

One Hundred and Fifty Years of Dedicated Service



READ IT
BLACK PRESS WEEK
MARCH 12 to 18

EDITORIALS

A Tribute To The Black Press

Five late outstanding black journalists will be enshrined in the newly established Hall of Fame along with the establishment of a Black Press Archives as part of the 150th anniversary observance of the Black Press. The gallery of distinguished pioneer journalists will include John B. Russwurm, Samuel E. Cornish, Frederick Douglass, Philip Bell and Dr. Martin Delaney.

The Black Press has been an organ of protest and reform since its early beginning, March 16, 1827, with the appearance of the Freedom's Journal edited by John Russwurm and Samuel Cornish. Philip A. Bell founded the Weekly Advocate in 1837 in New York City. It was later named The Colored American. In 1843, Dr. Martin R. Delaney, the first black to graduate from Harvard University, founded "The Mystery", when the regular Pittsburg, Massachusetts dailies refused to run the contributions by blacks. Frederick Douglass published his great anti-slavery addresses in his paper, The North Star, in 1847. This was his paper and his method, along with his distinguished debates, to let all the nation and world know that slavery was an outrageous institution.

These outstanding fore-runners of early black journalism well deserve to be among the first so enshrined. Other outstanding journalists will come in the future.

Perhaps it may be the Jervays of the earlier Cape Fear Journal and what is now known as the Wilmington Journal of Wilmington, N. C. This paper recently celebrated its 50th year of service. Or perhaps it could be our own late Editor-Publisher, Louis E. Austin, of The Carolina Times.

The Carolina Times was begun in August, 1921, by Charles Arrant and was called the Standard Advertiser. Upon his death in 1922, E. C. Harris took over the paper. Working with him at that time also was Louis E. Austin, a re-

cent graduate of North Carolina Central University, (formerly known as the National Training School) who served as Sports Editor for the Standard Advertiser.

The name, The Carolina Times, was chosen because the paper was intended to serve North Carolina, but now serves throughout the nation and abroad. Austin assumed control of The Carolina Times in 1927.

Throughout the years the paper has carried on its crusade which has sought to destroy the chains of oppression on minorities and to assert just and equal rights for all mankind as guaranteed by the Constitution and Bill of Rights. The motto, "The Truth Unbridled" was Austin's and is the paper's trademark.

During the years, editorials of The Carolina Times have shown that it has sought fairness and justice for all citizens through those channels which would lead to continued friendship rather than rancor; yet always persevering in the cause of justice, dignity and the worth of all mankind.

The special role of The Carolina Times has been always to focus on the problems of North Carolina and the nation's black citizens. It has pushed the philosophy that as long as one segment of society is denied basic rights, it was folly or foolishness to think that other segments were much better off.

The Carolina Times has weathered and endured some terrible storms and will continue to endure some more because of its deep faith.

But come what may, The Carolina Times and other Black Press will continue to serve as a battleground for justice and equality which can and must never cease until every underprivileged human being in the world has the opportunity to rise to the fullest capacity with which God has endowed him.

Things You Should Know

John Jones
1817-1879



BORN OUT OF SLAVERY IN NORTH CAROLINA, BECAME ONE OF THE NATION'S RICHEST NEGROES - A SELF-EDUCATED TAILOR / HE LED THE FIGHT AGAINST THE ILLEGAL BLACK LAWS (-A NEGRO COULD NOT VOTE, OR TESTIFY IN COURT-)

A FRIEND OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS AND JOHN BROWN, HE WAS TWICE ELECTED COOK COUNTY COMMISSIONER - IT WAS HE WHO HELPED SECURE THE LEGISLATION WHICH ENDED LOCAL SCHOOL SEGREGATION /

To Be Equal

The Black Press' Birthday

This March marks the 150th birthday of one of America's most important institutions - the black press.

In Marcy, 1827, fifty years after an American Revolution dedicated to freedom and liberty but based on slavery and exploitation, two black men launched the first black-owned newspaper in the country. They were John Russwurm, America's first black college graduate, and Samuel Cornish. Their paper bore the appropriate name, "Freedom's Journal".

Especially after watching "Roots," we can appreciate the courage it took, not just the financial risk, but the very real obstacles placed in the way of black activists by a national power structure that endorsed slavery and viewed free blacks with distaste.

Why a black newspaper? John Russwurm answered that in his first editorial, and it's worth quoting:

"We wish to plead our own cause," he wrote. "Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the public been deceived by misrepresentations in things which concern us dearly."

And in what still describes many sectors of the nation, Russwurm pointed to those "who make it their business to enlarge upon the least trifles, which tends to the discredit of any person of color; and pronounce anathemas and denounce our whole body for the misconduct of the guilty one."

"Freedom's Journal" had a short-lived life,

but from its humble beginnings grew one of black America's major resources - a vigorous press that exposed the conditions forced upon black people and a press responsive to their needs and aspirations.

The black press became a central factor in the abolitionist movement, and Frederick Douglass founded and edited the major newspaper of the pre-Civil War era, the "North Star." The paper's object, Douglass wrote, "will be to attack slavery in all its forms and aspects, advocate universal emancipation, exact the standard of the colored people; and to hasten the day of freedom to our three million enslaved fellow countrymen."

Since those days, the black press has become a natural source of black leadership, with such giants as T. Thomas Fortune, William Monroe Trotter, Carl Murphy, A. Philip Randolph and Roy Wilkins emerging from its ranks.

Their publications and others engined black civil rights protest, fought lynching and peonage, opposed segregation, and spurred black efforts to gain a foothold in the economic mainstream.

The black press still performs those functions, as well as providing the community with news of local and national importance. As in the past, it provides a forum for black expression, a haven for unpopular ideas fated to triumph, and acts the role of a sentinel against injustice. Its vigor can be seen in the publications of the Johnson Publishing Company, the Songstacke

By VERNON E. JORDAN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
NATIONAL URBAN
LEAGUE



newspaper chain, and may others too numerous to mention here.

Now, in its maturity, the black press faces great challenges - it must respond to a new readership, increasingly more sophisticated and integrated into the mainstream in a greater degree than ever before. And on the business front, it faces mounting costs and competition for the advertising dollar.

Corporate advertising flows to mass media outlets, especially television, often ignoring black purchasing power despite the fact that blacks are major consumers of certain products, forming higher percentage of the market than their share of the population.

I'm confident that the courage and creativity that founded the black press and sustained it all these years will enable it to continue to flourish, serving community needs. Its task is far from finished. While the rest of the nation condones high unemployment, fights affirmative action, and neglects widespread poverty, an activist black press setting forth alternatives to such self-destructive policies is crucial to our national well-being.

150 years is a long time, but age has not diminished the black press' vigor or importance so a loud happy birthday is in order.

Congressman Hawkins' Column

By Rep. Augustus F. Hawkins

More About "Roots"

Almost everywhere one goes these days he is apt to hear discussion of ABC-TV's recent blockbuster series which was adopted from author Alex Haley's best selling book of the same name.

Most of the discussions are positive, that is to say, they center around favorable scenes, or deal with the overall dramatic theme of a remarkable black family's perilous odyssey toward freedom - from 18th century Africa to the post-Civil War era in the United States.

It was compelling drama, the kind not often seen on television (or in the movies, for that matter), so there is little wonder the series has triggered a continuing dialog, often heated, that is ongoing in our schools, churches, barbershops, corner taverns, pool rooms, playgrounds and living rooms - wherever a group of black folk may happen to congregate.

There are some among us, and that includes blacks, who feel the series should not have been aired. It will only stir up more trouble between blacks and whites, they say, and to what positive purpose?

Others argue that the series was hammed up by Hollywood, that the stereotypes were too broad and cliched - good black folks, bad white folks - or that the series took too liberal a license with the factual elements of the book which in any case, they say, was much richer in detail and human interaction than the TV series.

Still others gripe that the series did not dwell on Kinte's African beginning, on his tight family

and extended family structure, on the deeply ingrained religious beliefs held and practiced yesterday by these so-called "primitive" peoples: beliefs that shaped their lives and attitudes about themselves and others which on the whole were much more healthy and wholesome than the beliefs held by their captors and oppressors. Then, there was just too much violence, they carped.

Well, I shared many of the same reservations held by the critics. For example, I felt there was a potential for worsened race relations following the presentation of the series. It has not turned out that way. Indeed, from all reports received by ABC network, and other competent observers, there was surprisingly little rancor generated by the television series' rendering of this painful part of our history on this continent.

Like many others, I was gripped by the drama. It hurt at physical and psychic levels in most excruciating ways. It gagged at the throat, throbbled at the temples, burned behind the eyeballs, ripped at the gut, tugged at the chest.

At times, I would have to shut off the set and walk out of the room, ears burning, knees wobbly. But back I would come for more, enthralled at the television rendering of this emotionally searing drama which had never before been dealt with in quite this way on television or in the movies.

And that is just the point: Sure, there were cliched scenes, stereotyped Hollywood drama,

poor story plotting at times, and less than complex characterizations throughout. But all this overlooks the strengths of the program and they were many: fine characterizations by Cicely Tyson, Maya Angelou, LeVar Burton, as the youthful "Kunta Kinte", John Amos, as the adult "Kinte", Ben Vereen as "Chicken George" Leslie Uggams as "Kizzy" and, of course, Lloyd Bridges and Chuck Connors as the evil and/or treacherous white folks.

It was compelling dramatization that transcended weaknesses, and the renderings of a stark and ugly page in the nation's history that has not been told in quite that way before. The violence was always in context, never gratuitous.

ABC-TV must be complimented for taking the risk of putting this program on the air and doing so in such a way that interest heightened until at the end of the eight-day serialization, more people were glued to their TV sets watching than had ever turned into a single TV program in history.

And something exciting has emerged from this showing: instead of heightened racial tension there are reports that more whites are now more sympathetic to blacks, having witnessed through "Roots" the depiction of this heroic family's struggle toward freedom. And blacks, especially the younger generation, are seeing older blacks through new and more respectable eyes.

For all of us, it has been quite an emotional experience and I do not believe American will ever be the same, indeed, can ever be the same again.

Benjamin L. Hooks

How To End Busing Crisis

I read a letter in the Los Angeles Times the other day, written by a retired, Jewish teacher, who concluded that the black community has not significantly pushed for academic excellence among its youth. And that it's not busing that is needed (to help improve the education of black students,) but rather a "re-definition of the value of education by the entire black community".

The writer of the letter was sincere in his beliefs, based on his own cultural heritage and his own experiences within that culture, but I think it takes a lot of cheek to blame the victims of racial prejudice for the things that the greater society has perpetuated in our educational institutions.

The very nature of the society within the school systems of this country have existed, has unfortunately caused some black youth to abhor formal learning of any kind. And in spite of the strong and forceful admonitions of their parents, who they have seen dehumanized by the racism here, these black youth are intelligent enough to see through all the racist "put-downs". Exactly what have they seen?

I think the school teacher knows; since he taught at George Washington Carver Junior High School, he must be aware that it took years before the Los Angeles City Schools would hire a black teacher to teach there - or in any of the other schools in the black community.

He must also be aware that not only were black educators refused jobs in schools in their own communities, they were totally absent for years in so-called white schools in this city, because of school board employment discrimination.

Even today, pockets of this kind of bigotry still exist.

The major point here - is not to argue against the black community taking a fresh assessment of its educational viewpoints, but

rather to affirmatively suggest that the majority society needs to do the same thing.

But on a much broader scope, the majority society also needs to look at the role it has assigned to blacks in this culture. It stands to reason you cannot consciously assign blacks the roles of second-class citizens in every regard on the one hand, and then expect them all to be exemplary citizens on the other hand. It just won't work and in large part it hasn't worked. Well where do we go from here?

It's almost axiomatic. Those blacks who the school teacher believes do not strive for academic excellence, and who have a "basically negative attitude toward education", would change almost overnight, if every opportunity for advancement in this society was opened up, and laid bare for them to grasp.

In other words, put back the hope, and you re-kindle the dream that Martin Luther King so eloquently defined in the 60's March on Washington.

Now that is a roughie, I'll admit, but there is no sense in arguing over the issue of busing and its merits or demerits, unless you are willing to consider alternatives - which will best provide the solution to all the controversy.

And the best solution to all of this - is to see to it that equal employment opportunity is a reality, that black and white ghettoes are declared null and void, that gerrymandered school boundaries are outlawed, that all educational resources (local, state and nationwide) are equitably shared, that we put back the term "justice" in the phrase "law and order" - so that it reads "law and order with justice", and finally, that we live up to the Constitution.

When a black youth knows - that someday he/she can become President of this land, then we won't need to bus anybody, anywhere, unless they want it that way.

Til then, we'll continue to be in pain.

FCC
Commissioner



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

TO THE EDITOR:

Dear Sir:
Many thanks for printing the Human Relations Day Article referring to Mr. J. William Becton. It helped our program tremendously.
Very truly yours,
Rufus E. Hackett
United Methodist Men
Asbury Temple United
Methodist Church

The Carolina Times

L. E. AUSTIN
Editor - Publisher, 1927-1971

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