



UBERT CONRAD VINCENT, B.S., M.D., 1892-1938*

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*And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward,
 and bear fruit upward. Isaiah, 37:31*

“How Far the Promised Land?” was the title Walter White, famed executive secretary of the NAACP, gave his autobiography published in 1955, the year he died. The question may well have been one which often occurred to Dr. Ubert Conrad Vincent, whose busy and brilliant career was cut short by his passing on December 18, 1938, at the early age of 46. He had been a member of the medical profession for 20 years, all spent in New York City. He is historically significant as the first Afro-American interne at a major American hospital, Bellevue, for the record he made there, for a surgical procedure for varicocele which he developed, and as the proprietor of a short-lived private hospital, Vincent’s Sanatorium, which was one response to the local need for hospital facilities where Afro-American physicians might serve their people.

BEGINNINGS IN NORTH CAROLINA

Dr. Vincent was born on January 5, 1892, in Raleigh, North Carolina, of the Rev. Andrew and Mrs. Cora F. Vincent. His father was a professor at the local Shaw University and later dean of its School of Theology, a post from which he retired in 1904, receiving an honorary degree at that time. Dr. Vincent’s mother, born in Wilson, North Carolina, had been a teacher of domestic science at Shaw. They had fourteen children of whom Ubert Conrad was the second of eight who survived.

Dr. Vincent attended the Chavis High School in Raleigh and was an honor student at Shaw University, from which he graduated in 1914. There was evidently a “combination” course at Shaw at that time because Dr. Vincent had entered the Leonard (Shaw) Medical School in that year. There occurred a student strike at Shaw because a classmate of Dr. Vincent’s known as “Macbeth,” who had

been a stellar athlete, was expelled for marrying secretly. Also, the accreditation of the Leonard (Shaw) Medical School had begun to be threatened, over general standards. It closed in 1915. Hence, Dr. Vincent and other students had to seek another place in which to continue their medical education.

At Shaw Dr. Vincent developed some lasting friendships, particularly with Max Yergan who was later to make outstanding contributions through his work in the Y.M.C.A. and in Africa. Dr. Vincent enjoyed sports in college. He was of slight build and became an acceptable left-handed second baseman.

PHILADELPHIA DAYS

Dr. Vincent passed an entrance examination and was admitted to the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, the nation’s oldest, which had been founded in 1765. Thus his first move northward was to the City of Brotherly Love where he received the M.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1918. He knew that Philadelphia was no Promised Land. A hundred years before his birth, Dr. Benjamin Rush and Mayor Clarkson during the great yellow fever epidemic of 1793 had called on the members of the African Society led by Absalom Jones and Richard Allen to help bleed the sick, after the fashion of the day, and to do the yeoman work of daily removal of the bodies of the dead.¹ For this the members of the Society received more blame than praise, so that Jones and Allen had to write a tract in support of their own work.^{2,3}

Dr. Vincent was aware that Philadelphia’s hospitals would not be open to him for postgraduate training. In 1891 Dr. Daniel Hale Williams had had to found Provident Hospital in Chicago.⁴ In Philadelphia the same closed doors had forced the founding of the Douglass Hospital in

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Dr. Vincent (right at table) assisting Dr. Keyes (?) in an operation at Bellevue.

1895 by Dr. Nathan Francis Mossell⁵ and the Mercy Hospital in 1907 by Dr. Eugene Theodore Hinson,⁶ so that Afro-American physicians might have a place to take their patients.

While in medical school Dr. Vincent found new friends, among them Dr. John P. Turner, who was active in the National Medical Association and became its 22nd president in 1921 and its 2nd Distinguished Service Medalist in 1946.

Dr. Vincent had no special funds with which to finance his medical school career and worked each summer as a Pullman porter on the New York Central Railroad. The tally of outstanding Afro-American physicians who worked their way as Pullman porters and Red-Caps would be quite long. This experience gave Dr. Vincent an acquaintance with upper New York State. The resort of Saratoga Springs was quite a Mecca then for the wealthy, and many Howard medical graduates earned their tuition in the summer there. Dr. Vincent later rented a summer cottage for his family at Saratoga.

BELLEVUE

When the time came for Dr. Vincent to seek an internship he applied to Bellevue Hospital in New York and was chosen on a matching basis. After his photograph had been forwarded, however, he was advised that he could not be accepted. But the thing became known and pressures upon Bellevue developed.

The Hon. Edward Johnson, then a New York State Assemblyman, threatened an investigation and the famous surgeon, Dr. John B. Deaver, who was on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania became interested. Dr. Deaver had a relative on the administrative board of Bellevue to whom he highly recommended Dr. Vincent. It is said that Dr. Deaver later told Dr. Vincent in an interview that, "If all black men are as smart as you are, let them all apply." However, his admission to the

internship was delayed, so that he did not enter at the regular time on July 1 but in October of 1918.

When Dr. Vincent's appointment as the first Afro-American interne at New York's Bellevue Hospital was finally announced, it received national publicity, with his photograph in the rotogravure sections of many newspapers.

In his pioneering opportunity at Bellevue Dr. Vincent wrought well. After his internship he served a residency, 1919-20, under the distinguished urologist, Dr. Edward L. Keyes. During his first year he introduced an improved procedure for the surgical relief of varicocele which has stood the test of time and is known as the Vincent operation.

In thus making a noteworthy contribution while in his first year of postgraduate medical training, Dr. Vincent's career has a kind of parallel with that of his pioneering contemporary in New York, Dr. Louis T. Wright, who while an interne at Freedmen's Hospital published the first scientific paper to come from that institution.^{7,8}

The circumstances of the two differed in that Dr. Wright (M.D., Harvard, '15), had interned at Freedmen's because in that day most of the few graduates of white schools had to intern at Freedmen's since the doors were shut elsewhere. There was no atmosphere there to encourage his initiative in gathering the data and publishing his paper on, "The Schick Test with Especial Reference to the Negro."⁹ Such action might have been considered presumptuous by some. Certainly it was never pointed to with pride as a selling point for the hospital and very few house staff members of Freedmen's today are aware that Louis Wright authored the first paper there.

On the other hand, Dr. Vincent (M.D., Pennsylvania, '18) was "on the spot" as the first of his race in an old and outstanding institution and working under one of the leaders in his field of urology. He had to be careful as to how he perfected and put forth an original procedure and getting credit for it after he had done so. It is a tribute to

his chief and associates that the credit was not denied him, though the identity of the originator of the Vincent operation is known to few today, especially Afro-Americans.

Dr. Vincent's record at Bellevue is best described in a letter written by a supporter of the next phase of Dr. Vincent's career, his private hospital project, on the basis of what the writer knew of him at Bellevue. The letter speaks for itself and was addressed to an influential layman whose backing was sought and later obtained, for the hospital. It read:

December 15, 1928

Mr. Chase Mellen
43 Cedar Street,
New York City

Dear Mr. Mellen,

Dr. U. Conrad Vincent has been known to me since 1918 when I endorsed his appointment as a surgical interne at Bellevue Hospital on the service of which I was at that time in charge. His work there, where he became, later on, resident surgeon in charge of the Urological Service, was of the highest order revealing him to be an exceptionally capable man with excellent preparatory grounding (Graduate 1918 University of Pennsylvania Medical School).

He is a man of high character, an able surgeon, well-equipped by education, training and disposition to promote the welfare of his patients and to aid his colleagues in the practice of medicine and surgery. Furthermore his attitude is so thoroughly gentlemanly that he proved himself under my observation persona grata to his superiors *and* (the better sign) to all those *under* his direction i.e. under-staff, nurses, orderlies and patients.

I am glad to endorse this effort of Doctor Vincent to provide a hospital for self-supporting members of his race.

Sincerely yours,

Signed: Alfred T. Osgood, M. D.
65 East 66th Street
New York

THE VINCENT VARICOCELE OPERATION

The original procedure developed by Dr. Vincent was apparently not described by him in a special communication to a medical journal. It is fully acknowledged, however, in Keyes' "Urology," a standard textbook which went through many editions. The author was Edward L. Keyes, M.D., Ph.D., professor of urology at Cornell University and urologist to St. Vincent's and Bellevue Hospitals. It was under Dr. Keyes that Dr. Vincent did his work.

The edition which the present writer used was the prescribed text when he was in medical school and was published in 1924. The Vincent operation is described there as follows on p. 751.¹⁰

"Operations for Varicocele

The Open Operation - 1. Incision in groin, as for a hernia. In subsequent manipulations care must be taken to keep away from the testicle. If it is brought into the wound or traumatized hydrocele will result.

2. The external inguinal ring is exposed and the pampiniform plexus of veins identified as they issue from the ring.

3. The cremaster is divided longitudinally and the veins freed from their surrounding fascia and divided between clamps.

4. The upper end is securely ligated at a point more than a cm. above the cut end. Otherwise the ligature is likely to slip off.

5. The intercolumnar fascia is divided, and with the handle of the scalpel a tunnel burrowed beneath the external oblique to a point opposite the internal ring.

6. The veins are pulled upward, and freed by blunt dissection, until the testicle has been drawn into the upper part of the scrotum, about 2 cm. higher than it should lie.

7. The veins are transfixed and securely ligated, so as to be absolutely sure that this suture, upon which traction is to be made, cannot slip. This suture should be placed on the veins at such a level that when tied at the internal ring the testicle will be suspended in the upper part of the scrotum.

8. With an aneurysm needle each end of this suture is introduced into the

inguinal canal and forced out through the external oblique aponeurosis opposite the internal ring, and there tied.

9. The wound is closed without drainage.

The operation as above described was devised in 1918 by Vincent, and has been used on my service at Bellevue since that time. It is the only operation that sufficiently suspends the testicle to relieve the pull upon the vas which is the usual cause of the testicular neuralgia of which the patient so often complains." (Italics ours)

The presentation in Keyes' textbook is authentic evidence of acceptance of the Vincent procedure. It may not be inferred that this came easily. The following letters, the first to Dr. Vincent from Dr. Keyes of February 19, 1920, the second, apparently a To Whom it May Concern from Dr. Barringer, of March 4, 1920, and the third to Dr. Vincent from Dr. McNeill of March 1, 1920, suggest that there may have been some challenge to the priority affirmation. The comments from those in a best position to know are unequivocal.

February 18th, 1920

Dr. U.C. Vincent,
Resident Surgeon,
Urological Division,
Bellevue Hospital,
New York City.

My Dear Dr. Vincent:-

I am very glad to add my testimony as to the efficacy of your method of operating for varicocele.

One hesitates to call any procedure original, but I have taken some interest in the matter and have found no description of any operation, which either in theory or practice, covers the points that yours does.

The signal advantage of your operation is, that it relieves pain, a virtue which is not shared by any other of the procedures with which I am familiar.

I have watched the cases operated upon by you on my service at Bellevue Hospital and have been delighted with the results obtained.

Very truly yours

Signed: Edward L. Keyes, M.D.
Bellevue Hospital
Department of Urology
1st Avenue and 26th Street
New York

March 4, 1920

During Dr. Vincent's term as Resident Surgeon to the Urological Division, Bellevue Hospital, he has developed an operation for the cure of varicocele. While other previous Residents on this Service have written papers from the Service and developed various devices for use on our Service no one as far as I can remember has done such a very considerable and excellent piece of work as this by Dr. Vincent. I believe it means a very considerable advance in the operation for this condition. There are many people who come into our Service for a varicocele operation with symptoms and in the past I believe that a good many of them after the operation, which we did at that time, left the Service with the same symptoms notwithstanding that we had done the best we could with them. From my personal observation I have watched the results which Dr. Vincent has obtained, and now would not think of doing any other operation. I believe he should be highly commended for his work in this line and take pleasure in hereby doing so.

Submitted

Signed: B.S. Barringer
Assistant Surgeon
Urological Division
Bellevue Hospital

March 1, 1920

Dear Dr. Vincent:

It gives me great pleasure to recommend and congratulate you on your new operation which you have devised for permanent cure of varicocele. I believe that the suspension of the testicle entirely eliminates any future pain or dragging sensation on the inguinal canal or its contents, and I believe that this operation will completely cure in all cases.

Very truly yours,

Signed: Walter H. McNeill, Jr., M.D.
Adjunct attending Urologist
Bellevue Hospital

The established acceptance of the operation is further confirmed by the inclusion of the "Vincent Method of Varicocelelectomy" on p. 78 of the "Manual of Operative and Surgical Knots," published by Ethicon, Inc., a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson, in 1961, 43 years after the procedure was introduced. The Ethicon Manual is a graphic atlas composed of annotated illustrations of all operations included. Figures 1-3 show the Vincent method.

Although this operation was in the textbook used by the present writer in medical school (1928-29) no mention was made of it in the routine lectures in urology, nor during his rotating internship in Freedmen's Hospital the following year (1929-30). Probably the staff was unaware of the ethnic identity of the originator.

The surgical technique devised by Dr. Vincent involves a perceptive appreciation of anatomy. The Department of Anatomy at Penn when he was in medical school was one of the strongest in the country. It was headed by Professor George A. Piersol, who was the editor of Piersol's Human Anatomy, an established text which endeavored to present under one cover in integrated fashion the essentials of developmental, microscopic, gross and applied anatomy. This book was the major effort to this end in this country and the most ambitious of its kind since Jacob Henle (1809-85), the greatest anatomist since Vesalius, had produced in Germany his multi-volume work to encompass all phases of the subject.

It is a tribute to the anatomists under whom he studied that in the first year after he graduated, Dr. Vincent was sufficiently anatomically oriented to develop a surgical technique soundly based on anatomy, which became a permanent contribution. It is extremely doubtful whether the average interne or resident today knows enough anatomy to evolve something comparable to the Vincent method.

HOME TO HARLEM*

When at the end of his hospital residency Dr. Vincent had to sally forth in the wide, wide world for the practice of his profession, he had already decided where he would locate. He was licensed to practice in the State of New York on February 11, 1919, before he left Bellevue, and straightway went uptown on Manhattan to Harlem where he was to spend the rest of his days.

The period was an exciting one. It brought a large literary outpouring of prose and poetry from new and older authors which led to the time being called that of the "New Negro" or the "Negro Renaissance." Many now historic stars in the world of music and entertainment prospered both on Broadway and in Harlem. An imposing block of brownstone houses designed by the famous architect Stanford White on 138th and 139th Streets running from 7th to 8th Avenues came to have Negro owners in the usual way and was known as "Strivers' Row." The 1925 book, "The Negro Negro," edited by Professor Alain Locke of Howard University portrays the renaissance spirit which was abroad. Dr. Locke dedicated

his book to "The Younger Generation" and wrote:

This volume aims to document the New Negro culturally and socially,—to register the transformations of the inner and outer life of the Negro in America that have so significantly taken place in the last few years. There is ample evidence of a New Negro in the latest phases of social change and progress, but still more in the internal world of the Negro mind and spirit.¹¹

The challenges and hopes of the times fired Dr. Vincent's spirit, but he well knew that Harlem was not yet the Promised Land.

HARLEM HOSPITAL

Although Harlem Hospital was a city institution, in late 1919 the staff was lily white and the medical profession had apparently not heard of the New Negro. Dr. Louis T. Wright was the first Negro appointee and he had had to fight his way on at the lowest rung on the ladder. Policy was changed in 1920 resulting in the appointment of Dr. Wright and Dr. Douglass B. Johnson as adjunct visiting surgeons and Dr. Lucien M. Brown and Dr. J.T.W. Granady as adjunct visiting physicians.⁷

In 1925 Dr. Vincent was appointed to the Harlem staff as an attending surgeon in the Division of Urology. Five years later, in March 1930, he found himself dropped from the staff through the medium of an official notice that the old board and visiting staff had been abolished. His name was not on the list of appointees under the reorganization. He made vigorous formal protest and was appointed head of the urological service in 1933. He did not hold this appointment long, however, as he is reported as "recently resigned" in the Corwin-Sturges study published in 1936. This study had been undertaken at the request of the NAACP because "it had been common knowledge for several years that Harlem Hospital is the center of agitation, charges and recriminations. Although colored doctors have been chiefly involved, a number of white doctors have joined with them and been active in fomenting unrest."¹²

SUCCESS IN PRACTICE

City hospitals paid nothing to visiting staff although the appointments had a certain prestige value. Hence physicians had to derive their incomes from other sources, mostly private practice. The New York Times reported that at the age of 35 Dr. Vincent had "built up the largest practice of any Negro physician in New York."

He began modestly enough. On April 23, 1920, he married Miss Naomi Tulane of Montgomery, Alabama. Her late brother, Victor, was long a professor of chemistry at Howard University. On completion of his residency at Bellevue, Dr. Vincent opened his first office in rented rooms at 209 W. 135th Street. Presently he had prospered enough to bring his parents to New York and with the help of funds from his father, bought the building which held his office. In about 1923 he moved onto "Strivers' Row" at 251 W. 138th Street. Here his first child, Ubert Conrad Jr., was born. He later moved his office into this home.

He was a sociable individual and enjoyed the theater,

*Title of a novel of the period by Claude McKay.

particularly musical comedy. He had a tenor voice which was appreciated in parlor circles. Among his patients were many famous entertainers, including the Nicholas Brothers, tap dancers, Eubie Blake, Noble Sissle, and Lottie Gee of "Shuffle Along" fame. The wedding reception of the Hon. Adam C. Powell and Isabelle Washington was held in Dr. Vincent's home. He also numbered among his friends Dr. Clilan B. Powell, radiologist and owner of the *Amsterdam News*, the Paul Robeson family and Bill and Fannie Robinson. He retained many friends from his days at the University of Pennsylvania and liked to visit Philadelphia to attend the annual Penn Relays. He once permitted himself a flashy Stutz Bearcat automobile and bought a summer cottage for his family at Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard Island in Massachusetts, which he had time to visit but little. Status symbols and conspicuous consumption were never a preoccupation with Dr. Vincent, however, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

VINCENT'S SANATORIUM

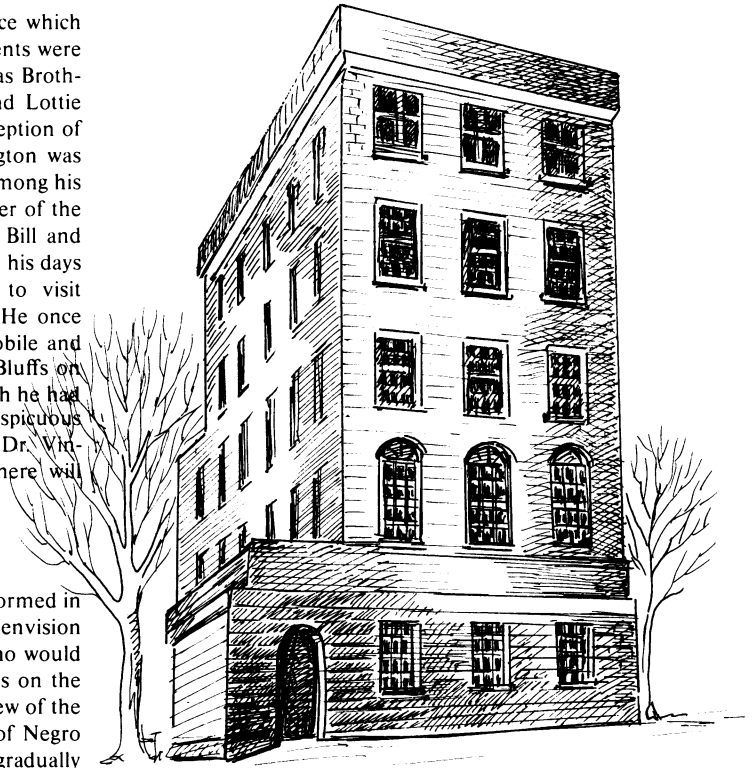
Dr. Vincent's heart lay in a project which had formed in his mind while an interne at Bellevue. He did not envision that as to racial discrimination the walls of Jericho would come tumblin' down no matter how many blasts on the seven trumpets of rams' horns were blown. In view of the obvious need for proper places for the training of Negro physicians and nurses and care for their sick, he gradually conceived the idea of establishing in Harlem a modern sanatorium for the community.

Once his plan was firm, he proceeded quietly. He told a reporter for the *New York Times*, "I don't believe in criticism. It gets us nowhere. I believe simply in working to provide those things experience has taught us we need as a race."

Hospital barriers had forced Negro physicians to open proprietary hospitals of their own in New York as elsewhere in the country.¹³ Two such institutions, the Edgcombe Sanatorium and Wilson's Sanatorium, had existed before Vincent's and survived a little longer. All three were in the same neighborhood. Rising requirements for hospitals made them eventually financially impracticable.

Vincent's Sanatorium was opened on March 17, 1929, at 2438 Seventh Avenue between 137th and 138th Streets. He had bought this five story building with his savings and the proceeds from the sale of some property he owned. Remodelling and renovations costing \$153,000 were required. Finding the money exhausted both Dr. Vincent and his resources, but sincere and influential friends led by Mr. Chase Mellen, a prominent lawyer, sponsored a drive to raise \$15,000 for equipment and prompted a thorough investigation by officials of the Title Guaranty and Trust Company of the doctor's ability to organize and operate a hospital. Convinced, the company made a building loan of \$65,000 on a first mortgage.

Determined to put forward his hospital as a community facility a formal opening day was announced and the 50 bed institution had tours for the public through the entire premises on two successive days. There was excellent newspaper coverage and a real community enthusiasm

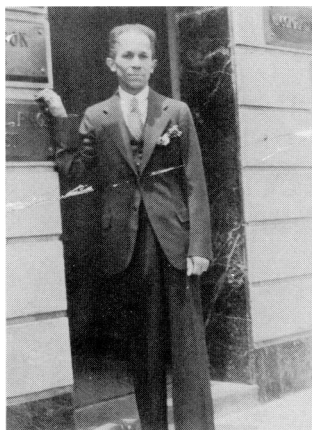


The Vincent Sanatorium at 2348 Seventh Avenue, a 50-bed private institution. March 17, 1929. Closed September 30, 1930.

was engendered.

The superintendent of the institution was Victor H. Tulane, Dr. Vincent's father-in-law. He had been a successful business man in Alabama and was a trustee of Tuskegee Institute. The head nurse was Mrs. Ruby Buster Burke, who had been assistant head nurse in the Harlem Hospital operating room. Miss Sadie Styner, Dr. Vincent's office nurse continued in that capacity. The prescription pharmacy was headed by Oliver N. LaMorell, formerly manager of the Chelsea Pharmacy. The dental unit was headed by Anna Cooper Johnson, D.D.S. Her husband, Earle F. Johnson, was dental technician.

There was an eminent Advisory Board composed of William H. Austin, attorney; Robert W. Bagnall, director of Branches of the NAACP; Harry Bernstein, attorney; Dr. Walter Gray Crump, surgeon of Broad Street Hospital; John R. Hawkins, president of the Prudential Bank of Washington, D.C.; Edmond P. Halaby, of the Department of Finance of the City of New York; Dr. Frederick C. Holden, professor of gynecology, New York University; Solomon Johnson, immigration inspector, N.Y.; Clarence Kelsey, chairman, Board of Directors, Title Guaranty & Trust Co.; William M. Kelley, editor, the *Amsterdam News*; Dr. Edward L. Keyes, professor of urology, Cornell University; Chase Mellen, attorney; Fred R. Moore, editor, the *New York Age*; R.R. Moton, principal of Tuskegee Institute; Leo Fitz Newton, M.D.; George O'Hanlon, M.D., superintendent of Jersey City Hospital; Alfred T. Osgood, M.D., professor of urology, New York



Dr. Vincent in the doorway of his Sanatorium.

University; William Pickens, field secretary, NAACP; L.P. Roberts, M.D.; James C. Thomas, attorney; and Lester J. Unger, M.D.

A more auspicious beginning could hardly have been desired. He had sound professional organization and had established rapport with the community.

''JUST A LITTLE BIT O'LUCK

All Dr. Vincent would have needed for his institution to have been an outstanding success was ''just a little bit o'luck, just a little bit o'bloomin' luck.''* But an unkind fate decreed otherwise. Two matters over which he had no control forced the closing of his hospital a year and a half after it opened.

A septicemic infection suddenly struck him down after he was just getting the hospital into high gear. The accompanying photograph of him standing in front of the hospital entrance after recovery from this illness indicates the weight loss he suffered.

The other and more important factor was that he opened his hospital in the year of the Stock Market crash ''v. the musical, ''My Fair Lady.''

of 1929, which ushered in the Great Depression. The effect of this was to lock up bank credit which was needed for the operation and equipment of the hospital and at the same time reduce the income from patients because people had less money. Thus the Vincent Sanatorium could not get over the initial financial hurdles which are encountered by any enterprise of this kind.

The financial failure of the hospital was naturally a terrible blow, but Dr. Vincent carried on. He moved his office back into his home and in due course regained his strength, as is apparent in the photograph above in which he and Dr. Marshall Ross are standing with the Hon. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. and some political leaders.

His practice continued to prosper and in his latter years, Dr. Cecil Marquez, a 1931 medical graduate of Howard University, was helpful to him. His constitution, however, was not strong and his drive and energy proved too much for it. He became ill of a kidney infection in August 1938. His daughter Jacqueline remembers seeing him being brought up the steps of his home in the arms of his driver. Therapy was not effective and he lingered until December 18, 1938, 18 days short of his 47th birthday.

The following letter released to the public by the Harlem Surgical Society best expresses the evaluation and esteem of Dr. Vincent's contemporaries. This Society had been organized in 1937 as a strictly scientific medical body. It was at first all Negro but later became co-racial.

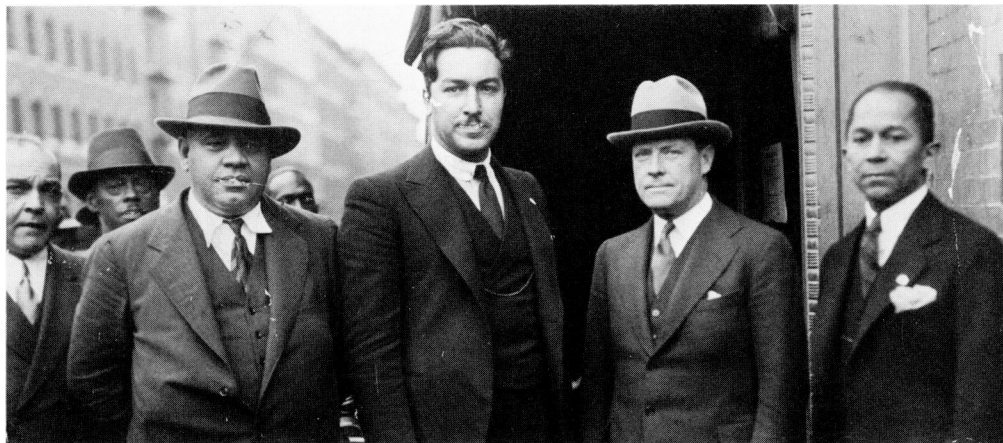
LETTER FROM HARLEM SURGICAL SOCIETY

December 22, 1938

The Harlem Surgical Society, regrets deeply the death of one of its esteemed members, Dr. U. Conrad Vincent. Dr. Vincent by his scientific work reflected also directed alone, the finest private hospital that this community has ever had, and it probably would have been opened today, had it not been for the fact that he became ill about that time.

In addition to being a very able surgeon, Dr. Vincent was always interested in the general welfare of all the people of this community. He rendered great service to the poor of Harlem, as a member of the surgical staff of Harlem Hospital.

Signed: Dr. Louis T. Wright, *President*
Dr. Joel V. Bolden, *Secretary*



Dr. Vincent (right) with (from left) Dr. Marshall Ross, Hon. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. and Mayor McKee.



Dr. and Mrs. Vincent shortly after their marriage.

FAMILY

The Vincents had four children, all young at the time of his passing: Ubert Conrad Jr. was 15, Silvia Naomi 9, Jacqueline Tulane 4, and Barbara Patricia, 18 months. It is a great credit to Mrs. Vincent and the family environment that all have secured a contributory niche in life.

Ubert Conrad, Jr. following a B.S. (Phi Beta Kappa) and M.S. from Columbia spent two years in medical school at Pennsylvania, his father's alma mater, before deciding he preferred some other calling. He did his World War II military service in the Navy and entered the field of clinical psychology in which he is now a doctoral candidate. He is presently a student counsellor at Queen's College.

Daughters Sylvia (Mrs. Jack Corliss) and Jacqueline (Mrs. Robert Bingham) followed the same educational course in different years. Each graduated from the Harlem Hospital School of Nursing and received the B.S. and M.A. in Education from the Teachers College of Columbia University. Mrs. Corliss is an instructor in nursing in New York and Mrs. Bingham an instructor in nursing at the Washington Technical Institute. Daughter Barbara (Mrs. Khotu Radjwani) finished at a school of dental technology and is presently a dentist's assistant in New York.

Their mother, Mrs. Naomi Vincent, continues to reside comfortably in New York. From the Vincent progeny surely some will "again take root downward, and bear fruit upward."

REFLECTIONS

When Dr. Vincent came on the medical scene in 1918 no welcome mat was out anywhere. Although there was a shortage of internes in many places due to World War I, Bellevue did not want to take him after it learned of his race, but had to yield to pressures. Dr. Louis T. Wright just got his foot in the door of Harlem Hospital, a public institution in 1919.

Other cities were no better. In Chicago it was big news when Dr. Walter Grant (M.D., Northwestern, '21) was awarded an internship in Cook County Hospital, another city hospital.¹³ In Cleveland, the City Hospital there did not obtain its first Afro-American interne until 1931 when Dr. Frederick D. Stubbs (M.D., Harvard, '31) was appointed by demand of newly elected Negro members of the City Council.¹⁴ In the Nation's Capital the Gallinger Municipal Hospital did not open its doors until 1948 after a three year fight led by the Medico-Chirurgical Society of the District of Columbia under the presidency of the present writer.¹⁵

There was no way for Dr. Vincent to know that it would be 30 years before the Hill-Burton Hospital Survey and Construction Act would depress racial barriers for internships and residencies by the creation of new hospital beds and another 24 years before the Civil Rights Act of 1964 pushed by President Lyndon B. Johnson would outlaw discrimination both as to patients and staff in hospitals built with the aid of Federal funds, developments in which the seven Imhotep National Conferences on Hospital Integration played a contributory role.^{16,17} All that was before Dr. Vincent with respect to hospitals were the solid walls on every hand.

When at the conclusion of his residency in 1920, he looked at medical faculties other than those of Howard and Meharry, Dr. William Augustus Hinton (M.D., Harvard, '12) was the only Afro-American to be found on any. Dr. Hinton, of the Hinton Test for syphilis, was made an instructor in preventive medicine and hygiene in Harvard Medical School and director of the Wasserman Laboratory of Massachusetts Department of Health in 1915. His Harvard title was changed to that of instructor in bacteriology and immunology in 1921. This he held until 1946, when he served as lecturer until 1949. Then, four years before his retirement in 1953, he was elevated to the rank of clinical professor.¹⁸

Dr. Julian Herman Lewis (M.D., Rush, '17) after receiving a Guggenheim foreign fellowship, served as associate professor of pathology at the University of Chicago from 1927 to 1945. In 1942 he published a well known book, "The Biology of the Negro."¹⁹

A career as an academic clinician could thus have hardly seemed appealing to Dr. Vincent. Of the options open to him, Harlem appeared the most challenging as an opportunity for both the development of his considerable talents and extending the benefits of his services. Hence up to Harlem he did go.

He was fully oriented as to the nature of the highly competitive and never harmonious environment he would encounter among his Afro-American colleagues there. While he nourished his dream of the private hospital, he worked indefatigably building his practice and accumulating some funds.

There have always been several factions, variously based, among the Afro-American physicians of New York. In Dr. Vincent's time some of these centered in a loose way on access to the two pre-existing private institutions there.²⁰ It was natural that when Dr. Vincent opened his own hospital, privilege priority would go to those most sympathetic to and supportive of his own efforts.

He apparently eschewed any controversy which could possibly be avoided, but once in he was always a good fighter. He belonged to the Medical Society of the County of New York and the Harlem Surgical Society. We do not have record of him as being active in other medical organizations.

He did little writing, scientific or otherwise. We have discovered but one paper by him, "The Open Operation," *Surgery, Gynecology and Obstetrics*, v., pp. 558-565, 1929, though there may be others. However, he did not have much time for contribution through clinical research.

Clearly, this gifted man was an involved part of the "New Negro" or the "Harlem Renaissance" through which he lived, though in a strongly individualistic and understandable way. This above all, he was true to himself and thus could not be false to any man.* Today in the perspective of adequate time and of the present writer at age 70, Ubert Conrad Vincent must be accorded a high place in the annals of Afro-American physicians in American medicine.

The vibrant activity of his short but useful life gives a picture of a man who burned his candle at both ends and knew it. He would have said, with Edna St. Vincent Millay:

*My candle burns at both ends,
It will not last the night.
But O, my friends, and Ah, my foes,
It gives a lovely light.*

The candle of Ubert Conrad Vincent did radiate a lovely light 'een though the Promised Land be yet afar.

*Paraphrased from—Polonius to Laertes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is pleased to acknowledge the pleasant and complete cooperation of Mrs. Jacqueline Vincent Bingham for materials, photographs and personal data used in this tribute. Her husband, Robert Bingham (D.D.S.,

Howard, '64) now an oral surgeon, was one of our students in dental school. Mrs. Naida Willette Page, staff artist of the Audio-Visual Section of the Howard University College of Medicine, made the drawing of the Sanatorium from a crude microfilm negative. We were the proud Lord's instrument who steered her into illustration many years ago.

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(Editorial from page 72)

The administration of such a program could be similar to those of existing health plans. This proposal may be objectionable to many since it places control in one area. It also adds another brick in the building of socialized medicine.

If the medical and legal professions are to address themselves to this serious problem,

drastic and possibly, unpopular measures must be enacted. To allow this situation to worsen, health care delivery, as we know it today, will suffer and eventually affect those whom we are committed to help.

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