

Howard University

Digital Howard @ Howard University

---

John Wesley Cromwell, Sr.

Cromwell Family Papers

---

8-10-1912

## Letter to John Wesley Cromwell, Sr. from Arthur Schomburg

Arturo (Arthur) Alfonso Schomburg

Follow this and additional works at: [https://dh.howard.edu/cf\\_johnwesleysr](https://dh.howard.edu/cf_johnwesleysr)

---

### Recommended Citation

Schomburg, Arturo (Arthur) Alfonso, "Letter to John Wesley Cromwell, Sr. from Arthur Schomburg" (1912). *John Wesley Cromwell, Sr.* 4. [https://dh.howard.edu/cf\\_johnwesleysr/4](https://dh.howard.edu/cf_johnwesleysr/4)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Cromwell Family Papers at Digital Howard @ Howard University. It has been accepted for inclusion in John Wesley Cromwell, Sr. by an authorized administrator of Digital Howard @ Howard University. For more information, please contact [digitalservices@howard.edu](mailto:digitalservices@howard.edu).

New York, N.Y. Aug. 10 1912

My dear Prof.

Concerning writing from home in relation to ~~what~~ <sup>what</sup> Gregoire ~~writes~~ <sup>wrote</sup> about a Black Pope, I have been unable to see it; you will find what he has to say about Benoit ~~who he tells us of~~ <sup>and</sup> his ~~black~~ parentage. The clipping giving in chronological order the history of the Popes I have seen one in the possession of Bruce, and one of the princes of the church is termed Black; so that when I receive Cusack's "Black Pope" it will be of much interest to both of us to fathom the mystery that clusters around this Pope. (Gregoire pages 82/3)

"Venerable men. you have come down to us from a former generation. Heaven has bounteously lenthened out your lives that you might behold this joyous day. You are now where you stood, fifty years ago this very hour, with your brothers and your neighbors, shoulder to shoulder, in the strife for your country. Behold now altered." (page 202 Bunker Hill Memorial)

\*\* \*\* \* \* \* \* \*

"The mighty pyramid itself, half buried in the sands of Africa, has nothing to bring down and report to us but the power of kings and the servitude of the people. If it had any purpose beyond that of a mausoleum, such purpose has perished from history and tradition (page 223 idem)

I think that Webster had solely in mind the white man. A man who like Lord Bacon both eminent for erudition, yet ~~base~~ <sup>Bacon</sup> did not think it was base to go against his best friend when at the height of his power. Webster the mighty, the giant in the halls of Congress and in the Tribune, did not think it was base to go against the principle of humanity and champion slaveholders cause and ribbet the chain of oppression against

20.

the unfortunate blacks. As you have said the Abolitionists will have their day in America, and the coming men free from prejudice will give them that measure of devotion for which they are justly entitled to receive.

But we have the report of a speech delivered in Boston whose language is definite, clarified, etc.

"Trace this very civilization of which we are so proud to its origin, and see where you will find it. We received it from our European ancestors--they had it from the Greeks and the Romans and the Jews. But where did the Greeks, and the Romans and the Jews get it? They derived it from Ethiopia and Egypt--in one word from Africa. Moses, we are told, was instructed in all the learning of the Egyptians. The founders of the principal Grecian cities, such as Athens, Thebes, and Delphi came from Egypt, and for centuries afterwards their descendants returned to that country, as the source and centre of civilization. There it was that the generous and stirring spirits of the time-- Herodotus, Homer, Plato, Pythagoras, and the rest--made their noble voyages of intellectual and moral discovery, as ours now make them in England, France, Germany and Italy. . . . Well, sir, who were the Egyptians? They were Africans. And of what race? It is sometimes pretended, that though Africans, and of Ethiopian extraction, they were not black. But what says the father of history, who had travelled among them, and knew their appearance as well as we know that of our neighbors in Canada? Herodotus tells us they were black, with curled hair.... It seems, therefore, that for this very civilization of which we are so proud, and which is the only ground of our present claim of superiority, we are indebted to the ancestors of these very blacks, whom we are pleased to consider as naturally incapable of civilization. \* \* \* \* \* At the period to which I have just alluded, when the blacks took precedence of the whites in civilization science, and political power, no such prejudice appears to have existed." (Alexander H. Everett.)

I will ask your pardon and turn to another book written by a woman, Lady Lugard, wife of Sr Lugard who wrote a history of the Rise of the South African Republics.

" This is not the place, nor am I competent to discuss the arguments which form the ground of belief that the civilization of Meroe preceded that of Egypt. It is enough to say very briefly, that on the site of the city of Meroe there exists remains of temples and pyramids, from which archaeologists have drawn the conclusion that the pyramids was a form of architecture native of Meroe, and only afterwards brought to perfection in Egypt. It is evident, from the decoration of the temples, that they were dedicated to the worship of ~~Jupiter~~ Ammon. It is believed that the remains of the temple of the most famous oracle of Jupiter Ammon are to be found in ruins at about eight hours' journey to the north east of Shendy. This temple of the oracle, was known to exist within a few hours journey of Meroe, and the priestly traditions of Ethiopia and Egypt assert that the worship of Ammon and Osiris, with its feasts and processions, was first settled at the metropolis of Meroe. This remarkable spot is regarded by the ancients as the "cradle of the arts and sciences, where hieroglyphic writing was discovered, and where temples and pyramids had already sprung up while Egypt still remained ignorant of their existence". From this temple the worship of Ammon and his attendant gods would seem to have spread to Egypt, and through the oasis of Siwah to Carthage and the Mediterranean coast ". (page 219-220)

\* \* \* \* \*

The monuments, though eloquent, are not the only grounds upon which this conclusion has been reached. The fame of the Ethiopians was widespread in ancient history. Herodotus describes them as "the tallest, the most beautiful and long-lived of the human race", and before Herodotus, Homer, in even more flattering language, described them as "the most just of men; the favorites of the Gods". The annals of all the great nations (early) of Asia Minor are full of them. The Mosaic records allude to them frequently; but while they are described as the most powerful, the most just, and the most beautiful of the human race, they are constantly spoken of as black, and there seems to be no other conclusion to be drawn, than that at that remote period of history the leading race of the Western world was a black race. When we reflect that this black race flourished within the very latitudes of Africa which European nations are now engaged in opening to modern civilization, a great interest is added to the study of their possible descendants (page 221 "A Tropical Dependency" by Lady Lugard)

These quotations seem to support Mr Everett, and in my humble opinion they do without adding any more light than what sparkle from its own words. I would request you to read the tome about quoted, I have a copy and price it as a lady prices a diadem.

Soon as the "Ghost" fly around I am going to impress you to run down to the 8th Street NW book-store and purchase for me three books. I rather have you do this for me than the ~~kn~~ store itself for they may misjudge, and report the items as sold, one has to be very careful and adroit in purchasing white folks books. It will be before school time and you no doubt will be pleased to do me a favor.

How is madam and the young lady these days, when I return to the city, I am going to devote some ~~of~~ time to the ladies, I believe they think I am entirely wrapped up in nothing but books and school buildings. Far from it, when I left the city <sup>(N.Y.)</sup> I never dreamt that my sojourn in the city of Washington would be longer than a day, but when one meets a Crumwell- the situation is entirely changed, and the day is mysteriously changed to days, or like Jasper<sup>(6)</sup> the Sun stops still, till I leave for good and the soil is swept clean from the ~~soils~~ souls of my shoes.

My best regards

*A. Chamberlain*

<sup>(4)</sup> Not Joshua.

*W. Webster on Pyramids*

"Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time"  
(Longfellow)

*Where is Webster's footprints?*