

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY JUBA (William Henry Lane) DANCER

By Gwen Walker

Very little is known about the early years of this talented dancer. Few records were kept on Blacks unless they happened to be someone's property and it is likely that Lane was born free around 1825 somewhere East of The Mississippi. Lane probably learned much of his dancing from "Uncle Jim Lowe, a jig and reel dancer, who because he was black, performed in saloons and dance halls rather than on the stages of regular theaters.

By the early 1840's, Lane had so distinguished himself that he was appearing frequently, on New York stages. He called himself, Master Juba, after the competitive dancing style he favored, and which derived from the African step called Giouba. By most accounts, the dancing he did was not distinctly African in origin but rather a combination of an Irish jig and African steps like the shuffle and the slide together with upper body movements that were also African in origin. Juba did what talented Black dancers had always done, and that was to include the dances he did with a style that was all his own with syncopation, improvisation, and percussion that would later be the basis for tap dance. He was judged to be one of the best dancers in the country, Black or white.

This didn't sit well with Master John Diamond, a white dancer who had made a name for himself, dancing jigs in Blackface. In 1844 Diamond challenged Juba to a series of dancing contest. Both men danced so well at the contest that no one was titled the winner. But after two more matches, at Chatham & Bowery Theaters in New York, Juba had won the title "King of all dancers." Juba toured with three white men known as the Georgia Champion Minstrels; also in England. While in England he began dancing with the Pell's Ethiopian Serenader and was booked solid in 1851. Juba married a English girl and remained in England, sadly he died in 1852 at age 27.



GWEN WALKER

NAARPR Demands Marines Free Black CO

The United States Marines racist railroading of conscientious objector Tahan Jones must be immediately halted, the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression said recently, as the court martial date nears.

Jones, a 22-year-old African American reservist, is facing the court martial at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, some 2,000 miles away from his home in California.

While the Marines are charging Jones with missing movement and desertion during the Persian Gulf War, Jones' application for CO status led him to being the target of racist harassment, including the military's failure to process his application in a timely fashion.

When he initially applied for

NAACP NASHVILLE CONVENTION EXHIBIT EXPECTED TO BE BEST, BIGGEST EVER

The 20,000 attendees expected at the NAACP's 83rd Annual Convention in Nashville, TN, will have the opportunity to see more than 300 exhibits of many of the nation's largest corporations, as well as those of non-profit and government agencies at the Nashville Convention Center during the Commerce

CO status, Jones was physically threatened by a superior officer. During the process an investigative officer lost papers related to the application. The officer even said that Jones, who has had a year of college, is "a Marine of marginal intelligence." However, a military chaplain said that Jones' beliefs were sincerely held.

Responding to letters demanding all charges be dropped against Jones, R.H. Belknap, Colonel U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, said, "Until a Marine's application for conscientious objector status is approved, he or she must comply with all lawful orders issued by superiors."

Charlene Mitchell, NAARPR executive director, said, "So as far as the Marines are concerned this is an open and shut case.

They openly use racism to deny Jones his CO status and then they shut him away in a stockade.

"This vindictiveness on the part of the Marines that is worsened by the underlying racism in this case has to be put to an end. I am again appealing to those of you who live in the region of Camp Lejeune to attend this court martial and those of you who don't to call Commanding General C.L. Vermilyea at (504) 948-1210 and demand that they drop the charges against Jones and end their persecution of this young man," Mitchell said.

Jones continues to receive support from across the country from individuals and organizations, including Amnesty International.

Leonard McNeil, coordinator

of the American Friends Service Committee's Youth and Militarism Program in Oakland, said, "Tahan Jones represents the best of the African American struggle for freedom, justice and equality.

If there is any honor in the Persian Gulf war at all, it rests with the young men and women who refused to take part in it. Tahan should not be imprisoned for exercising freedom of speech and conscience. Refusing to kill another human being is not a crime."

The National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, founded in 1973, is the only nation-wide, multi-racial, multi-national coalition with the sole purpose of organizing united, mass struggle against repression.

and Industry Show. The exhibit area will be open on July 13 and 14, from 10 A.M. until 6 P.M. and from 10 A.M. until 4 P.M. on July 15, when the show closes for the last time.

Among the exhibitors will be AT & T, the Ford Motor Company, General Mills, General Motors, Phillip Morris, the Anhe-

user-Busch, Coors, and Miller Brewing Companies; Walt Disney, Federal Express, United Parcel Service, Chrysler Corporation and all branches of the armed services. The convention will also feature the NAACP's first ever Health Care Summit on July 12th, and several of the exhibits in the Commerce and

Industry Show will address health care issues in the African-American community -- the Health Mobile, which will provide free blood pressure and cholesterol screening, and exhibits by the American Red Cross, the National Kidney Foundation and the Tennessee Department of Donor Services.

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