May 2018

Carroll, Patrick.

Follow this and additional works at: http://dh.howard.edu/og_news

Recommended Citation

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the OG Series at Digital Howard @ Howard University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Newspaper Clipping, Logbooks, Journals & Scrapbooks by an authorized administrator of Digital Howard @ Howard University. For more information, please contact lopez.matthews@howard.edu.
June 15, 1950

Mr. Scott,

Enclosed is the section in my table on your grandfathers. If you would like I will forward you a copy of my entire work after my advisor finishes reading it again. Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours very truly,

Patrick Carroll
WILLIAM HENRY SCOTT

He was probably the greatest organizer of his race for equal rights who ever lived in this state and second only to the elder Garrison. No colored man has ever organized and agitated for freedom in this land as persistently for so long a period.


Reverend William Henry Scott, activist minister of Woburn, Massachusetts, was born on a Virginia plantation on January 15, 1848. Scott's father was a white aristocrat while his mother was a field slave. As a boy, Scott served as house servant and companion to his owner's son before escaping in 1862 to the Twelfth Massachusetts Regiment of the Union Army. For the remainder of the war the ex-slave served as regimental quartermaster and personal body servant to Sergeant H. Muzzey the son of a wealthy, established family of Lexington, Massachusetts. Muzzey befriended and educated Scott and, at the close of the war, brought the young man home to Lexington. After spending a year with the Muzzeys, Scott returned to Virginia with the goal of receiving ministerial training firm in mind. After a disappointing year both educationally and financially in 1867, Scott left Virginia and journeyed to the predominantly Black West End of Boston. Serving as a house servant to affluent white families of Roxbury, he saved enough money by 1868 to pursue an education at the Theological Institution of Virginia and eventually (after a brief interlude as a teacher at Wayland Seminary in Washington, D.C.), William Scott was ordained a Baptist minister on January 16, 1880 and in that same year was appointed pastor of the all black Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts. In 1881 he was called to the pastorship of the Ebenezer Baptist Church of Boston, where he served until January 1, 1882. In that year he temporarily
He was probably the greatest organizer of his race for equal rights who ever lived in this state and second only to the elder Garrison. No colored man has ever organized and agitated for freedom in this land as persistently for so long a period.


Reverend William Henry Scott, activist minister of Woburn, Massachusetts, was born on a Virginia plantation on January 15, 1848. Scott's father was a white aristocrat while his mother was a field slave. As a boy, Scott served as house servant and companion to his owner's son before escaping in 1862 to the Twelfth Massachusetts Regiment of the Union Army. For the remainder of the war the ex-slave served as regimental quartermaster and personal body servant to Sergeant H. Muzzey the son of a wealthy, established family of Lexington, Massachusetts. Muzzey befriended and educated Scott and, at the close of the war, brought the young man home to Lexington. After spending a year with the Muzzeys, Scott returned to Virginia with the goal of receiving ministerial training firm in mind. After a disappointing year both educationally and financially in 1867, Scott left Virginia and journeyed to the predominately Black West End of Boston. Serving as a house servant to affluent white families of Roxbury, he saved enough money by 1868 to pursue an education at the Theological Institution of Virginia and eventually (after a brief interlude as a teacher at Wayland Seminary in Washington, D.C.), William Scott was ordained a Baptist minister on January 16, 1880 and in that same year was appointed pastor of the all black Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts. In 1881 he was called to the pastorship of the Ebenezer Baptist Church of Boston, where he served until January 1, 1882. In that year he temporarily
left the ministry to open a bookstore in the Capitol Hill section of Washington, D.C. For ten years Scott ran a lucrative business, choosing to leave the city in 1892 after a series of stringent segregation laws were passed in the Capitol. In 1893, Scott accepted a call from the Calvary Baptist Church of Boston, where he served until May, 1896. He resigned his post over the lack of enthusiasm and support for his community-action programs within the congregation, and became a travelling lecturer on race relations in America. Along with his speaking engagements, Scott became in 1898, the financial agent of the Bethel Industrial and Bible Training School of Jacksonville, Florida. In 1900, William Scott resumed his ministerial duties as pastor of St. John's Baptist Church in Woburn, Massachusetts. During his seven year tenure at St. John's, the parish flourished, as the finances were solidified and the congregation increased in number. In just five years, membership rose from thirty in 1900 to ninety in 1904.

Much like Reverdy C. Ransom, William H. Scott insisted that the role of the church extended beyond the pulpit. Scott preached and lived the Social Gospel, stressing the necessity of involving the church in the congregation's non-secular life. As William H. Scott, Jr., later commented on his father's ministry:

My father believed that a pastor should concern himself not only with the spiritual life of the parishioners but also with every phase of human endeavor that affected their life. He believed that he should, at all times, contend against moral, social and political corruption and injustice and strive to bring these conditions wherever they existed to the attention of the church, the community and public officials. In this way all might be aroused in correcting them.

Accordingly, during his first pastorate in Lawrence, Scott outlined as his principle goal the reduction of illiteracy among the congregation. By establishing a night school for his congregation, he hoped both to improve their situation and to gain the respect (for his church) of the white Baptist parish. While at St. John's Scott sought to broaden the social sphere and
raise the cultural level of his predominantly Southern-born, working-class parishioners through social clubs and youth organizations.

Equal rights activism was another dimension of William H. Scott's ministry. During his tenure at the Calvary Baptist Church, Scott became a leading figure in the Boston crusade for full constitutional rights for Black Americans. On October 16, 1895, he founded the Massachusetts Racial Protective Association, an organization which met weekly to "protest the rights and interests of the colored race in America against the discrimination and outrages of those who more and more were offering opposition to the advancement of the colored people." William Monroe Trotter was a charter member of the group and headed the committee on business and finance. Trotter delivered his first public address of a protest nature at the association's founding meeting." A close friendship based on similar ideological convictions developed between the two men. An acquaintance of the two activists, Mrs. Lilian G. Feutado, commented:

...these two figures fought everything and everybody who denied identical rights or who by compromise accepted or aided such denials. These two asked for and would accept nothing less than every right and privilege which is guaranteed by the constitution and enjoyed by other Americans.

In a eulogy to Scott in 1910, Trotter testified as follows to his close relationship with the elder minister:

He was my friend, teacher, leader, colleague comrade. I loved him, believed in him. He was a lover of liberty, liberty for its own sake.

By 1896, Rev. William H. Scott was also recognized by the Boston pro-Booker T. Washington faction as an ardent supporter of the socio-political rights cause, and as a threat to the Tuskegeen. As the pro-Bookerite Thomas T. Calloway wrote to Washington,
Mr. W.H. Scott, the president of the Racial Protective Association, has pronounced himself so frequently and so pointedly as opposed to the Tuskegee method and your speeches in general, that it is believed that he has anything good in view.²

On his return to the Boston area in 1900 (as pastor of the Woburn Church), William H. Scott resumed his activist role in the radical conclave. In the summer of 1901, Scott, along with fellow Massachusett's Racial Protective Association member Emery T. Morris, encouraged their colleague William Monroe Trotter to publish the Boston Guardian. In February of 1902, Scott, representing the Baptist Colored Race Convention, visited President Theodore Roosevelt and requested a drastic increase in the enrollment of Blacks at the United States Military Academy. In July of that year, Rev. Scott initiated and led the fight against the extradition of a young Black North Carolinian, James Rogers. Rogers was apprehended in Brocton, Massachusetts, and charged with committing arson in North Carolina. Scott, fearing that if he returned, Rogers would be lynched, enlisted the aid of Attorney Clement G. Morgan and William Monroe Trotter to contest the extradition. After six months of legal maneuvering and state house appeals, the group lost the case and Rogers was returned to his native state.

Rev. Scott was also an active member of the political and social clubs of Boston's intellectual elite. He attended the Boston Literary and Historical Association gatherings, and his Woburn home served as the site for the August 22, 1903, founding meeting of the New England Suffrage League. Scott and Emery T. Morris organized the December 10, 1904, celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of abolitionist William L. Garrison. Scott and Morris outlined the goals of the rally in an appeal sent to Black clergy throughout the country:

As representatives of that element for whose freedom Garrison gave the best efforts of his life with such success, we appeal to you to utilize this occasion to arouse the American people
to a sense of the enormity of the present evil of Negro-American serfdom through the nullification of those amendments to the constitution which are the dearly bought fruits of the war for freedom and to start a second Garrisonian movement to abolish Negro-American serfdom in this land as the first. Garrison movement abolished Negro-American slavery in the past, that it may be in very truth the land of the free.

Politically, Rev. Scott sided with the view of many of his radical ideological colleagues in that the issue of equal rights transcended partisan politics. Although initially a Republican, by 1900, Scott was disillusioned by his party's acquiescence to the racist norms of America. Expressing his dissatisfaction with the politics of President William McKinley, Scott stated:

I am forced to believe that since it is evident on every side that the McKinley administration has deserted us it is our duty not to vote for any political party but for liberty. To attain liberty our alliance must naturally flow toward any one party, race or people that will protect us and especially our brethren in the South.

As a pamphlet of Scott's Massachusetts Racial Protective Association later confirmed, "Our only hope is in God and ourselves. Neither of the old parties believe in liberty for the black and brown races under the flag."

Although much of Reverend William Scott's equal rights activity took place under the auspices of undeniably elite organizations, the minister did not disregard the plight of his poorer brothers. Scott's work within the congregation he headed, as well as his statements outside the church, were indicative of his allegiance to and pride for members of his race, regardless of socio-economic status. In the 1890's, during his lecturing tours, Rev. Scott rebuked the racist precepts of social Darwinism that proclaimed the innate inferiority of Black Americans. In his lectures "he brought to the attention of the people, white and black, that the colored man was not inferior and given an opportunity had many times proven his worth. In this manner he endeavored to instill into the members of his race a pride of race." Reverend Scott also recognized the need for training in the trades for a segment of the
Black population. In 1898 as an agent for the Bethel Industrial school, he petitioned congress to establish such institutions in Cuba. Scott's concern for the social and economic plight of the Black masses was manifested also in his goals for the Massachusetts Racial Protective Association. Along with agitation for equal rights, the group addressed the problems of Black unemployment and housing shortages in Boston. The thrust of William H. Scott's activism was not toward assimilation into the white community; rather it was directed toward the opening of the social and economic gates of opportunity which had been so long closed to Black Americans. Scott's opposition to Booker T. Washington and support of the Niagara movement stemmed from the minister's conviction that the Tuskegee, through his programs and statements, severely restricted the avenues to advancement open to Blacks. As Reverend William Scott's son contended:

My father believed that no man's status should be fixed but that every man should have the opportunity to develop whatever talents Nature had bestowed upon him and that the Negro as well as the white man should have the opportunity and be encouraged to become a professional man, a mechanic, a farmer and be allowed to work in his own chosen field.