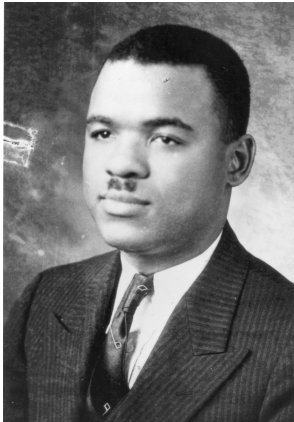


## Atlanta Daily World

### The history-making newspaper with Auburn Avenue roots

For decades, Auburn Avenue was the center of Black life and commerce in Atlanta. Some of the city's most storied institutions have their roots on the thoroughfare. But, Atlanta is constantly changing, and Auburn Avenue has changed with it. Businesses have thrived and failed. Organizations have come and gone. Even the most enduring institutions have not been immune to the change.



*W.A. Scott II*  
*Image via*  
*NewGeorgiaEncyclopedia*

William Alexander "W.A." Scott II was a 26 year old Morehouse graduate when, in August 1928, he founded a newspaper he called the Atlanta World. Before the Atlanta World, Atlanta had been home to other Black newspapers. But, they tended to be short-lived. The World, by contrast, would find quick success. Most Black newspapers in America at that time were published on a weekly basis. But, within four years, the World had become one of America's first Black-owned *daily* newspapers. With this move to daily publication came a new name: the Atlanta Daily World.

From its earliest days, the Atlanta Daily World was not seen as being as aggressive as some other Black newspapers of the day, such as The Chicago Defender. Given this more even-keeled stance, the Daily World was able to secure advertisements from Black and white businesses. These included major local companies, like Rich's Department Store, and nationally-known names, such as Coca-Cola and Sears.

As W. A. Scott's enterprise grew more and more successful, he began publishing other Black newspapers. Beginning with two Tennessee publications, Scott soon expanded to others. The organization, which was eventually called the Scott Newspaper Syndicate, was America's first chain of Black newspapers, with as many as fifty papers at one time.

By 1934, the Atlanta Daily World had been in publication for nearly six years. With the closure of the Atlanta Independent, Scott's paper was the sole journalistic voice for Atlanta's Black community. And, the Newspaper Syndicate was thriving. Unfortunately, W. A. Scott would not be able to enjoy the successes for long. In February 1934, he was shot and killed in a murder that has never been solved. Following his death, W. A.'s brother, Cornelius Scott – known as C. A. – took over leadership of the paper.



*Atlanta Daily World building, Auburn Avenue*  
*Image via theclio*

C.A. Scott maintained the rather conservative viewpoint espoused by the Atlanta Daily World. However, the paper did not shy away from covering major – and sometimes controversial – issues of concern to Black readers. Columns spoke out about Georgia’s white primary system. The paper reported on school segregation, police brutality, and racial discrimination. It encouraged voter registration efforts.

The Daily World also has a connection to a history-making event in American journalism. During his term, President Franklin Roosevelt was known to host lengthy, casual press conferences in the Oval Office. In 1944, a journalist named Harry Alpin attended one of these gatherings. Alpin, who had been assigned to the beat by the Daily World, was the first Black journalist to cover the White House. \*

In the 1960’s, when students at Atlanta’s historically Black colleges and universities organized sit-ins at businesses around the city, the Daily World did not support their plans. The paper discouraged the campaign, urging the students to resolve the abuses “at the conference table, ballot box, and in the courts of law.” Scott himself felt that greater strides would be made through the students working for the change than through protest.



*Atlanta Daily World sign  
Image via wheatstreettowers*

In the 1960s, the Daily World had a circulation of more than 20,000. But, by the year 2000, when W. A. Scott’s granddaughter, Alexis Scott, had taken over as president, that number had decreased. The advent of the internet had led to great changes in news gathering and consumption. And, the Atlanta Daily World’s circulation was hovering around 10,000. Still, though demand changed, the paper persevered, changing its publication schedule and adding an online component. All the while, it retained its Atlanta Daily World moniker.

In 2008, the paper was faced with yet another challenge. On a March evening that year, a tornado tore through downtown Atlanta, leaving a trail of damage in its wake, including at the Auburn Avenue offices of the Atlanta Daily World. The paper’s staff left its longtime home and moved into an office park near the Atlanta airport.

The news that the building would be sold to a buyer who planned to demolish it caused an outcry. By this time, Auburn Avenue had seen its share of change and loss. And, the potential loss of yet another historic building was simply too much. Luckily, though, a local real estate developer stepped in and was able to restore the building.

Change is inevitable, even for a storied institution like the Atlanta Daily World. In more than three quarters of a century, it has survived tragedy, the internet, and many of its competitors. The paper is still read by thousands, but the Scott family no longer oversees the day-to-day operations. Its Auburn Avenue home still stands, but the paper is no longer there.

\* Some sources cite name as Harry McAlpin.

\*\* Images are not cleared for use. Author holds no right to images. \*\*