

PROJECT

EDITOR: *Rai Otley*
REPORTER: *William J. J. J.*
DATE: *5/25/39*
WORDAGE: *475*
REWRITE:
SOURCE MATERIAL: *list of*

FILE TITLE & NO.

ART & #

ART TITLE *Biography of*
C. A. Johnson

Assemblyman

Negroes of New York

Wilbur Young

Biography of E.A. Johnson

Doctor Edward A. Johnson, noted lawyer, professor, dean, author, politician, and scholar was born in Raleigh, N.C. on November 23rd, 1860. He was the son of Columbus and Eliza Johnson. That he had a brilliant mind even as a child was quite evident for at the age of ten, he entered Washington High School in Raleigh. From there, he finished Atlanta University in Georgia and Shaw in Raleigh. He received his lawyer's degree from the latter in 1891.

He later became principal of his old Alma Mater, Washington High School in Raleigh. From here, he repeated the old trail and became professor of law and dean of Shaw University law school.

Between the years of 1893 and 1906, he served as an assistant in the ~~United States~~ United States District Attorney's office for the Eastern district of North Carolina. Following this, for two years as chairman of the Fourth Congressional District of the Republican party in North Carolina.

In 1899, Johnson came to New York to practice law and soon became engaged in local politics. In 1917, he succeeded in getting himself elected to the New York State Assembly at Albany and thereby became the first Negro to hold such a post in this state. He was elected from the Nineteenth Assembly District.

As a member of this body, he was given credit for the passing of four bills all of which effected the Negro. They were, The Civil Rights Act which stipulated equal privileges for all in all public places and a free employment bureau with an appropriation of \$30,000.

As a writer, Johnson essayed many valuable peices of Negro literature. His first book was the History of the Negro, the first Negro history textbook to be used in the Negro schools of North Carolina. He was author of Negro Soldiers in the Spanish-American War, Light Ahead for the Negro, and Adam versus the Ape man and Ethiopia.

In 1925, Johnson became blind but did not cease his writing for it was at that time that he turned out one of his greatest works the latter mentioned book, Adam versus the Ape-man and Ethiopia which was done in defense of the Negro race against prejudiced anthropologists. The book was turned down at first by White publishers on the grounds that it was physically impossible for such a work of art to be done by a blind man. However, he was backed by Colonel Arthur Little, author himself of the Negro Troops in the World War and former commander of the 369th Infantry.

Johnson's full name was Edward Austin but on most of his works, he merely used his initials. He was married in 1894 and had one daughter of which little is known. He was until recently an active member of the Harlem Board of Trade and Commerce, the Upper Harlem Taxpayers Association, the Southern Beneficial League, the Y.M.C.A., and the Masons. He is retired from active life now and resides at 17 West 132nd Street.

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Source of Information

New York Age 1931

Pittsburgh Courier 1932

Floyd A. Calvin release 1931