

EDITORIALS AND COMMENTS

BLACK HISTORY WEEK

One week during the month of February is traditionally set aside each year to observe Black History Week. One week each year is set aside for seminars, study groups, testimonials, skits, exhibits, and other types of programs that pay homage to the accomplishments that thousands of blacks have made to this country's history.

One week each year is not enough. It is difficult to condense in one week the successes and failures, the strivings, the longings, the hopes, the fears, the gains and losses of a people with unmatched faith in the God of their fathers and the law of the land. Since 1619 the story of black Americans has been an ongoing one. It has a beginning, but no end and as a result, it cannot be prescribed and should not be restricted to a weeks celebration each year. The history of black Americans is too proud, too

shameless, too true to be so confined. For it is history written across the face of the ages by black people of all colors; big names, little names, no names, leaders, thinkers, scholars, workers, men and women who in their own way have contributed mightily to the uplift of their people.

But in order to insure that our legacy remains a lasting one, our heritage safe, our future secure, we must fight to maintain our institutions while building new ones, and we must strive to make sure that our young reach the point of satisfaction that comes from an awareness and a knowledge of who we are and how far we've come.

Black history is too important to be limited to one week each year. It should be celebrated each day of the year.

And while celebrating, we must make our own lasting contributions.

LIFT EVERY VOICE . . .

Lift every voice and sing,
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty,
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past
has taught us;
Sing a song full of the hope that the present
has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chast'ning rod,
Felt in the days when hope
unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet,
Come to the place for which our
fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that
with tears has been watered,
We have come treading our path through the
blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our
bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us
thus far on the way;
Thou who hast by thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray,
Lest our feet stray from the places
our God where we met thee,
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine
of the world, we forget thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand
May we forever stand,
True to our God,
True to our native land.

WORDS BY JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

MUSIC BY J. ROSAMOND JOHNSON

BLACKS AND THE BICENTENNIAL

Within the next two years the term bi-centennial will become an important word not only in our schools, colleges, universities, states and the nation at large, but within households and family groups as well.

The very word bicentennial means an event happening once in a period of two hundred years. It may also mean lasting for 200 years and may be a 200th anniversary or its celebration. 1976 will be the 200 year of the memorable occasions in each and every community, state and the nation.

The American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (ARBC) has the responsibility for proving all interested planners, participants and the general public with information on Bicentennial activities and offers suggestions on how it can best be implemented.

An important division of the organization is the Bicentennial Information Network (BINET), inaugurated July 3, 1973. Goals include the installation of Binet terminals in each of the states and territories.

Themes for the Bicentennial celebrations are HERITAGE '76, which honors and reflects the past, FESTIVAL, U.S.A. featuring celebrations and hospitality, and HORIZONS, '76, which makes a commitment to improving the quality

of life for the future. Dr. Benjamin Quarles, from the Executive Council of the Association of the Study of Afro-American Life and History, (ASALH) has made some historical comments on Blacks and the Bicentennial.

To Black Americans the Revolutionary War, has always meant two things. It meant, as its name indicates, both a war and a revolution. The war would end when Lord Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown. But the revolution would continue down to the present, and beyond.

The war took place on land and sea, the revolution took place in the minds of men. The war dealt with military and naval operations, the revolution dealt with ideas and ideals, especially with the great concepts proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence.

On both counts Black Americans had a vital role to play. In the war some 5,000 blacks, slave and free, enlisted in the Revolutionary armies. Additional thousands found service with His Majesty's troops, performing war-related duties. The fighting contribution of blacks extended to the American navies, state and continental, and to the British fleet, both sides extending a special invitation to black pilots with their hard-won knowledge of the Atlantic Coastal waters.

To be Continued

A LOT OF NOISE. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BLACKS?



PIONS

To Be Equal

by Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

National Director of Urban League

FORD FOLLOWS THROUGH

President Ford had a whirlwind week recently, highlighted by a special economic message and the State of the Union address. Although his economic proposals leave a lot to be desired and he failed to include a strong civil rights message to the nation, as he had been urged to do, he did follow through on two recommendations made by Black leaders in our meeting with him last fall.

The first was that he appoint a black to a Cabinet position, the second, that he endorse extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, up for renewal this summer.

His nomination of an outstanding Black lawyer, William T. Coleman, Jr., as Secretary of Transportation not only puts the first black person in seven years into the Cabinet but it marks a major upgrading of that body.

Mr. Coleman is an outstanding lawyer, an honors graduate from Harvard Law School and former law clerk to Justice Felix Frankfurter, who has built an enviable reputation as one of the nation's top legal minds. He has also been a civil rights activist who worked on the school desegregation case that led to the Brown decision of 1954, among other noteworthy civil rights cases he had been involved with, and is president of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund.

He will take over a federal Department of special interest to city dwellers. At a time when it is essential to revitalize urban mass transit, this excellent appointment signals a more positive role in national transportation

policy.

Mr. Ford followed through on the recommendation that he back extension of the Voting Rights Act, and in the long run that may be even more significant. Along with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, this legislation forms the core of black gains in the Second Reconstruction. At a time when those gains are being sniped at and, one by one, stripped away, it is good to see the President drawing a line around the most significant ones and saying they will stand.

The Voting Rights Act, by extending federal protection of the right to vote in

sections of the country that had denied that right to black citizens, has helped to change the face of the South. Black people are voting today in places that used to react with violence when a black person attempted to register.

As a result, there are black mayors, black sheriffs, and county supervisors, and other black elected officials representing black people and their white neighbors all over the South.

The law, which runs for five years, was renewed in 1970 and President Ford's endorsement of renewal will help assure its passage this summer. There are plenty of people in Washington who would like the law to expire quietly, and if that happened we would be sure to see a host of measures in some states whose effect would be to deny blacks the opportunity to participate in the democratic process.

I doubt that the old "grandfather clause" and other unconstitutional methods would be adopted. But today's sophisticated legal engineers could easily come up with plans from multi-member districting, literacy tests, and gerrymandered districts that individually might pass the test of constitutionality but collectively would slash black registration figures.

That President Ford chose the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., to announce his support for extension also shows his sensitivity to the memory of the man who led the winning fight to extend the right to vote to black people.

Blacks have a lot to complain about in regard to many Administration policies, but Mr. Ford's appointment of William Coleman and his backing extension of the Voting Rights Act prove that he is willing to listen and to accept advice of black leadership, and that he is concerned about including black citizens in the mainstream of American life.

In times that need bold action to improve the lot of black Americans that may not be as much as we hoped for, but it is a big improvement over the attitude of the previous tenant of the White House.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

All of the men who participated in the break in of the Democratic National Headquarters in June of 1972, and the other various scandals that led to Watergate were white. There were only 4 black clerical workers and one black researcher out of a staff of around 95 people who work in the Watergate Committee. One fact is that there were no black lawyers hired by the Committee which hired all white lawyers, investigators and administrative staff to work for the Committee.

White America suffered more so from Watergate than blacks, which leads me to the conclusion that not only can certain whites in America put their trust, faith, and confidence in certain white Americans to represent them in public office and the Blacks and minorities in this country definitely cannot expect to rely on certain whites we help

vote and elect to public offices to really look after our welfare survival as a minority race in this country. Therefore, we must try to elect and put men in public office and especially blacks and minorities who we are sure will look out for our interest and welfare and really help us solve the problems we are faced with in this country today. We need to have people in public office who are not going to represent themselves and a few voters or friends but people who are going to represent the entire segment of the community that elected them into office in the first place, whether black, brown, yellow, white or green. And we must not let our elected officials voted into office forget us, especially when it comes time to call on our representatives for assistance. This applies especially to Black Americans and other minorities who help elect white

men into public office.

Remarks by:

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Wrong, Illegible
Addresses Delay Tax
Refunds, IRS Says

Some North Carolina taxpayers who filed a federal income tax return and claimed a refund may not get the check due them, IRS District Director for North Carolina Mr. Robert A. LeBaube said today.

"Many taxpayers have moved, since filing their Form 1040 or 1040A, and some forgot to give the post office a forwarding address," he said.

THE NEED FOR POLITICAL CLOUT

By ELVA P. DeJARMON

Dr. Nathaniel Wright made some interesting comments recently on the continuing need for political clout by Black Americans even as we note the singular successes of a number of black leaders.

Black Americans conduct themselves today both economically and politically as a largely dependent race...with the polite request still the etiquette of survival. Unlike the rise to power to other groups throughout history, we are not seeking full entrance into the American mainstream by the mighty organized political and economic power of our vast numbers, Wright said.

The alleged but doubtful failure of much of the rhetoric of black radicals in recent years is no logical reason for blacks to return to the outworn tactics of the past. Even White America is aware of the past and present injustices against us and have passed laws granting us routes to redress. Thus, the kind of inappropriate diplomacy which we practice far too often with white Americans when it comes to politely seeking our fair share of power might be far more appropriate in our relations with each other. Today, we need black togetherness almost as never before.

Wright said Black Americans must learn that when a group is one the bottom there is no such thing in it as an independent elitist corps as some would like to feel. We all need each other and must learn to speak and to act with the most extensive and variegated support which we can possibly muster. Every Black with stature...notwithstanding some outstanding credentials...gained that position in large part through black help cannot speak with power, if there are no large constituencies who are standing ready to impose massive and telling sanctions against those who fail to heed the rightful claims of black citizens.

Further, the singular successes of a number of blacks on a statewide level illustrate

the need for blacks to be flexible in their choice of political alliances. "The black Lieutenant Governor of California; Mervyn Dymally, and the black U.S. Representative from Texas, Ms. Barbara Jordan, whose new paths largely untried by blacks in the past-to power," Wright added.

For most of the years of our freedom we have had a "lovely complex" when what we have needed was a "power for freedom complex," he said. Our primary goal should never have been to reward or to be loyal to those who assumed the role of friends of black Americans. Rather we should have thanked those who had helped us, whenever and as soon as we possibly could, and kept our major efforts focused on moving on to reach the goal of equity (power and freedom) toward which the helping hand had moved us.

Our problem has been that of getting locked into means and forgetting our ends overarching purpose which is power and freedom. Blacks need power in order to achieve freedom. The two major paths toward power are perpetual in-group solidarity, regardless of how the in-group may be defined, and flexibility, to openness by joining forces temporarily with new groups who can help us reach immediately attainable goals.

In every state of the union, we need to stop counting repeatedly and gloating over the political crumbs that we have rescued. Instead, we need to keep constant count of, and our firmly focused eyes upon, the new numbers we need for political parity with other groups whose place in America is much newer but far stronger than our own.

New occasions, we are told, teach new truths. Nowhere is this more true than in the political arena of black Americans, our political duties are no less than our commonly shared techniques for our nation's cleansing for black survival.

Things You Should Know

Henry BIBB...



A SLAVE OWNED BY W.H. GATEWOOD OF BEDFORD, KY., WHO ESCAPED TO CANADA. IN 1849 HE PUBLISHED HIS LIFE STORY PLEADING THE ABOLITIONIST CAUSE. BY 1851 HE HAD ORGANIZED THE REFUGEES' HOME COLONY, BUYING SOME 1300 ACRES OF LAND FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF ESCAPED SLAVES. IN 1853 HE ATTENDED A NATIONAL COUNSEL OF NEGRO LEADERS DISCUSSING THE QUESTION OF AFRICAN COLONIZATION.

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