

WINNING ESSAYS IN VOICE NEGRO HISTORY CONTEST

Early in February, this year, (the month during which Negro History Week is celebrated annually throughout the nation), the Las Vegas VOICE announced the newspaper's sponsorship of a Negro History Essay Contest to be conducted in the High Schools of the Clark County School District.

THE CONTEST was approved and encouraged by Administrators and High School Principals

of the School District, and student response to it was immensely gratifying.

As scheduled, deadline for submission of essays to principals of participants was March 15. Each Principal, and/or staff members delegated by the Principal selected the three top essays of their school and forwarded them to the County Administrative office where Tom Bishop (of the Valley Zone office) and staff re-

moved all identification from essays, coded them and turned them over to the VOICE for the newspaper's panel of judges to select the top three essays. Neither the names of contestants nor the schools they attended were known to the judges.

ON TUESDAY morning, the judges delivered the three essays chosen by them to the VOICE publisher who, in turn, called Mr. Bishop's

office and reported the titles of the winning essays and Mr. Bishop identified the winners.

Basic High School in Henderson can be justifiably proud that both 1st and 2nd prizes were won by Basic High students. Mike Buchanan, 16-year-old Junior of 147 W. Basic Rd., Henderson, is author of the winning essay and will be sponsored by the Las Vegas VOICE to the Oddfellows and Rebeccas United Nation Pil-

grimage this summer.

Mary Ann Miller, 17, a senior at Basic High who resides at 540 Fairway Rd., Henderson was the second prize winner. Mary Ann's prize of \$100 will be awarded by the Las Vegas Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co., through Robert W. Stahl.

Third prize, a \$50 U.S. Savings Bond, was won by Brenda McKinney, 17-year-old Rancho High School senior of 1109 Jimmy Street.

ALL THE FINALS submitted by principals of the various High Schools were excellent. The choice must have been a difficult one for the judges. The VOICE offers the three winning essays here and heartfelt congratulations to all contestants for a most commendable effort.

"The Negro As An American Soldier"

By Michael Buchanan
Basic High School

ON THE NIGHT of March 5, 1770, a slight snow covered the cobblestones of Boston Common. A large number of soldiers and civilians milled about in the street. A barber's apprentice annoyed a British soldier and the soldier struck the boy with his musket. An angry crowd gathered and hurled snowballs at the soldiers quartered at Murray's Barracks. The hapless soldier who earlier had struck the barber's apprentice was set upon with sticks and snowballs. Captain Preston, the officer of the guards for the day, charged with a file of seven soldiers to help the soldier in trouble. The crowd was unafraid and pressed the soldiers by continuing to throw snowballs. Suddenly one soldier fired. Six others fired in rapid succession. Crispus Attucks, a runaway slave and one of the crowd's leaders, was the first to fall. Two white men fell across him. A day later two other men were dead.

Havoc reigned. The offending soldiers were later convicted of manslaughter and branded in the hand.

As the blood of Attucks and the men who fell with him ran on the cobblestones of the Common, free America was born. Since that day Negro men have stood and fallen with all races of men to defend America.

IN THE Revolutionary War, there was an average of 35 Negroes in each regiment of the Continental Army. They fought bravely in all battles and earned the praise of Marquis de Lafayette who said: "These people have measured up to my every expectation."*1. Lafayette also credited them with having helped save his forces from defeat by Cornwallis.

The first American woman to ever enroll in the armed services was a Negro, Deborah Sampson Gannett. She disguised herself as a man and crossed the Delaware with George Washington. For her "extraordinary instance of female heroism"*2, her home state of Massachusetts commended her and awarded her a monetary bonus.

When Commodore Perry hurled broadside after broadside at the enemy on the waters of the Great Lakes, Negroes fell to the decks having served and died that America's freedom, gained such a short while ago, might be sustained.

APPROXIMATELY 179,000 Negroes fought in the Civil War. They made up 161 complete regiments. An additional 5,890 colored men worked as cooks in the war. Negroes fought on both sides as their loyalties dictated. In either case they fought bravely and died as men. At the war's end the first man to be honorably discharged from the Union Army shortly after the war was a Negro.*3

When it became necessary for America to wage war against Spain in 1898, the Negro again distinguished himself as a soldier par excellence. The 24th Infantry (colored troops) was the first to arrive at Santiago Bay, Cuba, on June 20, 1898. Three other colored regiments were also among the first to go to the front.

In the battle of Las Guasimas, Cuba, Negro troops of the 10th Cavalry saved the day for Col. Theodore Roosevelt and his Rough Riders when the battle went against him. Of them Roosevelt later said: "I don't think that any Rough Rider will ever forget what the 10th Cavalry did for us."*4

THE NEGRO fought so bravely that their actions were much publicized. The following article appeared in a newspaper that had a nationwide circulation:

"One of the most gratifying incidents of the Spanish War has been the enthusiasm that the colored regiments of the regular

army have aroused through the whole country. ...Men who can fight for their country as did these colored troops ought to have their full share of gratitude and honor."*5

In the first World War, Negroes rushed to volunteer in numbers so large that within five days of the declaration quotas of Negro military outfits were oversubscribed. In those five days, 2,290,527 Negroes registered for service. The War Department had to issue the following statement: "No more need apply."*6. 458,000 were inducted.

Again the first American troops to move up to the fighting front were Negroes. The men of the 369th Infantry Regiment, called "Hell's Fighters" by the Germans, remained 191 consecutive days under fire--the longest ordeal ever endured by American soldiers. During that same period the 369th never had one man captured, never lost one foot of ground in the trenches, and were the first of the Allied Armies to reach the Rhine.

After Maison-en-Champagne and Meuse-Argonne, the Headquarters of the 369th Infantry received the following address from Marshal Foch, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies:

"...you have won the greatest battle in History and saved the most sacred cause, the liberty of the world.

With immortal glory you have adorned your flags.

Posterity will be indebted to you with gratitude."*7

IN ADDITION, Henry Johnson and Needham Roberts were the first Americans of all our Expeditionary Forces in Europe to win the coveted Croix de Guerre.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Negroes jumped to America's aid. Approximately 1,200,000 Negroes entered uniform. They were once again among the first to go overseas.

Negro soldiers were on Omaha Beach on D-Day. Negro anti-aircraft units fought bravely in Burma, Normandy, Italy, and North Africa. Negro engineers played a major role in building the Ledo Road in Burma, the Stillwell Road in China, and the Alcan Highway in Alaska and Canada. Negro transport units operated supply lines to all battlefronts and ran the famous 'Red Lion' Route from Bayeux to Brussels.

There were over 2,000 colored units in Europe alone. Many units won high honors. The 99th Pursuit Squadron, the first all-Negro flying unit, won a commendation from Air Force Commanding General H. A. Arnold for air combat over the Anzio-Nettuno beachhead.

THE 332nd FIGHTER Group of the 15th Air Force, in addition to having the highest percentage of college graduates in the armed forces, won a Distinguished Unit Citation. This citation, the highest unit decoration, was issued because in over 200 escort missions in the Sicilian Campaign it never lost a bomber to enemy fighters. It won a total of 845 medals and decorations.*8

The 969th Infantry Unit fought so well at the Battle of the Bulge that it received a Unit Citation. It was written the following words: "...Your contribution to the great success of our arms at Bastogne will take its place among the epic achievements of our army."*9

The 765th Tank Battalion fought so well that at the end of the war, ten of its tanks were chosen as part of the honor guard when General Lothar von Rundlic signed the surrender of the German Army in Austria. Of the General Patton said:

"...You are the first Negro tankers ever to fight in the American Army. I would never have asked for you if you weren't good. I consider you to have entered combat with such conspicuous courage and success as to warrant special commendation."*10

WHEN THE United States fought to stem the

tide of communist aggression in Korea, the Negro was there helping her. In fact, the first American victory in Korea came when the 24th Infantry Unit, a colored unit, recaptured Yech'on in July, 1950. Congressman Lane of Massachusetts read about its exploits in Korea to the House of Representatives. He said: "Communist propaganda took it on the chin at Yech'on when the Korean Reds were blasted by the American Negro troops who believed not only in the United States as it is, but in the better Nation it will become when intolerance is defeated."*11

In addition, Pfc. William Thompson of Brooklyn, New York, became the first United States service man to win the Medal of Honor posthumously for heroism in Korea. He was the first Negro so honored since the Spanish-American War. A year later Army Sgt. Cornelius H. Charlton of the Bronx was also awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for heroism.

IN THE CURRENT war in Vietnam, the Negro is again distinguishing himself as a soldier par excellence. Although Negroes make up only 11% of the total United States population, they have sustained 14.6% of the combat deaths through 1965. In addition, Negroes are scattered all over Vietnam, there are no segregated units in Vietnam.

As for combat performance, in the words of one veteran colonel:

"There is simply no comparison between the overall performance of the Negro in combat today and the Negro in the segregated units which we used to have. The percentage of good troops is far, far higher than it ever was before."*12

There are upwards of 12,000 Negro military personnel fighting and toiling in Vietnam. They are scattered by rank, branch, and duty. Their record will add a new chapter to military history.

THESE ARE but jottings from the total and glorious record of the Negroes' participation in the wars waged by our country, but they are the epitome of the will and intent of the Negro to preserve what he knows is best for all the world's people--the democratic way.

*FOOTNOTES:

1. Ben Richardson, "Great American Negroes" (New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1945), p. 216.
2. Langston Hughes, "Pictorial History of the Negro in America" (New York, Crown Publishers, Inc., 1963), p. 25.
3. Ibid., p. 87.
4. Saunders Redding, "The Lonesome Road" (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 83.
5. "Let's Honor the Deserving," Reviews of Reviews (Oct., 1898).
6. Redding, op. cit., p. 98.
7. Ibid., p. 99.
8. "The Cadet Who Refused to Quit," Readers Digest, (Sept., 1965), p. 65.
9. John Davis, "The Negro in the Armed Forces of America," The American Negro Reference Book, (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 301.
10. Ibid., p. 313.
11. Congressional Record, vol. 96, part 8, p. 10866.
12. "The Negro in Vietnam" U.S. News and World Report, (Aug. 15, 1966), p. 34.

Today let us protect our loved ones with constant vigil and strong defenses against those who seek to destroy our God-given freedoms.



ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS--From Left--Mary Ann Miller, 2nd place; Brenda McKinney, 3rd place; 1st place winner Mike Buchanan.

"The Missing Pages"

By Mary Ann Miller
Basic High School

"INTEGRATED MINDS are as vital as integrated schools, at the very least." This statement by Whitney Young, Jr. sums up one of the major problems confronting people of the United States today. The problem is the almost complete absence of the American Negro in history books, where he certainly has played a significant role since the dawn of civilization. Neither his face nor his contributions have found a home in our history texts. Even Paul Revere's famous drawing of the Boston Massacre pictures a battle among whites, despite the fact that Negroes were present and one leader, Crispus Attucks, was among the five American martyrs. Historian Henson J. Lossing transformed Attucks into a "Nantucket Indian."*1

Those Negroes who have contributed to American history west of the Appalachians are generally ignored. There is no mention of the Negro frontiersmen or explorers who blazed trails across the continent; Estevanico who opened the Southwest to Spanish exploration and Du Sable who founded Chicago, and even Matt Henson, who became the first American to reach the North Pole when he arrived an hour before Commander Robert E. Peary, do not appear in most history books. Nor do the Negro cowboys, who made up one-third of the trail crews who drove cattle up the Chisholm Trail after the Civil War, show up in school texts.*2 Negroes contributed key inventions to nineteenth century United States industrialization--for example, the Mechanical Laster that revolutionized shoe manufacturing. Granville Woods, holder of one hundred fifty patents, developed the third rail for electric trains in 1890, as well as induction telegraphy for communicating with trains in motion.*3

THERE IS some but not enough being done about this problem. The first American Negro history wasn't written until the 1830's, by the Reverend James W. C. Pennington. Publishers of a nine, soon ten, volume encyclopedia of Negro history have as their purpose to strengthen

the Negro's confidence and assurance that he has historical roots deep within the soil of Western civilization. Also to restore to history those missing pages whose absence has crippled America's ability to understand the Negro, hence retarding fulfillment of the American ideal of equal justice to all men, regardless of race, creed, color, or nationality.*4 Although this ten volume encyclopedia needs improvement and is still missing a few important factors, it is heading toward better understanding among people in America today. In 1963, in Detroit, Michigan, the elementary schools (47% Negro) began supplementing courses with a fifty-two page paper-back on Negro history that ranges from ancient times to Martin Luther King....the schools of Washington, D.C. (86% Negro) introduced "The Negro in American History," a one hundred fifty page teacher's guide that can be drawn on by all grades and read by eleventh-graders as part of their regular course.*5

THE FOUR CENTURY history of the American Negro is a grim tale of "enforced isolation from the mainstream of American life." That a few remarkable Negroes have nonetheless managed to write "a record rich in achievement" does not balance the unhappy fact that most have not. Yet now the isolation is breaking down; Negroes may see that color is disappearing as an excuse as well as a barrier.*6

If more writers, publishers, and people in general would go along with the statement "Integrated minds are as vital as integrated schools, at the very least", there would be a great deal more to learn about ALL Americans than just George Washington Carver who, although outstanding, was the only Negro that I ever learned about in my history books.

- *Footnotes:
1. William Katz, "Ignored by Historians," Saturday Review, vol. XLIX (July 16, 1966), pp. 67-68.
 2. Ibid., p. 68.
 3. Time, vol. 83 (March 27, 1964), p. 59.
 4. Katz, loc. cit.
 5. Time, loc. cit.
 6. Ibid.

"The Proud Negro"

By Brenda McKinney
Rancho High School

INTRODUCTION

In the following essay concerning the history of the Negro, I have attempted to speak from the way I feel and from my personal knowledge of the Negro, rather than the way books relate the information to me, or articles brief me. Simplicity is widely used. Informality is a definite usage in my essay. I believe in the straight truth and therefore dedicate this essay to Negro History.

WITH OUR VOICES raised in memory of our ancestors, and with our heritage signing the bill of recognition, we as a Negro people, as one nation under God, face our problem once more.

Through custom the Negro has met with challenge, fought it, and in many cases defeated it. We are not here for the world's pity, but we are here for their ability to recognize us as a free people. The chain of fear has pulled against us. Was it a sin to be born black? Will the color of one's outer skin determine his heart's content? Will the burden of one's ancestry be upon his children and his children's children? Every time he walks down the street will people spit upon the ground upon which he walks? Will his chances at a degree in college be only half as great as the youth who is of the so called "Privileged Race?" Will the pain of attitude and tradition in the past be upon him not as an American, but as a Negro for the rest of his days as

a Negro?
Ours, as a Negro race, is a dream world. We dream of becoming a free people, we dream of one day walking down the street and being recognized as an American rather than a Negro, but always being proud to be a Negro. This dream will never be seen from our eyes and probably never from our children's eyes, but eventually it will come true and when it does we can complete the phase "One nation under God indivisible with liberty and justice for all," we can complete the phase without being hesitant about the truth which stands behind it.

AS WE observe in our various history books we can immediately anticipate that there are a great number of Negroes who have helped make this country the great country it is today. Famous Negroes such as Booker T. Washington who founded Tuskegee and was a great writer, George W. Carver the famous scientist who derived over 100 uses from a mere peanut, Harriet Tubman whose poetry won the admiration of so many, Henry O. Tanner the artist, Marian Anderson whose voice is praised by many, and Sammy Davis Jr. who is yet bringing the standards of the Negro to the top. So very many have contributed to American history until I could list and list.

We as a Negro people are not ashamed of our ancestry, but rather we are a proud people, we hold our heads high and seek equality from every angle. We are far from the peak of perfection, (for those who reach perfection have no where to go but down the ladder,) but rather we seek for a better chance for our children, for our children's children and for their children. We search for hope, justice and equality just as a man does who desires dominance.

I AM OF one opinion, I speak from a small point of view, however I speak in hope of representing the outlook of the Negro race in general. Our cultural advances are not in vain, our long suffering, heartache and many times lost lives will not be forgotten, but rather they will be looked up to. Now the train of improvements will be on their way.

We as a Negro people have a feeling that probably no other race shares, we feel like a spirit of dominance to success should run through our veins, we can not quit, for the race has just begun, we can not wait, for there is no time for waiting, the train of achievement, of success, of justice, and of equality awaits us. Letting intelligence and reality be our highways we will conquer our goal, equality will some day belong to every man. We'll soon be able to walk into a hospital and witness the birth of a black child who has just burst into existence and say, "That child is what we've been suffering for, he's got a chance, and it was worth it, he can hold his head high and be proud of the cultural achievements of his people, he can walk down the street and be looked upon not as a Negro, but as an American. He will attempt to climb the ladder of achievement just as his forefathers did, only his chances will be equal, his interest, beliefs, and learning can all be applied just as the next fellows, for he is an American and he lives under the code "One nation under God indivisible with Liberty and Justice for all!! FOR ALL...FOR ALL.

Charles Walker Thomas
Secretary-Treasurer, A.S.N.L.H.,
1538 Ninth Street, N.W.,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

- (1) I enclose herewith my check money order for \$..... to promote the work of the A.S.N.L.H.
- (2) I enclose herewith my check money order for \$..... for subscriptions, "The Journal of Negro History"..... \$6.00 "The Negro History Bulletin" (8 issues)..... \$3.00 For both..... \$9.00