

PROJECT

Writers (Group no. 16)

Editor: Gus Cumberbatch

File Title & No. (35)

Reporter: James Gardner

Art. #

Date: May 15-1938

Art. Title Brief History of
Ferdinand D. Morton
N.Y.

Wordarc: 350

Rewrite:

Source Material: Chas McNeal United Colored Democ.
cracy. Clinton Williams, 2370-7th Ave

JAMES GARDNER
May 26, 1938

RACIAL GROUP
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Brief History Of Ferdinand Q. Morton of
New York

Ferdinand Q. Morton, one of the three civil service commissioners of the City of New York, comes from Mississippi, and has lived in New York since 1912.

His early education was gained in the public schools of Mississippi. Although not of a high school calibre, the boy obtained what schooling he could from the irregular system and practice of his state. After reaching the age of 19, his parents moved to Washington, D. C., where he was graduated later from the M Street high school. He followed this up with a law course at Harvard and obtained high rating upon graduation in 1907.

In 1910, Morton came to New York with the intention of opening law offices, but was persuaded to delay such opening by Charles McNeal after McNeal had heard Morton deliver an address to the United Colored Democracy in the latter's club rooms in West 53rd Street. It was the intention of the United Colored Democracy to add young Morton to the Club and use him to represent the body on grand occasions to deliver addresses. McNeal, the contact man for the democratic body knew he had made a find in Morton.

United Colored Democracy

Morton became the eighth leader of the United Colored Democracy. A leadership to which he was appointed by the late Chas. Murphy, Tammany dictator. And which position Morton held until long after Murphy's death in 1926. The mantle of leadership fell from the shoulders of Morton when his power over the Negroes in Harlem was clearly shown to be nil. In 1927, Martin Healey (white) wrested power from Morton. At the time of Morton's election every political office had to come through the United Colored Democracy. Thus Chas. Murphy had decreed it - and so it remained for 26 years. This body had sole power in the distribution of all patronage throughout all New York as pertained to Negroes. There have been seven other leaders among the United Colored Democracy. They were, Chief Lee, John Bell, Caleb Simms, Jno. Dickerson; Chief Lee again appointed for second time, and Robert Woods and Ferdinand Morton.

Time Expires July - Morton Out.

Holding down a position as commissioner of civil service for 14 years, Morton is slated to quit office, through retirement in early July. He is one of the highest paid Negroes in the city employment, drawing a yearly salary of \$10,500. It can not be said of Morton that his was a most brilliant leadership. Although a Harvard graduate, he showed little knowledge of that principal that is the chief element among leaders. The Race Negroes considered him weak, afraid to demand rights and lacking in the power to fight for the advantages of political power that

would create better working conditions and more pay for the Negro masses of the districts controlled by him. There is no record of his 15 years in office that shows Morton interested in Harlem's suffering and overcrowded living teeming thousands.

Information

from Char. McNeal, one of original organizers
of the United Colored Democracy

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Democratic Leader of 13th Dist

350 Words