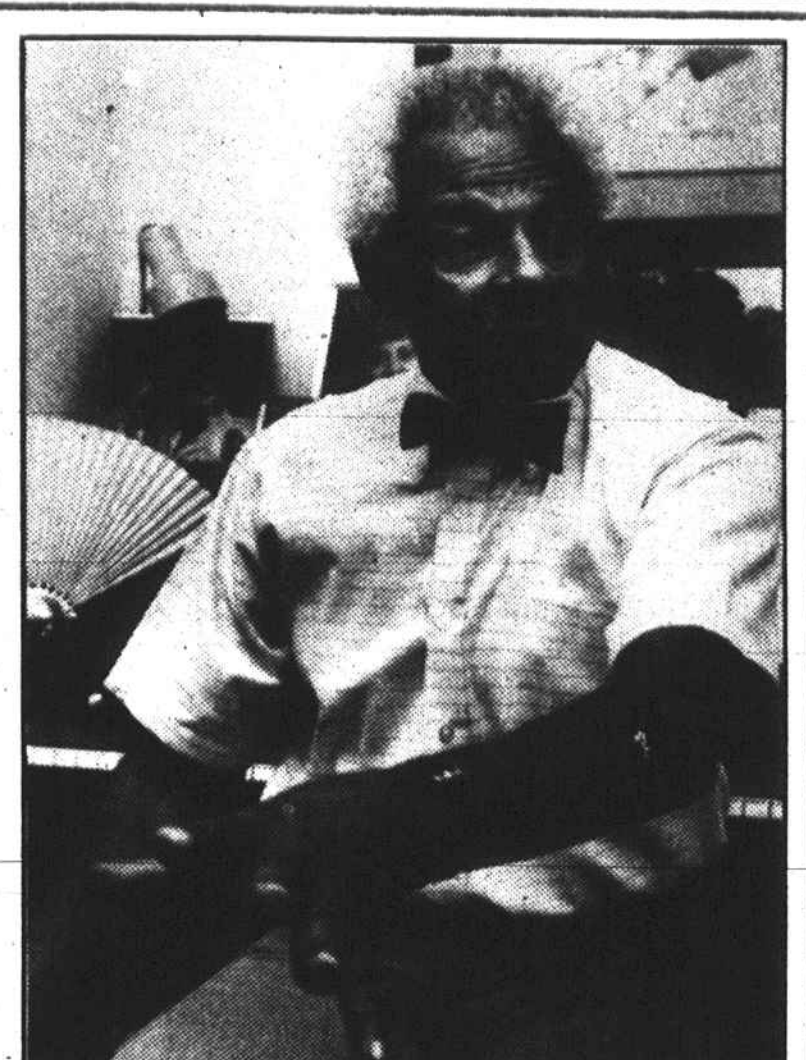
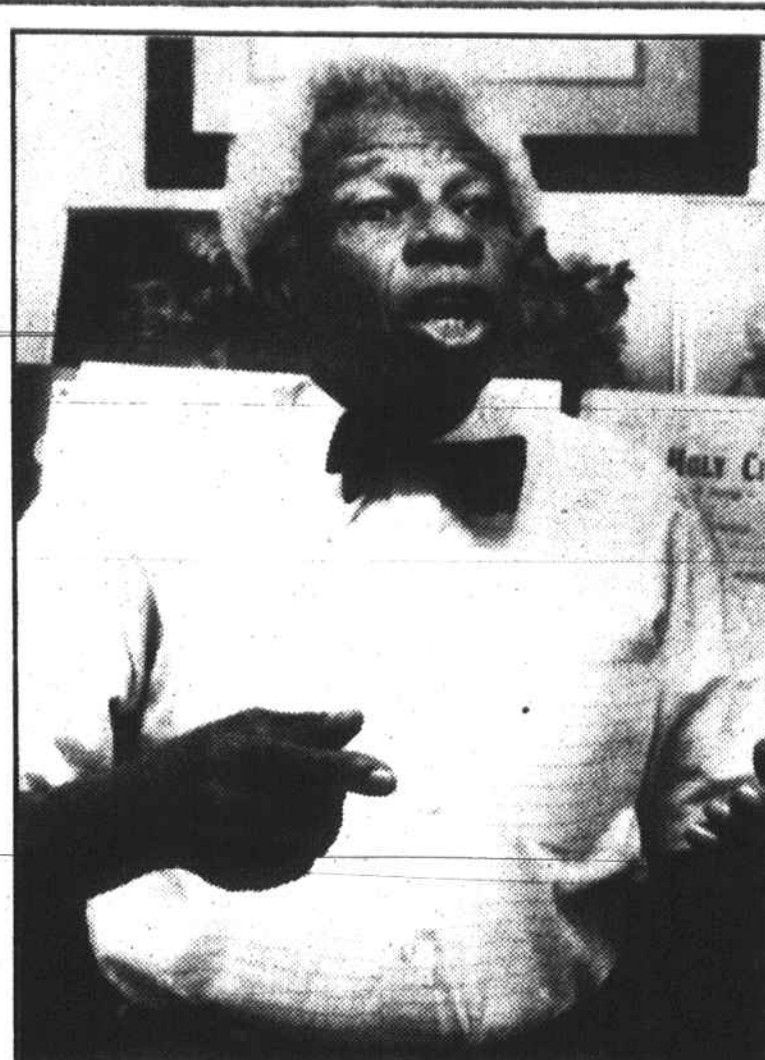
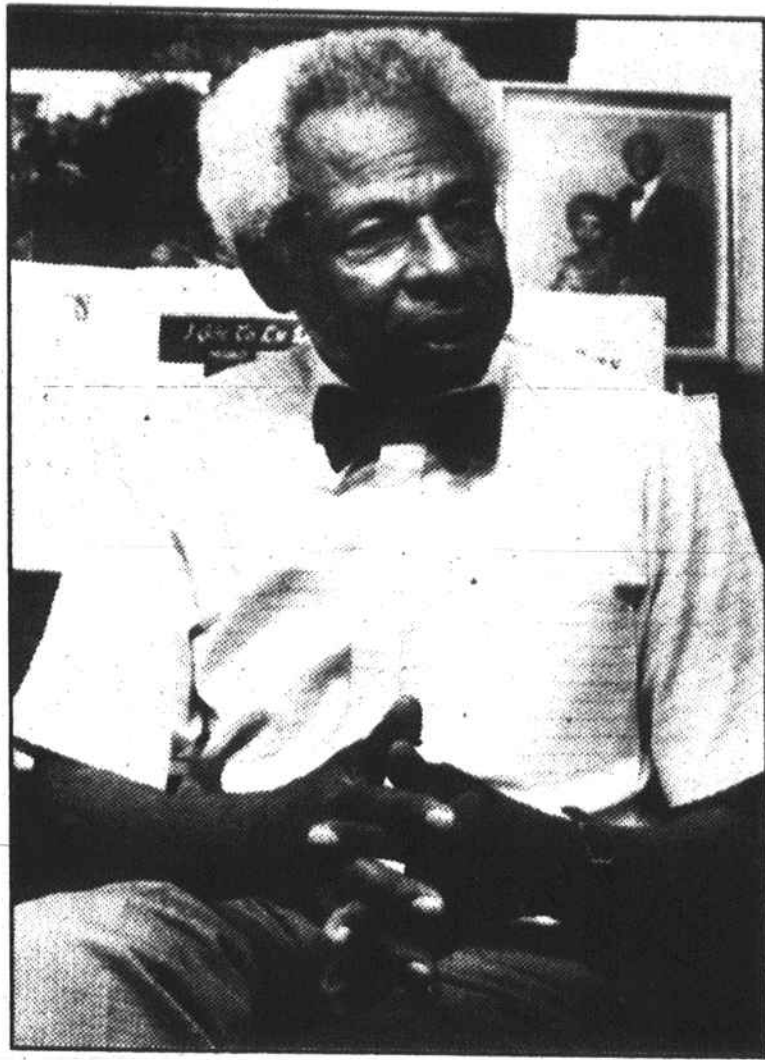
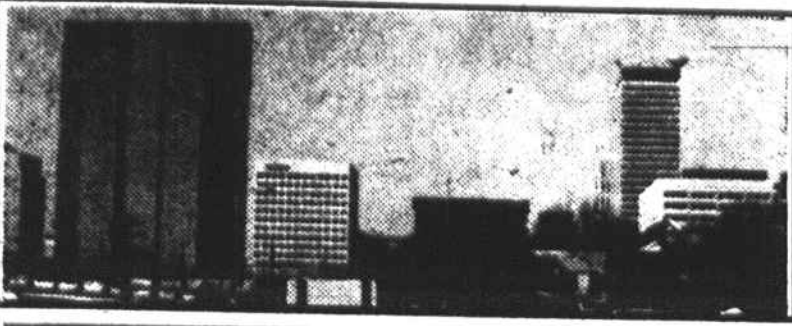


Community News B1



photos by Mike Cunningham

D.W. Andrews, a former member of the Famous Jubilee Singers that toured the country and Europe, is now owner of his own plumbing company. He also is the director of the First Baptist Choir.

Music still captures heart, imagination of D.W. Andrews

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Chronicle Staff Writer

He is a lean, slender man who gestures freely as he speaks. He dons a bow-tie for special occasions, such as picture-taking, and his slim stature gives no hint of the booming voice that lies inside. But there is a spark that appears in D.W. Andrews' eye whenever he starts to talk about music and his days with the Famous Jubilee Singers.

Earlier this month, Mr. Andrews was chosen to be part of a Reunion Quintet, composed of former Jubilee singers, that returned to Fisk University for a special commemorative Gospel Arts Day.

The Jubilee Singers, who developed a worldwide reputation, are credited with being one of the very first groups to bring the Negro Spiritual into broad prominence. Singing troupes associated with Afro-American universities during the 1920s and '30s were used primarily to raise funds for the colleges they represented. But the Fisk Jubilee Singers are recognized as a group that went far and beyond its primary purpose.

A graduate of Tuskegee Institute and a member of the Tuskegee Quintet, Mr. Andrews joined the Jubilee Singers in 1952 and was with the group when it toured Europe, North Africa and South America. His association with the group began, he said, when he had the privilege of meeting the group's director, Mrs. James A. Myers.

"I met Mrs. Myers in New York when I was a professional singer," Mr. Andrews said. "She told me that she needed a bass singer. I was a baritone but the only way I could travel with them was to become a bass. So I did."

Mrs. Myers' accomplishments with the Fisk Jubilee Singers have become legendary in Afro-American gospel music circles. She was able to arrange a European tour for the group in 1924, and the group made its fifth European tour in 1928. In 1932, the Fisk Board of Trustees disbanded the Jubilee Singers. Mrs. Myers left the university in protest and eventually reorganized the group using voices from the Fisk choir and other groups. The university relented and allowed her to again use the name Fisk Jubilee Singers, but in 1947 the group was reorganized as a non-professional student choir under the university's music department and has remained so until today.

Mr. Andrews said that it was an "honor" to perform with the Jubilee Singers and a very special opportunity to be chosen as one of only four former members to be invited back to form a reunion group. But Mr. Andrews' musical feats neither began nor ended with his participation in Mrs. Myers' Famous Jubilee Singers.



Members of the 1952 Jubilee Singers and Mrs. Myers just before a European tour.

In the 1940s, he won the Horace Height Contest, a highly competitive amateur hour regularly held in Winston-Salem. After leaving the Jubilee Singers, Mr. Andrews toured and recorded with a vocal group, the Tune-drops. He appeared with Cab Calloway at the Cotton Club and performed at New York's famous Apollo Theatre. And he has done background work for the likes of Mahalia Jackson. He is mentioned in a book on the life of Langston Hughes. Though others are awed by his history, Mr. Andrews takes it in stride.

"I'm nobody. It's the music and that group that Mrs. Myers kept together was magnificent," he said. "I'm not important in that picture."

A plumber by trade, Mr. Andrews left the world of professional music to join his father in D.W. Andrews and Son Plumbing and Heating Co. He loved music, he said, but he knew, too, that it would be difficult to make a go of it in the business. He often is kidded about being what one newspaper termed a "singing plumber," and he admits that people consider his two careers extremely opposite. But he has never been anything but comfortable with his decision to put all of his efforts into his plumbing business.

"I began to understand that you do what you do," he said, emphatically jabbing the air with each word. "I was a plumber before I was a singer. My dad was a plumber. I had no problem in doing the two, but you know that you have to do what you have to do, and I needed to go into plumbing. I do still find myself singing on some jobs though and I have to remind myself that the people hired a plumber and not a singer."

Mr. Andrews bursts into laughter as he pictures himself singing inside customers' homes and at the astonishment on the faces of passers-by who hear him bellowing out Negro Spirituals.

"They can't figure out what's going on in there, don't you know," he said, chuckling.

Mr. Andrews is a staunch proponent of the preservation of the Negro Spiritual. In fact, he'd rather talk about the music form than any of his own accomplishments.

"We have taken this kind of music for granted. Somewhere along the line, we began to want to get away from that," he said. "You'd be surprised that this kind of folk music -- and it is folk music -- was very, very well received in Europe. The Negro Spiritual grew out of pain and suffering and mirrored sorrow. European audiences seemed to be able to identify with that. I don't think we're going to lose the Negro Spiritual. It's a rich heritage and we need to understand it and get it back."

Mr. Andrews has served as a soloist and as choir director of local churches since 1960. Earlier this year, he directed the First Baptist Choir at the American Baptists of the South Convention in Nashville. He refuses to spend his time wondering "what might have been" with his musical career and considers himself fortunate to have had the experiences he had. He said that he may have been hard pressed to match the rewards he has gotten from meeting a variety of people and from being able to share his experiences with others.

"Music and my travel with the Jubilee Singers and working with some of the top talents of the day gave me the impetus to think of the whole world. You live in one place, but you find that there is another world somewhere that is open to you. It lets you know that anything is possible. It broadened my horizons. I'm thankful for that," said Mr. Andrews, flashing a smile at his wife. "I feel highly honored to have been a part of that. I'm deeply grateful that my life has been filled with meeting some of the finest people in the world. My life has been filled with music and with getting help from so many people. It's a joy to be able to share it with others."

Future looks fairly bright for black families, panelists say

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Community News Editor

Will Afro-American families make progress in the new century? Answers ranged from an optimistic "yes" to a cautious "probably, if..." at last weekend's National Council of Negro Women honors banquet.

The program featured a panel discussion on the likely progress of ethnic families into the 21st century.

"Why have black gains in schools stalled? Since the earliest days, education has been key to our progress. Our forefathers recognized that a free mind was the first step to freeing their people from bondage."

-- Aliese Jessup

Panelists offered assessments on the current status and future of the family in the areas of education, religion, non-partisan politics and business.

Members of the panel included Jerry Gilmore Jr., Florence Corpening, the Rev. and Mrs. Konnie Robinson, Marion Franklin and the Rev. and Mrs. John Jessup.

Opening the discussion, Rev. Robinson placed the spiritual condi-

tion of Afro-American families into historical perspective. He said that Afro-American families always have, and likely always will, find their greatest strength in their religious faith. Through the years, he said, families have been confronted with the effects of three major institutions: slavery, segregation and "ghetto-ization." Each has taken its toll on the family structure, Rev. Robinson said, but he suggested that if Afro-Americans remember

the spiritual fortitude of their forefathers, they will make much progress in the coming century.

"Since 1619, religion has played a significant role in our lives. It is religion that has given the family hope," said Rev. Robinson, the pastor of Union Chapel Baptist Church and a guidance counselor with the local school system. "Religion has brought us to the present hour. Prayer will keep the family

together."

He said that religion will be essential to the survival of future Afro-American families.

"We believe that the Afro-American family today is confronted with issues that may be even more severe than the institution of slavery. We have drugs and teenage pregnancy," he said. "The family must return to the faith that brought us to the present. The Afro-American family must reflect on its past to deal with the situations of the future. We must confront the future with a faith in a God who has comforted us, sustained us... and been in our midst. That same God will be with us as we move forward to the future."

His wife, Lonnie, said that Afro-American families should face the future with the knowledge that there are no "perfect Christian homes" and be willing to keep as much religion in their homes as possible.

"Every Christian home comes far short of the Biblical norms. Is it an ideal place with tranquility and quiet? We like to think so but that is not the condition in the majority of Christian homes," she said. "The most important thing to remember about the Christian home is that sin-

ners live there. There is no such thing as a perfect Christian home. Sinners live in a Christian home but the sinless savior lives there too. That's what makes the difference."

The key, as Afro-American families move to the future, she said, will be to keep Christ inside the home and the problems outside.

Aliese Jessup said that she is concerned about the future of the education of Afro-Americans because their academic progress has declined over the past few decades. Citing statistics from the 1940s and '50s which indicated an emphasis on education and achievement, Mrs. Jessup said that education does not seem to be as universally important to Afro-Americans as it once was.

"Why have black gains in schools stalled? Since the earliest days, education has been key to our progress. Our forefathers recognized that a free mind was the first step to freeing their people from bondage," she said. "In recent years, something has gone very, very wrong for our black students."

Mrs. Jessup said that even when Afro-American students manage to graduate from high school, many of them are academically unprepared for employment. "Why, after having won educational oppor-

Panelists at last weekend's NCNW honors banquet discuss the condition of ethnic families in the next century.



photo by Mike Cunningham

Panelists at last weekend's NCNW honors banquet discuss the condition of ethnic families in the next century.

tunities at such tremendous costs, do we face a black drop-out rate that is rising in alarming numbers? Two to three generations ago, blacks managed to advance their educational goals with the deck stacked much more against them. In a word, they aspired."

Mrs. Jessup said that the values of hard work, ambition, self sacrifice and love will have to be more prominent among Afro-American families and their outlook on education "to help black children achieve in the future."

Her husband, the Rev. John Jessup, said that Afro-American families must realize that education cannot be considered an option for the future but an absolute necessity. To consider it anything less, he said, will only condemn the future of Afro-American children.

Rev. Jessup said that the future does not have to be bleak for Afro-American children. He said that it can be as bright as their parents are willing to work to make it.

"The future of the education of

Please see page B3