

NAACP State President, Long Time Civil Rights Leader

The 32nd annual convention of the North Carolina State Conference of Branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was held in Lumberton from Nov. 6-8.

According to state president Kelly Miller Alexander, Sr., in a recent letter to all branch presidents, officers and members: "We have a wonderful NAACP family in North Carolina. However, due to the announced serious financial status of the national office, the delegates (at the state convention) approved a recommendation by the president to set up a voluntary Blue Ribbon Committee to raise funds to meet this crisis. Each member of the committee is responsible to raise at least \$100 from any source.

The field director, Mr. Charles A. McLean, is coordinating the Blue Ribbon Committee and all funds on this effort are to be sent to Mr. B. J. Battle, 1010 Bellevue St., Greensboro, N.C. 27404. Each contributor will receive a receipt from the national office and will also receive a letter of acknowledgement from the state conference. Contributors will also receive a Blue Ribbon Certificate from the state conference.

Mr. Alexander is a widely-known leader in fraternal life in the State of North Carolina and throughout the nation.

A 33 degree Prince Hall Mason, and actively identified with fraternal, civic, educational and religious activities, Bro. Alexander's caliber as an effective leader is nationally recognized.

Born in Charlotte, where he received his early education, he continued his academic and professional training at Tuskegee Institute, Ala., and at the Renouard College of Embalming, N.Y. City.

Early in life, he associated himself with community organizations; and in 1940, he organized the Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. From this time forward, he made the NAACP his major community organization interest, with his activities concentrated in the area of civil rights.

He is a charter member of the North Carolina State Conference of Branches of NAACP, and assisted in its



KELLY MILLER ALEXANDER, SR.

organization. In 1948, he was elected to the office of president; and he has been re-elected regularly, ever since.

In 1950, he was elected to the National Board of Directors of the NAACP; has served on many national board committees, and contributed significantly, to the implementation of NAACP policy and procedures on the national, regional, state and local levels. He is a life member of the NAACP and a member of the National Life Membership Committee.

The leadership and influence of the Alexander Years in the civil rights struggle in North Carolina have resulted in the following remarkable achievements:

Largest number of NAACP State branches in the United States; contributed more money to the Freedom Fund than any other state conference in the southeast region; spearheaded attacks against segregation in the field of public recreation facilities; provided leadership for the admission of Negroes to the University of North Carolina graduate and undergraduate institutions; created a workable project known as Operation Employment, in the interest of equal opportunity for Negroes in matter of employment; developed a Mother Of the Year project to raise Freedom Funds for NAACP, a widely-recognized model for NAACP Branch fund-raising; promoted parent education, preparatory to public school desegregation; provided financial assistance for families who suffer loss of gainful employment, because of their participation in school desegregation activities; encouraged and assisted branches in providing financial and legal aid for youth engaged in demonstrations throughout the state.

Brother Alexander has received numerous citations and tributes for his years of devoted, courageous and unselfish service to the cause of human freedom.

Certificate of Merit, for his leadership as a "Staunch Defender of Equal Rights for All Americans, by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; bronze plaque for "Unselfish, Courageous, Dedicated, Courageous Leadership as president of the NAACP in N.C." by the North Carolina State Conferences; citations from the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, the Civil Liberties Department of the N.C. State Association of Elks of the World, the James M. Teamer School of Religion, the Scorpions Club - to mention a few.

He is president of the Alexander Funeral Home, Inc., and the Alexander Burial Association, Inc.

Brother Alexander is an ardent member of Charlotte's Friendship Baptist Church; is married, and the father of two sons.

More Than You Know

BY STANFORD DRAKE

As the nation prepares to celebrate the Bicentennial in 1976, little notice is given to the heroic contributions that blacks have made toward the independence of this country. But today's deliberate exclusion of black feats becomes less blatant when we compare it with the exclusion that General George Washington practiced. It took a long cold winter at Valley Forge and the dissention of more than three thousand of his troops to bring General Washington around. But in 1778 he sent an officer to the Rhode Island Assembly asking them to authorize the enlistment of Negro slaves. After the Rhode Island Assembly consented to the requested authorization, Mass. followed suit. By the close of the war, blacks were serving in arms from every one of the thirteen colonies.

Their service should come as no surprise. They had been heroes at Bunker Hill before Washington took command of the army. But no sooner had Washington taken control than he issued orders banning the enlistment of blacks. The heroic deeds displayed at Bunker Hill by men like Peter Salem and Salem Poor, two distinguished and recognized patriots, and others like them, were enough to confirm their ability as fighting men.

The irony of the situation is that Washington and his general officers, after the debating the enlistment of black troops in October 1775 decided against doing so. So, on November 12, 1775 he sent out an order to that effect. The British on the contrary, cunning politicians that they



Little Known Facts From The Reader's Digest

are, proclaimed freedom for all males slaves willing and able to bear arms. Thousands of blacks streamed off of the plantations. They even defeated a force of American revolutionaries. Washington, alarmed at the threatening consequences, allowed the enlistment of free blacks who had served previously with the Americans. He stubbornly maintained that slaves could not be enlisted. This is easy to understand because General Washington, himself, had quite a few slaves at home.

This compromise was reinforced by another. But not without much grumbling and hesitation. It was the poor showing that whites had given in general on the battle line that made General Washington enlist slaves. In spite of the fact that there were one million men of fighting age in the colonies, there were never more than 50,000 facing the British at one time. Washington had this to say about their poor response, "Such a dearth of public spirit and want of virtue, such stock - jobbing and fertility in all the low arts to obtain advantage of one kind or another...I never saw before, and I pray God I may never be a witness to it again. Such a dirty mercenary spirit pervades the whole that I should not be at all surprised at any disaster that may happen.

By March 1778 General Washington welcomed any able bodied man black or white, slave or free to his army. By the end of the war approximately five thousand blacks; freemen and slaves had defended the liberty of whites.

Modern medicine has provided near-miracles in extending people's lives, but the blessings are not entirely unmixed. Average life expectancy has increased from 47 years in 1900 to 71.9 today, according to the December Reader's Digest. That's the good news. The bad: we may be living longer, but we're not necessarily enjoying the extra time. Thirty-eight percent of our over-65s suffer some kind of chronic condition that limits their activities. Of these, fully half have serious problems, and 5 percent are homebound. And about a third of all elderly Americans are also plagued by poverty.

Science has come up with the world's first man-made crop, the December Reader's Digest reports. Called triticale, it has been created by a mating of the ancient grains, wheat and rye. According to Nobel Peace Prize-winner Norman Borlaug, the man-made grain "has the potential to add importantly to world food supplies and help alleviate calorie and protein malnutrition among people in cereal-dependent nations."

By last fall, some 700,000 Americans had taken courses in Transcendental Meditation - TM for short. TM advocates say that the benefits of their periods of solitary meditation include better sleep, less worry, more effective job performance, less alcohol consumption, loss of weight and dozens of other improvements, says the December Reader's Digest.