

THE BETTER WE KNOW US ...

The Navy announced that President Ford has nominated Rear Admiral Samuel L. Gravelly, Jr., for promotion to Vice Admiral and assignment as Commander, U.S. THIRD Fleet.

Admiral Gravelly's present assignment is Commandant of the 11th Naval District, San Diego.

One of the Navy's four numbered fleets, the Third Fleet consists of some hundred ships and about 60,000 Navy and Marine Corps people. As commander of that fleet,

Admiral Gravelly will be responsible for guarding the western sea approaches to the U.S. and training the crew of ships deploying to the Western Pacific.

In discussing the new assignment, Admiral James L. Holloway III, the Chief of Naval Operations, said, "Command at sea is not unusual for Admiral Gravelly. His naval career includes command of four surface ships and a cruiser-destroyer group, as well as service in five other ships." He is also a graduate of the Naval War

College and the U.S. Navy Post-graduate School.

Admiral Gravelly saw action in World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam. In Washington he served in the Defense Communications Agency and directed the Navy's Communication Command.

Among his medals and awards for distinguished service are the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal and Meritorious Service Medal.

Admiral Gravelly will be the first

black fleet commander for the Navy. But he has set the pace in other milestones as well. He was the first black executive officer and commanding officer of a Navy warship, the first black line captain and admiral, and one of the first two blacks to attend the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Born in Richmond, Virginia, Admiral Gravelly is married to the former Alma Bernice Clark of Christiansburg, Virginia. They have two sons and a daughter.



THE TRIBUNAL AID

VOLUME IV, NO. 10

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11, 1976

\$6.00 PER YEAR

25 CENTS

MEMBER: North Carolina Black Publishers Association

North Carolina Press Association, Inc.

The 1976 Editions of THE TRIBUNAL AID will be dedicated to America's bicentennial Celebration, with emphasis on contributions our Race has made in the making of America, from birth to the present.

In 1976 there should not be a need to lift these contributions from isolated sources. Our past

should be interwoven into the fabric of our civilization, because we are, except for the Indian, America's oldest ethnic minority.

We have helped make America what it was, and what it is, since the founding of Virginia. We have been a factor in many major issues in our history. There have been many misdeeds

against us, yet we have been able to live through them and fight back. This is living proof of our history.

Our role in the making of America is neither well known or correctly known. Many positive contributions have escaped historians and have not found their way into the pages of many history books.

We will strive to give readers, Black and white, many little-known facts about our past and it is hoped that a proper perspective of our history will be of value to persons who may believe that as Black people we have an unworthy past; and hence, no strong claims to all rights of other Americans.

Faye Ashe, Black History Editor

A VIABLE, VALID REQUIREMENT
RESPONDING TO
BLACK NORTH CAROLINA

THE BLACK CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN LETTERS

PART I

ART IN ITS BROAD SENSE IS THE EXPRESSION OF BEAUTY IN FORM, COLOR, SOUND, SPEECH, AND MOVEMENT. ART EMBRACES NOT ONLY DRAWING, PAINTING, SCULPTURE AND ARCHITECTURE, BUT POETRY.

MUSIC, DANCING AND DRAMATICS. OUR CULTURE IS RICH IN ALL OF THESE ARTS FORMS, WE WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME EXAMPLES OF THIS PARTICULAR ART FORM.

Though nothing more by her survives and no more is known of her interest in verse, LUCY TERRY may still have been alive in Massachusetts when PHYLLIS WHEATLEY was brought from Senegal in 1761. A POEM BY PHYLLIS, A NEGRO GIRL IN BOSTON, ON THE DEATH OF REVEREND GEORGE WHITEFIELD was published. On the whole poetry written in American colonies in 1773, including that of Phyllis and Jupiter Hammon is limited interest to poetry lovers in the twentieth century.

Legal restrictions on the education of slaves were introduced in the American Colonies after the period of Phyllis Wheatley and Jupiter Hammon. The purpose was to keep from the slave, news and propaganda likely to incite a lust for freedom. During the French revolution, and the Haitian Insurrections there was regarded as a serious matter, and the slave uprising in Virginia, South Carolina, and elsewhere added to the anxiety. Escaped slaves who later wrote autobio-

ographies have left records of the mental anguish this deprivation caused them.

Slave poetry went underground, so to speak because the slave was denied the ABC's. Self-expression had to become oral, as it had been for so many of their ancestors in Africa. The suppression of book learning by slaves coincided with the earliest musical and lyrical expression in the form which became known later as Spirituals. The survival of "ROLL, JORDAN, ROLL", for example, among the slaves from the United States isolated on a Caribbean Island since 1824, would seem to place the beginning of these songs very early in the nineteenth century or late eighteenth century, allowing for the time it usually took such song to develop and become generally known.

The elegies, commemorations, and devotional poems of Phyllis Wheatley and Jupiter Hammon gave way to laments from slave quarters such as:

*I know moonlight, I know starlight
I lay this body down
I walk in the graveyard
I walk through the graveyard
To lay this body down.*

*I lay in the graveyard and stretch out my arms.
I lay this body down.
I go to the judgement in the evening of the day
When I lay this body down.
And my soul and your soul will meet the day
I lay this body down.*

*Bright sparkles in the churchyard
Give light unto the tomb;
Bright summer, spring's lover
Sweet flowers in their bloom.*

*My mother once, my mother twice, my mother,
she'll rejoice.
In the heaven once, in the heaven twice, she'll
rejoice.
May the lord, he will be glad for me
In the heaven, he'll rejoice.*

This was the kind of oral expression that replaced written poetry by Black Americans during the Abolitionist Campaign, the Civil War and the Reconstruction after the war.

There were, of course some exceptions. Among the free men of color, as they were called in Louisiana, a strong French influence persisted and stimulated many broad cultural interests. Young Colored men of talent were sent to Paris to be educated. Among them were poets like Lanusse, Pierre Dalcour and most important, Victor Sejour who later became a successful French dramatist and

moved in literary circles in which Alexander Dumas was prominent. In their youth in New Orleans these three Louisiana poets with a group of their associates produced a collection called LES CENELLES, published in 1845, the first anthology of American Negro Poetry. Included was "EPIGRAM" by Lanusse which, as translated by LANGSTON HUGHES, show how far the LES CENELLES poets and the free men of color of Louisiana were, culturally, from the slaves who created spirituals.

EXAMPLE:

*"Do you not wish to renounce the devil?
Aked a good priest of a woman of evil
Who had so many sins that every year
They cost her endless remorse and fear.*

*"I wish to renounce him forever," she said.
"But that I may lose every urge to be bad.
Before pure grace takes me in hand,
Shouldn't I show my daughter how to get a man?"*

GEORGE MOSES HORTON, a slave, had become known to the editor of the RALEIGH REGISTER in North Carolina, published in 1829 a slender volume of verse under the title HOPE OF LIBERTY. Horton was judged to about thirty-two at the time. He had become a well-known figure among the college students at Chapel Hill, where he may have been employed, and found it possible to realise a bit of income from his verses. The nature of this writing can only be guessed, since none of it appears to have survived, but circumstances would not lead one to think that it was passionate anti-slavery propaganda. Many of the students for who Horton wrote and who evidently paid him were children of slave holding families. He restrained in later life a noticeable capacity for humor, and it has been surmised that the poems with which he entertained the students at the University of North Carolina may have been in this vein. As the title of his first collection indicates, Horton hoped to earn from the sale of his poetry enough money to buy his freedom, however he did not succeed and his attitude changed, as seen in this poem:

*Alas! and am I born for this,
To wear this slavish chain?
Deprived of all created Bliss,
Through hardship, toil, and pain?*

*How long have I in bondage lain,
And languished to be free?
Alas! and must I still complain,
Deprived of Liberty?*

In 1865, after the Union Armies had won for him the emancipation his poems had failed to achieve, a second volume of Horton's verses was published in Raleigh under the title NAKED GENIUS. His second and last book contain stanzas which throw a certain light on his reputation at Chapel Hill:

*My duck bill boots would lik us bright,
Had you in justice served me right:
Like you, I then could step as light,
Before a flaunting maid.
As nicely could I clear my throat,
And to my tight's my eyes devote:
But I'd leave you bare, without the coat
For which you have not paid.*

*Then boast and bear the crack,
With the sheriff at your back,
Huzzah for Dandy Jack,
My Jolly Pop, My Jo!*

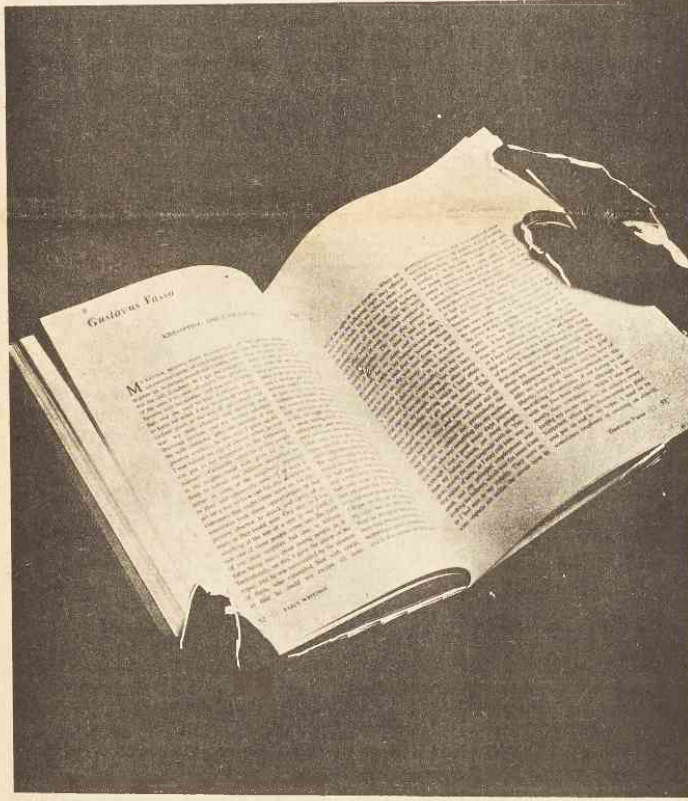
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Americans of African descent, still somewhat bewildered by the experience which had brought them into bondage in the New World, began to find a strangely satisfying expression for their thoughts and feelings in music. The songs which resulted, now known as Negro Spirituals, have not only been a powerful musical influence on the nation as a whole but these spirituals have been accepted with approval throughout most of the world. Spirituals owe as much to their words as to their music. They

mark a beginning of poetic expression as influential on subsequent poets as the music has been on later composers.

The lyrics of songs like "ROLL, JORDAN ROLL" and "SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT" were not the first attempts or verse by Blacks in the United States. An Indian raid on the little town of Deerfield, Massachusetts in 1746 is commemorated in a couplet by a semiliterate slave girl named LUCY TERRY. She called her account:

*Which caused his friends
much grief and pain
Simeon Amsden they found dead
Not many rods off from his head.
Adonijah Gillet, we do hear
Did lose his life which was so dear
John Saddler fled across the water
And so escaped the dreadful slaughter
Eunice Allen see the Indians coming
And hoped to save herself by running
And had not her petticoats stopt her
The awful creatures had not cotched her
And tommyhawked her on the hear
And left her on the ground for dead.
Young Samuel Allen, Oh! Lack-a-day
Was taken and carried to Canada.*

*August 'twas the twenty-fifth
Seventeen hundred forty-six
The Indians did in ambush lay
Some very valient men did slay
Twas nigh unto Sam Dickinson's mill.
The Indians there five men did kill
The names of whom I'll not leave out
Samuel Allen like a hero fout
And though he was so brave and bold
His fate no more shall we behold
Eleazer Hawks was killed outright
Before he had time to fight
Before he did the Indians see
Was shot and killed immediately
Oliver Amsden he was slain*

1776 Honoring America's Bicentennial 1976