

Chronicle Profile

Photographer delves into history

By JAMES PARKER
Staff Photographer

Last Friday, and in true Hitchcock fashion, I stepped through the front door of the Delta Arts Center and, subsequently, back in time. What was to have been a stroll through an exhibit by Winston-Salem photographer Clarence Nottingham became, for me, an eye-opening delve into the Twin City's black history.

Everything became black. But I wasn't afraid at all. I was amazed. It must've been about the late 1950s or so; I could tell by the cars parked next to Safe Bus Co., once the only black-owned bus firm in the world.

Had you wandered into the downtown area surrounding the Phillips Building in 1958, you too would have seen what Clarence Nottingham saw and later photographed. Since that time, Nottingham, an 81-year-old Philadelphia native, has recorded, and probably better than any other artist, Winston's black people and places. Samples of his work will be on exhibit at the Delta Arts Center until March 10, and they help tell the story of this city's proud black history.

Included in Nottingham's exhibit are pictorial scenes that make the mind drift back to the days of the Liberty and the Lincoln, black theatre houses; of Winston Mutual and North Carolina Mutual, black insurance agencies; of a black YMCA on Patterson Avenue and a black hospital named Kate Biting Reynolds.

The list of black businesses was enough to boggle my 1980 intellect. There were black barbershops,

restaurants, food stores, drugstores, taxicab companies, a plumbing company. Black-owned offices were busy with black doctors, lawyers and tailors -- you name it and black Winston had it. By 1947, Winston-Salem had pioneered so many black enterprises that *Ebony* magazine published the news of the black mecca nationwide that year.

"Atlanta and other major cities heard about Winston-Salem from that article and black businesses were inspired all over," said Winston native Minnie Benson. "They got it (the inspiration) from us."

And Nottingham himself is just as intriguing as the history he has recorded with film.

"I never felt black. I felt as a person, as a man."

-- Clarence Nottingham

He was first trained in his craft at the Germain School of Photography in New York City in 1931. While studying portrait photography in the 1960s with one of New York's best, Monclova, Nottingham took a portrait he won't ever forget.

A young Southern minister fresh out of an Alabama bus boycott was starting a speaking tour in New York when he was stabbed inches from his heart with a letter opener. During his recovery stay in Brooklyn, the young minister suited up to have a portrait made, and Nottingham was his photographer.

That minister, who became the famous civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., didn't mean a lot



Clarence Nottingham: The dean of Winston-Salem photography (photo by James Parker).

to Nottingham then.

"Then, we weren't impressed," says Nottingham. "We (photographed) so many jackleg ministers -- one was like another."

Since then, Nottingham has seen his portrait of King reproduced on calendars and posters all over the country. For an 8x10 of King, Nottingham received \$7.50 and no copyright.

On his initial visit to Winston-Salem for his

nephew's christening, Nottingham fell in love with the city. "I felt at home," he says. "It was a lot like Long Island (where he was then living)."

Since moving to Winston-Salem, Nottingham, who is semi-retired, has traveled extensively. Included in the many places he's visited are nearly every country between Canada and South America, Europe and several islands in the Atlantic Ocean.

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Calendar From Page A6

•The Institute for Islamic Involvement Inc. will sponsor a forum on "Understanding the Middle East: An African American View" at the East Winston Branch Library at 6:30 p.m.

•The Old Hickory Council, Boy Scouts of America, which serves the youth of eight northwestern counties in the state, will hold its annual Recognition Banquet in the Magnolia Room at Wake Forest University at 7 p.m. Superior Court Judge James M. Long will be the guest speaker.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 29

•Home Economics Extension Agent Joanne Falls will feature "Sewing Shortcuts" at the East Winston Branch Library at 10 a.m. Bring your lunch, if you wish and stay for conversation.

•The National Council of Churches Racial Justice working Group will hold a Service for Justice in the Greensboro Massacre at First Lutheran Church at West Friendly Avenue in Greensboro at 7:30 p.m.

Wachovia promotes four

Sharon G. Caldwell has been elected assistant vice president in the Personnel Group at Wachovia Bank and Trust in Winston-Salem. Ruth W. Fine, Kyle A. Royce and Richard A. Walden have been elected personnel officer.

Caldwell joined Wachovia in 1978 in the training and development section and recently was named manager of sales training. She is a native of Seagrove and a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Fine, a Winston-Salem native, is benefits administrator in the Personnel Group. She has been with Wachovia for 13 years.

Royce joined Wachovia in 1981 and serves as manager of non-exempt employment. A native of Glen Cove, N.Y., she has a bachelor's degree from the University of Richmond.

Walden joined Wachovia a year ago. He is a native of High Point and a High

Point College graduate.

In other promotions, P. Marshall Henderson was elected assistant vice president; Mary J. Simos was elected investment officer; and George G. Costas II was elected international banking officer.

Henderson joined Wachovia in 1980 and is a financial consultant in the financial services section of Corporate Banking Administration. A native of South Bend, Ind., he is a graduate of Indiana University.

Simos, a native of Winston-Salem, has been with Wachovia for seven years and is a funds management specialist in Corporate Banking Administration.

Costas joined the bank in 1981 and became foreign exchange trader later that year. He is a native of Lynchburg, Va., and earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia.

Being Black in America: A Real Picture

Remember your first real history lesson?

When Grandma used to sit you down and talk about her life she wasn't just telling tales. She was following a long line of Black historians who passed their precious knowledge from generation to generation using the most expressive instrument created. The human voice.

This knowledge is power. Because when you know where you come from you know who you are. Our grandparents knew this. So did W.E.B. Dubois, Sojourner Truth, Carter G. Woodson and Martin Luther King.

They also knew how important it was that this knowledge continue to be handed down. Black History Month is a reminder for us to learn from the past, because it positively affects the quality of our future.

Anheuser-Busch appreciates this fact. We have an ongoing commitment to forging partnerships with Black organizations across the country which are involved in preserving the Black cultural heritage.

And we've brought Black history into the community through our Great Kings and Queens of Africa art collection.

A real picture of being Black in America includes all of us. The future rests on people of all races working together to make our common reality one we can all be proud of.

Building a future in partnership with the community.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY KETHI HALE
An award-winning Black photographer, Mr. Hale is currently on staff with the Chicago Sun Times. Over the years his work has appeared in major publications, including EBONY and ESSENCE. The photograph below is of Mr. Hale's daughter and her great-grandmother.



Garden club meets

The Alta Vista Garden recently met at the home of Mrs. Maggie Rucker, with Mrs. Janie W. Thomas serving as co-hostess.

The president presided over the meeting, and Mrs. Alberta Singleton read a devotional message with the theme song "In The Garden."

Old business was called for. New business included

a discussion of the club's 50th anniversary, which will be planned at the club's next meeting.

Mrs. Odessa Perry set up the table arrangement for dinner and lunch for two people. Roll call showed 13 members present and one visitor, Mrs. Glennie M. Hall.

Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Rucker served the meal.