Selected Black History Sights in American Airlines Cities

BALTIMORE:—Bronze statue of Frederick Douglass, Morgan State College campus.

Basilica-Cathedral of the Assumption, Cathedral St., where country's first Black priest, Charles Randolph Uncles, was ordained.

St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Church, 1007 N. Caroline St., nation's oldest Catholic church established for Blacks.

BOSTON:—Crispus Attucks Monument, Boston Common, a memorial to the Boston Massacre victims, and named in honor of the first casualty—a Black man.

Shaw Monument, Beacon St., group statue of Col. Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts Volunteers, a Black regiment of the Union Army.

Park Street Church, Park and Tremont Sts., where William Lloyd Garrison delivered his first anti-slavery speech.

CHICAGO:—Du Sable Marker, Pioneer Court at Michigan Ave., site of city's first building built by its first non-Indian settler—a Black man.

Underground Railroad Marker, 9955 S. Beverly Ave.

Victory Monument, 35th St. and S. Park Way, commemorating the Black soldiers from Illinois who served in World War I.

Du Sable Museum of African-American History, 3806 S. Michigan Ave.

Chicago Historical Society, Lincoln Park, housing extensive Civil War and Abraham Lincoln materials.

Milton L. Olive Park, lakefront at Ontario St., named in honor of a Black recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, awarded posthumously.

Provident Hospital, 51st. and Vincennes Ave., first training school for Black nurses.

Johnson Publishing Co. Building, Michigan Ave., first building ever constructed in city's Loop for a Black-owned corporation.

CINCINNATI:—Harriet Beecher Stowe House, 2950 Gilbert Ave.

DAYTON:—Paul Lawrence Dunbar Home, 219 N. Summit St.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:—Emancipation Statue, Lincoln Park, erected and paid for by former slaves.

Frederick Douglass Home, 1411 W St., SE.

Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1401 14th St., NW, housing extensive collections related to Black history.

MEMPHIS: Fort Pickering Marker, Crump Blvd., site of Civil War fortification manned by the 3rd Regiment of Colored Heavy Artillery.

W. C. Handy Park and bronze statue, overlooking Beale St.

Tom Lee Memorial, foot of Beale St. on the riverbank, commemorating a Black man who saved 32 lives after a boating mishap.

Lorraine Hotel Plaque, marking site where Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated.

NEW YORK:—Martin Luther King Memorial, 66th and Amsterdam Ave.

Cooper Union, Cooper

(Continued on Page 16)

TRIBUTE TO EMANCIPATION — Hayes W. Jones, American Airlines' district sales manager in Washington, assists Rupert Picott, director of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, in placing a wreath at the Emancipation Statue during Black History week. The oldest memorial to President Lincoln in the nation's capital, the statue was paid for and erected by former slaves.

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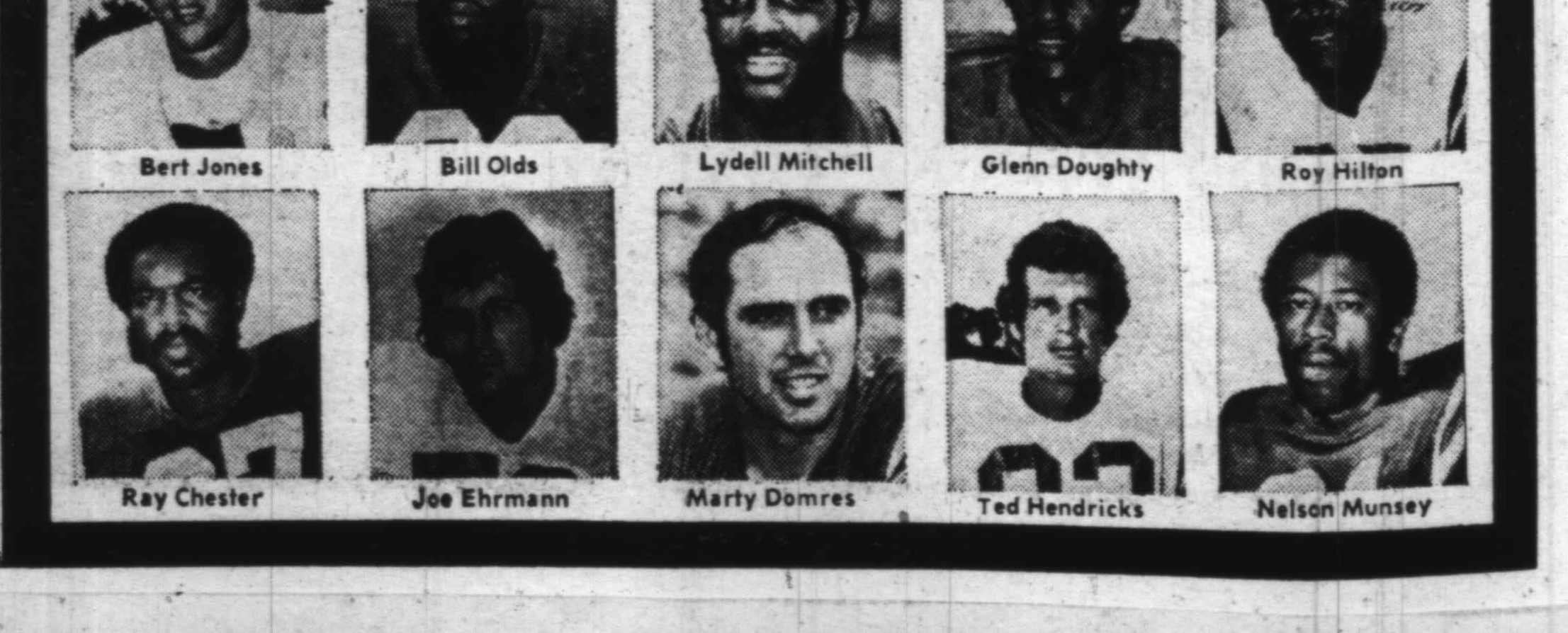

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MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART

10 years of 'Helping America understand African heritage'

By George Spicely
Program Director
Museum of African Art

Ten years ago the idea of a museum in the nation's capital devoted exclusively to traditional African art was a novelty. African art, admired only as a curiosity over many years of the western countries' contact with Africa, only fairly recently has been elevated to a position of respect and dignity.

The images of Africa, its culture and its art have long suffered due to centuries-old myths created by adventurers to the "dark" continent who distorted a great deal of what they saw and experienced. Later on, the reaction to African art started to stress the aesthetic qualities of it, its force and vitality, and its influence on European expression.

African art had been "discovered," so to speak. Even now the idea and presentation of art objects as ethnographic materials dominate in the institutions which display them.

It was against this background that a personal interest in African art coincided with a timely need to establish an institution which could, at once, house a collection of traditional African art and serve as an instrument of education and cultural understanding.

The latter function had a special relevance to the subject of the history of black Americans. That a museum can have the challenging objectives of exhibiting art, explaining African societies, and providing an important historical link to Africa for black Americans seems as exciting today as it must have been when the Museum was first opened to the public in 1964.

Physically, the Museum of African Art is linked to the black experience in America in an interesting way. It occupies the historic first residence in Washington of Frederick Douglass, a duplex house at 316-318 A St., NE. Today it lies a short distance from the Supreme Court and other capital buildings where Douglass' influence was felt over many years of activity on behalf of rights for black Americans.

TYPICAL of intricate African art on display is a mask like this from Nigeria.

The Museum of African Art was founded by Warren Robbins, its present director. The collection, now numbering several thousand art objects, was donated by private collectors and interested supporters of the Museum. The size of the single donations have varied. The Eliot Elisofon bequest includes hundreds of objects. Just recently a visiting official from Angola donated a mask and accompanying costume which is worn in a traditional ceremony in southern Angola among the Mbundu people. Grants from foundations, private donors, and from the National Endowment for the Humanities have supported the Museum's operational functions and special programs.

There seems to be an almost irresistible temptation to talk and write about museums as if they were tombs. This tendency leads to the image of the museum as a mere structure for the preservation of specialized objects as diverse as one can imagine. In the process the tremendous educational and social potential of the museum is denied.

One of the depressing results of this has been the relegation of the museum to the realm of the esoteric in the minds of some. That a museum can have a relevant, practical message as an extention of its objects is a somewhat more modern and enlightened way to assign functions to this traditional Institution.

Despite the growing interest in Africa and the spread of knowledge about it, gross misconceptions about the land, the people, and the cultures of Africa still remain. "Is Africa covered with jungles?" Why do Africans wear masks?" "Why do some of the carvings have such large belly buttons?"

These are some of the interesting and fascinating questions that have been dealt with in the thousands of lecture tours conducted in the Museum for groups of all ages, from nursery school groups to senior citizens. The lecture is an integral part of the education program.

The program is based on the premise that the Museum of African Art is an educational institution. It has been utilized as an education resource by the public school systems of Washington, D.C. and surrounding school districts as well as numerous private school agencies.

In order to appreciate an African art object, one must understand its particular function and the tradition from which it was produced. This is a familiar and important and underlying principle of the Museum's education program and philosophy. Combining sight, sound, and touch experiences in the arranged tour presentations, the Museum visitor participates in a cultural experience as contrasted with the more conventional museum tour.

The presence of two African staff lecturers, Crispin Chindongo of Malawi who is also Coordinator of Education and Dayo Adeyemi of Nigeria, lend realism to the "African" experience. The Museum tour has been supplemented with an educational extension program to schools and other institutions as well as occasional workshops and seminars in specialized topics.

The Museum has the task of relating to the wider community beyond the somewhat limited constituency of collectors and scholars of Africa and African art. The expansion of programs which incolve the public is a practical method of extending the Museum's service to the community. During the first ten years of its existence some 7,000 groups of people, primarily school children from the District of Columbia and surrounding areas have had guided lecture-tours of the Museum.

Total attendance has exceeded 250,000 people with an equal number having attended extension activities.

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Douglass and not Lincoln was 'emancipator'

By Gerard S. Burke

It seems that more and more black people are beginning to realize that Frederick Douglass and not Abraham Lincoln, should be referred to as "The Great Emancipator."

As Douglass' birthday is unknown, save for the fact that it occurred in February, 1817, some blacks now prefer to celebrate his birthday rather than Lincoln's, on Feb. 12.

Such sentiments would have been pretty much unthinkable two decades ago — even among blacks.

Thoroughly indoctrinated with the pervasive American myth that Lincoln was "The man who freed the slaves," most blacks simply fell in line when homage was paid to American's 16th President each Twelfth of February.

Douglass was a shadowy or unknown figure to blacks, except those who had the rare opportunity of black history.

However, the past decade or so has seen Douglass much more widely exposed as a true abolitionist, while Lincoln has been shown to be firmly against equality for blacks in his time.

In fact, according to historian Lerone Bennett, Lincoln only signed the Emancipation Proclamation as a means of saving the Union.

Simply from the standpoint of action alone, Douglass deserves better recognition as an "emancipator" than Lincoln.

Born into slavery on Maryland's Eastern Shore, Douglass refused to be physically or mentally crushed by slavery.

So rebellious was he, that his master sent him to learn obedience at the hands of a professional slave-breaker in Baltimore.

But, rather than being broken, Douglass broke through one of the supporting timbers of the slave mentality.

This occurred when he fought slavebreaker Edward Covery.

This occurred when the slavebreaker, Edward Covey, attempted to tie him up prior to beating.

The two fought viciously for two full hours until Covey relented. The immediate effect on Douglass' brutal existence under Covey was clear.

"The whole six months afterwards I spent with Mr. Covey, he never laid the weight of his finger upon me in anger," the abolitionist recalled in "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave."

But there were more lasting effects as well, as Douglass pointed out so eloquently.

"This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning point in my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood.

"I now resolved that however long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when I could be a slave in fact."

Douglass soon after escaped out of slavery in Sept. 1838 to settle finally in New Bedford, Mass.

Flushed with the entirely new experience of freedom, Douglass began to attend anti-slavery meetings in New England.

At one, he was called upon to speak and became, at age 24, a lecturer for the Massachusetts Antislavery Society.

He became, in the words of historian Benjamin Quarles, "The most influential of the former slaves who joined the abolitionist forces."

It is not hard to see why. Physically, Douglass, "loooked like someone designed for the platform or pulpit. (He was) six feet tall, broad-shouldered, his hair long and neatly parted to the side, his eyes deep set and steady, nose well formed, lips full and bronze-colored."

In short, he was an imposing and convincing sight at the lectern.

In a voice Quarles described as "melodious and strong," Douglass first narrated his experiences in slavery.

As well as possessing a fine sense of detail, Douglass also had a flair for dramatic utterances.

Asked to speak before an anti-slavery meeting in 1842, Douglass wryly announced, "I appear before the immense assembly this evening as a thief and a robber.

"I stole this head, these limbs, this body from my master and ran off with them."

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Inventors

When one views the context of Nineteenth-century social conditions, it seems remarkable that black scientists and inventors were able to overcome as many barriers as they did.

In 1870 more than 80 per cent of the black population had been denied the opportunity to learn to read and write.

Before the Civil War it was illegal in many states for a black person to hold a patent on an invention.

Every time a potato chip or ice cream is eaten, a round of golf is played or a traffic light is stopped for, a black mind has been at work.

Hyram S. Thomas created the potato chip, the invention of ice cream is credited to Augustus Jackson and George F. Grant gave the golf tee to the world while Garrett A. Morgan is responsible for the traffic light.

But this is only a partial listing; blacks invented such things as the rotary eingine, lawn mower, the original player piano, electric lamp, fountain pen, and contrary to popular belief, the telephone system.

The earliest black inventor recorded in American history is Benjamin Banneker, a freedman who constructed the first clock made in the U.S. and helped design the city of Washington.

However, the first patent granted to a black was to Henry Blair who received a patent for a corn-planting machine.

Other blacks were not as fortunate.

A large number of blacks made important contributions to some of the greatest early American inventions.

There is evidence that a slave assisted Eli Whitney develop the cotton gin. Cyrus McCormick, inventor of the reaping machine, worked with a black assistant, Jo Anderson.

Louis Howard Latimer was an associate of both Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Edison.

He supervised the installation of electric lights in both North America and Europe and invented an incandescent bulb of his own.

The "Rillieux System" of sugar refining which is still used today, was the invention of Norbert Rillieux, a black man, in 1845.

The shoe industry owes its existence to Jan Matzeliger.

After his arrival in America in 1870 he perfected a machine that assembled shoes and cut the price of the product in half.

He patented the device in 1883 but sold the rights to the machine to the United Shoe Manufacturing Company.

Within a few years his invention was the basis of a multimillion-dollar business.

Railroads may have been in a slump for the past few years, but at the turn of the century they were among the most important industries in the country.

Two black inventors, Granville T. Woods and Elijah McCoy, made major contributions.

Woods helped develop the "third rail" used in electrical railroads and McCoy received more than 75 patents for lubricating locomotive machinery as it ran.

The most famous of the black inventors was George Washington Carver.

Following his formal education he joined Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Institute and for 45 years advised southern farmers and experimented with simple plants and vegetables.

From the peanut alone, Dr Carver created more than 300 snythetic materials, including dyes, soap, paint, ink and nitroglycerine.

While Carver's contributions to modern science grew from the simplest of things, there were many blacks who contributed to the more sophisticated forms of research and development.

And in 1950, a well dressed black man was pulled from the wreckage of an auto near Burlington, N.C.

In desperate need of a transfusion, he was rushed to the nearest hospital and refused admiftance because of his race.

He bled to death before finding a hospital that would accept him. His name was Dr. Charles Drew, the man who developed the modern blood bank.

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