

The



Fossil

Official Publication of The Fossils, Inc., Historians of Amateur Journalism
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REV. CHARLES RANDOLPH UNCLES, S.S.J.

November 6, 1859-July 21, 1933

First Black Ordained A Roman Catholic Priest In The United States
(Baltimore, Maryland, December 19, 1891)

Amateur Journalist, Puzzle-Maker and -Solver, 1874-1879
Fossil, 1916-1933



IN MEMORIAM

STAN OLINER

Born 1938, died January 15, 2012

Photo couressy of Tom Parson

Shown here donating his time and talent to the American Antiquarian Society

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Guy Miller

EVEN-NUMBERED YEARS spell election time for the Fossils; so nominations are now in order. You will recall that elections are limited to the three members on our Board of Trustees who, in turn appoint members to the other offices in our organization, i.e., Secretary-treasurer, Official Editor, Historian, Librarian and Webmaster. Actually, since the incumbent president is a carry-over, we will cast our ballots for two candidates.

You are encouraged to submit your name as a candidate for Trustee and, for that matter for consideration for any of the appointive offices. Particularly, in regard to the Trustees position you should notify Secretary-treasurer Tom Parson or me by June 30. Ballots will be mailed you by July 10.

Let me know whether you would like to serve in any of the appointive offices. We will be looking for a replacement for our Official Editor for the coming two years. Our present Editor Ken Faig, who has been in that post for eight years, would like to step down; but he will be willing to submit contributing articles upon request. Having myself filled in between appointments, I do acknowledge that the editorship is a challenging job, but at the same time a fulfilling one. So we challenge someone to come forward!

In the meantime, Tom Parson is serving away well in his continuing job of sorting through and processing materials connected with the Graham-Wesson collection which Stan Oliner was handling before his untimely death. I am certain that Tom will give a report of his progress to the AAPA and NAPA members attending the dual convention in Dayton this July. He has taken on a tremendous task, we are all aware, and it will be some time before all materials have been placed in secure repositories. Several of our members with a background in archival experience—Mike Horvat, Barry Schrader and Ken Faig among them—stand ready to aid Tom in placement decisions. I have notified Tom and other interested parties that the full treasury of the Fossils is dedicated toward assuring that these materials are properly taken care of. Likewise the presidents of both AAPA and NAPA have offered financial support.

And the support of every dedicated away is called upon this year as members attending our Dayton dual convention this July 26-28 will be discussing matters of possible hobby-changing proportions. If you cannot attend this important event, keep alert to e-mails and communications issued from or about the proceedings. This is definitely not the time for any of us to claim ignorance about the events which promise to shape the future of our beloved little world of amateur journalism.

Finally, we acknowledge our losses. Harold Smolin, especially active in AAPA, served as president of the Fossils during the 1978-79 term. In his one presidential letter, he warned that he would not be an active president. In fact, when I asked him for a photo which I could use for our book *One Hundred Years of the Fossils, 1904-2004*, Harold confessed to not remembering that he had actually once been Fossils chief executive. A commercial photographer, Harold joined The Fossils in 1970, but when asked for a photo demurred, stating that "I can't afford my prices." So, maybe we were lucky in getting him to send one for the book!

Albert Lee, active in NAPA, had been in frequent attendance at the Fossils reunions in the decades 1950-70, and once when called upon for an introduction observed that, although he had never been an officer, his membership "covered a long period of time." Robert Orbach, active in AAPA and NAPA, did not participate in Fossils affairs, but was a long-time member before dropping membership some time in the late '90's. Louise Lincoln, an NAPA stalwart, though not directly active in any Fossils undertaking, nevertheless was a strong supporter of our objectives. At the age of 100, she was planning another issue of her *Kitchen Stove*. Heating 111 should appear in April or May.

All of these, our friends and associates, offered to our lives a richness that will always be a part of us.
March 31, 2012

STAN “SKIP” OLINER 1938-2012

The Fossils lost our beloved Trustee Stan “Skip” Oliner, age 73, on January 15, 2012. Stan was recruited for NAPA by the late Elaine (Jorgensen) Peck. His many publications for NAPA between 1954 and 1976 are detailed in Tom Parson’s abstract from the Moitoret Family Index of Amateur Journals 1870-2004, which appears later in this issue. Stan served NAPA as Official Editor in 1960-61 and as President in 1968-69 and as Librarian (lifetime appointment). He was also President of The Fossils in 1973-74. In 1964-67, he undertook an examination and reorganization of the Library of Amateur Journalism, between its stays at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia PA (1935-64) and at New York University in New York NY (1967-80). Then in 1990 he and Mike Horvat each took a week from their lives to rescue the Willametta and Martin Keffer collection in Roanoke VA and to ship it to join the rest of the Library of Amateur Journalism in Stayton OR. When in 2003-04 The Fossils learned that the Library of Amateur Journalism would be losing its home in Stayton OR, Stan contributed his expert knowledge of institutions and their practices to The Fossils’ LAJ committee, which finally decided upon placement with the University of Wisconsin Special Collections in Madison WI, where LAJ arrived on December 30, 2004. Then in 2010 Stan once again coordinated efforts to rescue part of the Sheldon and Helen Wesson collection (formerly the property of Fossil Historian Daniel Graham) when it was offered for sale by a Connecticut bookseller. Stan reported on the results of the rescue project to the joint AAPA-NAPA convention in Elk Grove Village IL in 2010—the same convention at which he received the hobby’s coveted Gold Composing Stick Award. Regrettably, Stan died while the placement of Graham-Wesson collection was still in progress. (He had placed a selection of “Lone Scout” material from the collection with the University of Wyoming.) Fortunately, Fossil Secretary-treasurer Tom Parson, a fellow Denver resident, has taken over and will carry to completion Stan’s endeavors with guidance from The Fossils, AAPA and NAPA, all of which participated financially in the rescue of the Graham-Wesson collection.

Stan was born in Denver in 1938, the son of the late Herman Oliner (d. 2001) and Bess (Charney) Oliver (1916-2009). His mother was the last surviving child of Samuel and Rebecca Charney, Russian Jewish immigrants who settled in Denver in 1911. She married Herman Oliner in August 1936. The Oliners had a son Stan and a daughter Fern. Son Stan became a professional librarian, who worked for many years as curator of books and manuscripts for the Colorado Historical Society. He was a member of the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester MA, a prominent donor and volunteer for its fabled amateur journalism collection. He was twice married and by his first wife had daughters Michelle Oliner and Stephanie Smith Velasco. By his second daughter he was the grandfather of Jacquelyn, Ari and Paul Velasco. Stan’s cremated remains are to be buried next summer at the Jewish cemetery in Leadville CO, and a memorial service is to be held at an as-yet unscheduled future date.

The Fossils join the Oliner family and all of amateur journalism in mourning the passing of Stan Oliner. His knowledge of and love for amateur journals were an outstanding resource for the hobby and for all of the institutions which collect its journals. Stan will be sorely missed in the hobby ranks. In his later years, Stan volunteered his time and knowledge not only at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester MA but also at the African-American Collection at the Denver Public Library. I hope he would like the article on Rev. Charles Randolph Uncles, the first black Roman Catholic priest ordained on American soil, in this issue of *The Fossil*. That this outstanding man participated in our hobby as a youth and that The Fossils welcomed him in our hobby ranks (despite the prejudice against his race in some amateur journalism circles at that time) is surely an honor both to our hobby and to our organization.

**AMATEUR JOURNALS PUBLISHED BY
OR WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY STAN OLINER**

Tom Parson

(from Moitoret Family Index of Amateur Journals 1870-2004)

Buckaroo No. 1, Feb (1954?), Englewood, Colo.

I Need These..., Dec. 23 (1954?)

The Colorado Minor, nos. 1-6, June 1954-December 1955

Denver Doodlings, 1955

Minur-Pruf, December 1955, July 19, 1956. No. 3, December 1956 (with Kermit Schuman)

The NAPA Mailer, vol. 17, nos. 1-12, August 1955-July 4, 1956.

Moving Day for C Minor, 1956, Boulder, Colo.

Independent no. 1, April 2, 1956, with Kermit Schuman, Englewood, Colo.

San Diego del Pacifico, August 10, 1956, with Gale Sheldon, San Diego, Calif.

Eh, What?, 1956, Englewood, Colo.

Y'All Publish, November 195?, Englewood, Colo.

Safari no. 1, October 1956, no. 2, February 1957, with Christine Atkinson, Boulder.

Helluvit, nos. 1-4, September 1956-April 1958, Boulder, Colo.

What's What in Paper (includes one-page contribution with other writers), 1956

Helen & Sheldon Wesson, February 3, 1957 (25 copies published, bound in leather),
Englewood, Colo.

A hell Raiser, February 3, 1957 (famed as "the Tissue Issue"), Boulder, Colo.

Scarlet Cockerell, February 3, 1957, Boulder, Colo. [index card not specific on Stan's contribution]

Seasonal no. 1 (undated)

Denvaria, no. 11, Englewood, Colo.

Cockerell Beer News, 1957, Boulder, Colo.

British Amateur Journalist (official organ, BAPA), no. 188, December 1957

Colorado Roundup (official organ, Columbine APC, no. 7, Winter 1957, no. 8, summer 1958,
Boulder, Colo.

The Spindle, no. 1, April 1958, Boulder, Colo.

Delight! (page contribution to 1958 It's A Small World)

The Boston Gay Blade, July 3, 1959, Englewood, Colo.

El Paso—1960, 1959, Boulder, Colo.

Preview: One, July 1960, Denver, Colo.

Proof without a doubt says the... (NAPA membership card for 1960, printed for Vic Press)

The National Amateur (official organ, NAPA), vol. 83, nos. 1-4, September 1960-June 1961

Tramp Printer (Mobile Librarian), no. 1, May 20-21, 1962 (Ft. Johnson NY); no. 2, July 14,
1962 (Ft. Johnson NY); no. 3, Nov. 10, 1962 (FairLawn NJ); no./ 4, April 19674

(Ft. Johnson NY); May 1974 (St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles)

Library News, no. 12, July 1976, Cheyenne WY

REV. CHARLES RANDOLPH UNCLES, S.S.J.
(1859-1933)
A BLACK ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST IN THE FOSSIL RANKS

Rev. C. R. Uncles of Epiphany College, Baltimore MD, first appears on The Fossils' membership roster in *The Fossil* for August 1916. Uncles continued in The Fossils' ranks until his death, which occurred on July 21, 1933, at age 74, at Newburgh NY, where Epiphany College had removed in 1925.¹ He was probably the recruit of Joseph M. Salabes, also of Baltimore MD, who served as Fossil President in 1915-16. Because of his duties as a Roman Catholic priest, Uncles only rarely attended Fossils' events—probably his moment in the limelight was as a guest at the Fossils' reunion held at the Poor Richard Club in Philadelphia PA on July 4, 1916 to mark the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the National Amateur Press Association in that city in 1876. William M. Clemens and Will R. Murphy reported on the event for *The Fossil* of August 1916. Their report included the following paragraph (p. 167) on Rev. Uncles' remarks:

Rev. C. R. Uncles, of Baltimore, expressed his great pleasure at the privilege of attending the gathering. His lofty ambitions to be an editor and author were most delightful in retrospect. A backward glance into amateur journalistic annuals he held to be glorious. Antiquarians and historians of newspapers in America would undoubtedly give credit to amateur journalism for its part in developing journalists of professional power and standing. He was personally grateful for the benefits derived, even though he did not enter professional newspaper work. His entry was through Munro's *Boys and Girls of America*², which published some of his puzzles as a solver, and gave his name and address. Soon he had correspondents and amateur papers containing puzzle departments. He paid tribute to the great influence amateur printing and writing have had on the youth of America. He felt that those who had passed their majority should take no active part in the political or operative phases of present-day amateur journalism, even though they desired to continue writing for the love of it. Amateur journalism, Dr. Uncles concluded, "adds to the strength of character, knowledge of words and ability for real leadership."

If the Theodore G. Meyer puzzle paper collection were still a part of the Library of Amateur Journalism, we would doubtless be better able to assess Charles Uncles' early participation in the hobby as a puzzler. Fortunately, Spencer's *The History of Amateur Journalism* (The Fossils, 1957) does provide a clue: on p. 138 it is stated that Uncles' *nom de plume* as a puzzle-maker and solver was "Tandolph." Hopefully, existing nineteenth-century resources at the American Antiquarian Society and elsewhere will allow future researchers to piece together a better account of his activity. Uncles' interest in games and puzzles did not end with his adolescence. He was active in chess organizations in Baltimore as late as 1921, when Samuel Rzeszewski came to the city to challenge local players. Rzeszewski won six games and lost four against the local players. *The American Chess Bulletin* (vol. 18, 1921) recorded (p. 114): "Not a single draw was recorded, although the Rev. Charles R. Uncles of Epiphany College, one of the last to hold out, came within an ace of dividing the point."

An early tribute to "Rev. Fossil C. R. Uncles," accompanied by his portrait—reproduced in this issue—appeared in *The Fossil* for December 1916 (p. 196):

There are no fewer than six Reverends in the Fossils' active membership list, namely: Revs. J. L. Elderice, F. S. C. Wicks, Jesse Higgins, W. L. McDowell, R. Howard Taylor and C. R. Uncles. The

latter's portrait is here presented. Dr. Uncles, who is connected with Epiphany College, Baltimore, was one of the most interesting speakers at the Philadelphia reunion last Summer, where he paid an eloquent tribute to amateur journalism, as "adding to the strength of character, knowledge of words and ability for real leadership."

Father Uncles is the first negro to have been ordained in the Catholic priesthood in the United States. He was so ordained Dec. 20, 1891, and on Dec. 20 of this year [1916] will celebrate his jubilee as a member of the priesthood. The ceremonies attendant on this jubilee will be participated in by Cardinal Gibbons, who, from the beginning of Father Uncles' career, has manifested a strong personal interest in his advancement.³

Shortly after the celebration of the silver jubilee of Uncles' priesthood, an article about him appeared in *The Brooklyn Tablet* (vol. XIII no. 41) for January 13, 1917.⁴ Therein, Uncles identified himself as a teacher of Latin and French at Epiphany College, the preparatory school for St. Joseph's Seminary in Baltimore.⁵ He stated his date of birth as November 6, 1859, and asserted (contrary to some other sources) that his parents and grandparents were all free Negroes. His father, he stated, had been a machinist with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, while his mother was still living. He had been baptized (1875) and confirmed (1878) at St. Francis Xavier Church, a Roman Catholic parish church with a predominantly black congregation at Calvert and Pleasant Streets in Baltimore.⁶ From 1874 to 1879 he had been occupied as a printer and a journalist, and thereafter as a printer. He also taught at St. Francis Xavier's parish school as well as in the public schools. In 1880, he became a teacher in Baltimore County schools, before commencing his preparation for the priesthood at St. Hyacinth's College in Quebec in 1883. He returned to Baltimore in 1888 to enter St. Joseph's Seminary to prepare for his ordination.

What we can find of Uncles and his family in the U.S. census generally confirms the facts he provided to his interviewer from *The Brooklyn Tablet*. In the 1880 U.S. census of Baltimore, Maryland (Precinct 1, Ward 19), Lorenza Uncles, age 50, a blacksmith, was living with his wife, Annie, age 32, a dress maker, and their sons Randolph, age 20, a barber, and Norman, age 6. Everyone in the household was born in Maryland of Maryland-born parents and had their race recorded as mulatto. In the 1890 Baltimore city directory, Lorenzo Uncles, a laborer, was recorded at 614 Saratoga Court. In the 1900 U.S. census of Baltimore, Maryland (Precinct 2, Ward 17), C. R. Uncles, born November 1859, was recorded as a teacher at Epiphany Apostolic College. His race was recorded as black. In the same year, his parents, brother and sister-in-law were recorded at 1116 Woodyear Street in Ward 18 of Baltimore: Olonzo Uncles, born October 1820, blacksmith; wife Annie Uncles, born April 1844 (the mother of 7 children, 2 living); son Norman Uncles, born March 1877, railroad porter; daughter-in-law Martha Uncles, born May 1876 (the mother of 1 child, not living). Everyone in the household was recorded as colored. Olonzo and Annie had been married forty years; Norman and Martha, three years. In the 1910 and 1920 U.S. censuses, Charles R. Uncles was again recorded as a clergyman at Epiphany Apostolic College in Baltimore; his race in these censuses was recorded as mulatto. In the 1930 U.S. census, Charles R. Uncles, age 70, was recorded as a priest at Epiphany Apostolic College in New Windsor, Orange County, New York. Maryland-born of Maryland-parents, his race in the 1930 census was recorded as negro. Uncles' widowed mother Annie Uncles, age 88, was recorded as a boarder at St. Frances' Convent and Orphanage in Baltimore in the 1920 U.S. census. Her race was recorded as mulatto.⁷

Today Rev. Augustine Tolton (1854-1897), ordained in Rome in 1886, is generally recognized as the first black American priest. (A generation earlier, three sons of slaveowner Michael Morris Healy by his slave mistress, were ordained in Europe; one of them, James Augustine Healy (1830-1900), became the

bishop of Portland ME in 1875.) In *The History of Black Catholics in the United States*, Cyprian Davis wrote of the Healy brothers (p. 152):

Doubtless, their origins were overlooked not because the atmosphere was one of tolerance for blacks but because the brothers were seen as exceptions; doubtless, too, it was because the brothers did not enter into solidarity with either the African American community as such or even the black Catholic community. At a time when racial bigotry was rife, when blacks were being systematically stripped of their rights, and when in the South violence against blacks was becoming normal, no word of concern, no sentiment of outrage, no reminder of justice escaped their lips. They never used their position to champion the cause of their fellow blacks. Nor did they ever give their fellow blacks the opportunity to bask in the reflected glory of their own noteworthy achievements.

So Tolton, as Davis writes, was “the first black American priest whom all knew and recognized as black.”

Where then does Charles Randolph Uncles, the fourth of his race born in the United States to be ordained a Roman Catholic priest, and the first to be ordained on American soil, fit into this picture? He is unmentioned in Cyprian Davis’ above-cited work, except for a ca. 1923-25 photograph (p. 142) with fellow black priests John Dorsey, S.S.J. and Joseph John, S.M.A. in front of St. Augustine’s Church in Washington DC. (Dorsey was the sixth black man to be ordained to the priesthood (Baltimore MD, 1902) and John was the eleventh (Harlem NY, 1923). However, another work, Stephen J. Ochs’ *Desegregating the Altar: The Josephites and the Struggle for Black Priests, 1871-1960* tells the story of Uncles in some detail. England’s Mill Hill missionary order had a special mission among the black population in the United States, and the American branch eventually evolved into the Josephite Order, to which both Uncles and Dorsey belonged. Ochs tells the story of the relationship between Josephite Superior General John R. Slattery and Uncles (p. 56):

By 1883 he [Slattery] had altered his earlier views about black priests; during that year he took steps that eventually resulted in the initial ordination of a black man in the United States. The first step was his meeting Charles Randolph Uncles, a tall, bespectacled, young mulatto parishioner who expressed a desire to become a priest. Born in 1859, Uncles had attended St. Francis Xavier School, Baltimore public schools, and the Baltimore Normal School for Colored Teachers and had taught in Baltimore County public schools from 1880 to 1883. Struck by what he described as Uncles’ “vivid intelligence,” Slattery tutored him and Joseph Johnson (another black man who impressed him but who later decided not to enter the seminary) in rhetoric and logic, two prerequisites for the seminary.

Slattery finally found a home for Uncles at the Sulpicians’ St. Hyacinth’s College in Quebec, where Uncles was admitted in 1883. (Slattery paid Uncles’ tuition out of his own resources.) However, the Sulpicians declined to accept Uncles as a seminarian at their St. Mary’s Seminary near his parental home in Baltimore MD. The problem was resolved when the Josephites acquired an adjoining property for their St. Joseph’s Seminary, which Cardinal Gibbons dedicated in 1888. Uncles was apparently allowed to take classes at St. Mary’s Seminary as well. Ochs records (p. 71):

Uncles impressed professors and fellow students at St. Mary’s. At the end of his first semester, for example, he scored the third highest grade out of a class of fifty in his theology examination.

Ordained in December 1891, Uncles was among the priests who opted to join the new St. Joseph's Society of the Sacred Heart, under the authority of Cardinal Gibbons, in 1893 (Ochs, p. 84). But Uncles' adjustment as a priest was not a smooth one. One Philadelphia priest whose parish Uncles visited found him "conceited as a peacock" (Ochs, p. 89). Ochs recorded (p. 90):

Much to Slattery's chagrin, however, the proud and sensitive Uncles spurned his superior's public relations plans for him, insisting that he would not be "trotted out before the public gaze" to become "a show priest" like Augustine Tolton. Uncles' aversion to missionary work in the South, owing to his hatred of segregation, also disappointed Slattery.⁸

The poverty of Uncles' parents also disturbed his early priesthood. He pleaded for the right to accept additional mass stipends, in order to support his parents, but the Josephites turned down his request. Uncles submitted letters of resignation to Slattery in 1893 and 1894, but Slattery found his first letter "illegal and uncanonical" (Ochs, p. 91). During this period Uncles continued to teach at Epiphany Apostolic College, but threatened with an unwanted assignment to Norfolk VA, he left the college without permission on February 9, 1895, to reside at his parents' home for almost three months (Ochs, p. 99). Eventually an accommodation was found—Uncles returned to his popular Latin classes at Epiphany College in the fall of 1895. Cardinal Gibbons remained committed to the education of black priests, having laid the cornerstone for a new St. Joseph's Seminary in 1893. On December 8, 1893, Uncles served as deacon for the mass of dedication of St. Joseph's Seminary.⁹ Uncles faced new problems in 1901, when a warrant for his arrest was issued in Baltimore MD (Ochs, p. 113). He spent a year outside the city at St. Joseph's Industrial School, until Slattery succeeded in getting the warrant quashed. Ochs writes (pp. 113-114):

Thereafter, Uncles spent his life teaching classics at Epiphany College. A very popular teacher whom the students nicknamed "Daddy," he settled into the relative obscurity of the classroom, emerging only occasionally for public appearances to celebrate mass for black Catholic organizations. As a respected and popular teacher, however, Uncles performed valuable work, influencing generations of young Josephites and dispelling, at least to some extent, preconceived notions about the intellectual inferiority of blacks.

Over time, Uncles' bitterness concerning the treatment of blacks in the society apparently grew. In his later years, he refused to celebrate St. Patrick's Day because other ethnic groups did not receive similar recognition. He also developed the habit of flinging open the windows when he walked into a room of white priests. Although he possessed a well-known passion for fresh air, many of his fellow Josephites suspected that Uncles also meant to communicate a need to "clean out the white smell in the room." He died in July, 1933, protesting that he did not belong to St. Joseph's Society.

Expressing his continued dissatisfaction with Uncles, Slattery advised his next black ordinand, John Dorsey (1873-1926), to model himself not "after your brother priest who is colored," but after Blessed Martin de Porres (Ochs, p. 124). Unlike Uncles, Dorsey did enjoy conducting parish missions, but eventually the strain of racial prejudices wore him down (Ochs, p. 145). "Daddy" Uncles was apparently well-loved by his seminary students at Epiphany Apostolic College; perhaps he felt he could be himself among his students. Foley relates of Uncles' relationships with his students (p. 47):

Notwithstanding his height (he was more than six feet, two inches tall), Father Uncles could unbend with the smallest of his students, and could joke and laugh with the jolliest. He could tell an

MUNRO'S GIRLS

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1878.

VOL. VII.

GEORGE MUNRO, PROPRIETOR,
24 BEEKMAN STREET.

NEW YORK.

"THE LITTLE BLACK VENTRILOQUIST"

CHAPTER I.

IN BRYANT'S MINSTREL HALL—A DAREDEVIL IN THE WINDY SEAT—A CROWD FROM THE COUNTRY—A SHILL VOICE FROM AN ORCHESTRA CHAIR—EVERYTHING TOPSY-TURVY—A HIGH OLD TIEK ALL ROUND.

THE majority of the boys living within a hundred miles of New York City have, during the course of their young lives, visited an entertainment of one or the other of the many famous minstrel troupes that have been located in the great metropolis.

Among the most famous of all these, since the time of the original Christy Minstrels, was the world-renowned Bryant troupe, whose successful career was only brought to a close with the death of its celebrated founder, Dan Bryant.

During one of the entertainments of this famous company, when at the zenith of its successful career, a remarkable and ludicrous incident occurred.

It was during a matinee. The house was crowded, as the saying is, from "pit to dome."

By some singular oversight, a little negro lad, contrary to the then existing rules of the house, smuggled himself into the parterre, and secured a seat away down in front among the orchestra chairs, and under the shadow of the left proscenium box.

This little intruder was a bright-eyed chap, possessing an intelligent black face, with a merry and mischievous expression resting upon his features.

Seated upon the front row of chairs, and right next to the railing enclosing the musicians, were a party of country folks, composed of two men and two plump-looking, red-faced, laughter-loving country girls.

It was evident to those sitting near this rural party that the present was the first visit of the latter to a minstrel show.

Before the rising of the curtain they had indulged in numerous remarks which betrayed their honest simplicity.

When the curtain finally lifted, and the black-faced performers filed from opposite sides upon the stage, dressed in their sombre black suits, and immaculate white shirt fronts, and white-gloved hands, the country folks began to giggle and nudge each other in perfect exuberance of delight.

The first part of the performance consisted of songs and comic dances, and the usual exchange of witty conundrums between the two irrepressible end-men.

Finally, the first part was brought to a conclusion, and a series of comic acts succeeded.

Two of the actors came upon the stage, dressed in the most outlandish fashion, and, as usual, convulsed the audience with laughter by their ludicrous actions and imitatively funny sayings.



"OKEE, GOLLEE!" WAS ALL THE CHINAMAN REPLIED, WHEN A SECOND

seen a ghost. With a puzzled look upon his face, the man said:

"I hope that there will be no more unnecessary interruptions," and he disappeared.

"I mean loved,"

"Well, who Remarks"

BOYS OF AMERICA.

By GEORGE MUNRO, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C.

OCTOBER 14, 1876.

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NO. 159

"A Tale of Fun and Frolic. By HALSEY PAGE.



WHEN THE POLICEMAN LEAPED INTO THE AIR, AS HE HEARD A DOG BARKING AT HIS HEELS.

that any loud remarks are not al-
has made any remarks?"
have come from your party."

clusion that the whole affair was a "put up job,"
as actors say, and a legitimate part of the per-
formance.
Among those who came out last was the little
nervous boy, whom we described in our previous

plished and most wonderful ventriloquist
in the world.

Combined with his ventriloquistic ac-
quirements was a faculty for imitating the
tones of any voice that he heard.

Beyond this, he could imitate birds and
animals, from the mate call of a yellow bird,
to the neigh of a horse, or the bray of a cow
or donkey.

His wonderful faculty went still further.
He could imitate any kind of a wind or
stringed instrument to perfection.

Having also an excellent musical ear, this
latter accomplishment, when exerted, was
the more remarkable.

Mose had long chafed for an opportunity
to try the perfection of his powers.

Having held a horse for a good-hearted
man one day, he received a half dollar.

He kept this money until his employer
brought him to New York, when he deter-
mined to visit some place of public amuse-
ment and try his powers.

He hit upon Bryant's Minstrels.
Having gone early, he managed, after the
purchase of his ticket, to slip away down in
the parquet.

The success of his experiment our readers
are already informed of in our previous
chapters.

Mose was delighted with his success. He
had discovered that his powers were even
greater than he had dared hope.

His master was an excellent vocal execu-
tionist, but alongside of Mose he was no-
where.

The latter possessed a power that even
the most skillful of ventriloquists, except
in very rare cases, have ever attained to.
This was the faculty of throwing his voice
to a great distance, and making it sound
afar off in any particular quarter that he
desired.

Leaving the theater, he started to go
down town. He had a little money left, and
he jumped upon a car.

In one quarter sat a close-fisted looking
old man.

As the conductor stepped into the car to
collect his fare from Mose, the old man
appeared to say:

"I'll pay that colored boy's fare!"

Instantly the conductor turned toward
the old man with his hand extended.

"What do you want?" growled the old
man. "I paid my fare once!"

"But you said you would pay that colored
boy's fare!"

"I didn't say anything of the kind!"
fiercely ejaculated the old man, adding:

"What is the matter with you?"

The conductor looked confused, when a
voice called from the forward end of the car:

"No, no, conductor; I was the one who
said I would pay that dear, poor little colored
boy's fare!"

The voice was that of an old woman, and an old
Irish woman sat in the corner from whence the
voice proceeded.

earthy joke like the one about the man who had a piece of dog bone grafted on his injured leg, and still not scandalize the innocent. And he felt sufficiently at ease on the delicate issue of race to find chuckles where others found gloom. His standard joke, when he passed the drugstore in which the seminarians were buying an afternoon soda, was to step in the doorway and ask them, “Are niggers allowed in here?” Then he would order a huge bowl of ice cream and eat it with the zest of a minor seminarian.

Louis B. Pastorelli became the fourth Superior General of the Josephites in 1918, and in 1925 constructed a new campus for Epiphany Apostolic College in Newburgh NY, where Rev. Uncles moved for the final years of his teaching career. Uncles did celebrate the funeral mass of John Dorsey before three thousand mourners in 1926 (Ochs, p. 277). Foley writes of Uncles’ final years (pp. 49-50):

By 1924 the infirmities of age were beginning to creep up on him. He still continued his routine classwork, but he had slowed down considerably in the pace that he was wont to set for himself and his students. He did not ask to be taken out of the grind of steady teaching and placed as an assistant in a sinecure. There were rumors to the effect that he had some mild ambition for the pastorate of his home parish, St. Francis Xavier in Baltimore, and that when this was not granted him, he had refused to accept any other parochial assignment. It hardly fits in with his retiring, spotlight-shunning personality, but the rumor persisted. He lived it down by faithfully adhering to the religious life and the routine of his dedicated tasks.

In the last years of his life, he was frequently incapacitated by many illnesses, not the least of which was a weakened condition of the heart that left him often gasping for breath after a strenuous day of class.

Uncles died on Friday, July 21, 1933, and his body lay in state over the weekend at the chapel at Epiphany Apostolic College, where he was visited by many friends and relatives from Baltimore. The Josephite Superior General Louis B. Pastorelli celebrated his requiem mass on Monday, July 24, 1933, with some twenty-five priests in attendance. Father Daniel Rice, S.S.J., delivered the eulogy for “Daddy” Uncles (q.v., Foley, p. 50). After Uncles’ death in July 1933, the Josephites were without any black priest until the ordination of Charles Chester Ball in Washington DC in 1941. However, the Society of the Divine Word had already taken the lead in this respect. Four black men were ordained to the priesthood at its seminary at Bay St. Louis MS in 1934 and many more followed thereafter.

As Augustine Tolton advances toward sainthood, what are we to make of Charles Randolph Uncles, the intellectual who was more at ease in his classroom than in the parish or mission work that his superiors had so ardently wished him to undertake? Whatever may have been the racial views of the fellow veterans of the amateur journalism hobby with whom he celebrated at the Poor Richard Club in Philadelphia in July 1926, they at least extended to the light-skinned Uncles (described in some documents as a “quadroon,” or one-quarter black) the common courtesies which he knew would be denied him in parish or mission work in the South. That he may have harbored some counter-prejudices against whites certainly seems believable. Yet, he was a pioneer for his race, and he sometimes attracted thousands when he deigned to appear at a public function, like the requiem mass for his fellow black priest John Dorsey. In the photograph with Dorsey and John (also reproduced in Ochs, p. 204, along with a fine early photograph on Uncles, p. 195), Uncles appears as a somewhat portly figure in his cassock, perhaps well meriting the nickname “Daddy” that he received from his seminary students. He was undoubtedly among the exceptional priests who truly

loved the Latin language patrimony of his church, and probably grateful for the occasional students who loved the beauty of the Latin language as much as he.¹⁰ He strikes one as a figure who truly loved the intellectual heritage of his Church, and celebrated the liturgy with scrupulous regard for its rubrics.

Despite his shortcomings, Charles Randolph Uncles remains a significant figure in the history of black Catholicism in the United States. Looking at the famous photograph of the four black Bay St. Louis ordinandi in 1934 (Ochs, p. 205), one realizes that Uncles and Tolton were both among their predecessors. No one is likely to initiate a cause for the canonization of Charles Randolph Uncles, evidently a proud and sensitive man not always the master of his faults. As the cause of Augustine Tolton advances, it will be well to remember as well Uncles and some of the other lesser lights of early black Catholicism in the United States. We can certainly be proud that Rev. Charles Randolph Uncles, S.S.J. was a member of The Fossils from 1916 until his death in 1933.

NOTES:

¹Uncles was buried on July 24, 1933 in the Josephite plot at Calvary Cemetery in New Windsor, Orange County, New York.

²The actual title was *Munro's Girls and Boys of America*, which was published weekly beginning on September 27, 1873, and ending in 1877. The publisher was George Munro (1825-1896), a native of Nova Scotia who came to New York City in 1856 and was associated with Beadle and Adams in American News before leaving to form his own publishing firm in 1864. A surviving weekly number from October 14, 1876 reproduced in part in this issue of *The Fossil* contains a story, "The Little Black Ventriloquist" by Halsey Page, which shows that Uncles would have been well familiar with casual racism in his early reading, and a "Numerical Enigma" submitted by "Randolph Uncles" to the "Our Puzzler" column. Although published in a larger format, *Munro's Girls and Boys of America* was probably intended as a rival of Oliver Optic's *Our Boys and Girls* (1867-1875).

³A contemporary report in *The New York Times* for December 20, 1891, makes clear that Uncles was actually ordained a priest by James Cardinal Gibbons (1834-1921) (Archbishop of Baltimore 1877-1921) at the Cathedral of the Assumption one day earlier, on December 19, 1891. Uncles celebrated his own first mass of thanksgiving on Christmas, December 25, 1891, at his parish church, St. Francis Xavier, Calvert and Pleasant Streets, Baltimore. Baltimore dedicated a new cathedral in 1959, but the Cathedral of the Assumption where Uncles was ordained was restored in 2004-2006 and remains a minor basilica. Uncles celebrated his silver jubilee mass at St. Francis Xavier Church, somewhat belatedly, on January 7, 1917. Auxiliary Bishop Owen D. Corrigan attended in place of the aging Cardinal Gibbons (q.v., Foley, p. 49).

⁴The author has not seen the original article in *The Brooklyn Tablet*, but it is quoted extensively in "Father Uncles of Baltimore" in the "News and Notes" section of *The Journal of Negro History* (vol. 2, 1917, pp. 198-199), which is available for free consultation on Googlebooks. The article in *The Journal of Negro History* is signed "Father Tobin."

⁵Epiphany Apostolic College, originally a hotel, stood at Piedmont and Allendale Roads in the Walbrook section of Baltimore. The building was demolished shortly after the College removed to Newburgh, New York.

⁶The baptism and confirmation years for Uncles come not from *The Brooklyn Tablet* article, but from Phillip T. Drotning's *A Guide to Negro History in America* (Doubleday, 1968). Foley (pp. 43, 44) confirms the baptism and confirmation years and gives April 2, 1875 as the exact baptismal date. The Universalists originally erected the church as the First Universalist Church at the northeast corner of Calvert and Pleas

ant Streets in Baltimore in 1837; they nearly lost it to debt in 1839 but Reverend James Shrigley (1813-1905) built the congregation to 800 souls during his 1841-1848 pastorate. The building seated 1000 persons and was the site of the Whig convention which nominated Henry Clay in 1844, the Democratic convention which nominated Lewis Cass in 1848, and the session of the Maryland legislature which voted for secession in 1861. Archbishop Spalding acquired the church for Baltimore's black Catholics in 1863, and it was formally dedicated as St. Francis Xavier Church on February 21, 1864. St. Francis Xavier parish moved from Calvert and Pleasant Streets to Eager and Caroline Streets in 1932 and again to its present location at Caroline and Oliver Streets in 1968. A plaque displaying an image of the original church may be seen at the current church. The original church building at Calvert and Pleasant Streets was demolished during the winter of 1941-42.

⁷Foley (p. 43) records the maiden name of Uncles' mother as Anna Marie Buchanan. Uncles' brother Norman Buchanan Uncles registered for the draft in Baltimore on September 12, 1918. He gave his date of birth as October 23, 1873 and his race as black. He was then residing at 1038 Argyle Avenue and working as a waiter at 500 West Franklin Street. He gave as the name of his closest relative his mother Annie Maria Uncles, living in Baltimore. In the 1920 U.S. census, Norman B. Uncles, age 48, mulatto, a hotel waiter, was recorded as a boarder at 1038 Argyle in the home of Houston and Emma Brown in Baltimore's 17th Ward. In the 1930 U.S. census, Norman Uncles, age 55, negro, married, was recorded as a lodger at 1041 Argyle in the home of Annie Rakes in Baltimore's 17th Ward. His occupation was given as seminary janitor—so it seems that the Baltimore archdiocese was still providing some support to the Uncles family. In the 1920 U.S. census the following household was recorded at 151 Stricken in Baltimore's Ward 15: Charles Raynes, head, age 70, born VA of VA-born parents, apartment house fireman; Isabella Raynes, wife, age 69, hotel cook; Cornelia Uncle, age 30, daughter, home laundry; Norman Uncle, son-in-law, age 43, hotel waiter; Charles Uncle, grandson, age 2; Norman Uncle, grandson, age 5; Lauretta Owens, daughter, age 24, home laundry; George Owens, son-in-law, age 25, hotel bell-hop; George Owens, grandson, age 1 year 9 months; Peter Cousin, cousin, age 60, steamboat stevedore; Rebecca Cousin, sister-in-law, 50, private duty nurse. Everyone except the head of household was born in Maryland; everyone's race was recorded as black. Whether Charles R. Uncles' brother was recorded twice in the 1920 U.S. census or whether the Norman Uncle of 151 Stricken was not his brother is not known to the author. U.S. Public Records collected by Ancestry.com show that a Norman R. Uncles lived in Baltimore MD between 1935-93; perhaps he was the 5-year-old grandchild in the 151 Stricken household in the 1920 U.S. census.

⁸Both Tolton and Uncles did attend part of the Parliament of World Religions held in conjunction with the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. At some time between August 27 and October 15, 1893, Tolton and Uncles addressed a delegation of colored American Catholics. See two books by Christopher Robert Reed: *All the World is Here! The Black Presence at White City* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2002) (p. 114) and *Black Chicago's First Century* (Columbia MO: University of Missouri Press, 2005) (p. 371). Despite his hatred of southern segregation, Uncles apparently also celebrated mass at the Hampden Institute in Virginia in 1924 (q.v., *The Southern Workman*, vol. 53, 1924).

⁹The former St. Joseph's Seminary building at 607 Pennsylvania Avenue in Baltimore has been renovated to contain 47 senior apartments and has been renamed the "Charles R. Uncles Senior Plaza." As far as the author is aware, this is the only public honor accorded to Rev. Uncles.

¹⁰Foley (pp. 47-48) writes of Uncles' teaching of the Latin language: "He taught from the old textbook of Greenough, until he knew it by heart. Ultimately he prepared his own edition of a text in the field, after many years of urging on the part of the staff and the students who wanted a short cut to the attainment of a minimum Latinity." The author has not found any textbook by Uncles in searching Worldcat and abebooks; it is possible that Uncles' work was reproduced privately by mimeograph or other means for his students at Epiphany Apostolic College.

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FOUR POEMS OF LIFE AND NATURE

Martha E. Shivers

Reflections

Speak to me softly
oh, my soul,
Of the beauties all around,
would that my life be whole
as opportunity abounds.

Speak to me firmly, oh, my soul,
when sorrow tests me true
would that faith be the role
that prompts and propels me through.

Speak to me kindly,
oh, my soul,
if I should complain or cry
when trials deny the goal
and peace passes me by.

Smile on me brightly,
oh, my soul,
as challenges are firmly met
may I accept life's role
and jostle me to not forget!

The Awakening

A rosy haze emerges on the horizon
etching spires and trees.
A star lingers in the heavens
twinkling of promises to be.
Noisy motors vibrate the quiet
A breeze stirs a gentle release
A new day awakens untarnished!

Evening Reverie

Laughter rings out in evening's last rays
clasping children's happy plays
They ride their bikes
Clock strikes
last call
bedtime for all
whose years are under eight!
Quiet yards, evening whispers late!

I See, I Hear, I Know

I can see the children romping
exploring woods, searching
for treasures. Plucking
bluebells, lamb's tongue, violets,
sweet williams at their leisure.

I can hear the call of the robin,
the jaunty blue jay, the raucous blackbird,
from cattail fronds. The melodious meadow-
lark, chatty catbird and frogs
croaking in nearby ponds.

I can smell plowed earth, newly cut hay,
fresh paint on kitchen floor
homemade bread, apple butter
lilacs blooming at the door
Then I know that I am home.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

I join our President Guy Miller in taking note of the passing of Fossils Harold Smolin, on December 25, 2011; Stan Oliner, on January 15, 2012; and Louise Lincoln, on March 3, 2012. Our ranks are sorely diminished by the loss of these three outstanding members. I also join Guy in noting the passing of former Fossils Al Lee and Bob Orbach.

I hope that any Fossils who are able to solve Uncles' "Numerical Enigma" in the "Our Puzzler" column of *Munro's Girls and Boys of America* for October 14, 1876 as reproduced in the center section of this number of *The Fossil* will communicate their solutions to the editorial address.

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THE FOSSILS

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This journal is the Official Organ of The Fossils, a non-profit organization whose purposes are to stimulate interest in and preserve the history of independent publishing, either separate from or organized in the hobby known as "Amateur Journalism" and to foster the practices of amateur journalism. To this end, The Fossils preserved the Library of Amateur Journalism, a repository of amateur papers and memorabilia dating from the 1850s, acquired in 1916 and donated in 2004 to the Special Collections Department of the University of Wisconsin Library, Room 976, Memorial Library, 728 State Street, Madison, WI 53706. (The Library of Amateur Journalism Collection is not yet open for use at University of Wisconsin at Madison.) Individuals or institutions allied with our goals are invited to join The Fossils. Dues are \$15 annually \$20 for joint membership of husband and wife. Annual subscription to The Fossil without privileges of membership is \$10. Make remittances payable to The Fossils, and mail to the Secretary-treasurer.



**IN MEMORIAM
LOUISE LINCOLN
Born February 12, 1912, died March 3, 2012
Photo courtesy of Guy Miller
Guy and Louise At Her 100th Birthday Celebration
Louise is speaking to Bill Boys**



**IN MEMORIAM
HAROLD SMOLIN**

Born May 8, 1920, Died December 25, 2011

Photograph Courtesy The Late Harold Smolin

With Harold Is His Beloved Wife Shirley (died 2007)