

That Good Summer Reading, III

By Prof. McKinley Burt

This week I'd like you to treat yourself to the following eye opener on a fascinating phase of neglected Black History: "Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail", W. Jeffrey Bolster, Harvard University Press, 1997.

Few Americans, black or white, recognize the degree to which early African American history is a maritime history. W. Jeffrey Bolster, professor of history at the University of New Hampshire Shatters the myth that black seafaring in the age of sail was limited to the Middle Passage. They sailed 'tall ships' (see Cuttysark Scotch label).

Seafaring was one of the most significant occupations among both enslaved and free black men between 1740 and 1865. Tens of thousands of black seamen sailed on lofty clippers and modest coasters. They sailed in whalers, warships and privateers. By 1800 most were free-men, seeking liberty and economic opportunity aboard ship. Keep in mind that professor Bolster was uniquely prepared to conduct this research. He holds a Master Mariner's license and spent ten years aboard ships as a professional seaman. He provides a more than adequate documentation in extensive notes and appendices. We continue the saga.

Bolster brings an intimate understanding of the sea to this extraordinary chapter in the formation of black America. Because of their unusual mobility, sailors were the eyes and ears to worlds beyond the limited horizons of black communities a shore (Reminds me of earlier days in Portland, Oregon, when the black doring car waiters and pullman porters brought back news of African American accomplishments in other parts of the country - accounts carefully censored by the establishment media).

But for all its opportunities, life at sea was difficult - Blacks actively contributed to the Atlantic maritime culture shared by all seamen, but were often outsiders within it. Capturing that tension, examines not only how common experiences drew black and white sailors together - even as deeply internalized prejudices drove them apart. Bolster races the story to the end of the Civil War, "when emancipated blacks began to be systematically excluded from maritime work." I add a further perspective for the reader.

This stirring account reveals the critical role these sailors played in forging new identities for black people in America. But that comment on the later "systematic exclusion" indicates an invidious process that paralleled the experiences of black craftsmen in land-based skilled trades as well. The violent drive to oust blacks from the seas, the crafts and better jobs in general escalated under the mounting pressure of hordes of new European immigrants and the fright of greedy, newly-rich industrialists who feared a strong, integrated labor force.

A revealing light is cast upon this stage by the noted historian, Henry Steele Commager in his, "Documents of American History" (Downtown Library). The entrenched money-grubbers and ex-slavers must have become desperate given the democratic ferment among the united black and white workers:

Document 298, Jan. 1, 1878, Knights of Labor, "Demand 8-hour-day and equal pay for sexes, graduated Income Tax" - document 325, July 4, 1892, Populist Party Platform: "Fair and liberal pensions for ex-union 'sailors' and soldiers." Did you think worker's demands for decent conditions were new?

For further documentation of the black man as sailor and shipbuilder and whaler see, "Eyewitness: The Negro in American History", William L. Katz, Pitman 1967 and later editions. For earlier nautical Excursions see books and articles by explorer Thor Hyerdahl who actually duplicated the ancient trips by blacks from the West Coast of Africa to this hemisphere in reed boats (Kon-Tiki, etc.). And of course you saw the televised sailing of the 200 year-old "Old Ironsides." I wonder if the black naval officer narrating this episode was told his fore fathers manned these tall ships, including this "U.S. Constitution"?

Business and Industry

Oregon banking executives 'search' lands new career



Jim Barri

During their long careers at the Bank of America, former Vice Chairman/President, Jim Barri and Senior Vice President of Oregon's Retail Operations, Burdett Johnston knew firsthand how difficult it was to locate and hire talented individuals to grow their business.

Then when a corporate restructuring occurred at the bank, the two executives elected to seek new career opportunities in the Northwest.

Together they saw an opportunity to take advantage of their over sixty years of combined financial knowledge, executive networking and extensive boardroom experience to help companies locate and place qualified employees.

They discovered the same sales, service and relationship management that was required to be effective in banking was also fundamental in performing professional and executive searches.

"Finding people with the right job skills and the right personality is the greatest investment a company can make," Barri said. "Most companies are willing to search the entire world to find the right person, but they don't know where to begin. That's where we come in," he explained.

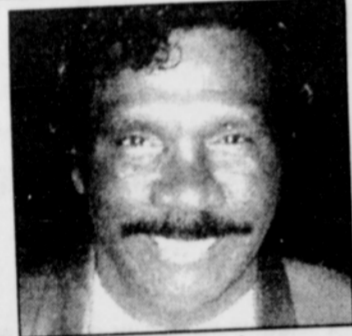
The two executives discussed starting a local company to find employees for northwest companies, but realized they needed the resources of a larger firm to really do the job right. Recently Barri and Johnston opened the first Oregon office of DHR International, Inc., an executive search firm with a network of over 32 offices domestically and 14 offices internationally.



Burdett Johnson

Shop at our advertisers and receive a discount, says Dr. William Richardson, who has just completed publishing the July-September issue of the Discount Buying Guide.

Portland's Richardson publishes buying guide



Dr. William Richardson

The consumer guide is part of cost reduction system which encourages local networking as a faster way to wealth. Richardson says the advertising is affordable for small business and buyers earn shared savings through discount buying.

The consumer guide is part of cost reduction system which encourages local networking as a faster way to wealth. Richardson says the advertising is affordable for small business and buyers earn shared savings through discount buying.

Mediation program

Continued from Metro

tively little notice. Linn now says "We envision that the current center will close its doors." However, she adds, "the city is committed to continuing free neighbor to neighbor mediation services. It's the wave of the future. It teaches people life skills."

To do this, she says, she has a "vision" of a "collaboration" between the city, Multnomah County's Youth and Family mediation program and the private consulting group, Resolutions Northwest. "This was not my original idea, but we thought it would make sense to do what we were doing better for less money."

She adds that the change was not brought on by any "perceived problem" in the current program.

Betsy Coddington of Resolutions Northwest says, "non-profits, because they're not wedded to government-scale benefits and salaries, can provide the same services for less money." Negotiations for the proposed contract have been put on hold while Linn recruits someone to put the proposals together, Coddington says.

The mediation program started under the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission in 1978, and was transferred to the Office of Neighborhood Associations in 1983. It employs three

full-time mediation specialists, a director and clerical worker, and makes use of six trained volunteers. Last year it handled 860 cases out of 1,700 requests for services.

Mediators work with parties to a dispute, at the request of one or both, in private discussions that both parties agree will be confidential.

The aim is not to determine who is "right," legally or morally, but what the dispute is about and what will satisfy both sides. The goal is to draft a non-binding written agreement for future behavior that both sides can live with.

Even the program's director, Emmanuel Paris, concedes that mediation is "not a panacea." It depends on both parties being willing to go through the process, committed to finding a mutually acceptable solution, and willing to modify their own behavior to achieve it.

Agreements are not legally enforceable if violated. Nonetheless, according to a survey of mediation participants conducted by the program in 1996, 94 percent said they were satisfied with the mediation program's services, and 86 percent said the situation that provoked the mediation had improved.

The city has used the program to try to resolve disputes between community groups, including neighborhood associations.

Cox Funeral Home Inc.

(503) 281-4891

A.A. COX, SR.
Mortician & Funeral Director

CHARLENE COX TANNER
Manager

JEROME G. TANNER
A. Funeral Director

*The Loss of a loved one
is always a traumatic experience.
But it can be made easier if you contact
a facility that has your interest at heart.*

2736 NE Rodney, Portland, OR 97212

Fabric Depot

THE LARGEST, MOST COMPLETE RETAIL FABRIC STORE IN THE WEST
August 5 through August 19, 1997

MAILER SALE!
30% OFF
Everything in the store*

SPECIAL SALE
2 DAYS ONLY - AUGUST 15 & 16
40% OFF*
ALL FABRIC
extended hours Saturday open 11-9pm
Limited to stock on hand!

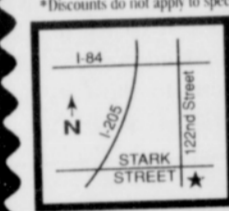
50% OFF
ON THESE PATTERNS
* Vogue • McCall • Butterick • Simplicity • Burda

Outdoor Warehouse
Sale Continues
10-6 Daily
New Additions Weekly
* 2 • 3 • 4 per yd.
Minimum cut 1 yard. Merchandise is on a first-come, first-served basis.

BE SURE TO CHECK OUR STORE FOR "MANAGER'S SPECIALS"
* Discounts do not apply to special purchase or previously discounted or marked down items. 8/5/97 thru 8/19/97

RETAIL HOURS:
MON-FRI 9:00am-9:00pm
SAT-SUN 9:00am-7pm
WHOLESALE HOURS:
MON-FRI 9:00am-5:00pm
SAT-SUN 11:00am-5pm

RETAIL - WHOLESALE
700 S.E. 122nd Ave.
Portland, OR
252-9530
Visit our website at
www.fabricdepot.com
1-800-392-3376

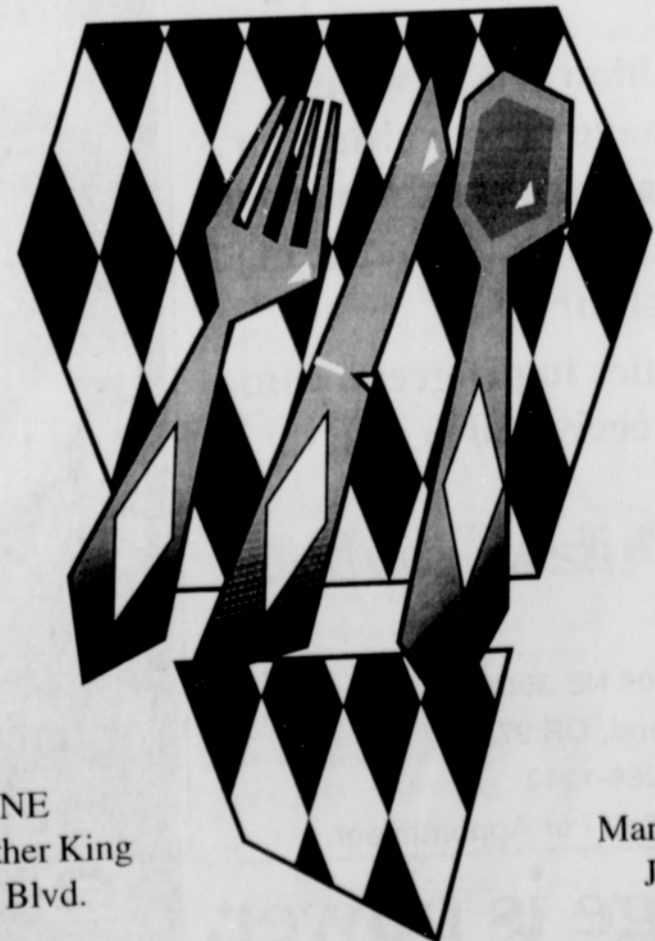


POPEYES

CHICKEN & BISCUITS

Salutes Diversity

Equal Opportunity Employer



3120 NE
Martin Luther King
Jr. King Blvd.

5949 NE
Martin Luther King
Jr. King Blvd.