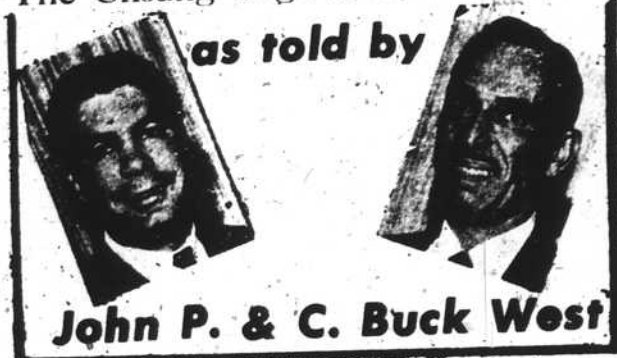


Hidden History

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)

(Second of a three-part profile of the great political and military genius, Toussaint Louverture as related by J. A. Rogers, the late historian-anthropologist in Vol. II of the author's "World's Great Men of Color".)

"Now virtual master of the colony, he decided to get rid of the white officials and sent them, one by one, to France, ostensibly on missions. Next, he suggested to La Veaux, himself, that he was needed in France. He took the hint and left.

"IN HIS PLACE, Toussaint appointed Raymond, a Negro, who had been sent from France, as one of the commissioners. Toussaint felt that the blacks preferred a Negro as governor.

"To assure the mother country of his loyalty, he sent his step-sons, Placide and Isaac, to France to be educated. Napoleon, however, fearing Toussaint, sent an official to the colony on the pretext that it was necessary because the English were still there. On this, Toussaint attacked the English at St. Nicholas, forced their commander, Lord Maitland, to surrender, and drove them from the colony.

"This done, he set in motion his reforms. He issued a general pardon to his white, black, and mulatto opponents, and urged all to unite for the good of the colony. He invited the former planters who had taken refuge in Jamaica and the United States, assuring them of the return of their lands and that their former slaves would work for them for five years for one-fourth of what was produced.

"AMONG THOSE who accepted his offer was his former overseer, Bayou de Libertat. Toussaint received him in his palace, surrounded by a brilliant retinue of white and colored subordinates. Bayou de Libertat, overjoyed at seeing his former coachman again, hastened forward to embrace him. But the diminutive Toussaint, stepping back with dignity, said: 'Gently, overseer. There is today a greater difference between me and you than there formerly was between you and me. Return to the plantation, be inflexible, be just; make the blacks work and so add to the prosperity of yourself and the administration.'

"Toussaint devoted himself energetically to the development of the colony. He built roads, one of them 180 miles long; reinforced the forts; reorganized the army; improved agriculture; built schools for the liberated blacks on whom he imposed discipline; proclaimed free trade, and in less than two years placed San Domingo on a sounder financial footing than it had ever been.

"UNDER HIS rule Haiti rose as if by magic out of its chaos of a few years previous. Everyone, white or black, responded to his wishes. He ruled as a benevolent despot, appointing only the most capable and honest men, white, black, or mulatto, to important positions.

"He maintained a brilliant retinue of 1500 followers of all colors; owned large estates and stables with hundreds of thoroughbreds. From all who approached him he demanded the strictest formality. Those in his most intimate circles were chiefly white men and women. He insisted that these white women dress respectfully. No low-necked dresses were permitted.

Time Off To Vote Without Pay Loss Provided By Law

By Earl Perkins

NEVADA ELECTION LAWS provide that voters shall have the right to take time off from work whenever it is impractical for them to vote before or after their work shift. Under these laws, the employer is given the privilege of designating the period during which the worker may leave the job to vote.

The voter must notify the employer, or his authorized agent, at least one day before the election, if he (the voter) requires leave from work to vote. When such notice is given to the employer (or his authorized representative), the employer is guilty of a misdemeanor if the request is refused.

THE EMPLOYER is prohibited by the Election Laws to take any action against the voter because of his absence from work. The voter can not be discharged, disciplined, penalized, nor be subjected to any reduction of pay by reason of such absence, when proper application has been made.

The Nevada statutes spell out in detail "sufficient time to vote". The length of time depends upon the distance between the voters place of employment and his polling place.

If the distance is less than two miles, the voter is permitted one hour as sufficient time to vote.

If the distance is more than two miles, but less than 10 miles, the law says that two hours is sufficient time.

When the distance (from the job to the polls) is more than 10 miles, the voter is allowed three hours to vote.

IN COUNTIES having a population of more than 25,000 registered voters, the polls shall open at 7 a.m. and close at 7 p.m.

Voters should clock the exact distance between their proper polling places and their places of employment so that they will know the amount of time permitted by law for voting. This information should be included in the voter's application to the employer for "sufficient time to vote".

Voters working the "swing shift" have sufficient time to cast their votes before reporting to work, and consequently are not entitled to be absent from work to vote.

Voters working the "graveyard shift" can

On one occasion when a young white girl appeared at his court in a dress too low at the neck, Toussaint drew his handkerchief and covered her bosom with it. 'Modesty,' he reprimanded her, 'ought to be the chief virtue of your sex.'

"But Toussaint's troubles were by no means over. There was a revolt in his own ranks, the blacks. Numbers of the latter opposed to working again for white people, revolted under his one-eyed nephew, General Moyse, who had been commissioned to see that the former slaves worked. Moyse said, 'Whatever my uncle may do I will not be the hangman of my race. He urges me to oppress my fellow-blacks in the name of France, but I will love the whites only when they give me back my eye.' Moyse's followers massacred 200 whites.

"Marching against him, Toussaint captured him and had him shot along with thirteen other rebel chiefs.

"THE MULATTOES, charging that Toussaint had betrayed them to the whites, revolted next. Led by General Rigaud, a veteran of the American Revolution, they were at first victorious, but Toussaint finally defeated them and Rigaud, Petion, and other mulatto leaders fled to France. He now made a new constitution in which he named himself governor of the colony for life with the right to name his successor.

"This step angered Napoleon to whom Toussaint was still but 'a rebellious slave.' The honor of France, he declared had been 'outraged' by this menial. Toussaint, too, had said that to Haiti he was like 'a black Bonaparte,' a comparison that caught on among Toussaint's admirers in France. Some of them, enemies of Napoleon, went even further. They said, 'Of the two Bonapartes, the black one is the greater.'

"Napoleon decided to crush him. Besides, the aristocratic refugees from Haiti, as well as

vote after they get off from work and are not entitled to have time off to vote.

THE ELECTION LAWS are geared primarily to assure the voters working the "regular shift" from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. "sufficient time to vote; without any loss of pay or other penalties as far as job security is concerned.

The Law states that a voter working more than ten miles from his voting place requires three hours as sufficient time to vote. Since the polls do not open until 7 a.m., the 8 to 5 voter has only one hour to vote before reporting to work, and only two hours to get to the polls after the end of the 8 to 5 shift. In neither case is there sufficient time for the voter to cast his vote.

RESIDENTS OF North Las Vegas and of West Las Vegas who work on the Strip are more than 10 miles from their voting places, and are legally entitled (at the discretion of the employer) to report to work two hours late, or to leave the job one hour early without loss of pay.

Las Vegas voters working in Henderson, or at the Test Site, are also entitled to the "sufficient time to vote" provision of the Election Laws.

The employer can permit the voter to have sufficient time off the job somewhere in the middle of the 8 to 5 work shift, but it is not the most likely decision for the employer to make. It is more economical for the employer to give the voter one hour off, or two hours off, than it would be to give three hours off. Most employers attempt to arrange their work schedules in order to save as many man-hours as possible. This results, in most cases, of letting the voter off at 4 p.m. which permits the sufficient three hours before closing of the polls at 7 p.m.

ANY VOTER who reaches the polls before 7 p.m. is permitted to wait his turn to vote regardless of the 7 p.m. closing time. If the polling place is crowded with voters waiting to get into a voting booth, even those voters who must wait their turn outside of the polling place are entitled to vote if they reach the polls by 7 p.m.

Nevada Election Laws guaranteed the voter his privilege of having a voice in certain affairs of government, as well as in selection of public officials. The people must utilize this privilege because it is the one right which guarantees all other Civil Rights.

the mulatto leaders, were urging him to do so. They charged Toussaint with plotting with England and the United States and said he intended making himself king.

"ON THE OTHER hand, Colonel Vincent, a white Haitian, advised him strongly to the contrary. To send an expedition against Toussaint, he said, would be an act of extreme folly. Toussaint, he said, had not only restored prosperity in the colony, but was loyal, and the fittest man for the post. 'At the head of this rich colony,' he said, 'is a man, the most active and indefatigable that can be imagined. It may be truthfully said that he is everywhere, and precisely at the spot where sound judgment and danger would say that his presence is most necessary; his great moderation; his power, peculiar to himself of never needing rest; the advantage he has of being able to resume the labor of the cabinet after laborious journeys; of replying to a hundred letters daily and habitually fatiguing

(See HISTORY, page 13)

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