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(Part Three)

Que Soy?: The Tri-Cultural
Heritage of Hispanic Americans



KEITH O. HILTON

This is the third part of a series that we have presented around the theme "Stop Undercounting Us Africans: The African (Afro Latino) Community Also Continues to Grow."

The following are excerpts from an essay by Dr. Angela Jorge of the Modern Languages Program, State University of New York/College at Old Westbury.

(Dr. Jorge's essay is one of twenty four that are included in my upcoming book titled "Multi-Cultural, Yes, Minority No!")

Angela notes that "an Amerafrohispanic family is neither African, nor Amerindian, nor Spanish; it is all of these. Although the Amerafrohispanic is all of these, it has been difficult for Amerafrohispanics to enthusiastically accept their uniqueness."

At the same time, she documents that, just as in the African American community, African roots are alive and well in the Latino community.

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Hispanic Americans are a people whose cultural roots are found in the Iberian Peninsula, in the New World Amerindian cultures, and in the cultures of the people of West Africa.

This tri-cultural heritage suggests that the more appropriate name for these people is Amerafrohispanics.

To call Amerafrohispanics Hispanic Americans is to deny that the Amerindian and African roots of their cultural heritage are alive and well and are part of that which makes Amerafrohispanics who they are. Each of the three peoples that primarily contributed to the formation of the Amerafrohispanic had a culture, albeit, a culture that may have been at a different level of development from the other two groups, but, nonetheless, a culture. Each had a language; a way of rearing their children and caring for their sick and elderly; of hunting and feeding the community; of worshipping their god or gods; and of passing on their traditions, their particular world view and particular history to the next generation.

Because each cultural mode meets the needs of the people that have come together and identified themselves as a particular cultural group, no culture is superior or inferior to another.

The survival of African and Amerindian cultural traits in the New World Spanish speaking population and the miscegenation that took place between the Africans, the Amerindians, and the Spaniards suggest that Amerafrohispanics cannot be neatly classified.

The numerous phenotypes in the Amerafrohispanic community signals to the observer that each family, including the extended family members, is a microcosm of the tri-cultural accommodation that took place at the most intimate, most personal level.

While there are Amerafrohispanics who maintain they are direct descendents of the Spanish conquistadors and colonizers, implying that they are not racially mixed, there are Amerafrohispanics who do recognize their mixed racial background, but who find the rigid white-black racial stratification of the Anglo-American society

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unaccommodating and thus avoid any racial self identification.

While the answer to the question, what am I, or Que soy? eludes many, two popularly known adages invariably surface when a discussion on race takes place among Puerto Ricans and Cubans.

One adage, El que no tiene de congo, tiene de carabali, means that the individual who does not have Congo ancestors has Carabali, or said differently, it means that everyone has at least one African ancestor.

The other adage, El que not tiene de dinga, tiene de mandiga, means that the individual who does not have Inca, or Amerindian ancestry, has Mandinga, or African ancestry, or said differently, it means that everyone has at least one non European ancestor.

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INPUT MEETING SET FOR PRIME 6 PLAN; SCHOOL BOARD ACTION RESCHEDULED

Action is being delayed on the Prime 6 Plan for educational improvement in the Clark County School District so that citizens have more opportunity to comment on the proposal.

A public input meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, November 17, at Mabel Hoggard Sixth Grade Center, 950 N. Tonopah Drive. The Board of School Trustees will act on the proposal at a special meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 1, at the education center, 2832 E. Flamingo Road.

The board was scheduled to take action on the Prime 6 Plan

at its November 10 meeting, but board members expressed concern that there was not sufficient time for public input or to take those comments into consideration.

Meanwhile, citizens may also comment on the proposal by calling 799-5229 and leaving a recorded message. This is a 24-hour service. All calls will be considered when the final proposal is drafted.

In addition, copies of the initial proposal of the Prime 6 Plan may be obtained in all school offices. Copies may also be obtained through the Public Information Office. The Prime 6

Plan, developed by Superintendent Brian Cram at the request of the board, is a proposal to provide additional education opportunities for West Las Vegas students and students throughout the district beginning with the 1993-94 school year. The plan has two key components: converting Mabel Hoggard Sixth Grade Center to a special emphasis school, and converting the remaining sixth grade centers, along with the new H.P. Fitzgerald Elementary

School, to Prime 6 schools.

Under the proposal, Hoggard would specialize in foreign languages and offer a strong curriculum in Science and Math. Prime 6 schools would retain pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and some sixth grade classes, but would allow West Las Vegas students in grades 1-3 the option of attending school in their neighborhood. Prime 6 schools would offer innovative education programs with a multicultural focus.



HERE COMES THE JUDGE — Principal Shirley Barber (left) of Mabel Hoggard Six Grade Center, welcomes Justice Of The Peace, Nancy Oesterle to install the newly elected student council at the West Las Vegas school.

Photos by Savoy/LVS-Voice

NOTES FROM THE SCHOOL OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

RACISM: a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial difference produce an inherent superiority of a particular race. This definition is furnished by none other than Webster from his Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary. It would stand to reason then that one who festers this belief is therefore a racist. Africans in this country have been taught from the the conception of this country to hate themselves.

Therefore, I assert that Africans as a collective have never been and can not be racists for we have never believed in our superiority over any race. Racism is an oppressive tool used to segregate people and I find it ridiculous for people to refer to African as racist especially when we have European history and good ole Mr. Webster to rely on. Until next week this has been the Minister of Information.]

William E. Dougan, M.D., FACOG

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"A MIND IS A MARVELOUS
THING TO DEVELOP"

Information Line Keeps Parents in Touch With The School News

Parents are only a phone call away from the latest news at Martin Luther King Elementary School with the school's Information and Homework Hotline.

School Principal Eva Wolfe said the information number is complete with topics parents want. "Topics like the weekly lunch menu, upcoming events, report card dates and holidays keep parents in the know 24 hours a day," she explained. The number is especially handy during non-school hours for immediate access to information like the lunch menu or special events.

Another component of the program is a number for each of

the school's teachers. Teachers may leave recorded messages on subjects like homework or special emphasis studies. Wolfe said some teachers change messages daily to inform parents of the topics students will be learning the next day in class.

"We know that parents are really pleased with the direct access they have to school news," Wolfe said. "Our plans are to expand the hotline to allow parents to leave messages for their child's teacher. This would allow for more two-way communication and help accommodate parent's busy work schedules."