

## H. L. Mencken and George S. Schuyler

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Thank you, George, for being so gracious, and for inviting me to this elegant and important library, and for assigning me this topic.

Last month there was a wonderful piece in *The Baltimore Sun* about the journalist and writer H. L. Mencken, by G. Jefferson Price, saying how Mencken endures because his commentaries have such relevance, especially now, during the presidential campaign. (1)

I have to say that in the last few months, every time I watch the Democratic and especially the Republican party debates, I have often wondered what Mencken would have made of the spectacle, and especially what Mencken might have thought of his fellow German American, Donald Trump. I just learned the other day that Trump's great grandfather was from Kallstadt, a village in the Rhineland. In Germany, the people from this town are affectionately known as *Brulljesmacher*, meaning "braggart." (2) Mencken would be having a field day right now.

But the topic tonight is not politics, though there will be some. It is about Mencken's friendship with George Samuel Schuyler, one of the most famous African American journalists of his time. Called "the black Mencken" (3) Schuyler, like Mencken, was an iconoclast. Both were proud, cultured, self-taught and opinionated. In their newspaper columns, both men

championed racial equality, liberty, but especially, individuality.

George Schuyler was the son of a cook; his mother was a housekeeper. His parents stressed the values of education, hard work and self-reliance; and while he was brought up in a Rhode Island neighborhood where whites outnumbered blacks, he never found this racially isolating, though he did wish to see blacks in a position of leadership. At age 17, Schuyler joined the Army, became a first lieutenant, and worked odd jobs until he became a newspaperman.

He was one of the first black reporters to write for leading white publications, among them Mencken's *The American Mercury*, *The Nation*, *The Washington Post* and elsewhere. He was also one of the first black foreign correspondents, traveling throughout the United States, Africa, and South America, writing about the situation of blacks in Liberia and Brazil. Because of his satirical style and unique point of view, Schuyler was much in demand until his reputation dimmed during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. He died in obscurity in 1977.

(4)

Lately, however, Schuyler has been experiencing a revival among conservatives, who have been praising him in *The Weekly Standard* and elsewhere. (5) Even Cornel West, who is, as a liberal, politically, the very opposite of Schuyler, has called Schuyler's autobiography a classic in African American letters. (6) There have been recent studies on Schuyler published by professors from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and the University of Albany in New York, but when they mention Mencken's association with Schuyler, they do so almost apologetically. (7)

Now I have to pause here because those of you who are relatively new to H. L. Mencken — and you cannot be from Baltimore and not know or at least have heard of Mencken — probably simply associate him with the notorious *Diary* that was published a while ago. (8) To that I can only cite the excellent speech made at the Enoch Pratt Free Library two years ago by one of your members, the Baltimore civil rights lawyer Larry Gibson, reproduced in this excellent little booklet which David Thaler published, called *Mencken's Prejudices Debunked*. (9)

Mr. Gibson asked: was Mencken a racist or civil rights champion? Here was a writer, as Larry Gibson pointed out, who used racial slang and racist language and not only about African Americans, but in describing all ethnic groups. He was, as Mr. Gibson said, “an equal opportunity slur monger.” (10) He freely insulted Italians, Catholics, Irish, Jews, Dutch, and especially Southern whites. Yet in his newspaper columns and books and in his actions, Mencken not only wrote against segregation, he took on the Ku Klux Klan and lynching, even going to Congress to testify for an anti-lynching bill. In the combat between the emerging blacks of the South and the ruling white trash, said Mencken: “I sympathize greatly with the Negroes, and have done what little I could to help them.” (11)

Throughout his career, Mencken had always been fascinated by the relationship between the races. How could he not be? He was from Baltimore, a city that had one of the largest urban black communities in the United States. Baltimore had three times more African American dwellers than Philadelphia and six more times than that of New York. Behind his house in Hollins Street, in West Baltimore, Mencken knew the black families who lived in houses in the alleys. By the time Mencken was a newspaper reporter, in 1910, relations between blacks and whites in Baltimore had deteriorated to such a degree that the mayor

feared riots and bloodshed. (12) When it came to finding a solution to the race problem, Mencken could find none. His editorials of that time called for a discussion of what he said was among “ the most important and perhaps most depressing of American problems.” (13) He repeatedly wrote of the short sightedness of Baltimore's white leaders when it came to issues of housing and public health, and in 1915 called upon the city to stop excluding African Americans from the discussion of public reform, and to start electing them to the city council. (14)

During World War I, as a German American who had experienced discrimination himself, Mencken's sensitivity towards the black man was heightened even further. Whenever Mencken was in New York – which was once every month-- he met with black intellectuals, reading their newspapers, and he continued writing about racial themes. To Mencken, nothing could be more ironic than the drafting of blacks to save the world for democracy and now denying them every vestige of that democracy. There was more segregation, more violence, more race riots, more lynching, than ever before. (15)

When the first world war ended, much of New York's cultural power came from the fact that the city had become a mecca to the thousands of African Americans who had emigrated from the South. (16) No other city during the 1920s was as receptive to black talent as New York was...and no other white cultural figure was as receptive to black talent as H. L. Mencken. Mencken even considered launching a monthly magazine dedicated to a black audience, that, unlike *The Crisis* magazine, would not cover just politics but also the fine arts. This last point is not well known, but I discovered Mencken's enthusiastic description for such a publication among the papers of Mencken's friend and co-editor, George Jean Nathan. This would not have been unusual for Mencken. Anonymously, Mencken had launched various

magazines to great success as a side source of revenue—the most famous of these was his detective magazine called *Black Mask*, which featured stories by James Cain. Mencken's enthusiasm for a possible monthly that featured fiction by black writers and focused on the culture of black America is in keeping with his encouragement of their work, both behind the scenes and in his writing, notably in one of his most famous essays, “The Sahara of the Bozart.” (17)

Mencken was also tireless in his efforts to bring the work of African American writers to the attention of white publishers, especially to his own publisher, Alfred Knopf. At Mencken's urging, Knopf had published Walter White's first novel, *The Fire in the Flint*, and reissued James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. (18)

Now, George Schuyler was among those African Americans who had moved to New York City during the 1920s. By then, he was writing a monthly column for Harlem's weekly newspaper, *The Messenger* and for *The Pittsburgh Courier*, the nation's second largest black circulation newspaper. Mencken regularly read both newspapers, and invited Schuyler to contribute to *The American Mercury*, a new magazine he had started in 1924. (19)

The aim of Mencken's *American Mercury* was to publish articles that no one else dared to print. His goal was for the magazine to serve as a platform to introduce one kind of American to another. Contributors were the famous and the unknown. They included hobos, doctors, lawyers, a bishop, a US Senator, even convicts. “Half the crooks in the United States seem to be going in for the beautiful letters,” Mencken wrote to one of his girlfriends. “I have to be polite to all of them, poor dogs!” (20) Subjects were not just literary; they ranged from science, law, theology, music, the immigrant press, to theater. At a time when black writers

were not featured in white publications, Mencken was the white first editor to explore the complexity of black life. From 1924 to 1933, the years when Mencken was editor, the American Mercury published over 50 articles about African Americans, written by whites and blacks, more than all other magazines combined. (21)

George Schuyler became one of *The American Mercury's* most prolific contributors, and was among those whom Mencken admired most. Very few white columnists, wrote Mencken, could match Schuyler for “information, intelligence, independence and courage.” (22) Mencken approached Schuyler with an idea: “I'd be delighted to see him [‘the Nordic’] dosed with the same kind of medicine that he has been giving the Ethiop for so many years. Certainly he must be a ridiculous figure seen from without.” (23) The result was: “Our White Folks” that appeared as the lead article in the December 1927 issue of *The American Mercury*. It was extensively advertised in newspapers, magazines, and on the news stands. (24)

Here is a sample from Schuyler's article:

“The attitude of Northern white folks...puzzles and incenses [the black man]” Schuyler wrote. “Here are folks who yawp continuously about liberty, justice, equality and democracy, and whoop with indignation every time a [black man] is incinerated below the Potomac....but toward the Negro in their midst they are quite as cruel as the Southern crackers.”

He went on:

“They are wont to shout, in their liberal moments, that the Negro is as good as they are

–as if that were a compliment! – And give him a square deal and a chance in the world, but when he approaches them for a job, they offer him a mop and a pail or a bellhop's uniform, no matter what his education and training may be. And except in isolated instances they see that he remains permanently in the lowly position they have given him.” (25)

The article received publicity in the United States and abroad, and helped make Schuyler a celebrity that led to a speaking tour.

Mencken played a vital role in advancing Schuyler's career. As Schuyler himself admitted: “Appearing in *The American Mercury* was regarded as something. And if a Negro was good enough to appear in *The American Mercury*, then there must be other Negroes who could write well or better.” (26) Mencken's magazine became an important factor in the development of black writers; *Harper's* and *The Atlantic* magazines later followed suit.

In his memoirs, Schuyler reminded his readers how, during the 20s, Mencken was the literary dictator of the United States, dominating the field to an extent that no one does today. Schuyler took advantage of the advice which Mencken imparted to him and continued his contributions to Mencken's magazine for many years. (27)

Schuyler's articles were just the kind of fearless and realistic intellectual discussion that Mencken said he liked. He had repeatedly urged the publisher of *The Baltimore Sun* to devote space on cultural features concerning African- Americans, arguing the *Sun* should not just write news stories when blacks were the focus of crime and misfortune.(28) He also suggested to various white newspapers and magazines, including the *Sun*, that Schuyler could be their man to write articles on racial themes. But, Mencken said, the chief *Sun* editor

was “too much of a Marylander to agree to it.” (29) Perhaps. The more likely reason, as this editor later wrote, was that Schuyler's style was too close of an imitation to-- as he put it, “Brother Mencken.” (30)

It is true, that under Mencken's coaching, Schuyler used hyperbole and turns of phrase that were Menckenesque. He also adopted Mencken's tone, especially after Mencken advised Schuyler to be unemotional in his writing; the use of irony, said Mencken, was a far more “effective weapon” than indignation. (31)

The topics Schuyler wrote about were issues that Mencken either had suggested or explored himself. One (which was published *The American Parade*) was on racial intermarriage (Schuyler had married a white woman); another on black churches; or the proposal, made by black nationalist Marcus Garvey “back to Africa plan”, for an African-American 49<sup>th</sup> state, which both men considered idiotic. (32)

Schuyler and Mencken also shared a conservative point of view. Neither was a fan of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Neither was able to recognize that many African Americans were benefitting economically from the New Deal. The focus of their resentment against Roosevelt was his belated efforts declaring lynching a major crime. As Mencken wrote to Carl Murphy, of *The Baltimore Afro-American* newspaper: “For nearly six years he [FDR] has dilligently avoided the subject, and during that time more than 60 Negroes have been lynched. I only hope that they all died full of unshaken confidence in the New Deal.” (33)

When Franklin Roosevelt died in April 1945, Mencken was jubilant to read what Schuyler had written about FDR in *The Pittsburgh Courier*.

“The death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt,” wrote Schuyler, “was the signal for such a hurricane of mushy sentimentalism, sheer bunk, sugary platitudes and assorted hokus as America has not seen in many, many years. This sort of thing occurs whenever a person of great prominence passes away, and realists have learned to bear with it and remain calm and detached until the flowery obituaries are driven from the public prints by the march of time. Now that the statements of leaders have been printed, the columns and editorials written and read, and the pictures of the funeral ceremony widely circulated, we can get down to calm appraisal of the fruits of Mr. Roosevelt's long tenure at the White House, especially as they relate to the colored brethren.” (34)

And what were they? When it came to the National Recovery Administration, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the National Housing Administration, wrote Schuyler, any concession made to blacks was hard won, and the goal of full equality was achieved from pressure on their part.

Roosevelt's Department of Justice had done nothing to prosecute officials who barred qualified blacks from voting, although the NAACP had supplied affidavits. “If Roosevelt used his prestige to get Negro cripples admitted to Warm Springs Sanitarium, there is no record of it,” wrote Schuyler. (35) One of the worst of FDR's acts, which set a most dangerous precedent for all minorities, declared Schuyler, was the internment of Japanese Americans into camps; moreover, there was still racial segregation in the Army and Navy.

When it came to the death of “our late lamented Fuhrer,” wrote Mencken to Schuyler, “It doesn't surprise me at all to discover that yours is the most intelligent piece on the subject

printed in America. The pale face journalists unanimously resorted to crooning and blah. You alone tried tell the whole and bitter truth. ...Your reward on this earth will be small, but when you get to Hell you'll be accommodated by a front seat in the hottest furnace.” (36)

In addition to being against Roosevelt, the men shared a passionate dislike for the Communist party. This was a shift from their thinking during their youth. During the 1920s, Mencken had defended outcasts such as Socialist Emma Goldman on the principle that she had a right to free speech. As for Schuyler, he had briefly been a member of the Socialist Party. (37)

By the 1930s and 40s, both men were suspicious and hostile toward the labor agitation and union organization that the Communist party was raising to the established order. Mencken was convinced the Sunpapers Newspaper Guild was infested with, as he called them, “pinks.” Schuyler went further in his diatribes. His articles against the Red Menace became his most recurring theme, and he was quick to put down, with withering language, anyone he felt was a Communist. He included *The Baltimore Afro-American* newspaper editor William Jones, who had praised the Communist party as the only group that advocated full equality and economic opportunity for blacks. (38) Schuyler wondered if the country would eventually erupt in a revolution, but, Mencken told him he doubted it would happen. “The American people have lost altogether their old impatience of regimentation. They now fall into the goose-step with the utmost docility.” (39)

When Schuyler visited his home in Hollins Street; Mencken was the perfect host, boasting about the liquor in his cellar, which Schuyler willingly sampled. The men spent several hours discussing the issues of the day. (40) After Schuyler left, Mencken wrote in his

*Diary*: "When I compare him to any of the dunderheads now roaring on in the *Sun*, I am sharply conscious of his enormous superiority. He is not only much more intelligent than they are; he is vastly more honest." (41)

George Schuyler never forgot his debt to Mencken, and was offended when Mencken's former assistant, the writer Charles Angoff in his memoir described Mencken as a racist. (42) It is true that Mencken and Schuyler had their disagreements. Mencken did not think the "Amos and Andy" radio show, while stupid, was racist or should be suppressed; Schuyler disagreed. (43) But Schuyler never thought Mencken was prejudiced. "On the matter of the Negro," Schuyler wrote of Mencken, "he had none of the mawkishness the white professional liberals display. He had no illusions about either colored or whites. He had been surrounded all of his life by Negro neighbors, and knew them as individuals in a way that so many sentimentalists do not." (44)

To their dying days, the men remained convinced that African-Americans could not afford to stop fighting for their constitutional rights. Both believed anti-discrimination laws for employment and housing were key. But the general feeling from the public at large, Mencken wrote, "unless I misjudge it sadly, is that the Negro has gone far enough, and already has as much as he deserves, and should be content for a while." (45) As Mencken observed: "His politicians promise him [the black man] that he will [get those rights], but they are only politicians. Some of his white friends tell him the same, but they have fooled him in the past. My private hope is that he will get them all soon or late, for the only future I can endure to think of is one which no man will lack what he reasonably wants, and can show that he deserves." (46) The real hope in the future, Mencken thought, lay in good leaders, white and black, with clear and attainable goals. As for the future of the races, wrote Mencken, it was

impossible to separate the one group from the other. "They rise or fall together." (47)

Mencken's 1943 letter to Walter White of the NAACP sums up his thinking of the problem: "I believe with George Schuyler...the immediate problem...is to protect the Negro, if it can be done, against white competitors on the lower levels to dispose of him by outrage or murder. Here in my own town of Baltimore, where race relations have been peaceful for generations...every thoughtful person, black or white, is made uneasy by the possibilities ahead." (48)

It is tempting to wonder what Mencken would have made of racial relations today. Or what he would have made of Martin Luther King Jr. He did not live long enough to see the rise of King. But Schuyler did. Schuyler's subsequent articles, during the 1960s, criticized King and so marked the end of Schuyler's popularity. Schuyler felt that King's mass protests and boycotts, although peaceful, would ferment resentment and frustration among whites, and lead to mass violence. He thought stories of police brutality of the 1960s were exaggerated; he objected to King's anti-Vietnam war position, socialist economics, and his association with Communist groups – on this latter point, in fact, Schuyler aimed most of his fury. He called King part of a Communist conspiracy, responsible for "fostering animosity" more than civil rights. (49)

While the white majority's attitude towards blacks had been unfair, Schuyler maintained that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 would not be able to succeed. On the matter of militant leaders or groups such as Malcolm X, or later, the Black Panthers, I think Mencken might have agreed with Schuyler, saying that racial equality could not be gained by militancy, but gradually. What Schuyler proposed was not protest, but interracial cooperation.

The key to understanding Mencken and Schuyler's writing about race is to simply to recognize that, at bottom, their main theme was to always champion the individual. Self-reliance, hard work, individual effort – these were the values they expected of themselves and appreciated in others, no matter what class or race. Schuyler's essay, "The Rising Tide of Black Racism," written in 1967, illustrates this point best, though it was never published. Here, Schuyler warned against indiscriminate blaming of whites. "Self-denigration, absurd demands for preference, and unbecoming racial truculence have been poor fare and a profound disservice to young boys and girls struggling to surmount real difficulties and needing encouragement and cooperation," he wrote, stating the youth "need to think in terms of individual excellence." (50)

By the end of the 1960s, Schuyler was embraced only by the far right and the John Birch Society. He admitted that he was labeled an Uncle Tom "to those people who had no answers to what I was writing and saying," and lamented the fact that the media virtually excluded his contrary point of view. (51) I agree with Professor Jeffrey Leak of North Carolina, who says where Schuyler was at fault was that "in his zeal to resist the excesses of liberalism, he had adopted a similar kind of ideological excess" in his adamant belief there was a Communist conspiracy to take over the country. (52)

As the late Stanley Harrison, formerly of *The Baltimore Sun* wrote, Mencken and Schuyler used a similar approach in their writing – satire and ridicule. They took great delight in being provocative and stirring up the animals. Both men were politically incorrect. They felt personal responsibility would gain group achievement. And they sounded a warning that not everything could be solved by the federal government. As Harrison wrote: "Neither man ever

doubted the correctness of his position, and sometimes both were dead wrong. Often, however, both were uncomfortably correct.” (53)

I began this talk this evening by quoting Mr. Price, the columnist on the *Sun*, who said how Mencken's words seem to endure. In the end, both Mencken and Schuyler left us with provocative commentary on the African-American experience which has a great deal of relevance today. On this note, I am happy to see that my alma mater, Goucher College, has introduced a seminar called “What is Race?” involving various facets of race studies, taught by different faculty members. (54) That is just the kind of honest discussion H. L. Mencken would have encouraged.

So I leave you tonight with this proposal – one which Garrison Keillor shared some years ago with myself and a few others. (55) Frankly, the timing could not be better: to reopen the Mencken House, in West Baltimore, not only as a Museum, but as the go-to place, a space where classes can actually be held with college students, law students, journalists, or invited members of the public to discuss such issues. This could be a forum, maybe under the auspices of Goucher College, or Maryland Law School, maybe in partnership with *The Baltimore Sun*, that could be moderated by a professor or such radio hosts as Marc Steiner or Dan Rodricks. Here, at the Mencken House, one could have frank discussions on race or some of the other topics which Mencken wrote about-- issues concerning free speech, civil rights, religion, censorship, politics – using the Mencken House as the appropriate venue to discuss what is taking place in the country today. To give this idea extra cachet, you could have these sessions broadcast live on local TV, the radio, and certainly, on the web.

The idea of reopening the Mencken House Museum and having such programs is in

keeping with the findings from studies conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Alliance of Museums, which state that the best way to attract tourists, patrons and donors to museums is by engaging them in new and various ways, with activities that are engaging. Today's museum visitors want to feel empowered and be involved in matters of substance and importance. (56)

A naive idea? Maybe. But the whole world was focused on Baltimore during the riots of a year ago, and sadly, to negative effect. With the upcoming presidential election, we are witnessing a sea-change and experiencing first hand how citizens are finding their voices to express their opinion on issues that concern them. My proposal is just one more solution as to how Baltimore can heal – and also help lead the way.

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## NOTES

1. G. Jefferson Price, III, "Mencken's Boob Dictionary," *The Baltimore Sun*, February 19, 2016.
2. "Trump's German Roots: Kallstadt's King," *The Economist*, February 13-19, 2016, p. 24-25.
3. "Mr. Hodding Carter and Mr. George Schuyler," *Oklahoma City Dispatch*, January 22, 1949.
4. For an extensive examination of Schuyler's prodigious writing career, see: Nickieann Fleener, "George S. Schuyler," in *American Newspaper Journalists 1926-1950, Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 29*, Edited by Perry J. Ashley (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1984), pp. 313-322; Oscar R. Williams, *George S. Schuyler; Portrait of a Black Conservative* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2007); Jeffrey B. Leak, *Rac[e]ing to the Right: Selected Essays of George S. Schuyler* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001, 2011). Among Schuyler's most interesting sociological studies for *The Pittsburgh Courier* are his reports regarding Harlem ("The Truth About Harlem," a series which ran during the late 1940s); his travels to the American South (during 1925-1926 and again during 1947-1948); his six-week 1948 tour to South America (particularly Brazil), entitled "Racial Democracy in Latin America," and his trips to Africa. See: George S. Schuyler, *Black and Conservative: The Autobiography of George S. Schuyler* (New York: Arlington House Publishers, 1966).
5. Mary Grabar, "Who Was George Schuyler? Rediscovering and Reclaiming 'the black H. L. Mencken'" *The Weekly Standard*, April 30, 2012; Jack Kerwick, "Black and Right: Forgotten Conservative, George S. Schuyler," *American Thinker*, August 5, 2012 [online editions].
6. Grabar, "Who Was George Schuyler?"
7. Oscar R. Williams, *George S. Schuyler; Portrait of a Black Conservative* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2007); Jeffrey B. Leak, *Rac[e]ing to the Right: Selected Essays of George S. Schuyler* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001, 2011)
8. H. L. Mencken, *The Diary of H. L. Mencken*, edited by Charles A. Fecher (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989).
9. David Stewart Thaler, Marion Elizabeth Rodgers, Larry S. Gibson, *Mencken's Prejudices Debunked* (Baltimore: Mercury House Press, 2015). The essay is Larry S. Gibson, "H. L. Mencken: Racist or Civil Rights Champion?" given at the Enoch Pratt Free Library on Mencken Day 2014 and reproduced here with footnotes, on pp. 25-51.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
11. Charles Scruggs, *The Sage in Harlem: H. L. Mencken and the Black Writers of the 1920s* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 77.
12. Ashbie Hawkins, "A Year of Segregation in Baltimore," *The Crisis Magazine*, November 1911, pp. 27-30.
13. H. L. Mencken, "A Negro State," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, May 7, 1910; H. L. Mencken, "The Common Negro," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, August 2, 1910.

14. Marion Elizabeth Rodgers, *Mencken: The American Iconoclast* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) pp. 123-124. These topics are contained in Mencken's "The Free Lance" column for the Baltimore *Evening Sun* during the years 1911-1912. See especially: "The Free Lance" for April 21, 1915. Mencken proposed that Progressive leaders, composed of all-white, old-stock Baltimoreans, invite African American leader, George F. Bragg, whose "prudence, sagacity and good citizenship" Mencken held "in high respect," be part of their committee.
15. See: *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180; Gibson, "H. L. Mencken or Civil Rights Champion?" *Mencken's Prejudices Debunked*, p. 30.
16. For an excellent discussion on this period, see: Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (NY: Farrar Strauss, 1995).
17. Isaac Goldberg's papers, Box One, in the George Jean Nathan file, NYPL Manuscript Division. The two-page undated memo (circa 1919) was written by Mencken to Nathan and J.W. Glenister, the Vice President and General Manager of Warner Publications who published their magazine, *The Smart Set*. In it Mencken had outlined his conversation with an African-American intellectual named Ferdinand Jackson for "a negro monthly" that would include fiction and the fine arts. It cited possible circulation figures, advertising, content suggested an African-American editor. In his December 26, 1919 letter to Mencken, Glenister enthusiastically agreed the monthly could be a money-maker, concluding: "It ought to go big and especially if we could use perfumed paper because you know how negroes like perfume." For a discussion of Mencken's sideline publications, see: H. L. Mencken, *My Life as Author and Editor*, edited by Jonathan Yardley (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), pp. 72-80; 350-353. H. L. Mencken, "The Sahara of the Bozart," *The New York Evening Mail*, November 13, 1917. An expanded version of this essay was published in Mencken's *Prejudices: Second Series* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1920), pp.136-154.
18. For a discussion on Mencken's literary influence on the Harlem literary renaissance, see: Charles Scruggs, *The Sage in Harlem: H. L. Mencken and the Black Writers of the 1920s* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).
19. H. L. Mencken to George S. Schuyler, August 25, 1927. Carl Bode, editor, *The New Mencken Letters* (New York: The Dial Press, 1977), pp. 213-214.
20. Rodgers, *Mencken: The American Iconoclast*, p. 261.
21. Fenwick Anderson, "Black Perspectives in Mencken's Mercury," *Menckeniana*, Summer 1979, pp. 2-6; Les Payne, "Is Mencken Relevant to Blacks? Was He Ever?" *Menckeniana*, Fall 1990, p. 9.
22. H. L. Mencken, *The American Language, Supplement I* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945, 1977 edition), p. 619, note 1.xx
23. H. L. Mencken to George Schuyler, August 30, 1927. Bode, *The New Mencken Letters*, p. 214.
24. George S. Schuyler, *Black and Conservative: The Autobiography of George S. Schuyler* (New York: Arlington House Publishers, 1966), p. 161.
25. George S. Schuyler, "Our White Folks," *The American Mercury*, December 1927, pp. 385-392.
26. "The Reminiscences of George S. Schuyler," New York: Oral History Collection of Columbia University, 1960, p. 123.

27. Schuyler, *Black and Conservative*, p. 234. Mencken withdrew from being editor in 1933; Schuyler continued contributing articles from 1939-1959. S. L. Harrison, "Schuyler and Mencken," *Menckiana*, Winter 2002, p. 6.
  28. See: H. L. Mencken, *Thirty-Five Years of Newspaper Work*, edited by Fred Hobson, Vincent Fitzpatrick, Bradford Jacobs (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 153. HLM discusses the prejudice of *Sunpapers* management and the editors who opposed his suggestion.
  29. H. L. Mencken, *Thirty-Five Years of Newspaper Work* [original manuscript], p. 1060, The Mencken Collection, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.
  30. John Owens to H. L. Mencken, December 15, 1933, The Mencken Collection, The Enoch Pratt Free Library. Mencken took offense at Owens' "half-concealed sneer." (Mencken, *Thirty-Five Years*, JHU Press edition, p. 153).
  31. H. L. Mencken to George S. Schuyler, October 5, 1932, from Guy J. Fogue, *Letters of H. L. Mencken* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), p. 349.
  32. Schuyler's articles in *The American Mercury* (before Mencken's departure as editor) are: "Our White Folks," December 1927; "Keeping the Negro in His Place," August 1929; "A Negro Looks Ahead," February 1930; "Traveling Jim Crow," August 1930; "Black Warriors," November 1930; "Memoirs of a Pearl Diver," April 1931; "Black America Begins to Doubt," April 1932; "Black Art," November 1932; "Uncle Sam's Black Stepchild," June 1933. "racial intermarriage in the U.S." was published in *The American Parade*, October 1928. Schuyler married Josephine Lewis from Houston; they had a daughter named Phillipa, a musical prodigy. The daughter died in 1967, and Josephine in 1968.
  33. H. L. Mencken to Carl Murphy, August 3, 1938. Maryland File, H. L. Mencken Collection, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.
- For a full discussion on Mencken's take on FDR and his stand on lynching, see: Rodgers, *Mencken: The American Iconoclast*, pp. 387-392.
34. George S. Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 25, 1945.
  35. *Ibid.*
  36. H. L. Mencken to George S. Schuyler, June 1, 1945; Bode, *The New Mencken Letters*, pp. 553-554.
  37. Fleener, "George S. Schuyler," *American Newspaper Journalists 1925-1950, DLA Volume 29*, p. 315.
  38. Fleener, "George S. Schuyler," *American Newspaper Journalists, 1926-1950, DLA Vol. 29*, p. 316; Vernon L. Pedersen, *The Communist Party in Maryland 1919-57* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), p. 95
  39. H. L. Mencken to George Schuyler, February 5, 1945 in Bode, *The New Mencken Letters*, p. 550.
  40. Schuyler, *Black and Conservative*, p. 233-234.
  41. H. L. Mencken, *The Diary of H. L. Mencken*, p. 383.
  42. Charles Angoff, *H. L. Mencken: A Portrait From Memory* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, Inc. 1956); George S. Schuyler interview with Carl Bode, among Carl Bode's papers in the H. L. Mencken Collection, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.
  43. H. L. Mencken to George Schuyler, June 15, 1931. Fogue, *Letters of H. L. Mencken*, pp. 329-330.

44. Schuyler, *Black and Conservative*, p. 234.
45. H. L. Mencken, "Notes on Negro Strategy," *The Crisis Magazine*, October 1934, p. 289.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 304.
47. *Ibid.*
48. H. L. Mencken to Walter F. White, December 6, 1943 in Forgue, *Letters of H. L. Mencken*, pp. 478-479.
49. See: Williams, *George S. Schuyler*, chapters 8-9; Leak, *Rac[e]jing to the Right*, Part III; Schuyler, *Black and Conservative*, chapters 14, 15, 16, and 18, 19; Hollie I. West, "George S. Schuyler, Writer, Satirist on Race Problems," *The Washington Post*, September 9, 1977. Schuyler's attitude towards King may have come to no surprise to those who knew his work. As early as 1937 Mencken wrote to Blanche Knopf, Schuyler "is the bitter enemy of all the uplifters who presume to uplift the darker races." (HLM to Blanche Knopf, July 7, 1937 in Forgue, *Letters of H. L. Mencken*, p. 419.)
50. Leak, *Rac[e]jing to the Right*, p. 108.
51. Schuyler, *Black and Conservative*, p. 342.
52. Jeffrey B. Leak, "Introduction," *Rac[e]jing to the Right*, p. xlii.
53. Harrison, "Schuyler and Mencken," *Menckeniana*, p.8.
54. Holly Selby, "What Is Race? Goucher Faculty and Staff Tackle a Tough Subject," *Goucher Newsletter*, February 2016, p. 4.
55. This took place Monday, October 16, 2007, when Garrison Keillor visited the Mencken House at 1524 Hollins Street in West Baltimore in the company of myself, Brigitte V. Fessenden and Oleg Panczenko of The Mencken Society. Keillor had previously visited the writer's home when it had operated as a house museum from 1984-1997 and was dismayed by its closing (its parent organization, the Baltimore City Life Museums Inc., became insolvent in 1997). Visitors to this National Historic Landmark (listed in 1983 on the National Register of Historic Places) included international tourists as well as celebrities. The Mencken House Museum remains one of the most intact writer's house museums in the United States because all of Mencken's personal effects (furniture, pictures, books, seidels, etc.) were on display; they are now sitting in storage at The Maryland Historical Society. The House remains closed to the public. For more information, visit: [www.menckehouse.org](http://www.menckehouse.org).
56. Michael Cannell, "The Millennial Museum," *Arrive Magazine*, September/October 2015, pp. 50-51. Museums that think outside of the box and are successfully incorporating activities, programs, and services to attract younger audiences and donors include MOMA in New York and The Phillips Gallery in Washington, D.C.