

Hidden History

The Unsung Saga of the Black Man
as told by



John P. & C. Buck West

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ESTEVANICO

Discoverer of Arizona and New Mexico
and Pioneer Explorer of the Southwest
(-1540)

"TO THE New World with the Spanish conquistadores came many unmixed Negroes, some of whom distinguished themselves in various ways in its exploration and conquest.

"Among the most romantic of these was Estevanico, whom fortune permitted in spite of his enslaved condition, to play a leading role in the opening-up of the South-West. He was one in a party of the first three to cross the North American continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific. At least two American states owe their beginnings to him.

"Of Estevanico's history prior to his arrival in the New World all that is known is that he was a native of Azamor, Morocco, and that he was very black with thick lips. He is first heard of when he and other Negroes arrived in Florida with the ill-fated expedition of Pamphilio de Narvez in 1527.

"AT THAT TIME Florida and the South-West were believed to be as rich in gold and precious stones as Mexico and Peru from which the Spaniards had wrung fabulous wealth. A tale had come to Mexico City of the Seven Golden Cities of Cibola situated in what is now Arizona and New Mexico. It was said that in these cities whole streets were given over to goldsmiths; the roofs of the houses were of gold; and the doors studded with precious stones. Incredible tales they seem now but the civilizations of Mexico and Peru, which had been undreamed of in the Old World prior to Columbus, gave color to them.

"Pamphilio de Narvez left Spain on June 17, 1527, for Florida, with 600 men. But storms and deserts soon reduced his force to a half. De Narvez, tall, red-bearded, one-eyed, pushed on, however, and finally landed at St. Clement's Bay, north of Tampa Bay, Florida. In a deserted Indian hut, one of his men found a golden ornament. De Narvez, hailing it as the first-fruits of the millions in gold awaiting him in the interior, gave the order to march.

"Into the forests and swamps of Florida, his men plunged. But after three months of weariness, hunger, and attacks by Indians, they found nothing, whereupon they returned to the coast and set sail westwards, arriving at Appalachee Bay. Thence they sailed toward the Texas coast, traversing the mouth of the Mississippi, at least fourteen years before its reputed discoverer, De Soto.

"Caught soon afterwards in a storm, they were cast ashore off the Texas coast where they were killed by the Indians. Only four members of the expedition were ever heard of again, Cabeza de Vaca, Castillo de Maldonado, Donates de Carranza, all white, and the latter's Negro slave, Estevanico. Captured by the Indians, all were enslaved.

"FOR THE NEXT six years they experienced a most cruel bondage. They were forced to do all the drudgery of the tribe. Quite naked, they suffered from sores on their bodies caused by stones, thorns and brushes. Year after year they planned to escape, but something always arose to frustrate them. Their male captors were in the habit of going away in the prickly pear season at the time others would arrive with objects for barter. They planned to escape with

VOICE READERS COMPRISE A \$30,000,000 MARKET

EDITORIAL

Will The REAL Paul Laxalt Please Stand Up

The ability of Nevada's Lieutenant Governor to reverse his position on issues without batting an eye-lash, and to espouse the political philosophy deemed by him to be the most acceptable for the moment has commanded attention from political observers both within the state and from those as far away as New York. Offered here are reprints from editorials of other newspapers commenting on the "leap-frog political philosophy" of Nevada's ambitious Lieutenant Governor.

(A reprint from the 1/21/66 issue of the Reese River Reveille and in the 9/16/66 issue of the Tonopah Times-Bonanza)

Political opportunist or politically inconsistent?

That's the question Nevada voters are asking of Lt. Gov. Paul Laxalt in his quest to be governor of Nevada.

Laxalt has made a complete flip-flop in political philosophy in the space of two years. As a Goldwater conservative in 1964, he embraced the John Birch Society, bitterly opposed civil rights legislation, opposed increased aid to Nevada schools, opposed creation of a park at Lake Tahoe and ridiculed a program to attract foreign tourists to our state.

Today, with a platform that indicates him to be the most liberal candidate on the statewide ballot, he has repudiated the John Birch Society as a dangerous threat and thrown them out of the Republican Party, has made extravagant promises to Negro leaders that he will be a champion of civil rights, has pledged to make Nevada a "lighthouse" of education, has taken credit for helping make a Lake Tahoe park possible and placed himself solidly behind conservation, and grandly announced his own plan to bring foreign tourists to Nevada.

There are other areas where the "new" Laxalt, in the tradition of Richard Nixon, has completely disassociated himself from the "old" Laxalt.

Confused voters are asking, "Why?"

the latter, but when success seemed near there was a quarrel over a woman; the tribe separated, taking one of the four.

"Finally, all the four succeeded. Travelling westwards, they roamed from the Mississippi to California, traversing the land of the cactus and the ranges of the buffalo, being the first from the Old World ever to see that animal.

"With their knowledge of Indian life they now became medicine men because of which they were well-treated and even feared. At last, after three years more of almost unparalleled hardships they arrived at a Spanish slaving-post in California, having wandered more than 2,500 miles from Tampa Bay. The story of this journey as told by Cabeza de Vaca is one of the most thrilling in the entire history of adventure.

"THEIR RETURN to Mexico City was a sensation, the more so as they brought back news of the "Seven Golden Cities of Cibola," of which they had had abundant confirmation from the Indians. From all accounts these cities possessed riches compared with which those taken from Mexico and Peru were paltry.

"The viceroy of Mexico, Antonio de Mendoza, immediately prepared an expedition to go in search of them. The important considerations were a leader who knew the country, the language and the ways of the Indians, and was honest as well. Estevanico seemed such a one in every respect and the viceroy gave him three hundred Indians for the task. It is probable that there were several Negroes among them; at least the Indian legend on the subject seems to confirm this. Estevanico and his savages, Mendoza felt, would not make off with the captured treasures of Cibola.

"Estevanico was illiterate. Two priests, Marco and Onorato, went as recorders. The latter died a few days after they set out.

"LEAVING MEXICO City, the party travelled in a north-westerly direction. The journey proved a veritable triumph for Estevanico. Everywhere he was received with honor, thanks to his size and strength; his dark skin, his daring bravery, and bluff as well as his good nature and ready wit, his reputation as a medicine man,

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Is it because he now truly believes all his conservative political ideals to be wrong, or is it because he feels he can be elected only on a liberal platform? The first marks him as politically inconsistent, the latter as a political opportunist.

As Nevadans prepare to ballot in the most important election of this decade, the question is not where Laxalt stood two years ago or where he stands today.

The question is, where will he stand tomorrow? Apparently it is a question Mr. Laxalt may not be able to answer himself.

(On July 25, 1966, the San Francisco Chronicle printed the following column from the New York Times written by syndicated columnist, Tom Wicker)

Headline: A New Laxalt Campaigns for Governor

NEVADA'S CHANGED CONSERVATIVE

"He (Laxalt) is a Goldwater man who came in from the cold, a right-wing conservative who got the message in 1964, a Republican who had looked over all the slogans and decided that 'me too' sounds best of all.

"Four years ago, running as a conservative Republican, Laxalt became Lieutenant Governor and his party's only high office holder in Nevada.

"Two years ago, he ran as a devout disciple of Barry Goldwater...

"But things are different at Laxalt headquarters in 1966. Last April, the young, 43-- and attractive Lieutenant Governor personally took the lead in having the State republican convention read the John Birch Society out of the party--and this after years when he followed the 'some of my best friends are Birchers' line popularized by Goldwater."

"In 1964, again like Goldwater, he opposed the civil rights act as unconstitutional.

"This year, he took care to have a Negro named Woodrow Wilson address his party's convention, is promising action to improve the lot of Nevada's sizable Negro community, and suggests that he will appoint a Negro to high State office.

"The lesson of 1964 was that we Republicans can't go into a campaign with an all negative approach," he said. "All we did was knock, knock. Well, it's all right to criticize but I learned that we have to present alternatives. We have to offer positive programs."

"The trouble with the right wing has been that no matter what one thought of its theoretical arguments it had and has no practical chance of winning general elections in modern America.

"That was the lesson most graphically demonstrated in 1964 and that is why Nevadans may call Paul Laxalt anything they please except a bad student."

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