

EDITORIALS & COMMENTS

Salute To Black Business!

It is a privilege to pause this week to salute minority owned business, especially black-owned businesses, and in particular, locally owned black enterprises.

The rationale for this tribute arises from the unique and nearly insurmountable obstacles black people have had to overcome to achieve even a small measure of the American tradition - the private ownership of profit-making free entrepreneurs.

Our reference to the black Americans' business ownership as unique comes from its history and the challenges that history presents in 1982. Historically, black Americans have the weakest commercial tradition of any ethnic group of people in the United States. We have not, to any significant degree, been attracted to trade, business management, marketing, or employing labor for the purpose of making a profit. This presumed lack of a strong commercial tradition is rooted largely in the years of slavery and its aftermath.

However, upon a closer look at the commercial history of blacks, we find that some, particularly before the year 1660, were able to escape the horrors of economically motivated enslavement as practiced by whites. These blacks moved from the status of indentured servitude to being free men and women. Black historian Lerone Bennett Jr. reminds us that these free blacks laid the foundation for over 300 years of business operations.

Historical facts reveal further that the first Africans to be imported to America brought with them a highly developed sense of commerce and industry. They were talented traders and commercial developers of considerable ingenuity. In effect, some of their skills and some of their ingenuity survived the brutalities of the slave ships and made Africans significant contributors to the economic transformation of the New World.

Economic Racism

As early as 1625 blacks were engaged in the buying and selling of property and indentured servant contracts, some sold rice and tobacco from their land holdings, others were ship builders and shipowners, retail merchants, building contractors and craftsmen. These were the beginnings of black economic development and black capitalism in America. However, accompanying the increasing use of black slave labor after 1660 was a public policy to limit the economic opportunities of all non-whites.

In spite of these hardships, blacks persisted in their desire

for economic gain. For example, in the 1820's black business development was again successfully competing with white business for the consumer dollar, but again the specter of economic racism in the form of riots and burnings because of the fear of competition was used to discourage these economic gains.

Since these early beginnings, black business from the corporate to the sole proprietorship level has existed under a form of domestic colonialism, that is, it has been largely limited to and dependent on the urbanizing black community for the consumer dollar. Nevertheless, and in spite of blurring of black commercial development by the ravages of slavery, there is a positive business development background that blacks can and should use a foundation for economic progress in the years ahead.

Dollar Crutch

Therefore, blacks who choose to be owners and managers of profit making businesses should reject the self-pity mentality of assuming that because of some continued racism in the market place, with its foundation of institutionalized slavery, that they cannot succeed or that government owes them a continuing dollar crutch.

Blacks, or anyone else desiring to succeed in business, must be willing to invest their money, take risks, sacrifice the time and energy to acquire business management and finance skills, and be willing to be innovative.

Furthermore, while it may be many years before a black owned business achieves the status of being listed among the "Fortune 500", a good beginning in that direction is in those blacks who have had the courage to venture into competitive businesses that are not limited to the black consumer. Money and success are color-blind thus we particularly commend such efforts.

Finally, it is therefore a privilege to salute the efforts of organizations like the National Business League, the Charlotte Business League. We salute their philosophical viewpoint that black business ownership and black managerial talent will catalyze the attitudinal and structural changes necessary to bring about social justice in America.

You, the consumer, can help in this effort by supporting competitive black owned businesses that offer the products and services you demand. This can and will be an important step toward reducing black unemployment, welfare dependency and raising expectation and black self images.

NEEDED NOW... UNITED COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

BLACK AMERICA ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES



"BLACK FOLKS THEMSELVES ARE GOING TO HAVE TO WORK OUT MANY OF THEIR OWN PROBLEMS, INSTEAD OF LEAVING IT UP TO THE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS!"

ROY WILKINS



Tony Brown's Comments

Blacks Stopped "Pretty Boy" Floyd

Did you know that Boley, Oklahoma was—and is—and all-black town? That in 1903, when it was founded, whites were not allowed to live there?

Did you know that on Thanksgiving Eve, November 23, 1932, "Pretty Boy" Floyd's notorious gang attempted to rob the Farmers and Merchants Bank at Boley?

And did you know that the black people, whose hard-earned money was in that bank, blew "Pretty Boy's" gang into kingdom come?

No, you wouldn't know any of that unless you have read Leon E. Smith's exciting book, "High Noon at the Boley Corral." A Detroit, and a friend of longstanding, Smith wonders about the white media's distortion by omission.

"Why did the New York Times write a three column story on the foiled bank robbery that destroyed the 'Pretty Boy' Floyd Gang, but failed to state that the dead or captured were Floyd's gang?"

I'm sure by now any black or rational white person knows the answer to that question. We also understand why Smith had to scrape together \$4,500 of his own money to publish his 92-page book.

And like the other self-made black publishers that I have been writing about, Smith has to sell his books from his home because the white-distribution monopoly will not touch a meaningful black book. Smith has set up Leann Publications, 18635 Westford Avenue, Detroit, Michigan 48234 and sells his "spotlight on historical deception" for only \$4-313-

The author grew up in Boley, the largest of several all-black towns that sprang up around the turn of the century in what was still known as Indian Territory. Blacks were denied residency in white communities. However, this town became landmarks of self-sufficiency.

Charles A. "Pretty Boy" Floyd would announce in advance what banks he would rob—and do so. But the movies about his heroics never reveal as Smith's book does, that his gang was wiped out by blacks in Boley, Oklahoma.

The book quotes "Pretty Boy" as he warned his gang: "Nigras ain't got but that one bank in this state. That mean they ain't gonna give it up without somebody dying." He was right. "Pretty Boy" did not die at Boley, however. He took his own advice. "Pretty Boy" Floyd didn't want to bother this little black town. He used to hide out with blacks. In fact, one black man was said to have a silver dollar for every bank Floyd had robbed," Smith, who was turned down by 20 publishers, says.

Is there a demand for black-affairs information such as this? If my mail response to our documentary on "The Black West" is a yardstick, there is. "Please continue with such programs as this. It benefits all of us, especially our children. We all need to know about black contributions and your method is most impressive," wrote James Thomas of Torrance, California.

"Such programs as the one I saw Saturday should be shown weekly. We need

to know the contributions we made to this country, especially our young black boys and men, added Beverly A. Wilson of Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

"Boley Corral" records an example of authentic black genius. Smith reveals how they pulled off their coup. "When activated, the bank's alarm alerted four other stores on Main Street. The alarm was triggered by lifting the last dollar bills from the teller's cash box connecting two two electrodes wired to the bank."

The people you meet in this autobiographic documentary about Boley, Oklahoma, sprang from the most unique group of homesteading pioneers. The author's father was one of the black eye witnesses to the saga of Oklahoma's pre-state years, the Boley boom years, and the "Pretty Boy" days.

Although there is a demand for this information, the black entrepreneur must become the catalyst, as Smith has. He has "discovered" America's history for us. We must, in turn, "discover" Smith, if the circle is to be closed.

Next season on my television series, you'll see me telling Smith's story—at the Boley Corral.

"Tony Brown's Journal," the television series, can be seen on public television Saturdays on Channel 42 at 8 p.m. It can also be seen on

Channels 30, Sundays at 1:30 p.m.; 58, Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.; and 58, Sundays at 6 p.m. Please consult listings.

By Rev. John Perkins

WALK Your TALK



Rev. Perkins

When Love Takes Hold

When I was seven months old my mother died, leaving me to be reared by my grandmother, a widow with 19 children of her own. Uncles, aunts and grandchildren helped make up a full household. My people were bootleggers and my uncles gambled. We understood what it meant to have the police come to our house and carry off our people to jail. That was part of my upbringing in rural Mississippi.

Somewhere between the third and fifth grades I dropped out of school to work on the plantations. There I got my first lesson in economics; after working a whole day the man gave me 15 cents. My thinking was strongly molded by the plantation system.

We children were brought up to be patriotic Americans. During World War II we had calendars on the wall with pictures of our generals on them. My brother Clyde fought for the allies in Germany and came back with several Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart. We looked upon him as a hero. But shortly after he got home he was shot down in the street by a policeman. After that our family decided it was better to leave, so we moved to California.

I had never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. My only desire was to get ahead in life. I felt that if I could accumulate some wealth I would be happy. When the Korean War broke out I was drafted and spent the next 18 months overseas. After being separated from the service I was hired as a janitor by a new company in California. Pretty soon I was moved into the maintenance department, then trained as a welder, and then promoted to designer and layout man. I was moving up with the company.

During the war I had married, and now my wife and I joined a church because we were told that is what people do when they move to a new community. It was a black church, but as an institution it was certainly not meeting any need of mine. I began looking into the different cults, but again I failed to find in them the peace or contentment that I needed and wanted.

By the year 1957 we had three children, and my eldest son was attending a little holiness mission in Pasadena. They taught the Bible with flannelgraphs in such a way that he could grasp it; and his behavior became so changed by this that he would come home singing Good News songs. There was something in his life that was being developed in a way that had not developed in my life. I began to see something beautiful in his life; he had a joy and a discipline that I had never had.

Each Sunday my wife would take little Spencer and the other children to Sunday School and I decided one day that I would go with them. It was at that Sunday School that I heard the Gospel for the first time. I remember that they were teaching the life of the Apostle Paul and I wondered why a man would suffer so much for religion. I didn't see religion as having that much meaning.

One night as I sat at home reading Paul's Letter to the Galatians, trying to understand the book and how law and Grace fit together, I came upon Galatians 2:20.

Next week: Part two of When Love Takes Hold.

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From Capitol Hill

Professional Sports Highly Unfair To Black Players

By Alfreda L. Madison
Special To The Post

Thirty six years ago, Jackie Robinson, enduring many threats and insults, started the path that later led to blacks being included among the professional sports. A little later Bill Willis and Marion Motley broke the racial barrier in professional football by becoming members of the Cleveland Browns, and in the early 1950's three black players broke the National Basketball Association's racial trend.

By 1974 blacks comprised 60 percent of all professional basketball players, 40 percent of professional football players and 30 percent of professional baseball players. Notwithstanding, this phenomenal player representation and outstanding performance, there have been only three black baseball managers, nearly a dozen black head coaches in basketball and not one black head coach in the National Football League.

Representative Augustus Hawkins, Chairman of the House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Employment Opportun-



Alfreda L. Madison, because of his participation on the Citizens' Panel on Equity in the National Football League, held hearings on the recruitment and hiring of blacks in coaching positions.

Mr. Hawkins said, "The NFL's national prominence makes alleged discrimination a matter of major importance. Fairness and equality of opportunity are important and necessary attributes of this intensely media-focused institution which has captured the attention of millions of Americans."

The witness list consisted of former and present players of the National Football League, a Catholic Monsignor and a research

scientist from Johns Hopkins University. All of the witnesses gave strong testimony which proved that racial discrimination does exist in the National Football League.

The National Football League Association which is a bi-racial group has taken the problem of the lack of blacks in managerial, front office and coaching positions to NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle, who denied that discrimination is a problem. Mr. Rozelle stressed the word "quality" in urging league owners to hire blacks in coaching, front office and managing positions. He also refused to consider the Players' Association suggestion for an affirmative program. At the request of the Players' Association, Dr. Braddock of Johns Hopkins University made an exhaustive study of NFL's hiring practices. Commissioner Rozelle and the NFL have ignored the discriminatory findings of this study.

Evidence shows that black athletes suffer from positional segregation, salary discrimination and biased media treatment. In

spite of the fact that blacks have become dominant as players, they have made only meager inroads into professional sports management either on or off the fields.

Since professional sports are highly competitive, and winning is the goal, the best players are sought. In a disproportionate number of instances in major professional team sports, the outstanding performers are black. Yet, coaching positions are filled by former players and blacks are relegated to playing positions that do not afford them experiences of interaction, training in leadership and chances for mobility to managerial ranks.

The most central of fensive playing positions in football are quarterbacks, center, right guard and left guard, and the most central defensive playing positions are left, right and middle linebacker. Three positions allow for social interaction, inter-personal acceptability, and coordinative decisions. These are positions that blacks rarely fill in the NFL. Blacks are, usually, running backs, defensive backs and wide

receivers - positions coaches rate as demanding speed, physical quickness and high motivation achievement. The coaches rated centers, guards and quarterbacks as requiring reliability, quick mental comprehension and thinking ability. These are the positions that are considered as giving training for positions of management, coaching and front office.

Emilen Tunnell - a Hall of Famer was the first black assistant coach and there are only 12 in this modern era, in the NFL, and no black managers.

NFL cites statistics that most of their coaches come from major colleges and of course they don't consider any of the black colleges as major, and certainly their coaches are black. Many of these black college coaches have done an outstanding job, under adverse conditions, including low budgets, poor equipment and raids of their most talented players by the large universities. Many outstanding black players have come from small black colleges. Grambling College, even though small, has contri-

buted more outstanding professional football league players than any other college in the nation. If black college coaches can train the most competent football players under

extremely inadequate conditions, it goes without saying, that they have to either be superior or at least equal to their big white college counterparts. Many of the all-pro players were trained by black college coaches.

White athletes receive numerous advertisement opportunities such as an opportunity is just about closed to black athletes.

The playing span of a football player is only a few years. However, the white players can look forward to front office, coaching, managerial and advertisement opportunities.

It has been said that sports racial actions were a role model for justice and equity.

