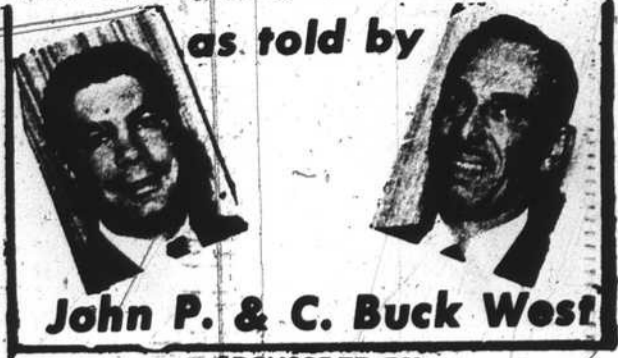


Hidden History

The Unsung Saga of the Black Man
as told by



John P. & C. Buck West

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TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE

The Negro of Whom Napoleon Was Jealous
(1743-1803)

In Volume II of World's Great Men of Color, author J. A. Rogers, the late distinguished Historian-Anthropologist relates, not only the history of the great political and military genius whom Chateaubrian described as "The Black Napoleon--whom the White Napoleon imitated and killed", but annotates the world effects of the events set in motion by L'Overture including the debt of gratitude owed him by the United States.

"IN 1743, in a slave hut on the plantation of Count de Breda in St. Domingue, or Haiti, was born a male child whose civil status was that of an ox. For the next forty-eight years he remained thus, almost untaught; then, at a time when others are nearing the grave, he rose to be dictator of the colony, establishing a record for political and military ability that has rarely, if ever, been excelled. His high-born masters, some of them descendants of kings, trained in the best universities and military academies of France, became part of his retinue. All of this was accomplished in less than six years. No romance ever written can excel the true story of Toussaint Breda, surnamed "L'Overture."

"Toussaint came on the scene when slavery was at its worst in Haiti. This richest of French colonies had an annual export trade of two and a half billion gold francs and imports that totaled only half of that sum. Its 40,000 white inhabitants lived in luxury. Determined to maintain and make the most of their power, these whites repressed with rigorous severity the rising ambitions of the 30,000 freed men and the 450,000 slaves, the creators of their wealth.

"WHEN ONE of the freedmen, Lacombe, presented a petition in 1789, asking that he be seated in the local legislature, he was hanged after a mock trial for this 'crime.' The freedmen were mostly mulattoes, who constituted a caste superior to the blacks. They were, for the most part, children of white men, some of them of noble birth, and humble black mothers. These mulattoes, some of whom were educated in France, owned a quarter of the real estate of the colony and had black slaves who toiled for them. Because of their ancestry, however, they had no social standing, and on the whole, like the slaves, had no rights that a white man was bound to respect.

"During the French Revolution, when citizens in the mother country were slaughtering the nobility, the mulattoes, thinking the time opportune to win their rights, sent two of their number, Oge and Chavannes, to the Convention in Paris, to ask for them. On their return the two delegates were seized by the whites who broke their arms, legs, thighs and backs on the wheel and turning up their faces to the broiling sun left them thus till they died. Their bodies were then quartered and hung up at important crossroads as a lesson.

"THESE INJUSTICES stirred Toussaint to the depths and he felt that he was destined to remedy them. He had read in the works of Abbe Raynal, a great foe of slavery and a contemporary of his, a passage which seemed addressed directly to him. It ran:

"Nations of Europe, your slaves have need

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EDITORIAL

LEST WE FORGET

1963, October - LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

"What I (Laxalt) did say, was 'Nevada has no serious civil rights problem,' and this in a discussion on comparative situations in other states.

"My personal belief is that legislation to remedy civil rights problems should be used as a last resort, and only when more democratic remedies have been exhausted. Moral persuasion by the government, the church and the people should always be the first approach.

"Without any legislation at all, Nevada has no civil rights problem in education and voting, which are the big problems in the South. And through moral persuasion, headway is being made in employment and housing. It is not happening overnight, but we are getting there.

"IN TALKING WITH NEGROES THROUGHOUT NEVADA, I FOUND ONE THING THAT SURPRISED ME. MANY OF THEM ARE WELL SATISFIED WITH THEIR LOT AS NEVADA CITIZENS AND THEY THEMSELVES ARE AFRAID OF LEGISLATION BECAUSE OF THE DANGER OF REPRISALS."

1964, January 4 - HUMBOLDT BULLETIN

"Lt. Gov. Paul Laxalt, an announced supporter of Goldwater since last August, said earlier that 'Nevada is a Goldwater state.' Laxalt said 'the biggest issues between the New York governor, Nelson Rockefeller, and Goldwater will be civil rights and Rockefeller's general approach to welfare programs.'"

neither of your generosity nor your counsel to break their chains. They need but a leader. Where is this man? He will appear. Have no doubt of that; he will raise the standard of liberty; his companions will rally around him. More impetuous than the torrent, they will leave everywhere the ineffaceable traces of their just resentment.

"Toussaint knew, however, that the time to strike was not yet and prepared himself for the day. While tending cattle he read books that inspired him for his "divine" mission, as Plutarch, Epictetus, Caesar, Saxe, and Raynal. So diligent and obliging he was that the overseer, Bayou de Libertat, made him his coachman. This post served him well. From the box he would listen to the conversation of the whites, learning of their plans and their way of thought. Rising still higher in esteem, he was made overseer of all the blacks on the estate.

"IN THIS post he was so humble, devout, and eager to please that in time he was held up as a model for all the slaves on the island. His exterior was but a mask, however. Underneath was an iron determination that one day, all, including his master, should be taking orders from him.

"Ever the words rang through his mind, 'A great man will arise!' with the echo, 'You are that man!'

"The atrocious treatment of Oge and Chavannes was the signal for a double revolt: one, of the mulattoes under General Beauvais; the other, of the slaves under Bouckmann, Blassou and Jean-Francois. On the night of October 30, 1791, the blacks arose, and setting fire simultaneously to thousands of cane-fields, butchered the whites as they fled from their blazing mansions.

"THOUGH TOUSSAINT helped to engineer the revolt, he was too humane to approve the slaughter of helpless women and children. Thereafter he came out openly in favor of revolt and so modest and patient was he, that although he was the most capable of the leaders, Negro or mulatto, he accepted calmly the minor title that Blassous, the black leader, had conferred on him, 'Doctor in the Armies of the King.' Diminutive, desiccated, toothless, and nearly fifty, he looked less like a leader than any of his compeers.

1965, September 18 - LAS VEGAS SUN

Headline: EVEN PARADISE MAYBE?

WATTS DISTRICT: A NICE AREA BY ANY STANDARD, SAYS LAXALT

"Lt. Gov. Paul Laxalt calls Gov. Grant Sawyer's speech blaming the Los Angeles Negro riots on impoverished conditions 'the height of irresponsibility.'

"Those statements are a lot of nonsense," Laxalt said of Sawyer's remarks...

"The Watts area of Los Angeles is a nice area by any standard. And to suggest that Negroes or anyone else in California do not have equal opportunities for education and freedom of movement is the height of irresponsibility.

"Let's set the record straight. Less than one per cent of the people living in the Watts area of Los Angeles were involved in the riot," Laxalt said in a statement.

"Grant Sawyer and others do a great disservice to the Negro minority and the civil rights movement when they make statements which make excuses for the Los Angeles riot."

"Laxalt, a Republican, blamed the riots on 'a small number of hoodlums and criminals who are no less criminals because their skin is a different color.'

"They are not at all representative of the rest of the Negro people in Los Angeles..." he said.

"But the others, knowing his ability and his popularity with the blacks, were jealous of him even in the innocuous post they had given him. Jean-Francois, one of the three great black leaders, threw him into prison.

"IN THE meantime, the whites of Haiti, finding themselves powerless sent to the slaveholders in the neighboring colony of Jamaica for aid. These British whites, on arriving, succeeded in making an alliance with the mulattoes, who, as was said, were many of them slaveholders and oppressors of the blacks. The result was that the blacks were overwhelmed. The Black Code and slavery were restored and the black leaders fled to the Spanish part of the island where all were given high posts, except Toussaint. Loyal to the king of France and a monarchist at heart, he refused to join in any attack on the French part of the island. It was only after the monarchy in France had been overthrown, and a republic established, that he did join the other Haitian black leaders in their attack on the French part of the island.

"MADE A colonel, he soon began winning victories for Spain against France. The French, eager to have him back now, made him flattering offers, intending to use him as a means of driving the Spaniards off the island but Toussaint refused to serve republicans. He said, 'The world has always obeyed a king. I could not live under any other form of government.'

"But he was destined to leave the Spaniards. (See HISTORY, page 10)

LAS VEGAS
Voice

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