

# from the CAPITOL

By GOV. GRANT SAWYER



MODERN, ENLIGHTENED personnel administration is one of the keys to effective state government. Since 1953, Nevada has been among the majority of state governments operating within the framework of a statewide personnel system, usually referred to as the merit system.

This concept is based on the democratic assumption that each citizen is entitled to an equal opportunity for employment within the limits of his capabilities.

Another fundamental principle of merit system legislation is to establish favorable job conditions that will attract and retain high caliber employees. This is essential in view of the ever increasing complexity of government.

MERIT SYSTEMS have been successively endorsed by Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson as well as by countless leaders in public and private life. They have recognized that voters and taxpayers deserve strong guarantees of efficiency, quality and economy in public service.

With one-fifth of our country's labor force currently on government payrolls, personnel program emphasis has shifted from mere opposition to political patronage to the more positive concepts of modern personnel management.

In Nevada, personnel administration is handled by the Personnel Division of the State Department of Administration. The division and department are headed by James F. Wittenberg and Howard E. Barrett, respectively. They are primarily responsible for Nevada's progress in personnel administration in recent years.

Three basic functions of the Nevada Personnel Division are: Classification and pay, recruitment and examining and training and employe development.

EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL work is a universally-accepted concept of sound personnel administration. The salary scale within the classified state service is one of the most important factors in attracting and retaining competent employes. Nevada must remain competitive with other states in this area or face loss of key administrators.

A vigorous and imaginative recruitment program is essential in the attraction of qualified job applicants. The Personnel Division cooperates with the Nevada Employment Security Department and news media in publicizing existing job opportunities in state government.

For the first time since the inception of the personnel system, the division last August opened a branch office in Las Vegas to service the needs of both state agencies and the general public in Southern Nevada.

Written examinations of several varieties are utilized by the Personnel Division to measure job knowledge, skills and abilities. Many times oral interviews are combined with written examinations to determine applicants' qualifications.

Nevada's merit system, fortunately, contains provisions giving management general authority to take effective disciplinary action. This prevents incompetent or insubordinate employes from being immune to proper discipline.

THE RIGHTS AND privileges of the individual state employe must be balanced against his obligations to the general public. Considering the length of time Nevada's personnel law has been in effect, it appears the merit system has worked well to promote good government.

## (HIDDEN HISTORY, from page 2)

my deepest sympathies went out to Virginia because I never thought of her as a "white" woman but as one whose high ideals had brought her suffering and death. From then on I began to see world figures not as men and women and began to search for some that were of Negro ancestry. However, there was not a single one to be found so carefully had they been expurgated by the masters. Alexander Dumas was one of my favorites but not a single word was there of his Negro strain. Literature, religion, education had all been carefully bleached. At last, however, I did hear of one great mulatto whose "race" could not be hid because I knew people who had seen him, and who was then world news: --General Antonio Maceo, Cuba's greatest military leader. However, it was not until years later I found in Chicago a friend who introduced me to books in which I found the names of several great men of Negro ancestry, past and present. In my spare time, and with no thought of writing a book, I began to collect some of these names. That was about 1911.

ABOUT THIS TIME I also made what was to me an important discovery, namely, that the recital of the deeds of the great or the worthy was instinctive in humanity. I found that all peoples--English, French, German, Spaniards, Italians, Americans, Chinese, Jews, Moslems, had lists of their great and noted men. And more than that, even states of the union, cities and small towns had their list of "greats" as well as doctors, scientists, lawyers, preachers, engineers and almost every professional group. Why, even the radicals who had called me a chauvinist had their own heroes whom they were forever extolling and whom they worshipped as blindly as the conservatives their own heroes. What the radicals really wanted was that I should worship at their own particular shrine, eschewing all others. Also I felt that if I were the victim of an inferiority complex I certainly had a host of illustrious company dating back to Plutarch with his "Lives of Illustrious Greeks and Romans."

Another thought that decided me to continue my researches was that man's chief knowledge of himself was what has been done by man; that the good and the evil that others have done were our sole guide through life's wilderness. And was not the recital of great and stirring deeds the most gripping of all dramas?

To bring out the best in ourselves (and at times the worst, too) a study of the lives of the great of all races, ages, and climates is a necessity. Biography will ever be the highest and most civilizing form of literature. That is why Plutarch is still a best seller after two thousand years.

AS REGARDS "RACE" which was thrust upon me (I had never felt otherwise than as a member of the human race) I realized that the further back the Negro's past could be pushed the more ridiculous would appear the old slave-holding dogma of "Negro" inferiority. I saw, also, that the white overlords to inflate the ego of their own group had reached back to claim the coal-black Ethiopian; the mulatto Egyptian; the black

Hindu; the Negroid Polynesian, not to mention certain individuals of Negro ancestry as Esop, Terence, Cleopatra, and Mohamet as white. Later, I saw Mussolini trying to prime his people by telling them of their great Roman past; and Hitler puffing up his by calling them Aryans and claiming that the ancient Egyptians were really Teutons. In short, Negro history was only a rebuttal of this braggadocio of the white masters. Let me say here that I feel emphatically that any boasting by Negroes about their history is just as nauseating. Furthermore, those individuals who work themselves up to a state where they talk as if the deeds of an ancestor were actually done by themselves will probably go no further than that in doing something worthy themselves. One of the world's greatest needs has ever been unboastful, unbiased history.

I noticed, too, that there was an urge not only to delve in national and "racial" history but in individual ancestry, also. I thought of the great genealogical societies; of the immense number of books tracing genealogies even here in America; and of the money paid out by the newly-rich and others for a family-tree and a coat-of-arms. I was especially struck by one magazine founded in 1899, "The Mayflower Descendants," tracing minutely living Americans to the Mayflower, even though such strain after more than three hundred years is extremely attenuated. Yes, it does appear that a past is as necessary to man as roots to a tree. However, it is undeniable that a knowledge of one's ancestors does have a certain psychological value, especially if such ancestors were worthy. Especially for youths would this be an inspiration. In short, as with most everything else, ancestry is what you make of it.

I REASONED NOW that since so many other groups and individuals were tracing their past, why should the objection be so strong when the Negro did so. Was not such objection but another manifestation of white superiority complex, even in the case of the white economic radicals?

As regards the lives of great Negroes, I felt, too, that the greater handicaps they had to overcome because of color ought to be proof of an inspiration to right-thinking white people with their lesser handicaps. Queen Victoria made her grandchildren read Booker T. Washington's "Up From Slavery." In view of the foregoing and in spite of the taunts of the economic radicals, white and Negro, I continued my researches on great Negroes, purely as a hobby.

THE VOICE, provided funds are available for the costly researching, intends to continue "Hidden History", not as a hobby, as Rogers stated, but rather as an important educational tool designed to ease the problems which tend to encumber the Great Society which is the goal of our great President, L.B.J.

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