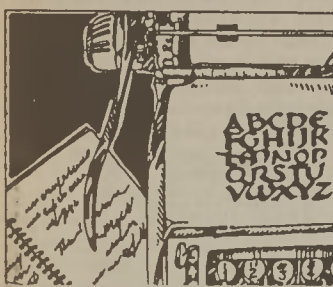


books



THE PORT CHICAGO MUTINY
The Story of the Largest Mass Mutiny Trial in U.S. Naval History

Black Men And The U.S. Mutiny

July 14, 1944. A tremendous explosion wracked Port Chicago, an ammunition depot near San Francisco. Three hundred and twenty men were killed. Two hundred and two of them were black ammunition loaders--improperly trained to handle explosives--working under the command of white officers in segregated labor battalions. Within the next three weeks, more than 200 shaken black ammunition loaders balked at carrying out their jobs. What followed was the largest mass mutiny trial in history--50 black men were charged, court-martialed and convicted of mutiny, with sentences ranging from eight to 15 years in prison.

THE PORT CHICAGO MUTINY by Robert L. Allen (Warner Books/Amistad Press/Hardcover, March 27, 1989/\$19.95) tells for the first time the dramatic story behind the worst domestic U.S. military disaster of World War II, the resulting "mutiny" and mass mutiny trial, and the naval cover-up that ensued. In a shocking expose that could still cause extreme embarrassment to the U.S. Navy and the U.S. government, THE PORT CHICAGO MUTINY reveals a gross miscarriage of justice that has not been rectified to this day.

Through in-depth interviews with the men involved (many of whom have still not been exonerated), and extensive research in naval and presidential archives, Robert L. Allen uncovers the hidden facts behind the Port Chicago Mutiny and the naval cover-up. Finally setting the record straight, THE PORT CHICAGO MUTINY provides the long-awaited opportunity for those unjustly convicted to receive honorable discharges and veteran's rights and benefits.

The Port Chicago disaster received national attention at the time of its occurrence, provoking the interest of the NAACP as well as many prominent citizens, including Eleanor Roosevelt. Forty-four years later, the story of THE PORT CHICAGO MUTINY is even more explosive, equally newsworthy, and unquestionably one of the most gripping stories in the annals of military history.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert L. Allen is the former editor of The Black Scholar magazine and was a professor of Sociology at San Jose State University. He lives in Oakland, California.

The Voices Of Black Memphis

Homespun Images: An Anthology of Black Writers and Artists.
Editors:
Miriam DeCosta-Willis and Fannie Mitchell Delk
\$14.95 (Cloth)

A Book Review
By Reginald Martin, Ph.D.
The Memphis Black Writers' Workshop was founded nearly a decade ago. Born in 1980 at LeMoyné-Owen College, the workshop was the brainchild of a group of writers who long for opportunities to develop their craft; who knew that others in the Memphis community needed kindred souls with whom to share the pleasures of literature; who longed to experience the joy of breathing life into a poem or a story or a painting or a photograph; who needed to record the sagas of their fore-parents so that the deeds of those strong men and women would live forever in the minds and hearts of the young.

During Tennessee Homecoming '86, the Black Writers' Workshop presented "Homespun Images," a series of programs which examined the importance of community, of home, in a writer's work. Offered were sessions on fiction, poetry, and nonfiction led by writers Arthur Flowers, Paula Giddings, and Nikki Giovanni. Fittingly, this celebration was the idea, the seed, for *Homespun Images: An Anthology of Black Writers and Artists* (1989). The editorial review board of the Black Writers' Workshop selected 53 writers for inclusion. This work is both the single most ambitious project and the *raison d'être* of the Memphis Black Writers' Workshop--and the breadth and beauty of the works included are stunning.

Overwhelming, impressionistic paintings, Pointillistic photography, drama, fiction, journa-



listic prose, theological treatises, literary criticism, and an ambitious variety of poetry are all to be found in *Homespun Images*. Perhaps the most startling aspect of the work is that all of the pieces share a uniformity of southern vision when the past, present, and future of Memphis is written of or captured in a photo or painting, yet many of the writers and artists no longer make their home there. It is as though the essence of Memphis--what it is and was like to live and grow in Memphis--is indelibly etched on the psyches of these artists. No other such anthology captures the essence of one city over two centuries as does this book. And no other such book currently on the market gives us the unique perspective of a city's black inhabitants and ex-patriots through the vehicles of their writings. By association and reference, we see the entire black South of 19th and 20th century America opening before our eyes as we turn the beautifully illustrated pages.

One of the most powerful voices in the volume, Gloria Wade-Gayles, writes, "There was nothing special about Memphis, Tennessee, during the late forties and fifties. Nothing all," but knowing, as do all the other artists in *Homespun Images*, that the "southern rage to tell," and the speciality of Memphis forces them to write of the city in all of its duplicity and beauty.

Some of the artists to be found in *Homespun Images*:

NONFICTION:
Fannie Delk; Gloria Wade-Gayles; Larry Conley; Roberta Church; Miriam DeCosta-Willis; Sterling Stuckey.

FICTION:
A. R. Flowers; Levi Frazier; Reginald Martin; Joyce L. Dukens; Cheryl Tate Lambert; Charlotte R. Bush.

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