

**Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)**

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*The Journal of African American History*

**Volume 101, Fall 2016**

**ASALH announces the publication of the latest issue in the second century of *The Journal of African American History*.**

**Special Issue**

**“African Americans and Business:  
Race, Capitalism, and Power”**

**Guest Editors Juliet E. K. Walker and Shennette Garrett-Scott**

**Contents**

*The Journal of African American History's* (JAAH) Fall 2016 issue is available. With Guest Editors Juliet E. K. Walker and Shennette Garrett-Scott, “African Americans and Business: Race, Capitalism, and Power” provides new and original interpretations of African American business history. In their introduction, Walker and Garrett-Scott survey the historical literature on African Americans and business and focus on those works that have documented the “Golden Age of Black Business.” Encompassing the period from 1890 to 1930, they outline the advances in black enterprises before the coming of the Great Depression and note that three articles in the Special Issue document this business activity.

In “A Man in a Women’s World: Anthony Overton’s Rise to Prominence in the African American Personal Care Products Industry,” Robert E. Weems, Jr. traces Overton’s personal background and path-breaking entrance into the market for hair, face, and body products for African American women. Weems also describes Overton’s founding of the *Half Century Magazine* that included advertisements for his beauty products; and his movement into banking and other areas of commerce based on the success of his line of personal care products. Overton’s leadership in the Chicago branch of the National Negro Business League (NNBL) is also assessed.

W. Brian Piper’s “To Develop Our Business’: Addison Scurlock, Photography, and the National Negro Business League” examines Scurlock’s professional career and his work with the Washington, DC, branch of the NNBL. Scurlock not only provided photographs for advertisements of black businesses in the District, he also contributed to the *Negro Business*

*League Herald*, which contained his photographs and described business activities of its members. In addition, Piper describes the unique aspects of his photographic style that came to be known as the “Scurlock Look.”

While African American women were performers in minstrel shows and vaudeville acts in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, there is little information on their roles as theater agents and managers. Michelle Scott’s “These Ladies Do Business with a Capital B: The Griffin Sisters as Black Businesswomen in Early Vaudeville” documents the theatrical careers of Mabel and Emma Griffin and describes their establishment of the Griffin Sisters Theatrical Agency in 1913. Concerned about the treatment and wages paid African American performers by white theatrical circuit managers, the sisters started their own agency which provided shows and theatrical performers for the increasing number of black theaters operating at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In “Black Land, Black Capital: Rural Development in the Shadows of the Sunbelt South,” Alec Fazackerley Hickmott documents the efforts of Robert Browne in establishing the Southern Land Bank in the 1970s in an attempt to stem black farmers’ loss of land. Hickmott makes it clear that rural development and land retention for black southerners became a pressing issue and spurred mobilizations to make funds available so that black farmers would have alternatives to white financial institutions that usually failed to provide much-needed loans. The rise of the Sunbelt South was accompanied by a decrease in black land ownership and the concentration of commercial farming in the hands of fewer and fewer multinational corporations.

In addition, the JAAH Fall 2016 issue includes an Essay Review by Larry O. Rivers on two books documenting the religious and philosophical positions taken by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr; and there are reviews of 17 recently published books on the African American history and culture.

**The JAAH Fall 2016 issue is available for purchase from ASALH in hard copy, and for use in courses through Publications Director, Karen May, at [kmay@asalh.net](mailto:kmay@asalh.net). The digital version will soon be available through “JSTOR Current Journals”; please check and make sure your university library subscribes to the program.**

**Be sure your membership is up to date. Forthcoming JAAH issues will examine African American migrations during and after the Civil War, international reparations campaigns, and 300 years of the African American experience in New Orleans.**

**For more information, go to the JAAH website: [www.jaah.org](http://www.jaah.org); or contact Sylvia Cyrus, JAAH Managing Editor, [executive.director@asalh.net](mailto:executive.director@asalh.net).**