



*Photo courtesy of Atlanta Daily World*

*Why take photographs of the  
concentration camps and killing  
centers?*

## WILLIAM ALEXANDER SCOTT III

William ("W.A.") Scott III was named after his great-grandfather, a slave who fought in the Civil War with the Union Army in Mississippi. His life began in Johnson City, Tennessee, on January 15, 1923. That same year, his family moved to Atlanta, where his father, W.A. Scott II, founded the Atlanta Daily World newspaper, the oldest Black-owned daily newspaper in the United States. From childhood, W.A. worked at the newspaper in a variety of jobs: paperboy, maintenance man, sports statistician, movie and play critic, and photographer.



*Photo courtesy of Atlanta Daily World*

In 1943, W.A. was a business and math major at Morehouse College. He was engaged to his childhood sweetheart, Marian Willis, when he was drafted into the U.S. Army which was segregated at the time. After his induction at Fort Benning, Georgia, W.A. was assigned as a photographer with the 318th Airbase Squadron. After testing at Tuskegee, Alabama, he was assigned to the Army Specialized Training Program at Howard University in Washington, D.C. From there, he joined the 183rd Engineer Combat Battalion as a reconnaissance sergeant, photographer, camoufleur and part-time historian in the Intelligence Section. W.A. and Marian married just before he was shipped overseas in 1944.

On April 11, 1945, W.A. rode into Eisenach, Germany, in an Army convoy with General George S. Patton's 3rd Army. That afternoon, they entered Buchenwald, one of the largest concentration camps established by the Nazis within German borders. With his camera, W.A. documented some of the Nazi atrocities at the camp. He later recalled, "We got out of our vehicles and some began to beckon to us to follow and see what had been done in that place - they were walking

skeletons. The sights were beyond description. ... I had thought no place could be this bad. I took out my camera and began to take some photos - but that only lasted for a few pictures. As the scenes became more gruesome, I put my camera in its case and walked in a daze with the survivors..."

*"...One has to witness it to even begin to believe it."*



US Holocaust Memorial Museum – Photo courtesy of William Alexander Scott III

After the war, W.A. returned to Atlanta and completed his education at Morehouse. On July 16, 1948, President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981 which abolished racial discrimination in the armed forces. That same year, W.A. became publications and advertising manager of *The Atlanta Daily World*, a post he held for the rest of his life.



Map courtesy of US Holocaust Memorial Museum

Throughout W.A.'s life he was very active in the Atlanta community. A chess champion and expert, W.A. served as president of the Atlanta Chess Association for three years. He served on the committee designating the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. a national holiday. In 1986, W.A. Scott was appointed by Mayor Andrew Young to serve on the "Committee of 150" to plan the city's 150th anniversary.

Impacted throughout his life by his experience in Buchenwald, W.A. was appointed by Georgia Governor Joe Frank Harris as a charter member of the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust. He was also appointed by President George H. W. Bush to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council. W.A. passed away in 1992.

