

EDITORIAL

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perspectives

More Black Contributors To Medicine, II

Before we continue on with our recitation of illustrious black contributors in the health field, let's do one of those "you-heard-it-here-first" things. For Black History Month six years ago, I included in one presentation, 1/10/88, a picture of Dr. Hallie Tanner Johnson "First Woman physician certified in the state of Alabama."

This black 19th-century pioneer was until very recent years one of the best kept secrets in America. A reader of the Portland Observer Newspaper informs us that just this year she has now seen citations all over the place, including Jet, Essence, etc. Again, actor Bill Cosby is proved right about black history, "Lost, strayed or stolen."

This week, let us honor Dr. Lloyd A. Hall (1894-1971), the scientist who coined the slogan "More nutritious and appetizing food for better health and longer life through food technology." This great chemist understood better than anyone this century that there was an urgent need for better standards and quality controls for food preservation if the nation's food supply was to be kept safe. E-Coli was very rampant before Hall's innovations. Though obtaining a B.S. degree from Northwest University and doing graduate

work in chemistry at the University of Chicago, he nevertheless encountered intense discrimination in seeking a position. Finally 1916, Hall was hired as a chemist by the Chicago Department of Health Laboratories where he rose to senior chemist in one year (nothing has changed much through the years as its civil service gets bright minorities for half the going rates paid by industry).

Eventually, industry recognized the talent so the young chemist and the huge Iowa meat packing company, John Morrell, Inc. hired him away from the city of Chicago. There was a series of increasingly important positions in food technology until, in 1925, he went to work for the famed Griffith Laboratories. Hall was appointed chief chemist and director of research, remaining with the Chicago firm until his retirement in 1959.

What most people do not realize is that the preservation of meats was still a fairly haphazard affair before Hall went to work on the problem. Salts for curing and preserving foods were not very satisfactory, though in use since ancient times. Although nitrates were added to give meats their red color, the mixture did not allow the preserving salts to penetrate properly. Hall solved the problem with his invention of a combining process, "Flash drying."

We are further indebted to the eclectic contributions of Mr. Hall for many other inventions that advanced the quality controls of food handling and, therefore, raised the health standards of the world. His research discovered that, contrary to popular impression, most spices marketed to allegedly preserve foods, instead, carried millions of germs in the form of bacteria, molds and yeasts. Natural spices such as cloves, cinnamon, ginger, paprika, all spice, sage, even onion powder and garlic powder—all were guilty of contaminating food (even by meat packers).

In another burst of genius, Hall solved this problem for the nation (and the world) by developing a process that sterilized foods by placing them in a vacuum chamber filled with ethylene oxide gas. Now, the very same process is applied to drugs, medicine, medical supplies, cosmetics, dentrifices, bandages, surgical dressings and so on. Further, we may thank him for developing a wide range of preservatives called antioxidants that prevent fats and oils from soiling and becoming rancid.

So it is we may also credit him with the concept of the "solid" cooking oils like "Crisco". Hall stands with Frederick McKinley Jones, black inventor of the refrigerated truck and box care, as the greatest of contributors to the sciences of health and food preservation. Bon appetit!



By Professor McKinley Burt

Blazer Arena Project: Are Blacks Really Scoring?

BY JAMES L. POSEY

The Blazer Arena Project public relations team has been working overtime promoting what some say is the unprecedented, successful participation of disadvantage businesses on the arena project. Eight months into construction, many news articles abound featuring Blacks working on the job, while exalting the high number of contracts awarded to minority and women businesses. And, most Portlanders have seen the impressive TV commercial showing Trail Blazer players in hard hats, running heavy equipment at the construction site. Consequently, it's logical to assume that the commercial, in part, is meant to symbolize Black participation on the project.

Such notables as Congressman Ron Wyden and Mayor Vera Katz have visited the job site and publicly praised the efforts of the Drake/Turner joint venture and its contribution to the economic viability of the Northeast community. Blazer officials claim to have talked to Northeast community leaders about how well the project is performing. Drake/Turner has even gone so far as to describe the project as a successful model for the rest of

country in achieving minority business participation.

But what's really going on? On January 14, the National Association of Minority Contractors of Oregon (NAMCO) requested specific information from Drake/Turner to determine who is benefiting from the work on the project. NAMCO wanted to assess in real dollars just how much money is actually flowing into the Black community. While Drake/Turner's response can only be characterized as reluctant to provide this detailed information, enough has been obtained to raise several red flags.

The first flag went up with the hiring of a person to administer the DBE program who, from all appearances, is a novice in arena construction and DBE programs. The second one is raised when Drake/Turner presented information that tends to lump all the groups together without an exact accounting of their involvement on the project. Although this information has been requested on several occasions, as of this writing, management has yet to provide the specific break out of which minorities, specifically African-Americans, have benefitted and at what dollar

amount. Other flags are raised when officials question the propriety of giving information based on private dollar vs. public dollars. Likewise, the flags start waving when program statistics don't reflect the actual quantity of work performed by minority subcontractors compared to the project's entire workforce. For example, based on current data, of a total of 25 African-American workers currently employed, two relatively small companies have hired over two-thirds of the total Black workforce.

No one should mistake this article for an indictment of the Oregon Arena project because it is apparent they have tried to approach minority contracting and employment in a different way. The real question is have Black residents of Northeast Portland scored on this project? None of us should celebrate until the numbers have been evaluated. NAMCO will continue to monitor the situation and update the community as soon as the Oregon Arena Project provides more detailed information. Stay tuned.

James Posey is a small business owner with a background in social work and community activism.

Oregon Sojourners



Jim Beckworth

The Oregon Territory became the state of Oregon in 1859, but prior to this evolution, this vast territory had been visited by a number of different nations whose crews were of mixed hues and races. As noted, the first recorded presence of a black man in the Oregon territory was that of Marcus Lopez who met an untimely death. Also noted before was Ben York of the famous Lewis and Clark Expedition that travelled through the Oregon Territory on their way to the coast.

In addition to these sojourners, we have Edward Rose who

lived with the Crow Native American Tribe. His life among the Crow gave Rose enough knowledge of the West to become an excellent guide and interpreter for many expeditions. In 1811, Rose was hired by Mr. Hunt to guide an expedition to Oregon. Due to problems with his temperament, he wasn't able to complete the trip.

Another mountain man who helped shape Oregon was James Beckworth. His explorations in Nevada and California scouted out major passage routes for new settlers moving into the West and Northwest.

THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT Building Bridges Between Blacks And Jews

Last week Minister Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam showed all of America why he is the major African American leader in the United States.

Long one of our most important and respected religious and moral leaders, at this Washington, D.C. press conference on February 3 minister Farrakhan made clear that he is a man of integrity and compassion who has the courage to stand up to nay and all who would harm the Black community--whether they be white, Jewish or Black.

At the press conference the publicly disciplined Minister Khalid Muhammad for his speech at Kean College in New Jersey on November 29. Khalid's remarks were not, as Minister Farrakhan pointed out, consistent with "the teaching and guidance of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad."

At the same time, though, Minister Farrakhan insisted that Minister Khalid was not the issue. The real issue, Farrakhan pointed out, was the attempt by the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith (ADL), which had paid for a full-page ad in the New York Times containing excerpts of Khalid Muhammad's remarks, to further divide the African American and Jewish communities and, in the process to extend its influence over the Black political establishment and within the white political establishment.

As Minister Farrakhan pointed out: "Their aim was and is to destroy the reputation and character of Louis Farrakhan in the eyes of the world...and to destroy the unity of the Nation of Islam with any of the established Black leaders." At the press conference Minister Farrakhan distributed an internal ADL document, "Mainstreaming anti-Semitism: The Legitimation of Louis Farrakhan," which discusses Minister Farrakhan's success in building alliances, with Black elected officials--particularly the Congressional Black Caucus--and weighed various approaches the ADL

might take in responding to this development.

The ADL memo concedes that "now that Farrakhan has obtained a measure of legitimacy from the mainstream Black community...the picture has become more complicated." The League wonders whether it can continue to pursue a "hard line" against Minister Farrakhan and still maintain its influence "with the CBC, the NAACP, and other respected leaders in the black community who are no longer willing to ostracize the Nation of Islam." The document reveals that the ADL is quite willing to sacrifice its supposed principles in the name of political expediency.

The real agenda of the ADL, which claims to be the standard bearer of the fifth against anti-Semitism, is becoming more and more obvious, even to many in the Jewish community. The ADL is all about cynical political maneuvering--improving its bargaining power within America's (non-Jewish) ruling circles--and has little or nothing to do with protecting the Jewish community from anti-Semitism. If the ADL was serious about building bridges with the Black community it would have responded positively to Minister Farrakhan's numerous attempts to reach out to the Jewish community over the last few years. Instead, it has looked for excuses to widen further the gap between the two communities. In contrast, Minister Farrakhan is seriously working to build bridges. When he was in New York City last month for an rally of 10,000 Black men interested in fighting crime and drug abuse in their communities, he met with me and Dr. Fred Newman, a Jewish leader who has worked with me in the New Alliance Party to build unity between Blacks and Jews at the grassroots level. Minister Farrakhan, Dr. Newman and I discussed ways of bypassing the official Jewish leadership to bring ordinary African Americans and ordinary Jews together to dialogue on the issues that keep us apart. Minister Farrakhan, Dr.

Newman and I, along with many, many, ordinary people in both communities realize that it's time to get Black-Jewish relations out of the hands of the professional politicians whose only concern is getting elected, and organizations like the ADL, which seek only to increase their fundraising potential and their big power connections and influence (all of which are, of course, related).

We need a people-to-people connection between Blacks and Jews; ordinary folks who are ready to say: "To hell with all our politicians and political wheeler-dealers who are using the tensions between our peoples are a political football."

How can Abe Foxman, national director of the ADL, build Black Jewish unity? He has absolutely no credibility in the Black community and less and less in the Jewish community. How can Rev. Jesse Jackson build Black-Jewish unity? He has been willing to capitulate to pressure from the pro-Zionist white political establishment at every turn. The fact is there is an issue that Blacks and Jews can unite around--it's getting rid of Abe Foxman and Jesse Jackson (and a few others to boot). We could unite around getting rid of all those Black and Jewish leaders who are playing games over the dead bodies of Blacks and Jews while the powers-that-be (who are neither Black nor Jewish) sit back and laugh at the sight of us destroying each other.

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