

BILLY ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

Yesterday Is History

In the b'day month of the late immortal Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and February here, in which time is set aside to mark "Black History Week", all has created a cul-de-sac in which my thoughts were trapped in the memory of the sixties. Those were the years in which Dr. King's intentions became observable on the conscience of America. The period was referred to in many ways by politicians and laymen. However to most of my clan, it was a time of profanity. Each day there was another bitter headline, radio or television report to curse. It were days filled with bitterness, anger and hard swallowing. The agony of this immortal man's struggle, the bravery of his march into the valley of bias, barbarity, prejudice and perversion won the admiration of fair minded persons in the total world. Despite the cowardly threats and wicked torture, the inhuman insolence and disrespect used against him by the forces of law and evil to deny us of the most elementary rights of citizenship his words of condemnation rang out to denounce the despot and despotism. His every move, word and deeds highlighted the fundamental morality of the black cause, the anguish cry of his followers, white and black forged into the sound of one immortal voice. Their stand against the forces of power and evil was as brave as it was brilliant and pulsated with the dream of all humanity.

Perhaps there is a tomorrow when all people will live like brothers and share bread and liberty in a world which will make the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. come true. After all Christ, the son of God, wanted the same thing.

THE BLACK PRESS - - - The black press is one of the pivots upon which Black History turns and is preparing a nationwide Special to call attention to, and celebrate that occasion in time. Norman Powell, the API, nat'l black newspapers rep., shared some black newspaper intelligence with this scribe. It was these words which inspired the beginning of the so-termed Black Press.

"The sun shines for all white men and not for colored men." That was the response of the editor of the New York Sun in 1846 when black Willia S. Hodges of N'York responded to an editorial in that publication advocating little or no voting rights for the, then called, "colored men." Naturally his remarks were not printed in the papers "Voice of the People," so Mr. Hodges bought a \$15. ad so his remarks to the editor could be published. Even under so bias standards, money talked. This racist action incensed Hodges so much he resolved to publish his own newspaper. As a result, "The Rams Horn, went into print in 1847. Thus the same manner of prejudice sparked an enterprise as it did in 1827 when freed slaves, John Brown Russwurm and Rev. Samuel E. Cornish Published Freedom Journal, the first black newspaper. That was 37 years before the Emancipation Proclamation, 1863.

Between 1827 and 1861 there were at least 40 black newspapers. After the Civil War the number increased to some 575. This journalistic surge came on the heels of the growing number of educated blacks. Before the E. P. blacks were legally not permitted to learn from books, the Bible, which most of them could not read, was excluded. Black newspapers have always played an important role in black life. During the years following the war between the states, they devoted full space to the burning issues of that time. Thru them blacks were kept informed about the latest laws and how they affected their newly acquired freedom. As early as the 19th century, there was a need for a daily paper for blacks. The first such which came into being was The Daily Creole, founded in New Orleans in 1856 as the voice of the Creoles, or mixed bloods of that city. Behind this effort Dr. Louis C. Roudanez, a black physician, established the New Orleans Tribune in 1864.

Northward the Illinois Cairo Gazette was born in 1882, but died a fiery death when white racists torched and destroyed the paper's entire plant. The Columbus Georgia Messenger became the fourth black daily published when it was "put to bed," in 1887. Tuskegee graduate, B.T. Harvey was the founder and publisher. These are just a few of the black pioneers fo black media history. They did their thing under the most adverse conditions, brought on by slavery, injustice and a

horrible bank-aching lack of cash. They managed through amazing grace and left a legacy on incalculable wealth and are still the only true champions of DEMOCRACY!

WRITE ON PERSONALITIES - - - Just when Sammy Davis, Jr., started to ease off smoking Princess Caroline gave him a magnificent gold ciggie case. She's also working on a reconciliation between her mother, Princess Grace, and the total talented one. He walked out on the former film star, Grace Kelly's big annual charity bash in Monaco a few yrs back. It had something to do with an alleged snub of his lady Altrovisse... No blacks made designer Richard Blackwell's "Worse Dressed" list. Soul Queen Aretha Franklin surely should have been a runnerup. Her duds have neither heart nor soul. And then there's Grace Jones... If you're a member of the Jet Set, there's a femme skycap in your future. They are about to break that all male work sociey, and the cats are hot as a dude whose luggage got let there and he's here... H'cum sports editor Dick Young and columnist Jimmy Breslin jumped so hard on Rev. Jesse Jackson because of his successful objection against South African Kallie Knoetze plying his trade here. You'd think that the "Country Preacher" had committed a crime instead of taking a stand against a race hater, a mutilator of young kids... Postal rates have skyrocketed, Johnson Pub. will either go "Home Delivery" with its Black Stars mag. or drop it altogether... I will be out of the city, but you have no excuse for missing Count Basie's tribute to "The Duke" at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine Friday. America's #1 Statesman, Amb. Andrew Young will co-host with Ruth Ellington... **HANG LOOSE.**

VA

For the first time in history, the nation's veteran population has climbed above the 30 million mark.

And Veterans Administration chief Max Cleland said today that the number is likely to keep climbing during at least the next few months before leveling off.

At the end of November, VA estimated the number of living veterans at 30,023,000. A year ago, the number was 29,879,000.

Cleland said the continuing increase is due to the fact that discharges from military service have been exceeding the number of deaths among veterans. The lower death rate, in turn, is a reflection of the increased life expectancy in the past few years.

VA said the largest group of living veterans are those who served in World War II. These numbered 12,866,000 in November and their average age was just over 58 years.

In contrast, only 278 veterans of the Spanish-American War remained alive in November, the survivors of the 392,000 participants in that conflict.

Vietnam Era Veterans totaled 8,779,000, Cleland said, and next in numerical order are the 5,893,000 men and women who served during the Korean conflict.

Only 653,000 veterans of World War I are still alive out of the 4,744,000 soldiers sailors and airmen who took part in that "war to end all wars." Their average age now is 83.

Cleland said California is home to more veterans than any other state. More than 3.3 million of them live there. New York has 2.5 million veterans, and Pennsylvania, Texas, Illinois and Ohio -- in that order -- have between 1.5 and 1.7 million veterans each.

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President Nominates Black

President Carter has nominated David S. Nelson of Roxbury, MA. to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Massachusetts, making Nelson the first black to be named by the President under the Omnibus Judgeship Bill of 1978.

The President has stated his determination to bring more blacks and other minority representatives - and women - into the nation's judicial system and said the Omnibus Judgeship Bill would afford him that opportunity, especially if the U.S. Senate agrees with the concept of merit selection of judges through independent commissions.

"My influence will be used to the maximum degree practical in encouraging Senators to cooperate with me in appointing both, and recommending both, women and blacks, other minority groups, for those district judgeships," President Carter stated late last year.

Nelson, one of the first appointees under the new law which created 35 new judgeships on the Court of Appeals and 117 on the District Courts, received a B.S. from Boston College in 1957 and a LL.B from Boston College Law School in 1960. He is 46.

From 1960 to 1973, Nelson practiced law with the Boston firm of Crane, Inker and Oteri. In 1968 and 1969, he was United States Commissioner in Boston. From 1971 to 1973, he was assistant attorney general for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Since 1973 he has been an associate justice of the Superior Court of Massachusetts.

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