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BLACK CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

CULTURETECHLENS RESEARCH REPORT · CTL-RD-BIZ-000001

Johnson Publishing Company

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CultureTechLens NFP · Chicago, Illinois

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01 · Identity

Canonical name: Johnson Publishing Company (JPC)

The Johnson Publishing Company was a Chicago-based Black-owned publishing company founded in November 1942 by John H. Johnson, publisher of *Negro Digest* (1942), *Ebony* (1945), *Jet* (1951), *Tan/Tan Confessions*, *Black World*, and other titles, and owner-operator of Fashion Fair Cosmetics, the Ebony Fashion Fair traveling show, WJPC radio, and the JPC Book Division. It operated continuously for 77 years and ended in a Chapter 7 bankruptcy liquidation filed April 9, 2019, in Chicago (Case 19-10236, N.D. Ill.).

Disambiguation. JPC-the-organization is distinct from (a) the **JPC Archive** (the company's photographic and audiovisual archive, a separate entity now jointly owned by the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture and the J. Paul Getty Trust) — linked by the `archived-at` edge, per the audit near-miss rule; (b) the Johnson Publishing Company Building at 820 S. Michigan Avenue (the building is a separate entity; the company `headquartered-at` it); (c) Johnson Products Company, a separate Chicago Black-owned business (founder George E. Johnson; hair-care products) documented in CTL-DR-ECON-001, which Johnson Publishing's business model is sometimes confused with; and (d) Robert L. Johnson (BET founder), who appears in CTL-DR-MEDIA-001 records.

02 · Executive Profile

Johnson Publishing Company (1942–2019) was the largest Black-owned publishing company of its era and one of the most consequential Black businesses in American history. Founded by John H. Johnson on a $500 loan secured by his mother's furniture, JPC proved the existence of a multibillion-dollar Black consumer market to reluctant white corporate advertisers — Zenith signed the first major advertising contract in 1947 — and insisted that ads in its pages feature Black models. Its magazines chronicled Black achievement and Black life for three generations: *Ebony*'s initial 25,000-copy run (November 1945) sold out; *Jet*'s September 1955 publication of the Emmett Till open-casket photographs is widely credited with catalyzing national civil-rights attention; *Ebony* carried Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Advice for Living" column (1957–1958).

CTL establishes: the November 1942 founding; the five-address Chicago headquarters history (Supreme Life Building → 5619 S. State → 1820 S. Michigan → 820 S. Michigan, December 1971–2011 → 200 S. Michigan at dissolution); the product line and its dates; Eunice W. Johnson's distinct roles (named *Ebony*; created the Ebony Fashion Fair, 1958; founded Fashion Fair Cosmetics, 1973); the June 2016 sale of *Ebony* and *Jet* to Clear View Group (price undisclosed); the April 9, 2019 Chapter 7 liquidation; and the July 2019 $30M consortium rescue and July 28, 2022 joint NMAAHC/Getty ownership of the JPC Archive (~4 million images).

What remains uncertain: precise revenue and employment figures (company directories give conflicting numbers); the identity of the $500-loan lender; the primary documentation of the 2009 R.R. Donnelley mortgage; the exact 2016 sale price; and the whereabouts of the company's non-photographic business records. See §28 and `gaps.md`.

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03 · Significance

- **VERIFIED.** JPC was the largest Black-owned publishing company of its era and one of the most consequential Black businesses in American history. (BPM-003 co-jpc; company self-description; Congressional Record tributes.) It created the first sustained, nationally circulated Black-owned picture-magazine infrastructure: *Negro Digest* (1942), *Ebony* (1945), *Jet* (1951).
- **VERIFIED.** JPC demonstrated the economic power of Black consumer markets to white corporate America, converting advertising skepticism into contracts (Zenith 1947, Chrysler 1954, among others) and setting the industry precedent that Black publications could carry national brand advertising.
- **VERIFIED.** Its publications served as the visual and narrative record of the Black freedom struggle for three generations — *Jet*'s Emmett Till photographs (September 1955) and *Ebony*'s documentation of civil-rights leadership are primary-source material in the civil-rights historiography.
- **VERIFIED.** Through Eunice W. Johnson's institutions — the Ebony Fashion Fair (1958–2009; $55M+ raised) and Fashion Fair Cosmetics (1973) — JPC built the first national Black beauty

economy: a traveling couture circuit and the first prestige cosmetics line formulated for Black women, preceding the modern inclusive-beauty industry by four decades.

- **VERIFIED.** The July 2019 $30M rescue of the JPC Archive — the century's largest Black-media archival event (per CTL-DR-MEDIA-001) — preserved roughly 4 million images of 20th-century Black life under joint NMAAHC/Getty stewardship.
- **SUPPORTED.** The company's arc — self-financed Black capital formation, exclusion from bank credit, real-estate self-construction as strategy, diversification, decline under digital disruption, and liquidation — is a case study in both Black business achievement and the structural limits of Black capital access in the 20th century.

Without JPC, the record would lack: the dominant Black picture-magazine tradition of 1945–2019; the most complete commercial photographic archive of Black American life in the 20th century; the first national Black beauty economy; and the template for Black consumer-market advertising economics.

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04 · Names/Aliases

Name	Source	Date range	Grade
Johnson Publishing Company	Company records; press	1942–2019	VERIFIED
Johnson Publishing Co.	Press; legal filings	1942–2019	VERIFIED
JPC	Press; company usage	c. 1960s–2019	VERIFIED
Johnson Publishing Company, LLC	Bankruptcy petition, Case 19-10236 (d.b.a. Fashion Fair Cosmetics)	filed 2019-04-09	VERIFIED
Negro Digest Publishing Co.	Grolier Club exhibition (Vol. 1 masthead)	1942–1945 (approx.)	SUPPORTED
Johnson Publications Inc.	Trade press (andscape)	mid-20th c.	SUPPORTED

Note: The 2019 bankruptcy debtor name "Johnson Publishing Company, LLC" with d.b.a. "Fashion Fair Cosmetics" (EIN 32-0347330) is the legal successor name; it does not indicate a separate company.

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05 · Dates

Date	Event	Grade
1942-11	JPC founded in Chicago by John H. Johnson; *Negro Digest* first issue	VERIFIED
1945-11-01	*Ebony* first issue	VERIFIED
1950-11	*Tan Confessions* first issue	SUPPORTED

Date	Event	Grade
1951-11-01	*Jet* first issue	VERIFIED
1958	Ebony Fashion Fair launched	VERIFIED
1961	Eunice W. Johnson becomes producer/director of the Ebony Fashion Fair	SUPPORTED
1971-12	JPC moves into 820 S. Michigan Ave. HQ	VERIFIED
1973	Fashion Fair Cosmetics founded (Eunice W. Johnson)	VERIFIED
1973-05	WJPC radio purchased (WGRT, $1.8M)	VERIFIED
1994-12	WJPC sold	VERIFIED
2002	Linda Johnson Rice becomes CEO	VERIFIED
2005-08-08	John H. Johnson dies	VERIFIED
2009	Ebony Fashion Fair final season; R.R. Donnelley mortgage against HQ (provisional)	VERIFIED / PROVISIONAL
2010-01-03	Eunice W. Johnson dies	VERIFIED
2011-01	820 S. Michigan HQ sale closes (Columbia College Chicago)	VERIFIED
2014-06	*Jet* print ends	VERIFIED
2016-06	*Ebony* and *Jet* sold to Clear View Group	VERIFIED
2017	820 S. Michigan designated Chicago Landmark; resold to 3L Real Estate	VERIFIED
2019-04-09	Chapter 7 liquidation filed (Case 19-10236, N.D. Ill.)	VERIFIED
2019-07	JPC Archive bought at bankruptcy auction ($30M consortium)	VERIFIED
2019-11	Fashion Fair Cosmetics sold out of bankruptcy ($1.85M)	VERIFIED
2020-12	*Ebony* assets bought by Bridgeman Sports and Media ($14M)	VERIFIED
2022-07-28	JPC Archive ownership transferred jointly to NMAAHC + Getty Research Institute	VERIFIED

06 · Geography

Chicago, Illinois, throughout the company's life. Headquarters history, each address documented (see §11 for building entities):

1. **3501 S. Parkway Ave** (now Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive), inside the Supreme Life Building — 1942–1943. Johnson's first office was in attorney Earl B. Dickerson's law library on the building's second floor. The company operated from the SLL law library in its earliest days.

2. **5619 S. State Street**, Washington Park — purchased 1943 (a small one-story retail/storefront building, $4,000). Extant as of the City's landmark report.
3. **1820 S. Michigan Avenue** — purchased and rehabilitated 1949 (the former Hursen Funeral Home; demolished). The company remained through 1971.
4. **820 S. Michigan Avenue** — purpose-built 11-story headquarters, December 1971–2011 (sale late 2010, closed January 2011). Designed by Black architect John Warren Moutoussamy; the first Black-owned building in Chicago's Loop and the only Chicago high-rise designed by an African American; designated a Chicago Landmark (fall 2017).
5. **200 S. Michigan Avenue, Suite 900, Chicago, IL 60604** — final principal place of business, per the April 9, 2019 bankruptcy petition.

Migration arc: the company's geography is a South-Side-to-Loop ascent — from the Black Belt (Supreme Life Building, 5619 S. State) up Michigan Avenue into downtown, a deliberate capital-formation strategy culminating in the self-built 820 S. Michigan tower.

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07 · Biography/History

Founding (1942). John H. Johnson, an office assistant and in-house magazine editor at Chicago's Supreme Life Insurance Company (later Supreme Liberty Life), conceived a Black *Reader's Digest*-style magazine while clipping Black newspapers for his employer's publication. Unable to obtain a bank loan — in his own account, because banks would not lend to Black borrowers — he borrowed $500 using his mother's furniture as collateral, mailed 20,000 charter-subscription offers to Supreme Life policyholders at $2 each, received 3,000 replies ($6,000), and printed the first issue of *Negro Digest* in November 1942. Early distribution was built through guerrilla tactics: co-workers asking for the magazine at South Side newsstands, friends buying copies Johnson then reimbursed and resold, and mail carriers used to map target neighborhoods. Within a year circulation reached 50,000; Eleanor Roosevelt's 1943 "If I Were a Negro" contribution doubled it overnight. (Claims C-001, C-002, C-003.)

Building the empire (1945–1971). *Ebony* launched November 1, 1945 — patterned on *Life*/*Look*, named by Eunice Johnson "thinking of the dark wood," 25,000 copies selling out. Zenith signed the first major advertising contract in 1947; by 1948 Pepsi-Cola, Colgate, Beech-Nut, Seagram, and Remington Rand advertised; Chesterfield ran the first full-color ads in a Black magazine; Chrysler signed in 1954. In 1952 Johnson told *Advertising Age* the Black consumer market, "$15 billion strong," was "ripe and ready." JPC insisted advertisements feature Black models. *Jet* launched November 1, 1951, as a pocket-size weekly billed "The Weekly Negro News Magazine." The company added *Tan Confessions* (1950), *Hue* and *Copper Romance* (1953), *Ebony Jr!* (1973), *Ebony Man* (1985), *Ebony South Africa* (1995), a book division, Supreme Beauty Products, Mahogany Travel, and EBCO International. In 1958 Eunice Johnson launched the Ebony Fashion Fair from a Jessie Dent/Dillard University charity fundraiser; she produced and directed it from 1961, building a 200-city traveling couture circuit that raised over $55 million for charity and

scholarships. Unable to find makeup for her models, she founded Fashion Fair Cosmetics in 1973 — the first national prestige makeup line for Black women. (Claims C-017–C-027, C-034, C-035.)

Movement years. JPC's publications were the movement's picture press. *Jet*'s September 1955 publication of David Jackson's open-casket photographs of Emmett Till is widely credited with catalyzing national attention to the lynching. *Ebony* published Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Advice for Living" column (1957–1958). Staff photographer Moneta Sleet Jr. chronicled King for 13 years; his 1969 Pulitzer Prize for the Coretta Scott King funeral photograph made him the first African American man to win the Pulitzer in journalism. Johnson himself served as a presidential envoy — accompanying Vice President Nixon to nine African nations (1957), special ambassador to the Ivory Coast (JFK, 1961) and to Kenya (LBJ), and a Nixon appointee to the UN 25th Anniversary commission. (Claims C-009, C-010, C-020, C-047, C-048.)

The tower and the peak. In December 1971 JPC moved into its purpose-built 11-story headquarters at 820 S. Michigan Avenue, designed by Black architect John Warren Moutoussamy — Johnson's answer to a decade of bank refusals to finance the building, and the first Black-owned building in Chicago's Loop. The land had been bought for $250,000 cash through a white lawyer acting in trust after agents refused to deal with Johnson once they learned he was Black. The company bought WGRT radio for $1.8 million in May 1973 (WJPC — the first Black-owned Chicago radio station; sold December 1994). At peak the company reported on the order of $425–488 million in annual revenue and roughly 2,000 employees (figures vary by source and year; see §25). (Claims C-025, C-030, C-031, C-036.)

Succession and decline. John H. Johnson led the company until his death on August 8, 2005. Daughter Linda Johnson Rice became CEO in 2002 and the company's last chairman/CEO. Eunice Johnson died January 3, 2010. Desiree Rogers served as CEO from August 2010 (returning to Chicago after serving as President Obama's White House Social Secretary, 2008–2010). *Jet* ended print in June 2014; in 2015 JPC sought $40 million for its photo archive to reduce debt. In June 2016 JPC sold *Ebony* and *Jet* to Clear View Group — an Austin, Texas-based Black-owned private equity firm chaired by Michael Gibson — which created Ebony Media Corp; JPC retained Fashion Fair Cosmetics and the photo archive. The sale price was never publicly disclosed. (Claims C-008, C-038, C-040, C-046.)

Bankruptcy and afterlife. On April 9, 2019, Johnson Publishing Company, LLC filed for Chapter 7 liquidation (Case 19-10236, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, N.D. Illinois), listing 200–999 creditors and $10–50 million in assets and liabilities; trustee Miriam "Mimi" Stein was appointed. The company blamed a "tidal wave of marketplace changes and business issues": the bankruptcy of a major retailer carrying Fashion Fair Cosmetics, a costly product recall, and digital competition. The archive — pledged years earlier to secure a $12 million loan from Capital Holdings V, LLC (Mellody Hobson and George Lucas), in default for about three years — was bought at the July 2019 bankruptcy auction for $30 million by a consortium of the Ford Foundation, the J. Paul Getty Trust, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. On July 28, 2022, ownership was transferred jointly to the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture and the Getty Research Institute, which is

physically housing and digitizing the archive with a $30 million Getty commitment and a public-access target of 2029. Fashion Fair Cosmetics was sold out of bankruptcy in November 2019 to Cheryl Mayberry McKissack and Desiree Rogers for $1.85 million. *Ebony*'s assets were bought by Bridgeman Sports and Media for $14 million in December 2020 and relaunched in March 2021. (Claims C-041–C-046.)

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08 · Chronology

- 1942-11 — JPC founded; *Negro Digest* first issue — VERIFIED — AA Registry; Congressional Record; Grolier Club
- 1943 — Eleanor Roosevelt "If I Were a Negro" contribution doubles *Negro Digest* circulation — SUPPORTED — Grolier Club exhibition; FDR Library
- 1943 — JPC purchases 5619 S. State St. building ($4,000) — SUPPORTED — Chicago Landmark Designation Report; thefreelibrary chronology
- 1945-11-01 — *Ebony* first issue; 25,000 copies sell out — VERIFIED — Ebony 75th anniversary; Grolier Club
- 1946-03 — First four-color *Ebony* cover (Lena Horne) sells 275,000 copies — SUPPORTED — thefreelibrary chronology
- 1947 — Zenith signs first major advertising contract — VERIFIED — Congressional Record; Manchester thesis
- 1949 — JPC moves to 1820 S. Michigan Ave. (former Hursen Funeral Home) — VERIFIED — Chicago Landmark Designation Report
- 1950-11 — *Tan Confessions* first issue — SUPPORTED — Wikipedia JPC; Ohio University thesis
- 1951-11-01 — *Jet* first issue ("The Weekly Negro News Magazine") — VERIFIED — Ebony 75th; AP
- 1952 — Johnson tells *Advertising Age* the Black market is "$15 billion strong" and "ripe and ready" — VERIFIED — ECON-001; Hicks/Forbes reprint
- 1953-11 — *Hue* and *Copper Romance* launched — SUPPORTED — Wikipedia JPC
- 1954 — Chrysler signs as advertiser — VERIFIED — Congressional Record
- 1955-09-15 — *Jet* publishes Emmett Till open-casket photographs (Sept 15 issue favored) — VERIFIED — Library of Congress (Booker oral history)
- 1957–1958 — *Ebony* publishes MLK's "Advice for Living" column — VERIFIED — BPM-003
- 1958 — Ebony Fashion Fair launched (Jesse Dent/Dillard fundraiser) — VERIFIED — multiple histories
- 1961 — Eunice W. Johnson becomes producer/director of Ebony Fashion Fair — SUPPORTED — Essence; Black Enterprise; Delta Sigma Theta
- 1966 — John H. Johnson receives NAACP Spingarn Medal — VERIFIED — Encyclopedia.com; Congressional Record

- 1969 — Moneta Sleet Jr. wins Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography — VERIFIED — Swann Galleries; Newseum
- 1971-12 — JPC moves into 820 S. Michigan Ave. HQ — VERIFIED — Preservation Chicago; Landmark Designation Report
- 1973 — Fashion Fair Cosmetics founded — VERIFIED — Essence; HBO Max documentary coverage
- 1973-05 — WJPC radio purchased (WGRT, $1.8M) — VERIFIED — BPM-003; FundingUniverse
- 1973-05 — *Ebony Jr!* launched — SUPPORTED — Wikipedia JPC
- 1982 — Johnson first African American on the Forbes 400 — VERIFIED — NPR
- 1985 — *Ebony* peak circulation ~2.3M (40th year) — VERIFIED — AP obit
- 1985-11 — *Ebony Man: EM* launched — SUPPORTED — Wikipedia JPC
- 1987 — Johnson named *Black Enterprise* Entrepreneur of the Decade — SUPPORTED — Encyclopedia.com
- 1994-12 — WJPC sold — VERIFIED — FundingUniverse; BPM-003
- 1995-11/12 — *Ebony South Africa* launched — SUPPORTED — Wikipedia JPC; Congressional Record
- 1996 — Johnson awarded Presidential Medal of Freedom — VERIFIED — multiple sources
- 2002 — Linda Johnson Rice becomes CEO — VERIFIED — BPM-003
- 2005-08-08 — John H. Johnson dies — VERIFIED — AP
- 2009 — Ebony Fashion Fair final season — VERIFIED — Black Enterprise
- 2009 — R.R. Donnelley takes ~$12M mortgage against HQ over unpaid printing bills — PROVISIONAL — BPM-003 red-team (needs primary)
- 2010-01-03 — Eunice W. Johnson dies — VERIFIED — Black Enterprise; Essence; Delta Sigma Theta
- 2010-08-10 — Desiree Rogers named CEO — SUPPORTED — ChicagoTalks/Columbia
- 2010 (sale) / 2011-01 (close) — 820 S. Michigan sold to Columbia College Chicago — VERIFIED — NPR; BPM-003 red-team resolution
- 2014-06 — *Jet* print ends (digital-only) — VERIFIED — AP
- 2015 — JPC offers photo archive for sale, seeking $40M — PROVISIONAL — CJR
- 2016-06 — *Ebony* and *Jet* sold to Clear View Group; Ebony Media Corp created — VERIFIED — NPR
- 2017 (fall) — 820 S. Michigan designated Chicago Landmark — VERIFIED — Preservation Chicago
- 2017-11 — 820 S. Michigan resold to 3L Real Estate ($10M); converted to 150 apartments — VERIFIED — press; Wikipedia JPC
- 2019-04-09 — Chapter 7 liquidation filed (Case 19-10236, N.D. Ill.) — VERIFIED — bankruptcy petition (Scribd copy); AP

- 2019-06 — *Ebony* print ends — VERIFIED — BPM-003
- 2019-07 — JPC Archive bought at auction ($30M consortium) — VERIFIED — Pulitzer.org; The Art Newspaper
- 2019-11 — Fashion Fair Cosmetics sold ($1.85M, Mayberry McKissack/Rogers) — VERIFIED — Essence; Hollywood Reporter
- 2020-12 — *Ebony* assets bought by Bridgeman Sports and Media ($14M) — VERIFIED — BPM-003; NPR
- 2021-03 — *Ebony* relaunched — VERIFIED — NPR
- 2022-07-28 — JPC Archive ownership transferred jointly to NMAAHC + Getty Research Institute — VERIFIED — The Art Newspaper; Hyperallergic
- 2024 — Rebuild Foundation exhibition "Theaster Gates: When Clouds Roll Away" (Stony Island Arts Bank) incorporates furnishings Gates salvaged from 820 S. Michigan in 2010 — SUPPORTED — Wikipedia JPC
- 2029 (target) — Public access to JPC Archive — PROVISIONAL — Getty event copy; CJR

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09 · People

Founders and family

- **John H. Johnson (1918-01-19 – 2005-08-08)** — Founder, publisher, chairman. Born John Harold Johnson in Arkansas City, Arkansas, grandson of enslaved people; moved to Chicago 1933; DuSable High School honor student (class president, school-paper editor, graduated 1936); office assistant and in-house magazine editor at Supreme Liberty Life Insurance; took courses at the University of Chicago and Northwestern (no degree). Founded JPC November 1942; led it until his death. Honors: NAACP Spingarn Medal (1966), *Black Enterprise* Entrepreneur of the Decade (1987), Presidential Medal of Freedom (1996), first African American on the Forbes 400 (1982), 35 honorary doctorates. Married Eunice Walker, June 21, 1941, Selma, Alabama. Children: John Harold Johnson Jr. (1956–1981; died of sickle-cell anemia) and Linda Johnson Rice. Presidential envoy roles (see C-048). VERIFIED. Canon ID: `canon-john-h-johnson`.
- **Eunice W. Johnson (1916 – 2010-01-03)** — Secretary-treasurer of JPC; named *Ebony* ("thinking of the dark wood"); created and produced/directed the Ebony Fashion Fair (show launched 1958; she directed from 1961 to 2009); founded Fashion Fair Cosmetics (1973). Born Selma, Alabama, to a physician father and educator mother; maternal grandfather founded and led Selma University; Talladega College (sociology, art minor); Loyola University Chicago (master's, social work); journalism at Northwestern; interior decorating at Ray-Vogue. Delta Sigma Theta member. Black Enterprise's 2010 obituary calls her co-founder of JPC; CTL grades formal co-founder status PROVISIONAL. Died at her Chicago home, age 93. VERIFIED except co-founder status. Dossier-local ID: `RD-BIZ-000001-002`.

- **Linda Johnson Rice (b. 1958)** — Daughter of John H. and Eunice Johnson; president/COO, then CEO of JPC (2002–2019); the company's last chairman/CEO. VERIFIED. Dossier-local ID: `RD-BIZ-000001-003`.

Leadership and staff

- **Desiree Rogers** — CEO of JPC from August 10, 2010; previously White House Social Secretary under President Obama (Nov 2008–Feb 2010). Partnered with Linda Johnson Rice to lead the company 2010–2017; with Cheryl Mayberry McKissack bought Fashion Fair Cosmetics out of bankruptcy (Nov 2019). SUPPORTED. Dossier-local ID: `RD-BIZ-000001-004`.
- **Ben Burns (1913–2000)** — Founding editor of *Ebony* (1945) and, per BPM-003, of *Jet*; a white editor whose early sensational editorial tone was removed in the 1953–54 recession-era repositioning; praised Lerone Bennett Jr. as his successor-era "resident history buff." Founding-editor role VERIFIED; departure circumstances SUPPORTED. Dossier-local ID: `RD-BIZ-000001-005`.
- **Era Bell Thompson (1905–1986)** — Pioneering Black woman editor at *Ebony* (associate editor, then editor); brought international coverage of the global Black experience. SUPPORTED. Dossier-local ID: `RD-BIZ-000001-006`.
- **Lerone Bennett Jr. (1928-10-17 – 2018-02-14)** — *Jet* city editor (1952–53); *Ebony* associate editor (1953), executive editor (1958–); historian and author (*Before the Mayflower*, originated as *Ebony* series; *Forced Into Glory*); ghost-wrote Johnson's autobiography *Succeeding Against the Odds*. Over 50 years with JPC. VERIFIED. Dossier-local ID: `RD-BIZ-000001-007`.
- **Simeon Booker (1918–2017)** — *Jet* Washington bureau chief (~1954–2007); reported the Emmett Till story for *Jet*. VERIFIED (Library of Congress oral history). Dossier-local ID: `RD-BIZ-000001-008`.
- **Robert E. Johnson (1922 – 1995/1996)** — Associate publisher and executive editor of *Jet*; joined February 1953. PROVISIONAL (weak-source only; BPM-003 red-team downgrade). Death year contested in CTL records (1995 vs 1996) — record both, resolve before publication. Dossier-local ID: `RD-BIZ-000001-009`.
- **Moneta Sleet Jr. (1926-02-14 – 1996-09-30)** — Staff photographer, *Ebony* (1955–1996); 41-year career; chronicled MLK and the civil-rights movement for 13 years; 1969 Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography (Coretta Scott King at MLK's funeral) — first African American man to win the Pulitzer in journalism. VERIFIED. Dossier-local ID: `RD-BIZ-000001-010`.
- **David Jackson (1922–2008)** — Staff photographer, *Jet*; took the Emmett Till open-casket photographs published in *Jet*, September 1955. VERIFIED. Dossier-local ID: `RD-BIZ-000001-011`.
- **Isaac Sutton (1923–1995)** — Staff photographer, *Ebony*; 41-year career; co-subject with Sleet of Theaster Gates's *Black Image Corporation* (2018). SUPPORTED. Dossier-local ID: `RD-BIZ-000001-012`.
- **Ordinary workers.** JPC employed on the order of 2,000 people at its 2000s peak (Congressional Record; FundingUniverse), "more than one hundred" by November 1955 (Hicks), and a national network of newsstand salesmen and mail-carrier distributors in its

early years. Individual rank-and-file workers are largely unnamed in the sources consulted — a documented gap (see §28). Sales and distribution workers were essential to the 1942–43 circulation build (SUPPORTTED as a business fact; individual identities UNRESOLVED).

10 · Organizations

- **Supreme Liberty Life Insurance Company** (later Supreme Life) — John H. Johnson's employer (1936–1943); JPC's first offices sat inside its building; its policyholder mailing list supplied JPC's first 3,000 subscribers. Canon ID: `canon-supreme-life-insurance`. Relationship: Johnson `employed-by`; JPC's first magazine `mailed-to` its policyholders; JPC first `headquartered-at` its building (the building is a separate entity).
- **Clear View Group** — Austin, Texas-based Black-owned private equity firm (chairman Michael Gibson). Acquired *Ebony* and *Jet* from JPC, June 2016; created **Ebony Media Corp** as the new publisher. Terms not publicly disclosed. Dossier-local IDs: `RD-BIZ-000001-020`, `RD-BIZ-000001-021`.
- **Bridgeman Sports and Media** — Acquired *Ebony* assets December 2020 ($14M); relaunched March 2021. Dossier-local ID: `RD-BIZ-000001-022`.
- **R.R. Donnelley** — Printer of *Ebony*/*Jet*; took an alleged ~$12M mortgage against JPC HQ in 2009 over unpaid printing bills. PROVISIONAL. Dossier-local ID: `RD-BIZ-000001-023`.
- **Capital Holdings V, LLC** (Mellody Hobson / George Lucas) — Held a $12M loan secured by the JPC Archive; in default ~3 years pre-bankruptcy. SUPPORTED. Dossier-local ID: `RD-BIZ-000001-024`.
- **The 2019 consortium:** Ford Foundation; J. Paul Getty Trust; John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (Smithsonian Institution's purchaser-role per The Art Newspaper, disputed by Pulitzer's four-foundation account). Jointly acquired the JPC Archive for $30M, July 2019. Dossier-local IDs: `RD-BIZ-000001-030–033`.
- **Successor custodians:** National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC); J. Paul Getty Trust / Getty Research Institute — joint owners of the JPC Archive from July 28, 2022. Dossier-local IDs: `RD-BIZ-000001-034`, `RD-BIZ-000001-035`.
- **Columbia College Chicago** — Bought 820 S. Michigan (sale 2010, closed Jan 2011). **3L Real Estate** — bought it November 2017 ($10M); converted to 150 apartments. Dossier-local IDs: `RD-BIZ-000001-036`, `RD-BIZ-000001-037`.
- **Landmarks Illinois / Museum of Food and Drink (MOFAD)** — Recipients of the Ebony Test Kitchen after the 3L conversion. Dossier-local IDs: `RD-BIZ-000001-038`, `RD-BIZ-000001-039`.
- **Rebuild Foundation** — 2024 exhibition "Theaster Gates: When Clouds Roll Away" at the Stony Island Arts Bank incorporated furnishings Theaster Gates salvaged from 820 S. Michigan in 2010. Dossier-local ID: `RD-BIZ-000001-040`.
- **Cheryl Mayberry McKissack / Desiree Rogers** — Buyers of Fashion Fair Cosmetics from bankruptcy (Nov 2019, $1.85M); relaunched the brand (vegan/cruelty-free, Sephora). Dossier-local IDs: `RD-BIZ-000001-041`, `RD-BIZ-000001-004` (Rogers).

- **Advertisers (organizations):** Zenith Radio (first major contract, 1947); Pepsi-Cola, Colgate, Beech-Nut, Seagram, Remington Rand (by 1948); Chesterfield (first full-color ads in a Black magazine); Chrysler (1954). Relationships: each `advertised-in` *Ebony* (and some *Jet*). Dossier-local IDs: `RD-BIZ-000001-050–055`.

11 · Places

- **Supreme Life Building, 3501 S. Parkway Ave (now Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive), Chicago** — JPC's first home (1942–43); Johnson's office in Earl B. Dickerson's second-floor law library. Dossier-local: `RD-BIZ-000001-060`.
- **5619 S. State Street, Washington Park, Chicago** — JPC's first owned building (1943–1949), a one-story retail building; extant per the City landmark report. Dossier-local: `RD-BIZ-000001-061`.
- **1820 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago** — JPC HQ 1949–1971 (former Hursen Funeral Home, rehabilitated; demolished). Dossier-local: `RD-BIZ-000001-062`.
- **820 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago (Johnson Publishing Company Building)** — Purpose-built 11-story HQ, December 1971–2011; designed by John Warren Moutoussamy; first Black-owned building in Chicago's Loop; only Chicago high-rise designed by an African American; Chicago Landmark (fall 2017); converted to 150 rental apartments ("820Michigan") by 3L Real Estate; rooftop Ebony/Jet sign preserved. Separate entity from the company. Dossier-local: `RD-BIZ-000001-063`.
- **200 S. Michigan Avenue, Suite 900, Chicago, IL 60604** — JPC's final principal place of business (2019 petition). Dossier-local: `RD-BIZ-000001-064`.
- **Washington, DC** — The JPC Archive is physically housed at the NMAAHC. The archive, not the company, has the DC connection.

12 · Events

- **1942-11 — Founding.** JPC established; *Negro Digest* first issue (3,000 copies; $6,000 from charter subscriptions).
- **1943-10 — The Eleanor Roosevelt boost.** Roosevelt's "If I Were a Negro" article doubles *Negro Digest* circulation 50,000 → 100,000.
- **1945 — War Production Board paper crisis.** Ordered to cease publishing *Negro Digest* under Regulation L-244; Johnson pled his case before the appeals board without a lawyer and won. (thefreelibrary chronology; SUPPORTED — include with source caveat.)
- **1955-09 — The Till photographs.** *Jet* publishes David Jackson's open-casket photographs of Emmett Till (Sept 15 issue favored); the issue is reprinted — the first *Jet* reprint ever.
- **1969 — The Pulitzer.** Moneta Sleet Jr. wins for the Coretta Scott King funeral photograph.
- **1971-12 — The tower opens.** JPC moves into 820 S. Michigan; Ebony runs a September 1972 spread of the "new headquarters" (public debut).

- **2010-11 — The building is sold.** 820 S. Michigan sale to Columbia College Chicago (closed Jan 2011); furnishings salvaged by Theaster Gates.
- **2016-06 — The magazines are sold.** Clear View Group acquisition ends 71 years of Johnson-family ownership of *Ebony* and *Jet*.
- **2019-04-09 — The liquidation.** Chapter 7 filing; trustee Miriam "Mimi" Stein appointed. The company states it was "caught in a tidal wave of marketplace changes and business issues which, despite exhaustive efforts, could not be overcome."
- **2019-07 — The rescue.** The $30M consortium buys the archive at the bankruptcy auction — the century's largest Black-media archival event (CTL-DR-MEDIA-001).
- **2022-07-28 — The transfer.** Joint NMAAHC/Getty ownership begins.

13 · Works/Products

Magazines (all JPC unless noted)

Title	Run	Notes	Grade
Negro Digest	Nov 1942 – Nov 1951; revived Jun 1961; renamed *Black World* May 1970 – Apr 1976	First JPC publication; Black *Reader's Digest*	VERIFIED
Ebony	Nov 1, 1945 – Jun 2016 (JPC)	Flagship; named by Eunice Johnson; 25,000 first run sold out	VERIFIED
Jet	Nov 1, 1951 – Jun 2014 print (JPC to 2016)	Pocket weekly; "The Weekly Negro News Magazine"	VERIFIED
Tan Confessions → *Tan* → *Black Stars*	Nov 1950 – Aug 1952 → Sep 1952 – Oct 1971 → Nov 1971 – Jul 1981	True-confessions lineage	SUPPORTED
Hue; *Copper Romance*	Nov 1953 –	Early-1950s titles	SUPPORTED
Ebony Jr!	May 1973 – Oct 1985; online 2007	Children's magazine	SUPPORTED
Ebony Man: EM	Nov 1985 – Jan 1998	Men's title	SUPPORTED
E Style	Sep 1993 – (catalog w/ Spiegel)	Catalog venture	PROVISIONAL
Ebony South Africa	Nov/Dec 1995 – Sep 2000	South African edition	SUPPORTED

Other products and divisions

- **Fashion Fair Cosmetics** (1973–2019 under JPC; revived 2019–) — first national prestige makeup line formulated for Black women; founded by Eunice W. Johnson; at peak (2003) ~$56M sales (Fortune via press); d.b.a. on the 2019 bankruptcy petition; sold Nov 2019 for $1.85M.

- **Ebony Fashion Fair** (1958–2009) — traveling couture show; 200+ cities (US, Canada, Caribbean, England); $55M+ raised for charity/scholarships; world's largest traveling fashion show of its kind.
- **WJPC radio** (1973–1994) — WGRT bought May 1973 for $1.8M (first Black-owned Chicago radio station); sold December 1994. Canon: `canon-wjpc`.
- **JPC Book Division** — published *Before the Mayflower* (from Bennett's *Ebony* series), *Succeeding Against the Odds*, and others.
- **Supreme Beauty Products** (Duke/Raveen) — former division.
- **Mahogany Travel**; **EBCO International** (51%, South Africa) — diversification arms.
- **JPC Consumer Products, LLC** (Ebony lifestyle branding); **Ebony/Jet Entertainment Group, LLC** (branded multimedia; *Ebony/Jet Showcase* TV) — later-era divisions, thinly documented.
- **Beauty Salon** (company formed by Johnson in the 1950s to advertise its own products in JPC pages when mainstream sponsors balked) — Congressional Record; SUPPORTED.
- **EbonyJet.com** (c. 2007–2016) — branded web presence.

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14 · Relationships

The relationship layer is this dossier's spine. Every edge below also appears in `relationships.json` with provenance and grade (Appendix A). Only VERIFIED edges are cleared for the verified-only graph.

Founders ↔ company - John H. Johnson → `founded` → Johnson Publishing Company (1942-11) — VERIFIED - Eunice W. Johnson → `executive-of` → JPC (secretary-treasurer) — VERIFIED - Eunice W. Johnson → `co-founded` → JPC — PROVISIONAL (Black Enterprise obituary; CTL has not found incorporation records confirming formal co-founder status) - Linda Johnson Rice → `ceo-of` → JPC (2002–2019) — VERIFIED - Desiree Rogers → `ceo-of` → JPC (2010–2017) — SUPPORTED

Company ↔ publications - JPC → `published` → *Negro Digest* (1942–1976, with hiatus/rename) — VERIFIED - JPC → `published` → *Ebony* (1945–2016) — VERIFIED - JPC → `published` → *Jet* (1951–2016) — VERIFIED - JPC → `published` → *Tan Confessions*/*Tan*/*Black Stars* (1950–1981) — SUPPORTED - JPC → `published` → *Ebony Jr!*, *Ebony Man*, *Ebony South Africa*, *Hue*, *Copper Romance* — SUPPORTED

Company ↔ products and divisions - JPC → `owned` → Fashion Fair Cosmetics (1973–2019) — VERIFIED - JPC → `operated` → Ebony Fashion Fair (1958–2009) — VERIFIED - JPC → `owned` → WJPC radio (1973–1994) — VERIFIED - JPC → `operated` → JPC Book Division — SUPPORTED - JPC → `operated` → Supreme Beauty Products; Mahogany Travel; EBCO International — SUPPORTED

Company ↔ people (workers) - Moneta Sleet Jr. → `employed-by` → JPC/*Ebony* (staff photographer, 1955–1996) — VERIFIED - David Jackson → `employed-by` → JPC/*Jet* (staff photographer) — VERIFIED - Isaac Sutton → `employed-by` → JPC/*Ebony* (staff photographer) — SUPPORTED - Ben Burns → `founding-editor-of` → *Ebony* (1945) — VERIFIED - Lerone Bennett Jr. → `executive-`

`editor-of` → *Ebony* (1958–) — VERIFIED - Simeon Booker → `bureau-chief-of` → *Jet* (Washington, ~1954–2007) — VERIFIED - Era Bell Thompson → `editor-of` → *Ebony* — SUPPORTED - Robert E. Johnson → `executive-editor-of` → *Jet* — PROVISIONAL

Company ↔ founders' family - Eunice W. Johnson → `spouse-of` → John H. Johnson (m. 1941-06-21) — VERIFIED - Eunice W. Johnson → `named` → *Ebony* — VERIFIED - Eunice W. Johnson → `founded` → Fashion Fair Cosmetics (1973) — VERIFIED - Eunice W. Johnson → `created` → Ebony Fashion Fair (1958) — VERIFIED - Linda Johnson Rice → `daughter-of` → John H. Johnson; → `daughter-of` → Eunice W. Johnson — VERIFIED

Company ↔ advertisers and markets - Zenith → `advertised-in` → *Ebony* (first major contract, 1947) — VERIFIED - Chrysler → `advertised-in` → *Ebony* (1954) — VERIFIED - Chesterfield → `advertised-in` → *Ebony* (first full-color ads in a Black magazine) — SUPPORTED - Pepsi-Cola; Colgate; Beech-Nut; Seagram; Remington Rand → `advertised-in` → *Ebony* (by 1948) — SUPPORTED - JPC → `targeted` → Black consumer markets (demonstrated their scale to white corporate advertisers) — VERIFIED - JPC → `employed-models` → Black models (insisted ads feature Black models; Ebony Fashion Fair's all-Black model casts) — VERIFIED

Company ↔ places - JPC → `headquartered-at` → Supreme Life Building, 3501 S. Parkway (1942–43) — VERIFIED - JPC → `headquartered-at` → 5619 S. State St. (1943–1949) — VERIFIED - JPC → `headquartered-at` → 1820 S. Michigan Ave. (1949–1971) — VERIFIED - JPC → `headquartered-at` → 820 S. Michigan Ave. building (1971-12–2011) — VERIFIED - JPC → `headquartered-at` → 200 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 900 (2011–2019) — VERIFIED - JPC → `based-in` → Chicago (1942–2019) — VERIFIED

Company ↔ movements and history - JPC/*Jet* → `documented` → Civil Rights Movement (Till photographs, 1955; movement coverage) — VERIFIED - JPC/*Ebony* → `documented` → Civil Rights Movement ("Advice for Living," 1957–58; Sleet's 13-year King coverage) — VERIFIED - JPC → `influenced` → Black consumer-market advertising economics (industry precedent) — SUPPORTED

Company ↔ successors and the afterlife - JPC → `sold-publications-to` → Clear View Group (*Ebony*, *Jet*, 2016-06) — VERIFIED - Clear View Group → `created` → Ebony Media Corp (2016) — VERIFIED - *Ebony* → `acquired-by` → Bridgeman Sports and Media (2020-12) — VERIFIED - JPC → `sold-assets-to` → Columbia College Chicago (820 S. Michigan, 2010/2011) — VERIFIED - JPC → `archived-at` → JPC Archive — VERIFIED (the archive is a separate entity; this edge, not identity, links them) - Ford Foundation; J. Paul Getty Trust; MacArthur Foundation; Mellon Foundation → `acquired` → JPC Archive ($30M, 2019-07) — VERIFIED - JPC Archive → `owned-by` → NMAAHC + Getty Research Institute (joint, from 2022-07-28) — VERIFIED - JPC Archive → `housed-at` → NMAAHC, Washington, DC — VERIFIED - Fashion Fair Cosmetics → `acquired-by` → Cheryl Mayberry McKissack + Desiree Rogers ($1.85M, 2019-11) — VERIFIED

Edge counts: see `relationships.json` and §29.

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15 · Claims

The full claim ledger — every significant assertion the dossier makes, each as a standalone, falsifiable sentence. The dossier uses the five working grades; the evidence file (CTL-EF-BIZ-000001) uses seven. Mapping: evidence file REFUTED → ledger DISPUTED ("refuted — see CTL-EF-BIZ-000001"); evidence file UNVERIFIABLE → ledger UNRESOLVED (with pointer). Ledger and evidence file reconcile 1:1.

Identity and founding

- **C-001 — VERIFIED.** Johnson Publishing Company was founded in Chicago, Illinois, in November 1942 by John H. Johnson, originally as the Negro Digest Publishing Company.
- **C-002 — VERIFIED.** The company's first publication was *Negro Digest*, whose first issue appeared in November 1942.
- **C-003 — VERIFIED.** The founding was financed by a $500 loan secured by Johnson's mother's furniture, because banks would not lend to Black borrowers. (This is Johnson's own account, repeated in Congressional tributes and multiple histories; the specific lender's name is not corroborated — see C-051.)
- **C-004 — VERIFIED.** JPC ceased operations in a Chapter 7 bankruptcy liquidation filed April 9, 2019, ending 77 years of continuous operation.
- **C-005 — PROVISIONAL.** Eunice W. Johnson was a formal co-founder of Johnson Publishing Company. (Black Enterprise's 2010 obituary calls her co-founder; incorporation records not located.)

People

- **C-006 — VERIFIED.** John H. Johnson (January 19, 1918, Arkansas City, Arkansas – August 8, 2005, Chicago) founded JPC and led it as publisher/chairman until his death.
- **C-007 — VERIFIED.** Eunice Walker Johnson (1916 – January 3, 2010) was JPC's secretary-treasurer, named *Ebony*, created the Ebony Fashion Fair, and founded Fashion Fair Cosmetics.
- **C-008 — VERIFIED.** Linda Johnson Rice, daughter of John H. and Eunice Johnson, became JPC's CEO in 2002 and was its last chairman/CEO through the 2019 bankruptcy.
- **C-009 — VERIFIED.** Moneta Sleet Jr. was a staff photographer for *Ebony* (1955–1996) and in 1969 became the first African American man to win the Pulitzer Prize in journalism.
- **C-010 — VERIFIED.** David Jackson was a *Jet* staff photographer whose Emmett Till open-casket photographs were published in *Jet* in September 1955.
- **C-011 — VERIFIED.** Lerone Bennett Jr. was *Jet*'s city editor (1952–53), *Ebony*'s associate editor (1953) and executive editor (from 1958), and authored books including the *Ebony*-series-derived *Before the Mayflower* and Johnson's autobiography *Succeeding Against the Odds*.
- **C-012 — VERIFIED.** Ben Burns was the founding editor of *Ebony* (1945).

- **C-013 — SUPPORTED.** Era Bell Thompson was a pioneering Black woman editor at *Ebony* (associate editor, then editor), bringing international coverage of the global Black experience.
- **C-014 — PROVISIONAL.** Robert E. Johnson was associate publisher and executive editor of *Jet*, joining in February 1953. (Weak-source only; BPM-003 red-team downgrade.)
- **C-015 — VERIFIED.** Simeon Booker was *Jet*'s Washington bureau chief (c. 1954–2007) and reported the Emmett Till story.
- **C-016 — SUPPORTED.** Isaac Sutton was a JPC staff photographer with a 41-year career at *Ebony*.

Publications and products

- **C-017 — VERIFIED.** *Negro Digest* ran November 1942 – November 1951, was revived in June 1961, renamed *Black World* in May 1970, and published until April 1976.
- **C-018 — VERIFIED.** *Ebony* launched November 1, 1945, with an initial press run of 25,000 copies that sold out; the name was chosen by Eunice Johnson.
- **C-019 — VERIFIED.** *Jet* launched November 1, 1951, as a pocket-size weekly news digest.
- **C-020 — VERIFIED.** *Jet* published David Jackson's Emmett Till open-casket photographs in September 1955 (September 15 issue favored over September 22).
- **C-021 — SUPPORTED.** *Tan Confessions* (November 1950 – August 1952) became *Tan* (September 1952 – October 1971), which became *Black Stars* (November 1971 – July 1981).
- **C-022 — SUPPORTED.** JPC published *Ebony Jr!* (May 1973 – October 1985), *Ebony Man: EM* (November 1985 – January 1998), *Ebony South Africa* (November/December 1995 – September 2000), *Hue* (1953–), and *Copper Romance* (1953–).
- **C-023 — VERIFIED.** The Ebony Fashion Fair ran 1958–2009, traveled 200+ cities, and raised over $55 million for charity and scholarships; Eunice W. Johnson produced and directed it from 1961.
- **C-024 — VERIFIED.** Fashion Fair Cosmetics was founded in 1973 by Eunice W. Johnson as the first national prestige makeup line formulated for Black women, and was sold out of JPC's bankruptcy in November 2019 for $1.85 million.
- **C-025 — VERIFIED.** JPC bought WGRT radio (WJPC) for $1.8 million in May 1973 — the first Black-owned radio station in Chicago — and sold it in December 1994.
- **C-026 — SUPPORTED.** JPC diversified into the JPC Book Division, Supreme Beauty Products, Mahogany Travel, and EBCO International (51%, South Africa).
- **C-027 — PROVISIONAL.** JPC operated Ebony/Jet Entertainment Group, JPC Consumer Products, and the EbonyJet.com digital arm in its later years. (Thinly documented.)

Geography

- **C-028 — VERIFIED.** JPC's first headquarters (1942–43) was inside the Supreme Life Building at 3501 S. Parkway Ave; Johnson's first office was in attorney Earl B. Dickerson's law library on the second floor.

- **C-029 — VERIFIED.** In 1943 JPC purchased a building at 5619 S. State Street; in 1949 it relocated to 1820 S. Michigan Avenue (the former Hursen Funeral Home).
- **C-030 — VERIFIED.** In December 1971 JPC moved into its purpose-built 11-story headquarters at 820 S. Michigan Avenue, designed by Black architect John Warren Moutoussamy — the first Black-owned building in Chicago's Loop and the only Chicago high-rise designed by an African American.
- **C-031 — SUPPORTED.** The 820 S. Michigan lot was bought for $250,000 cash through a white lawyer acting in trust after agents refused to deal with Johnson, and banks refused to finance the building's construction for nearly a decade. (Johnson's own account, 1989.)
- **C-032 — VERIFIED.** 820 S. Michigan was sold to Columbia College Chicago (sale 2010, closed January 2011), designated a Chicago Landmark (fall 2017), resold to 3L Real Estate (November 2017, $10M), and converted to 150 rental apartments; the Ebony Test Kitchen was donated via Landmarks Illinois to the Museum of Food and Drink and the rooftop Ebony/Jet sign was preserved.
- **C-033 — VERIFIED.** JPC's final principal place of business was 200 S. Michigan Avenue, Suite 900, Chicago, IL 60604 (per the April 9, 2019 bankruptcy petition).

Business mechanics and economics

- **C-034 — VERIFIED.** JPC's business model proved the Black consumer market to white corporate advertisers: Zenith signed the first major contract (1947); Pepsi-Cola, Colgate, Beech-Nut, Seagram, and Remington Rand advertised by 1948; Chesterfield ran the first full-color ads in a Black magazine; Chrysler signed in 1954; Johnson told *Advertising Age* (1952) the Black market was "$15 billion strong" and "ripe and ready."
- **C-035 — VERIFIED.** JPC insisted that advertisements in its publications feature Black models.
- **C-036 — SUPPORTED.** At peak JPC reported roughly $425–488 million in annual revenue with about 2,000 employees; *Ebony* peaked at ~2.3M circulation (1985); *Jet*'s rate base was ~700,000 at print's end. (Figures vary by source and year; no single audited series found.)
- **C-037 — VERIFIED.** The company attributed its collapse to "a tidal wave of marketplace changes and business issues": the bankruptcy of a major retailer carrying Fashion Fair Cosmetics, a costly product recall, and digital competition.
- **C-038 — PROVISIONAL.** In 2015 JPC offered its photo archive for sale, seeking $40 million to reduce debt. (Single strong journalism source.)
- **C-039 — PROVISIONAL.** In 2009 R.R. Donnelley took a ~$12 million mortgage against JPC's headquarters over unpaid printing bills. (Needs primary confirmation.)

Decline, sale, bankruptcy, successors

- **C-040 — VERIFIED.** In June 2016 JPC sold *Ebony* and *Jet* to Clear View Group, an Austin, Texas-based Black-owned private equity firm chaired by Michael Gibson, which created Ebony Media Corp; JPC retained Fashion Fair Cosmetics and the photo archive; the price was never publicly disclosed.

- **C-041 — VERIFIED.** On April 9, 2019, Johnson Publishing Company, LLC filed Chapter 7 liquidation (Case 19-10236, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, N.D. Illinois), listing 200–999 creditors and $10–50 million in assets and liabilities; trustee Miriam "Mimi" Stein was appointed.
- **C-042 — SUPPORTED.** The JPC Archive had been pledged to secure a $12 million loan from Capital Holdings V, LLC (Mellody Hobson and George Lucas), in default for about three years before the filing.
- **C-043 — VERIFIED.** In July 2019 a consortium of the Ford Foundation, the J. Paul Getty Trust, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation bought the JPC Archive at the bankruptcy auction for $30 million. (The Art Newspaper also names the Smithsonian as a co-purchaser; Pulitzer's 2019 announcement names the four foundations — the discrepancy is recorded, not adjudicated.)
- **C-044 — VERIFIED.** On July 28, 2022, ownership of the JPC Archive was transferred jointly to the NMAAHC and the Getty Research Institute; the archive is physically housed at the NMAAHC; the Getty Trust committed $30 million to organization and digitization, with public access targeted for 2029 (end-date provisional).
- **C-045 — VERIFIED.** The JPC Archive comprises more than 3 million photo negatives and slides, 983,000 photographs, 166,000 contact sheets, and 9,000 audio/visual recordings (including *Ebony/Jet Showcase* TV recordings, Black Achievement Awards recordings, and radio-station segments).
- **C-046 — VERIFIED.** *Jet* print ended June 2014; *Ebony* print ended in 2019; *Ebony*'s assets were bought by Bridgeman Sports and Media for $14 million in December 2020 and the magazine relaunched in March 2021.

Movement and significance

- **C-047 — VERIFIED.** JPC's publications documented the civil-rights movement: *Jet*'s September 1955 Till photographs catalyzed national attention; *Ebony* published MLK's "Advice for Living" column (1957–1958); Sleet chronicled King and the movement for 13 years.
- **C-048 — SUPPORTED.** John H. Johnson served as a U.S. presidential envoy: with Vice President Nixon to nine African nations (1957); JFK's special ambassador to the Ivory Coast (1961); LBJ's special ambassador to Kenya; Nixon appointee to the UN 25th Anniversary commission.
- **C-049 — VERIFIED.** Johnson was the first African American on the Forbes 400 (1982), received the NAACP Spingarn Medal (1966) and the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1996), and was named *Black Enterprise* Entrepreneur of the Decade (1987).

Myth and limit claims (mapped from the evidence file)

- **C-050 — DISPUTED ("refuted — see CTL-EF-BIZ-000001").** The claim that *Ebony* had "9 million subscribers" is refuted: the 9M figure conflates circulation with pass-along readership; documented peak circulation was ~2.3M (1985).

- **C-051 — UNRESOLVED (see CTL-EF-BIZ-000001).** The exact identity of the lender of Johnson's 1942 $500 loan ("Citizens Loan Corp." per one account) cannot be substantiated from available evidence.
- **C-052 — SUPPORTED.** Under Clear View Group's ownership (2016–2020), *Ebony* freelancers complained of late/non-payment, a class action paid out $80,000 (#Ebonyowes), and about a third of staff was laid off in spring 2017.

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16 · Evidence

Evidence for each claim is developed in full in the Type 04 evidence file (CTL-EF-BIZ-000001, `evidence-file.md`), one 10-part record per claim, reconciling 1:1 with the §15 ledger above. Key evidence précis:

- **Founding (C-001–C-003):** African American Registry (founded November 1942); Congressional Record, vols. 147 and 149 (tributes: "$500 seed money… mother pawned their furniture"; "first issue sold 3,000 copies… within one year, circulation hit 50,000"); Johnson, *Succeeding Against the Odds* (primary, self-reported origin narrative); Grolier Club exhibition (Vol. 1, Nos. 1–12, November 1942–October 1943, Negro Digest Publishing Co.); AP obituary (2005).
- **People (C-006–C-016):** BPM-003 entities (per-jhjohnson, per-eunice, per-ljr — all Verified); Black Enterprise obituary for Eunice Johnson (2010-01-04); Essence obituary (2010); Delta Sigma Theta press release (2010-01-08); Swann Galleries on Sleet (2014); LOC Civil Rights History Project (Booker oral history); Ebony.com obituary for Bennett (2018); Manchester University thesis on Bennett/Burns (primary archival research in the Lerone Bennett Papers and Ben Burns Papers).
- **Publications (C-017–C-022):** Wikipedia "Johnson Publishing Company" publication list (tertiary; cross-checked against Grolier Club for the 1942–43 run and against BPM-003/Ebony 75th for *Ebony*/*Jet* launches); Ohio University M.A. thesis on *Tan Confessions* (2021).
- **Fashion institutions (C-023, C-024):** Black Enterprise (Ebony Fashion Fair: 200+ cities, $55M+; Fashion Fair Cosmetics founded 1973); Essence ("The Beauty of Blackness" coverage; Mayberry McKissack quote); Hollywood Reporter via New Black Voices (Nov 2019: $1.85M sale); Delta Sigma Theta release (1958 launch; $55M; cosmetics 1973); Racked (2017: Revlon refusal backstory).
- **Geography (C-028–C-033):** City of Chicago Landmark Designation Report for the JPC Building (address history, 5619 S. State extant, 1820 S. Michigan demolished, 1971 completion, Moutoussamy); Preservation Chicago; NPR (2010 building sale); bankruptcy petition (200 S. Michigan, Suite 900).
- **Economics (C-034–C-039):** Congressional Record vol. 149 (Zenith, Chrysler; "$425 million… more than 2,000 employees"); Manchester thesis (Zenith 1947); Stephen Hicks/Forbes reprint (1948 advertisers; "$15 billion"); BPM-003 (Black-models advertising policy; Donnelley

provisional); CJR "Rebrand" (2019: $40M archive asking price; Clear View era); AP via LA Sentinel (bankruptcy causes).

- **Sale and bankruptcy (C-040–C-046):** NPR (2016-06-19: Clear View Group, Austin TX, Black-owned PE; Kyra Kyles; Linda Johnson Rice board seat); bankruptcy petition PDF (Case 19-10236; EIN 32-0347330; d.b.a. Fashion Fair Cosmetics; 200–999 creditors; $10–50M); Bankruptcy IDEA consortium case study (trustee Mimi Stein; Capital Holdings V $12M loan); Pulitzer.org (2019-07-25: four-foundation $30M purchase); The Art Newspaper (2022-08-01: July 28, 2022 joint transfer; 3M+ negatives, 983K photos, 166K contact sheets, 9,000 A/V); Hyperallergic/EURweb ($30M Getty digitization commitment); BPM-003 (Bridgeman $14M, Dec 2020; relaunch Mar 2021).
- **Movement (C-047–C-049):** LOC (Till photos; Booker); BPM-003 (MLK column); Swann (Sleet); Face2Face Africa (envoy roles); NPR (Forbes 400); Encyclopedia.com (Spingarn; Entrepreneur of the Decade); FDR Library (Medal of Freedom citation context).
- **C-050:** AP 2005 obituary (peak circulation 2.3M, 1985; 1.6M in 2005); Congressional Record (11M/8M readership figures, i.e., pass-along). **C-051:** lender-name claim appears in BPM-003 as provisional; no corroborating primary found. **C-052:** CJR "Rebrand" (2019).

Circular-sourcing check: Wikipedia's JPC article draws substantially on the same press sources CTL cites directly (AP, NPR, CJR); it is treated as tertiary and never as the sole basis for a VERIFIED grade.

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17 · Primary Sources

1. **Bankruptcy petition, Johnson Publishing Company, LLC, Case 19-10236** (U.S. Bankruptcy Court, N.D. Illinois), filed 2019-04-09 — 35-page Voluntary Petition (Official Form 201): debtor name, d.b.a. Fashion Fair Cosmetics, EIN 32-0347330, 200 S. Michigan Ave. Suite 900, 200–999 creditors, $10–50M assets/liabilities. Repository: court records; copy reviewed via Scribd upload. Access: PACER for certified.
2. **Congressional Record, Vol. 147, No. 158 (H8229, 2001-11-13)** — House tribute: founding narrative, Zenith/Chrysler advertising, Jet 50th anniversary, awards (Medal of Freedom, Spingarn, Fisher Award). congress.gov.
3. **Congressional Record, Vol. 149, No. 131 (H8471, 2003-10-02)** — House tribute: "$500… mother pawned their furniture… first issue sold 3,000 copies… circulation hit 50,000"; 820 S. Michigan HQ; "$425 million… more than 2,000 employees"; 11M/8M readership. congress.gov.
4. **John H. Johnson**, ***Succeeding Against the Odds*** **(1992)** — founder's autobiography (with Lerone Bennett Jr.): origin narrative, 820 S. Michigan land purchase ($250,000 cash via white lawyer; bank refusals). Primary but self-reported; corroborate financial specifics.
5. **City of Chicago Landmark Designation Report: Johnson Publishing Company Building** — address history (Supreme Life → 5619 S. State → 1820 S. Michigan → 820 S. Michigan), 1943 purchase/rehab, 1949 move, 1971 completion, Moutoussamy commission, "shirt front" design directive. City of Chicago, Dept. of Planning and Development (Historic Preservation).

6. **Library of Congress, Civil Rights History Project: Simeon Booker oral history** — Booker on the Till assignment; supports the September 1955 *Jet* publication (Sept 15 favored).
7. **Delta Sigma Theta Sorority press release (2010-01-08)** — Eunice W. Johnson death notice: Ebony Fashion Fair (1958 launch, $55M+ raised), secretary-treasurer role, *Ebony* naming, Fashion Fair Cosmetics (1973). Institutional primary.
8. **The Ebony Test Kitchen** (object) — donated by 3L Real Estate to Landmarks Illinois → Museum of Food and Drink. Material primary source for JPC's editorial culture.
9. **JPC's own publications** (*Ebony*, *Jet*, *Negro Digest* back issues) — primary sources for content claims (Till photos, "Advice for Living," advertising pages). Accessible via the JPC Archive (NMAAHC/Getty) and library holdings.

18 · Secondary Sources

- **Columbia Journalism Review, "Rebrand" (Aug 2019)** — strongest single secondary on the decline: 2015 $40M archive asking price, Clear View acquisition, #Ebonyowes ($80K payout), spring-2017 layoffs (~1/3 of staff). Well-sourced journalism.
- **NPR, "Jet and Ebony Sold" (2016-06-19)** — Clear View Group sale terms as documented; Kyra Kyles; Linda Johnson Rice.
- **NPR/Cheryl Corley (2019-04-10)** — bankruptcy reportage; Charles Whitaker and Lynn Norment interviews.
- **Associated Press (2005-08-09 obituary; 2019-04-09 bankruptcy)** — founding facts, peak circulation (2.3M, 1985; 1.6M, 2005), bankruptcy causes.
- **The Art Newspaper (2022-08-01)** — July 28, 2022 joint NMAAHC/Getty transfer; archive extent figures.
- **Pulitzer.org (2019-07-25)** — four-foundation $30M acquisition announcement.
- **Bankruptcy IDEA Consortium case study (2023)** — trustee (Miriam "Mimi" Stein), Capital Holdings V $12M loan/default. Legal analysis; footnoted to case filings — SUPPORTED grade driver.
- **Essence (2010 obituary; "Beauty of Blackness" coverage)** — Eunice Johnson; Fashion Fair Cosmetics $1.85M sale (Nov 2019).
- **Black Enterprise (2010-01-04 obituary)** — Eunice Johnson: co-founder claim, Fashion Fair ($55M+, 200+ cities), $328M revenue.
- **Hollywood Reporter / New Black Voices (2022)** — "The Beauty of Blackness" documentary; sale details.
- **Swann Galleries (2014)** — Sleet Pulitzer; 13-year King coverage.
- **Manchester University PhD thesis (2021)** — Bennett/Burns editorial history from the Lerone Bennett Papers and Ben Burns Papers (archival primary research; strong secondary synthesis).

- **Grolier Club exhibition, "Negro Digest: A Magazine of Negro Comment"** — Vol. 1 run (Nov 1942–Oct 1943), Negro Digest Publishing Co. imprint; Roosevelt contribution.
- **Ohio University M.A. thesis (2021)** — *Tan Confessions* content and reader letters.
- **Encyclopedia.com (John Harold Johnson entry)** — career facts, *Tan* (1950), Spingarn, Entrepreneur of the Decade.
- **Wikipedia, "Johnson Publishing Company" / "John H. Johnson" / "Negro Digest" / "Moneta Sleet Jr."** — tertiary; useful for publication-list completeness; never sole basis for VERIFIED.
- **CTL prior research:** CTL-DR-BPM-003 (co-jpc, pub-ebony, pub-jet, per-jhjohnson, per-eunice, per-ljr, per-sleet, per-djackson, arc-jpc, bld-820mich — audit-consistent); CTL-DR-MEDIA-001 (MED-061 JPC; archive track: $30M rescue, 2022 transfer); CTL-DR-ECON-001 (ECON-035: address history, business model, diversification, decline).

Weak sources flagged: thefreelibrary.com chronology (unattributed Ebony tribute reprint — useful dates, treat as secondary); Wikipedia (publication dates for minor titles — SUPPORTED only in convergence); tangietwoods.blog and similar fan pages (not cited).

19 · Archival Collections

Critical distinction (audit near-miss rule): JPC-the-organization is not the JPC Archive. The archive below is the photographic/audiovisual collection of the company's magazines — a separate entity linked by `archived-at`.

1. **Johnson Publishing Company Archive** — Jointly owned by the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) and the J. Paul Getty Trust (Getty Research Institute) since July 28, 2022; physically housed at the NMAAHC, Washington, DC. Extent: 3M+ photo negatives and slides; 983,000 photographs; 166,000 contact sheets; 9,000 audio/visual recordings (including *Ebony/Jet Showcase* TV recordings, Black Achievement Awards recordings, and radio-station segments). Digitization in progress (Getty $30M commitment); portions accessible during the multi-year process; public access target 2029 (provisional). Custody history: JPC → Chapter 7 estate (trustee Mimi Stein) → four-foundation consortium ($30M, July 2019) → NMAAHC + Getty (July 2022). No public finding aid located yet — check NMAAHC and Getty Research Institute catalogs.
2. **Non-photographic JPC business records** (corporate papers, board minutes, advertiser contracts, circulation audits, personnel files) — **location unknown; presumed dispersed or lost in the 2019 liquidation.** Not known to be part of the NMAAHC/Getty acquisition, which was photographic/audiovisual. See §28/gaps.md.
3. **Ben Burns Papers** — cited in the Manchester thesis (Box 9, "Ebony Staff material"). Repository not verified in this dossier — gap.
4. **Lerone Bennett Papers** — cited in the Manchester thesis (Boxes 1, 9). Repository not verified — gap.

5. **Library of Congress** — Simeon Booker oral history (Civil Rights History Project); *Jet* September 1955 issues in serial holdings.
6. **FDR Presidential Library** — "If I Were a Negro" *Negro Digest* contribution context (June 1943 day-by-day).
7. **Theaster Gates / Rebuild Foundation holdings** — furnishings and decor salvaged from 820 S. Michigan in 2010; exhibited 2024 ("When Clouds Roll Away," Stony Island Arts Bank).

20 · Documents

- **Chapter 7 Voluntary Petition (Case 19-10236, filed 2019-04-09):** Official Form 201 for Non-Individuals — debtor "Johnson Publishing Company, LLC," d.b.a. "Fashion Fair Cosmetics," EIN 32-0347330, 200 S. Michigan Ave. Suite 900, Chicago, IL 60604; 200–999 creditors; $10–50M assets and liabilities. Reviewed via Scribd copy; certify via PACER before legal reliance.
- **City of Chicago Landmark Designation Report (Johnson Publishing Company Building):** address chronology, construction history, Moutoussamy commission, Johnson's "shirt front" directive, 5619 S. State extant status, 1820 S. Michigan demolition.
- **Congressional Record tributes (2001, 2003):** founding and business history as entered by members of Congress.
- **Delta Sigma Theta press release (2010-01-08):** Eunice W. Johnson memorial facts.
- ***Negro Digest* Vol. 1 masthead (via Grolier Club):** "Negro Digest Publishing Co." imprint, November 1942.
- **Missing:** articles of incorporation (would resolve C-005), advertiser contracts, circulation audit statements, board minutes, the 2016 Clear View sale agreement, the Capital Holdings V loan documents. See gaps.md.

21 · Photographs

Rights rule: rights-cleared images only. Magazine covers are described, not reproduced (rights assessment unclear).

1. **TO LOCATE — John H. Johnson receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1996).** Likely public-domain (White House photograph). Verify via the Clinton Presidential Library / NARA catalog before use. Do not reproduce until cleared.
2. **TO LOCATE — 820 S. Michigan Avenue building.** Check Wikimedia Commons per-file license verification and the Chicago Landmark designation report (City of Chicago publication, typically reusable with credit). Do not reproduce until per-file license verified.
3. **DESCRIBE ONLY — *Ebony* first issue (Nov 1945); *Jet* Emmett Till issue (Sept 1955); *Negro Digest* Vol. 1 No. 1.** Rights held by successor owners or unclear; describe-don't-reproduce.
4. **DATA-DRIVEN GRAPHICS (recommended instead of archival images):** (a) corporate timeline 1942–2019 with product launches, address moves, ownership changes; (b) address-history map of the five Chicago HQs; (c) ownership/custody diagram of the archive (JPC →

estate → consortium → NMAAHC/Getty); (d) circulation/revenue series chart from §25 data with source bands. No AI-generated historical imagery or people, ever.

22 · Audio

- **JPC Archive A/V holdings (9,000 recordings):** *Ebony/Jet Showcase* TV recordings, Black Achievement Awards recordings, radio-station segments from JPC-owned stations (WJPC). Rights held by the archive custodians; access via NMAAHC/Getty as digitization proceeds. CTL does not host.
- **No rights-cleared audio identified for direct embedding.** Oral histories (e.g., Booker LOC interview) are referenced, not reproduced.

23 · Video

YouTube ILLUSTRATES, never evidences. Candidates (link-don't-embed until embedding permission verified; none watched in full):

1. **"What the Johnson Publishing Building in Chicago Means for Black People"** — youtube.com/watch?v=2Vk66viDwo4 (Global Black History channel, per search metadata). Title/description reviewed; relevance: 820 S. Michigan symbolism. Status: not watched; link only.
2. **Fashion 2012 / Eunice Johnson scholarship kickoff** — Theo Daniels video via chicagotalks.colum.edu (2012): Desiree Rogers on the Ebony Fashion Fair and Fashion Fair Cosmetics history. Status: not watched; link only.
3. **"The Beauty of Blackness" (HBO Max documentary, 2022)** — Fashion Fair Cosmetics history; licensed platform; reference only.

All require re-verification of availability and embed status at publication (link-rot check).

24 · Maps

Build from the five documented addresses (§06/§11):

1. **Address-history map:** 3501 S. Parkway → 5619 S. State → 1820 S. Michigan → 820 S. Michigan → 200 S. Michigan, with tenure dates. All addresses are commercial/public; no privacy issue.
2. **Ebony Fashion Fair circuit map:** 200+ cities (US, Canada, Caribbean, England) — schematic only; city-level list not compiled (gap).
3. **Archive custody map:** Chicago → bankruptcy estate → consortium → Washington, DC (NMAAHC housing).

Historical boundaries: 3501 S. Parkway is now Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive — label both names with dates. Washington Park community area for 5619 S. State per the Landmark report; do not collapse Bronzeville-area community areas.

25 · Data

Dataset 1 — Publication launches (JPC). Source: Wikipedia JPC publication list cross-checked with Grolier Club, BPM-003, Ebony 75th. | Title | First issue | End (JPC) | |---|---|---| | Negro Digest | 1942-11 | 1951-11 (rev. 1961; Black World to 1976-04) | | Ebony | 1945-11-01 | 2016-06 | | Tan Confessions | 1950-11 | 1952-08 (→ Tan) | | Jet | 1951-11-01 | 2016-06 (print to 2014-06) | | Hue; Copper Romance | 1953-11 | n.d. | | Tan → Black Stars | 1952-09 → 1971-11 | 1981-07 | | Ebony Jr! | 1973-05 | 1985-10 | | Ebony Man: EM | 1985-11 | 1998-01 | | Ebony South Africa | 1995-11/12 | 2000-09 | *Limitation: end dates for minor titles rest on a single tertiary source.*

Dataset 2 — Revenue, employment, circulation (reported, not audited). | Year | Figure | Source | |---|---|---| | 1955-11 | 100+ employees | Hicks (via ECON-001) | | 1985 | Ebony circulation ~2.3M (peak) | AP obit 2005 | | 1997 (est.) | 1,500 employees | Black Enterprise via Encarta Africana | | 1998 | 2,647 employees | Black Enterprise Top Ten | | c. 2001 | ~$425M revenue; 2,000+ employees | Congressional Record vol. 149 | | 2003 | $488.5M sales; 2,000 employees | FundingUniverse | | 2005 | Ebony circulation ~1.6M | AP obit | | c. 2010 | $328M revenue | Black Enterprise | | 2014 | Jet rate base ~700,000 | AP/JPC release | *Limitation: no audited series; methodologies differ; treat as reported figures with source bands. The "9M subscribers" figure is REFUTED (see C-050, §27).*

Dataset 3 — Address history. See §06. Five addresses with tenure ranges.

Dataset 4 — Archive extent. See C-045. Consortium/institution figures; breakdown vs. rounded totals noted.

26 · Controversies/Conflicts

1. **The Donnelley mortgage (2009).** R.R. Donnelley allegedly took a ~$12M mortgage against the 820 S. Michigan HQ over unpaid printing bills. PROVISIONAL — needs Donnelley filings or JPC bankruptcy schedules. If confirmed, it marks the point the printer became the company's secured creditor.
2. **The 2016 sale terms.** The Clear View Group purchase price was never publicly disclosed; CTL does not repeat rumored figures. What is documented: JPC retained Fashion Fair Cosmetics and the photo archive; Linda Johnson Rice took a board seat at the new entity; Kyra Kyles became editor-in-chief.
3. **The #Ebonyowes affair (2016–2017).** Under Clear View/Ebony Media Corp ownership, freelancers complained of late or non-payment; a class action paid out $80,000; ~1/3 of staff laid off spring 2017 (CJR). This concerns the successor, not JPC proper, but it altered public perception of the *Ebony* brand (C-052, SUPPORTED).
4. **The archive's $12M pledge.** The archive was pledged to Capital Holdings V (Hobson/Lucas) and in default ~3 years; the trustee had a <3-month window to liquidate while traditional auction houses (Christie's, Sotheby's) had failed to sell it (Bankruptcy IDEA). SUPPORTED.

5. **Consortium composition.** The Art Newspaper (2022) names the Smithsonian as a 2019 co-purchaser; Pulitzer (2019) names only the four foundations. Recorded as an unresolved discrepancy, not adjudicated (C-043).
6. **Eunice Johnson's co-founder status.** Black Enterprise calls her co-founder; CTL has not located incorporation records. PROVISIONAL (C-005).
7. **Robert E. Johnson's record.** BPM-003 red-team downgraded his Jet role to Provisional (weak-source only); death year 1995 vs 1996 contested within CTL. Not for public use until re-sourced (C-014).
8. **Editorial criticism (historical).** *Ebony* was criticized for focusing on successful people and aspirational imagery; Johnson's 1992 AP defense: it "inspired them to be successful by showing examples of blacks who have made it." Recorded as contemporary criticism, not CTL adjudication.
9. **Ben Burns's removal (c. 1953–54).** The Manchester thesis frames it as a recession-driven shift away from sensational content; Burns's own drafts criticized successor editors. Multiple perspectives recorded; no CTL adjudication beyond the documented mechanism.

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27 · Myth vs. Evidence

1. **MYTH:** "*Ebony* had 9 million subscribers." → **VERDICT:** False (conflation). → **EVIDENCE:** AP's 2005 obituary documents peak circulation ~2.3M (1985) and ~1.6M (2005); the Congressional Record's 11M/8M figures are *readership* (pass-along). BPM-003 explicitly rejected the 9M figure as inflated. → **CORRECTED:** "*Ebony* peaked at about 2.3 million in paid circulation (1985); its pass-along readership was estimated in the millions — not 9 million subscribers." (Evidence file: REFUTED; ledger C-050: DISPUTED "refuted — see CTL-EF-BIZ-000001".)
2. **MYTH:** "John H. Johnson founded JPC with a bank loan." → **VERDICT:** False. → **EVIDENCE:** Johnson's own account (autobiography; Congressional tributes): banks would not lend to Black borrowers; the $500 came via his mother's furniture as collateral. → **CORRECTED:** "Johnson financed the founding with a $500 loan secured by his mother's furniture, precisely because bank credit was closed to him."
3. **MYTH:** "The Ebony Fashion Fair began in 1961." → **VERDICT:** Exaggerated (compression). → **EVIDENCE:** The show launched in 1958 from the Jessie Dent/Dillard fundraiser; Eunice Johnson became its producer/director in 1961 and ran it to 2009. → **CORRECTED:** "Launched 1958; Eunice Johnson produced and directed it from 1961."
4. **MYTH:** "JPC still publishes *Ebony* and *Jet*." → **VERDICT:** False. → **EVIDENCE:** Sold to Clear View Group (June 2016); Chapter 7 liquidation (April 2019); *Ebony* assets to Bridgeman (Dec 2020). JPC published nothing after 2016. → **CORRECTED:** "JPC sold *Ebony* and *Jet* in 2016 and was liquidated in 2019; successor owners publish the titles."

5. **MYTH:** "The $30M archive rescue was a purchase by the Smithsonian alone." → **VERDICT:** Exaggerated. → **EVIDENCE:** Pulitzer (2019) names four foundations as purchasers; The Art Newspaper (2022) includes the Smithsonian among purchasers. Joint NMAAHC/Getty ownership began July 28, 2022 — three years after the purchase. → **CORRECTED:** "A four-foundation consortium bought the archive for $30M in July 2019; the Smithsonian (NMAAHC) and Getty became joint owners in July 2022."

28 · Knowledge Gaps

Searched but not found

- The exact sale price of *Ebony*/*Jet* to Clear View Group (2016) — not publicly documented; rumored figures not repeated.
- The identity of the lender of the 1942 $500 loan ("Citizens Loan Corp." per one account — uncorroborated). See C-051.
- Primary documentation of the 2009 R.R. Donnelley ~$12M mortgage (Donnelley filings or JPC bankruptcy schedules not consulted).
- The location and extent of JPC's **non-photographic business records** (board minutes, advertiser contracts, circulation audits, personnel files, 2016 sale agreement, Capital Holdings V loan documents).
- Repositories of the Ben Burns Papers and Lerone Bennett Papers (cited in the Manchester thesis; not verified).
- A public finding aid for the JPC Archive at NMAAHC/Getty.
- City-level roster of the 200+ Ebony Fashion Fair tour cities.
- WJPC sale price and buyer (December 1994).
- Rank-and-file employee records and oral histories (celebrity bias in surviving sources).

Records known to be lost or inaccessible

- JPC corporate records dispersed in the 2019 liquidation; no institutional custodian identified.
- 1820 S. Michigan HQ (former Hursen Funeral Home) demolished.
- 820 S. Michigan interiors altered in the 3L Real Estate apartment conversion (furnishings partially salvaged by Theaster Gates, 2010).

Questions for future research

- What did the 2016 Clear View sale agreement include/exclude (photo archive carve-out mechanics)?
- How did the $12M Capital Holdings V loan originate, and what were its terms?
- Full advertiser ledger: which brands, what spend, what years?
- Circulation audit series (ABC statements) for *Ebony*/*Jet*, 1945–2014.
- JPC's role in the 1960s–70s Black broadcast and cable investments (landscape notes "cable and radio properties" beyond WJPC).

- Comparative economics: JPC vs. Johnson Products Company capital strategies (CTL-DR-ECON-001 direction).

29 · Knowledge Graph

- **Entities:** see `entities.json`. Canonical audit IDs reused: `canon-johnson-publishing-company`, `canon-john-h-johnson`, `canon-supreme-life-insurance`, `canon-wjpc`. All others dossier-local (`RD-BIZ-000001-###`). The JPC Archive is a separate entity (`RD-BIZ-000001-070`) linked to the company by `archived-at`.
- **Edges:** see `relationships.json`. Counts by grade (final tally in the JSON): VERIFIED edges are cleared for verified-only graph ingestion; SUPPORTED/PROVISIONAL edges carry their grades; no DISPUTED edges are asserted as fact.
- **Registry feeds:** Chronology (§08) → Timeline registry; Places (§11) → Geography registry; Archive (§19) → Archive registry; People (§09) → People registry; the JPC Archive entity → Black Cultural Knowledge Graph via `archived-at`.

30 · Related CTL Entities

- **CTL-DR-BPM-003** — Black print media: co-jpc (7 claims, 6 Verified), pub-ebony, pub-jet, per-jhjohnson, per-eunice, per-ljr, per-sleet, per-djackson, arc-jpc, bld-820mich, co-wjpc, editorial-staff edges. Primary CTL source for JPC's media history; this dossier's business layer builds on it. Audit-consistent; no contradictions.
- **CTL-DR-MEDIA-001** — MED-061 (JPC) and the archive track: the $30M rescue documented as the century's largest Black-media archival event; 2022 joint transfer; extent figures. Preserved precisely (§19, C-043– C-045).
- **CTL-DR-ECON-001** — ECON-035 (JPC, ECON-focused): $500-loan origin, advertising economics ($15B Ad Age statement), address history, diversification, decline, 820 S. Michigan land-purchase account. Direction for the business-mechanics layer.
- **Canon entities touched:** `canon-john-h-johnson`, `canon-johnson-publishing-company`, `canon-supreme-life-insurance`, `canon-wjpc`, `canon-chicago-defender` (contextual rival/peer).

31 · Bibliography

Primary / institutional

- U.S. Bankruptcy Court, N.D. Illinois, Case 19-10236 — Voluntary Petition, Johnson Publishing Company, LLC (filed 2019-04-09).
- Congressional Record, Vol. 147, No. 158 (2001-11-13), H8229.
- Congressional Record, Vol. 149, No. 131 (2003-10-02), H8471.
- Johnson, John H. *Succeeding Against the Odds* (1992).
- City of Chicago, Landmark Designation Report: Johnson Publishing Company Building.
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, press release (2010-01-08): Eunice W. Johnson.

- Library of Congress, Civil Rights History Project: Simeon Booker oral history.
- Grolier Club, "Negro Digest: A Magazine of Negro Comment" (exhibition).
- FDR Presidential Library, Day by Day: June 1943 (Roosevelt/Johnson).

Secondary / journalism / scholarship

- Columbia Journalism Review, "Rebrand" (Aug 2019).
- NPR: "Jet and Ebony Sold" (2016-06-19); Cheryl Corley bankruptcy report (2019-04-10).
- Associated Press: Johnson obituary (2005-08-09); bankruptcy (2019-04-09); via LA Sentinel, Oklahoma Eagle, Harlem Times, Public Radio East.
- The Art Newspaper (2022-08-01); Pulitzer.org (2019-07-25); Hyperallergic; EURweb — archive rescue and transfer.
- Bankruptcy IDEA Consortium, JPC case study (2023).
- Essence: Eunice Johnson obituary (2010); "Beauty of Blackness" (2022).
- Black Enterprise: Eunice Johnson obituary (2010-01-04).
- Hollywood Reporter / New Black Voices: Fashion Fair sale (2019).
- Racked: "Before Fenty" (2017).
- Swann Galleries: Moneta Sleet Jr. (2014).
- Ebony.com: Bennett obituary (2018); Ebony 75th anniversary.
- Manchester University PhD thesis: *Ebony Magazine, Lerone Bennett, Jr., and the Making and Selling of Modern Black History* (2021).
- Ohio University M.A. thesis: *Tan Confessions* reader response (2021).
- Encyclopedia.com: John Harold Johnson.
- The Free Library: "Celebrating the life and legacy of John H. Johnson" (Ebony tribute reprint; chronology).
- ChicagoTalks/Columbia: "Shades of Fashion" (2012).
- Wikipedia: "Johnson Publishing Company"; "John H. Johnson"; "Negro Digest"; "Moneta Sleet Jr." (tertiary; corroboration only).

CTL internal

- CTL-DR-BPM-003 (entities/relationships/red-team); CTL-DR-MEDIA-001 (entities, archive track); CTL-DR-ECON-001 (entities, relationships); `research/_audit/duplicates.json`; `research/_audit/contradictions.json`.

32 · Citation

CultureTechLens Research Dossier CTL-RD-BIZ-000001, "Johnson Publishing Company," v1.0 (2026-09-28), status: Research. Evidence file: CTL-EF-BIZ-000001. Cite claims with their C-numbers and grades; cite the evidence file for the reasoning behind any grade. Persistent identifier: CTL-RD-BIZ-000001.

33 · Rights

- No images, audio, or video are reproduced in this dossier. All photographic and audiovisual material is described, not reproduced, pending rights clearance (see §21–§23, `visuals.md`).
- Magazine covers (*Ebony*, *Jet*, *Negro Digest*): rights held by successor owners or unclear — describe-don't-reproduce.
- JPC Archive images: rights held by NMAAHC/Getty; not reproduced.
- Data-driven graphics (§21.4, §24, §25) are CTL-original and clear.
- The bankruptcy petition (public court record) and Congressional Record (public domain) may be quoted with citation.
- Rights log starts empty and fills with evidence; nothing is "cleared" by default.

34 · Version History

- **v1.0 — 2026-09-28.** Initial dossier (Research status). 52 claims (C-001–C-052); evidence file CTL-EF-BIZ-000001 (Type 04); entities and relationships JSON; visuals/sources/red-team/gaps. Built on CTL-DR-BPM-003, CTL-DR-MEDIA-001, CTL-DR-ECON-001 with new web verification (2026-09-28). Audit alignment: JPC/Ebony/Jet checked consistent (no action); JPC-org vs JPC-Archive kept separate per near-miss rule. Corrections trigger new versions; nothing is silently rewritten.

References

Every source consulted, primary/secondary labeled, with CTL's assessment of its strength. Weak sources are flagged.

Primary / institutional

1. **U.S. Bankruptcy Court, N.D. Illinois, Case 19-10236 — Voluntary Petition (filed 2019-04-09).** Dispositive for filing date, chapter, debtor name/d.b.a./EIN, address, creditor/asset bands. Copy reviewed via Scribd upload — **obtain PACER certified copy for legal reliance.** Strength: high (court record).
2. **Congressional Record, Vol. 147, No. 158 (2001-11-13), H8229.** House tribute: founding, Zenith/Chrysler, awards. Strength: high (government record, commemorative).
3. **Congressional Record, Vol. 149, No. 131 (2003-10-02), H8471.** House tribute: founding details, HQ, revenue/employment, readership. Strength: high (government record; read revenue figures as reported).
4. **John H. Johnson, *Succeeding Against the Odds* (1992, with Lerone Bennett Jr.).** Origin narrative; 820 S. Michigan land account. Strength: primary but self-reported — corroborate financials.

5. **City of Chicago, Landmark Designation Report: Johnson Publishing Company Building.** Address chronology; construction history; Moutoussamy commission. Strength: high (municipal primary).
6. **Library of Congress, Civil Rights History Project: Simeon Booker oral history.** Till assignment; September 1955 publication. Strength: high (participant primary).
7. **Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, press release (2010-01-08).** Eunice W. Johnson: death date, roles, Fashion Fair, cosmetics. Strength: high (institutional).
8. **Grolier Club, "Negro Digest: A Magazine of Negro Comment" (exhibition).** Vol. 1 run, masthead imprint. Strength: high (physical evidence).
9. **FDR Presidential Library, Day by Day (June 1943).** Roosevelt/ *Negro Digest* contribution. Strength: high (archival).
10. **The Ebony Test Kitchen (object; Landmarks Illinois/MOFAD).** Material primary for JPC editorial culture. Strength: high (artifact); access via institutions.

Secondary / journalism / scholarship

1. **Columbia Journalism Review, "Rebrand" (Aug 2019).** Strongest single secondary on decline: $40M archive ask, Clear View era, #Ebonyowes, layoffs. Strength: high (well-sourced journalism); single-source on $40M — PROVISIONAL.
2. **NPR: "Jet and Ebony Sold" (2016-06-19); Cheryl Corley bankruptcy report (2019-04-10).** Strength: high.
3. **Associated Press: Johnson obituary (2005-08-09); bankruptcy (2019-04-09).** Strength: high; read revenue/circulation as reported.
4. **The Art Newspaper (2022-08-01).** July 28, 2022 transfer; archive extent. Strength: high; Smithsonian-role discrepancy noted (recorded, not adjudicated).
5. **Pulitzer.org (2019-07-25).** Four-foundation $30M announcement. Strength: high (contemporaneous).
6. **Hyperallergic; EURweb.** Transfer and Getty $30M commitment. Strength: medium-high.
7. **Bankruptcy IDEA Consortium, JPC case study (2023).** Trustee, Capital Holdings V $12M loan. Strength: medium-high (footnoted legal analysis) — SUPPORTED.
8. **Essence: Eunice Johnson obituary (2010); "Beauty of Blackness" coverage (2022).** Strength: high.
9. **Black Enterprise: Eunice Johnson obituary (2010-01-04).** Strength: high; co-founder label treated as PROVISIONAL.
10. **Hollywood Reporter / New Black Voices (2022).** $1.85M cosmetics sale. Strength: medium-high.
11. **Racked, "Before Fenty" (2017).** Fashion Fair Cosmetics backstory (Revlon refusal). Strength: medium-high.
12. **Swann Galleries (2014).** Sleet Pulitzer; 13-year King coverage. Strength: high (specialist).

13. **Ebony.com: Bennett obituary (2018); Ebony 75th anniversary.** Strength: high (institutional).
14. **Manchester University PhD thesis (2021).** Bennett/Burns from the Bennett and Burns Papers. Strength: high (archival primary research, strong synthesis).
15. **Ohio University M.A. thesis (2021).** *Tan Confessions* reader response. Strength: medium-high.
16. **Encyclopedia.com: John Harold Johnson.** Strength: medium-high.
17. **notablebiographies.com: John H. Johnson.** Strength: medium-high.
18. **thefreelibrary.com: "Celebrating the life and legacy of John H. Johnson."** ⚠️ WEAK — unattributed Ebony tribute reprint; useful dates only; never sole basis for VERIFIED.
19. **ChicagoTalks/Columbia: "Shades of Fashion" (2012).** Strength: medium.
20. **Wikipedia: "Johnson Publishing Company"; "John H. Johnson"; "Negro Digest"; "Moneta Sleet Jr."** ⚠️ TERTIARY — useful for publication-list completeness; corroboration only; never sole basis for VERIFIED. Draws substantially on the press sources above (circular-sourcing risk noted).

Not consulted / not cited (flagged)

- tangietwoods.blog and similar fan pages — not cited.
- YouTube videos — not watched; link-only candidates in visuals.md.
- JPC's own back issues (primary) — referenced via the archive, not directly consulted (archive digitization in progress).

CTL internal

- CTL-DR-BPM-003 (entities/relationships/red-team); CTL-DR-MEDIA-001 (entities; archive track); CTL-DR-ECON-001 (entities; relationships). Audit: `research/_audit/duplicates.json`, `research/_audit/contradictions.json`.