

'FALL GUYS'?



New Yorkers topple a statue of George III in 1776. King George III was the target of American protest that resulted in a total break with Britain and led to the Revolutionary War.

70 Beginnings: To 1789

How did the condition which Black Las Vegans find themselves in today come about? To answer this question, we must once again glance backwards to the 1760s and take a peek at the ingredients being placed in the cauldron of a brewing Republic.

At the close of the French and Indian Wars in 1763, the American colonies stretched along the Atlantic seaboard. Most white Americans were small farmers and a smaller number of Black Americans were the same. A small number of white Americans were slave owners and a large number of Black Americans were slaves. Slavery existed, at one time or another, throughout all of the colonies. Because the slaveholding aristocracy was limited, Africans did accumulate at the several plantations. In each and every instance where slave labor was used in abundance, paid labor was scarce. The presence of slaves was a thorn in the side of paid labor. The presence of each slave meant the absence of a job which someone else might have been paid to do. The prospective white worker viewed the Black slave as his enemy. It is too bad that they did not see the white slave owners as such. Had they done so, the blame for their condition would have been placed in its proper place.

Most of the Founding Fathers participated in slavery. Thomas Jefferson's Monticello and

George Washington's Mount Vernon were among the largest plantations of the eighteenth century. John Adams and Benjamin Franklin were among the notable exceptions who did not traffic in slavery.

On those plantations where slavery existed, family life among Africans was rekindled. Families which had been previously destroyed during the kidnapping in Africa, the Middle Passage across the Atlantic, the breeding in the Carribean islands and the auctioneer's blocks of Charleston and other places, were beginning again from scratch. These new black families were not being respected by owners who maintained a position of selling slaves as they saw fit and thereby destroying families. The African had been dehumanized in the minds of slave owners. They were no longer considered as being people. They had become merely pieces of property. A century or more earlier the "brotherhood of man" had been the theme song of the slavers. By the mid-seventeen hundreds, "slaves obey your masters" had taken over the number one slot on the charts.

Centuries earlier, somewhere on the Balkan peninsula, Plato had said that justice was "in the interest of the stronger." The slave aristocracy, great admirers of the ancient Greeks, took him literally. Their notion of

justice was basically determined by what was best for them based on their own determinations. Morality was of little consequence. They discovered, as so many others before them, that if justification for an act was sought after diligently it could be found. The inconsistencies which evolved therefrom, were inconsequential to them and were glaringly manifested as the era of independence approached. "No taxation without representation," "Give me liberty or give me death," "All men are created equal" and other like slogans were incompatible with the realities of slavery which they were involved in. Tenaciously they clung to their beliefs in spite of their obvious fallacies.

Those were "honorable, intelligent gentlemen." They would not long be able to discern ample loop holes in their already sieved logic to maintain the double standard under which they functioned. They would, however, manage for a while anyway — until another need arose. Then another mad scramble for justifications would be underway and the race would be on again.

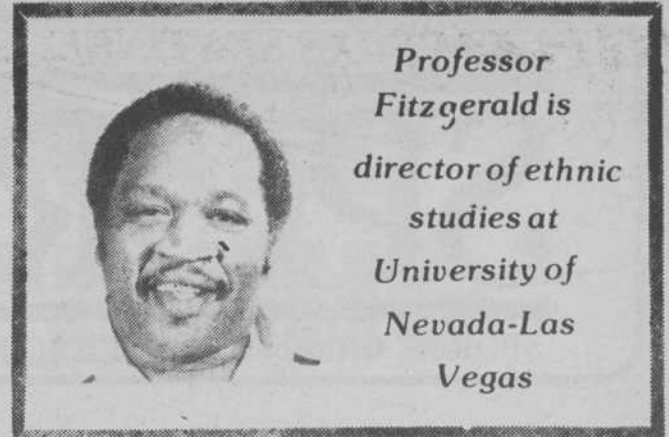
"We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

The aforementioned statement is part of the Declaration of Independence. Those factors were so important to early Americans that, to secure and protect them, they were willing to go to war with the most powerful nation in the world — England. They did not do so immediately. For a dozen years they had sought some form of redress to their grievances. At each and every turn, the English Crown turned deaf ears to their pleas. The colonials were not hasty. They had no real desire to cease being Englishmen. Their history, their culture and their whole philosophies of life were English.

What they wanted was to be treated as Englishmen as was their due.

They insisted. The Crown refused. No compromise could be reached. The Nevagational Acts, the Stamp Act, the Tea Act and other revenue generating Acts were heaped onto the colonials. They responded but their responses were of little consequence. At the Boston Massacre of 1770 three colonials were slain. Counted among those three was one Crispus Attucks, a Black man. Three years later the Boston Tea Party occurred. Yet, the Crown did not relent. Two opposing forces. Something had to give.

The official break occurred with the activity at Lexington and Concord in 1775. That was closely followed by the skirmishes at Fort Ticonderoga and Bunker (Breeds) Hill. The lines were defined. Some Americans remained loyal to England and, initially, some Black



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slaves fought on the side of the British. They were called the Ethiopian Regiment. As the conflict got underway, the Continental Army under the direction of George Washington, reluctantly permitted Black slaves to fight with the Americans. The deal was as it had been with the British, "if we win we'll set you free."

The white soldiers of the Continental Army fought for independence. The Black

soldiers of the Continental Army fought for freedom. The former got theirs and the latter got the shaft.

The American Revolution is probably the single most important event to have occurred in our history. It was that event which created the United States. The people who fought to bring about that reality were white, red and black.

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