

# National Urban League Organizes Commission

In keeping with a resolution passed at the 1975 Delegate Assembly of the National Urban League calling for a Commission to hold wide-ranging discussions on the precise role and function of the Assembly, the NUL has organized such a unit under the chairmanship of NUL PrL President Donald H. McGannon and set dates for holding "convocation sessions" in the four NUL regions.

Beginning early in December and continuing through the end of February, 1976, representatives of NUL affiliates and constituent bodies and other members of the Urban League family will have an opportunity to present their views and ideas to the Commission.

The first Convocation will be held in Chicago, (Central Region) December 10th and 11th.

The Commission members will exert every effort to make these sessions truly democratic. Testimony and discussion will be recorded.

It is hoped that all important points can be raised in verbal discussion following the reading of each representative's statement. However, the Commission will accept written statements from representatives who find it impossible to attend.

The sessions will be scheduled during both day and evening hours to meet the convenience of individuals who will testify.

By March, 1976, the Commission will approve the draft of an overall report on the hearings. The report will be distributed throughout the four regions.

The Commission of the Delegate Assembly is comprised of six NUL Trustees: Chester Burger, W. Don Cornwell, Ronald R. Davenport, Joyce A. Hughes, George A. Jensen; four affiliate presidents each representing a NUL region: Joseph T. Almon, South Carolina; Owen L. Heggs, Ohio; Clarence R. Johnson, Sr., California; Margaret P. Lord, Connecticut; four members of the Delegate Assembly, each representing a NUL region: Joseph L. Barrow, Jr., Colorado; Frank B. Cox, Oklahoma; William E. English, Minnesota; Helen E. Mervis, Louisiana; and four representatives from NUL constituent groups: Sidney Alexander, Urban League Alumni Association; James L. Buckner, Council of Urban League Presidents; Erma M. Davis, National Council of Urban League Guilds; Gleason Glover, Council of Urban League Executive Directors. The Ex-Officio member of the Commission is Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., Executive Director of the National Urban League.

The President of any affiliate or constituent group, a 1975 Delegate Member or Member-at-Large, or any other member of the Urban League family, who wishes to submit testimony, MUST SO NOTIFY THE COMMISSION, at its official headquarters, 500 East 62nd Street, New York, N. Y. 10021, AT LEAST (30) DAYS IN ADVANCE OF THE CONVOCATION SCHEDULED FOR HIS REGION THE NAME, IDENTIFICATION AND MAILING ADDRESS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE TO PRESENT TESTIMONY must be sent to the Commission on official Registration Form, NOT

LESS THAN FIFTEEN (15) DAYS IN ADVANCE of a Regional Convocation, and before the written testimony is submitted.

TESTIMONY MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE COMMISSION, IN WRITING, not less than ten (10) days in

advance of the Regional Convocation. Testimony must be limited to the role and function of the Delegate Assembly, and is to be not more than ten minutes reading time.

The date, time, and place, and specific hour indicated for appearance at the Regional

Convocation, will be sent to the individuals who have been designated to testify, or who request time to testify, approximately ten (10) days prior to the session.

The testimony which was submitted in writing will be presented verbally. A maximum

of (10) minutes will be allowed for and a similar amount of time for questions and discussion. During the "give and

take" of questions and discussion, the person testifying will be free to ad lib within the time framework designated.

## Historic Milestones

by Elva P. DeJarmon

(Brief anecdotes of Negro History from BEFORE THE MAYFLOWER, by Lerone Bennett, Jr., and THE NEGRO IN VIRGINIA, Writers Program of WPA in Virginia, Hampton Institute Sponsored).

1762

James Derham, who was born a slave in Philadelphia in 1762, is generally recognized as the first Negro physician in America. Derham learned the art while serving as an assistant to his physician master. In 1783, Derham bought his freedom and built up a large practice among Negroes and whites. By 1788, he was one of the top physicians in New Orleans.

1770

Crispus Attucks was first of five persons killed in Boston Massacre, March 5. Attucks is generally regarded as first martyr of the Revolution. Quakers, led by Anthony Benezet, opened school for Negroes in Philadelphia, June 28.

1773

Massachusetts slaves petitioned legislature for freedom, January 6. There is a record of eight petitions during Revolutionary War period. Phillis Wheatley's book, POEMS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS, RELIGIOUS AND MORAL, published, the second book by an American woman. First Negro Baptist Church organized at Silver Bluff, S. C.

1775

First abolition society in United States organized in Philadelphia, April 14. Negro and white minutemen fought at Lexington, and Concord, April 19.

Negro patriots participated in first aggressive action of American forces, the capture of Fort Mifflin by Ethan Allen and Green Mountain Boys, May 10. Negro soldiers fought at Battle of Bunker Hill, June 17. Two of the heroes of the day were PETER SALEM and SALEM POOR.

Horatio Gates, Washington's Adjutant General, issued general order banning Negro soldiers from American Army, July 10.

Council of general officers decided to bar slaves and free Negroes from American Army, October 8.

Continental Congress approved resolution barring Negroes from Army, October 23.

Lord Dunmore, deposed royal governor of Virginia, issued proclamation which promised freedom to male slaves who joined British Army, November 7.

General George Washington issued general order which forbade recruiting officers to enlist Negroes, November 12.

Alarmed by response to Dunmore proclamation, Washington reversed himself and ordered recruiting officers to accept FREE Negroes, December 31.

1776

Continental Congress approved Washington's order on enlistment of free Negroes, January 16.

Declaration of Independence adopted, July 4. Section denouncing slave trade struck out in deference to South Carolina and Georgia.

African Baptist Church organized, Williamsburg, Va.

The familiarity of Negro waterman with the tricky tides and channels of the Potomac, York and James rivers made them invaluable crew members of Virginia's heterogeneous Navy. Captain John Cooper's slave, Harry, was noted for his zeal and courage; William Ballard's slave, Cupid, was described as a "champion of liberty" and a "favorite of all the officers." Aaron Weaver, first class slave seaman on another vessel, was seriously wounded after fighting valiantly in an engagement at the mouth of the York River. Cuffy was an able seaman on the "Revenge", Kingston on the "Accomac" Nimrod Perkins on the "Diligence Galley". Joseph Ranger, an Elizabeth City Negro, served for the duration of the Revolution aboard the ships, Hero, Patriot, Dragon and Jefferson. He was taken prisoner by a British man of war shortly before Cornwallis' surrender. Captain Mark Starling, only Negro Naval captain in Virginia's history, was an anxious observer, better known as Uncle Mark, was of very singular and meritorious character...with a crew consisting largely of Negroes he is credited with having made numerous daring night attacks on British vessels operating in Hampton Roads. At the close of the Revolution, Captain Starling, returned to private life, but in

spite of his distinguished service record, he was reclaimed as a slave by his old master. Mark Starling died in slavery just a year before a Virginia legislative act of 1783 would have made him a freeman. Records reveal that Negroes performed valiantly in the many small engagements that were fought in Virginia. At one time, Negroes were fighting Negroes in Virginia - those with the English and those in Colonial America.

Names such as Billy Flora, James Armistead, Samuel Jenkins, Oliver Cromwell and Seymour Burr, slave to the brother Aaron Burr, who had signed over to his master his bounty money in return for freedom as well as William Lee, Washington's body servant. A black woman Deborah Gannett, served in the Colonial army under the name of Robert Shurtleff without revealing her sex for the duration of the War. This service won her in 1783 a yearly grant of 34 pounds in British currency.

After the disastrous winter of VALLEY FORGE, Negroes - slaves and freemen were welcomed into the American Army. There were Negro soldiers in the Revolutionary Army from every one of the original thirteen colonies. Most of the estimated 5,000 Negroes in the Revolutionary Army fought in integrated units. Negro soldiers participated in practically all of the big battles of the war. They were at White Plains, Stillwater, Bennington, Bemis Heights, Saratoga, Stony Point, Trenton, Princeton, Eutaw, S. C. and Yorktown. Negro-troops played important roles in the battles of Rhode Island, Long Island, Red Bank, Savannah, Monmouth and Fort Griswold.

In spite of the act emancipating slaves for war services, many masters refused to notify the intended beneficiaries - the slaves. One slave who would have been freed was Simon Lee, who at the end of the war, was returned to his master's tobacco plantation, where he died a slave.

TO BE CONTINUED.

OUR Patriots!

A LITTLE KNOWN FACT OF AMERICAN HISTORY IS THAT RECORDS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR INDICATE THAT SOME 5,000 BLACKS... BOTH SLAVES AND FREE MEN, SERVED VALIANTLY THROUGH THE WAR.

FROM CRISPUS ATTUCKS, ONE OF THE FIRST MARTYRS OF THE REVOLUTION, TO THE ALL-BLACK REGIMENT WHICH DISTINGUISHED ITSELF AT THE BATTLE OF RHODE ISLAND IN 1778, BLACK PATRIOTS CONTRIBUTED IMMEASURABLY TO THE WAR'S SUCCESS.

OVER THE YEARS, BLACK SOLDIERS ESTABLISHED AN ENVIABLE RECORD OF BRAVERY AND VALOR ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

THE BLACK MEN AND WOMEN OF TODAY'S U.S. ARMY RESERVE ARE THE HEIRS TO A PROUD TRADITION... SERVING THEIR COUNTRY.

