



Chicago Defender (Images of America)

Myiti Sengstacke Rice

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In 1905, what was to be the largest and most influential black newspaper in the country was born. The Chicago Defender began as a weekly newspaper and led an entire race to leave the oppressive South for a better life in the North. At the helm was one man with a vision and purpose and a slogan that said it all: American race prejudice must be destroyed. Robert Sengstacke Abbott began the Chicago Defender with 25¢ and a dream in his landlady's kitchen. The Defender boasted a circulation of more than 230,000 nationally as the newspaper was secretly delivered by Pullman porters to cities everywhere. Almost overnight, Abbott became one of the few black millionaires of his time. By 1920, the Defender tagline was the World's Greatest Weekly. The story of the Defender is one of inspiration, struggles, and triumphs and of dreams coming true. It became a beacon and voice for those who for years had no voice. The Defender produced talents such as Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, and W. E. B. DuBois. In 1940, Abbott's nephew John H. H. Sengstacke took over as publisher, and by 1956, the Defender was a daily newspaper.

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