

perspectives

by Professor McKinley Burt

More On The Magnificent Sons OF Haiti: How About The Great Naturalist, John James Audubon?

To appreciate this "follow up" article be sure to get a copy of last weeks' Observer Newspaper and read my Perspectives' column on page 2, "America's greatest Debt To Haiti: The Shame." As promised, I now expand on both the magnificent contributions of Africans in the West Indies and on the European continent—this is what so rightened (and seduced) President Thomas Jefferson.

No where in American or the world is there a better known or more prolific pioneer naturalist, painter of birds and gifted writer on the great outdoors than John James Audubon. What is usually not known on the side of the Atlantic is the fact that he was born in Les Cayes Santa Domino in 1785 (Now Haiti). The illegitimate son of an African mother who died shortly after his birth (Jeanne Rabine) and French sea captain, "Jean" Audubon, John and his half-sister Rose were taken to France for their rearing and education. A consequence of his illegitimacy was that he was left no legacy when his father died in 1818.

The famed American "Audubon Society", as we might expect, is still having serious problems with this sell-documented bloodline; as are of course, American teachers, historians, writers and other assorted bird watchers. Another talented ornithologist, John Burroughs, has written a biography of Audubon that follows a typical "American" line; He was the son of a "creole beauty", born in Mandeville, Louisiana and then taken back to Haiti. This is another strange tale developed by American historians for it is documented that Audubon "had to apply for American Citizenship" which was granted July 3, 1812.

For his timid biographer see, Burroughs, John, "John James Audubon," The Overlook Press, Woodstock, N.Y. 1987. For a more adequate account with an excellent Chronology of Audubon's entire life, get a book edited by Scott Russell Sanders, "Audubon Reader: The best writings of John James Audubon," Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ill., 1986 (I got my copy in May, 1992 for only \$9.95 from the Scholars' Bookshelf Press, 51 Everitt

Drive, Princeton Junction, N.J. 08550, Item #742H2, Postage \$4.00.

Another promise was to expand on President Jefferson's preoccupation with things African; we now move beyond his incorporation of Africa into the Great Seal of the United States, his denigrating exchanges with black surveyor and inventor Benjamin Banneker who laid out Washington, D.C. after the disgruntled surveyor, L'enfant, returned to France, and as revealed in his letters, his constant solicitations of friends like George Washington for "competent slave craftsmen", especially bricklayers needed at Monticello.

Today, we will take a closer look at Sally Hemmings, his "main African lady". Remember, I described that document in the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, the passport signed by the King of France, Louis XVI, issued to "Jefferson and Company" which included our Sally Hemmings who went on a shopping trip in Paris that startled even the sophisticated French Newspapers. They wrote extensively on a spree that would make Eva Gabor jealous. We speculate that American taxpayers may have paid for this caper. Certainly a number of American tabloids of the time thought so, for they stayed on the case of Jefferson and his black lover. You really ought to take a look-see through that historical stuff in the New York Public Library.

Especially informative is a book by the black author, Barbara Chase-Riboud, "Sally Hemmings": The Washington Star, "...A new vision of a much repressed part of our history"—The Denver Post, "...a combination of factual documentation and a deep understanding of the agony of slavery". Avon Pocket Books N.Y. 1979. This book contains a detailed Jefferson "Family Tree" divided into a "White Family" and a "Black Family". Interestingly, today's black family has "incorporated" and this organization preserves and publishes the entire embarrassing lineage for posterity. In the 1970's Ebony Magazine did a lengthy account on the clan of blacks who collected the most real history.

Let me correct one item from last week; Alexander Dumas—I was the one

general of Napoleon who was not born in the West Indies. It was "Toussaint" whom Napoleon foolishly sent there to maintain order in the colony. Interestingly, Napoleon's fear and jealousy of this great black general resulted in a treachery that parallels Alexander the Great's murderous rage vented upon his top military personage, "Clitus (Melas, The Black)". This African, Commander of Alexander's Calvary and Governor of Bactria, and boyhood playmate of Alexander, was run through by a spear, the "Great" one blaming it on "drunk". See Cummings, Lewis, "Alexander the Great", Cambridge, Riverside Press, Mass. 1940; and see "Plutarchs Lives" Vol III, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, Mass. 1957.

In closing this week, here is more of the surge in African intellect and prowess that so frightened Thomas Jefferson and other founding fathers.

To the son of the African general, Dumas we are indebted for many famous novels and plays; 300 novels and 25 volumes of drama in all. They are still popular after almost two hundred years, with motion pictures and movies-for television shown today.

The world still enjoys his The Three Musketeers, The Count of Monte Cristo, The Man in the Iron Mask, The Corsican Brothers, and The Black Tulip. This is the Black man who was voted the greatest gourmet the world has ever seen, owned a yacht and theatre, and told a pregnant mistress, "I doubt if this miracle is mine, but if it comes with a head of kinky hair I'll be convinced."

Of now less importance are the works of the grandson Alexander Dumas II (1824). His classic novel, "The Lady of the Camelias" made him famous throughout France. His rewrite into a play made him famous throughout the world. Two world famous operas are adaptations of this work: "La Traviata" by Verdi, and "Camille" by Forest. In 1874 this younger Dumas was made a member of the famed French Academy of Arts and Sciences and was later elected its president. He next received the second most prestigious honor of France. The Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor.

Spotted Owl Joins Zoo's Education Program

A northern spotted owl has been added to the group of animals presented in education programs at the Metro Washington Park Zoo. The northern spotted owl has been designated a threatened species in Washington, Oregon, and California by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The owl, a female, came to the zoo through USFWS, and will be used in programs at the zoo, in

schools and at special educational functions. It is the only spotted owl used in such programs on the west coast.

The 27-ounce bird has permanent injuries to her right wing, which prevent her from being released back into the wild. She was found in August in the Falls Creek area of the Willamette National Forest, and was rehabilitated at the Cascade Raptor

Center in Eugene. "We're please to add this bird to our school assembly and on-grounds educational programs," said Education Manager David Mask. "It gives us the opportunity to present information with which individuals can form opinions and make informed decisions about an animal that lives close by as well as a situation which as affected our region."

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ALONG THE COLOR LINE Why The Somalia Invasion Was Wrong

by Dr. Manning Marable

Rarely in the twentieth century has an American military invasion into a Third World country been so "popular" inside the U.S., than the recent intervention into Somalia beginning in December, 1992. The basic issues seemed simplistically clear to most Americans. Thousands of Africans were dying of starvation each day. The Somali government was in chaos, unable to check the terrorist assaults of local warlords. African nations seemed paralyzed by their own problems, and favored U.S. and United Nations intervention.

As American troops landed at Mogadishu, politicians praised "lame duck" President George Bush's decision. President-elect Bill Clinton (at the time) expressed his support. Clergy claimed that American military were working in the "service of God", because their mission was designed specifically to have lives and to foster humanitarian service. By the beginning of 1993, 17,500 American troops were stationed throughout Somalia.

No doubt that the situation in Somalia just before American troops arrived was extremely desperate. Throughout 1992, about 30,000 people were estimated to have died in Mogadishu alone from gunshot wounds or shelling. Throughout the country, about 300,000 Somalis, primarily women and children, starved to death. However, neither Bush, Clinton nor the media point out that massive starvation and violence also exists in other parts of Africa, equal to the Somalia crisis. In nearby southern Sudan and in Mozambique, according to the World Food Program, the humanitarian "emergencies are on par

with Somalia." Why the focus on Somalia rather than these other countries?

For more than a decade, the United States pumped millions of dollars into the corrupt dictatorship of Somali leader Siad Barre. While thousands starved in the countryside and domestic dissidents were murdered, the Americans did virtually nothing. The reason? Somalia's geopolitical location on the Indian Ocean gave U.S. military planners an excellent base for possible intervention into Iran, Iraq and other Middle East countries. Americans were given access to the air force base at the Somali city of Berbera.

There were also growing economic considerations for both Americans and Europeans. According to the Washington Post, there is considerable "speculation that Somalia sits atop large oil reserves."

Even before the fall of Siad Barre's regime, major oil corporations were signing contracts to carry out extensive explorations. The presence of U.S. troops would lead to domestic stability, one could reason, thus permitting oil companies to pursue their political profits.

The American public was told that their sons and daughters in the military would be stationed in the Horn of Africa for only several weeks, and would be withdrawn before Clinton assumed the presidency. But by the middle of January, "Operation Restore Hope" seemed to be taking on the character of a permanent occupation of hostile territory. Relief workers in the countryside began reporting increased incidents of sniper attacks. One unnamed U.S. diplomat told re-

porters that as many as "10,000 U.S. soldiers might have to stay in Somalia for as long as two years."

There were other alternatives to an American military invasion, even if one accepts the "humanitarian" reasons given for the decision. The U.S. government could have allocated the same amount of money and resources to fly African troops from the Organization of African Unity into Somalia. Or the government could have donated the same funds to the United Nations, to create a humanitarian force which was not dominated by Americans.

The American invasion of Somalia was designed not primarily to save Blacks' lives, but to serve as an illustration of U.S. military power in the "post-Cold War era." The "New World Order" is based on the idea of one world superpower, the United States, which serves as the world's police force. The invasion of Panama, the bombing of Iraq, and the intervention into Somalia during the Bush administration, are all illustrations of American power over Third World nations.

To end violence and famine in Somalia, we should call for an American troop withdrawal. How do we take away the guns from the Somali paramilitary forces? Why not a voluntary, Somali-directed program of exchange, in which guns could be returned for employment or participation in development programs, such as building schools or clinics. American funds could be used to finance such a program of economic and social reconstruction. No one's interests are served by a long-term U.S. presence in Somalia.

This Way For Black Empowerment

by Dr. Lenora Fulani

When You're Playing Hardball Politics With A Billionaire, You Have To Move It Or Lose It

Ross Perot was never into third-party politics. Now it's official: at a press conference last week he said "the volunteers" would do "anything...to strengthen both parties and make them work."

The purpose of the press conference was to announce that from now on United We Stand, America—the organization that grew up around Perot's history-making independent presidential campaign—will function as a citizens lobby. It will cost \$15 to become a member of United We Stand, America; the money, Perot explained, will be used mainly to finance the electronic town hall he promoted during his campaign. (He is paying for the membership drive.)

Along with many others -- including grassroots leaders of the Perot movement -- I don't believe that all of the 20 million people who voted for Ross Perot last November did so because they wanted to join a lobby. What's more, I think that there are significant elements of the Perot voter base who want to see an independent third party in America. They said so before Perot dropped out in July. They said so when they insisted that he get back into the race. And on election

day -- despite the fact that Perot ran a less than passionate, less than competent campaign -- they had the guts to put their voices where their mouths were.

A watchdog organization to act as a countervailing force to the "special interests" by bringing grassroots pressure to bear on Congress is a fine idea, particularly from Perot's point of view. He's created a niche for himself in mainstream politics -- something he's tried to do for a very long time -- by consolidating "his" movement into an organization over which he can exercise a great deal of control from the top. You can control a lobby. You can't so easily control a grassroots political party -- it's too messy. So he's got his. But there are millions of Perot voters whose interests aren't being served by the reincarnation of United We Stand, America as a lobby.

You see, regardless of his intentions the Perot campaign precipitated an electoral avalanche that permanently transformed the American political landscape. But the question of how that landscape will be shaped, and who will decide, still awaits an answer.

Fountain Baptist Church Pledges To Black College Fund

Rev. Jerry M. Sanders, pastor, Fountain Baptist Church, signed a commitment letter with Mr. William Gray, president & Ceo, UNCF, pledging a quarter of a million dollars to the United Negro College Fund. "The monies represent the proceeds of the Men's Day contributions and will be given over a 10 year period. It is our hope that Fountain Baptist Church's gift will serve as a witness for other church communities to follow," said Sanders.

"This is the largest gift a church has made to the College Fund," said Gray. "It is rewarding to know Rev. Sanders and the members of Fountain Baptist Church understand the relationship between the African American church and the historically Black colleges and universities," said Gray.

Most of the UNCF schools were founded by churches after the Civil War to provide education to the newly freed slaves. The growing demand for admission to these historically Black colleges and universities lends validity to the claim that they continue to

be necessary components and attractive alternatives within the U.S. education system. UNCF colleges have experienced a 25 percent increase in enrollment since 1986, and they now enroll over 53,000 students. This increase occurs at a time when more Black youth are graduating from high school than ever before (77 percent), and when more Black youth are participating in college than ever before (one-third of all Black High School graduates). Tougaloo College, a UNCF school in Mississippi, was selected to receive Fountain Baptist Church's first installment. The church's gift will be matched by a \$10,000 gift from the Stewart Mott Foundation. "We're helping this small rural college to raise \$60,000 by contributing \$20,000," said Sanders. "And the mission and vision of our founders in 1897 continues to unfold as the church seeks to minister to the poor, the brokenhearted and the captive, serving as a beacon of hope and agent of change," he added.

The U.S. Department Of Labor

In 1990, wage and salary workers with 4 years of high school had median earnings of \$354 a week, and those with 1-3 years of college earned \$431. By comparison those with 4 years of college earned \$569, and workers with 5 or more years, \$704, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Quarterly.

In 1986, only 33 percent of high school graduates from the class of 1972 reported that they participated in employer-sponsored training on their last full-time job, compared to 60 percent of those who went on to finish college. Employer-sponsored training often leads to better paying jobs, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Quarterly.

Graduates with bachelor's degrees in economics, engineering, mathematics, and business had the highest earnings, and graduates in home economics, education, English/journalism, and liberal arts had the lowest, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Quarterly.

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