**From: Introduction to the 1969 reprint of "The Messenger" 1917 - 1921 Vols 1 and 2 of**

**"The Messenger"**

**From the FIRST volume of the reprint done by Negro Universities Press 1969**

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Publication of the Messenger began in November 1917. Although it was intended to be monthly, the journal appeared irregularly in the early years. Lack of money, World War I, paper shortages, and printers 'strikes prevented its regular publication. By December 1919 however, the editors felt confident enough to declare:

“The period of incipiency of The Messenger is now over.  The Messenger Magazine has established itself as a permanent part of the life of the Negro American.”

This statement proved to be overoptimistic, since regular publication did not begin until 1921.

From July of that year until the printing of the final issue in May / June 1928, the Messenger was in fact a monthly.

Because of the irregularity in the numbering of the first three volumes, an analysis of the publishing schedule is provided as a guide:

**Vol 1  No. 11  November 1917**

**Vol 2  No.  1  January 1918**

**No.  7  July 1918**

**- -     March 1919 and supplement**

**- -     May / June 1919**

**No.  7  July 1919      (yes... a 2nd No. 7)**

**No.  8  August 1919**

**No.  9  September 1919**

**No.  10 October 1919**

**No.  11 December 1919**

**No. II     February 1920**

**No. III    March 1920**

**No. IV-V   April/May 1920**

**No. VII    August 1920       (No No. VI)**

**No. VIII   September 1920**

**No. IX     October 1920**

**No. X      November 1920**

**No. XII    December 1920    (No No. XI)**

**Vol 3  No. III    March 1921**

**No. II     July 1921     (yes... No. II follows No. III)**

**No. III    August 1921   (yes... a 2nd No. III)**

**No. IV     September 1921**

**No. V      October 1921**

**No. VI     November 1921**

**No. VII    December 1921**

Publication of the Messenger was erratic, and as can be seen, issues were not always numbered consecutively.

Instead, the issue number usually coincided with the month of the year.  For example, the first issue of Volume 1(which is also the only issue of Volume 1) is No. 11 (November 1917).  (The editors had previously published the Hotel Messenger, which was the social organ of the hotel bellmen and an entirely separate journal.)

A reading of the January 1918 issue indicates that this was the second number published; references to the Christmas season, which would ordinarily appear in the December issue, are evident throughout. The editors apparently did not publish in February, March, April, May, or June of 1918. If they had, “Miss Mary White Ovington's Letter to the Messenger” in the July1918 issue (pp.14-15), in which she comments on articles appearing in the January 1918 issue, presumably would have been published earlier.

Publication of the Messenger was again interrupted until March 1919. (With this issue, numbering temporarily ceased. This was no doubt an acknowledgement of the irregularity of publication.) Evidence for this is found in the July 1918 issue, which contains an advertisement listing articles scheduled to appear in the next issue.  One of these appears in March 1919; the others in subsequent issues.  The unnumbered May/June 1919 issue was the next one published.  This is evident from a reading of the text, which covers events occurring in the intervening

period.

The Messenger did not appear in November 1919, as indicated by the consecutive numbering of the October 1919 and December 1919 issues.  The January 1920 issue was probably never published (see Vol. 2, No. II, .p8), nor were the June 1920 and July 1920 issues (see Vol. 2, No. VII, .p64 ).

Pagination of the December 1920, March 1921, and July 1921 issues is continuous, indicating that no intervening numbers ever appeared.  Beginning in July1921 the magazine was published regularly until 1928, when it ceased publication with the May/June issue.

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(The reprint volumes of The Messenger, published in 1969 in the USA, have no copyright notice, so this introductory text appears to be entirely in the public domain. We sincerely thank those who produced the reprint from which this archive is scanned, and who wrote this note on issue numbering oddities, which we have very slightly edited for greater clarity.)