

## Census notes Nevada homeowner disparity

LAS VEGAS (AP) - A greater percentage of white Nevadans own their own homes than Hispanics or blacks, census figures show. U.S. Census Bureau figures for 2000 released Wednesday show 64.3 percent of white Nevadans own their residences, compared with 46 percent for Hispanics and 39.8 percent for blacks.

Black and Hispanic community leaders blame at least part of the disparity on what they called discriminatory lending practices, which are illegal.

The Rev. Marion Bennett of Zion Methodist Church in North Las Vegas placed some blame on alleged discriminatory bank mortgage lending practices known as redlining, in which loans are based on race or ZIP code.

"If you're black, they charge you more interest," Bennett told the Las Vegas Sun.

"It's more difficult for blacks to get loans for housing. There is also a lack of access to jobs. In a lot of jobs, blacks have been replaced by Hispanics. Having a steady job is something they look for in a first-time home buyer."

There are also relatively few black-owned local financial institutions, said Mujahid Ramadan, executive director of the Nevada Partners Inc. job placement and counseling service in North Las Vegas.

Blacks are more frequently denied loan requests based on questions about their credit history than other ethnic groups, Ramadan said.

"We need more financial institutions owned or run by African-Americans who are more understanding of their challenges and barriers," he said.

Representatives of the National Council of La Raza, a nonprofit civil rights and community development organization in Washington, were in Nevada last week and pushed for increased home ownership among Latinos in this state.

Charles Kamasaki, senior vice president of the organization, said La Raza will attempt to establish counseling services to help Hispanics buy their first homes.

"Latinos, on average, tend to have low incomes and are less likely to own homes than others, but it turns out that income alone may not be as important as originally thought," Kamasaki said.

"If Latinos owned homes at the same rate as whites of similar income, their home ownership would be in the 60 percent range."

He said discrimination in bank lending and home insurance rates affect Hispanics as well.

But Kamasaki said lack of education and unfamiliarity with mortgage banking practices in this country also prevent many Hispanics from understanding how to buy a home.

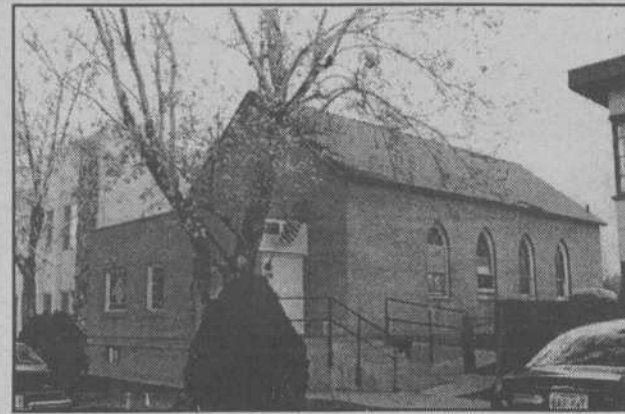
"In a lot of Latin countries, such as Mexico, a 50 percent down payment is common, and there is a much higher interest rate," Kamasaki said.

In addition to lack of knowledge among Hispanics, there is also a lack of knowledge among key players such as real estate agents and bankers about the Latin community, Kamasaki said.

## Church, cabin listed as historic places

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*  
CARSON CITY—Bethel A.M.E. Church in Reno, and the Lena N. Gale Cabin in Zephyr Cove were listed in the National Register of Historic Places on June 12, 2001, Ron James, state historic preservation officer, announced today. The National Register is the nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation.

Bethel A.M.E. Church, located at 220 Bell Street in Reno, is recognized for its role in the history of African Americans in Reno, and its role in Reno's civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. At the turn of the 20th century, Reno's small black population had few social institutions to champion its



Bethel A.M.E. Church, 220 Bell Street in Reno.

causes or to provide continuity to its social life.

The first and most enduring of these were Bethel A.M.E. Church. Built as Reno's first black church in 1910, it is the longest operating black congregation in Nevada.

"The A.M.E. Church

strives to provide opportunities for self-expression and fuller involvement in society, to give members a sense of dignity and self-respect," said Mella Harmon, architectural historian. "Bethel A.M.E. Church has fostered social equality in Reno through its active role in the

community, through its direct link with the NAACP, and through its abiding dignity in the face of conspicuous and unrelenting discrimination."

Along with the Moulin Rouge in Las Vegas, which was not built until 1955, Reno's Bethel A.M.E. Church is one of Nevada's most significant buildings associated with the history of its black population.

By 1933 the congregation had grown to such an extent that a larger church was acquired. The congregation now worships in a newer facility in Sparks, Nevada, and the older church was sold to a private party, who converted the building into a homeless shelter.

## Census cites high rate of blacks in state prisons

CARSON CITY, Nev. (AP) - Census figures show Nevada has a disproportionate percentage of blacks in prison and juvenile detention facilities.

Blacks represented only 6.8 percent of Nevada's population last year but constituted 27.2 percent of the imprisoned Nevada males aged 18 to 65 and 29.8 percent of the female inmates in the same age group.

Figures from the 2000 Census released Wednesday also revealed that blacks younger than 18 composed 22.2 percent of the male population and 23.7 percent of the female population in the state's juvenile institutions.

"These numbers are horrible when you think about it," said Elgin Simpson, executive director of the Nevada State Task Force for the Study of Racial, Economic and Gender Bias in the Justice System.

"We have a whole generation of black men who will spend their whole life in prison."

Simpson said much of the

blame rests on a criminal justice system that is far more lenient toward whites. Non-Hispanic whites represented 65.2 percent of the state's population in 2000 but only 50.8 percent of incarcerated males 18 to 65. Non-Hispanic white females of the same age group represented 58.2 percent of the women incarcerated in state prisons.

One effort to curb high

incarceration rates among black juveniles may begin this fall, when the nonprofit Nevada Partners Inc. of North Las Vegas will attempt to launch a federally funded pilot program to counsel those youths. Mujahid Ramadan, executive director of the organization, also said community leaders need to meet and discuss ways of reversing the incarceration trends.

"A lot of black juveniles are coming from households headed by females, so they are at or below the poverty level," Ramadan said. "They are exposed to more violent crimes and a higher degree of drug and alcohol abuse. There are a lot of young mothers who are incapable of teaching them values that allow them to be productive in their early stages in society."

## Great-great grandson going to share Frederick Douglass legacy at library

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

On Sunday, July 1, at 1 p.m. at the West Las Vegas Library Theatre, 951 W. Lake Mead Blvd., there will be a performance and collection of works celebrating the life of Frederick Douglass.

Frederick Douglas IV, his great-great grandson, will give a presentation and dramatic performance of the historical author, orator, editor, abolitionist and suffragist.

The program begin with an unveiling of the comprehensive works of Douglass, followed by a performance of his life by Douglass IV. The younger Frederick travels across America portraying his famous ancestor while

delivering a positive as well as a personal message to younger African-American males.

"If my great-great grandfather could transform himself from being a slave to an internationally renowned editor, author, orator, suffragist, abolitionist and statesman, then you have infinite capacity to transform your life for the better," he said.

Douglas IV is the co-author of two books, "Lost Classic" and "To My Ole Master," and is the president of Douglass Enterprises, Inc.

The special presentation was made possible by a donation from the Frederick Douglass Educational Scholarship Fund. For more information call 647-2117.

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