

Hidden History

The Unsung Saga of the Black Man

as told by



John P. & C. Buck West

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WASHINGTON, D.C.--Vice President Humphrey asked Americans to help close an educational "gap" by including accomplishments of the Negro in the nation's history.

In an article appearing in the February issue of "Negro Digest," the Vice President said "the shared pride in Negro history and achievement is a solid foundation upon which to build a new and healthy climate of mutual respect and understanding among all elements of society."

"Lacking an awareness of where the Negro fits in American society, generations of Negro children have grown up with a warped attitude toward themselves, their parents, and grandparents," the Vice President said.

CALLING THIS lack "a great American tragedy," the Vice President said "there is no way of knowing how many Negro youths have become frustrated, discouraged and bitter over their feeling of 'nobodiness.'"

To solve the problem, Vice President Humphrey suggested the following:

Let all our children, Negro and white, learn the complete history of our country.

Let them learn that Negroes were here as far back as the days when Columbus discovered the Western Hemisphere; that Negroes accompanied the Spanish and Portuguese explorers of the New World; 26 Negroes were among the 44 settlers who founded Los Angeles; explorer Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable, a French-educated Negro trader founded our country's second city --Chicago, in 1772; surveyor Benjamin Banneker helped Major Pierre l' Enfant plan and lay out the city of Washington.

Inventor Elijah McCoy devised the self-lubricating machine; Matthew Henson was the first man to set foot on the North Pole--45 minutes ahead of his chief, Admiral Perry.

LET OUR boys and girls learn about slave-poetess Phillis Wheatley who began the tradition of Negro literature in America; about Frederick Douglass, a great American orator and statesman who played a significant role in the outcome of the Civil War.

Let the education of both youths and adults include proper recognition of the nameless black masses whose toil helped build American cities.

Let all of us understand and appreciate the true role of the Negro in this country's struggle for freedom and justice.

Let every American know that the very first man to lose his life in the cause of American independence was Crispus Attucks, shot down by the British in the Boston Massacre of 1770.

...Five thousand Negroes fought in the forces of General George Washington in our War for independence; 36,000 gave their lives to the North from among 200,000 in the Union Armies and Navy.

...Negro troops charged up San Juan Hill with Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders. They fought and died for their country in World Wars I and II.

Calling on "segments of our society" to help close the history gap, the Vice President quoted Frederick Douglass who said: "(This is a time) when the American people are once more being urged to do from necessity what they should have done from a sense of right, and of sound statesmanship."

Reprints of the article are available from the Vice President's Office, New Senate Office Building, Room G-241, Washington, D.C. 20510.

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EDITORIAL

"THE BEAT OF A DIFFERENT DRUM"

Mrs. Marie Johnson, President of the San Jose, California Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People wrote an article in the branch newsletter entitled "From the President" which so impressed West Coast Regional Director, Leonard H. Carter, he inserted her full statement into the April 28 issue of the Regional newsletter.

Equally impressed, the VOICE offers a reprint of Mrs. Johnson's commentary for the benefit of readers who do not receive the Regional newsletter:

"RECENTLY TWO great leaders, Martin Luther King and Roy Wilkins became the center of a highly publicized debate, 'Should attempts be made to merge the civil rights movement and the peace movements.'"

Wilkins termed such an attempt a "tactical mistake". King seems to feel personally committed to a "moral responsibility" to speak out for peace. As usual, the press chose to magnify the differences in views. (Any break in the unity of the civil rights front provides satisfying reading to many Americans.)

Since all fights for the freedom of man, black, yellow or whatever are intrinsically merged, the press' hair-splitting agitation should provoke suspicion in thinking people.

IT MUST BE agreed that much effort, money, and manpower are being diverted from the fight to alleviate problems of minorities and the poor here at home. The real debate then is what line

should civil rights activities now follow?

The key lines seem to be "tactical" (Wilkins) and "moral" (King). There can be no clear-cut distinction between the two. King's emphasis has always been more moral than tactical. As a Nobel Peace Prize recipient and as an advocate of non-violence, he can hardly close his eyes to the obvious immorality of America's military involvement in Viet Nam. That he chooses to express his dismay through personal commitment is not to be criticized.

On the other hand, Wilkins' emphasis has always consisted of concentrated strategy in the specialized area of civil rights. He contends that diversion of civil rights activities into other areas such as peace movement and foreign policy would delete the battle against Jim Crow here at home. This is not to say that he is not for peace.

WHO IS to say that either view is wrong? One is directed toward world peace and broad ideological freedom--the other is concentrated on dismantling the sinister structure of discrimination on the homefront (for instance, our (California) State Senate's recent axing of the Rumford Bill).

Surely there is room in America for the coexistence of both approaches. We are, of course, for a just peace, and there already exist dedicated organizations whose first task is to work for peace as our first job is to work for civil rights."

THIS WEEK IN NEGRO HISTORY

AN "NPI" FEATURE

- May 4, 1921 Oldest Negro lawyer in Washington, D.C., slave-born John A. Moss, died at age 92.
- May 5, 1865 The Rev. Adam Clayton Powell Sr., father of Rep. Adam Clayton Powell (D.-N.Y.) and pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church, born in Franklin (Va.) county.
- May 5, 1941 Emperor Haile Selassie, exiled for five years and 3 days in London after being forced out by the Italians returned to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- May 6, 1790 The "Almanacs" of Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806) mathematical and mechanical genius and one of a three-man team who planned and surveyed the site for the city of Washington, D.C., were published. Banneker, an astronomer and inventor of the first striking clock, was a noteworthy American scientific pioneer. His "Almanacs" were widely used throughout the United States in the 1790's.
- May 6, 1812 Martin R. Delaney, co-editor with Frederick Douglass of the North Star newspaper (launched in Rochester, N.Y. on Dec. 3, 1847), was born.
- May 6, 1931 Birth of Willie Mays, San Francisco Giants' possible contender for the home run honors held by Babe Ruth, in Westfield, Ala.
- May 7, 1789 Thaddeus Kosciuszko, a Polish Revolutionary War hero, provided for the education of Negroes in his will.
- May 7, 1845 The African Methodist Episcopal church organized in Louisville, Ky., by Southern Methodist Episcopal Conference.
- May 7, 1857 Dred Scott Decision of the U.S. Supreme Court handed down, which held "Negroes have no rights which white men are bound to respect."
- May 8, 1884 Harry S. Truman, under whose

- administration as President the armed forces of the United States were officially integrated, was born.
- May 8, 1885 Bishop W. J. Walls, AME Zion church was born.
- May 8, 1915 Bishop Henry A. Turner, first Negro U.S. Army chaplain, died.
- May 9, 1911 Thomas Wentworth Higginson, commanding officer of first Negro Regiment in Civil War, died at age 87.
- May 9, 1800 John Brown, abolitionist, leader of the Harper's Ferry, Va., rebellion, and martyr for Negro liberation, was born.
- May 10, 1837 P.B.S. Pinchback, Reconstruction statesman, was born.
- May 10, 1854 Elizabeth T. Greenfield sings before Queen Victoria.
- May 10, 1919 James R. Europe, regarded by many as the father of American jazz, was given the first public funeral for a Negro in New York City.
- May 10, 1948 U.S. Supreme Court ruled that restrictive racial covenants on real estate were unenforceable.

EDITOR'S MAILBOX

Dear Dr. West:

The children at C. V. T. Gilbert enjoyed your talk. Your talk made them realize what will happen in the future.

Also I do understand a little better myself. (See MAILBOX, page 11)

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