

Hidden History

The Unsung Saga of the Black Man
as told by



John P. & C. Buck West

We continue to explore the fascinating subject of Negro ancestry in Europe as authenticated by J. A. Rogers, noted historian and anthropologist, in Vol. I of his publication "Sex and Race." Beginning on page 162 of Chapter 15, Rogers writes further on the subject.

ITALY

"The Moors also dominated parts of Italy. In 1846 A. D., they laid siege to Rome. In 878, they captured Sicily from the Normans, and in 898 defeated Otto II of Germany in South Italy. As in Spain they mixed their blood with that of the native Italians, who at this period had a large infusion of German blood due to the invasion of the Goths, and Vandals.

Negro slavery of the fifteenth century from Spain and Portugal also spread into Italy. The parents of St. Benedict the Moor, Catholic saint, who attained great fame during his life, came of this stock. Negro "blood" also found its way into the leading Italian families, including the most illustrious royal family of the times; the Medicis. The faces of some of the Medici as given in "Regiae Familiae Mediceorum Etruria," are undoubtedly Negroid, especially that of Cosimo III and his son Gian Gastone who bears a striking resemblance to the great Negro novelist, Alexander Dumas. Charles II of England came of this stock. G. F. Young says of the latter, "His dark hair and swarthy complexion showed traces of the Medici blood."

ONE OF THE MEDICIS, Alessandro, "The Moore", first reigning Duke of Florence, actually had a Negro mother. The latter, who was in the service of the Pope's aunt, was the wife of a mule-driver, but Pope Clement VII, then Cardinal dei Medici, took her as his mistress, and was the father of Alessandro. Nearly all the writers are agreed that Alessandro was a mulatto, which moreover, is clearly indicated by his portrait by Bronzino. The Enciclopedia Italiana says, "His color, his lips, and his hair" revealed his Negro strain. Gina Capponi, Italian historian, says that his mother was "a Moorish or mulatto slave" (una schiava mora o mulatta) and that Alessandro had "a dark skin, thick lips, and woolly hair." (La pella scura, le labbra grosse e i capelli crespi.) Benevenuto Cellino, who worked for Alessandro, says, as do several others, that everyone believed that Alessandro was the son of the Pope.

Alessandro married Margaret, daughter of Charles V, emperor of Germany, Spain, and Austria, but had no children by her. His children were by other white women were: Julius, who became an admiral of the Order of St. Stephen; Cosmo, who by Lucretia Cajetana, had Angelica, first wife of Peter, Duke of Altemps and Galesio. Alessandro also had two natural daughters, one, Julia, who was twice married, first to Francesco Cantelmo, Duke of Popola, and secondly, to Bernardo de Medina, Baron of Ottogano; from this latter marriage descended the princes of that line. Portia, the other daughter, became a nun. Staley reports yet another daughter who married Francesco de Barthelemi.

ANOTHER GREAT ITALIAN, who was most likely of Negro ancestry was Ludovico, "The Moor," Duke of Milan, foremost member of the powerful Sforza family. Biographie Universelle says he was called "The Moor" because of his very swarthy skin.

Brantone tells of another love affair in high life with a Negro-- "a beautiful grand dame of Naples," who had a Negro slave, "the ugliest in the world, her groom, her lover," whose "ugliness and odd appearance made him beloved by her."

KEITH MAC DONALD WILL BE MISSED



The tragic news of the sudden death last Friday of Keith MacDonald, Superintendent of the City Recreation Department, was received at the VOICE office with the same reaction of stunned

sorrow and sense of personal loss as was felt throughout all the City.

Keith MacDonald came to Las Vegas from Vallejo, California to fill the post of Recreation Superintendent in May, 1962. In the brief span of the four years he resided and worked here, he earned not only respect and admiration but the affection and devotion of all those with whom he was associated. He was revered and loved probably more than any other public servant to serve this area.

His complete dedication to his life's work and love of it, as evidenced in the growth and expansion of the City's recreational facilities and programs.

More than anything else, he loved to make the city's youngsters happy. His enjoyment of playing Santa Claus every year to thousands of Las Vegas children at innumerable parties was as keen as their love for him.

He is remembered at the VOICE office, particularly, for the occasion of this newspaper's Christmas Party in 1963 for the Community's youngsters when he appeared at the Christmas Party at Reubens Supper Club and made over a hundred excited children delirious with excitement over Santa Claus and his live reindeer - an innovation of MacDonald's unmatched for popularity.

Notable at Keith MacDonald's Funeral Services at the Palm Mortuary on Tuesday morning was the presence of so many young people who came to pay final respect to the man they knew understood and cared about them the most.

NOBLE ITALIAN LADIES

AND THEIR AMOURS WITH NEGRO SLAVES

Juvenal and Martial, early Roman writers, scored the fondness of the Roman matrons of their time for blackamoors, as was said. Masuccio, another Italian writer of the fifteenth century, is even more severe in this respect. In his stories, which throw much light on the history of the period, noble Italian ladies, who are cold and indifferent to men of their own class are infatuated with Negro slaves. In his Novellino XXII, the wife of the rich Nicholao d' Aguito of Trapani, a woman of great beauty, is so deeply in love with her husband's Moorish slave, "a young fellow, strong and robust of body but ugly beyond measure" that she would have killed her husband if the slave had said so, and finally ran away to Africa with him.

Novellino XXIV tells of a young man who was desperately in love with "a gracious and beautiful lady, the wife of one of the foremost gentlemen of the city." After trying to win her in every way, he entered the yard of her home one day, and hid behind a pile of casks, intending to enter the house and get under her bed when she went out. But she stayed at home all that day.

WHILE HE WAS STILL HIDING, a Negro slave came into the yard driving a mule, loaded with wood. The lady, hearing the slave, hurried to the window and began scolding him for being so long. But the slave took no notice of her on which she came down into the yard and began "to sport with him in tender wise with her hand and she went on from one endearment to the other; the wretched lover who stood wonder-stricken and for his own sake wishful that he could have won the favour which was now being granted to the black man without any labour on his part beheld the lady go and make fast the door and then without any further ado or demur, throw herself upon the mule's saddle which lay there and draw the horrible black fellow towards her. He without waiting at once set himself to the task and gave the wanton what she desired."

Novellino XXV deals with "a very young and beautiful woman" named Geronima, "vain beyond measure" who held captive the hearts of some of the noblest and choicest men without ever letting them taste "the supreme fruit she held in store." One nobleman set himself the task of winning "this finished artist in coquetry" but had no success. Finally he thought of reaching her through one of the Negro slaves of the family, Alfonso. He treated the latter so well that he became more attached to him than to his master. At last the nobleman asked the slave to intercede with the lady for him. The slave, greatly embarrassed, tried to dissuade him. The lady wasn't worth his notice, he said. Pressed for the reason the slave confessed that the

haughty dame was already his mistress, and gave the nobleman most convincing proof.

CASANOVA, the world's most famous lover, had a Negro mistress. He says, "A handsome Negress who served the prettiest of my actresses to whom I showed great attention said to me one day;

"I can't make out how you can be so much in love with my mistress who is as white as the devil."

"Have you never loved a white man?" "I asked.

"Yes," said she, "but only because I had no Negro to whom I certainly should have given the preference."

"Soon after the Negress became mine and I found out the falsity of the axiom: Sublata Lucerna nullum discrimen inter ruinas for even in the darkness a man would know a black woman from a white one."

THIS OBSERVATION may be more significant than it seems. Casanova appears to have had more than a touch of the tar-brush, himself, as the most intimate descriptions of him indicate.

The Prince de Ligne who knew him well says, "Ce serait un bel homme, s'il n'était pas si laid; il est grand, bati en Hercule; mais un teint africain..." (He would have been a fine-looking man if he had not been so ugly; he was tall, built like a Hercules, but he had an African complexion...) Casanova's father in unknown.

GARIBALDI'S WIFE and companion in battle was a colored Brazilian woman, Anita, who was called "Coffee." A magnificent monument was reared to her recently in Rome. Southern Italy is still decidedly Negroid as well as parts of Albania.

Southern Italians are very much mixed. Some Sicilians are indistinguishable from dark mulattoes. Poincare refused to withdraw the colored troops from the Rhine on the ground that they were no darker than large numbers of Italians."

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