

# THE BETTER WE KNOW US ...

Fayetteville, N.C.—If you are familiar with Bragg Boulevard in Fayetteville, N.C., you know that there are thousands of businesses of all types and sizes strewn along the strip between Ft. Bragg and the city itself. But what you may not know is that located on that boulevard is a Black-owned drycleaning business which is claimed by the National Drycleaning Institute to be the most productive drycleaning plant in the United States, if not in the world, per square foot—A&H Cleaners. The owner of this enterprise is Marion Rex Harris, a man we all should, and will, know better for his story is one of "skill, will and a lot of

courage" as stated by Peter Bailey in his 1970 interview of Mr. Harris for Ebony Magazine.

Mr. Harris is originally from Goldsboro, N.C. Instead of going to college, the young man enlisted in the army where he served for 12 years. It was following his retirement from the army that his saga began. In 1965, a few months after rejoining civilian life, Mr. Harris had \$3,000 in savings, a wife, three daughters, and some ideas of what he wanted to do. At the time, A&H Cleaners was white-owned and near bankruptcy. Thw owner was convinced by one of Mr. Harris' ex-army buddies who was working at A&H to hire Mr. Harris

because of his Ft. Bragg contacts. His office was located in a trailer behind the cleaners so that the whites would not know a Black man was a supervisor there. Working on a full commission, Mr. Harris had the business grossing \$20,000 a month in just five months time. He knew the white owner would keep him around just long enough to rebuild the business and that he probably would not get paid the money that he had earned. The Wayne County native then collected \$20,000 owed by A&H customers and kept it all for himself, telling the owner that "it just about covers the amount I'm due." It was at this point that Mr.

harris made his move. He told the white owner that he was going to set up his own business, resulting in the owner begging Mr. Harris not to leave A&H and agreeing to lease Mr. Harris the business for six months with an option to buy. The owner was certain no Black man could run the business due to white pressure. But upon the end of the six-month period, Mr. Harris bought the plant, despite the fact that many white salesmen and laundry suppliers would not sell to him during the lease period. As Peter Bailey put it, "The lily-white patter of business ownership on Bragg Boulevard was smashed." By June 1968, things

were looking good for the Black entrepreneur. A five-year Ft. Bragg contract worth approximately \$500,000 had been acquired and slated to go into effect on July 1, 1968. But on the night of June 28, 1968, while Mr. Harris was in New York for a funeral, tragedy struck. Arsonist entered the building through the roof, and started a gasoline fire which totally destroyed the business. The place had an estimated worth of \$370,000 but Mr. Harris had only been able to get \$50,000 worth of insurance due to race. The local white power structure and press ignored the event and refused to help in any form. The mentally depressed,

financially ruined businessman was ready to give in and sell the plant. But his wife and lawyers convinced him to keep pushing. He sent his children to New York because of threats against his family. Then with the aid of political friends and economic help of friends in banking, Mr. Harris secured a 10-year, \$350,000 loan from the Small Business Administration; approximately one year after the fire, the new A&H Cleaners had its grand opening.

Still operating with the Ft. Bragg contract, A&H Cleaners also handles regular civilian business. Mr. Harris claims that his payroll is "over 1/2 million



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# THE TRIBUNAL AID

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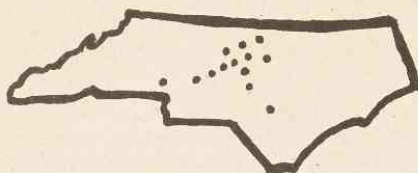
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A VIABLE, VALID REQUIREMENT  
RESPONDING TO  
BLACK NORTH CAROLINA

## BICENTENNIAL BLACK HISTORY

"Lost-Strayed-Or Stolen"

Extracted From  
THE NEGRO ALMANAC  
by Fay Ashe

Black history in the Western Hemisphere most probably begins with the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Blacks are known to have participated meaningfully in a number of later explorations made by Europeans in various parts of the United States and Spanish America. Facts such as these at once fashion a new dimension for Black history within the mainstream of American history. Inasmuch as one of the primary purposes of this feature is to record some historical achievements of the Black, it becomes most important to offer the reader chronological accounts through which he can conveniently familiarize himself with the broad sweep of American Black history. The years covered here are 1492-1954.

1492 **The New World** slave order penalizing Negroes are among the first explorers to come to people who lend refuge to harbor runaways. Offenders are fined 20 pounds worth of tobacco for every night they are made to discourage slaves by threatening them with branding. The letter "R" is burned into the flesh of anyone caught after a second escape attempt.

1538 **Arizona-New Mexico** Estevanico, a Negro explorer, leads an expedition

1538 **Arizona-New Mexico** Estevanico, a Negro explorer, leads an expedition from Mexico into the territory of the American Southwest; is credited with the discovery of what is today Arizona and New Mexico.

1619 **Jamestown, Virginia** Negro history in "English America" begins with the arrival of 20 Negro slaves aboard a Dutch vessel (August 20).

1624 **Jamestown, Virginia** Baptism of William Tucker, the first Negro child born in the English colonies.

1642 **Virginia** Virginia passes a fugitive

1651 **North Hampton County, Virginia**

Anthony Johnson, himself a Negro, imports five servants and thus qualifies to receive a 200-acre land grant along the Powhateague River in Virginia. Other Negroes soon join Johnson and attempt to launch an independent black community. At its height, the separate settlement has 12 black homesteads with sizable holdings.

1704 **New York City** Elias Neau, a Frenchman, opens a school for Negro slaves.

1705 **Virginia** The Assembly declares that "no Negro, mulatto, or Indian shall presume to take upon him, act in or exercise any office, ecclesiastic, civil or military."

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*This, the first edition of 1976, begins a series of articles honoring the Bicentennial Year, with special interest to Black History.*

## To Enter U.S. Navel Academy

HIGH POINT - Thomas Perkins Delaine, Jr. was home over the recent holiday period after spending 4½ months at the Navel Preparatory School in Newport, Rhode Island. Mr. Delaine enrolled at the Navel prep school in early August to ready himself for

enrollment at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland. If all goes as planned, the High Pointer should enter the Naval Academy in July 1976, when he will work towards a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy.

## More Children Eligible For Free Lunches

All public schools in North Carolina must offer free and reduced-price lunches to eligible school children under a recent law passed by Congress, according to Ralph W. Eaton, director of the State's School Food Services Program for the Department of Public Instruction.

Approximately 92% of North Carolina's schools are presently offering free and reduced-price meals, Eaton noted, but under the new law the service is mandatory.

"The intent of the legislation," explained Eaton, "is to reach more eligible children. Children of unemployed parents," for example, "whose income level has fallen within the criteria set up for eligibility can now be included in the program."

Guidelines have also been revised to require that children from families with incomes between family size income level of the State's standard for free meals and 195% of the Secretary of Agriculture's income poverty guidelines be served free and reduced-price meals. This is a technical change in eligibility, according to Eaton, that will have to be determined by local school officials.

Although changes in the law have broadened eligibility requirements, Congress has given school officials the right to verify income information they receive on applications for

free and reduced-price meals if they have cause to believe it may be incorrect. During the time the information is being verified, however, the child must be served free and reduced-price meals based on the information on the application.

Income level charts and guidelines for the free and reduced-price lunch program are available from school lunchroom managers in County/City Schools.

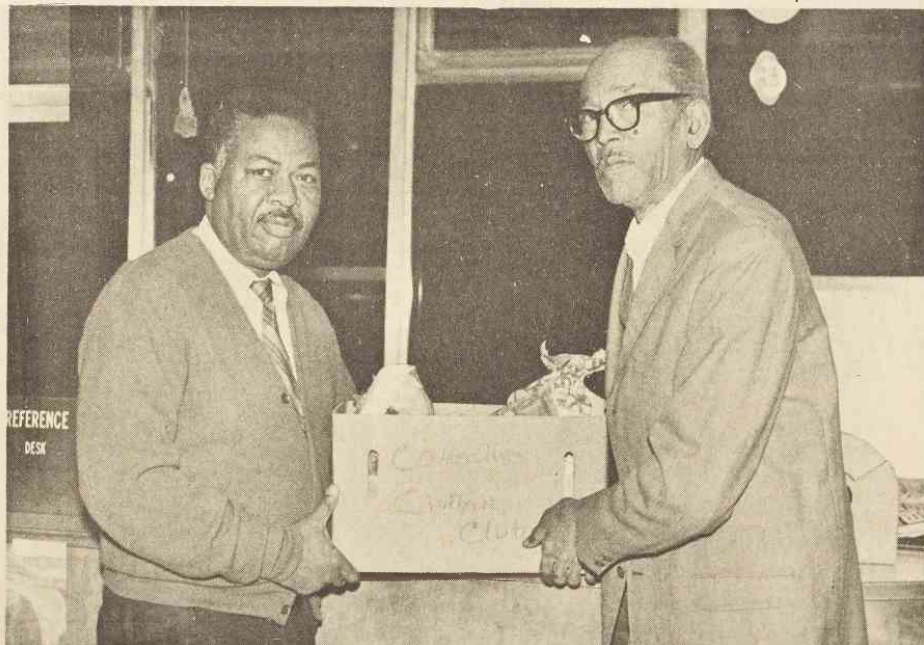
The T. Wingate Andrews graduate stated that his time spent at the preparatory school, thus far, has been a great experience. He also stated that he is more enthusiastic about the Navy since making his commitment. While at the Naval preparatory school, Thomas' curriculum consisted of the basic courses in math, science, and english. Mr. Delaine said there were no displays of prejudice or hostility toward him at the prep school; and, in fact, he felt the atmosphere to be quite open with everyone trying to relate to one another because there were many nationalities represented there.

In expressing his thoughts about the Navy, Thomas stated, "It's (the Navy) nice to get into, but you work for what you get. Nothing is handed to you. I would recommend the Navy for those wishing to enter technical fields. The offi-

cers training is highly technical." Thomas further stated that he has created stronger dependence on God since enrolling at the prep school.



The son of the late Rev. Thomas Delaine, Sr. and Mrs. Ethel Delaine returned to Rhode Island, January 4th with hopes of finishing the prep school and becoming a cadet at the U.S. Navel Academy. Let us all wish him well!



High Point - Rev. Gates (left), a member of the Collective Civitan Club of High Point presents a basket of food to Mr. George Williams of Jamestown, who was burned out of his home the day before Christmas Eve.

Mr. Williams turned 74 the day after Christmas. The High Point Collective Civitan Club distributed several other baskets during the holiday season.

## Historical Landmarks Of Black America

Extracted From  
THE NEGRO ALMANAC  
by Fay Ashe

No more substantial testimony to the role of the Black in the growth and development of America can be found than the numerous historical landmarks in various regions of the country which are associated with Black Americana. Many of these—like the Alamo and Bunker Hill—are not conventionally known as sites involving chapters of Negro history.

**ALABAMA**  
Florence: Handy Heights Housing Development and Museum  
The Development and Museum is named for composer W.C. Handy, who was born in Florence in 1873. It includes a restored cabin in which are housed his piano, trumpet, and other mementoes.

**Talladega:**  
Talladega College  
Home of the first college for Negroes in Alabama, Talladega was founded by the American Missionary Association as a primary school in 1867. Its Savery Library houses three fresco panels by Hale Woodruff (the celebrated Amistad Murals). Professor Woodruff studied abroad in France under the renowned Henry Ossawa Tanner, and also at the Herron Institute in Indianapolis.

**Tuskegee:**  
Tuskegee Institute  
The Institute is a world-famous center for agricultural research and extension work. First opened on July 4, 1881 with a \$2,000 appropriation from the Alabama State Legislature, it consisted of a single shanty, a student body of 30, and one teach - Booker T. Washington. Tuskegee functioned originally as a normal school for the training of Negro teachers, the first of its kind established in the United States. Eventually it came to specialize in agricultural and manual training, areas which were to make both the school and Booker T. Washington famous.

In 1882, Washington moved the school to a 100-acre plantation, and began a self-help program which enabled students to finance their education. Most of the early buildings were built with the aid of student labor.

Next to Washington, the most famous person to be associated with the Institute was George Washington Carver, who became its director of agricultural research in 1896. Carver persuaded many Southern farmers to plant peanuts, sweet potatoes, and other crops instead of cotton, which was rapidly depleting the soil. Ultimately, Carver's research programs helped develop 300 derivative products from peanuts and 118 from sweet potatoes. At one point, he even succeeded in making synthetic marble from wood pulp.

Today, Tuskegee covers nearly 5,000 acres, and has more than 150 buildings. Notable places to visit there include: the Founder's Marker (the site of Washington's original

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# 1776 Honoring America's Bicentennial 1976