

think about how to make use of the talents and skills many represent. Although a UN Travel Document is supposed to provide a refugee with the right to travel, unfortunately it is in itself an impediment to employment. I hope that you and your editorial committee will think about the possibility of the ASA Newsletter being a vehicle which is available to such persons who need employment.

Yours sincerely,
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OBITUARIES

Professor Cheikh Anta Diop, 1923-1986

(The following article from the *UCLA African Studies Center Newsletter*, Spring 1986, was submitted by Boniface I. Obichere.)

It was with grief and sorrow that we were informed of the sudden death of Professor Cheikh Anta Diop of Senegal, which sad event occurred on February 8, 1986 in Dakar.

Cheikh Anta Diop was born in Diourbel about 150 km. east of Dakar, Senegal, on December 29, 1923. He received his *Docteur ès Lettres* from the University of Paris in 1960 in the History of Ancient Africa. Before this, he had been through the maze of the French education system that existed in colonial Senegal from the *école primaire* to the *lycée* and obtained his *baccalauréat* with distinction. He went to Paris to continue his education and progressed from the *licence* to the doctorate degree at the Sorbonne in 1960.

Professor Diop became famous as a result of his rethinking and rewriting of the history of ancient Africa. He did this with a new methodology, which led him to evidence that had been overlooked or deliberately suppressed. Much controversy has raged over his work and his generalizations about ancient Egypt and its ties with Black Africa, especially his study of the skin color of the mummies of the Pharaohs through his unique melanin test methodology. Dr. Diop was the veritable pioneer in the scientific study and analysis of the contributions of ancient Black Africa to the development of classical and ancient Egyptian civilization. His comparative analysis of the political and social systems of pre-colonial Africa and those of Europe before the rise of modern nation states, provoked as much controversy as his revisionist and persistent publications on ancient Egypt and Black Africa. His masterly response to his critics in 1962 silenced most of them. He pushed his arguments and generalizations beyond the doubt in his seminal publication in 1977 of the results of his scientific study of the genetic and consanguinal ties of Pharaonic Egyptians and the skin pigmentation of ancient Egyptians. He applied his methodology of melanin tests, which was a real revolutionary technique in modern Egyptology. I remember discussing these far-reaching results with him during the Congress of African Historians in Yaounde in December 1975.

Dr. Diop was a pre-eminent scholar, a respected social scientist and historian, an indefatigable researcher and a very valuable colleague. He also entered party

politics in the last years of the rule of President Leopold Sedar Senghor, as the secretary-general of a new opposition party (R.N.D.), formed after Senghor lifted the ban on political parties in Senegal in 1976. He was the secretary-general of the R.N.D. from 1976 to 1986.

He served in the Institut Fondamental de l'Afrique Noire in Dakar (IFAN). He was a foundation member (1971) of the International Scientific Committee for the Drafting of a General History of Africa, sponsored by UNESCO. Professor Diop served in numerous education and scientific communities in Africa and Europe. He was a well-known public speaker and his lecture tours took him to the U.S.A., South America, the U.S.S.R., China and all over Africa and Europe. Dr. Diop will be remembered for his rigorous scholarship, his courage in the defence of truth and his lasting contributions to African Studies and the Republic of Senegal.

Helen F. Conover, 1898-1986

(Submitted by Julian K. Witherell)

Helen F. Conover, who retired from the Library of Congress in 1963 after 32 years of service as a bibliographic specialist, died in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, on May 25, 1986. Born in Brady, Texas, Miss Conover graduated from Bryn Mawr College with a B.A. degree in 1919 and later studied at Columbia University, New York University and the Sorbonne. Before joining the Library of Congress' staff in 1931, she taught languages and mathematics in private schools and served as an editor, researcher, and librarian for several publishing firms. At the Library, she was a pioneer in developing its African bibliographic and reference programs while serving first in the Division of Bibliography and, later, in the European and the General Reference and Bibliography divisions.

As the Library's recognized African area specialist, she was the first appointee to the African Section upon its establishment in 1960. Primarily as a result of her bibliographic work, which included such major compilations as *Serials for African Studies* (1961) and *Africa South of the Sahara: A Selected, Annotated List of Writings* (1963), the African Section gained recognition as a pre-eminent center for Africana bibliographic research. Following her retirement, she worked with Dr. Peter Duignan of the Hoover Institution in compiling the *Guide to Research Works on Sub-Saharan Africa* (1971), edited the African Bibliographic Center's *Dictionary of Afro-Latin American Civilization*, and served on the editorial board of the Center's *Current Bibliography of African Affairs*.

In 1979, the African Studies Association established a Conover-Porter Award in recognition of the Miss Conover's accomplishments and those of Mrs. Dorothy Porter-Wesley, who served for many years as Curator, Moorland-Spingarn Collection, Howard University; the award is presented biennially for outstanding achievement in Africana bibliography and reference works.