

ROSCOE DUNJEE AND THE OKLAHOMA CITY BLACK DISPATCH

by

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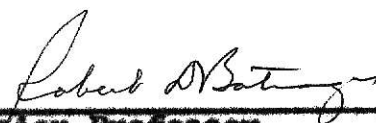
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Research Problem and Need for Study

Justification for this study was stated succinctly by Stevens, who concluded that of the 2,700 black newspapers started in this country "there is not an adequate published institutional study of any of them, nor of their editors."¹ He said that until the 1960's "blacks were as invisible in journalism history as in other history. . ."² The lack of interest in the black press is also indicated in back files of Journalism Quarterly, which until 1963 had published only two such articles.³ Stevens maintained that journalism history textbooks have done "almost nothing" with the black press, and even the Columbia Journalism Review largely ignored it until 1970.⁴

Wolseley listed 36 books and monographs concerned primarily with black journalism.⁵ Twenty-two were published during or following 1960. Only seven were published before 1960. This is but another indication of the paucity of research on the black newspaper and the black editor.

The purpose of this study, which will help fill in this void referred to by Stevens and others, is to report on

the life and work of Roscoe Dunjee, an important black newspaper editor who published the Oklahoma City Black Dispatch from 1914 to 1955. There is little doubt that Dunjee and his newspaper are worthy research subjects. One historian called him the "most interesting and perhaps the most influential black man in Oklahoma history."⁶ A white Oklahoma City civic leader recalled that Alfalfa Bill Murray, former governor and one of Dunjee's favorite editorial targets, had said that the black editor was "100 years ahead of his time."⁷ Wolseley said Dunjee was an entrepreneur who may have been responsible for the now popular phrase, "black is beautiful," because he had suggested many years earlier that Negroes should be proud of their color.⁸

Dunjee was constantly on the firing lines fighting for justice and equality for blacks. He was a member of the executive council of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, was president of the National Negro Business League for two terms, and was vice-chairman of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare.⁹ A national director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, he organized the Oklahoma Conference of Branches of the NAACP, the first organization of its kind in the United States. He was an organizer of the Oklahoma Commission for Interracial Cooperation, serving five years as its secretary. He organized the Oklahoma State Negro Business League, remaining as president for five years. Specific accomplishments by Dunjee as an editor, reporter and leader of the Negro community, are

reserved for later chapters.

Method

Every effort was made to gather most information from primary sources. These sources were Dunjee's writings, on microfilm at the Oklahoma Historical Society building in Oklahoma, and two persons who knew him at least as well as anybody and who worked with him at the Black Dispatch. Most secondary sources were newspaper articles and editorials written about Dunjee.

A form of content analysis described by Holsti was used to determine Dunjee's preoccupations as an editor.¹⁰ Holsti maintained content analysis is one of the best research techniques for analysts whose subject is deceased, in which case the subject is studied through the record of his activities, through what his contemporaries said about him, or through his writings.

The form outlined by Holsti is a systematic process of categorizing the major themes of editorials. A single qualitative judgment was made of each editorial without tabulating the frequency with which any content attribute or symbol appeared. The findings, however, were reported quantitatively. Holsti defined this form of content analysis as a technique for making inferences objectively and for systemically identifying specified characteristics of messages.

The universe for this portion of the study was all

editorials appearing in the Black Dispatch written by Dunjee during his editorship. The first editorial of every fifth issue published during Dunjee's editorship was selected in the sample. If, in a selected issue, the first editorial was not written by Dunjee, the following issue's first editorial was used. Holsti supported this sampling procedure as long as the material was collected on a systematic basis. Selected editorials were categorized on a pre-printed form. Notes were taken on the same form, to be used as a guide for further search into the files, since information taken only from the selected editorials would be insufficient for extensive reporting. Free lance searching was necessary to gather material for all chapters except the one which categorizes the editorial themes.

To get a "feel" for the types of editorial themes present, the writer made a preliminary search of the files for information on which to establish categories. During the course of the research, themes were added to the sampling form as they appeared.

Following the preliminary examination of the files, a hypothesis was developed: The Black Dispatch was established as a "cause" newspaper, and its founder and editor was preoccupied with one overriding issue--equality for Negroes.¹¹

Definitions

Traditionally, researchers have agreed on a general definition of a black newspaper, as summarized by de Felice.¹²

He concluded that blacks must own and manage the publication, the newspaper must be intended for black readers, and it must "serve, speak and fight for the black minority." Definition of categories used in the content analysis is deferred until a later chapter.

Footnotes

¹John D. Stevens, "Black Journalism: Neglected No Longer," in Mass Media and the National Experience (New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 98.

²*Ibid.*, p. 97.

³*Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁵Roland E. Wolseley, The Black Press, U.S.A. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1971), pp. 334-35.

⁶Kay Teall, quoted in Daily Oklahoman (Oklahoma City), May 9, 1971, p. 22-C.

⁷Black Dispatch, May 1, 1969, p. 1.

⁸Wolseley, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

⁹Jimmy Stewart, private interview at Oklahoma City, May, 1972.

¹⁰Ole R. Holsti, Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities (Reading, Mass., Menlo Park, Calif., London, Don Mills, Ontario: Addison-Wesley Publishers Co., 1969), pp. 6-14.

¹¹The premise that black newspapers were established in response to white repression is advanced by most black press scholars.

¹²Wolseley, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

CHAPTER II

BLACK PRESS IN AMERICA

This chapter has been slanted in the direction of the black press as an institutional force in American life rather than toward a review of individual black editors. Most studies of the black press have dealt with such topics as longevity of black newspapers, readership, numbers of papers, influence of the papers on blacks, history, political positions taken by black papers, and the role of black newspapers in the struggle for equality. This review is intended to call attention to these studies, all of which contribute to a better understanding of black editors and newspapers.

Bontrager pointed out that the black newspaper is generally urban-based, and that black publications are characterized by low circulations and high mortality rates.¹ He also stated that black newspapers do not attempt to cover all the news, dealing instead with the problems and achievements of black people. In this respect, he concluded, they complement rather than compete against the white press. In a survey of black inner city residents of Syracuse, N.Y., a city without a strong black local newspaper, Bontrager found that a majority of blacks were readers of white newspapers--with 52.2 per cent of the adult population reading white newspapers

exclusively, and 25 per cent reading both black and white newspapers.

Wolseley agreed that the black newspaper is a local voice, pointing out that even so-called national black papers have core circulations in the communities in which they are printed.² The black newspaper office may be a gathering place for blacks, who meet to discuss mutual problems and concerns. Stevens also believed that black papers constitute a supplementary press.³

It is evident that politics has been important to black newspapers. Robinson reported that blacks never became politically active prior to establishment of the black press.⁴ Blacks were victims of almost total repression prior to the founding of the black papers and were restrained from "all but indirect or non-political expression of their passions and resentments," Robinson said.

Dann noted that Negroes didn't begin to realize the importance of politics to their race until the end of the Civil War, for the first time seeing politics as a mechanism by which they could achieve equality.⁵ From the start black editors were staunchly Republicans, and they maintained their allegiance to the Republican party well into the 20th century:

As the black man's faith in the political system and his loyalty to the Republican party were used time and again to deprive him of any semblance of self-determination and as his rights as a citizen were continually eroded, the black press reflected his efforts toward winning immediate objectives in education, employment, and politics. Though independent political action was proposed by more daring black editors in the

1870s and 1880s, the tendency was successfully resisted, and black people remained (when they could) Republicans. Black editors who were, almost without exception, Republicans (and who were often supported by the Republican party), struggled to consolidate gains and power in their party and called on party leaders to renounce their racism and hypocrisy.

When black people began to advance substantially, white people became more hostile and repressive. They instituted a reign of terror, sanctioned by law and custom. . . . With the symbol of the Republican party as the part of emancipation strongly embedded in their experiences, black people went to the polls only to be refused the ballot and, if they persisted, to be murdered.⁶

Pride made one of the early contributions to the field of black journalism research. He found that Negro newspapers have been published without interruption since 1827, except for a brief period after 1930.⁷ Thirty-two black newspapers were launched from 1827 to 1862. Only three were begun during the Civil War. Between 1865 and 1900, the number of black papers established was 1,187. But the peak year was 1902, when 99 were founded. Pride said many northern black newspapers sprang to life before elections, only to go out of business shortly following the voting. In addition, many black papers were instruments of religious denominations, with ministers serving as editors. Pride said Ayer Directory of Publications classified the Baptist Leader (1890-1908) at Mobile, Ala., and the Christian Hope (1893-1915) at Birmingham, Ala., as "Baptist and Republican." Republicans often subsidized papers in the south, but these, too, were short-lived. Democrats, Pride said, never showed interest in the black vote, and seldom got it.

Aptheker contended the black press was influenced by business and politicians before elections.⁸ He cited a letter from W. E. B. DuBois, a noted black leader, ridiculing advertising contents of black papers. DuBois feared few influential whites read black papers and acknowledged that money had been furnished black papers which printed certain material and refrained from writing about particular matters. DuBois appeared to be inferring that black editors took bribes. Bain stated that the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the development of his New Deal programs brought the Negro in America to "see a new place for himself in our national life."⁹ He studied four black newspapers which claimed national distribution--Chicago Defender, New York Amsterdam News, Pittsburgh Courier, and Baltimore Afro-American--to determine their reaction to the various New Deal programs.

The newspapers were favorable to the New Deal administration, mainly for its interest in housing, relief and public works projects. While little mention was made of labor relations legislation, the Fair Labor Standards Act (wage and hour law) drew wide newspaper support because it was believed the Negro would begin to enjoy a better standard of living. Bain said the Negro press in the New Deal years assumed a role of double critic: criticizing the government on one hand when it was seen in the wrong; on the other hand, criticizing the Negro community when it did not make its

demands known forcefully enough. After asserting a political independence in 1932, when Roosevelt defeated Herbert Hoover, a majority of both the Negro voters and of the four newspapers supported the reelection of Roosevelt in 1936. Most black press criticism against FDR came when it crusaded for a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission. The president established the commission by executive order.

Van Auken pointed out that the black press' enthusiasm for the New Deal did not carry over into the 1948 presidential election involving President Truman and Governor Dewey of New York.¹⁰ Most of the larger black newspapers supported Dewey, but a majority of black voters supported Truman. However, the important factor was that Negro voters had apparently helped swing a presidential election for the first time in history.

Van Auken felt reasons for the independence of the Negro vote could be partially explained. While the Negro press failed in its attempt to win readers over to Dewey, it focused attention upon the anti-discrimination issues of the post-war era. When election day came, Negro and white voters alike decided to vote on the basis of what they believed to be in their interest. The white press also had supported Gov. Dewey.

Van Auken noted that the attitude of the Negro press, while divided in its loyalties to the major parties, was united against Henry Wallace, the 1948 third party candidate.

She found that neither the black press nor the black voter took Wallace seriously. It was also concluded that polls--which showed Dewey leading--did not take into consideration the trend in Negro voting patterns and failed to include a proportionate number of blacks among their respondents. This research raises questions as to whether black papers influenced black voters. The Cleveland Call and Post supported Dewey but readers went for Truman. The Pittsburgh Courier supported Dewey but the city's black voters preferred Truman. Philadelphia blacks voted decisively for Truman, while the Tribune backed Dewey. The Amsterdam News supported Dewey but Harlem voters rejected the governor at the polls. Similar trends were noted in Kansas City, Milwaukee, St. Louis, and Oakland.

Stevens found that most black newspapers emphasize racial harmony more than racial conflict and that there is a lack of interest among Negroes of all-white news and international news.¹¹ Schneider reported blacks don't trust white newsmen.¹² Block said blacks tend to show distrust and dislike for the "establishment" media, being more eager to accept advice from black friends and the black oriented media.¹³ Behling studied black newspapers in South Carolina and found (1) they were short-lived, (2) they did not conform to accepted standards of journalistic competence, and (3) they were financially weak because white merchants wouldn't advertise if the papers fomented racial strife.¹⁴ Wolseley said black newspapers remain the primary source of the black

man's information and comment. Similar views were expressed by an official of the NAACP.¹⁵ Henry Lee Moon concluded that blacks "still look to the Negro press for their side of the story and for an interpretation of the news that affects their vital interests."¹⁶ Valarie Myers, a former editor of a black newspaper in Syracuse, N.Y., declared blacks would not know who they are nor what is happening in their fight for full citizenship if it were not for the black press.

Frazier saw the black press in a different light than many writers who have researched black journalism. He maintained the black press perpetuates "the world of make-believe" for the black well-to-do.¹⁷ In such role, Frazier said, the black press does not speak for the rank and file Negro:

Since the Negro press has always claimed that one of its functions was to present to the world a proper picture of the Negro, it has naturally placed much emphasis upon the achievements of Negroes. However, the reports which the Negro press has given concerning Negro achievements are primarily an attempt to compensate for the collective inferiority of the Negro, especially of the black bourgeoisie. Consequently, the significance which the Negro press attributes to these achievements generally has little relation to the world of reality outside of the world of make-believe into which the black bourgeoisie has found an escape. . . . It is more often the petty achievements of living Negroes that are reported as if they were of great importance. . . in the Negro press mere police magistrates become judges.¹⁸

Despite the fact the black press has been a dominant force in black social, economic and political progress, Keech is not certain that blacks will ever obtain justice:

The tragedy of American racial history is that it has left the Negro with more problems than men of goodwill are able to solve. . . . The most frustrating problem of the American Negro in politics is that even if policymakers were totally responsive to Negro demands, it is not at all clear that they have it in their power to eliminate the inequality with which three and a half centuries of discrimination have saddled the American Negro.¹⁹

Footnotes

¹Robert D. Bontrager, "An Investigation of Black Press and White Press Use Patterns in the Black Inner City of Syracuse, N.Y.: A Field Study," (Unpublished PhD dissertation: Syracuse University, 1969), p. 96.

²Wolseley, op. cit., p. 91.

³Stevens, "Black Journalism: Neglected No Longer," op. cit., p. 100.

⁴Donald Robinson, Slavery in the Structure of American Politics: 1765-1820 (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., 1971), p. 7.

⁵The Black Press, ed. by Martin E. Dann (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1971), p. 12.

⁶Ibid., pp. 21-22.

⁷Armistead Scott Pride, "Negro Newspapers: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," Journalism Quarterly, XXVIII (Spring, 1951), pp. 179-88.

⁸A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States, ed. by Herbert Aptheker (New York: The Citadel Press, 1951), p. 82.

⁹George W. Bain, "How Negro Editors Viewed the New Deal," Journalism Quarterly, XLIV (Autumn, 1967), pp. 552-54.

¹⁰Cecelia Van Auken, "The Negro Press in the 1948 Presidential Election," Journalism Quarterly, XXVI (December, 1949), pp. 431-35.

¹¹John D. Stevens, "Conflict-Cooperation Content in Black Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly, XLVII (Autumn, 1970), pp. 556-58.

¹²Lawrence Schneider, "A Media-Black Council: Seattle's 19-Month Experiment," Journalism Quarterly, XLVII (Autumn, 1970), pp. 439-49.

¹³Carl E. Block, "Communicating With the Urban Poor," Journalism Quarterly, LXVII (Spring, 1970), pp. 3-11.

¹⁴Charles F. Behling, "South Carolina Negro Newspaper," (Unpublished master's thesis, University of South Carolina, 1964), quoted in Journalism Abstracts, (Vol. II, 1964), p. 146.

¹⁵Wolseley, op. cit., p. 14.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁷E. Franklin Frazier, Black Bourgeoisie (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1957), p. 174.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹William R. Keech, The Impact of Negro Voting (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Company, 1968), p. 109.

CHAPTER III

BLACK PAPERS: ANSWER TO RACISM

To understand why Roscoe Dunjee established a black newspaper in Oklahoma, it is necessary to examine the social and political conditions existing in the state at that time. This chapter will also present a brief history of black journalism in Oklahoma.

Discrimination Abounds

Oklahoma statehood in 1907 melded two areas--Oklahoma and Indian Territories--into a western state that practiced southern-styled segregation.¹ As in the South, Oklahoma restricted suffrage and segregated public conveyances. Once considered a haven for mistreated blacks, Oklahoma was to become the opposite. Its whites had no intention of accepting blacks as equals. Discord between blacks and whites in the territories began with the "Run of '89," when the federal government sanctioned the first great opening of land in the central part of what was to become Oklahoma.

Instrumental in the migration of Negroes into the area during this period was an aggressive black newspaperman from Kansas, William L. Eagleson. He owned the American Citizen of Fort Scott, Kansas, and the Kansas Herald of

Topeka.² Eagleson sent word to Negroes in southern cities in 1889:

There never was a more favorable time than now for you to secure good homes in a land where you will be free and your rights respected. Oklahoma is now open for settlement. The soil is rich, the climate favorable, water abundant and there is plenty of timber. Make a new start. Give yourselves and your children new chances in a new land, where you will be able to think and vote as you please.³

The Topeka American Citizen, another black paper, had alerted blacks to prospects in Oklahoma in 1888:

Let every colored man who wants 160 acres of land get ready to occupy some of the best lands in Oklahoma, and should it be opened up, there is no reason why at least 100,000 colored men and women should not settle on 160 acres of land each and thus establish themselves so firmly in that territory that they will be able to hold their own from the start. . . . Let every colored American keep his eye on Oklahoma and when the opening alarm shall have been sounded, move forward and take it.⁴

It is noteworthy that Eagleson followed his own advice, moved to Indian Territory, and edited the Langston City Herald.⁵

Another Topeka paper, the Colored Patriot, also proposed Oklahoma as an exclusive black territory.⁶ Even a New York black paper, the Globe, was enchanted by the idea. It explained that Oklahoma was inhabited by Indians and Negroes who had been slaves of Indians and that they had lived together since emancipation. "They (Negroes) are believed to be entitled to a considerable portion of the land in Indian Territory, and application has been made to the government for an investigation and decision upon their claims," wrote the editor, who said Indians had failed as

"agriculturists."⁷

E. P. McCabe, a former Kansas state auditor, obtained a 320-acre tract of land east of Guthrie in Indian Territory and a black community named Langston sprang to life in 1890.⁸ It remains a predominately black community today. An advertisement in the Langston City Herald called Langston the "only distinctively Negro city in America."⁹ It said Langston was founded October 22, 1890, by McCabe, and urged Negroes to select 40, 80, or 160 acres, drive a stake, cut timber for a house and "do a little plowing" that will show others the land was occupied. The paper said the homesteader should file an affidavit and pay his fee of \$6 for 40 acres, \$7 for 80 acres, or \$14 for 160 acres. By 1892 the ambitious McCabe still had high hopes for Negroes in Oklahoma and Indian Territories, saying that within a few years "Congress would have two Negro senators" from Oklahoma.¹⁰ In 1890 Negroes were approximately 4.1 per cent of the population of Indian and Oklahoma Territories. By 1900 they represented 7 per cent of the population, or 55,684 people out of nearly 800,000.

Negroes were still pouring into the territories by 1906. Those in the south were being told by the Muskogee Cimeter, a black newspaper, that Indian Territory was "the best country on earth." Negroes totaled 8.3 per cent of the population and owned three million acres of land in Oklahoma in 1910. By the turn of the century, blacks had begun moving into cities instead of to farms. Black home ownership in

urban areas increased 148.9 per cent between 1900 and 1910. Alfalfa Bill Murray, president of Oklahoma Constitutional Convention expressed concern for the changing Negro population. He opposed "irresponsible hordes of worthless Negroes around our cities and towns."

The proposed Oklahoma constitution, opposed by Negroes, guaranteed Indians the right to vote but excluded blacks.¹¹ Generally it implied a special and inferior status for blacks. When voters approved a constitution on September 17, 1907, the stage was set for years of legal entanglement involving Negroes and state government.

Soon after the Democratic-controlled legislature had been sworn in, a bill was presented that would segregate the railway system in Oklahoma. While the new constitution did not call for segregation of public conveyances, it didn't shut the door on future legislation that would have the same results. The bill passed easily, and the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of the Jim Crow legislation in November of 1914, shattering at least for the moment any hopes blacks may have had for fair and equal treatment.

When Republicans made a political surge in 1908, a confused Oklahoma electorate enacted the "grandfather clause."¹² It allowed poor and illiterate whites to vote while excluding blacks of the same social class.¹³ Under the clause, a resident of Oklahoma not qualified to vote could do so if his ancestor had voted prior to 1866, when

Negroes were enfranchised. Ruled constitutional by the Oklahoma Supreme Court, the clause brought the NAACP into one of its first legal disputes. The NAACP pursued the case of an Oklahoma Negro voter who had brought about the indictment of some election officials for refusing to allow him to vote. For nearly seven years many Negroes were restricted by the grandfather clause, finally getting relief in June, 1915, when Chief Justice Edward D. White, a southerner, handed down a U.S. Supreme Court decision that invalidated it. The verdict read in part:

It is true it (grandfather clause) contains no express words of an exclusion, from the standard which it establishes, of any persons on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude prohibited by the 15th amendment, but the standard itself inherently brings that result to existence, since it is based purely on a period of time before enactment of the 15th amendment and makes that period the controlling and dominant test of the right of suffrage.¹⁴

Following this decision in 1915, Oklahoma did not stop trying to circumvent the 14th and 15th amendments. The legislature immediately passed a bill providing that all persons who were already registered should remain qualified voters, but all others would have to register within a 12-day period or remain forever barred from voting.¹⁵ A black who was barred from voting following the 12-day period brought a lawsuit which eventually reached the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1939, nearly 25 years after the bill was passed, the court repudiated the Oklahoma law, ruling that the 15th amendment nullified all modes of discrimination. And so it was that Oklahoma was still attempting to deprive blacks of equality

when Roscoe Dunjee entered the scene as editor of the Black Dispatch in 1914.

Black Press in Oklahoma

The birth of the black press in Oklahoma came at a time when blacks were converging on the state and whites were hoping they would leave. Negro journalism was born in Indian Territory in 1890 with establishment of the Langston City Herald.¹⁶ Oklahoma may have had as many as 85 black papers. However, most were short-lived, almost on a "here today, gone tomorrow" basis. The Oklahoma Historical Society has identified the following black papers: Black Dispatch, Tulsa Eagle, Oklahoma Guide, Peoples Elevator, Oklahoma Safeguard, Langston City Herald, Langston Western Age, Oklahoma Church and State, Muskogee Cimenter, Dispensation, Southwesterner, Muskogee Star, Saturday Evening Tribune, Tattler, Weekly Progress, Muskogee Lantern, Boley Progress, Boley Beacon, Boley Informer, Boley News, Bookertee Searchlight, Castle News, and Clearview Patriarch.¹⁷

In addition to these newspapers, Dunjee, who often reminisced about black journalism in Oklahoma, mentioned several others.¹⁸ A friend, G. N. Perkins, owned the Guthrie Guardian. In 1908, Arthur Smitherman, started the Tulsa Star, which Dunjee called the first black Democratic newspaper in the state.

Dunjee remembered that Smitherman had been considered "a traitor to his race" because he was a Democrat. After

the Star was destroyed by fire during race riots in 1921, Smitherman fled Tulsa and contacted Dunjee from Checotah, Oklahoma, asking for money on which to leave the state. Dunjee said he wired the money.

Theodore Baughman founded the Tulsa Eagle, still in existence, after Smitherman left Tulsa. Oklahoma City's first black newspaper was the Occidental Lighthouse, published by J. D. Randolph, whom Dunjee identified as the first principal of separate schools in the city. When this paper died, John C. Leftwich started the Western World. Then C. N. Moran launched the Oklahoma Gazette while Rev. W. H. Jernigan and William Harrison founded the Oklahoma Tribune. Dunjee felt Jernigan and Harrison devoted too much space to Baptist news at the expense of other denominations. The paper was short-lived, as were many black newspapers of that day. Joseph Abbey launched another paper, also called the Tribune. He was a Methodist minister and Dunjee recalled that he had made the same mistake that had caused the death of the earlier Tribune. Abbey printed news about his denomination while omitting news of other religious groups. The Tribune was sold to Melvin Chisum who was to figure in Dunjee's entry into the newspaper business.¹⁹

Footnotes

¹Philip Mellinger, "Discrimination in Oklahoma," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, XLIX (Autumn, 1971), pp. 340-78.

²Dann, op. cit., p. 24.

³Quoted by Mellinger, op. cit.

⁴Dann, Black Press, p. 288.

⁵Ibid., p. 24.

⁶Ibid., p. 276.

⁷Ibid., p. 278.

⁸Mellinger, op. cit.

⁹Langston City Herald, November 17, 1892, p. 3.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 2.

¹¹Mellinger, op. cit.

¹²Wording on the ballot was such that whites and blacks were confused about whether they were voting yes or no. Also, blacks were led to believe by pre-election publicity that the grandfather clause was beneficial to them.

¹³Henry Lee Moon, Balance of Power: The Negro Vote (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1969, p. 102.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 103.

¹⁶Louise Cook, private interview at Oklahoma City, April-May, 1972. Mrs. Cook is a historian in the newspaper department of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

¹⁷Information from Oklahoma Historical Society newspaper department, April, 1972. The period during which most of these papers existed was from approximately 1890 to 1915.

¹⁸Black Dispatch, November 10, 1955, p. 5-A.

¹⁹Black Dispatch, May 1, 1969, p. 6.

CHAPTER IV

BIRTH OF THE BLACK DISPATCH

This chapter will discuss the early years of Roscoe Dunjee's life and events leading up to establishment of the Black Dispatch.

Dunjee's Early Years

Dunjee was born June 21, 1883, at Harper's Ferry, Va., the son of John William and Lydia Ann Dunjee.¹ He had a brother, Irving, and three sisters, Ella, Drusilla, and Blanche.² The elder Dunjee, a Baptist minister, had fled to Canada at the age of 27 through the Underground Railroad, a secret escape system used by southern blacks for fleeing oppression. Dunjee's master had allowed him to work as a houseboy for Governor Wise of Virginia.³ After getting permission to visit his family in New Kent County, John Dunjee instead made contacts necessary for escaping into Canada.

Following the war, sometime between 1866 and 1882, Dunjee became financial agent for Storer College in Harper's Ferry. In 1882 he established the Harper's Ferry Messenger-- "impelled by the earnest and often repeated requests coming from many who are deeply interested in the elevation of our (the long and much oppressed) race, and the public welfare

at large."⁴ There is no record to indicate when the paper died, but it was probably short-lived.

Dunjee and Frederick Douglass, famous black orator and newspaper editor, sat in the first civil rights convention held by Negroes.⁵ In the early 1880s Douglass delivered the dedicatory address at Augusta, Ga., when Dunjee opened the new Union Baptist Church for worship. Douglass, editor of the North Star at Rochester, New York, who had also gone to Canada to escape slavery, was Dunjee's house guest in Minneapolis in 1888. The Dunjee family apparently moved to Minneapolis from Augusta.

In Minneapolis, Dunjee established the Bethesda Baptist Church. As an employee of the American Baptist Missionary Society, it was Dunjee's responsibility to promote that denomination's work in various sections of the country, and the next stop was to be Oklahoma City, in 1892. In a few weeks he established the Tabernacle Baptist Church at Third and Geary.⁶ The date is unknown, but John Dunjee soon homesteaded a quarter section of land on the southwest corner of Northeast 10th and Bryant. Because of his interest in education, he also helped establish Langston University.⁷

Roscoe Dunjee was placed in the "elementary" department at Langston, although he was approaching the age of 20.⁸ Working in a print shop at Langston while attending the eighth grade in 1903, he was notified of his father's death. He returned to Oklahoma City, where the responsibility for earning a living for his mother and a younger brother

and sister fell on his shoulders. The family farm had been providing vegetables for the Dunjees, and young Roscoe decided to enlarge the operation and become a truck farmer, selling directly to the public.

As if he weren't busy enough, Dunjee decided to supplement the family income by becoming a bellhop at the Stewart Hotel in Oklahoma City.⁹ It was a job he found "fairly lucrative." But he still wasn't satisfied with his life, and began reading everything he could find about the Pythian Grand Lodge, a Negro fraternal organization. Fascinated by black fraternalism, Dunjee joined the Pythian Grand Lodge and began lecturing in its behalf throughout the state. He also enlisted new members, and his reputation as an organizer grew.

Traveling throughout Oklahoma also gave Dunjee an opportunity to observe the conditions under which black migrant cotton patch workers and black tenant farmers were squeezing out bare livings. The problem was that no one was pointing out the poverty conditions under which these black families were living. Not only was the Negro unable to earn a living wage, he was being restricted in his travels and deprived of other rights and personal freedoms enjoyed by whites. Thus, Dunjee began thinking seriously about establishing a newspaper that could tell the Negro story and reply to white racism.

Dunjee began developing intellectually as he studied from a library left by his father, sold vegetables door to

door and from the rear of a truck, worked as a bellhop, and traveled for the lodge. And because working in the print shop had given him a "hankering" for the newspaper business, Dunjee had been submitting articles and editorials to local newspapers.¹⁰ Incensed at what he had seen during his travels in the state, Dunjee became all the more determined to start a newspaper.

Melvin Chisum and C. N. Moran were to figure prominently in Dunjee's entry into the newspaper business. Chisum had purchased the Tribune in Oklahoma City in 1914, but it was doomed to failure in a few months, when the editor overstepped his bounds.¹¹ A story appeared in the Tribune stating that a baby had been born in a dormitory at Langston. Dr. Inman Page, the university president, filed legal action against Chisum, who was forced to suspend publication. Chisum ultimately sold the plant to Joseph Abbey. Meanwhile, Moran had launched the Gazette, one of the newspapers for which Dunjee had been submitting articles and editorials.

It was alleged in a Gazette special edition that Chisum had written the story about the Langston dormitory birth to embarrass Dr. Page and to serve as a basis for his removal.¹² The Gazette story infuriated Chisum, who physically attacked Moran in the presence of Dunjee. The bystander, who escaped Chisum's fury, wrote years later that Chisum had died without knowing that he, Dunjee, and not Moran, had written the article and that the wrong person had been attacked. This episode served to increase Dunjee's

fervor for owning a newspaper, and the opportunity was soon to present itself.

Mrs. Olivia Abbey, Joseph Abbey's widow, wound up with the Tribune printing equipment, but was in no position to operate a business. A teacher in the Oklahoma City school system, Mrs. Abbey decided to sell the business, located at 226 East First. She found a ready buyer in Dunjee, who borrowed the \$500 purchase price and prepared to begin a newspaper career with mortgaged property, no money, no building in which to house the machinery, and few customers.

Dunjee was to recall years later that he felt like a person who "walked into the blackness of night" because he had no formal journalism training.¹³ He said use of his father's library probably had as much as anything to do with preparing him for entrance into the "newspaper game."

Dunjee Proves Doubters Wrong

The first black newspaper was founded nearly 90 years before the first issue of the Black Dispatch was printed.¹⁴ "We wish to plead our cause. Too long have others spoken for us," read the first editorial of Freedom's Journal in 1827. The world took little note of that statement, just as it paid little attention to Roscoe Dunjee and his Black Dispatch.

Accounts differ on the year in which Dunjee started his newspaper. Apparently not one for remembering dates, Dunjee in some issues said it was 1914, while in others he said it was 1915. The purchase was probably made in 1914,

and he may have printed a handout for several months. In any event, the first microfilm copy on file at the Oklahoma Historical Society is dated September 21, 1917. Dunjee, whose career spanned four turbulent decades, needed rescuing before he had even named his paper. He got word to move the equipment at once. Before Dunjee had time to panic, a friend came to his rescue. The friend was Dr. W. H. Slaughter, a Negro physician who heard of his plight and offered free space in the basement of a building at 300 East Second.¹⁵ Dunjee accepted, but he didn't even have enough money to move the machinery. Suddenly, he hit up a stroke of luck. When workmen were tearing the walls from the building, they accidentally knocked cement and other debris onto the printing equipment. Dunjee was offered \$150 cash for the damages-- money he used to move the equipment to Slaughter's building. The money was heaven-sent, said Dunjee, because the equipment wasn't damaged.

When pondering a name for the paper, Dunjee leaned toward "black dispatch," a term used to identify a whisper campaign in the community.¹⁶ "I decided to dignify a slur," he wrote, "although people at first assumed the title of the paper was consonant with unreliability." Quoting a poet, he said "a rose by any other name is just as sweet."¹⁷ Dunjee also recalled "people didn't like the name, and some, even today (1920) do not like the editor. Some said the effort would last only four weeks, and some said five; none, though, ever got above five. . . . Well, we started, we bought a

plant on credit and without knowing a composing stick from a piece of head rule . . . "18 He commented that the Oklahoma expression "that's black despatch (sic) gossip" had caused to be developed a psychology among Negroes that their color is a curse and that there is something evil in their peculiar pigmentation."19 He wasn't upset by black skin, feeling Negroes should be proud to say: "I am a black man." He could even joke about black skin. For example, he editorialized that a Democratic convention was nothing short of a "dark donkey meeting."20 In 1923, he wrote that black people were "dodging the word 'black' then, as now, and so it was that the Black Dispatch started out fighting from the front and from the rear . . . "21

Somehow, Dunjee managed to start operating on a cash basis with Western Newspaper Union (WNU) for supplies and for printing his "four forms."22 WNU contracted to print his paper while Dunjee used the old press purchased from Mrs. Abbey for job printing. WNU printed the Black Dispatch for several years. The company forced Dunjee into a line of credit of \$500 because it was losing money making so many trips to Dunjee's shop delivering small amounts of supplies for cash. WNU insisted on a credit basis so Dunjee could order larger amounts of materials at a time.

The Dispatch remained in Slaughter's basement for 10 years, before moving to 225 North Stiles.23 Dunjee proclaimed in 1937 that there was "not another city in America claiming a Negro population of 15,000 where a Negro

newspaper is published comparable with the Black Dispatch."²⁴ The occasion was the opening of the new Black Dispatch press-room facilities, attended by 5,000 persons (Dunjee's figures).

The editor had a few problems to cope with as he began to operate the new plant. A union was attempting to get Dunjee to hire three white pressmen to run the new 16-page Goss Straightline Perfecting press.²⁵ But Dunjee wouldn't budge, saying he wanted to train blacks to do the job, otherwise they would never learn the trade. When the first issue was off the press--plates on pages 1 and 6 were reversed and had to be changed--Dunjee boasted that a class of 12 had been graduated from "Black Dispatch University."²⁶

The paper had begun operation as a six-column "folio," and was published on Saturdays.²⁷ By 1917, it was a conventional seven-column newspaper, expanding to eight columns in 1931.²⁸ Dunjee commented in 1919 that the policy of the paper "is to exclude . . . immoral stories . . . that can serve no good purpose."²⁹ He said some black journals indulged in yellow journalism and wrote about crooks in the race but that "enough of that can be found in the white papers." By 1932, he was contending that "Negro journals serve an important place in the ranks of race progress. While cowards within the race pussyfoot and Uncle Tom, the Negro journalist takes a firm and certain stand upon every question. Out in the front ranks of the battle he stands, burning his bridges behind him. He never retreats, he never

recants, he will not compromise."³⁰

By 1945, he was carrying this notation over editorials:

An independent newspaper not bound by party label; fighting for the political, economic and social freedom of the Negro.

The Black Dispatch was a member of the Western Negro Press Association during its formative years and later subscribed to the Associated Negro Press, which boasted of having 112 member newspapers in 1921.³¹ As the years passed, Dunjee added the Crusader Service, the Pacific Coast News Bureau, and Preston News Service, among others. Today the Black Dispatch is the oldest continuously published black newspaper in Oklahoma.

Footnotes

- ¹Ibid.
- ²John Dungee, private interview at Oklahoma City, May, 1972.
- ³Testimonial dinner program, November 18, 1955.
- ⁴Black Dispatch, November 10, 1955, p. 1-A.
- ⁵Black Dispatch, March 4, 1944, p. 1.
- ⁶John Dungee, private interview, op. cit.
- ⁷Editorial, Black Dispatch, December 5, 1931, p. 4.
- ⁸Black Dispatch, May 7, 1970, p. 1.
- ⁹Jimmy Stewart, private interview, op. cit. Stewart is uncertain about dates prior to 1914, but Dungee's work as a bellhop and with the Pythian lodge had to take place between 1903 and 1914.
- ¹⁰Editorial, Black Dispatch, April 12, 1923, p. 4.
- ¹¹Black Dispatch, October 7, 1937, p. 1, and November 1, 1955, p. 5-A.
- ¹²Ibid.
- ¹³Editorial, Black Dispatch, December 21, 1922, p. 4.
- ¹⁴Quoted in A Documentary History, op. cit., p. 82.
- ¹⁵Black Dispatch, November 17, 1955, p. 5-A.
- ¹⁶Ibid.
- ¹⁷Editorial, Black Dispatch, December 20, 1934, p. 4.
- ¹⁸Editorial, Black Dispatch, January 2, 1920, p. 4.
- ¹⁹Wolseley, op. cit., p. 52.
- ²⁰Editorial, Black Dispatch, September 25, 1930, p. 4.
- ²¹Editorial, Black Dispatch, April 12, 1923, p. 4.
- ²²Black Dispatch, November 17, 1955, p. 2.
- ²³Black Dispatch, October 29, 1937, p. 1.

- ²⁴Black Dispatch, September 30, 1937, p. 1.
- ²⁵Black Dispatch, November 6, 1937, p. 1.
- ²⁶Ibid.
- ²⁷Black Dispatch, November 17, 1955, p. 5-A.
- ²⁸Editorial, Black Dispatch, May 28, 1931, p. 4.
- ²⁹Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 17, 1919, p. 4.
- ³⁰Editorial, Black Dispatch, September 1, 1932, p. 4.
- ³¹Black Dispatch, September 22, 1921, p. 1.

CHAPTER V

DUNJEE'S EDITORIAL THEMES

A form of content analysis was used to describe and summarize the editorial issues which most concerned Dunjee. Four hundred and eleven editorials were selected for examination by the procedure described earlier. The theme of the editorial was the recording unit. In cases where the editor mentioned several themes, the writer recorded the one he considered to be the overriding topic. The themes of all editorials were summarized in 31 editorial theme categories, listed below. Of the 31 theme categories, 13 dealt with civil rights, four with politics, four with black achievement, and 10 with other topics.

Explanation of Themes

(1) White brutality: Included comments on any type of violence resulting from black-white confrontation, such as lynchings, actions by all-white groups, alleged police brutality, or other repressive measures that resulted in violence or arrests of blacks.

(2) Discrimination by courts and/or law enforcement officials: Included discussions by Dunjee involving alleged bias by judges, courts or law enforcement officers where

little or no violence occurred; generally, concerned injustices perpetrated by white authorities on blacks.

(3) Registration and/or voting discrimination:

Included comments by Dunjee about efforts by whites to keep blacks from voting or registering, about election laws, or about political party anti-vote campaigns against blacks.

(4) Employment discrimination: Included discussions about alleged unfair treatment of blacks in employment, whether on a job or in regard to efforts to prevent Negroes from working. It also included discussions about the Fair Employment Practices Commission.

(5) Public accommodations discrimination: Included discussions concerning discrimination of blacks in regard to public conveyances, such as trains, buses, or streetcars, or in regard to discrimination in public buildings, parks or any other area normally considered existing for public use. It also included comments about unfair laws (Jim Crowism) that deprived blacks of equal opportunities to share in tax financed facilities.

(6) Military discrimination: Included comments regarding discrimination in branches of the military, including treatment accorded blacks by draft boards, discrimination by white servicemen, or regarding military regulations barring blacks from serving.

(7) Housing discrimination: Included editorial comments that deal with segregated housing, with court decisions concerning housing segregation, or with poor housing

conditions of blacks in congested areas.

(8) Economic repression: Included discussions dealing with white activity that kept blacks in poverty, prevented blacks from getting fair market value for their agricultural products, or any action by whites that kept blacks from getting started in business in competition with white enterprises. It also included activity by whites that took unfair advantage of blacks in any business transaction, such as the selling of oil leases and property.

(9) Discrimination resulting from states rights philosophy: Dealt with comments about states rights and repression which Dunjee alleged resulted from the states rights political philosophy, or with discussions about centralized forms of government being more beneficial to Negroes.

(10) School discrimination: Dealt with comments about public schools, the separate but equal doctrine, or any discussions that cited disadvantages faced by blacks because of school segregation laws or policies.

(11) White racism (general): Concerned any civil rights issue not included by the remainder of themes in this category, namely: prevailing white prejudices of the day, general opposition to desegregation, and white refusal to give credit to blacks who achieved something worthwhile.

(12) Discrimination by legislation, governmental agencies and/or elected or appointed officials: Included comments about white racism among officials at all levels

of government, release of convicted white offenders by white officials, legislative bias, unfair treatment of blacks caused by alleged "American imperialism," or U.S. government attitude toward black countries.

(13) White vs. white (racial overtones): Concerned primarily with distrust among whites relating to racial issues, inability of whites to govern themselves, white opposition to officials who attempted to assist Negroes, or internal problems faced by white organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan.

(14) Local politics: Concerned Oklahoma City politics, Dunjee's comments about local candidates, changes in local forms of government, election or defeat of candidates, or corruption in local government (racism not the central issue).

(15) State politics: Concerned political activity outside Oklahoma City but included state officials, state political parties, or action by politicians at the capitol, or in other cities, such as Tulsa (racism not the central issue).

(16) National politics: Involved comments on national political figures or parties, national elections or any discussions dealing with issues considered in a party platform (racism not the central issue).

(17) International politics: Included comments about internal problems of other countries, particularly black nations, but also including military and political

alliances and exploitation policies of other nations toward black countries.

(18) Black entrepreneurship: Included comments about black business, usually in form of encouragement to blacks to enter some type of business to serve black people or black enterprises.

(19) Black achievement, black history and black heritage: Included comments about blacks who had been successful in school, sports, business, or military, and discussions encouraging blacks to be proud of their heritage and color.

(20) Black solidarity: Included discussions about the importance of black togetherness, whether at the polls, in racial matters, or in other issues, or comments about racial unity and about blacks "staying together or hanging together," including the importance of organizations such as the NAACP.

(21) Black-white cooperation: Dealt with areas where blacks and whites worked together, and included comments about white leaders who attempted to assist blacks in knocking down racial barriers.

(22) Black patriotism: Concerned discussions about obeying the law of the land, respecting the flag, and defending the country in time of war.

(23) Black health: Dealt with health problems faced by blacks and included comments about whites or white organizations that attempted to help or hinder blacks in the

area of medical care.

(24) Black education (general): Dealt mainly with black schools and efforts to upgrade them (integration is not the overriding issue).

(25) Dunjee's criticism of blacks: Included comments unfavorable to blacks or black organizations.

(26) Black press: Included comments about the Black Dispatch or other black papers, favorable or unfavorable, on various issues.

(27) Black-white sexual relationships and intermarriage: Included discussions about white men who had intimate relationships with black women. Also included discussions of miscegenation.

(28) Prohibition: Dealt with comments about prohibition, favorable or unfavorable.

(29) Religion: Dealt with comments about religious organizations, black or white, favorable or unfavorable.

(30) Communism: Concerned communism and its tenets, abroad or in the U.S., favorable or unfavorable.

(31) Miscellaneous: Dealt with items of no particular interest to the general public or not germane to the problems of the Dunjee era.

Results of Content Analysis

Results of this study (as shown in Table 1) support the hypothesis that Dunjee was preoccupied with equality and justice for black people and that the Black Dispatch was a

TABLE 1
MAJOR EDITORIAL THEMES WITHIN CATEGORIES

N = 411 Editorials		Num- ber	Per cent
Categories and Major Themes			
CIVIL RIGHTS		164	40.0
1. White brutality		18	4.4
2. Discrimination by courts, law officers, etc.		15	3.6
3. Registration and/or voting discrimination		10	2.5
4. Employment discrimination		4	1.0
5. Public accommodations discrimination		10	2.5
6. Military discrimination		4	1.0
7. Housing discrimination		3	0.7
8. Economic repression and white exploitation		8	2.0
9. Discrimination resulting from states rights philosophy		10	2.5
10. School discrimination		20	4.9
11. White racism (general)		39	9.4
12. Discrimination by legislation, etc		19	4.6
13. White vs. white (racial overtones)		4	1.0
POLITICS		79	19.0
14. Local		12	2.9
15. State		25	6.0
16. National		25	6.0
17. International		17	4.1
BLACK ACHIEVEMENT		95	23.0
18. Black entrepreneurship		21	5.1
19. Black achievement, history and heritage		31	7.5
20. Black solidarity		17	4.1
21. Black-white cooperation		26	6.3
OTHERS		73	18.0
22. Black patriotism		6	1.5
23. Black health		2	0.5
24. Black education (general)		19	4.6
25. Dunjee's criticism of blacks		16	4.0
26. Black press		10	2.5
27. Black-white sexual relationships and inter- marriage		7	1.7
28. Prohibition		3	0.7
29. Religion		2	0.5
30. Communism		4	1.0
31. Miscellaneous		4	1.0

"cause" newspaper founded for the purpose of fighting for black equality. Of the 411 Dunjee editorials reviewed, 164 or 40 per cent, evolved around civil rights issues. Nearly 10 per cent of these dealt with white racism. On specific discrimination issues, he was more concerned about school problems brought about by segregation. Next was discrimination by legislators, government agencies and/or officials, followed by discrimination in the form of brutality and violence.

Next to equality, Dunjee was concerned with the achievement of black people, encouraging black business ownership, pride in black history and black heritage, and pointing to the need for black unity and black-white cooperation. Ninety-five (23 per cent) of his editorials dealt with black achievement. Dunjee's third major area of concern was politics, which constituted 79 (19 per cent) of his editorial themes. He expressed more interest in state and national politics, with international issues and local politics in more secondary positions. All other themes combined (outside of civil rights, black achievement, and politics) consisted of 73 (18 per cent) of his editorial subjects. It should be explained that Dunjee was so involved in seeking equality for blacks that even most of those editorials not categorized under civil rights were interspersed with concerns about equal opportunities for Negroes.

As mentioned in the introduction, the writer used information collected in the content analysis as a basis for

further examination of the Black Dispatch files.

CHAPTER VI

DUNJEE THE ACTIVIST

This chapter deals with some Dunjee accomplishments, political involvement, and views on various racial and social issues.

'Bloody Fangs of Jim Crow'

With repression of the Negro rampant when Dunjee founded the newspaper, it was only natural that race problems dominated editorial content of the paper at the outset. In 1917 Dunjee said the "Jim Crow law is dripping with innocent blood in Oklahoma today and the time is ripe for an investigation into a law that in its operation impairs the safety of black travelers and has made many, many homes mourn."¹ A railroad accident had killed 20 blacks riding in a wooden coach in the front of the train. Dunjee implored the Corporation Commission to adhere to a Supreme Court ruling of November 30, 1914, in which it said railroads must furnish accommodations "equal, alike and the same" for all races.

Dunjee argued the black traveler riding in the wooden coach in front of the steel coaches carrying the white man did not have equal security, adding that the hands of

Jim Crow were dripping with "ghoulish guilt, as were the hands of Pontius Pilate with the blood of Christ." In later years he was contending that the Supreme Court had ruled on such questions as equality for animals while overlooking Negroes. He said a "hog rides through all of the states under uniform regulations and treatment," receiving preferential treatment to blacks.²

Dunjee not only pointed out the evils of Jim Crowism, he attempted to do something about them. He didn't sit behind a typewriter, getting his information second hand. He was an active reporter. A prime example was an incident at Chickasha in February of 1918 when two black soldiers were placed in a "dirty, filthy shack" behind a hospital.³ One of the soldiers was a Lt. Charles A. Tribbett, who had ridden Pullman into Chickasha and had gotten arrested at the depot for violating the separate coach law. Dunjee attempted to obtain the release of the soldiers by calling Fort Sill, Okla., military authorities. A bystander quipped: "He (the black officer) will smell brimstone before he reaches Fort Sill." Dunjee reminded a Chickasha justice of the peace, who was demanding an immediate plea, that the soldier had a right to counsel.

Grady county's prosecuting attorney agreed to delay proceedings until the next day, when the officer pleaded guilty to violating the separate coach law and paid a \$24 fine. Dunjee appealed to Fort Sill's adjutant general at Sill, who told him it was not a military matter. Noting

that the soldiers had been "marooned in a hell of prejudice," Dunjee said that the Supreme Court had ruled Oklahoma must provide blacks with the same conveniences made available to whites. His plea fell on deaf ears. Years later, Dunjee admitted that he and Tribbett connived to test the separate coach law; he was riding in the Jim Crow section while Tribbett was planted among white travelers.⁴ In this same account, he discussed a train ride to and from St. Louis to test the law. Dunjee reminded blacks that they could ride in the white section if they were traveling from one state to another but that they had to ride in the Jim Crow section if they were traveling intrastate.

In the early years of his editorship, Dunjee pleaded for equal accommodations as a substitute for total integration.⁵ He even criticized blacks for entering a public building when they knew they would be turned away, saying that as long as blacks clamor to purchase Jim Crowism "there is very little hope for the rest of us."⁶ In 1922, he commended blacks for asking only for equal facilities instead of mixed schools.⁷ When he was turned away from the front entrance of an Oklahoma City hospital, Dunjee said blacks needed a separate hospital with black doctors and nurses.⁸ While advocating "separate but equal" schools, he was opposing separate library facilities.⁹ He was still accepting the separate school principle in 1925.¹⁰ However, by 1931 Dunjee was saying that separate schools should be removed from the educational scene because black schools were

not getting their share of money earmarked for education.¹¹ He began to develop the argument that the state simply wasn't wealthy enough to support separate schools. He had noted previously that a bull had more room to lie down in at Oklahoma A&M College (all white) than a Negro girl had to turn around in at Langston dormitories, commenting that blacks made up one-tenth of the population in Oklahoma in 1921 but received only one-thirty third of the money spent for education.¹² As late as 1948, Dunjee was pleading for more funds for black schools "until we get single schools."¹³ Following the 1954 Supreme Court decision on school desegregation, Dunjee said if separate schools were unconstitutional, so were segregated trains and buses.¹⁴

As for his fight against segregated public conveyances, he argued in 1923 that if it were acceptable for a white baby to nurse a "black mammy's breast" and for a black maid to sleep in a room next to white people, it should be acceptable for a "stumbling Negro traveler to touch a white person."¹⁵ In 1918, he urged the government to take over the railroad system so blacks could claim a property interest and Jim Crow would suffer.¹⁶ He pointed out Jim Crow laws added further embarrassment to blacks because whites standing in crowded aisles in streetcars refused to move when blacks worked their way to the rear or to exits.¹⁷ Dunjee himself never suffered this embarrassment because, as mentioned previously, he rode in the white sections of buses and streetcars. "He was light-skinned and porters,

although suspecting he was black, were afraid to ask him to move to the Negro section for fear they just might be embarrassing a white paying customer," recalled Jimmy Stewart, a longtime Dunjee friend and associate.¹⁸

If any one person were responsible for integration of Oklahoma's state colleges and universities, it would have to be Roscoe Dunjee.¹⁹ It all started when Dunjee accompanied Ada Lois Sipuel, a Negro who had been graduated from Langston, to Norman, Okla., to challenge the state's segregation laws. She wanted to enter the University of Oklahoma law school. When she was refused admission, one of the longest court fights in Oklahoma history began. However, it wasn't Miss Sipuel who first cracked the racial barrier at OU. That distinction went to George Washington McLaurin, a 54-year-old black seeking a doctorate in education. On October 7, 1948, Attorney General Mac Q. Williamson told OU regents that he interpreted an earlier three-man federal court decision to mean that OU had to admit McLaurin or drop the courses he was seeking to enroll in.²⁰ Five days later the regents said McLaurin would be admitted, but under segregated conditions.²¹ On October 14, McLaurin attended his first class, but at a distinct disadvantage.²² He sat in an anteroom, facing the instructor at a difficult angle, and separated from the remainder of the class. In addition, McLaurin had to eat by himself at a specially-arranged facility, away from all contact with white students and faculty members. He also had to use separate toilet

facilities.

McLaurin went to school under these restrictive conditions until classroom segregation officially ended in 1950, due to a lawsuit pursued by Dunjee as the state's top NAACP official. The Supreme Court broke the separate but equal doctrine that opened the doors for blacks to study at institutions of higher learning on an equal and integrated basis. McLaurin said in 1949 that he wanted no segregation of any kind because it was an "insult in itself and in any form."²³ He had entered the OU graduate school in the company of Dunjee and Amos Hall, a Negro attorney, in a repeat of the Sipuel case.²⁴ Miss Sipuel (she married and her name became Fisher before the legal involvement was settled) was denied entrance into OU in 1946 when she was accompanied to Norman by Dunjee and Dr. W. A. J. Bullock of Chickasha.²⁵ She was again denied permission to enroll, on the grounds that state law prohibited it. The state said it furnished money to blacks to attend schools which accepted them.²⁶ Dunjee and the NAACP launched a series of court battles that was to last for several years and culminate in the Supreme Court. Dunjee reported that the state found itself in a "defenseless position" in the Sipuel case when Attorney General Fred Hansen told the court that Oklahoma had made no effort to provide equal facilities to black law students.²⁷

When the state was ordered to admit Miss Sipuel or furnish equal law school facilities, the legislature

established a "Langston University School of Law," with classes to be held at the state capitol.²⁸ The school was set up in January of 1948.²⁹ The Daily Oklahoman reported that as of October 14, 1948, the school had not enrolled a single student. The following June, it became apparent that segregation was nearing the end at OU. On June 17, 1949, the regents refused to admit Miss Sipuel again on the grounds Langston's law school was still in operation at the capitol.³⁰ The same day the regents said Negro students would be allowed to enroll in courses not offered elsewhere but students would have to be separated from whites by railings. In addition, every Negro student would have to be approved for admission by the state regents. The next day, the regents announced that they were closing the Langston law school on June 30, and Miss Sipuel enrolled at OU on June 18. Dunjee pledged to "prosecute with vigor our fight to end all segregation in state colleges."³¹

On June 21, 30 Negro students were admitted to OU, attending classes separated by railings or partitions.³² Most white students interviewed about Negro admissions ridiculed the state regents and the legislature for insisting on barriers. It wasn't until months later that the railings were taken down and blacks could attend OU and other schools on an equal and integrated basis.

Dunjee won another landmark decision involving education in 1948 when a U.S. district court ruled that disparities of salaries for black and white teachers in

Oklahoma City were unconstitutional.³³ The editor had pursued the case in behalf of Emma Lee Freeman, a black teacher who alleged whites were paid more than blacks in the local school system. Dunjee accepted donations from black teachers to press the issue through the courts to a successful conclusion.

Responding no differently than would a member of any other oppressed group, Dunjee nearly always defended black people charged with crimes against whites, especially when they involved capital punishment. The white man, he said, was depriving blacks of their civil liberties while forcing white women to share the white man's love and bed with black women.³⁴ He cited a case in Altus, Okla., where a white man was shot by a black woman in the Negro section.³⁵ Dunjee suggested the white man had intimate relations with the black woman, although before dying the victim said he had been on his way to buy medicine. Dunjee noted that white men had been going for medicine in Oklahoma City for a long time.

Another case in which Dunjee was heavily involved concerned Jess Hollins, a black man convicted of raping a white girl in eastern Oklahoma.³⁶ As usual, the editor took a personal interest, collecting money and giving some of his resources for attorney fees. When Hollins had been in prison 20 years, Dunjee said the black prisoner was being incarcerated for a misdemeanor because the girl, who had been having an affair with him, charged rape only after

being seen with Hollins by a relative.³⁷ Eventually, the U.S. Supreme Court entered the picture by ordering a new trial.³⁸ Hollins, who had been condemned to death in two trials, was convicted a third time, but received only a life sentence. Dunjee pointed out that all-white juries had convicted Hollins each time.³⁹

A similar case involved Collin Tillry, who was convicted of killing a white policeman in 1920. Tillry died in prison in 1928, leading Dunjee to comment that he was convicted by a white jury without a "scintilla" of evidence against him.⁴⁰ After Tillry's funeral, Dunjee wrote: "As we stand at the bier today of Collin Tillry, a black man who was sacrificed in Oklahoma that Jim Crow might live, let us rededicate ourselves to the proposition that we will fight on to the dawn that shall surely come, when the scales of justice balance."

Still another case which called for Dunjee's assistance involved Elias Ridge, a 13-year-old black accused with his uncle of slaying a white woman in Mayes county.⁴¹ After two trials, in which Ridge was sentenced to death, the Criminal Court of Appeals commuted the death sentence, with attorneys using funds collected by Dunjee for appeal. Dunjee contended that while Ridge may have been guilty, the death sentence for a 13-year-old was unconstitutional.

Dunjee felt Oklahoma City was in the same racial boat as major southern cities. He repeatedly called

attention to discriminatory practices, such as the time when the school board purchased a bus to transport westside blacks to Douglass high school (Negro) on the east side.⁴² It was not a gesture of kindness, he said, but a move to keep blacks from attending Capitol Hill high school (white) when integration arrived. The bus would be a good excuse to continue hauling black students across town. On another occasion he said whites had prevented blacks from competing with whites in a parade.⁴³ There was the time at a Jim Crow swimming pool where black and white youths, playing together away from the water, couldn't enter it together.⁴⁴ This, said Dunjee, was proof that prejudice was based on hypocrisy and deception among adults. After Golden Gloves boxers from Oklahoma City were defeated in a national tournament, Dunjee laid the blame for the team loss on white adults, who refused to permit blacks to try out.⁴⁵ He said white boxers could sharpen their skills only by competing against superior black boxers.

Oklahoma City barred blacks from parks in 1935, not even allowing so much as a Sunday School picnic to be held.⁴⁶ In this instance, Dunjee was willing to accept a separate but equal facility for blacks. The scene shifted to the city zoo in 1939, when Negroes were being told to stay away.⁴⁷ The city capitulated and allowed blacks to attend on Thursdays, with no whites permitted on that day. After observing this procedure for a few weeks, Dunjee concluded that whites were showing up in greater numbers on Thursdays

than blacks.

Another black-white hassle that involved Dunjee centered around land near the fairgrounds that was being considered as a park for blacks. After nearly 15 years of wrangling, an agreement was reached, prompting this statement from Dunjee: "The action taken by the city council . . . marks the consummation and carrying out of every proposal and demand of the Black Dispatch."⁴⁸ The Hassman park (named assigned the land in question) issue arose when Washington park (Negro) was leased for oil drilling purposes and had to be abandoned. Arguments developed among blacks and between blacks and city officials over the additional facilities, with Dunjee claiming it was his suggestions that settled the issue to the satisfaction of all parties.

When City Manager Ross Taylor refused to give 10 Negro policemen a hearing after they were fired, Dunjee circulated a grand jury petition for an investigation.⁴⁹ The editor maintained it was his petition drive that forced a settlement.

Dunjee and the NAACP were instrumental in breaking up housing segregation in Oklahoma City in 1935. He enlisted a black, Sidney Hawkins, to join in fighting the city's residential ordinance.⁵⁰ Hawkins was arrested for living north of Eighth Street, in an all-white area bordering the Negro section. Dunjee encouraged Hawkins to go to jail so he could be gotten out on a writ of habeas corpus. This would force a court decision on the constitutionality of

residential segregation. Dunjee and the NAACP won the habeas corpus proceedings, the case eventually going to the Oklahoma Supreme Court. Residential segregation was outlawed in 1936.⁵¹ Justice Fletcher Riley wrote the majority opinion, making Oklahoma one of the first southern states to concur in the opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court on Louisville's segregated housing ordinance approximately 20 years before.⁵²

Dunjee did not advocate violence, but he had little sympathy for blacks who didn't retaliate in the face of white oppression.⁵³ When advocating open defiance of white racism in 1919, he encouraged blacks to fight and applauded retaliation by Negroes in Chicago and Washington as a sign that the minority race was beginning to realize it had to fight or die. "This civilization is going down in chaos-- out of it will rise a better world," he wrote. Dunjee likened whites who kept blacks bottled up in congested areas to "common murderers," because the tuberculosis rate was high in poor housing sections of cities.⁵⁴ This fact alone was sufficient reason for Negroes to meet violence with violence, he felt.

No Relief at State Level

One conclusion from Table 1 is that Dunjee considered discussion of state and national politics more important than local politics. Perhaps this was because he felt the principle of states rights was largely responsible for

segregation, mob violence and other black problems, and that a local solution was not possible.⁵⁵ Dunjee appeared to be ambivalent on some occasions, such as when he called the U.S. Constitution a states rights document written by forefathers with narrow visions.⁵⁶ The document was written, he contended, by a well-organized ruling class that said the charter should represent a "government of property, for property, and by property."⁵⁷ Dunjee called Jefferson a hypocrite because, as he wrote that all men were created equal, he was holding slaves.⁵⁸ Yet, he also said the constitution was a great document and Jefferson a great patriot, and that the Bill of Rights prevented a monarchy and allowed a republic. Regardless of the apparent contradictions here, Dunjee appeared to be fairly consistent throughout his newspaper career. In any event, he saw no relief for black people in the segregated south, and contended that a centralized form of government was the only avenue of freedom for the minority race.⁵⁹

Powerless Without Ballot

While awaiting relief from federal courts, Dunjee urged blacks to at least attempt to register--at a time when they were being denied this right. "The Negro in Oklahoma who fails to go and register . . . is unfit for citizenship," was a typical Dunjee plea.⁶⁰ However, there was a problem: discrimination against the eligible black voter was rampant; he couldn't always register, and Dunjee warned that without

the right to vote "citizenship becomes the pawn and plaything of demagogues and the ruling class."⁶¹ One Muskogee county registrar was reportedly "in Cuba" when Negroes went to register; Wagoner county had allowed only eight blacks to register, while in Okfuskee county blacks previously registered were being forced to requalify.

Dunjee accused "black hirelings" in Muskogee county of arranging for blacks who promised to vote Democratic to register. "Go out and vote the Republican ticket," he admonished. "Vote it because you cannot stomach the stench that comes from the evil bodies of your own race who will connive with white men to deprive you of a privilege in citizenship." Dunjee was jailed in 1919 for "electioneering" in a mayoralty race in Oklahoma City.⁶² Serving as a "watcher" at a precinct polling place, Dunjee objected to black Democrats who had crowded around voting booths "taking ballots out of voters' hands." The editor was held for two hours while friends were summoning a judge to release him. Dunjee said he had been arrested for insisting that the intruders leave. As the years wore on and Dunjee became head of the Oklahoma Conference of Branches of the NAACP, he noted that Oklahoma had relented and had become a model state in the area of Negro voting rights.⁶³

Dunjee's Running Political Battles

Dr. I. W. Young was a black Oklahoma City medical doctor who, although never seeking political office, became

actively involved in politics at the local and state levels.⁶⁴ His relationship with the Black Dispatch editor was one of the more intriguing sidelights in Dunjee's career as a newsman and NAACP leader. Dunjee and Young were not politically compatible; in fact, they were to become bitter personal enemies. An Oklahoma City Non-Partisan League was denounced by Dunjee as a front for a Democratic political figure to trick blacks into changing registration from the Republican to the Democratic side. Young was a member of the league.⁶⁵ Dunjee, infuriated at this gimmick, decided to help form the Lincoln League to "expose" the NPL.⁶⁶ Young once wrote that while the two disagreed over politics, there was no disagreement as far as the race fight was concerned.⁶⁷ In this case, however, political fever was higher than racial fever, and the two parted company for good.

When Young was appointed president of Langston University, Dunjee was outraged. He opposed the appointment on the grounds that Young was without "literary" training, adding that he had predicted the political plum would come Young's way because the doctor was a political ally of Jack Walton, Democratic candidate for governor.⁶⁸ When blacks were being denied registration rights by Democrats in Muskogee county, Dunjee called it government by coercion and said if Young, by now a leading figure in Oklahoma politics, believed "in this sort and character of violence visited on liberty, he was born past his time. . . ."⁶⁹ This running battle continued for many years, with Dunjee accusing Young

of changing politics for personal gain and Young charging that Dunjee was inconsistent in his political philosophy. Dunjee carried a banner headline when Young died, but refrained from passing out condolences. Young, ousted by a new administration, had been reappointed head of Langston by Gov. Murray, which didn't help his relationship with Dunjee.

Dunjee rejoiced over one event that resulted from his personal feud with Young.⁷⁰ In 1922, Young and a man named Deck Fuller contracted with Dunjee for columns to be written and edited by Young that would appear twice weekly in the Black Dispatch during the political campaign. After four weeks, Young brought in a picture of Walton, a white, to run with his column. A mistake in the makeup by composing room employers made the layout to appear that the column was written by Walton. The state Republican party purchased 10,000 copies of the paper to distribute in southern Oklahoma, an anti-black area, in hopes of damaging Walton's chances for victory. The next week produced another windfall for Dunjee; Democrats purchased 20,000 copies because of an editorial by Dunjee on "ballot power." It was a "radical" editorial, recalled Dunjee, and Democrats wanted to show white voters that blacks were posing a threat to them at the ballot box. Even after paying for extra newsprint, Dunjee said he made \$1,000 with the two editions.

Walton supplied much of the fodder for Dunjee's acid editorials in the 1920s. A Democrat, Walton was in and out

of Dunjee's favor for years. The editor first supported Walton in a local election because he felt the Republican candidate was a racist.⁷¹ But Dunjee said he would not support Walton in the 1921 mayor's race in Oklahoma City because of a "gradual deterioration" in the candidate's feeling for the black man. However, in less than a year Dunjee was back on Walton's bandwagon when the latter was running for governor, saying the mayor had helped blacks gain access to the city library.⁷² Dunjee urged blacks to support Walton in the primary election, reasoning that the former Democratic mayor had afforded more protection for Negroes than prior Republican administrations.⁷³ When other newspapers pointed out that a friend of Walton had lynched Jake Brooks, a Negro, Dunjee answered that Walton should not be found guilty by association. He contended that Walton had a good record on election reform, but that his ideas were not incorporated into the Democrats' platform.⁷⁴ The editor didn't yield to his temptation to support Walton, however, in the general election. He took a stand for John Field, the Republican nominee.⁷⁵

Within a year Dunjee was praising Walton as the only governor in the United States who was "taking the hood off the Klan (Ku Klux Klan)."⁷⁶ When Walton got into trouble with the legislature, which threatened impeachment, Dunjee contended that any legislator who voted for impeachment was voting for the KKK.⁷⁷ When Walton was impeached by the House and suspended by the Senate, Dunjee condemned the governor

for releasing persons convicted in the lynching of Brooks.⁷⁸ After the deposed Walton filed for the U.S. senate against Republican W. B. Pine, Dunjee cried that a vote for Walton was a vote for those who were against anti-lynching legislation.⁷⁹ Twenty years later, Dunjee had forgiven Walton and urged his election as a corporation commissioner because Walton had promised the editor a hearing on racial discrimination on public conveyances.⁸⁰

Dunjee's Changing Politics

It is obvious by now that politics was important to Dunjee, as it was to other black editors, and that any summary of his life would be incomplete without a discussion of his political activity. It wasn't until mid-1918 that he began to mention his party affiliation. The Black Dispatch carried a brief notice that indicated the editor was one of three "race members" on the Oklahoma County Republican Central Committee.⁸¹ However, there was not any reason to believe he was anything other than a Republican, principally because of his affection for Lincoln and Douglass. But he wasn't active in party politics then. Editorializing in the GOP committee story, the Black Dispatch editor reported that in his opinion the leadership of the Republican party had not been as cordial or liberal in its relationship with black voters as it should have been. It wasn't long before he began firing salvos at both political parties, sometimes taking up all the space on an editorial page to do so. He

never let a presidential election go by without commenting at length on the candidates and issues. Several months before the 1920 election involving Cox and Harding, he wrote that the "Democratic party does not believe in the principles of human freedom and equal rights to all men," adding that the Republican party wasn't what it used to be but that it was improving in its relationship to black hopes and aspirations.⁸² He accused President Wilson of lacking moral leadership.⁸³ Then, following a Harding campaign speech in Oklahoma City, he wrote:

Gazing down into a throng variously estimated at from 12,000 to 15,000, Sen. Warren Harding, Republican candidate for president of the United States, and the man who will, without question, set in the White House after March, 1921, as president of the United States, talked to a spellbound crowd for over an hour. . . . The speech was the final climax of the greatest Republican rally ever staged in Oklahoma, and according to the statement of the senator, was the greatest demonstration he has yet received since the mantle of supreme leadership had been placed upon him.⁸⁴

Dunjee accused "hell-hounds of hate" of attempting to embarrass Harding through a series of questions appearing in the Daily Oklahoman on the day Harding was to speak. Harding was asked if he favored separate coaches, schools, restaurants and amusement places for blacks and whites, and passage of a so-called 'force bill' that authorized the use of federal troops by guaranteeing the "full vote of the great Negro population of the south?" Dunjee said Harding had found Oklahoma full of "maniacs" who didn't want him to say anything pro-Negro.⁸⁵

As the election approached Dunjee was saying that the

Democratic party was founded on the principle that the Negro should remain a slave and its leaders believed the "world is the white man's coconut."⁸⁶ No black, he said, could enter the party until it turned from tradition and acknowledged the black man's constitutional equality in citizenship. It was useless, he continued, for persons to attempt to convince him that the Democratic party was "the ship upon which I should sail when it has attempted and still attempts to scuttle the little vessel that Abraham Lincoln bequeathed to us." Then he delivered this scathing attack on Democrats:

We want to know whether you have the sense and vision to join the landslide of Republicanism that shall sweep President Wilson, his heirs and assigns into oblivion forever.⁸⁷

Dunjee soon became disenchanted with Harding, whom he accused of inviting blacks out of the Republican party.⁸⁸ Saying he was a Republican only because the party was the only vehicle on which Negroes could ride to citizenship, Dunjee considered asking blacks to vote for the best candidate in future elections, regardless of political ties. "The Black Dispatch has not gone Democratic, but . . . we are getting mighty independent in our thinking these days," warned Dunjee. Upon Harding's death in 1923, Dunjee called him a man of courage who was weighted down by the Ku Klux Klan.⁸⁹

Although Dunjee wavered during the Harding administration, he decided to support Coolidge against Davis, the Democrat, in 1924. Blacks were urged to oppose Democratic

congressmen because they would tie the hands of the "greatest president since Lincoln."⁹⁰ The Republican National Committee was praised by Dunjee for appointing 38 blacks as delegates to the national convention, while the Democrats had only four Negroes at their convention.⁹¹ The U.S. was still without an anti-lynching law, and Dunjee expressed confidence that Coolidge would see to it that a bill was passed.⁹² He quoted Coolidge as saying Congress needed to protect blacks and others from the "hideous crime of lynching."⁹³

By now Dunjee was regularly attacking states rights, reasoning that the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments had been nullified in the South.⁹⁴ If the GOP idea of government could prevail, he said, the Negro could vote in Mississippi and Georgia just as he had been able to do in Maine and New Hampshire. Dunjee said blacks could support Democrats when the party decided to write into its platform a pledge of centralization of power and authority. In 1928, Dunjee lashed out at blacks who were being lured into the Democratic ranks.⁹⁵ Claiming that Democrats would take credit for a "good corn crop," Dunjee said such reasoning was as consistent as the talk making the rounds that Smith, the Democratic nominee, had placed 700 blacks on the New York City police force. The editor pointed out that Smith didn't have the authority as governor to appoint policemen but that "bone-headed Negroes" would continue to believe the story. "While Al's henchmen are dealing in bunk, they ought to go the limit," suggested Dunjee. "Why not tell the Negroes up North

that Al will give them a mild winter as soon as elected; and that so far as the South is concerned he will immediately exterminate the boll weevil." Dunjee continued his onslaught:

Democratic Negroes are . . . whispering in the ears of gullible black folk that the Republican party has been swallowed up by the (Ku Klux) Klan. With a look of horror these same Negroes, especially those in Oklahoma, forget that their record is against them on such a subject. . . . The world is still filled with the type of men who would traduce Christ. Everybody knows that Herbert Hoover comes from a Quaker extraction. It was the early Quakers . . . who formed a human chain that helped thousands of slaves to freedom. . . . The writer's father was helped to freedom by Quakers . . .⁹⁶

The editor predicted that Jim Crow cars would show up in Washington within six months if Smith were elected; those disguised as southern liberal Democrats were "demagogues who never miss an opportunity to abuse and insult the Negro, even on the floor of Congress."⁹⁷ He accused Democrats of defeating bills that would have (1) enforced the 14th and 15th amendments, (2) provided better educational opportunities for blacks, and (3) eliminated lynching. Predicting the end of the Democratic party, the editor wrote that ". . . if Smith is not elected to the presidency, the torn and embittered fragments of the organization will never be able to assemble itself (sic) together again." Dunjee said if Hoover were a member of the Ku Klux Klan because Klansmen were going to vote Republican (as inferred by Democrats) then Smith was a bootlegger, gambler and thug because "all of that crowd is following the Democratic candidate."⁹⁸

To support his claim that the Democratic party was anti-black, Dunjee cited an entry on page 2,243, volume 33, of the Congressional Record, by U.S. Sen. Tillman (D-N.C.):

I am standing here to advertise that the state of North Carolina has disfranchised all of the colored race that it could under the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments. We have done our level best, we have scratched our heads to find out how we could eliminate the last one of them, and we would have done it if we could. . . . We stuffed the ballot boxes, we shot them and we are not ashamed of it. With that system and force, with the tissue ballots, etc., we even got tired ourselves, so we called a constitutional convention and we eliminated all of the colored people we could under the 14th and 15th amendments.⁹⁹

The appearance locally of a St. Louis minister riled Dunjee, who wrote that the Rev. Noah Williams asked God to bless Smith and damn those who opposed him.¹⁰⁰ Dunjee quoted Williams as saying "if Al Smith is elected he won't bring whiskey back--it's already here. We have plenty of whiskey; what we want is better whiskey, and let the government get the revenue." Williams called Hoover a member of the Klan, but Dunjee replied that the preacher didn't know that KKK "owned the Democrats in Oklahoma from stem to stern."

Dunjee said another reason for supporting Hoover was that no state nominating Smith allowed a Negro in as a delegate at the party convention. And he felt if Smith were elected and increased the immigration quota as promised, Negro industrial job opportunities in the North would worsen because foreigners would work for less than blacks. He repeated that the GOP had "clothed the Negro with citizenship rights." Following the election, Dunjee was surprised that

Hoover could have broken the solid South, saying few people believed an issue could "loom down in Dixie big enough to cause the men who followed Lee and Jackson to forget their Negrophobia long enough to vote the ticket of Lincoln and Roosevelt . . . the death knell of the Democratic party may have been sounded. Political parties are not immortal and who knows but that the South yesterday was on the way to the graveyard to bury the hell born at Appomattox?"¹⁰¹

The next four years were not what Dunjee had anticipated, and by 1932 he had become disallusioned with Hoover and the Republican party. Although he had predicted the death of the Democratic party on numerous occasions, Dunjee began to have second thoughts; perhaps Franklin Roosevelt had something to offer. He put it this way:

The Democratic party seeks to destroy forever our ballot rights, while the Republican party, operating on the assumption we belong to them, refuses to lift a hand in the defense of black citizenship . . . President Hoover has spent the past 3 1/2 years trying to disrupt the Negroes' political organization in the South. What is it the Democrats could do worse than this? Looking at Hoover from this angle, his lily-white tactics are far more reprehensible than the methods used by Democrats.¹⁰²

At this point Dunjee felt the black man had been too loyal to Republicans, giving way to emotionalism instead of rationalism. The GOP, he said, should stand for "Good on Promises." Six weeks before the 1932 election he was urging blacks not to vote for either candidate but to concentrate on state elections and convince the South that the Negro vote was no longer a Republican bloc. He blasted Hoover for naming

a southern "black-hater" (John J. Parker) to the Supreme Court.¹⁰³ He asked readers to compare the GOP of 1932 with the "party of yesterday," when Frederick Douglass was declaring "The Republican party is the ship; all else the sea." Dunjee felt blacks had more important things to do than blame Hoover for the depression, insisting that the sterile Negro vote was the important thing.¹⁰⁴ "The Democratic party fights for the white primary and disfranchisement while the Republican party supports a path of paternalistic boredom," he said. Nevertheless, Dunjee began making political eyes with the Democrats, declaring the party felt the way it did because it knew blacks would vote Republican regardless of what Democrats promised. He predicted a major ballot vote among blacks.¹⁰⁵

Ultimately Dunjee decided to support Roosevelt on the basis that the plight of Negroes couldn't worsen and that a solid vote for FDR would identify the black ballot as an "independent entity."¹⁰⁶ He said the GOP "castrated" blacks from positions of responsibility within the party.¹⁰⁷ GOP "hypocrisy" had moved the Black Dispatch off the Republican reservation, although Dunjee was not yet ready to start a love affair with Democrats. By election time, such prominent blacks as W. E. B. DuBois were indicting Hoover and swinging to the other side.¹⁰⁸ Dunjee said rumors that he was accepting money represented "the kind of slobber going the rounds among a few brass-colored, yellowdog Republicans."¹⁰⁹ He called the FDR drift a "progressive movement for political

emancipation . . . why has the GOP, in power 55 of the previous 77 years, failed to pass anti-lynching legislation? Why were Negro Gold Star mothers Jim Crowed and sent to the graves of their sons in Flanders Field in cattle ships, while the mothers of white soldiers were sent in the best vessels traveling the seas?" Following FDR's victory, Dunjee commended blacks for supporting the winner and said the "haughty Republican party has been brought to its knees."¹¹⁰ He felt Negroes should not join either party at the time but straddle the middle of the road and "tell the political organizations that the black vote can be secured, based and contingent upon what political parties will promise and do for the common weal of black folk."

The accomplishments of the first Roosevelt term were enough to convince Dunjee in 1936 that FDR was the answer to Negro problems.¹¹¹ While still against total commitment to either party, he accused the Republican high command of trying to frighten blacks into returning to the party. Roosevelt was urged to "tinker around and get some of the states' rights out of the federal constitution." The editor became more critical of Republicanism, accusing them of taking views on states rights formerly held by Democrats and disassociating themselves from the party for which "Lincoln fought and died."¹¹² He defended the New Deal laws as "no more unconstitutional than the Emancipation Proclamation," reasoning that some amendments would not have been necessary had Lincoln's edict been constitutional. Dunjee considered Alf

Landon, the GOP nominee, as weak and said blacks who supported Republicans were moving out of the house and into the rain. Just before election Dunjee said Democrats weren't so bad after all, pointing out that Jefferson, the "greatest exponent of freedom for blacks," was a Democrat.¹¹³ Again getting wrapped up in one of his favorite subjects, Jefferson, he noted:

When he wrote the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson was thinking about Negroes. Few Negroes realize today . . . that the 14th amendment as it is in the constitution was copied almost verbatim from the resolution Jefferson presented to the makers of the American constitution.¹¹⁴

Dunjee contended that a vote for Landon was a vote to put white-collared black workers out of jobs, arguing that Landon wanted to return all relief work to the states.¹¹⁵ He reasoned that the states wouldn't be able to handle a national project that had placed 25,000 black youth on relief work. The editor also was at odds with blacks who said they were voting the GOP ticket because they had been "born" Republicans. Dunjee wrote that the womb had nothing to do with politics:

Most of the Negroes we know were born black and ugly, and in the bed. . . . Neither moon, stars or the Republican party has anything to do with it.¹¹⁶

Dunjee said if a Negro were born a Republican and continued to vote Republican, then he should drive an oxcart and weave clothes as his father and mother had done before him.

By 1940, Dunjee was saying that "lily-whitism" had

driven him from the Republican party (see Appendix). And the confirmed New Deal supporter was having little patience with those who weren't of his political faith:

It remains to be seen whether Negro leaders will eye the flesh pots of selfish venality or will rise to the high level of common good. . . . The New Deal has unquestionably interested itself with a lot of human problems that greatly distress the business world. Old age pensions, social security, education of the poor, home ownership and a score of other measures calculated to raise the living standards of poor white and black people alike.¹¹⁷

Dunjee said GOP candidate Wilkie's promise to place all relief projects in the hands of the states would be repudiated by blacks, whose votes were no longer the "piece of Republican granite" they used to be. Wilkie was labeled a wolf in sheep's clothing and an "Indiana demagogue."¹¹⁸ Dunjee contended property rights meant more to Wilkie than human rights and that big business had forced the nominee into the Republican party when he really wasn't wanted. A Republican inference that Roosevelt was seeking dictatorial powers was scoffed at, Dunjee reasoning that as long as three major branches of government operated according to the constitution neither Roosevelt nor anyone else could become a dictator.¹¹⁹ Wilkie was accused of suffering from hallucinations, and in a Wichita, Kan., speech Dunjee said persons who believed that a president should not have a third term would have to recall U.S. Sen. Arthur Capper of Kansas.¹²⁰

The editor used some emotional appeal to induce blacks to support FDR:

When Mrs. Roosevelt . . . cast aside her membership

in the Daughters of the American Revolution and, taking a black girl by the hand, led her up the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and said 'sing,' it was then that the president's wife won the admiration and applause of black mothers in this nation. . . . The Black Dispatch is for Franklin D. Roosevelt because we realize during the past seven years we have had a man guarding the destinies of this nation who believes that 'justice is a kingdom's strength' How ungrateful it would be were Negroes on election day to forget Roosevelt.¹²¹

The New Deal, according to Dunjee, had enrolled 250,000 blacks in Civilian Conservation Corps camps and had given blacks \$15 million in clothing and \$20 million in cash. Republican campaign material scolding FDR for the fact that 83 persons had been lynched during his terms in office didn't tell the whole story, Dunjee said, adding that the GOP should have mentioned that 934 persons were lynched during McKinley's administration, 269 when Theodore Roosevelt was in office, 322 when Taft was president, and 277 during the terms of Harding, Coolidge and Hoover.¹²² "Don't bite the hand that feeds you" was Dunjee's advice, and he pointed out that under Roosevelt Col. Benjamin O. Davis became the first Negro general and William H. Hastie the first black federal judge in U.S. history.

In 1944, the Black Dispatch was warming up to Democrats again, pointing out that Vice-President Wallace had said there must be no inferior races.¹²³ While attacking the GOP for wanting to decentralize government, Dunjee cited figures to show what he called progress made under FDR:

	<u>1930</u>	<u>1940</u>
Acres owned by blacks . . .	.13.7 million	24.4 million
Black farm owners . . .	.67,222	174,010 ¹²⁴

Dunjee said the black population increased 8.1 per cent in the decade while the number of farms owned by Negroes was increasing 158.8 per cent, for which he credited the United States Department of Agriculture policies on loans and financial assistance. Dunjee also presented figures on black education to show progress under FDR:

	<u>1930</u>	<u>1940</u>
Length of avg school term . .	132 days	156 days
Enrolled pupils (pct)		
attending daily	72%	80%
Avg. days school per pupil .	97	126
Pct. pupils above 4th grade .	26.6%	37.5%
Pct. in elementary school . .	95.1%	89.5%
Pct. in high school	4.9%	10.5% ¹²⁵

Dunjee felt Negro soldiers got a better deal under FDR, saying there was one commissioned Negro officer for each 298 black enlisted men in World War I, with the ratio being 1 to 135 under Roosevelt during World War II. Dunjee, who had supported FDR in a Negro Digest article, was criticized by Chester Franklin, editor of the Kansas City Call, who attacked the president's states rights stand.¹²⁶ Dunjee replied that while states rights might be inherent in the constitution, people who wrote the document had no corner on intelligence, attested to by the fact the people had "tampered with it (constitution) 21 times." Dan Burley managing editor of the New York Amsterdam News, wired Dunjee that Harry Truman, FDR's running mate, had been a member of the KKK.¹²⁷

Dunjee telegraphed Burley that one of the finest men he knew, Hugo Black, was a former member of the Klan.

When Roosevelt died in April, 1945, Dunjee began his next editorial with Proverbs 22:1: "A good name is rather to be chosen, than great riches and loving favor rather than silver and gold." He continued: "Time can never erase his good, his value and his worth, and among minority groups the world over his immortality is established."¹²⁸

In the Dewey-Truman race in 1948, Dunjee decided the U.S. needed Wallace's liberal civil rights views.¹²⁹ He urged blacks and "low union whites" to write in Wallace's name on the ballot.¹³⁰ Truman was opposed because of his vote for a poll tax in 1942. Moreover, Dunjee was boiling at Truman when the president condemned communism and failed to mention civil rights in an Oklahoma City speech.¹³¹ Truman was only shadow boxing, Dunjee argued, while Wallace, the third party candidate, was throwing "caution to the wind" in approaching civil rights issues. Dunjee liked Wallace for refusing to speak before segregated audiences while the two major parties "were taking the Negro for a ride." He reminded blacks they didn't have to vote for a winner; the important thing was to vote for a "new definition of citizenship and democracy, for truth, justice and social decency." What Democrats needed to do more than anything else was to rid the party of Dixiecrats, or southern liberals.¹³²

Action by the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations led Dunjee to support Stevenson,

the Democrat, over Eisenhower in 1952.¹³³ The CIO had come out against racial job discrimination and criticized Eisenhower and the Dixiecrats.¹³⁴ Blacks, Dunjee believed, were going to stick with the "party of Roosevelt" because Stevenson had tried to pass fair employment legislation in Illinois. He said blacks could not forget that Roosevelt organized three forgotten segments of the population--the industrial worker, the farmer, and the Negro. He felt Eisenhower was a captive of Dixiecrats and had no civil rights conviction.¹³⁵ To charges that the New Deal had been an "incubator for Reds," Dunjee replied that red, yellow, or purple, the Democratic party under FDR saved the republic from disaster.¹³⁶

Dunjee did an about face in 1956, supporting Eisenhower over Stevenson because, he said, Democrats had not delivered on civil rights.¹³⁷ Dunjee said Eisenhower stopped the Korean War and defeated Hitler, sufficient reasons to keep him in the White House.¹³⁸ In addition, Eisenhower gave impetus to school desegregation all over the nation, he said. So Dunjee decided to "leave well enough alone," taking advice, he said, from his mother many years before.¹³⁹ Thus, Dunjee had run the gamut, starting his career by supporting Republican presidential candidates, switching to Democratic hopefuls, then a third party candidate, back to the Democrats, and finally to the Republicans again.

Dunjee on Other Issues

While it is doubtful that Dunjee was a Communist, he said in 1944 that he believed in some of the basic tenets of the Communist party:

This writer is not a Communist, but it is high time someone stood up and denounced capitalistic influences seeking to impress everyone that communism is something vile, low and wholly undesirable. Every black man should believe in some of the tenets of communism. For instance, communism believes in racial equality. Do you believe in racial equality, and does the fact you believe in racial equality convert you into a Communist?¹⁴⁰

In the fall of 1944, the Dies Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives was investigating communism in this country.¹⁴¹ During a hearing, a committee researcher testified that Dunjee was a Communist. Other "Communists" named by the researcher were Negroes E. Franklin Frazier, Howard University sociologist; Metz T. P. Lochard, editor of the Chicago Defender, and Paul Robeson. In response, Dunjee said Communists were among his best friends and that "someone should inform Congressman Dies" that the Oklahoma editor was "not red, but . . . awfully pink."¹⁴² However, Dunjee said he differed on communism on its economic premises, explaining that he had a business which he had been building for years and didn't want to divide it with anyone, which he understood he would have to do under communism. In 1931, Dunjee said he believed "in evolution, not revolution. We do not believe in the doctrine of Stalinism as an elixir for our present day woes."¹⁴³ On the other hand, he felt Stalin had developed Russia from a downtrodden peasantry into a giant mechanical

civilization. While opposing the distribution of wealth theory of communism, Dunjee called for a poverty program that could pull people above the want stage.¹⁴⁴

Despite his comments on communism, Dunjee never considered himself anything other than a patriot. Addressing a group of drafted black soldiers about to leave for military duty in World War I, he commented:

It has not been necessary for black men to march in liberty parades, to give expression of their loyalty. It has not been essential that they buy liberty bonds to prove that these brave boys are the most dependable unit in the nation. There are some self-evident truths, and though we have been silent, there have been parades to march with Wilson to fight for the right of men to be heard in their own government. . . . You boys are going to lengthen the trail of black blood that leads from Bunker Hill to Carrizal. . . . For every right there is a responsibility. Crucifixion meant redemption, slavery brought with its sorrows the right we have today. . . . Go out upon the plains of Europe and make yourselves towering monuments to use that shall cast their convicting shadows into the hearts of all men that shall help into fuller knowledge of your right to be counted in the equations of the world.¹⁴⁵

When draft resistance uprisings occurred in Okmulgee, Okla., Dunjee emphasized that no blacks were present. "There were about 60 Indians involved; but all Negroes were loyal and patriotic," wrote the editor. After alleging in 1918 that 30,000 blacks were being denied the right to register through literacy and parentage tests, Dunjee cried: "Sure we (Negroes) are loyal, but our own kind of loyalty seeks to get somewhere. We are just loyal enough to want to save America from the grip of selfishness. . . ."¹⁴⁶ He argued that Negroes in Oklahoma were "not loyal and patriotic because

of the blessings of liberty and comfort . . . but in spite of them."¹⁴⁷ Once, when discussing Flag Day observances, Dunjee said it was difficult to look at the flag without remembering that 4,000 blacks had been lynched, murdered and burned in the United States, and that the only portion of a popular patriotic song which applied to blacks was that which referred to "land where our fathers died."¹⁴⁸

The issue of whether Negroes should return to Africa was bantered around during the 1920s. The idea of Negroes migrating to another country did not have strong appeal to Dunjee, although in 1920 he said he admired Marcus Garvey's back-to-Africa efforts "in principle."¹⁴⁹ Dunjee was more interested in helping Liberia and Haiti financially "so blacks could be represented in world councils." The editor felt a physical migration to Africa was impractical and by 1922 was saying that Garvey expected too much to happen "in the next 10 years."¹⁵⁰ A year later he condemned Garvey for allegedly taking money from the poor and not doing with it what he had promised.¹⁵¹ He accused Garvey of hurting race relations. After Garvey was sentenced to prison for mail fraud, Dunjee said Liberia didn't want the back-to-Africa advocate to come there anyway.¹⁵² Dunjee's opinion of Garvey's movement was compatible with his general philosophy that the blacks were as American as whites and therefore deserved to be treated equally.

Another issue in Oklahoma following statehood was prohibition. At first Dunjee supported prohibition, saying

in 1919 that if whites were deprived of liquor they would make fewer attacks against blacks.¹⁵³ By 1932, he had made a 360 degree turnabout, saying that "prohibition is the cancer of hypocrisy eating at the vital organs of our national life."¹⁵⁴ After a 1949 liquor amendment vote in Oklahoma, he boasted that Oklahoma City blacks went for repeal of prohibition by 4 to 1.¹⁵⁵

For years Oklahoma law prohibited intermarriage between blacks and whites. This law was a sore spot with the editor. Dunjee vigorously opposed it, saying that while he wanted to perpetuate the Negro strain, it could never be done with 10,000 American mulattoes stepping across into the white race each year.¹⁵⁶ He argued no law could stop intimate black-white relations. Dunjee once accused the Oklahoma City police department of setting double standards--arresting black men found with white women but ignoring white men who were preying upon black women.¹⁵⁷ He noted that Congress was upset during World War II about black soldiers dating white girls at USO dances but that it failed to see anything revolting about white soldiers dating native black women in the South Pacific and taking them "to rendezvous of immorality."¹⁵⁸ Dunjee predicted the Negro population would continue to outdistance the white population, and suggested each person should peek under his ethnic blanket because a lot of people didn't know who their foreparents were.¹⁵⁹ Dunjee argued that God created blacks and whites and the fact that the "fiction of color" had the world at

dagger's point made no sense to him."160

Footnotes

- ¹Black Dispatch, October 5, 1917, p. 1.
- ²Editorial, Black Dispatch, November 13, 1951, p. 4.
- ³Black Dispatch, February 22, 1918, p. 1.
- ⁴Black Dispatch, November 8, 1941, p. 1.
- ⁵Editorial, Black Dispatch, December 3, 1920, p. 4.
- ⁶Editorial, Black Dispatch, January 26, 1922, p. 4.
- ⁷Editorial, Black Dispatch, August 31, 1922, p. 4.
- ⁸Black Dispatch, June 14, 1923, p. 1.
- ⁹Editorial, Black Dispatch, November 6, 1921, p. 4.
- ¹⁰Editorial, Black Dispatch, March 9, 1925, p. 4.
- ¹¹Editorial, Black Dispatch, February 12, 1931, p. 4.
- ¹²Black Dispatch, February 4, 1921, p. 1.
- ¹³Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 23, 1948, p. 4.
- ¹⁴Editorial, Black Dispatch, May 22, 1931, p. 4.
- ¹⁵Editorial, Black Dispatch, September 6, 1923, p. 4.
- ¹⁶Editorial, Black Dispatch, January 4, 1918, p. 4.
- ¹⁷Editorial, Black Dispatch, September 6, 1923, p. 4.
- ¹⁸Jimmy Stewart, private interview, op. cit.
- ¹⁹Black Dispatch, May 1, 1969, p. 6-A.
- ²⁰Daily Oklahoman, October 7, 1948, p. 1.
- ²¹Daily Oklahoman, October 12, 1948, p. 1.
- ²²Daily Oklahoman, October 15, 1948, p. 1.
- ²³Daily Oklahoman, June 19, 1949, p. 18-B.
- ²⁴Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 23, 1948, p. 4.
- ²⁵Editorial, Black Dispatch, May 1, 1969, p. 6-A.
- ²⁶Oklahoma City Times, January 15, 1946, p. 5.

- 27 Black Dispatch, January 24, 1948, p. 1.
- 28 Daily Oklahoman, October 14, 1948, p. 1.
- 29 Black Dispatch, January 24, 1948, p. 1.
- 30 Daily Oklahoman, June 17, 1949, p. 1.
- 31 Daily Oklahoman, June 18, 1949, p. 5.
- 32 Daily Oklahoman, June 21, 1949, p. 5.
- 33 Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 23, 1948, p. 4.
- 34 Editorial, Black Dispatch, June 11, 1922, p. 4.
- 35 Editorial, Black Dispatch, May 28, 1926, p. 4.
- 36 Editorial, Black Dispatch, March 14, 1934, p. 4.
- 37 Editorial, Black Dispatch, January 9, 1954, p. 6.
- 38 Black Dispatch, January 16, 1936, p. 1.
- 39 Black Dispatch, February 27, 1936, p. 1.
- 40 Editorial, Black Dispatch, April 26, 1928, p. 4.
- 41 Black Dispatch, October 30, 1924, p. 1.
- 42 Editorial, Black Dispatch, February 13, 1954, p. 6.
- 43 Editorial, Black Dispatch, April 30, 1925, p. 4.
- 44 Editorial, Black Dispatch, July 7, 1928, p. 4.
- 45 Editorial, Black Dispatch, March 4, 1937, p. 4.
- 46 Editorial, Black Dispatch, July 18, 1935, p. 4.
- 47 Editorial, Black Dispatch, July 29, 1939, p. 4.
- 48 Black Dispatch, February 26, 1944, p. 1.
- 49 Editorial, Black Dispatch, January 29, 1955, p. 6.
- 50 Jimmy Stewart, private interview, op. cit.
- 51 Black Dispatch, May 1, 1969, p. 6-A.
- 52 Jimmy Stewart, private interview, op. cit.
- 53 Editorial, Black Dispatch, September 12, 1919, p. 4.

- ⁵⁴Editorial, Black Dispatch, May 13, 1937, p. 4.
- ⁵⁵Editorial, Black Dispatch, November 7, 1944, p. 4.
- ⁵⁶Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 15, 1922, p. 4.
- ⁵⁷Editorial, Black Dispatch, April 15, 1944, p. 4.
- ⁵⁸Editorial, Black Dispatch, July 11, 1953, p. 6.
- ⁵⁹Editorial, Black Dispatch, November 7, 1944, p. 4.
- ⁶⁰Editorial, Black Dispatch, July 26, 1918, p. 4.
- ⁶¹Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 25, 1928, p. 4.
- ⁶²Black Dispatch, April 4, 1919, p. 1.
- ⁶³Editorial, Black Dispatch, September 28, 1940, p. 4.
- ⁶⁴Editorial, Black Dispatch, May 3, 1923, p. 4.
- ⁶⁵Black Dispatch, February 4, 1921, p. 1.
- ⁶⁶Black Dispatch, March 4, 1921, p. 1.
- ⁶⁷Black Dispatch, March 25, 1921, p. 4.
- ⁶⁸Editorial, Black Dispatch, May 3, 1923, p. 4.
- ⁶⁹Black Dispatch, October 18, 1928, p. 1.
- ⁷⁰Black Dispatch, October 29, 1937, p. 7.
- ⁷¹Editorial, Black Dispatch, April 1, 1921, p. 4.
- ⁷²Editorial, Black Dispatch, January 5, 1922, p. 4.
- ⁷³Editorial, Black Dispatch, June 22, 1922, p. 4.
- ⁷⁴Editorial, Black Dispatch, August 17, 1922, p. 4.
- ⁷⁵Editorial, Black Dispatch, November 2, 1922, p. 1.
- ⁷⁶Editorial, Black Dispatch, September 20, 1923, p. 4.
- ⁷⁷Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 11, 1923, p. 4.
- ⁷⁸Black Dispatch, August 9, 1924, p. 1.
- ⁷⁹Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 16, 1924, p. 4.
- ⁸⁰Black Dispatch, July 8, 1944, p. 1.

- ⁸¹Black Dispatch, July 5, 1918, p. 1.
- ⁸²Black Dispatch, April 11, 1919, p. 1.
- ⁸³Editorial, Black Dispatch, November 21, 1919, p. 1.
- ⁸⁴Black Dispatch, October 15, 1920, p. 1.
- ⁸⁵Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 15, 1920, p. 4.
- ⁸⁶Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 22, 1920, p. 4.
- ⁸⁷Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 29, 1920, p. 4.
- ⁸⁸Editorial, Black Dispatch, January 5, 1922, p. 4.
- ⁸⁹Editorial, Black Dispatch, August 9, 1923, p. 4.
- ⁹⁰Editorial, Black Dispatch, September 25, 1924, p. 4.
- ⁹¹Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 2, 1924, p. 4.
- ⁹²Black Dispatch, October 9, 1924, p. 1.
- ⁹³Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 16, 1924, p. 4.
- ⁹⁴Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 30, 1924, p. 4.
- ⁹⁵Editorial, Black Dispatch, September 27, 1928, p. 4.
- ⁹⁶Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 4, 1928, p. 4.
- ⁹⁷Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 11, 1928, p. 4.
- ⁹⁸Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 18, 1928, p. 4.
- ⁹⁹Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁰Black Dispatch, November 1, 1928, p. 1.
- ¹⁰¹Editorial, Black Dispatch, November 8, 1928, p. 4.
- ¹⁰²Editorial, Black Dispatch, September 22, 1932, p. 4.
- ¹⁰³Editorial, Black Dispatch, September 29, 1932, p. 4.
- ¹⁰⁴Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 13, 1932, p. 4.
- ¹⁰⁵Black Dispatch, October 20, 1932, p. 1.
- ¹⁰⁶Ibid., editorial, p. 4.
- ¹⁰⁷Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 27, 1932, p. 4.

- ¹⁰⁸Black Dispatch, November 3, 1932, p. 1.
- ¹⁰⁹Ibid., editorial, p. 4.
- ¹¹⁰Editorial, Black Dispatch, November 10, 1932, p. 4.
- ¹¹¹Editorial, Black Dispatch, September 24, 1936, p. 4.
- ¹¹²Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 15, 1936, p. 4.
- ¹¹³Black Dispatch, October 22, 1936, p. 1.
- ¹¹⁴Ibid.
- ¹¹⁵Ibid., editorial, p. 4.
- ¹¹⁶Ibid.
- ¹¹⁷Editorial, Black Dispatch, September 28, 1940, p. 4.
- ¹¹⁸Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 5, 1940, p. 4.
- ¹¹⁹Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 12, 1940, p. 4.
- ¹²⁰Black Dispatch, October 19, 1940, p. 1.
- ¹²¹Ibid., editorial, p. 4.
- ¹²²Editorial, Black Dispatch, November 2, 1940, p. 4.
- ¹²³Black Dispatch, September 30, 1944, p. 1.
- ¹²⁴Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 7, 1944, p. 4.
- ¹²⁵Ibid.
- ¹²⁶Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 21, 1944, p. 4.
- ¹²⁷Black Dispatch, November 4, 1944, p. 1.
- ¹²⁸Editorial, Black Dispatch, April 21, 1945, p. 4.
- ¹²⁹Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 9, 1948, p. 4.
- ¹³⁰Black Dispatch, October 30, 1948, p. 1.
- ¹³¹Ibid., editorial, p. 4.
- ¹³²Editorial, Black Dispatch, November 6, 1948, p. 4.
- ¹³³Editorial, Black Dispatch, September 27, 1952, p. 4.
- ¹³⁴Ibid.

- 135 Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 18, 1952, p. 4.
 - 136 Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 25, 1952, p. 4.
 - 137 Black Dispatch, October 12, 1956, p. 1.
 - 138 Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 26, 1956, p. 6.
 - 139 Editorial, Black Dispatch, November 2, 1956, p. 6.
 - 140 Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 7, 1944, p. 4.
 - 141 Black Dispatch, October 14, 1944, p. 1.
 - 142 Ibid., editorial, p. 4.
 - 143 Editorial, Black Dispatch, January 22, 1931, p. 4.
 - 144 Editorial, Black Dispatch, January 23, 1943, p. 4.
- Dunjee may have been the first black editor in America to suggest an anti-poverty program for the poor.
- 145 Black Dispatch, November 2, 1917, p. 1.
 - 146 Black Dispatch, July 26, 1918, p. 1.
 - 147 Editorial, Black Dispatch, June 28, 1918, p. 4.
 - 148 Editorial, Black Dispatch, June 15, 1922, p. 4.
 - 149 Editorial, Black Dispatch, December 17, 1920, p. 4.
 - 150 Editorial, Black Dispatch, May 25, 1922, p. 4.
 - 151 Editorial, Black Dispatch, July 19, 1923, p. 4.
 - 152 Black Dispatch, September 13, 1923, p. 1.
 - 153 Editorial, Black Dispatch, July 11, 1919, p. 4.
 - 154 Editorial, Black Dispatch, June 25, 1932, p. 4.
 - 155 Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 8, 1949, p. 4.
 - 156 Editorial, Black Dispatch, September 26, 1935, p. 4.
 - 157 Editorial, Black Dispatch, June 20, 1942, p. 4.
 - 158 Editorial, Black Dispatch, March 11, 1942, p. 4.
 - 159 Editorial, Black Dispatch, March 12, 1955, p. 6.
 - 160 Editorial, Black Dispatch, October 4, 1947, p. 4.

CHAPTER VII

DUNJEE, AS VIEWED BY CONTEMPORARIES

This chapter discusses (1) what others have said about Roscoe Dunjee; (2) Dunjee's later years; and (3) the Black Dispatch, present and future. It is based almost solely on interviews with two persons who knew him better than anybody else in the last 25 to 30 years of his life.

His Two Closest Co-Workers

Roscoe Dunjee had been publisher of the Black Dispatch a quarter of a century when his nephew, John Dunjee, joined the newspaper following graduation from Langston University in 1940.¹ His father, John Dunjee Sr., was Roscoe Dunjee's cousin. His mother, Blanche Dunjee, was Roscoe's sister. The difference in spelling resulted from some members of the Dunjee family merely choosing to write it differently.

"I was a dropout and headed nowhere in life," recalls John Dunjee. "I left home in Arizona and went to California. My mother contacted my uncle and told him I didn't know what to do with my life. The first thing I knew a bus ticket arrived in the mail and I was on my way to Oklahoma City. My uncle helped me enroll at Langston, and I worked my way through school in the print shop and helped at the Black

Dispatch during the summers. If it had not been for his sending the bus ticket and showing a great interest in my life, I probably would never have gone to college and became a newspaper publisher."

Following graduation, John Dunjee became a fulltime employee of the Black Dispatch, and has been associated with it since that time. Dunjee discusses this association in the following interview:

Question: Why has it been said that Dunjee was ahead of his time?

Dunjee: Everyone has or should have some goal in life. Some marry and have a family, but he said he wasn't interested in this. Some get interested in making money, but he said he wasn't interested in this. My uncle loved his mother deeply; she was his inspiration. He never got married. A lot of people say he was married to the paper. He and the paper--that was his wife. And he guarded it with integrity as he would someone dear to him. As a newspaper publisher with unlimited courage who dared to speak out for opportunities for Negroes in a world dominated by whites, Dunjee was ahead of his time. Because, you see, not many people would have attempted to do what he did.

Question: He must have had a reason for going into the newspaper business other than to make a living. What was this reason?

Dunjee: Well, he made a living out of the paper, but

he never made money. He died a pauper. He didn't mind-- this wasn't his bag, as they say now. He had something to tell, something to say, and he kept his paper free of encumbrance so that he could say it any way he wanted to say it, without strings attached. Today, I (as editor) couldn't do it this way because it would affect my economic position. But he didn't have to worry about this. His effort, his cause, was based on helping a downtrodden people.

Question: Were there times when he could have gotten more advertising from the white community if he had not stood up for certain things?

Dungee: Certainly, but there again, he didn't care. He got national advertising, and some local, which helped him meet his payroll and pay his bills. He never missed a payroll in his life; in fact, the paper has never missed a payroll or an issue in its history. Because of the way he operated the paper, it took me four years after I took over to change the militant stance of the paper; where 'militant' means violence today, I don't mean this type of militance.

It took that long to make it a regular commercial medium and before I could sell advertising. The economy base of the newspaper wasn't advertising; it was circulation. It was about that time (in the mid-1950s) that all Negro weekly newspapers were switching fast to another economic base, which they had to do to survive,

because circulation was not profitable; it was a losing game.

You sold a paper for a nickel and my uncle had a lot of circulation and most of it was out of our trade area. He carried a lot of news from Negro communities over the state because people who moved to California, for example, wanted to know about what was going on in places like Atoka and other communities. He had this national edition, he called it, with this news in it. But I cut out the national edition because it was a losing proposition. You see, he didn't care if it was a losing proposition.

Today, you have to have advertising, and to do that you've got to have healthy and sound topics. You do what you can (for the race) but there's no reason in just knocking yourself out and killing yourself. You (the paper) are nobody then. You have to stay sound (economically) to get along. I'll give you an example of what I mean. Shortly after I took over the newspaper Negroes started sit-ins at Brown's Department Store downtown. Now Brown's was one of my best customers and still is today. I went to the company's management and said I didn't expect them to continue advertising during the sit-ins; that I would run their ads free during this period. My uncle wouldn't have done that. He would have lost a customer. Today, Brown's is my biggest advertiser.

Question: What was the circulation of the Black

Dispatch during your uncle's editorship? I was never able to find it in the files.

Dunjee: Circulation in any newspaper then was a guarded thing; oh, his circulation went up to 10,000 or 12,000, maybe 13,000. But in a weekly paper, as any editor will tell you, this means about three times that many readers.

Question: Roscoe Dunjee, back in the early days, fought for separate but equal facilities, particularly in schools, and he later changed his mind. Did he ever talk to you about why he changed his mind?

Dunjee: Many times. Well, at the beginning he was fighting within the law. He wanted the people to live up to what the law was saying--equal. But it had never been equal in the schools. It was decided by the Supreme Court that inherently separation means unequalness. That is what he was trying to show, and to understand what he was fighting for you have to have a background on the atmosphere in Oklahoma and the attitude toward the minority by the majority. When you see the situation in Oklahoma today, some people wonder what he fought for and raised sand about. But the better racial climate we see today is largely a result of Roscoe Dunjee and men like him. In his time Negroes were confined to a small easterly section of the city and couldn't go north, they couldn't go west; any development had to come down in the fairgrounds area where there was no pavement, just

mud; houses were compacted on lots and the living accommodations were bad, real bad. You look at Oklahoma City and say 'why was he saying all this?'--well, it's not the same as it was then.

Question: What kind of a personality did Roscoe Dunjee have?

Dunjee: When you talk about his personality, you've got to say the NAACP in Oklahoma, the Black Dispatch, and Roscoe Dunjee were one personality. He was just the man behind the scenes. He broke the back of segregation in Oklahoma, with the help of other people. He was witty, he had a sense of humor. He was never angry with people; he never held a grudge. The reason he never held a grudge was that it was the system he was fighting, not the individual whites. He was interested only in issues, not personalities. Like I said, he never made money, but he didn't need a lot of money. He never paid good salaries, from maybe \$13 to \$18 per week when I started.

He knew how to handle potentially explosive situations. I recall once when a mob was forming to go to the jail to protect a Negro who had been charged. They had heard that whites were forming a lynching party. The Negroes came to Dunjee, who saw something tragic might happen, and he told them they were handling the situation in the wrong way. My uncle called the sheriff, I believe it was Ben Dancy at the time, and said some Negroes were in his

office and were coming down to help him (the sheriff) protect the prisoner from the white mob. Of course, Dancy couldn't do anything but agree to let them come down. By some quick thinking, and by using some psychology, my uncle prevented what could have been a terrible event. Needless to say, there was absolutely no trouble.

Question: Why did he consider politics so important for Negroes?

Dunjee: I'll start by saying he was touched by the mystic image of the Republican party . . . it was an emotional rather than a logical thing. Of course, he soon learned that for the thinking Negroes in the United States the individual running for office was the important thing, not the political party. Obviously, he was opposed to violence for violence sake, and thought Negroes could make more progress at the ballot box, voting as a bloc for candidates whom they thought would support their best interests, and through the courts. He never discounted the importance of the party, but he was more interested in the candidates once he decided the Republican party didn't have the answers.

Question: Would you describe Roscoe Dunjee's last few years at the newspaper, and what he did until he died?

Dunjee: Roscoe Dunjee began to mellow in the early 1950s, partly because of age and partly because of failing health. He wasn't nearly as aggressive; some of the

fight had gone, but that was probably because he could see his crusades had begun to bear fruit. He became less militant, but he still wouldn't compromise. He began to lose confidence in himself; he knew that to survive in the newspaper business any longer he would have to change, and he wasn't about to change. It was costing more money each year to stay in business and the need for more advertising increased. Rather than continue to fight the battle, he decided to retire in 1955, but even then he wrote editorials for the newspaper for a few months after retirement.

Question: What were the events leading up to his death?

Dungee: Tragically, Roscoe Dungee lived the last few years of his life in a rest home, largely a forgotten man. It was sad to see people forgetting him, but that is the way life is, I guess. But history will show that he was a great newspaperman, a great fighter, that he had a brilliant mind, and that indeed he was ahead of his time. As I said, he died without a cent; in fact, I had to help pay for the funeral.

Question: He was not educated. How could an uneducated man do what he did?

Dungee: I'll differ with you; he was educated. He wasn't indoctrinated. Education is drawing out that which is inside a person. You don't necessarily get that at a university. Indoctrination is an input, which is

what we have in the formal classroom setting at universities. So you see, he was educated; extremely well educated. He just didn't become educated at a university, that's all. That may be an oversimplification, but that's how I feel.

Question: You mentioned that Mr. Dunjee never married. Did he ever consider marriage?

Dunjee: Yes, and it was kinda funny, too. He was engaged to a girl once, and even bought a lot of furniture. Unfortunately, or fortunately, he stored the furniture in a basement pending his wedding. A rain came and flooded the basement, and ruined his furniture. My uncle went to the girl and told her he wasn't going to get married without furniture. She couldn't understand it, but that's the way it had to be, and he called off the whole thing. As far as I know, he never came close to getting married again.

Question: Was the newspaper given to you by Mr. Dunjee?

Dunjee: It's a long story about how I came to be part owner of the paper. I do not own it all. I'll only mention a highlight or two. My uncle actually wanted to close out the newspaper in the mid-1950s. He had become ill, as I mentioned, and he didn't feel the newspaper should continue in operation. But he had a few bills he wanted to clear up before closing down, about \$3,000 worth. I finally made an arrangement whereby I would get

the newspaper if I paid off the bills. For reasons I will not go into here, I did not wind up with the entire paper; one-third is owned by Dr. G. E. Finley, a Negro physician; and another third is owned by Dr. J. W. Sanford, another Negro physician who is the son of a longtime friend of my uncle. I am responsible for the publication; they know how to take out a person's appendix but they don't know how to run a newspaper.

Question: What are you as editor doing differently than your uncle?

Dunjee: Well, I changed to offset, which was necessary to survive, in my opinion. We farm out our printing; less overhead that way, and no machinery to worry about. I already mentioned that we became less militant, but I want to add here that we have not compromised our integrity. We report what happens as fairly and accurately as we know how; when there is an injustice, we call attention to it. But that doesn't mean that we have to get involved up to our necks.

We run as high as 32 pages in a week. The Black Dispatch is now the top weekly in Oklahoma in terms of advertising lineage. I went \$16,000 in debt at one time to get the paper on a paying basis. And we have continued the excellent record of Roscoe Dunjee by not missing a payroll or an issue and by paying our bills. This newspaper has published continuously for nearly 60 years--a record not many black newspapers can match.

Question: In your opinion, what is the future of the black press in general and the Black Dispatch in particular?

Dungee: Only those black newspapers with ingenuity will survive. There is plenty of operating room for black papers that are ingenious. Certainly there will always be a need for the black press, simply because black editors can relate to black people. A white editor can't relate to a Chinese with an American newspaper; neither can he relate to a Negro. A Chinese can relate only to another Chinese, and a Negro only relates in the proper way to another Negro.

I'll give you this analogy to show why a Negro newspaper is important. If five men are sitting around talking and a woman enters, the tone of the conversation changes immediately, without the woman saying a word. Her presence is all that is necessary. This applies to a black newspaper. If it is just there, in the midst of white newspapers, it will be doing a job. Of course, the black newspaper must operate in a business-like manner and use common sense. That goes for the Black Dispatch, too. Remember, a newspaper is not so many sheets; it is a personality. Either people like it or dislike it. Although the Black Dispatch is not the same paper it was 20 years ago, it obviously has maintained a personality that people like. There will always be a need for the Black Dispatch and other black papers.

Another longtime associate of the editor was Jimmy Stewart, who contributed to the newspaper as a columnist although he was never on Dunjee's payroll. An employee of Oklahoma Natural Gas Co. in Oklahoma City for many years, Stewart was closely allied with Dunjee until the editor retired, and remained his friend until his death.² This association with Dunjee is discussed in the following interview:

Question: When did you become involved with Roscoe Dunjee?

Stewart: It was in the middle thirties. I got started by helping him in the newspaper, and he encouraged me to write a current events column. I had become interested in the National Negro Business League, and we first became friends through this organization. He later became president of the NNBL, which I think led to his retirement and to his physical breakdown in the early 1950s.

Question: Is it true that Dunjee launched his newspaper for reasons other than financial gain?

Stewart: Dunjee never cared for money. He would write editorials on weekends and leave them and go to Dallas or elsewhere where he thought he could help Negro progress. Very little expense money did he ever receive for his work in the name of the NAACP. He would use what money he had to back up his convictions. This isn't well known, but I know for a fact that he mortgaged his place of business on more than one occasion so he could have

money to make trips in behalf of the race. His work for Negro rights didn't make him very popular with white merchants. Dunjee wrote vigorous editorials, and people wanted to see what he was saying. Migration to California helped him stay in business, because people who went there from Oklahoma wrote back to subscribe to the paper. National advertising and subscriptions kept him in business. Without them, there would have been no Black Dispatch, although I suppose Roscoe would have found some way to keep the doors open.

Question: Dunjee was at his writing best when attacking some individual or organization. Do you feel this statement is correct?

Stewart: Yes, that is probably true, but you should add that he never attacked anyone without first giving the person a chance to change his position and telling him that he was getting ready to attack him editorially if he didn't change. It is important to remember that Dunjee, contrary to what might appear in his editorials, was an organization man. He was most effective working behind the scenes, but he would work at the front if it were necessary. People feared him--both blacks and whites. If he were alive today there would be unanimity within the black community--I can guarantee you that.

Question: When I read his editorials, I get the idea that they were written by a Harvard-trained journalist, or perhaps somebody from the New York Times. Yet, I

know better. Did you consider him an outstanding writer?

Stewart: Yes, I'm not sure that I ever read after a better editorial writer. Remember, he only went to the eighth grade. But he had a fantastic legal mind. He told NAACP lawyers what he wanted to pursue, and they could hardly believe his ability to think things out; I mean deep, complicated legal procedures. Lawyers marveled at his legal mind and told him he was way ahead of his time, or that he should have been a lawyer. Dunjee worked on the assumption that blacks were going to lose most of their cases in the lower courts, but that they would win most of them in the higher courts, which he considered less prejudiced. His batting average while operating on this theory was pretty darned high.

Dunjee always told me that the key to any lawsuit involving blacks was to listen carefully to the opposing arguments, and then quickly devise a plan that would shoot holes in them during rebuttal. If the opposition talked long enough, his prejudices would finally come out in the open. Dunjee's brilliant mind and his ability to fight and win the gut issues made people of all races respect him tremendously. Yes, even his enemies respected his ability.

Question: What was Dunjee's greatest contribution to black people?

Stewart: You are asking a difficult question that could have several answers. However, I'll say the one

thing that stands out in my mind is that while associated with the NAACP in Oklahoma he pursued seven discrimination cases through to the Supreme Court, and won four of them. He was a black leader without equal in Oklahoma or anywhere in this part of the country. He could gather support for a just cause, so I would say his ability to organize Negroes for legal, social, and political action was his greatest achievement.

Take the NAACP, for example. The old Constitutional League was formed by Negroes in answer to the Constitutional Convention. It was headed by a man named Harrison, an attorney who helped in the fight against the grandfather clause. But he moved to Chicago, creating a leadership vacuum in Oklahoma. Through reading the Crisis (NAACP publication), some Negro leaders in Oklahoma decided to organize an Oklahoma City branch. Dr. A. Baxter Whitby was elected president, but the organization died during the first war.

Then along came Dunjee, who helped revive it. The Oklahoma City branch had several legal battles in the 1920s. Dunjee realized that the local branch couldn't represent all of the state so he thought about a state conference of branches. No such organization had existed until that time. The Oklahoma Conference of Branches of the NAACP was organized and with Dunjee's leadership grew to 89 branches. This gave Dunjee considerable nationwide publicity, and he later was called to Texas to help

organize a conference there. At one time the Texas branches had 53,000 members.

Question: You were personally involved with Dunjee in some of his fights against discrimination. What was it like to see him in action?

Stewart: I'll give you an example. I will never forget the time when Dunjee decided that the signs pointing to the Negro toilets and other segregated places at the capitol had to come down. I went with him to Clarence Burch, I believe it was, who was the chairman of the State Board of Affairs, which was responsible for installing and maintaining such things. Dunjee told Burch that the signs had to come down. Burch said he couldn't and wouldn't take them down unless told to do so by law, the courts or the governor. Well, my uncle said he was going to go to the white toilet, and that Burch had better get somebody to arrest him.

Burch told him, 'No, I'm not going to have you arrested.' Since we didn't get anywhere with Burch we went to Mac Q. Williamson, the attorney general. Williamson said: 'Roscoe, write Burch and tell him to remove the signs, because if he doesn't and there is a lawsuit, the state will not defend him in court.' Needless to say, the signs came down.

Question: Specifically, in your opinion, what contribution has the black press made to the Negro cause?

Stewart: The black press has been the bridge over

which we crossed. Without black newspapers, I am convinced, we would not be close to where we are today. The black press has served as an advocate for Negroes since its inception. And it will continue to fill this role. The white press is still slow on reporting about the social lives of Negroes, so the black press must do it. As long as this condition exists, there will be a need for the black press.

Retirement Brings Accolades

Telegrams poured into Oklahoma City when Dunjee retired in 1955. Many were read at a testimonial in Dunjee's honor:

Dowdal H. Davis, an employee of the Kansas City Call: "No person is more deserving of acclaim and recognition. . . . He has been a stalwart writer in the very front ranks of this ceaseless battle for a meaningful democracy . . ."3

Mrs. Ruth Haefner, then an official of the Oregon NAACA branch: "His fearless editorials have been an inspiration to us."

Dr. L. H. Foster, then president of the Tuskegee Institute: "Roscoe Dunjee has rendered a great service to the people of America in the field of human relations. His pioneering efforts in newspaper work has been an inspiration for many youth in this country."

James W. Ivy, then editor of Crisis: "Roscoe Dunjee is a complete exemplar of a fighting crusader, who has

achieved against odds. America is a better place through his sharing example."

Herbert K. Hyde, former United States district attorney: "Thirty one years ago I first met Roscoe Dunjee upon my return from law school in Boston. To me he is more than an inspiration--he is an institution"

Thurgood Marshall, then chief counsel for the NAACP, said Oklahoma was indebted to Dunjee for his "intelligent, hard-hitting and unswerving leadership."⁴ The North Star, a white publication in north Oklahoma City, commented editorially that Dunjee had carried the "torch for a long time in Oklahoma . . . with unusual editorial skill, in years when support of his newspaper was sketchy and the paper was more often in the red ink than black. Dunjee never complained"⁵ An employee wrote that Dunjee's editorials "in defense of civil rights have made him a figure to be reckoned with at the local, state and national levels of American society and place him in the forefront of the great fighters for equal rights of all men."⁶ Dunjee spent several weeks in Africa while in semiretirement, using funds raised at the testimonial dinner. He wrote numerous articles for the Black Dispatch from Africa.

Death Comes at 81

Ill for several years, Roscoe Dunjee died in Oklahoma City on March 1, 1965, at the age of 81. Jimmy Stewart still has the telegrams received during the following days:

Mike Monroney, then senior United States senator from Oklahoma: "No Oklahoman in our state's history contributed more to the progress of his race than my old friend, Roscoe Dunjee. He made the Black Dispatch a leader in its community through decades of devoted service to his fellow man. His accomplishments and achievements will endure."

Henry Bellmon, then governor of Oklahoma and now its junior U.S. senator: "His is a unique role in Oklahoma's history. Not only has Oklahoma lost one of her outstanding men, but America has given up one of her earliest and most courageous fighters for equal justice and human rights. . . ."

Roy Wilkins, executive director, NAACP: "For more than a quarter of a century Roscoe Dunjee stood with the leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People through his service as a member of its national board of directors and as a vice-president. His mind, his energies, and his voice made vital contributions to the policies and programs of the association and he backed them up tirelessly and effectively, both as a hometown citizen and as a nationally known publisher and editor. Besides all this, he was a warm and respected human being, blessed with the warmth and affection of countless friends. . . ."⁷

The Daily Oklahoman said Dunjee was a "son of slavery who fought a dogged, lonely battle for human rights in Oklahoma's fledgling days."⁸ It reported that Dunjee "ironically, was too ill to comprehend the successful fight for passage of the civil rights bill" of the mid-1960s.

No greater tribute was paid Dunjee than that which appeared in the Oklahoma City Advertiser, a white weekly that had competed against the Black Dispatch for advertising.

(See Appendix) Owner Freda Ameringer eulogized in this editorial:

There was drama, a sense of history, at the little New Hope Baptist Church out on Northeast Seventh Street Saturday morning, when funeral services were held for Roscoe Dunjee.

Those who filled the church to overflowing were from many walks of life, white as well as Negro; older men and women who had worked with the fallen crusader; younger people who had caught his vision and were carrying on; those of humble rank, distinguished men of letters, those in high city, county and state government. And there was no mistaking the feeling of respect, sorrow and loss. . . . As I took my seat, I could not help thinking of these verses in Ecclesiastes:

'To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven;
'A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted.'

. . . It was in 1915 that Roscoe Dunjee began his career as printer and newspaper publisher. Have we stopped to consider how much the picture has changed in the ensuing 50 years? Those were the days of lynchings and mob rule, all-white primaries, separate cars and waiting rooms, wretched health and educational standards for the Negro. Through 40 turbulent years Roscoe Dunjee fought to make life better for his race. Denied the normal happiness of wife and family, his paper, this struggle, was his entire life. . . . The torch he held aloft lighted the path for others who took up the battle. For the more moderate, less uncompromising, he voiced no censure. There was work for all. But his beacon light burned no less brightly. Unique among men was Roscoe Dunjee, no one quite like him, in Oklahoma nor in the nation.⁹

In reporting the funeral, the Oklahoman said "people of all ages and stations, from gradeschoolers to elders on crutches--old friends, old fellow campaigners and young

beneficiaries of the rights Dunjee helped them achieve--listened intently and remembered."¹⁰ Perhaps the Rev. E. J. Perry said it best when he gave thanks "for this departed gladiator who fought on a high plane."

Dunjee school was named for the editor prior to his death. It stands not far from the small farm on which he lived for so many years. He had turned down an earlier offer for a school namesake because the building in question would have been only for Negroes.¹¹

It wasn't until after his death that another significant event involving Dunjee's name took place. In 1969, a portrait of the editor was accepted by Gov. Dewey Bartlett of Oklahoma to hang in the official gallery at the Oklahoma Historical Society building.¹² It was only fitting that Dunjee was the first black man so recognized by the state.

Footnotes

- ¹John Dungee, private interview, op. cit.
- ²Jimmy Stewart, private interview, op. cit.
- ³Black Dispatch, December 1, 1955, p. 7.
- ⁴Black Dispatch, November 24, 1955, p. 1.
- ⁵Editorial, Black Dispatch, November 24, 1955, p. 4.
- ⁶Black Dispatch, November 3, 1955, p. 1.
- ⁷Telegrams and other memorabilia remain in possession of Jimmy Stewart.
- ⁸Daily Oklahoman, March 2, 1965, p. 1.
- ⁹Editorial, Oklahoma City Advertiser, March 11, 1965, p. 1.
- ¹⁰Daily Oklahoman, March 7, 1965, p. 19.
- ¹¹Daily Oklahoman, March 2, 1965, p. 1.
- ¹²Oklahoma City Times, April 23, 1969, p. 40.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Roscoe Dunjee was a man among men who accomplished more by word and deed than any black man in Oklahoma history. Indeed, the 20th century has yet to produce a black man who fought more relentlessly and unselfishly to lead Negroes out of a wilderness of hopelessness and frustration than the editor of the Black Dispatch.

Lacking a formal education but blessed with an alert, inquiring mind, Dunjee could have been a successful businessman or politician. But becoming a financial or political success did not interest him; it was what he could do for an oppressed race that counted. Certainly, he didn't establish the newspaper as a business proposition, because he knew that he had two strikes against him the day he opened the doors. Historically, black newspapers were short-lived. He was going to be the exception rather than the rule.

A newspaper was a vessel through which he could fight lily-whitism and "Negrophobia," a term he may well have originated. For more than 40 years Dunjee used the paper to goad, prod, tantalize and shame the white establishment, with 40 per cent of his editorials dealing with civil rights issues (Table 1).

To use a trite expression, Dunjee worked within the system as a rare type of leader who could command respect from his adversaries. If he seemed inconsistent on some issues, it must be remembered that he lived at a time when the beleaguered black man was ridiculed, tricked, spat upon, insulted and relegated to a position of second class citizenship by a majority race that considered black skin akin to leprosy. Much of what Dunjee professed had to be dictated by the conditions of the moment. Undismayed by setbacks, he felt the black man would have his day in court.

Before Dunjee was born the United States had recognized, in theory at least, the black man's right to citizenship and franchisement. As Dunjee was to discover 50 years later, what little progress the Negro had made during the last quarter of the 19th century was being eroded during the first part of the 20th. The white man was still attempting to separate blacks from all ties with their language, religion, and customs when Dunjee launched his newspaper.

It is doubtful that a person of lesser talent and conviction could have kept the Black Dispatch out of bankruptcy. His paper was doomed to oblivion. Why should it succeed where others had failed? Primarily it was because he had a fierce pride that simply would not allow him to fail. His zeal was stronger than the forces that opposed him. Dunjee could not see a great deal of difference in the circumstances under which his father had been forced to flee the United States and the circumstances under which blacks

were living in the early part of the 20th century. The black man was still imprisoned, socially, economically, and geographically. Also in his favor was the fact he never considered all whites bad and all blacks good. Quick to criticize, he was always ready to cite progress. But he never sold out to advertisers or to a political party, as had many black editors before him.

Out of admiration for Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, Dunjee was an early disciple of the Republican party. Disillusioned, he changed to the Democrats in 1932, and in later years promoted black political independence. While he urged blacks to vote as a bloc, he became convinced that their freedom would come from a centralized government in Washington and from higher courts. Early in his career he supported the doctrine of separate but equal, but it didn't take him long to recognize that such a social arrangement was not only impossible but impractical. He became an integrationist, convinced that inequality was inherent in separation. And he called for government poverty programs long before such ideas became commonplace in the United States.

When Dunjee saw blacks condemned by all-white juries, he called for minorities to be included on juries. When he saw blacks riding in separate and dangerous public conveyances, he called for mixed seating. He opposed laws prohibiting black-white marriages, reasoning that thousands of children had white fathers and black mothers and that what was transpiring illegally in bedrooms should be made legal

through intermarriages.

Possessed with exceptional leadership and organizational ability, Dunjee mobilized the Oklahoma Negro to rally for black causes. The NAACP "conference of branches" was his idea. Using the courts to break down university segregation was his idea. Pursuing criminal and civil cases through the lower courts to the highest in the land was his idea. In each case, he engineered the course for Oklahoma Negroes as adroitly as a helmsman steers a giant ship into a small harbor.

Accused of being a Communist, Dunjee never entertained serious thoughts about joining the party. He wasn't particularly impressed by communism, although he did accept some of the tenets of that ideology. Opposed to violence, he did encourage Negroes to stand their ground against whites when the majority was in the wrong. A generous person himself, Dunjee never hesitated to ask Negroes for money to pursue a court case in behalf of a black or group of blacks. In many cases, he contributed personal funds to such causes, mortgaging his property if need be.

Whatever his achievements, Dunjee was above all a fighter for black rights. This was his only reason for operating a newspaper. The profit motive was incidental. If he had a place to sleep, clothes to wear and an automobile to drive, he was content with meager profits. The fight began to leave Dunjee in the early 1950s. It was brought on by the aging process, accompanied by physical problems. But

before the fire flickered for the last time, Dunjee saw the U.S. Supreme Court rule that racial school segregation was unconstitutional. While Dunjee, of course, had no role to play in the Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education case, the historic decision was a culmination of decades of court struggles initiated by men like Dunjee who felt that America could not truly be the land of the free until an equal opportunity was available to every person, regardless of the color of his skin.

What does the future hold for the Black Dispatch? The writer believes a fair assessment is that the newspaper will succeed where Dunjee failed, and will fail where Dunjee succeeded. The newspaper will earn dollars where Dunjee earned pennies. Whereas under Dunjee the Black Dispatch was a militant voice, the newspaper today adheres to a softer line. Unfortunately, it would appear that a local black newspaper cannot be both a financially sound business and a militant voice. That is a fact of life that the present management is well aware of. Roscoe Dunjee did not choose to make money. Today's owners are not choosing a hard line approach to racial matters. As long as the Black Dispatch refrains from militancy, it would appear to have a good chance for survival. Every indication is that any other approach is out of the question.

While local, privately-owned black newspapers still need to call attention to discriminatory racial practices, it would appear that the extremist approach to racial matters

is being left to black organizations that distribute newspapers and magazines on a national basis. Organizations such as the Congress for Racial Equality, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and Black Panthers either did not exist or were not on the front lines battling for black rights 30 and 40 years ago.

Today the black man still hasn't attained a full share of the American dream. But this is no discredit to editors such as Roscoe Dunjee, without whose vision and courage Negroes would perhaps still be living in the cold, dark isolation of the 19th century.

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APPENDIX

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS SEVERAL
DOCUMENTS THAT
ARE OF POOR
QUALITY DUE TO
BEING A
PHOTOCOPY OF A
PHOTO.**

**THIS IS AS RECEIVED
FROM CUSTOMER.**



Roscoe Dunjee
1883-1965

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
NUMEROUS PAGES
THAT WERE
BOUND WITHOUT
PAGE NUMBERS.**

**THIS IS AS
RECEIVED FROM
CUSTOMER.**

This is page one of the first Black Dispatch issue on file at the Oklahoma Historical Society. As this reproduction suggests, many of the early editions were difficult to read.

**THE FOLLOWING
PAGES WERE BOUND
WITH THE PRINTING
EXTENDING INTO THE
BINDING, AND ARE
ILLEGIBLE DUE TO
BEING CUT OFF AND
BEING POOR QUALITY
COPIES.**

**THIS IS AS RECEIVED
FROM THE
CUSTOMER.**

MOUTH-PIECE OF A
BETTER
THINKING COLORED
PEOPLE

A Message
From
The Black
Folk

5 Cents Per Copy

The
ONWARD
HEIGHTS
122
BLACK
FAITH
DISPATCH

Oklahoma City, and Guthrie, Oklahoma Sept. 21 1917

ORGAN OF THE KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS OF N. A., S. A., E. A., A., AND A., JURISDICTION OF OKLAHOMA. :

The Bolt And Shock We Need

Our Schools Badly Need A Truant Officer

Prof. Debnam's Need

Truant Officer Could Help Much

Commissioners Should Act

We, the colored citizens of the Colored Oklahoma City schools, remembering the good things you have done, would like to point out a glaring weakness in the colored system. We have no truant officer for the colored. A truant officer is more highly needed by us than by the white school. Negro schools are often located in unsafe neighborhoods for moral growth. The colored and white slaves dare not hang openly around the white school. All the good authority is taken by the white race. We have no civil control over

Around the Negro school hide later these dangers to entice the boys and girls from school. Because the principal of the white school cannot afford to these difficulties you appoint a white transient officer. Our principal formerly were himself out last year, fighting a systemized onslaught upon his race. He does not talk, he does not complain, but we are determined that this year such a harrowing burden he shall not bear alone. This paper endorses because of his heroic act for the morality of his girls.

as a colored citizenship, we feel that in making this thing plain to you, you will fill this need. You are fathers and brothers and can realize deeply how keen is our desire that this protection be placed around our girls. We hope you will secure from the police judge authority for the officer to take

[illegible]

Dr. G.W. Spearman

THE BLACK DISPATCH



Col. Edward Jefferson

GRAND MASTER'S ROUSING R
PORT



Stevedore Soldiers

The Jolt We Need

Chaos Reigns Where Order Ought
To Be, Our Helplessness

Oklahoma City Negroes Asleep While Rare Passage Thru Most Crucial Moment Of Citizenship

There is no discounting the fact that this condition is increasing daily in the Northwest and carries out with it all of its attendant evils, a lot of stampeded cattle and wonder what the trouble is.

"Oh yes I hear you when you say, 'We just recently started the Oklahoma Negro Civic League.' But the editor of this paper wants to go on and on about saying that it might as well not have been organized, if the good it is doing is to justify its life. The Oklahoma Negro Civic League has not done as much as any of the other, many civic organizations we have started. The rest of them did meet long enough to print stationery and get out big Negroes names at the top of a letterhead.

By 1932 Dunjee was publishing a more attractive newspaper while still headlining the sensational.

SEEKS MARRIAGE ANNULMENT

Man Claims Marital Status When White Baby Is Born

Negro Business

Turn to page 4. A statement on Negro business as seen by the executive committee of the National Negro Business League, is given. Timely pointers and helpful suggestions are submitted.

The Black Dispatch

WE STAND—For the right of the voice of men to be heard in their own Government—For Democracy that is actual—not ritualistic.

PRICE FIVE CENTS

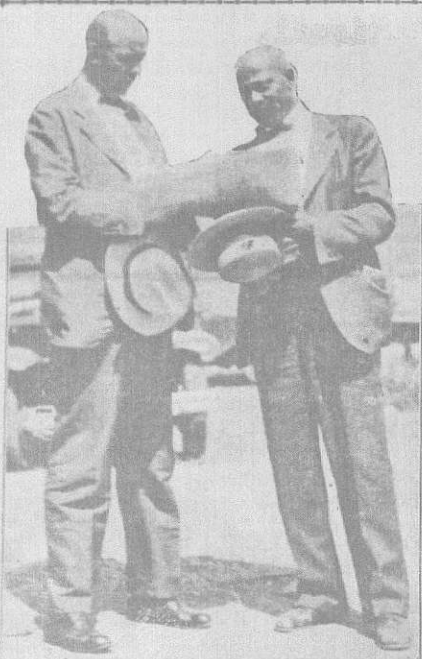
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA, JULY 21, 1932

VOLUME 17. NUMBER 34.

Binga Jury Disagrees; To Get New Trial

K. C. MAN FACES CRIMINAL ASSAULT CHARGE

Reading Their On Proclamation



Grand Master Len McNeil, Enfaula (left) and Endowment Secretary M. T. Hutton, Sapulpa (right) of St. John Grand Lodge, A. F. & A. M., are shown in the picture above reading the Black Dispatch during the sessions of the Pythian Grand lodge last week.

Interest for these two dignitaries was created on this occasion by the publication in the issue of the 9th of the proclamation announcing the coming session of the Masonic Grand Lodge, which convenes in Boley August 9-10.

One paragraph in the recent proclamation issued by Grand Master McNeil announces that Mrs. Lillie Talliaferro, Grand Worthy Matron, Terry, who was stricken seriously ill in a southern Kansas town, has completely recovered and has returned home.

"SAY, JOHN, COME TAKE THESE NIGGERS TO SEE THOSE SCOTTISBORO NIGGERS," SAYS WARDEN

STARTLING STATEMENT IS MADE TO HORACE MANN BOND, WHO VISITED PRISON DURING NATIONAL NEGRO TEACHERS MEETING

Writer Gives Close-Up on What States Have Spent in Making Condemned Boys Good Citizens

MISTAKEN IDENTITY IS BELIEF OF FRIENDS OF MAN ACCUSED OF CRIMINALLY ASSAULTING WOMAN

CHARLES ROLLAND AIDED BY FRIENDS AND FORMER EMPLOYERS WHO DO NOT THINK HIM GUILTY

Held Without Bond, Defense Testimony Will Be Given in Forthcoming Term of Circuit Court

KANSAS CITY, Mo., July 23.—Whether the unsupported word of a woman who claims to have "identified" a man after having seen him only once under dim street lights and when she was admittedly under great stress, shall stand against the testimony of people who for years have known the integrity of the man in question and are willing to spend money to prove it, is the real matter which will be decided in the trial of Charles Rolland.

Seven white families who have employed Rolland for years, believe him innocent. They believe it so strongly that they have hired a lawyer to defend him. The case has become a matter of their loyalty growing out of their knowledge of Rolland versus the halting identification of the accuser.

Rolland has been held in jail since June 22 without bond, charged with the attack of Mrs. Nellie Schupp, white, the night of June 19 in the vicinity of Twelfth street and Monroe avenue. He appeared in Justice Joseph J. Dougherty's court Wednesday for arraignment on charges of criminal assault and robbery.

His friends, allies and well-wishers appeared with him. They filled the benches. They stood up all the standing room. They overflowed the courtroom. They stood on the sidewalk outside and peered in. With the exception of a small group of Communists, they had not been asked to come. They did not feel that Rolland was in the wrong and they wanted a chance to say so.

(Continued on Page 2, Col. 4)

Taken To Hot Chair

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., July 21.—(AP)—James T. Byrd, under death sentence for the slaying of Mrs. A. C. Allen, white, and criminally attacking her 17-year-old daughter, was taken to Kilby prison Tuesday where he is to be electrocuted July 29. The Supreme court recently affirmed the conviction and sentence of the lower courts and denied Jordan a new hearing.

Another Receiver For Victory Life

CHICAGO, July 21.—(AP)—James Gullett, white, an assistant attorney general of the State of Illinois, was

Johnson Choir Not So Hot In New Spot

NEW YORK, July 23.—(ANP) Variety's reviewer who stopped in on the new act of Hall Johnson's choir which was tried out at the Academy last week, did not think so much of the unit in its new home. Karl writes in the theatrical publication:

"Hall Johnson's Negro choir of some 21 voices is admittedly one of the finest choirs in the country. As concert material they're great. They even showed at the Roxy with good results. But in vaudeville—and on 14th street—it's a different story. The audience didn't know what was intended.

"To make things worse there's a misconstrued attempt to stage the thing into a Harlem revue. A colored announcer in evening clothes comes out on the apron and tries to be humorous as a master of ceremonies. He announces the choir, which appears in 'one' before a shabby house curtain for a crowded and unpleasant effect, especially since all are in costume of some sort.

Prisoner Blinded In Memphis Jail

MEMPHIS, Tenn., July 21.—(ANP)—"It was just a 'nigger' fight," Sheriff Bacon told a judge in the county court Tuesday when Mackey Lee Forbes applied for aid from the county after having lost his eyesight in jail.

Forbes told the court that he had been arrested through the malice of a neighbor and held in jail three days. While he was in custody, a trusty brought him food and told him he would have to pay 25 cents for it or suffer a whipping. Forbes told the court he did not have the money. The trusty returned later, according to Forbes, and threw boiling hot water into his face.

He has lost the sight of one eye.

(Continued on Page 2, Col. 4)

Alleged Bootlegger Slain

MEMPHIS, Tenn., July 23.—(ANP)—Roy Dobbs, alleged to be a bootlegger, was shot and killed Sunday night by Mrs. Annie Smith, who claims that Dobbs came to her home to collect some money owed by her husband and tried to force his way in. She used a shotgun to protect her castle.

FRAUD MARRIAGE ASKED TO BE ANNULLED BY HUSBAND WHO CLAIMS HE WAS TRICKED BY WIFE

FEW MONTHS FOLLOWING MARRIAGE BABY IS BORN WHICH HUBBY CONTENTS IS WHITE

Woman Finally States Father of Child Is White Man; Conspiracy Charges May Be Filed

WASHINGTON, July 23.—(CNS)—Charging that his wife induced him into the marriage state by fraud and deceit without his knowledge, William Edwards of 1717

Langston Guard Bags Sugar Thief

EIGHT SACKS SAID TO HAVE BEEN IN HANDS OF DISCHARGED EMPLOYEE

Summer Term Nears Close With Teachers Unpaid

LANGSTON, Okla., July 23.—The cat is out of the bag. Semi-official information has at last been secured which alleges that a certain high official, recently discharged, was caught by the guards on the campus, after having looted the university store rooms of eight sacks of sugar.

Because of the previously close political relationship of this man to the administration, every effort is being made to keep these ugly facts from the public, because it is known that to publish these startling disclosures will but substantiate the recent charges made by the Black Dispatch and discredit the head of the present regime.

It has been fully established, so it is said, that this is but one of the many back door leaks which has been going on for the past two months, and that a portion of the present financial embarrassment can be checked up to this unaccountable political set-up which now begins to ring down upon the head of its master mind. It is now being freely said that the recent illness of Dr. I. W. Young was the direct reaction of the terrible discovery and disclosure when the guard caught a supposed to be trusted friend and associate looting the store rooms.

While no one immediately connected with the university administration is willing to know anything about this matter, the guards themselves are known to have told responsible persons that they actually captured the favored one with almost 1,000 pounds of sugar. It is thought that this sugar was being sent by a "fence" to another county to be used in illicit bootlegging.

With summer school closing only one week away, teachers at both of the branch normals remain without pay. Small hope is held for the early payment of the instructors who have had to make many sacrifices to keep the schools open.

The few who have received a few dollars have been paid, so it is said, out of special funds, indicating that the biennial appropriation has been exhausted. Even this class of payment has ceased, so it is reported. It was said on high authority this week that the entire \$16,000 left in the revolving fund by Dr. Z. T. Hubert, had been completely spent.

Chicotah Grants O. G. & E. Franchise

CHICOTAH, Okla.,—Citizens of Chicotah, at a special election held July 12, granted a twenty-five year

10,000 CHEER

124



Over ten thousand people gathered in Brooklyn, N. Y., to cheer for the Negro League baseball team. (Top and bottom)

Struck By Train Killed

ZEBULAN, N. C., July 23.—(ANP)—Clarence Gray, killed about two miles from town Thursday night by a passenger train, was struck by a passenger train and killed.

Robbed By White Burned To

OAKLAND, Miss., July 23.—(ANP)—According to a statement by Sheriff W. H. Smith, a white man, named Zebulon, was killed by a train Thursday night. The man was killed by a train and his body was found in a field. The man was killed by a train and his body was found in a field. The man was killed by a train and his body was found in a field.

BINGA FAIL OWN DEFENSE HE STOLE

DEFENSE CONTS A PART OF BAI NOT

Testimony By side

CHICAGO, Ill., July 23.—(ANP)—Prystalski dismisses the case that had been filed against him. He is now free.

CHICAGO, July 23.—(ANP)—A jury of 12 men and 2 women, after considering the case for 10 hours, returned a verdict of guilty. The man was found guilty of the crime.

Blackened

The energetic Dunjee often used most of the space on a page for his editorials.

Text of the editorial written by Freda Ameringer,
editor of the Oklahoma City Advertiser, following
Dunjee's funeral.

(Continued from Page 1)

FRONTPAGE EDITORIAL**A Good Life****By Freda Ameringer**

There was drama, a sense of history, at the little New Hope Baptist Church out on Northeast Seventh Street, Saturday morning, when funeral services were held for Roscoe Dunjee.

Those who filled the church to overflowing were from many walks of life, white as well as Negro; older men and women who had worked with the fallen crusader; younger people who had caught his vision and were carrying on; those of humble rank, distinguished men of letters, those high in city, county and state government. And there was no mistaking the feeling of respect, sorrow and loss.

The casket was open and one could not help noting that the figure within looked surprisingly youthful for his nearly 83 years, despite all the hard fighting for a cause dear to his heart and particularly the illness which had extended over his last eight years. As I took my seat I could not help thinking of these verses from Ecclesiastes:

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

"A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted."

Given a choice surely this one-time restless soul would have preferred death in the fray to his long enforced idleness on the side lines.

* * * *

For those of us who have not realized how swift is the pace at which our world moves there is distinct shock in the story of Roscoe Dunjee. Here was a man whose father was actually a slave, escaping in his 27th year to Canada by the underground railroad. The father came with his family to Oklahoma Territory in 1892 and they eked out a precarious living on a little farm near Choctaw. When the elder Dunjee died young Roscoe carried on with the farming and "peddling" vegetables from door to door until his mother, sisters and a brother were able to carry on for themselves.

It was in 1915 that Roscoe Dunjee began his career as printer and newspaper publisher. Have we stopped to consider how much the picture has changed in the ensuing 50 years? Those were the days of lynchings

(Continued on Page 10)

and mob rule, all-white primaries, separate cars and waiting rooms, wretched health and educational standards for the Negro. Through 40 turbulent years Roscoe Dunjee fought to make life better for his race. Denied the normal happiness of wife and family, his paper, this struggle, was his entire life.

The typographical appearance of The Black Dispatch often caused fellow printers to shudder. But there was "the blood, sweat and tears" of the battle in what Roscoe Dunjee wrote. There was never any doubt about where he stood on issues. This is what counted with his followers. What did the smeary type and the cuts which wouldn't print matter?

The torch he held aloft lighted the path for others who took up the battle. For the more moderate, less uncompromising, he voiced no censure. There was work for all. But his beacon light burned no less brightly. Unique among men was Roscoe Dunjee, no one quite like him, in Oklahoma nor in the nation.

* * * *

When history evaluates leadership in the Negroes' struggle for justice in this country I believe that Thurgood Marshall will stand among those at the very top. For he is the man, be it remembered, who carried the fight for the integration of public schools to the highest court in the land—and won.

What an epitaph for any man in any age!

Through the weary years he waged this struggle, against almost inconceivable odds, it is not strange that he and the fiery Oklahoma editor became close friends. Marshall came to speak at a testimonial dinner for Dunjee in 1955 and he was back Saturday—now Judge Marshall of a U. S. Circuit Court in New York—for the funeral. It was the last service he could do his friend and perhaps he realized his coming would have pleased him more than all the flowers and messages.

* * * *

"From the heart it rings, to the heart it clings," wrote Goethe long ago.

So of Thurgood Marshall's words at the bier of Roscoe Dunjee.

He spoke of the blessing which working with his friend had meant to him; of the great inspiration he had been to everyone, of an ability which would have made him a wealthy man had he cared for himself. He spoke of Roscoe Dunjee's high standing in national councils of the NAACP, of the fact that the hard-pressed organization was never called on to help in any of the Oklahoma fights because "Roscoe always raised the money needed."

"Rights we take for granted today he had to fight for," Judge Marshall reminded, "a gallant, free spirit who never accepted segregation for himself. Always Roscoe sat where he pleased, trains, buses, wherever he went."

* * * *

Nor in death, Judge Marshall might have added. For Roscoe Dunjee was buried in quiet Fairlawn, also the final resting place of many civic, business and political leaders of city and state. Our Oklahoma sun and winds quickly withered the flowers which banked his grave; but the lessons of faith and courage in such a life live on. Countless men and women in countless years will "pluck up that which" he planted.

A Dunjee speech delivered at the National Colored Democratic Convention was placed in the Congressional Record in 1940.

Congressional Record

National Colored Democratic Association

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY ROSCOE DUNJEE

Mr. THOMAS of Oklahoma. Mr. President, the National Colored Democratic Association recently held a national convention in the Eighth Regiment Armory in Chicago. The keynote address before this convention was delivered by Mr. Roscoe Dunjee, editor of the Black Dispatch and a highly respected citizen of my State of Oklahoma. I ask unanimous consent to have the address printed in the Appendix of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the address was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

I understand that Oscar DePriest, a distinguished citizen of this community, has done us a great honor. I am advised he says that Negro Democrats are "foolcrats." I come today to beard the lion in his den. I want to devote a lot of my time today to the Negroes in America, who, like Oscar DePriest, assume the philosophy of Lot's wife, looking backward at the Republican ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah.

VOTE IN OKLAHOMA

I come from Oklahoma, that fair State where the Indian and the coyote used to roam. I come from a State where 40,000 Negroes now vote in the Democratic primary, and I come from below the Mason and Dixon's line to fling this challenge in the face of Oscar DePriest:

The 40,000 "foolcrats" down in Oklahoma, who have sense enough to be Democrats, are the black men and women who by their vision and good fellowship among the citizens with whom they live are going to politically liberate the millions of beleaguered members of our race now disfranchised in the far reaches of the Southland.

NEGRO ASLEEP

For 60 years the Negro laid down and went to sleep in the back yard of the Republican Party. He asked for nothing, and got nothing; but we who are assembled here today have discovered the power in the ballot. We were dissatisfied with the crumbs that fell from the Republican table. Practically all of the older men of this convention are former Republicans and we left the Republican Party immersed in that philosophy expressed by the immortal Frederick Douglass when he said:

"Men have in their own hands the peaceful means by which they may put all of the moral, political, and economic enemies to flight, if they will faithfully, courageously, and valiantly use them."

L. K. WILLIAMS IN OKLAHOMA

Once before I have had to correct the thinking of one of the distinguished citizens of this fair city. He came down to Oklahoma

during the last Presidential campaign admonishing an old colored lady whom he said symbolized all of the Negro Democrats in America. He said there was an old colored lady up here in Chicago who was singing a song entitled "Jesus Leads Me and Roosevelt Feeds Me."

Well, I am glad to come to Chicago today to say that in spite of the Reverend L. K. Williams, the great Republican leader, Jesus, still leads and Roosevelt still feeds the great American Nation.

Parties are nothing except that they represent principles in government. The principles for which the Republican Party first stood have my approval, but when parties change their principles we should forget party and follow principle. This is the grave error made by Negroes who belong to the Republican Party.

"LILYWHITE-ISM"

I was once a Republican. For 18 years down in Oklahoma I was the undisputed head of the Negro wing of the Republican organization. I sat in the Republican convention in Kansas City in 1928 where "lilywhite-ism" was florescent. I shall never forget that memorable and despicable scene when, in spite of the truth and the facts, the Republican Party sold the Negro down the river.

"Lilywhite-ism" drove me out of the Republican Party. I was wounded in the house of my friends. I was present when Goose-neck Bill McDonald, of Fort Worth, and Ben Davis, of Georgia, were given their walking papers, and I lived long enough to see that same "lily white" organization send Mable Willibrandt from the department of "injustice" down to Mississippi in an attempt to put Perry Howard behind prison bars. Perry Howard happened to be one of those fellows spoken of in the Bible.

Perry has eyes but sees not. He has ears but hears not. Perry was trying to and is still trying to stay in Sodom and Gomorrah. Perry Howard was still looking back toward Lincoln and to Frederick Douglass who said, "The Republican Party is the ship, all else the sea."

TOOK FRENCH LEAVE

Well, I come to Chicago today to say that the Democratic Party is the ship, all else the sea. I think I proved that rather conclusively to the Reverend L. K. Williams when he came down to Oklahoma 2 years ago. I think I'll take time out to tell you how I forced Reverend Williams to take French leave from our party. I heard State Senator King and Reverend Williams were coming down to explain to us the "whereforeness of the which." I decided that Reverend Williams was one who needed an intelligence test, so I prepared examination papers for him.

I knew what Hoover prosperity had done for the American people and I thought that if Rev. L. K. Williams and State Senator King had not heard about it, I would treat them to a little information. You know there are still some mountaineers up in the hills of Tennessee who have not found out Lincoln is dead, and who come down into the valley each election to vote for him.

So with this in mind, and with the hope that these deluded individuals would see the light, I prepared a list of 13 questions and registered them special delivery to the temporary residence of Reverend Williams. I asked this distinguished churchman to answer these questions when he spoke to his Oklahoma City audience. I am here to say that he never answered a single one of those questions. He called me up and said he would prepare a statement regarding same when he returned to Chicago. Apparently, Lacy Kirk Williams has never gotten back home, for he still owes me a letter answering my questions.

Now here is the list of 13 questions I asked Dr. Williams:

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Did you know that during the 10-year period ending with the Hoover administration, Negro farmers lost their rural holdings in the amount of 2,748,619 acres—an area almost twice the size of the State of Delaware? This happened under the Republican "old deal," did it not?

2. Did you know since President Roosevelt inaugurated the New Deal and organized the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, Negro farmers have been able to purchase 4,046 individual farms, representing more than 400,000 acres? Tell the audience how you account for this. (Negroes voted down South.)

3. Where are the mile-long soup lines and the hungry borders who were breaking into food stores bequeathed to the Democratic Party by Herbert Hoover's "old deal"? Do you remember?

4. Why have the daily papers ceased to carry stories which tell of rich men jumping out of 20-story windows? (Even a few Negroes jumped.)

5. Did you know that the New Deal you lambast is furnishing money in the United States to give 5,057 Negro youths a college education; keeps 21,331 in high school and is giving 128 graduate work?

6. Did you know that more than 400 Negro youths are being educated by the New Deal in Oklahoma today? This is the direct result of assistance coming from the National Youth Administration. Do you oppose this Government aid?

7. When Republicans shout "constitutionalism" today, are they not in fact advocating State rights, the principle which the South has given birth to Jim Crow, disfranchisement, and segregation?

8. Does not the Roosevelt New Deal seek to centralize government and give uniformity to national laws, which would rid the United States of sectionalism and finally southern prejudice?

9. Where are the highjackers and kidnapers of 1933? Do you feel that President Roosevelt's C. C. C. camps had anything to do with this?

10. Do you know that the C. C. C. camps removed from the highway that leads to lawlessness and crime 50,000 young Negroes, and that out of their Government checks these black boys are sending back home slightly more than a million dollars each month? Do you condemn this New Deal program? Did Republican administration ever attempt anything similar?

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11. Why have the Liberty Leaguers and members of the anti-New Deal crowd sought to traduce and malign the wife of President Roosevelt? Is it because she has been friendly to Negro development and progress, or is it because she is an enemy of black folk? (I'd like to make Mrs. Roosevelt President.)

12. Is it not true that the Republican Party "sold the Negro down the river" in the Kansas City convention, which nominated Herbert Hoover, when the Illywhites ousted "Gooseneck Bill" McDonald of Texas, and the Georgia delegation?

13. What do you think of a remark made by Congressman Oscar DePriest, of your city, in the church where you now stand? Congressman DePriest said in that statement: "If I were a Negro and lived in Oklahoma, I'd be a Democrat." (Oscar himself would be a "foolcrat" if he lived in my State.)

NOTHING CONSTRUCTIVE IN REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

If you listened in on the Republican National Convention the other day, you noticed that the boys who gathered in Philadelphia were against something and for nothing.

Not alone in politics, but in all life we find people who knock every constructive program, and many people think knockers are extremely smart because they oppose what is being done. Usually, the only thing one has to do to expose such individuals is to ask them what they have to offer as a substitute for the present order.

BE HONEST WITH VOTERS

You hear Republicans orating against the New Deal, and the terrible expenditures being made in our relief set-ups. But why are they not honest or intelligent enough to tell the American people what it is they would cut out? Do the Republicans want to get rid of W. P. A.? Do they want to get rid of C. C. C.? Do they want to get rid of N. Y. A.? Do they want to scrap-heap the housing program or the farm security program? What is the definite and positive change these fellows would make in the present governmental function?

Why great day in the morning! When my father died he left my mother and me in a dilapidated old house with which I was very much dissatisfied. It was an old unpainted structure, had no porch or foundation under it, and the ceiling was made of cheap canvas. I was utterly disgusted with that home, but I am here in Chicago today to tell you that I never moved out of that home until I was able to build a better one in which to live.

It seems to me that the Republican Party wants the American people to move out into the rain. I have read the speeches of Taft, Dewey, Vandenberg, and Wilkie, and in each instance it is a statement of negation. I think that the greatest creation of the mind is expressed in the radio. One can back a \$2 jackass up to the finest radio in the world and that jackass can kick the radio all to pieces, but the jackass cannot reconstruct this monument to man's superb mentality.

WARNING TO NEGROES

There is just one thing that has been said by Republican speakers that is perfectly understandable. I want to stop right here and call attention to it. I think Candidate Alf Landon expressed it very clearly 2 years ago during the campaign in a speech at Wichita.

Here is what Candidate Landon said:

"The Republican Party as a major reform proposes to return the administration of relief to the States. It will be possible for the communities themselves to determine just what form relief would take. They will determine what, if any, work-relief project will be started and continued."

I know every one of my listeners can understand that the Republican Party wants to take the administration of W. P. A.,

C. C. C., N. Y. A., and A. A. A. out of the hands of the Federal Government and place it in the hands of the State.

AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

I ask you in all sincerity whether or not you believe that the millions of black folk who live south of the Mason and Dixon's line would fare better or worse under such an arrangement. What would happen in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana? I stand here today shouting from the hilltops that age-old expression, "Am I my brother's keeper?" If you want to rescue and help the black men and women south of the border you'll never allow the Republican Party to reconstruct agencies of relief in any such manner.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT SAYS

At the same time that Alf Landon was making his memorable address at Wichita, President Roosevelt uttered this very significant statement:

"I do not believe that Kansas would have pulled through the difficult problems of the past 4 years as splendidly as it has, had it not been for Federal cooperation, and Federal assistance in many fields of your endeavor. If you think we were wrong to give this assistance, then, to be logical you must ask in the day to come every State in the Union shall set itself up as an individual entity for the solution of all the problems of the inhabitants."

PARTY CHANGES

I said a while ago that the Negroes in the Republican Party had gone to sleep in a political back yard. A man asleep is like Rip Van Winkle; he wakes up finally in a new environment and bewilderment. If the Negroes in the Republican Party had not been asleep, they would have known long before now that both the Republican and the Democratic Parties have swapped their party principles and that the Democratic Party and the New Deal now stand for centralization of authority and uniformity of laws.

In the days of federalism and antifederalism the same line of demarcation between political parties existed then as now. State rights was the rock upon which the Democratic Party rested and the Republican Party marched under the banner of central control.

STATE RIGHTS ISSUE

It ought to be perfectly clear to every Negro in America that State rights has been the vicious principle in government from which all our woes emanate. Jim Crow, segregation, disfranchisement, and mob violence are all made possible by special legislation and special sanctions in State-rights States. Central control and uniformity of laws would make it possible for America to have an even spread of democracy. There is no better way to identify Negroes asleep in the Republican Party than when we see the time-honored principles of the party abandoned and the party of Lincoln embracing the idea and notion of government as expressed by the Republican grass-roots convention held at Springfield, Ill., 2 years ago and the later statement of Alf Landon at Wichita.

CONSTITUTIONALISM MEANS SAME THING

Of course, the Republicans do not use the term "State rights." They shout about constitutionalism, which, when reduced to its meaning, is equivalent to the same thing. When President Roosevelt wanted to reorganize the Supreme Court the Republicans shouted "Constitutionalism," even though they knew that the Constitution of the United States provided for the President doing everything he was attempting to do regarding the Supreme Court.

The remarkable thing about this changing of the Supreme Court rests in the fact that the Negroes in the Republican Party were imbued with the same thought and idea as their constitutional shouting white colleagues.

SACRED COW

Every Negro I met at that time in the Republican Party seemed to think that the Constitution of the United States is a sacred cow of some sort. They do not recall that the American people have written 21 amendments to that document, every one of which recognizes delinquencies and lack of vision on the part of those who first drafted it. Why the Constitution in its originally adopted form did not have a Bill of Rights, and I say here and now that without the Bill of Rights America would not have a democratic form of government. The truth is we are going to have to write a number of new amendments to the Constitution of the United States before democracy is more than a gesture at human rights in this country. But the most ridiculous position taken by the Republican Party results from attempts to prevent the President from reorganizing the Supreme Court. To kick men off and put new men on was characterized by Republicans as outraging that venerable document. They argued that it was not the American way and belonged to a Hitlerized form.

SUPREME COURT

Negroes who endorsed such views do not realize that Abraham Lincoln had to constitutionalize the emancipation of the slaves in identically the same manner as President Roosevelt attempted to make legal the various New Deal agencies of government. Lincoln knew when he wrote the Emancipation Proclamation the same was unconstitutional, but Lincoln did not stop there. In a conversation with members of his Cabinet he discussed the social and political outlook of members of the Supreme Court whom he was sure would declare unconstitutional the freeing of the slaves. Here's what Lincoln said:

"I must change the membership of the Supreme Court in order that I may constitutionalize the Emancipation Proclamation."

Lincoln had to do the same thing regarding paper money that is in circulation now. The Constitution of the United States does not provide for the making of paper money. But Lincoln put paper money in circulation during the Civil War. After the war, Lincoln had to change the complexion of the Supreme Court in order to have a judicial body that would declare paper money constitutional.

SUPREME COURT

Unquestionably about the dumbest human I know is the black man who will today follow the Republican Party in its mad witch hunt for a type of constitutionalism which if it had been followed in Lincoln's time would have reinslaved all black men. One thing we can thank President Roosevelt for is that when he did get a whack at the Supreme Court he went out into the citizenship of this great Nation and found Justice Hugo Black.

For years I have berated the order of the Ku Klux Klan, but President Roosevelt has taught me that "good can come out of Nazareth," and I come to Chicago to say that if all klansmen are like Justice Hugo Black, let us have more and more klansmen.

DEMOCRATIC VIRTUES

And the Democratic Party under the New Deal has been busy with its searchlight finding the gold within the ranks of the Negro race. The Democratic Party located and found for the American Negro that incomparable statesman and valiant fighter for race rights, Congressman ARTHUR W. MITCHELL.

The fight that Congressman MITCHELL has made against lynching; his single-handed fight against the evils of Jim Crow transportation facilities and his ceaseless vigilance the past 4 years in the halls of the Federal Legislature should forever endear him in the hearts of America's largest minority group.

The Democratic Party reached out upon the broad prairies of Missouri and found that able leader who heads their organization, Dr. William J. Thompkins. Surely those of us who have watched the movements of Dr. Tompkins in the office of Recorder of Deeds are proud that the great prairies of the West could offer to the Nation this unselfish and outstanding black man.

The New Deal located and found that diplomat and polished statesman from the great State of New York, who has made a distinguished record in the Republic of Liberia. I speak of none other than the Honorable Lester Walton, another boy who comes from the great plains of the West.

The New Deal reached out to find that spotless, matchless woman, who, as the bard sang, "is pure as the icicles that hung in the Temple of Diana and as chaste as the vestal virgins." I speak of none other than Mary McLeod Bethune.

I might go on and on to prove that the New Deal has placed emphasis upon intelligence and integrity within the ranks of Negroes. I might add to the list such brilliant sons of Jethro as Edgar Brown, Ambrose Caliver, Dr. Robert C. Weaver, Eugene Kinckle Jones, Joseph H. P. Evans, Maceo Smith, Lawrence W. Oxley, and many others too numerous to mention.

I don't know why they started designating the Roosevelt administration as the New Deal, but I will say for the American Negro that the selection of this vast array of eminent and prepared black men for administrative responsibility is unquestionably a New Deal for Negroes in America.

THE NEW PROGRAM FOR WHICH WE SHOULD FIGHT

Nothing I have said should cause the delegates assembled in this convention to feel that there is nothing left for which to fight. In fact the battle for the black man has just begun here in America. We must teach greater solidarity in voting and destroy vicious individualism that crops out every time an election is held. Unselfish leaders, interested in the common weal, is the crying need of the hour.

QUELL THE MOB

We should join the struggle for passage of antilynching legislation. I am proud to say that the present bill now before the Congress was drafted and introduced by Democrats. The Republican Party in its Philadelphia convention devoted three lines to a general statement against lynching, but that convention, in line with the attitude of the Republican Party through all of the years while in power, refused to declare itself for a definite proposal. The Republican Party lacked the moral courage to say it favored and endorsed the Wagner antilynching bill.

POLL TAX

We must join in the protest against the vicious poll tax which now strangles millions of poor whites and blacks in the Southland. I want to say here and now that if the unqualified right to the ballot is ever given to the black man in the South, there will be no need of an antilynching bill. Sheriffs and courts are unwilling to identify and prosecute members of mobs because the mob votes but the victims of mob and their relatives and friends do not vote.

We should battle within our party ranks for the right of the Negro to be integrated into every branch of the combat units of the American Army and we should insist upon a program that will

in its finality deliver into the hands of every citizen of this Republic his civil rights.

Our ballots should secure for black men and women occupational opportunities, and the right to achieve in every avenue of life in our dynamic American society. If these are our objectives, if we struggle in this direction, we shall some day win our place in the sun, and this will indeed be a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

NATIONAL DEFENSE

I want to insist here and now that as American citizens we demand the right to be integrated into every branch of the American Army. Recently I appeared before the resolutions committee of the Oklahoma Democratic State Convention. White men who spoke before that body were in utter frenzy, asking that the convention virtually declare war on Germany. From what they said one would think that Hitler was going to sweep over the ocean and invade America within a few months.

When I did get an opportunity to talk I told that committee about the obvious discriminations in the American Army. I told them how Pat Hurley, from my State, who when Secretary of War under Herbert Hoover had practically demobilized all of the Negro combat troops of the Army. I told them that at Fort Sill, in my State, and at Fort Riley in Kansas, Negroes were nothing more than manure handlers. I told them that if Hitler was going to come over here, Negroes wanted to be armed with something else other than a mop and a broom.

The Republican Party under Herbert Hoover struck at the Negro's right to fight for this country and we want to ask our party convention this year to put a gun in the black man's hands. We want the right to fight in the Army, Navy, the air, and the National Guard. The Oklahoma Democrats wrote such a plank into our State platform and I believe the time is ripe for such a plank in our national platform.

LABOR

The most important fight which I believe we should launch during this convention is in relation to the problems of labor. I would be derelict in my duty here were I to paint a picture of satisfaction in which no account is taken of the tolling masses. Much has been done in New Deal legislation in the interest of the workingman, and many black men and women have benefited thereby.

But wage-and-hour laws exclude outside workers, agriculturists and domestics. I think we should insist that all such laws be amended in recognition of the fact that practically all Negro workers come within the classifications excluded from the wage-and-hour laws. We must cease emphasizing that a few Negroes get big jobs and remember that Booker Washington said, "We shall rise in proportion as we raise the standard of the common masses."

WE WANT ROOSEVELT

And finally, in the last analysis, we want this convention to nominate for the Presidency of the United States Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He is the only man who today seems to see the "sparrows" in American life. We want Roosevelt to continue as President because his social outlook has meant more to the downtrodden, and especially the American Negro.

ROSCOE DUNJEE AND THE OKLAHOMA CITY BLACK DISPATCH

by

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Roscoe Dunjee, the son of a runaway Negro slave, established the Oklahoma City Black Dispatch in 1915, when racism was rampant among the state's white population. A civil rights activist, Dunjee operated the newspaper for 40 years, during which time he crusaded for equality for blacks not unlike the manner in which the famous Frederick Douglass had pleaded the cause of Negroes in the previous century. As a reporter and editorial writer, Dunjee was constantly on the firing line, calling attention to man's inhumanity to man. He fought for the right of blacks to serve on juries, for school and residential desegregation, and for assistance to the poor.

Dunjee entered the newspaper business after he noted while traveling Oklahoma for a Negro fraternal organization, that sharecroppers and other poor blacks were being treated as second-class citizens and that no one was pleading their cause. He began his venture with \$500, borrowing it to buy some broken down job printing equipment.

Dunjee, perhaps more than any other person, was responsible for the integration of Oklahoma's universities and colleges. As founder of the Oklahoma Conference of Branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, he spearheaded several legal battles that reached the U.S. Supreme Court, most of which resulted in relief for black people.

Without a formal education, Dunjee was self-taught. He studied from his father's library and developed into a

prolific editorial writer. He traveled extensively, reporting on various events, involving black-white confrontations. He even went to jail for protesting "electioneering" at a precinct voting booth in Oklahoma City. His campaign against the separate coach law also attracted considerable attention.

As were many black editors before him, Dunjee was interested in politics and the courts. A Republican, Dunjee switched in 1932 when he concluded that the GOP had turned its back on Negroes. From that time until he retired, Dunjee voted mostly Democratic, although he cautioned that Negroes should not be tied to any particular political party. He was interested in law because he felt the future of blacks lay in the nation's judicial system, primarily among the higher courts. Dunjee felt lower courts were too prejudiced to render fair decisions. He had a brilliant legal mind, and often directed the course of lawsuits brought by the NAACP.

A slightly-built man, Dunjee had unbounded energy. He never held a grudge, and often said he didn't hate the white man, just his ways. Dunjee managed to keep his newspaper solvent, although on occasion he borrowed against it to support a black cause. He never compromised with white merchants, which undoubtedly cost him advertising money. As long as he could pay bills, meet the payroll, have clothes on his back, and a car to drive, Dunjee was satisfied with a meager income. He died a pauper in 1965 at the age of 81.

As president of the Oklahoma Conference of Branches

and as a national director of the NAACP, Dunjee developed many friendships with national figures, including Roy Wilkins and Thurgood Marshall. Marshall, former chief counsel for the NAACP, and now a member of the U.S. Supreme Court, attended a testimonial dinner for Dunjee in 1955 and the editor's funeral in 1965. He called Dunjee one of the great black editors and leaders in American history. Wilkins expressed similar sentiments.

One portion of this study involved a form of content analysis, in which Dunjee's editorial themes were tabulated to determine his pre-occupations as an editor. It was found that 40 per cent of his editorials dealt with equality for all people, a fact which clearly illustrates that Dunjee was totally dedicated to helping free the enslaved Negro.