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Amsterdam News

Mario A. Charles

College of New Rochelle, mcharles@cnr.edu

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The Encyclopedia of New York City



Office of the Amsterdam News

Amsterdam News. Weekly newspaper, first published in 1909 with John Henry Anderson as its managing editor and an editorial focus on issues of interest to blacks; Sadie Warren Davis became its manager and treasurer in 1921. A strike by the Newspaper Guild led to the acquisition of the newspaper in 1935 by C. B. Powell and P. M. H. Savory. From its inception the newspaper was strongly supportive of civil rights and of Democratic candidates for office. Although in the 1940s it contained gossip of the sort found in the daily tabloids, by the 1970s its tone had become more serious and it was one of the largest and most influential black newspapers in the United States. It was purchased in 1971 by a group that included Percy E. Sutton, H. Carl McCall, and Clarence E. Jones, who became the editor and publisher. Sometimes criticized by activists for its conciliatory politics, in the following decades the newspaper became more confrontational: its editor in the late 1980s, Wilbert A. Tatum, was an outspoken leader in the successful effort to deny a fourth mayoral term to Edward I. Koch. The newspaper also broadened its coverage, at first strongly oriented toward Manhattan, by adding sections on national news and on Brooklyn and Queens. Over the years the staff of the *Amsterdam News* has included such notable writers as Dan Burley, T. Thomas Fortune, Roy Wilkins, and Floyd McKissick. Its circulation is more than eighty thousand.

W. Augustus Low and Virgil A. Clift, eds.: *Encyclopedia of Black America* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981)

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