

Mental

From Page 18

cans, including women and children. Fortunately, rights granted to African-Americans after the Civil War provides them with a voice that enables them to address issues of confusion in a non-violent, creative manner.

The segment of African-Americans who display total resentment towards the Market House are extremely angry and offended. They resent the fact that so much emphasis was placed on the actual structure as opposed to its historical value. The Old Fayetteville Association is the organization largely responsible for the newly restored condition of the Market House. Sources within the association revealed that it's taken eight years and an undisclosed amount of money to achieve the restoration process, and that the process wasn't limited to just the Market House, but all of Downtown Fayetteville. Blacks state that no matter what time of day a person drives through the downtown area, there's always a sizable number of blacks seen hanging around the immediate vicinity of the Market House, as if to imply that "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree." In general, Blacks feel they shouldn't be forced to look at the Market House on a daily basis.

African-Americans have "occupied space" in this country since the 1600s and have participated, contributed, and positively effected every major event in American History. African-Americans have also made original contributions to technology, literature, and other arts. There's always room for improvement and positive contributions in society as long as its understood that there are many racial and ethnic groups with their own distinctive culture, and in order for those different groups to be functionally integrated, there has to be mutual harmony, tolerance, and respect.

Fayetteville's Market House demands a response from all who are willing to participate. While photographing the Market House for the purpose of this article, the photographers and I were approached by a total stranger (black male) who obviously felt it was necessary, as a Black American, to make sure we understood exactly what the Market House represented and how displeased he was about its very existence. It's fair to say that the Market House generates negative responses within the black community. It is also fair to say that structures such as the Market House provide white society with the fuel needed to perpetuate stereotypical thinking towards black society.

Susan Smith, a white South Carolina female who was recently charged with the murders of her two sons, decided to cash in her views of stereotypical thinking at the expense of the black race.

Because of Susan's exposure to elements that promote mental segregation, she rationalized that society would accept a Black-American on the "run" for car jacking, kidnapping, and possibly murder as opposed to other ethnic groups who are just as capable of committing crimes of this magnitude. Both Black and White society shared mutual benefits from Susan's confession of the crime. For the sake of discussion, imagine the chain of events that an innocent black male may have encountered based on what Susan claims took place.

This is just one of the many very real examples of how a structure such as the Market House continues to influence how black society is viewed in the eyes of white society. Does its dual representation as a historical landmark and social stigma provide enough information to clearly define its meaning and value? Or, does it add validity to the concept of Mental Segregation?

Society is my prison,
Racism are the chains which
hold me down,
Prejudices are the bars which
inhibit my growth....
And knowledge shall set me free.

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From Page 18

critical of the editorial direction of ESSENCE, now is the time to make your criticism heard and to offer specific alternatives and solutions. Enclosed are writer's guidelines. Use them as your guide in querying us, and be sure to gear your ideas to young people. Send ideas to Contemporary Living/Ideas/ESSENCE Magazine at the address below.

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Thanks so much for your time. We look forward to making ESSENCE bolder, fresher and more relevant to your lives.

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