

Abolition, Agitation and Emancipation

The history of African people in the United States doesn't begin in 1619, nor does it begin with the first Black people to arrive in the new world. The history of African people in the new world must begin in Africa. Black Americas are unique in that we are the only Americans who were brought here against our will.

There are those who give no thought to what it meant to be captured, torn from family, friends and familiar surroundings and carried off to another continent. Too often we are led to believe that the African continent was a backward and uncivilized place where savages lived. The truth is that Africa has a rich history and can boast of ancient civilizations. Anthropologists now admit that the civilizations of the Nile Valley were influenced and shaped by Nubian people who were black. The Ishango people lived more than eight thousand years ago and used primitive multiplication tables long before any Europeans. The fact is that the enslaved African was not a savage but rather was savaged.

BLACKS IN POLITICS

The brutal slave system in the English colonies that later became the United States was such that it led to suicides and slave revolts. The names of Nat Turner and Denmark Vesey are known to us because of their efforts to throw off the yoke of slavery. By the nineteenth century a movement to abolish slavery in America had sprung up. That movement came to be known as the Abolitionist Movement.

The Abolitionist Movement was started by whites and was, for a long time, led by whites. William Lloyd Garrison was perhaps the most prominent white Abolitionist. Garrison published a newspaper called "Liberator," which began in January, 1831. In the first issue he said, "I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject (slavery) I do not wish to think, to speak, or write, with moderation. No! No! Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravishes; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen; but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present! I am in earnest — I will not equivocate — I will not excuse — I will not retreat a single inch — AND I WILL BE HEARD."

In 1833, Garrison founded the American Anti-Slavery Society in Philadelphia. Black men were active in the Society from its beginnings. The Reverend Samuel Cornish, Reverend Theodore Wright of New York and Reverend Peter Williams all served on the Society's executive committee. The Anti-Slavery Society discovered and recruited Frederick Douglass, a runaway slave from Maryland. Douglass, a self-taught man with the gift of powerful speech, became something of a sensation. While some white men sought to break up Society meetings and white Douglass was frequently assaulted and insulted, his speeches drew large crowds that went away convinced that slavery was wrong and had to be abolished.

In 1852 Frederick Douglass was invited to address the citizens of Rochester, New York at a Fourth of July Celebration. He told them, "The Fourth of July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn. To drag a man into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, were inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony . . . Fellow citizens, above your national tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions, whose chorus, heavy and grievous yesterday, are today rendered more intolerable by the jubilant shouts that reach them . . ."

The 1850s brought Black people increasing despair as the nation de-

bated the matter of slavery. The Dred Scott decision in 1857 confirmed that the Africans in America were not "citizens" and were not entitled to the Constitutional safeguards enjoyed by white Americans.

But the Abolitionist Movement continued to grow. In 1852 the book, "Uncle Tom's Cabin", appeared and sold 300,000 copies. It soon was being performed as a play all over the northern states. The story dramatized the cruelty of the slave system built on human degradation and exploitation.

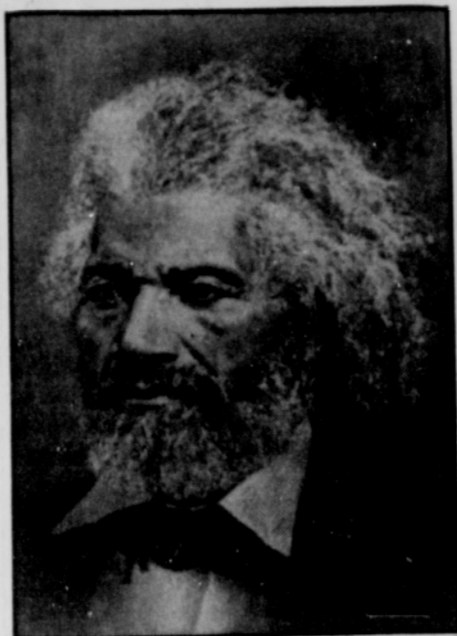
There were blacks as well as whites who believed that only sending the slaves "back to Africa" would solve the race problem. The African nation of Liberia was created as a haven for freed Blacks. Men like Martin Delany were strong advocates of establishing an African homeland. Others suggested Haiti or South America as more practical. Most Black people rejected the idea of leaving America. Many regard it as banishment and felt themselves entitled to the "blessings" of America.

There were conventions held by Blacks in almost every northern state. These conventions adopted resolutions protesting and condemning slavery and demanding emancipation and full citizenship rights for all Americans. And in the South there was the Underground Railroad typified by Harriet Tubman's daring. Thousands of Blacks escaped slavery by running away. Congress adopted Fugitive slave laws in a vain effort to thwart the efforts of free Blacks and white Christians to free those held in bondage.

John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry was a signal flash to the country that those who opposed slavery would not be forever content with polite petitions and mass meetings. In Boston, New York and Philadelphia free Black men and women attacked police officers attempting to arrest Blacks accused of being fugitive slaves.

The Civil War and Emancipation renewed African-American faith in the dream of a society of free and equal citizens of every race and class. Blacks served in the Union Army as fighting men, spies, nurses and scouts. Not until 1864 did these men receive the same pay as white soldiers. However a total of 186,000 Black men fought for the Union Army.

Frederick Douglass described the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation as a "trilling experience". Indeed, it must have been.



Frederick Douglass

SPORTS



Grant's Shawn Hoseney shoots over the Wilson defense but Grant came up two points short in its 79-77 loss to Wilson.

Photo by Richard J. Brown

Wilson 'Shoots Out' Grant For Win

by Fred Hembry

On Friday, Feb. 12, 1988, Wilson paced off with Grant High for one of the hottest contests of the season.

This game held nothing back. The crowd stayed on its feet from start to finish, swaying to the beat of Grant's well-directed stage band, and the sound of swishing nets.

Both teams came out crashing the net in the first quarter ending with an amazing, last-second twenty-five footer by Wilson's Charles McKinney, bringing the score to 24 Wilson, 21 Grant.

With the opening of the second quarter, Wilson came out firing from 'the three-point zone', with McKinney at the trigger, answering again with three by Craig Ford.

Wilson has an offense that seems to focus on the three-point shot.

The three-point barrier is an area that surrounds the key ranging from 25 to 30 feet from the hoop.

This happens to be the first year of the three-point ruling in Oregon schools. This gives high school basketball a new dimension much

like the dunk shot of the seventies. Wilson is one of few teams able to score with consistency at this range. They do so with an amazing 50 percent accuracy.

James Demry again answered the call for team leadership offsetting Wilson's perimeter jumpers with some of his own: he hit 19 points in all.

Near the end of the first half, Wilson led 45-42.

The second half barrage began with Shawn Hoseney scoring down low, returned with the same play by Johnny Lyday of Wilson.

The last half of this contest was most exciting with Grant answering Wilson almost shot for shot. Unfortunately, Grant was not able to overtake the hot-handed playing of Wilson.

Wilson stayed ahead with last-minute foul shooting, forced by Grant with 20 seconds, for the 79-77 win.

This was a truly great contest — an excellent showcase of the three-point game attributes. Thanks for the show!

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