and her husband, and became a postal clerk. Also, with help from Philadelphia architect Horace Trumbauer, he traveled in Europe, studied Revival architecture, and honed a distinctive style.

Trumbauer hired Abele in 1906. “I hire my brains,” he stated. Abele soon became chief designer; Trumbauer approved and signed blueprints. After Trumbauer’s death in 1938, Abele co-headed the firm but worked behind the scenes. In 1941 the all-white American Institute of Architects elected him to membership. His contributions include the Philadelphia Museum of Art; Widener Library, Harvard University; and fifty-three buildings, notably Duke Chapel, at Duke University. Reportedly, when he visited the campus during construction, “a Durham North Carolina hotel ... refused to give him a room ..., while accommodating his white associate” (King, p. 1). Abele’s portrait is in the foyer of Duke’s administrative Allen Building.

#### Further Reading

King, William E. “Abele, Julian Francis (1881–1950).” *North Carolina Builders & Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000277>.

### *Affirmative Action*

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Tift, Susan E. “Out of the Shadows: After Decades of Obscurity, African American Architect Julian Abele is Finally Getting Recognition for His Contributions to Some of 20th-Century America’s Most Prestigious Buildings.” *Smithsonian Magazine* (February 2005). Retrieved from [www.smithsonianmag.com/history/out-of-theshadows-85569503/](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/out-of-theshadows-85569503/).

#### AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Executive Order 10925 (1961) created the Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, which required federal contractors to “take affirmative action” against discrimination. The 1964 Civil Rights Act banned discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, and sex (later including sexual identity and physical condition). It also formed the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC); affirmative action became shorthand for ensuring equal economic, educational, and political opportunities.

African Americans pursued equality in education, employment, housing, and more. The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and National Women’s Law Center, among other groups, provided crucial assistance. In the meantime, federal courts began a retreat from remedies for inequalities such as de facto segregated schools. In 1974 the Supreme Court disallowed a lower court’s order requiring that suburban school districts bus students as part of an adjacent urban district’s desegregation plan. Opponents called affirmative action “reverse discrimination” or “race preferences” as it saw growing opposition. However, the second Clinton administration “vowed to ‘mend not end’ affirmative action.” It did so largely by reducing cash payments and job-training programs that crucially helped welfare recipients. In a 1997 Gallup Poll, 79 percent of whites believed black applicants had an equal opportunity to be hired, compared to 51 percent of blacks.

[See also *Bakke v. Board of Regents of California* (1978); Civil Rights Act of 1964.]

#### Further Reading

Anderson, Terry H. *The Pursuit of Fairness: A History of Affirmative Action*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Golland, David Hamilton. *Constructing Affirmative Action: The Struggle for Equal Employment Opportunity*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2011.

## AFRICA

Motherland of African Americans, Africa is the second largest continent. Her 12 million square miles could encircle Europe, China, India, New Zealand, the United States, and Argentina. Her borders are the Atlantic Ocean (west), Mediterranean Sea (north), Red Sea (northeast), Indian Ocean (southeast), and offshore islands. She contains four major lakes, notably 4,600-mile Victoria; thirteen rivers, including the Nile, the world's longest river; a few mountains, including Mt. Kilimanjaro; minerals (copper, diamonds, oil, uranium); plants; and wildlife. There are five climate zones: Mediterranean, northern shore to the Cape of Good Hope; Desert, the Sahara (world's largest), Namid, and Kalahari deserts; Sub-Desert or Sahel, a semiarid region below the Sahara between Cape Verde and the Red Sea; Savanna, flat grasslands from Senegal to Ethiopia (largest zone, it includes a tourist reserve); and Tropical Rain Forest, so-called "jungles" across West-Central Africa and Madagascar. Climate sustains fishing, hunting-and-gathering, farming, and herding livelihoods. Agricultural economies, mining, and service industries emerged ca. 1885–1990. Industrialization, including mass migrations to cities, has expanded since 1945. Casablanca (Morocco), Kinshasa (Zaire), Cairo (Egypt), and Lagos (Nigeria), respectively, report 4 to 21 million inhabitants today. Farming is the main pursuit of rural dwellers.

The current population (1.69 billion) is diverse, especially by race (color) and ethnicity (language, religion). Ethnic groups or tribes share a common ancestry, homeland, and livelihood. Aborigines or blacks comprise a 70 percent majority. Blacks constitute 800 ethnicities and speak 1,000 languages, most of them unwritten. Arabic, Amharic, Malagasy, and Swahili are spoken and written. Africans also have embraced European and other settler languages. Native linguistic areas are North Africa (Afro-Asiatic), Niger River bend to East Africa (Nilo-Saharan), West Africa (Niger Congo), Central Africa (Kordofonian); South Africa (Khoisian), and Madagascar (Austronesian). Africans honor ancestors, gods, and the land but differ in familial, religious, artistic, and political customs. They currently live in sixty-two nations and territories, composing 24 percent of the geographical regions represented in the United Nations. Theirs is "a continent in crisis" and they use varied strategies to combat disease, hunger, war, and genocide.

Africa is central in human history. Anthropologists have found the oldest human remains (5.8 to 1.7 million years) in East Africa's Great Rift Valley. They believe that humans first lived there before migrating internally

and to the Near East, Europe, Asia, and the Western Hemisphere. Users of fire, natives created bone, stone, bronze, and iron weapons for survival while domesticating animals and plants. They fished, hunted, grew barley or herded sheep, and participated in trans-Saharan trade. After 2500 BC the Sahara began to dry up, thus gradually isolating sub-Saharan peoples.

However, between 4000 BC and 750 AD, native peoples forged states, armies, and civilizations. A crossroads of races and cultures, including Arab and Greek, Egypt developed horticulture, architecture, and hieroglyphic writing. Until the Greek conquest in 332 BC, Egypt's pharaohs controlled an empire from the Upper Nile to the Iberian Peninsula. Kush, Ethiopia, and Nubia mastered the Lower Nile, where tribal faiths, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam coexisted. In the northwest, Carthage advanced its economy and dictated much of Euro-African commerce; it fell to Rome in 202 BC.

Wars raged in the Medieval (500–1500 AD) and Modern (post-1500) periods, as firearms increasingly were used. By 733 Muslims dominated large parts of the Near East, North Africa, and Spain. Muslim empires (Morocco, Algiers, Egypt) eventually invaded the “Land of the Blacks.” Ghana, Mali, and Songhay, the land's respective rulers, accommodated Muslims in the western Sudan. Great Zimbabwe ruled southern Africa. Despite the presence of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, black religions endured. These combined faith in a High God (creator of mankind), animism (lesser deities or spirits in nature), and ancestor worship. Slaves mostly were war prisoners and aliens, held in service but allowed some rights. A second-generation bondman could not be sold, except as a penalty for a serious crime. A member of his master's family, he could marry, receive part of the harvest, and rise to familial or tribal leadership.

Slavery persisted. The Arab-driven Saharan Slave Trade (650–1500) and East African Slave Trade (900–1600) delivered an estimated 17 million blacks to North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. The European-run Atlantic Slave Trade (1502–1888) transported 12 million blacks to the Caribbean and Americas. This trade paved the way for colonialism (1885–1980) as Belgium, England, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Spain conquered, partitioned, and governed Africa by force. They instituted slave labor, segregation, and white supremacy. Nevertheless, black resistance led to decolonization (1945–1995), independence, international sanctions, and the abolition of apartheid.

Sub-Saharan West Africa was home to most African American forebears, who largely occupied coastal and inlands from Senegal to Angola. Three million were carried across the Atlantic, called the Middle Passage,

to the British Caribbean and North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries alone. Captured at age eleven in Nigeria, Olaudah Equiano (1745–1797) was one of fifteen known survivors who wrote of captives' suffering on the crossing, publishing his account in 1789. Of 12 million overall, the Congo-Angola subregion shipped 25% of them (Bakongo, Mbundi, Tio); Bight of Biafra 23% (Yoruba, Fon, Igbo); Gold Coast 16% (Akan, Ewe); Senegambia 13% (Wolof); Sierra Leone (Mende) 6%; Bight of Benin (Aja) 4%; Mozambique (Sena) and Madagascar (Merina) 2%. Many spoke “‘Bantu languages’” such as Yoruba, Kongo, Swahili, and Zulu. Griots (oral historians) conserved tribes' memories in proverbs, songs, and tales. Peoples lived in villages of communal subsistence as well as economies based on a barter or monetary system.

Before their New World diaspora, West Africans pursued a variety of occupations. Fishing was the primary means of subsistence among coastal dwellers. Savanna inhabitants were hunters, herdsmen (cattle, goats), and farmers. Using a hoe or spade, they harvested crops such as cotton, millet, and rice. To wit, every adult Ashanti labored in the fields. Dahomey assigned fieldwork only to women, who represented households' wealth as wives, co-wives, child bearers, and workers. Frequently, women were withheld from slave buyers. Although the Yoruba required fieldwork of everyone, men cleared the fields and broke the soil. Education, training (particularly artisans), and commercial life flourished in towns. Niani, capital of Mali, had Arabic schools after 1300. By 1415 Songhay boasted the city of Timbuktu, site of the University of Sankore, a hub of Muslim scholarship. Timbuktu, Gao, and Jenne were intercontinental markets. Besides farm produce and slaves, exports consisted of artisans' wares in basketry, ivory, metallurgy, pottery, textiles, or wood carvings. Yoruba craftsmen and women influenced town councils. Economic activity was comparable to that of Mesopotamia, China, India, Mexico, or Peru.

West African societies valued ideals of kinship, hierarchy, and interdependence. Every community, district, and nation contained interlinked social classes. These included People of Authority (chiefs, elders, captains, kings, nobles, and royal families); Merchants; the Common People; Servants and Slaves; Women; Children; and Occupational Castes (priests, blacksmiths, doctors, griots, or musicians). The king, sometimes advised by a queen mother, exercised absolute authority. He could enslave, exile, or execute any subject for murder, adultery, rebellion, or idolatry. His will prevailed in the judiciary, military, taxation, and trade spheres.

*African Blood Brotherhood (ABB)*

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Communalism was the basis of society. Communities allotted land to a kin group or lineage by means of its ancestry of fathers (patrilineal) or mothers (matrilineal). Lineages comprised a clan, its members inhabiting “extended family” or multigenerational households of married and unmarried adults and children. Members had kinship obligations. Spirits of the dead guided the eldest Dahomean male, for example, who supervised the family’s fields, granaries, burials, and plural marriages. When he died, his next oldest brother or son succeeded him. Slaves helped account for a household’s size, production, and social status. Bondwomen were favored over bondmen, but a household valued both. Slaves’ sons could emerge to be heads of households or state authorities. Human sacrifice occurred in sacred rituals, but not universally. Offerings of goats or chickens were customary. The harvest or the naming of a newborn child marked an occasion for drumming, singing, and dancing “in a broken counter-clockwise circle” (Stuckey, 1987, p. 12).

[See also Afro-American Studies; Family; Slavery.]

Reference

Stuckey, Sterling. *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 12.

Further Reading

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- Handler, Jerome S. “Survivors of the Middle Passage: Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in British America.” *Slavery & Abolition*, 23 (April 2002): 25–56.
- Smallwood, Arwin D., with Jeffrey M. Elliot. *The Atlas of African-American History and Politics: From the Slave Trade to Modern Times*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998.

AFRICAN BLOOD BROTHERHOOD (ABB)

Responding to race riots and lynchings during the Red Summer of 1919, Harlem activist and journalist Cyril V. Briggs founded the African Blood Brotherhood for African Liberation and Redemption (ABB), a radical group.

ABB not only advocated armed self-defense and self-determination but also coalesced with the Communist Party USA, fusing black nationalism and communism. With never more than 3,000 members, many of them Caribbean nationals, it boasted a core of intellectuals, including

Jamaica-born writer Claude McKay. Until its demise in the 1920s, ABB was a paramilitary organization. Locally based affiliates, known as posts, received orders from and reported to a central command or Supreme Council in New York City. Posts helped protect and uplift their northern, southern, and West Indian communities.

[See also Black nationalism.]

#### Further Reading

- Kuykendall, Ronald A. “African Blood Brotherhood, Independent Marxist During the Harlem Renaissance.” *Western Journal of Black Studies* 26 (2002): 16–21.
- James, Winston. *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America*. New York: Verso, 1998.

#### AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES

Covering African, Africana, and African American subjects, Afro-American Studies comprise research and education in black history and culture. It evolved from the Negro history movement (early 1900s), notably historian Carter G. Woodson’s work. Its chief promoters include the Woodson-created Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (1915), African Heritage Studies Association (1969), and National Council for Black Studies (1975). The council seeks “to establish standards of excellence and provide development guidance” ([www.ncbsonline.org/about\\_ncbs](http://www.ncbsonline.org/about_ncbs)) for colleges and universities’ programs. San Francisco State College launched the first nonblack college program in 1968.

Subjects and instruction span the humanities and behavioral and social sciences. Slavery examines slave systems beside slaves’ experiences and freedom struggles in Africa and the African diaspora. Cultural studies examine Africanisms (African cultural survivals), including Ebonics (black English), Afro-Christianity, and music. Also examined are anti-black racism, plus blacks’ economic, political, religious, and social institutions, organizations, and movements. Many researchers and teachers advocate Afrocentrism or study and teaching from an African-centered perspective. Programs rather than departments are the norm at the 400 colleges and universities now offering majors and minors in the field. One hundred and forty of them award the bachelor’s degree, twenty-four the master’s degree, and five the doctoral degree.

[See also Education; Scholarship; Woodson, Carter G.]



## Agriculture

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### Further Reading

- Rojas, Fabio. *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007.
- Rooks, Noliwe M. *White Money/Black Power: The Surprising History of African American Studies and the Crisis of Race in Higher Education*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006.

### AGRICULTURE

A mirror to African American history, agriculture reflects the long struggle for racial and economic equality.

For two and one-half centuries, most African and Afro-American slaves worked in fields. Among them were rice and tobacco cultivators; fishers, hunters, trappers, and animal herders; and forest cutters and other forestry workers. They produced staple crops (tobacco, rice, indigo, wheat, corn, peanuts) and forged families. Some were permitted to have garden plots and barter their produce, thus earning money to purchase freedom and property. Gradual abolition in the post-Revolutionary North saw many ex-slaves buying farms and creating livelihoods, even as “King Cotton” rose in the South. Most free blacks also lived in plantation areas. Treated as “slaves without masters,” they survived as farmhands and tenants. Sometimes they acquired land and livestock; a small propertied elite held servants and slaves. Slavery, class privilege, and white racism developed side by side.

In the wake of the Civil War and emancipation, ex-slaves equated freedom with self and land ownership and literacy. Thousands earned wages as Union laborers; their children attended missionary-run schools; and freed communities evolved. Tens of thousands of freedpeople farmed family plots at Roanoke Island, North Carolina, Port Royal, South Carolina, and other government farms. But these opportunities ended when Congress authorized the Freedmen’s Bureau (1865) and restored abandoned lands to ex-Rebel owners. Freedpeople still hoped for “40 acres and a mule,” or leases on homesteads elsewhere. But most signed Bureau-supervised contracts with cash-strapped landlords, usually as sharecroppers. A sharecropper contributed his labor and half the fertilizer to earn half of the crop. Landlords exacted high interest and often cheated. Sharecroppers who resisted landlords’ rules risked expulsion, whipping, and sometimes death.

Sharecropping mirrored the crop-lien system, which kept farmers and tenants in a vicious cycle of debt. With consignment goods from northern mercantile firms, merchants “furnished” food and supplies; buyers used cash or their crops for credit. Every item in the store had two prices, one for cash and another, higher price for “time” customers who paid interest rates from 25 to 50 percent. Once he agreed to his first crop lien, a farmer of tenant rarely could “pay out.”

Racial violence shadowed blacks’ search for opportunity. In the “Exodus” of 1879 some 60,000 croppers migrated to Kansas, Oklahoma, and Indiana, where they suffered but also built towns and a foundation for progress. Black southerners reported 120,738 farms in 1890, amid farmers’ growing protest against the government’s pro-business policies. The 1.5 million-member Colored Farmers’ Alliance (1890), alongside the white Southern Farmers’ Alliance, joined the People’s Party (1891) or the Populist Party. Their move challenged Democrats’ control and fueled white campaigns of intimidation, murder, disfranchisement, and segregation. Nevertheless, blacks persevered. In 1910 they owned 218,972 farms totaling nearly 15,000,000 acres.

Interregional migrations continued (7 million southern blacks migrated circa 1914–70). Many nonmigrants, heeding Back to the Farm advocates, acquired farms, homes, and economic autonomy. Devastated by boll weevils, low prices, and the Depression-era collapse of cotton tenancy, most blacks embraced relief programs, such as the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, as thousands organized. A biracial Southern Tenant Farmers’ Union enrolled 30,000 members in six states between 1934 and 1940 alone. More and more blacks participated in community co-ops and NAACP branches. Churches, schools, fraternal, and women’s groups helped sustain a safety net for families and communities. Seven churches (six Baptist, one Holiness) and six Rosenwald Schools crucially sustained Tillery, North Carolina before the Resettlement Administration started a demonstration project there in 1934. Known as the Tillery Farms Project, it included 325 farms across 17,000 acres; 350 frame family houses with electricity and septic tanks; and 1,500 residents. The co-op owned a social center, grist mill, blacksmith shop, potato curing house, storage shed, and farm equipment. Residents chartered the Lower Halifax County NAACP in 1954.

Communities such as Tillery revealed the conditions plaguing rural blacks under Jim Crow as well as during the Civil Rights Movement, War on Poverty, and Urban Crisis (1945–80s). Land loss was a persistent problem. Black-owned acres aggregated 6,000,000 (40 percent of