

perspectives

by Professor McKinley Burt

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

By Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

African American Economic Empowerment

America's Great Debt To Haiti: The Shame

As a matter of fact, what is it that all Americans (and the world) would know if only a timid, racist media and equally frightened school systems and alleged historians had told us. The noble history of Haiti and its freedom-loving people who staged the first successful slave revolts in the Western Hemisphere goes far beyond its brief citation in the Rand McNally World Atlas and much deeper than the current, denigrating descriptions as "Boat People" and AIDS ridden" (The source?)

The most critical and momentous issues and actors on the stage of American development and expansion turn about the events at the beginning of the 19th century in Haiti-raising our nation into contention as a world power. We are speaking of the Louisiana Purchase, Napoleon, Thomas Jefferson, the great black generals who defeated Napoleon's best, here in the West Indies (Toussaint Louverture, Dessalines, et al) and John Wesley Powell. The noted explorer of the American West.

It all began on that Caribbean island formerly known as Santo Domingo; One half colonized by France (Haiti), and the other half by Spain (The Dominican Republic: known by most Americans as the home of all those top major league baseball players). There are several important facts we need to understand at this point. This land in the early 1800s was the scene of the most vicious and depraved form of slavery ever practiced. The original Indian inhabitants, as in most of the West Indies had been exterminated by the European powers in their genocidal drive to develop the fabulous economic wealth of the sugar and molasses trade. The unfortunate Indians were replaced with the even more unfortunate African slaves. Their exploiters, France, Spain and England-already "owning" most of North, Central and South America--now set their greedy eyes upon the upstart United States which had demonstrated that even more wealth could be developed by slaves; King Cotton!

The second important fact to be considered regarding the Key and pivotal role of Haiti in all of this is that the ambitious Napoleon was the most feared and competent general (and ruler) in the world. And no less importantly, the key to Napoleon's military reputation was his elite and formidable staff of 12 African generals drawn mostly from the West Indies. Most notable among them was the famed General Alexander Dumas, the African military genius whose son and grandson became the most famous novelists and playwrights in France on the European continent. Their careers paralleled that of Alexander Pushkin, Russia's greatest poet and novelist who in the same African tradition, wrote and fought for the freedom and dignity of the repressed.

Now we may well understand the incredible and openly-voiced fears and nightmares of President Thomas Jefferson and the other founding fathers of the vulnerable American nation. Just a few hundred miles away from Florida and New Orleans, the great general Toussaint Louverture had led a successful revolt to free Haiti. When, subsequently, Napoleon sent enough troops over to finally defeat and exile him, he was succeeded by the fierce black general, Dessalines. This freedom fighter finished off the French armies for good and put it on Napoleon's mind for good that he could not both fight wars in Haiti and Europe at the same time with any degree of success.

Thomas Jefferson was left facing what was for him an absolute, black Anglo Saxon nightmare of the first magnitude. On his doorstep were super competent black generals and armies who might ignite all of the West Indies into slave revolts. And, worse yet, rumors were reaching the American mainland, distressing fearful slave owners and often creating violent unrest among the slaves. As we have seen here, blacks on both sides of the Atlantic had not only excelled in the military, but in the arts and sciences. A well read and studious Thomas Jefferson knew well of these

things. In the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, we find that the King of France, Louis XVI, issued a royal passport to "Jefferson and Company, including his black mistress, Sally Hemings". Indeed, so well versed was he in African things that he incorporated into this design of the Great Seal of the United States of America the Great Pyramid and the eye of the African God Osiris (see your dollar bill). The president's next move was predictable. He sent emissaries Monroe and Livingston to negotiate for French property in North America.

Jefferson knew he must move fast. Not only were the blacks in Haiti securing their position, but in France, leading intellectuals, Voltarie, Montesquieu and Rosseau were speaking out against the slavery that existed in the French colonies (but not on the mainland). When Napoleon offered to sell the entire Louisiana Territory for 15 million dollars, Jefferson jumped at the chance to avert an African-driven "catastrophe" for the whites of America. Also, this "Louisiana Purchase" double the size of the United States, adding lands from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada and from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains. Jefferson sent Powell to see how much land he really got.

So we may quite rightly say that the brave people of Haiti are directly responsible for the preservation and development of these United States--yet they are repressed, maligned and slandered by government, media and historians. Napoleon's correspondence from his exile in Elba pointedly makes the point "My folly was the way I handled Toussaint...I lost my army and then I lost Haiti".

My thanks to my former foreign students at Portland State University for their many citations to texts and archives that revealed the true history of the United States, West Indies, France and North African in particular. More "real" history next week including citations."

One of the highest priorities now facing the African American community is the necessity to define explicitly long term economic empowerment goals and to develop and implement a strategic plan to effectively reach those goals. One matter that has caused great concern has been the lack of a concerted national effort to really deal responsibly to the economic injustices of American racism.

There is no magic formula to economic development. During the last thirty years there have been numerous efforts by civil rights and other organizations to launch various economic development projects and programs at the local and regional levels. But the truth is that most if not all of those efforts have been too limited in scope and with too short of a time line. The reality is that there has not been an effective long term economic development strategy that has involved massive numbers of African Americans since the rime of Marcus Garvey.

Again, this is not to belittle the good work of many organizations that are presently attempting to make a contribution toward the economic uplift of this African American community. The point here is to simply state the obvious: "All of the present efforts within the external to the African American community to enhance overall economic empowerment appear to be insufficient to meet the economic needs of the African American community"

While there are increasing examples of tremendous individual eco-

not worked to the benefit of the majority of thirty million African Americans. First, African Americans must invest in the uplift of the community not for the short term but for that long term development goals of the entire community. The economic infrastructure of the African American has to be literally reconstructed to meet the new demands of the present historical moment.

Some of those who are advising President-elect Clinton on economic matters have routinely referred to investment as "creating something that will add to the economy's ability to produce later on." Too often the African American community is viewed only as "taking from the economy" rather than "contributing to the economy." But what those who would economically discriminate against the African American community do not fully understand is that the spending of the African American community is more than a 300 billion dollar a year economic force in the nation's economy.

The problem is "spending" is not the same thing as "investing." We must invest not just in banks and other financial institutions. Our highest priority ought to be to invest all that we can in our youth: financially, educationally and spiritually. What are our long term economic goals and how are we going to achieve those goals? These are the questions that must be answered if we are to be serious about fulfilling the dream of true African American economic empowerment.

Spicing Up Food--And History

BY PROFESSOR MCKINLEY BURT

The formation of the Institute of Good Technologist in 1939 officially confirmed the opening of a new branch of Industrial chemistry by that pioneering African American food chemist, Dr. Lloyd A. Hall. His brilliant career in the science of food preservation brought full round the technology first developed by the Africans over 5,000 years ago on the southeast coast and island of the great continent--and by their relatives across the Red Sea in what is now called Saud. Arabia (the "spice islands, Yemen").

Whereas Dr. Hall learned his basic chemistry at Northwestern and the University of Chicago, the subjects of ancient black rulers like "The Queen of Sheba" (Genesis X, 28) and "Queen Hatshepsut" (Smithsonian, Dec. 1986) first learned their draft on the job after bringing back spices from lengthy expeditions. Back at home in Ethiopia/Somalia and Egypt they soon progressed to the point of establishing laboratories which were attached to the temples. One of these still exists in the Temple of Edfu where the walls are still covered with inscriptions describing the recipes for preparing preservatives and exotic incense or perfume (see p.26, Sewell, "Egypt Under The Pharaohs").

Fortunately for us, Dr. Hall went to work for the Griffith Laboratories in Chicago, so instead of a temple Wall from which to chart his pioneering innovations that have made the world's food supply safe, we have a wealth of corporate records and photocopies of patents. From 1925 to 1960, he successfully took up a number of tasks, including developing improved salt compounds for preserving meats. Before his invention of "flash-drying", the process has hardly changed since the African camel caravans be-

gan hauling salt millenniums ago. What Dr. Hall did was perfect a method of combining salt with nitrogen-containing chemicals that not only better preserved meat, but have it that red fresh look. The packing houses of the world fell in love with this genius.

Another area that occupied much of Hall's research was the sterilization of foods and substances associated with food. Many people are under the impression that spices are used to preserve foods. Hall found, to the contrary, that many spices marketed carried with them millions of germs in the form of bacteria, molds, and yeasts. Natural spices, such as cloves, cinnamon, ginger, paprika, allspice, sage, and others, are a type of food ingredient used in small amounts, yet usually infested with spores of molds, yeasts, and bacteria. Even dried vegetables (onion powder and garlic powder) were guilty of contaminating food. Meat packers adding spices to their meat products were actually contaminating these products.

Hall undertook long and exhaustive research and experimentation in this new area. How could he effectively sterilize these foodstuffs and at the same time preserve their appearance, quality, and flavor with no noticeable change? Spices and fried vegetables became darkened by being heated in air. They lost their flavor and aroma when exposed to evaporation or oxidation. Sterilizing spices by dry or moist heat above 240 *F ruined the color and flavor of the spices so as to make them unmarketable.

Once again our resident genius solved the problem which had defeated the best minds in the world. It was Hall who invented the famed process of exposing foods-stuffs to the gas, ethylene oxide. It is a "toss up", trying to determine who crated the

most billions for the citrus farmers of California and Florida--Our Dr. Hall or the brilliant black grammar school dropout, Frederick M. Jones invented the "Refrigerated Box Car", thus permitting the shipment of fresh fruits and vegetables across the country (Patent No. 2,696,086, Dec. 7, 1954).

The introduction of sterilized spices to the meat-packing industry did much to revolutionize that industry. This process was also applied to drugs, medicines, medical supplies, cosmetic materials, dentifrices, and so on. Sterilization with ethylene oxide has become a very large business in the United States on hospital supplies such as bandages, dressings, and sutures. Hall's method is in general use throughout the country.

There was another big problem in food chemistry that Hall now attacked. Fats and oils often became "spoiled" or rancid and therefore unfit for human consumption. Some of the constituents of fats and oils are known to possess the tendency to react with the oxygen in the air. Rancidity develops primarily from the products formed during this oxidation. These products impart an undesirable odor and taste. Chemicals called antioxidants retard or prevent this oxidation and thereby the development of rancidity in fats and oils and foods containing them. It was with these antioxidants that Hall now worked. It did not take him long to solve this problem, giving us such types of lard as "Crisco".

In 1951, Hall and an associate patented a process for curing bacon which reduced the time of curing--usually six to fifteen days--to a matter of hours. The products were more uniform and had better stability and a better appearance and on and on he went to a total of 105 patents.

News Conference

p.m., Thursday, January 21, in the Thayer Room 3, Templeton College Center, at Lewis & Clark College located at 0615 SW Palatine Hill Road. This will give you a chance to talk to Chisholm before her evening speech

Shirley Chisholm, first black woman elected to Congress and first black woman candidate for the U.S. Presidency. Life-long fighter for racial equality.

The conference will start at 2:00

Seattle Physician Reveals New Treatment For Hypertension



Dr. Grant Deger a Seattle physician was in Portland recently to interview with the PORTLAND OBSERVER to discuss a new "breakthrough" drug treatment for hypertension and angina, as well as noteworthy findings that can enable heart patients to lead more, healthy lives, including:

The "silent patient" syndrome: A checklist of points for heart patients to discuss with their physicians to facilitate and accurate diagnosis and an appropriate prescription regimen.

Dealing effectively with multiple diseases.

Proper diet, exercise, and lifestyle topics for patients.

Early recognition of heart disease, its risk factors and warning signs.

Differentiating between mild-to-moderate, severe and acute hypertension.

How to recognize and treat "silent" pain, which is potentially as dangerous as painful episodes.

Additional recent medical advances in the diagnosis and treatment of heart disease.

Announcement

1993 Housing Fair Committee meeting Friday, January 22nd at 3:00 P.M. in the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods Office, 4815 N. E. 7th. All interested are invited.

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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Board To Consider Recommendations On Second Language Requirement

The Oregon State Board of Higher Education is scheduled to consider adopting a policy for Second Language College Admissions when it meets on January 22, 1993, in Smith Memorial Center at Portland State University.

The proposed policy guidelines are a result of work undertaken by the Joint Boards of Education (Board of Education and the State Board of Higher Education) to assist Oregon students attaining second Language education and international understanding. If adopted, the Chancellor's office will continue working with the Department of Education on a statewide framework leading to second language skills as a requirement for admission to Oregon public higher education institutions. OSSHE institutions currently do not have second language requirements for admission.

The Board will also consider a request by Oregon State University to establish the Western Center for Community College Professional Development. The proposed center would be located on the OSU campus and would involve the additional faculty and resources of Portland State University and the University of Oregon to meet the needs of community col-

leges. In other action, the Board will consider proposed Graduate Programs at OSU in Apparel, Interiors, Housing, and Merchandising; and a B.S. in Education, Specialty in American Sign Language/English Interpreting at WOSC.

The Board is also expected to take action on a routine item involving the Summer Session Fee Book and amendments to other fee policies related to the Academic Year Fee Book for 1992-93.

The Board will receive separate reports on the 1992-93 headcount enrollment and the growing deferred maintenance backlog within the State System.

Meetings of the committees of Academic Affairs and Finance and Administration are held prior to the Board meeting beginning at 8:30 a.m.

The eight colleges and universities that make up the Oregon State System of Higher Education are Eastern Oregon State College, Oregon State University, Oregon Institute of Technology, Oregon Health Sciences University, Portland State University, Southern Oregon State College, University of Oregon, and Western Oregon State College.

Celebrating Home Ownership for Low Income Families

Habitat for Humanity (HFH), Portland Project, invites you to the dedication of our first house in 1993. The formal dedication will take place Saturday, January 30th at 2:45 pm at 735 N.E. Killingsworth. HFH welcomes minority organizations, community residents, and churches to the dedication celebrating home ownership, promoting awareness of its projects, and welcoming the Garcia family to their new neighborhood.

HFH is committed to providing home ownership opportunity to low-income families. Habitat renovates and builds houses using volunteer labor and donated materials where possible. Habitat sells these homes to selected families at cost under an interest-free mortgage. A family wishing to qualify for an HFH home invests 350 hours of sweat equity into home construction and renova-

tion. The Garcia Family - Jose and Maria with their children Jose Lusi (12), Pablo Jesus (10), Mariz de Resugio (9), Bernice (6) - moved to Portland in 1989 from Comala, Mexico. While living in the basement of a relative's house, the Garcias went to different agencies to look for adequate housing. The housing authority personnel explained the housing ministry of HFH. The Garcias went to their first HFH meeting and were eventually selected as a family and began their sweat equity.

Work is done by volunteers in construction, family nurturing, administration and many other areas. HFH is looking for interested people, especially bilingual, minority volunteers. If you want to learn more, please contact Jeffrey Merkley, Director at 287-9529.

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