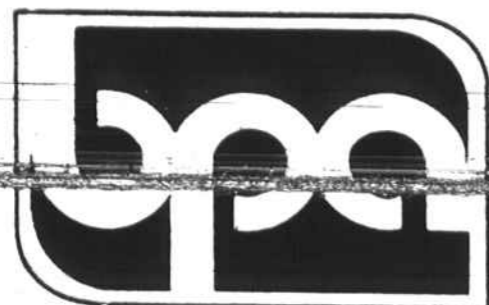


VIEWPOINTS editorials ● columns

Member North Carolina Black Publisher's Association



Black History Month

A person with no history has very dim prospects for the future. That's why the history of black people has been systematically overlooked in far too many of the accounts of the history of America.

For the same reason, the observance of Afro-American History Month has a great significance. During February, we all should take the time to learn about the accomplishments of a people who have moved "From Slavery to Freedom" in the words of historian John Hope Franklin.

However, February is not the only month during which we should take heed of the black heritage. When Carter G. Woodson, "The father of Negro history" launched "Negro History Week" in the early 1900s through the newly-formed Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, it was his idea to stimulate the study of black life all year round.

Dr. Woodson's idea was and still is constructive. Black history is not something to be kept in the closet for 11 months of the year.

Professional educators and others who study student achievement cast negative self-images as a major culprit in low academic achievement, particularly among black and low-income youth.

Negative self-images result because youth do not have role models they can point to as examples of success. To

a child living in poverty (we mean either economic or informational poverty), it is hard to conceive of people like him doing better in life unless there is an example of success to point to.

There is where the hiding of black history has had its most serious impact.

There are many positive role models for our youth to learn about. There are inventors, educators, businessmen, doctors, civil rights leaders, skilled craftsmen and even laborers, who have done menial tasks to perfection.

One does not have to leave the city to find such models. As our series, "The Roots of Black Winston-Salem" has documented, there have been black politicians, religious leaders, bankers, insurance men, real estate entrepreneurs, transit operators, brick-makers, restaurateurs, academicians and just about anything else blacks could find a way to be despite the restrictions placed on them.

Despite the poverty endemic in our communities, there have been many who have attained wealth and many ventures which have achieved success.

There is a solid record of achievement not only in Winston-Salem, but also in North Carolina, the nation and the world for black people, which makes Afro-American History Month a



Getting Along



Dr. James P. Comer

Adopting A White Child

Dr. Alvin F. Poussaint

[Alvin F. Poussaint and James P. Comer are psychiatrists and the authors of the book "Black Child Care." Dr. Poussaint is associate professor of psychiatry and associate dean for student affairs at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Comer is professor of child psychiatry and associate dean for student affairs at Yale University School of Medicine.]

Dear Dr. Poussaint: We are a black childless couple and we would like to adopt a white child. We believe integration and that all people are just basically human beings, regardless of their skin color. When we mention our wish to friends, some think we are absolutely bizarre and just asking for trouble. Is our wish so strange? H.G.

Would you raise the child as a white or as a black? Raising the child as a human being as you had mentioned is fine, but what about his identity? How will he feel about having black parents in a world with racial prejudices? Is it possible or likely that the child will turn against you? Unfortunately, nobody knows for certain the answers to these questions.

Black parents have raised very light skinned black children as black even though the children were able to pass for being white. However, these children usually had some black ancestry that one could point to. Have you considered raising an adopted white child with a black identity? If you had, why then would you not want to adopt a black child?

Do you know that most adoption agencies will not let you adopt a white child? This may seem like a contradiction since these same agencies permit a white couple to adopt a black child. They claim that they have this policy because there is a shortage of acceptable black adoptive parents.

However, some agencies probably feel that it would be advantageous for a black child to be adopted by a white couple, whereas a white child would be harmed psychologically and socially were it to be adopted by a black couple. Clearly this line of reasoning has an aura of racial prejudice. Indeed, the issue is very complicated.

Nevertheless, go to adoption agencies and let your wishes be known. We would be very interested in the responses you receive.

Finally, if there are any black couple reading this column who have adopted white children, please let us

hear from you about your experience.

Dear Dr. Poussaint: I am sixteen and I have a bad crush on my best girlfriend's father. He's about fifty and sometimes he looks at me in such a way as though he might be interested in me. I'm afraid that he may try something and I won't be able to resist. Lately I have become very nervous around him. I don't know what to do because I don't want to stop going to my girlfriend's house. T.A.

Dear T. A.: It's not uncommon for a young woman to develop a crush or an attraction toward an older man. Fatherly types may have a special appeal to a teenager who is in a transitional period between childhood and adulthood.

In fact, your crush could indicate that you like him as substitute father. Or it may mean that inside you feel that you have not received enough love and affection from your own father. Have you grown up in a female-headed, single parent family? If so, the latter consideration may be even more apropos to your situation.

Very often at your age crushes come and go very quickly. However, if you want to avoid any potential problem, make sure that you don't flirt with your friend's father. You should also refrain from wearing sexy or revealing clothes in his presence, and for the time being, don't spend the night at your friend's house.

You may be imagining that your friend's father is looking at you in a special way. Nevertheless, if he makes any advances, you should firmly decline. That may well end matters between you and him, in which case you need not mention it to your friend, since it would probably only hurt her and her relationship with her father.

If her father persists in making advances, tell him you will tell your parents if he doesn't stop. If he still continues, tell your parents about it and have them speak with her father directly.

If your anxiety and crush persist and continue to cause you emotional pain, you should seek the help of a counselor.

Dr. Poussaint
If you have any questions for the doctors, send your letter to "Getting Along," care of this newspaper.
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Need For Good Records

Guest Editorial - The Carolinian

Institutions - religious, social, educational, fraternal, political, economic, and so on - will at some point in time, want to write a history covering their development and growth. Not many, but a few, local churches may want to write a history. In such cases, the writer will find himself hard put.

We know a man who is commissioned to write the history of his local church that is now 111 years old. He knew he would have some difficulty, but not to the extent that existed. Practically no minutes of official church boards had been preserved. He found that although the church had had about 50 pastors, there were no official membership rolls preserved.

Well, how did he manage? Here and there some members came with a valuable piece of history, for example, a Sunday School record book for the 1930's. Another member had the original mortgage of a brick structure which was dedicated in 1914.

Probably, the main source of the writer's strength in getting materials was a church historical committee. This committee supplied the man who is preparing the church history with such information as he requested; that is, if the committee could locate it.

Any local church (Baptist, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, Seventh Day Adventist, etc.) should develop a plan by which it proposes to secure and preserve local records, be it for 25, 50, 75, or 100 years. First, a place for keeping the history ought to be provided. It might be called the church library, which has an appointed librarian. If the librarian is not trained in such work, he could take a course, or courses, in library science from some nearby college on the extension basis. The librarian should have shelves, as well as a 4-drawer metal filing cabinet - with dividers, folders, etc. And most of all, the librarian must be dedicated to the task, must be willing to walk the third undemanding mile.

If your church doesn't have a historical library, then be a leader who will get one started at once.

Speaking Out by John Lewis

February is Black History Month--a time to look at the past and plan for the future--an appropriate time for black people to consider committing a year or two of their lives in helping others, either through VISTA or the Peace Corps.

February is also Peace Corps/VISTA Month, a time to salute over 132,000 men and women who have shared their skills, experience, and dedication as Peace Corps or VISTA volunteers over the years.

Black people have a tradition of struggle, a sense of caring for others, and history of involvement in the movement for human dignity. I see many parallels between serving as a Peace Corps or VISTA volunteer and participation in the civil rights movement which was so effective in the past two decades.

It takes a special kind of person, an unusual person, to be a Peace Corps or VISTA volunteer, just as it takes the initiative of a special few to spark the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Black history records that our revolutionary movements were sparked, not by the majority of students on any college campus or the general population of neighborhood or town, but by the audacity of

a courageous, committed, caring few.
Being a Peace Corps or VISTA volunteer requires the same kind of courage and commitment as the sit-ins or the Freedom rides of the early 1960s. It takes an individual who believes change is possible--one who is willing to invest time, energy and love in work which uplifts others.

VISTA and Peace Corps comprise an army of volunteers in much the same sense as did the civil rights movement. This is a nonviolent army, a movement to help people help themselves, a movement to enhance the quality of life for people on a sugar cane plantation in the South, in the ghettos of our nation's urban areas, on Indian reservations, in the barrios of the Southwest, and in 63 nations around the world. It is a movement to help those who are forgotten--a sea of poverty, those left out and left behind, the underclasses of the world, and health programs, assisting farmer and consumer cooperatives, bringing together tenant and neighborhood groups to rehabilitate housing, or setting up centers for battered spouses, to name only a few.


How Can Postal Service Be Improved?

The United States Postal System often receives complaints about the mail service. Many consumers say that their mail delivery is too slow, or that the price of stamps are too high.


The Chronicle Camera visited the Post Office on Patterson Avenue to ask participants, "What do you think of the postal services and how can the services be improved?"

Their answers were:
Edna B. Davis - I'm satisfied with the service. I don't have any complaints.

Annie M. Davis - The service is okay as far as I can see. I do think that the stamps are too high. Fifteen cents is too high.




Davis




Wilkins

Hattie Wilkins--I have to stand in long lines so I think they need more clerks. For my money the stamps are too high. Ten cents would be better.



Hodge

Kay Foster--I think the service is okay. I don't usually write letters and I only come to the post office to get food stamps.



Martin

Adellne Hodge--I'm satisfied with the services.

Curtis Martin--I don't think they need improvement. The stamps are going up, and with inflation; groceries are high; everything is high, but everyone has got to live.

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The Chronicle welcomes news items. Deadline for handwritten materials is Monday at 5 p.m. Typewritten materials; Tuesday at 5 p.m. Letters to the Editor should be signed and should have the name, address and telephone number of the writer.