### **Ohio History Connection**

## And Now, the News!

### Exhibiting Inclusion at the 1939 World's Fair

### INTRODUCTION:

Newspapers are often a key part of historical research. In the mid-1800s, World's Fairs (also known as World Expositions) were a way for nations around the world to communicate their recent advancements. Newspapers captured who was there, what was displayed, and how it was received by the world.

In this activity, students will examine newspaper clippings from the *Dayton Forum*, an African-American newspaper, to explore the first African-American exhibit held at a World's Fair in the United States. They will consider what role they had in creating the exhibit, what their intentions were, and what their participation at the World's Fair can tell us about American race relations on the eve of World War II.

This lesson plan may also serve as a jumping off point for National History Day and the 2021 contest theme of *Communication in History: The Key to Understanding.* 

### **GRADES:**

9 – 12

### **DURATION:**

60 minutes

### STANDARDS:

- High School Social Studies Standards: American History 21.
- High School English Language Arts Standards: RH.6-12.6; RH.6-12.9; and RI 7.1 8.1.
- High School Social and Emotional Learning Standards: B2; C1. 2.d; C3. 1.d; and E1.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- Students will work in groups to analyze newspaper articles to understand the past, evaluate different perspectives and reflect on potential biases.
- Students will explore the National History Day theme of *Communication in History: The Key to Understanding.*

### **VOCABULARY:**

- Exhibition: a public display of works of art or items of interest, held in a gallery, museum or trade fair.
- World Fair: large international events starting in the mid-1800s, which showcased a country's scientific, technological, and cultural advancements.



### **BACKGROUND ON LANGUAGE:**

The Ohio History Connection Collections are comprised of many culturally significant materials. Some contain offensive images, language or content which reflect the creators' views or those of the period in which they were created, written or recorded. Many are not appropriate by today's standards of respectful expression and actions. They serve as reminders of the importance of increased cultural competency, inclusion and equity. We present them in their historical context in line with our mission: "We spark discovery of Ohio's stories. Embrace the present, share the past and transform the future."

Throughout this lesson, students will encounter the word "Negro" in the article from the *Dayton Forum*. During the mid-20th century, many African Americans self-described as "Negro", a term which replaced "colored" in the 1920s, and would be challenged during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s with terms like "Black" and "African American." (Click here to learn more about the history of this term.)

In this lesson, students will analyze the newspaper articles and create a news broadcast about the information gleaned from those sources. In order to align with what is concerned culturally appropriate and respectful, when creating and delivering their broadcast students should not use the term "Negro", rather they should use the term "African American".

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Beginning in the mid-1800s, World's Fairs were large international events, which hosted exhibits from many different countries. These exhibits showcased a country's scientific, technological, and cultural advancements. The 1939-1940 World's Fair was held in New York City. At this time the United States was just coming out of the Great Depression, and in a few short years would be drawn into World War II. Despite this, the Fair's theme, "The World of Tomorrow", was an optimistic vision of the future. The theme focused on the power of technology and cooperation to improve people's lives. Exhibits like "Democracity" showed a futuristic city where people of all backgrounds, classes, and ethnicities worked together. This was in contrast to the rising hostilities between different groups in Europe.

Despite the Fair's theme of unity, historically, African Americans had little representation at the World's Fairs. In 1939, the New York World's Fair Committee offered African Americans an opportunity to display their own exhibits and contributions to society for one week only. These exhibitions would be displayed on the "American Common", a project celebrating the diverse backgrounds of American citizens.

This was the first type of exhibit showcasing African American art and culture in the United States. Some African Americans were also employed by the World's Fair. The NAACP and other civil rights groups, however, claimed that too few African Americans were employed compared to the number of white workers hired, and that the jobs that were filled by African Americans were mostly low-skilled.

### **ACTIVITY OUTLINE:**

- 1. Put students into small teams of no more than 4 students, give each the "To Have Negro Display at New York World's Fair" article. Next assign each team a topic to focus on and distribute the related article clippings:
  - a. Employment
  - b. Media
  - c. **Entertainment** (Instructor Note: These are long articles. Depending on your class/team assignments, you may want to split these up.)

- 2. Tell them they are going to work together to produce a 3-minute news program, including the headlines, special reports, interviews, perhaps some footage from a story (if students like acting!).
- 3. Their program should be based on news items from the papers, and everyone must be involved in some way.
- 4. Each team should act out their broadcast to the rest of the class.
- 5. For each team, ask them to reflect on the following questions: What was missing from their broadcast? What information would they need to round out their research to be as unbiased as possible?
- 6. Ask students to reflect on the following questions, either by creating a mock social media post or record themselves with a smartphone. Then discuss as a class: What can these articles tell us about African American participation at the fair? How does this fit within the larger context of American race relations on the eve of the Second World War?

### **SOURCES:**

#### General

#### **ARTICLE**

"To Have Negro Display at New York World's Fair" *The Dayton forum*. [volume] (Dayton, Ohio), 12 May 1939. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024234/1939-05-12/ed-1/seg-1/

## TO HAVE NEGRO DISPLAY AT NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR

Grover Whalen Agrees to Plan Which Proposes Showing Progress in all Lines Made by Negroes the Past 75 Years

NEW YORK CITY (ANP)-Last, be held on Thursday when Mr. Sunday as the great New York World's fair opened in a blaze of glory and in typical Manhattan su- lect its site at the fair. per-style, it was announced by a committee headed by George E. Wibecan, inspector in the office of Brooklyn Borough President Ingersoll that the World's Fair corporation had consented to a Negro exhibit at the big exposition.

Grover A. Whalen by members of the citizens' committee composed of Wibecan, Mrs. Maria C. Lawton, the Rev. George H. Sims and the Rev. S. V. Gumbs. The exhibit, it was explained, would depict all phases of Negro life and show racial progress in all lines of endeavor during the past 75 years. Scores of civic, business and religious groups in Harlem and other borough districts have campaigned for months state, among them Harlem's pride to have a Negro exhibit at the fair. the 369th Infantry, whose provision-It was said another meeting will

Whalen will discuss details of the exhibit with the committee and se-

It was also learned that a Chicago colored artist will have one of his paintings on display at the big exposition. A canvass by W. E. Scott, nationally-known muralist and former Rosenwald fellow, entitled "Inspiration," which for several years The announcement followed a has hung in the lounge room of Harconference held with Fair President lem branch YMCA, has been selected for showing in the YMCA building at the fair. The painting was chosen by a committee headed by Dwight Baum, architect of the fair's YMCA building.

> In last Sunday's colorful spectacle which marked the fair's opening, several Negro units occupied positions of prominence. A parade feature was selected marchers from various national guard units of the

> > (Continued on page eight)

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(Continued from page one)

al battalion in the line of march was commanded by Captain Walter A. Hume and 1st Lt. John Brown of Company E, and 2nd Lt. Fred Robinson of Company C.

Sunday night the Hall Johnson choir, famous "Green Pastures" choristers, sang in the Ford building on the regular broadcast hour. On Tuesday, at ceremonies marking opening of the YMCA building, the Southernaires, famed radio singers, were featured.

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The announcement followed a conference held with Fair President Grover A. Whalen by members of the citzens' committee composed of Wibecan, Mrs. Maria C. Lawton, the Rev. George H. Sims and the Rev. S. V. Gumbs. The exhibit, it was explained, would depict all phases of Negro life and show racial progress in all lines of endeavor during the past 75 years. Scores of civic, business, and religious groups in Harlem and other borough districts have campaigned for months to have a Negro exhibit at the fair.

It was said another meeting will be held on Thursday when Mr. Whalen will discuss details of the exhibit with the committee and select its site at the fair.

It was also learned that a Chicago colored artist will have one of his paintings on display at the big exposition. A canvass by W. E. Scott, nationally-known muralist and former Rosenwald fellow, entitled "Inspiration," which for several years has hung in the lounge room of Harlem Branch YMCA, has been selected for showing at the fair. The painting was chosen by a committee headed by Dwight Baum, architect of the fair's YMCA building.

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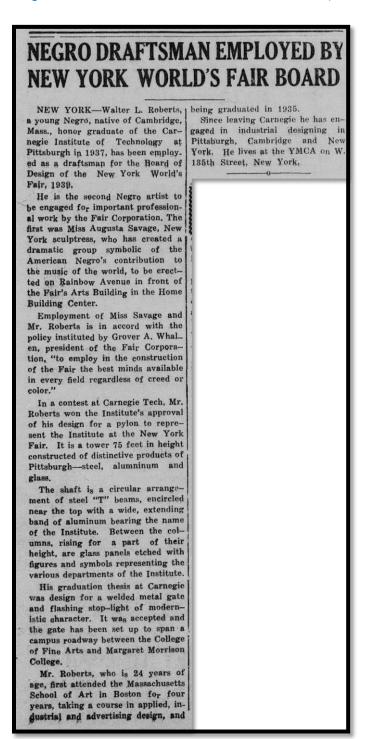
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### **Employment**

#### **ARTICLE**

"Negro Draftsman Employed By New York World's Fair Board" *The Dayton forum.* [volume] (Dayton, Ohio), 15 April 1938. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress.

https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024234/1938-04-15/ed-1/seq-1/



#### **TRANSCRIPT**

### NEGRO DRAFTSMAN EMPLOYED BY NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR BOARD

NEW YORK – Walter L. Roberts, a young Negro, native of Cambridge, Mass., honor graduate of the Carnegie Institute of Technology at Pittsburg in 1937, has been employed as a draftsman for the Board of Design of the New York World's Fair, 1939.

He is the second Negro artist to be engaged for important professional work by the Fair Corporation. The first was Miss Augusta Savage, New York sculptress, who has created a dramatic group symbolic of the American Negro's contribution to the music of the world, to be erected on Rainbow Avenue in front of the Fair Arts Building in the Home Building Center.

Employment of Miss Savage and Mr. Roberts is in accord with the policy instituted by Grover A. Whalen, president of the Fair Corporation, "to employ in the construction of the Fair the best minds available in every field regardless of creed or color."

In a contest at Carnegie Tech, Mr. Roberts won the Institute's approval of his deign for a pylon to represent the Institute at the New York Fair. It is a tower 75 feet in height constructed of distinctive products of Pittsburgh—steel, aluminum and glass.

The shaft is a circular arrangement of steel "T" beams, encircled near the top with a wide, extending band of aluminum bearing the name of the Institute. Between the columns, rising for a part of their height, are glass panels etched with figures and symbols representing the various departments of the Institute.

His graduation thesis at Carnegie was design for a welded metal gate and flashing stop-light of modernistic character. It was accepted and the gate has been set up to span a campus roadway between the College of Fine Arts and Margaret Morrison College.

Mr. Roberts, who is 24 years of age, first attended the Massachusetts School of Art in Boston for four years, taking a course in applied, industrial and advertising design, and being graduated in 1935.

Since leaving Carnegie he has engaged in industrial designing in Pittsburgh, Cambridge and New York. He lives at the YMCA on W 135<sup>th</sup> Street, New York.

#### **ARTICLE**

"Marian Anderson to Sing at N.Y Fair" and "Lily White" Harlem Hotel to Admit Negroes During World Fair" *The Dayton forum*. [volume] (Dayton, Ohio), 24 March 1939. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress.

https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024234/1939-03-24/ed-1/seq-5/

### MARIAN ANDERSON TO SING AT N. Y. FAIR

NEW YORK, March 21 (ANP)—
The New York World's Fair committee, through its guiding spirit, Grover Whalen, announced this week that Marian Anderson, internationally known contralto, who has been the center of a bitter controversy in Washington musical circles since being refused the use of the DAR Constitution hall, would appear in one of a series of concerts at the fair this summer.

Miss Anderson's concert will be

part of the fair's music festival, which will present world-famous soloists and orchestras at the fair's musical center. A definite date has not been set.

### "LILY WHITE" HARLEM HOTEL TO ADMIT NEGROES DURING WORLD FAIR

NEW YORK—(C)—It was announced at a church service Sunday that the Theresa hotel, 125th street and Seventh avenue, which has long been "lily white" in spite of being surrounded by Negroes, will admit Negro guests during the world fair influx to relieve the congestion. It is estimated that about 250,000 Negroes will visit New York during July and August, and already the YMCA and YWCA are reported to be booked solid with room reservations for those months.

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#### Media

### **ARTICLE**

"First Negro Press Group at World's Fair" *The Dayton forum*. [volume] (Dayton, Ohio), 04 Aug. 1939. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024234/1939-08-04/ed-1/seq-6/



#### **TRANSCRIPT**

NATIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

FIRST NEGRO PRESS GROUP AT WORLD'S FAIR

NEW YORK – (C) – The Ted Yates Press Association became the first colored press group to have a day at the New York World's Fair when they spent Monday, July 17 on the fair grounds. The Yates group was given every courtesy, including passes, guides, and free entrance to amusement places.

#### **ARTICLE**

"New York Fair Does Not Want Aid of Negro Press" The Dayton forum. [volume] (Dayton, Ohio), 12 April 1940. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024234/1940-04-12/ed-1/seq-1/

## **NEW YORK FAIR DOES NOT** WANT AID OF NEGRO PRESS

NEW YORK -(C)-In an inter- ried by the colored papers because view with the officials of the 1940 of the few Negroes employed by the New York World's Fair last week, Fair. This, too, was ignored. Calvin's Newspaper Service's reporter was informed that the Fair circulated, more than 6,000 people had not nor did it expect to appro- would be hired by the Fair, not inpriate any money for publicity in cluding those in private concessions. the Negro press. This, despite the fact that last year these same officials admitted that thousands of dollars were spent with white news agencies.

Among these present during the interview were scores of white newspaper men now employed by the Fair. It was admitted by one of these workers that he was getting a nice salary for writing news stories for the various white dailies. There wasn't one writer for the colored press on the staff. When questioned about it, the officials answered that they did not hire any last year and saw no reason why they should hire any this year.

It is understood that the Fair press and promotional department has on hand a list of Negro papers and plans to send free passes to them, hoping that this would be sufficient to obtain free publicity in the colored press.

It was pointed out by the reporter that unless the Fair officials provide to have some money given to the Negro press, the greater amount of publicity about the Fair would be unfavorable. To this the officials did no more than shrug their shoulders and laugh, They were then reminded of the adverse stories car-

According to the story already It is admitted that a number of Negroes will be hired in menial jobs. but only a few will occupy what is known as white collar jobs. The officials stated with pride that last year they employed a colored policeman and a number of colored policewomen. They thought the same ones would be rehired this year but were not sure.

Plans by the Fair officials to sponsor a "Negro Day" are underway. They expect to make it one of the biggest days at the Fair, and have called in several Negro leaders to aid in making it a success. If they refuse, however, the officials expect to go through with their plans.

It was suggested to the officials that if it was necessary to call in Negro leaders to assure the success of the Negro Day, then it was necessary to appropriate a special fund for the distribution of news to the Negro press.

It was learned by this Service that a number of the leaders contacted by the Fair are planning to decline if the Fair does not appropriate any money for the Negro papers, and hope that the papers will not give the Fair favorable publicity.

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It was pointed out by the reporter that unless the Fair officials provide to have some money given to the Negro press, the greater amount of publicity about the Fair would be unfavorable. To this the officials did no more than shrug their shoulders and laugh. They were then reminded of the adverse stories carried by the colored papers because of the few Negroes employed by the Fair. This, too, was ignored.

According to the story already circulated, more than 6,000 people would be hired by the Fair, not including those in private concessions. It is admitted that a number of Negroes will be hired in menial jobs, but only a few will occupy what is known as white collar jobs. The officials stated with pride that last year they employed a colored policeman and a number of colored policewomen. They thought that the some ones would be rehired this year but were not sure.

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#### Entertainment

#### **ARTICLE**

"What Should You See When and If You Come to the Big Town" The Dayton forum. [volume] (Dayton, Ohio), 09 June 1939. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024234/1939-06-09/ed-1/seg-3/

> (about 225 city blocks) three miles | buildings illuminated at night reveal long to be exact . . . The theme of the Fair (The Trylon and Perisphere) is truly a beautiful inspiring sight, with its spectacular shows, musical revuesicals, side and 'alleged' freak shows, fireworks, and the world's largest amusement centerbarring none, the Fair has nearly every state in the Union represented. The several states on exhibition display what they excel in best . . . New York City, alone, spent more than \$25,000,000 on the Fair. The State of New York, \$15,000,000, while the U.S. Government spent \$3,000,000. The Fair Corporation has already spent more than \$55 .-000,000. It is estimated that consessionaires have spent more than a cool hundred million . . . Although, roughly, ten dollars will permit you to see everything at the Fair, you can see some of the most unique, artistical and colossal sights free. In all, you will see the achievements of the world of today at a Fair that is dedicated to the "World of Tomorrow" . . . Negres have exhibits in the Home Furnishings Building, 1,000 feet of space . . . Tours to the city are numerous in number, but, the American Travel Institute is conducting safe 'n' sane trips to the New York World's Fair. You may write for their free illustrated booklet on the Harlem "Hospitality" Tours, 2309 Seventh Avenue, N.Y.C. You will find these tours covering every detail. Do not be mislead . . The column, too, is offering to its reade sout-of-town, a free illustrated World Fair phamphlet. Write to your N.Y. correspondent at, 225 W. 113th Street, N.Y.C. . . . Some of the most interesting buildings to visit are the Academy of Fine Arts, American Geographical Society, the American Museum of Art, and the American Museum of Natural History . . . Of the points of interest: The aquarium,, Battery Pard, Hudson River, Wall Street, Pennsylvania Station, Grand Contral Terminal, New York's wonderful skyline from a ferryboat on the New Jersey side of the Hudson. You can ride to and fro at a small cost. You will

"the new city of Bagdad" . . . Bronx Zoological Park, Central Park; the Mall in Central Park, the New York City Museum, Fort Tryon Park, New York viewed from atop a Fifth Avenue bus . . . The Independent subway . . . Times Square . . . International House Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument . . . The Polo Grounds . . . Madison Square Garden . . . The Yankee Stadium . . . The Triborough Bridge . . . Harlem with its nite spots . . . Frequent the Harlem Hollywood, where the entertainment is hot on these cool summer nights. The gay revelry of a rhythmpating swing band to dance to. It should be No. 1 on your nite tour . . . The coziness of Milton Heath's swank Lafayette Grill, a stone's throw from the Savoy Ballroom. Relax in the lounge booths that give this bar and grill the air of a Fark Avenue exclusive club . . . "I was up to Harlem the other night and everything was righteous right. I "dug" the Savoy, and, found it to be the "McCoy!" Harlem home of happy feet where two orchestras swing 'n' sway. You've got to see my town-New York in its glory. That's my story.

What You Sh uld See When and If You Come to the Big Town:

The New York World's Fair. The 1939 super-stupendous biggest of thrills. A sight for eager eyes and willing minds . . . And you will see along the many interesting things that will have your neck stretched from ear to ear and here to there is the Trylon and Pereisphere. A triangular shaft 700 feet in height serving as a broadcasting tower and illuminating\* when evening shadows fall gently upon the huge spectacle covering 1,216 1/2 acres. The gigantic globe, 200 feet in diameter, containing a vast exhibit hall is devoted to a thrilling dramatic display of the greater "World of Tomorrow." Commemorating the launching the United States Government under the Federal Constitution 150 years ago, it is 11/2 miles wide and

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The column, too, is offering to its readers out-of-town, a free illustrated World Fair phamplet. Write to your N.Y. correspondent at, 225 W. 113<sup>th</sup> Street, N.Y.C...

Some of the most interesting buildings to visit are the Academy of Fine Arts, American Geographical Society, the American Museum of Art, and the American Museum of Natural History...

One of the points of interest: The aquarium,, Battery Pard [Park], Hudson River, Wall Street, Pennsylvania Station, Grand Central Terminal, New York's wonderful skyline from a ferryboat on the New Jersey side of the Hudson. You can ride to and fro at a small cost. You will be thrilled at the sight—the tall buildings illuminated at night reveal "the new city of Bagdad" ...

Bronx Zoological Park, Central Park; the Mall in Central Park, the New York City Museum, Fort Tryon Park, New York viewed from atop a Fifth Avenue bus... The Independent subway... Times Squire... International House Soldiers' and Sailor's Monument... The Polo Grounds... Madison Square Garden... The Yankee Stadium... The Triborough Bridge... Harlem with its nite spots...

Frequent the Harlem Hollywood, where the entertainment is hot on these cool summer nights. They gay revelry of a rhythmpating swing band to dance to. It should be No. 1 on your nite tour...

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#### **ARTICLE**

"Negro Nat'l Baptist Day Held at N.Y. World's Fair" *The Dayton forum.* [volume] (Dayton, Ohio), 22 Sept. 1939. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024234/1939-09-22/ed-1/seg-4/

# Negro Nat'l Baptist Day Held at N. Y. World's Fair

the World's Baptist alliance and pas formed in 1775 at Silver Bludd in the world's gaptist annate and property of Clivet Baptist church, Chi-the colony of South Carolina. In cago, was the principal speaker on the struggle for the verities of citcago, was the principal speaker on Monday afternoon at the Hall of Re izenship, Nat Turner, a Negro Bapligion at the World's Fair. The convention, which was in session last week at Philadelphia where there was an attendance of 15,000, moved on to New York City, to observe Negro Baptist day at the fair.

vast audience by the Rev. Thomas ination, E. Harten of Brooklyn, N. Y., vice president of the convention. After paying a high tribute to those responsible for the building of the fair and its grandeur in every respect, "The final word from Negro Bap-Dr. WIliams said, "The group which tists to all of us. Let us march on we represent cannot be climinated the fulfillment of our highest possiunselfishly their best. We helped to convert all her dense swamps, and perilous wildernesses into laughing productive fields. This group has freely given its sons to protect claim of this country.

"We have furnished a quota of world," inventors, scientists, educators, artists, sculptors, musicians, historians the Concord Baptist church, mechanics, (abovers, farmers, etc., master of ceremones. His church whose hands helped to produce all choir, under the direction of Prof. that this fair symbolizes.

"We gather here today when war clouds are encircling Europe across the thresholds of America. Christian Negroes will pray that our country will be saved from partici- Lord, What a Morning" was pation in another warld's war, and steadfastly preserved. We also hope give justice to all races and nations.

of the Pilgrim Baptist church, Chi-of the Pilgrim Baptist church, Chi-introduc-ial" left Monday night and will stop was the Rev. J. C. Austin, pastor tion, Dr. Austin said in part, "We. at Buffalo and Niagara Falls. The the Negro Baptists, are concerned train was under the direction of the in those eternal principles, in those Rev. J. H. Branham, transportation basic things, upon which alone can commissioner of the convention and rest a permanent civilization supported by a righteous citizenship which recognizes the Fatherhood of God, and promotes the brotherhood of man."

Dr. Austin spoke of the Negro

NEW YORK, Sept. 20.—(By being denied equality in opportunity Cary B. Lewis for ANP)—Dr. L. K. and religious worship and education williams, president of the National Baptist convention, vice president of the first Negro Baptist church was tist preacher, led a rebelion 100 years ago aimed to gain freedom which anticipated the Civil War. As a citizen, Booker T. Washington is one of the examples of the contribution the Negro Baptists make in Dr. Williams was presented to the the face of prejudice and discrim-

Rev. Austin then made an appeal for the Christionization of the world and said that the way out is the new birth of Jesus Christ. Said he, from the occasion. They have given bilities as chi dren of God. Let us reserve ourselves and go backward to the level of the lower life, which strikes at us from the jingles as we march on to a finer social order which will be found when the Kingagainst sany foe, every right and dom of Christ, a kingdom of love, becomes the ruling influence in the

The Rev. J. C. Adams, pastor of Edward Boatner, rendered high class selections. The solo work in "In-flatamus" was sung beautifully by and casting their somber shadows Miss Catherine Smith. The pinaist was Elsworth Patterson and the organist was Desadrel Church, "My spiritual that won applause. Mount that it, honor and safety will be Olivet choir was directed by Leroy Maxwell, The Rev. O. C. Maxwell and pray that the peace that will is pastor. The scripture flesson was follow this European struggle will read by Rev. C. L. Aikins, Atlantic City, N. J., and Dr. Nabritt, treas-Another speaker for the occasion urer of the convention, and other Baptist leaders shared the platform.

assistant pastor of Olivet church.

#### **TRANSCRIPT**

Negro Nat'l Baptist Day Held at N. Y. World's Fair

NEW YORK, Sept. 20. –(By Cary B. Lewis for ANP)—Dr. L. K. Williams, president of the National Baptist convention, vice president of the World's Baptist alliance and pastor of Olivet Baptist church, Chicago, was the principal speaker on Monday afternoon at the Hall of Religion at the World's Fair. The convention, which was in session last week at Philadelphia where there was an attendance of 15,000, moved on to New York City, to observe Negro Baptist day at the fair.

Dr. Williams was presented to the vast audience by the Rev. Thomas E. Harten of Brooklyn, N. Y., vice president of the convention. After paying a high tribute to those responsible for the building of the fair and its grandeur in every respect, Dr. Williams said, "The group which we represent cannot be eliminated from the occasion. They have given unselfishly their best. We helped to convert all her dense swamps, and perilous wildernesses into laughing productive fields. This group has freely given its sons to protect against any foe, every right and claim of this country.

"We have furnished a quota of inventors, scientists, educators, artists, sculptors, musicians, historians, mechanics, laborers, farmers, etc., whose hands helped to produce all that this fair symbolizes.

"We gather here today when war clouds are encircling Europe and casting their somber shadows across the thresholds of America. Christian Negroes will pray that our country will be saved from participation in another warld's [world's] war, and that its honor and safety will be steadfastly preserved. We also hope and pray that the peace that will follow this European struggle will give justice to all races and nations."

Another speaker for the occasion was the Rev. J. C. Austin, pastor of the Pilgrim Baptist church, Chicago. After a spending introduction, Dr. Austin said in part, "We, the Negro Baptists, are concerned in those eternal principles, in those basic things, upon which alone can rest a permanent civilization supported by a righteous citizenship which recognizes the Fatherhood of God, and promotes the brotherhood of man."

Dr. Austin spoke of the Negro being denied equality in opportunity and religious worship and education and worship, in face of opposition, the first Negro Baptist church was formed in 1775 at Silver Bludd in the colony of South Carolina. In the struggle for the verities of citizenship, Nat Turner, a Negro Baptist preacher, led a rebellion 100 years ago aimed to gain freedom which anticipated the Civil War. As a citizen, Booker T. Washington is one of the examples of the contribution the Negro Baptists make in the face of prejudice and discrimination.

Rev. Austin then made an appeal for the Christionization of the world and said that the way out is the new birth of Jesus Christ. Said he, "The final word from Negro Baptists to all of us. Let us march on the fulfillment of our highest possibilities as children of God. Let us reserve ourselves and go backward to the level of the lower life, which strikes at us from the jingles as we march on to a finer social order which will be found when the Kingdom of Christ, a kingdom of love, becomes the ruling influence in the world."

The Rev. J. C. Adams, pastor of the Concord Baptist church, was master of ceremones. His church choir, under the direction of Prof. Edward Boatner, rendered high class selections. The solo work in "Inflatamus" was sung beautifully by Miss Catherine Smith. The pinaist [pianist] was Elsworth Patterson and the organist was Desadrel Church. "My Lord, What a Morning" was the spiritual that won applause. Mount Olivet choir was directed by Leroy Maxwell. The Rev. O. C. Maxwell is pastor. The scripture lesson was read by Rev. C. L. Aikins, Atlantic City, N. J., and Dr. Nabritt, treasurer of the convention, and other Baptist leaders shared the platform.

The Chicago "President's Special" left Monday night and will stop at Buffalo and Niagara Falls. The train was under the direction of the Rev. J. H. Branham, transportation commissioner of the convention and assistant pastor of Olivet church.

### **FURTHER READING:**

Cleary, Kenneth. "African Americans and the World of Tomorrow." *New-York Historical Society Museum and Library: From the Stacks* (Blog). November 18th, 2011. http://blog.nyhistory.org/african-americans-and-the-world-of-tomorrow/

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Phillips, Nicole. "World's Fair of 1939/1940." *History of New York City: a TLTC Blog.* November, 14, 2016. https://blogs.shu.edu/nyc-history/2016/11/14/worlds-fair-of-1939/

Ware, Diedre. "Negro Week At The 1939–1940 New York World's Fair." *HuffPost* (Blog). March 2, 2017. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/negro-week-at-the-19391940-new-york-worlds-fair\_b\_58b26313e4b02f3f81e44893?guccounter=1

### Related Topic: The 1940 American Negro Exposition in Chicago

American Negro Exposition Authority. "American Negro Exposition: Chicago Collisuem – July 4 to Sept. 2, Official Program and Guide Book." Chicago: 1940.

http://livinghistoryofillinois.com/pdf\_files/American%20Negro%20Exposition%201863-1940,%20July%204%20to%20Sept.%202,%201940,%20Chicago,%20IL.pdf

The "American Negro Exposition" The Dayton forum. [volume] (Dayton, Ohio), 12 July 1940. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024234/1940-07-12/ed-1/seq-8/