Black Pioneers

Samuel Fraunces (c 1722-1795), innkeeper. Fraunces was a mulatto, possibly from an island in the French West Indies. He was commonly referred to as "Black Sam." In 1762, Fraunces purchased and converted an elegant mansion on the corner of Broad and Pearl Streets into a cosmopolitan inn which he named The Queen's Head. He leased it in 1765 and purchased Vauxhall Gardens, near the junction of Greenwich and Warren Streets. There, he established a museum of wax works, consisting of seventy figures in miniature, presenting the Queen of Sheba carrying presents to King Solomon. Admission was charged and tea, coffee and hot rolls were served mornings and evenings. The place became a favorite for the gentry to relax.

In 1770, Fraunces resumed operation of the inn. He named it Fraunces' Tavern, and it became the city's social, cultural and revolutionary center. Frequented by General George Washington, Fraunces was an ardent patriot. When the Revolutionary War started, he left the business in the care of his wife while he served a stint as a private in Washington's own division. For his generous advances and kindness to American prisoners and the secret service, he received a note of thanks and an honorarium of about $2,000 from Congress.

After Washington's inauguration in New York as the nation's first President, he appointed Fraunces as steward of the executive household. After more than five years in the post, in New York and Philadelphia, he returned to the inn business, opening the Tavern-keeper, 166 South, in Philadelphia. He died a few months after opening the inn.

Fraunces' Tavern is still in operation on the ground floor of the building, now owned by the Sons of the Revolution. They occupy three of the four floors; the long room off the second floor which Fraunces used for receptions; the third floor houses a permanent exhibit of Revolutionary relics; and the fourth floor houses a small historical library. The building is the oldest landmark in New York City.

Although New York had a larger black population than any of the other colonies in the North, the percentage of free blacks was the lowest—only large enough to support small neighborhood personal service businesses. The racial climate, for the greater part of the century, minimized black businesses which had to depend, in part, upon white patronage.

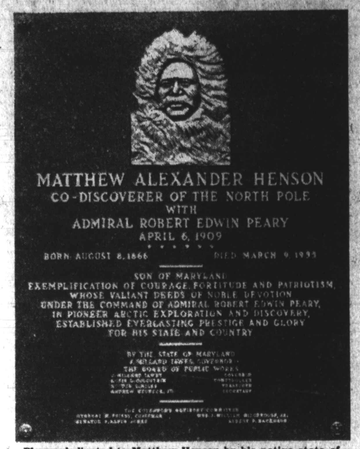
Pierre Toussaint (1766-1853), hairdresser. He was born in Haiti and, at an early age became a slave in the household of a wealthy, aristocratic French family. Much of their culture rubbed off on Toussaint. The family fled to America in 1787, before the impending revolution, and brought Toussaint with them. The master conceived the idea of having him learn to be a hairdresser, and arranged for his apprenticeship. Toussaint did not question the idea or the arrangements. He proved to be a gifted student and quickly learned to master the hair styles that were in fashion. Toussaint went into business and was unrivalled in his craft, attracting the patronage of the French and other distinguished ladies. But he remained a slave. When his owner became insolvent, Toussaint assumed payment of all the household bills and, after his owner died, he continued to support the widow for twenty years. From her death bed, Toussaint was manumitted. He married and adopted a daughter. Upon their deaths, he became more benevolent, purchasing the freedom of relatives, sheltering and training homeless black boys, nursing victims of successive plagues of disease, supporting orphans, contributing to the building of churches, and raising a large part of the money for erection of the first Catholic orphanage in New York City.

Peter Williams, a tobacconist, became an early "American success story" according to Kenneth Holcomb Dinshee, in his book "As You Pass By." Williams and his wife, Molly, were slaves of a British loyalist who returned home during the Revolutionary War. They preferred to remain in this country than going to England, and were sold to the John Street Methodist Church in 1778. Williams and his wife were known there, and he became their first sexton. By 1881, he had repaid the church the full amount expended for their purchase. Becoming dissatisfied with the racial policies of the church, he resigned his post after seven years and, with the knowledge and experience acquired while working with his former owner, a tobacconist, Williams went into the cigar-making business. He became wealthy and used a considerable part of his wealth and energy in making possible the building of the Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church—the first Black church in New York City.

NORTHWEST TERRITORY

Before 1818, when part of this territory was admitted into the Union as the State of Illinois, a black trader in furs had been the first settler in the area. The site where he settled was named Chicago and it became the major city in the state. The settler was *Jean Baptiste Pointe DeSable* (1745-1818), free born in St. Marc, Saint Dominique (Haiti). With the help of Indians, DeSable built a trading post at a convenient junction where traders rested while travelling to and from Canada. To settle there was considered dangerous since Indians had often fought over it. But DeSable was on friendly terms with them. He became a member of the Potawatomi Tribe, married one of its girls and had a family. DeSable prospered. In addition to the trading post, he built wharves, barns, a mill and smokehouses—the best in that part of the country. In 1800, the federal government took possession of the area as public land for sale. DeSable was compelled to sell what he had built or buy the land from the government. He sold it and finally retired in St. Charles, Missouri, where he and Daniel Boone, whom he had earlier befriended, became inseparable.

The 18th century was a period in which free blacks broke new ground in operating business enterprises. Though few in numbers and generally unable to establish roots in one place, they used what they had, took what they got to get what they could.



Plaque dedicated to Matthew Henson by his native state of Maryland.

Matthew Henson, co-discoverer of the North Pole.

DUSK TO DAWN, 19th CENTURY

Adverse pressures of overpowering magnitude stifled business development by blacks during the first three quarters of the 19th century—a repetition of the course imposed for the same period of the 18th century. Invention of the cotton gin in 1793 and its effectiveness in cleaning the product of seed, compared to the hand process revolutionized the economy of the country. Cotton became king and the slaves its vassals to plant, tend, pick, transport, operate the gins, and to press cotton into bales. The relationship of slaves to the industry is reflected in export of the product: 138,000 pounds in 1792 versus 17,790,000 in 1800.

Development of the cotton industry changed the direction in which slavery was going. Many people, including some planters, felt that slavery would eventually die out because it was becoming ar economic burden. But now, as the basis for the national economy, it enabled slaveholders to gain dominant political and economic power of the national life of the country which they held until the Civil War in 1861. Up to 1856, eleven of the sixteen presidents came from the planter class, and most of the others were their tools. The slaveholders controlled the Presidency and Senate for 24 years, the Supreme Court for 26 years, and the House of Representatives for 22 years. Over a 57 year period, the federal government supported slavery in the following ways:

In 1800, Congress voted 85 to 1 against a petition requesting a review of federal laws on the slave trade, on fugitive slaves, and for gradual abolition of slavery; in 1840, it forbade free blacks to carry United States mail; in 1820, it prohibited them from joining the army; in 1850, it strengthened the Federal Fugitive Slave Law. The revision allowed any claimant of a runaway slave to take possession of him upon establishing proof of ownership before a federal commissioner; in 1854, the Homestead Bill was passed. It enabled any white male citizen, or one who may have declared his intention to become a citizen previous to passage of the act, to acquire a minimum of 320 acres of public land at a price of 12½¢ to $1.00 an acre. This bill was a revision of the acts which permitted minimum purchase of 640 acres in 1785, 320 in 1800, 160 in 1804, and 80 in 1820; and in 1836, under the Pre-emption Act of 1841, free blacks were denied the right to apply for free land in the Northwest Territory.

Influenced by the sage political force, Congress outlawed the slave trade in 1808 to protect the heavy investment in slaves by the planters, and as a precautionary measure against importation of slaves who had knowledge of the successful revolution in Haiti and could aggravate the growing number of slave rebellions, three of which were of major national importance:

In Virginia in 1800, a rebellion was led by Gabriel Prosser; in South Carolina in 1822, Denmark Vesey; was the leader of a rebellion; and in Virginia again in 1831, the most publicized rebellion, led by Nat Turner, took place. The fears generated by the rebellions and the support of slavery by the federal government led a number of states to legislate laws to rid them of free blacks—allegedly the stimulus for slave rebellions in the South, and creators of racial tensions in the North.

Junius K. Graves, (1850-?), Green County, Kentucky, potato king. Mr. Graves was born a slave. His education was meager, but by the time he reached manhood, he could read, write and had some knowledge of figures. In 1870, he walked from his home in Kentucky to Kansas City, Kansas, where he worked on a farm for forty cents a day. Because of diligent work, he was given several raises and was later allotted nine acres of the farm to cultivate on shares, with the owner supplying a team of horses, seed and tools, in return for two-thirds of the production. Mr. Graves married. He and his wife used this as a stepping-stone in Edwardsville. They purchased 500 acres of the finest land in Kaw Valley to grow white potatoes, onions, carrots, parsnips, turnips, etc. In one year alone they produced 721,500 bushels of potatoes (121,500 bushels more than any single grower in the world.

Benson & Hedges Menthol

"B&H, I like your style."

100's and Lights

Lights. 11 mg "tar", 0.8 mg nicotine av. per cigarette, by FTC method
100's 17 mg "tar", 1.1 mg nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report May '78

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

Prospects for D.C. representation look dim

WASHINGTON, By Elaine S. Povich

In the early voting, the constitutional amendment that would give Washington, D.C., two senators and two representatives in Congress is faltering.

The amendment was passed by Congress in August, 1978 and has so far been approved by three states—New Jersey, Ohio and Maryland.

Three other states—Delaware, Tennessee and California—have turned it down, but supporters are optimistic they will eventually come around.

However, many states have shown ambivalence toward the amendment, and others have shown a definite distaste. In several states, one house of the other has rejected it.

The argument for approving the amendment is a much one—the same as was needed by American colonists who took the Boston Tea Party. It's the argument against "taxation without representation."

The argument against it is much more complex. Washington, D.C. is not a state. It's a city, and should not have the same representation that states do.

Supporters counter that the district is already larger than three states and should not be denied representation just because of artificial boundary lines.

Before it becomes a part of the Constitution, the amendment must be approved by 38 states.

Walter Fauntroy, the city's non-voting delegate to Congress, has been telling state legislatures the District should have the "basic right of representation."

"The amendment presently before you would extend the basic citizenship right to the only remaining group of citizens in our union who assume all the duties of citizenship but who are denied the right to be represented in government," he told a committee of the Maryland legislature.

Fauntroy puts less emphasis on the negative votes other cites.

Despite arguments that District residents have been largely denied a vote for nearly 200 years, and "taxation without representation" and anti-bureaucracy feelings that swept President Carter into office are the biggest obstacles facing the proposed amendment.

Add that sentiment to a backlash of partisan politics, the well documented conservative trend in the country, and some racism—Washington is nearly three-fourths black.

"There is no fair way to represent the body of people, which is larger than seven of the other fifty has full representation in both houses of Congress," he said.

Meanwhile, conservatives have come up with a plan they believe will end the amendment drive before it gets started and prevent questions about representation votes and extensions of ratification time that have haunted the equal rights amendment.

The plan is to have state legislatures pass resolutions opposing the amendment.

The conservatives say such resolutions would be recognized and that would bind a state against the amendment. Operating on that assumption, passage of just 13 negative resolutions would crush the amendment before it got started.

So far, no state has passed an opposing resolution, and the legal questions that are sure to crop up have not been settled, but that type of resolution has been introduced in several states.

Fauntroy is attempting to put together bi-racial, bi-partisan coalitions in each state to back the D.C. amendment.

But the groups have not yet rallied and the legislation is being blocked mostly by blacks. Representatives from the District almost certainly would be black since the majority of the 700,000 people who live in the city are black, as are most city officials.

Fauntroy's master plan calls for a budget of $775,000, raised from private sources. He's gotten little of that so far, and he says he's paying his own travel expenses. A $100 - a - ticket fund raiser in Washington a few weeks ago netted $15,000 for the cause.

NEW HUD AIDE — Former City Council chairman for the District of Columbia, Sterling Tucker, took the oath of office Feb. 12 as assistant secretary at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Accompanied by his wife, Alloyce, Tucker is administered the oath by HUD Secretary Patricia Roberts Harris in left photo. At (R), his saughters, Lauren, and Michelle Jeffrey look on approvingly.

(AFRO Photos by Milton Williams)

U.S. students' knowledge of basic skills is low

WASHINGTON

Who did the United States fight in World War II? What was the Bay of Pigs? What happened at Munich in 1938?

If you're over 40, the answers are no problem. But a young California education consultant said Feb. 14 a majority of his remedial reading high school students could not answer the first question, a majority of his college students could not answer the second and fewer than 10 percent of his undergraduates could answer the third.

At a Senate Education Subcommittee hearing on why the basic skills of American students are so embarrassingly low, the consultant, Paul Copperman, put the onus squarely on liberals.

He blamed busing and affirmative action plans that retain unqualified teachers, and a "permissive educational ideology" that allows ethnic studies, sociology and current events to be taught instead of world history.

Rudolf Flesch, author of the 1955 best-seller "Why Johnny Can't Read," disagreed with Copperman on almost everything except the fact that standards are declining.

Copperman said basic skills improved each generation in American history, but are now starting to fall.

Flesch said it started 50 years ago when schools began to teach children to read by the "look-say" method, in which children are taught to recognize the form of words alongside of pictures of what they represent.

Flesch is an advocate of the "phonics" system in which children are taught the basic sounds of the alphabet and then apply them to words whose meanings they don't necessarily know.

The "look - say" methods in use in 80 to 85 percent of schools because, he said, there is a conspiracy between the education establishment and the big textbook publishers whose profit is derived from selling a series of primers from grades one through eight.

Improper teaching is the "chief source of education deterioration," Flesch said.

Flesch forecast that "a growing part of our population is lapsing back into illiteracy," because of bad teaching.

Street ejected again from Council meeting

PHILADELPHIA — State Rep. Milton Street was ejected from a City Council meeting last week, the second time in two weeks, after he threatened that more than 100 supporters and himself would not allow the regular council session to begin.

He was carried bodily out of the chamber by police who had used blackjacks and night sticks some days earlier to break up a protest by Street and some of his supporters inside the council chamber.

After his earlier protest, he said he would resign his legislative seat if less than 500 to 1,000 blacks did not rally behind him at the council meeting, because a smaller turnout would indicate that blacks did not support his criticism of city housing programs.

Following his second protest and eviction, he said he would not resign, as the turnout was satisfactory. "This gives me spirit," he said of the turnout.

Several of his supporters scuffled with police as Street was carried out. One of them threw a large apple at majority leader Harry P. Jannotti, who was presiding over the meeting in the absence of vacationing Council President George X. Schwartz. The apple missed Jannotti and nearly struck a reporter.

ACLU files suit against the Army

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The American Civil Liberties Union, acting on behalf of six women rejected by the Army, has announced it has filed a sex discrimination suit against the service.

The class action suit was filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia by the ACLU's women's rights project.

It charges that the Army unconstitutionally discriminated against women trying to join the army by demanding higher entry test scores for them than for men, and by refusing to accept women with "general education development" (high school equivalency) diplomas while accepting men with that status.

One of the plaintiffs, Mary Elizabeth Nixon, scored a 93 on the entry test (50 is the minimum for women while only 10 is required of men) and has taken college courses. Despite that showing, she charged, she was turned down solely because she lacked a high school diploma.

High school diplomas are not required of men seeking to join the armed forces.

The suit charged that the dual set of standards breaches the Constitution's guarantee of equal treatment under the laws. It asked the court to declare the system unconstitutional and order the Army to review the applications of the six plaintiffs.

The Armed Forces freely acknowledge they have tougher enlistment standards for women, giving as a reason the fact that more women are trying to enlist than the services have openings for. Military officials say the same policy would be adopted for men if a surplus of applicants arose.

Pentagon sources said they expect to ease the standards for women as more openings for them arise over the next few years.

Auto falls 5 stories from garage, man unhurt

OAKLAND, Calif. (UPI) — James Barber pushed the wrong pedal on his car's floorboard and ended up doing a five-story backflip from a parking garage.

The 56-year-old engineer was described as "very, very lucky," by a doctor who treated him for a broken shoulder bone, fractured ribs and a black eye.

Barber was pulling into his assigned fifth floor parking space at his apartment complex when he pushed the accelerator instead of the brake.

His car broke through an ornamental steel and plastic wall and plunged to the street, landing on its top.

It took firemen 15 minutes to extricate Barber from his demolished 1978 vehicle, but he kept assuring his rescuers that he was "OK."

Dr. Simon Pinhas treated Barber and called him a "very, very lucky man."

"I AM BLACK.
I AM AN AMERICAN.
I AM OF AFRICAN ANCESTRY."
"AND I AM PROUD OF THEM ALL!"

© SALA 1977

Design © SALA 1972

MUNTU®

Send money to:
SALA & Associates, Ltd.
2625 S. Robertson Blvd.
Los Angeles, Ca. 90034
(213) 836-6836

PENDANT (with 20" chain) $12.50*
PIN (for dress or lapel) $11.50*
*Plus $1.00 — shipping & handling
Ca. residents add 6% sales tax

50c OF EVERY DOLLAR RECEIVED THROUGH THIS SPECIAL OFFER WILL BE CONTRIBUTED TO THE NAACP IN THE NAME OF ALL BLACK AMERICANS.

Sam Sax
Creator of MUNTU®

FEB