

Fiery Bill Coston, Army Chaplain Threatened to Burn Minneapolis

Life of Bold Spanish War Veteran Reads Like Wild West Romance. Rescued Colored Soldiers from Firing Squad. Punched Drunken Quartermaster. Advertised in Charleston, S.C., Daily Papers that Cole Blease and Ben Tillman were Traitors and Ought to be Shot.

Wild "Bill" Coston, of Philadelphia, Spanish-American War chaplain, has a life story that reads like a western romance. For sheer courage in a race hating country, his equal is hard to find. Ready either to fight or preach, he has pastored churches in Minnesota, Iowa, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Canada. Here is his story in his own words:



Wild "Bill" Chaplain Coston Points to Map of Cuba, Where He Campaigned in the Spanish-American War of 1898.

In 1898 I was serving as chaplain in the Province of Santiago De Cuba. An affray occurred between some members of the regiment in which I was serving and the subjects of the city of Santiago and San Louis. I knew of the prejudice against black soldiers in general, even by General Leonard Wood.

Hostile Spaniards, after finding one of the members of my regiment alone in a sutler's canteen, murdered him by shooting him. The report of the rifle shot was heard within our regimental lines. When the smoke

He Knows His Chinese

WASHINGTON, D. C. — Berry Armstrong Claytor is second in command of a division in the Library of Congress which houses the largest collection of Oriental literature found outside of the Orient.



BERRY ARMSTRONG CLAYTOR

This collection contains more than 100,000 Chinese and Japanese manuscripts and books.

Among them may be found the Yung Lo ta tien, which is generally considered the world's largest and in some respects most valuable book. It originally contained 11,095 volumes, and it required 2,500 scholars to compile it.

in addition, there are smaller collections of Syrian, Armenian and Ethiopian.

Mr. Claytor makes no pretensions at being a scholar of Oriental languages. The way he goes about his work amazes Chinese scholars, who come from all parts of the world to study in the Library of Congress. He has a method unknown to the most learned Chinese scholars in classifying Chinese characters. He determines character instantaneously, whereas mines the number of strokes in a the average Chinese scholar has to count them on his fingers.

Mr. Claytor was born some thirty years ago in Raleigh, N.C., from which place he came to Washington. His early school life was spent at Hampton Institute. In 1916 Mr. Claytor was appointed to a minor position in the Library of Congress. His aptitude for the work and his genial personality soon won him favor with his superiors, and he has, step by step, moved up to his present position.

Mr. Claytor studied law at Howard University, and in 1921 graduated with honors.

He is married and has two children, and resides at 1515 S Street, n.w., Washington, D.C.

ENGLISH

Word Often Misused

Do not say, "She is the most charming girl I ever met." Say, "have ever."

Word Often Mispronounced

Drama. Pronounce first a as in "arm" (not as in "at"), second a as in "ask."

Synonyms

Particular, separate, specific, individual, respective, especial.

was cleared away, an half dozen Spaniards were dead and several Cuban civilians wounded.

General Wood placed my regiment under arrest and took several into the city of Santiago and confined them in the Bastille.

Two of this number were court-martialed and convicted and sentenced to be shot upon such evidence as only a black man can be convicted, and that only in the South. I intervened.

In short, these men were not shot. I was instrumental in getting them home in irons, but living. They were discharged at Camp Meade, Pa.

Punched Drunken Captain

En route home and on the government army transport I was placed under arrest because I resented to the captain quartermaster his insulting, humiliating and bestial drunken conduct in the presence of the wives of the colored officers of my regiment. This gentleman replied that he did not know that it was possible for him to insult of humiliate wenches. He immediately found out, however, how to desist.

I was placed under arrest by my Colonel, C. J. Crane. Because of my arrest the men became mutinous and a mutiny was discovered growing by the white officers of the regiment. I was then immediately restored to duty.

Reforms Reformatory

In 1913 I was in the pastorate of the South Carolina Conference of our church. A guard at the penitentiary shot and killed an eight-year-old boy. I resented his murder and said through the papers at Charleston, S.C., that the act was wanton murder and could not possibly be made to represent a Christian civilization nor a humane state government. With the assistance of Bishop Gary, the late Bishop of the Episcopal Church of South Carolina, I was able to have

the reformatory for colored boys in South Carolina separated in its management from the management of the state penitentiary and to have this reformatory changed into a reform school under semi-colored management. Work hours, school hours and play hours were established for the boys then there and those who would unfortunately be corralled there in the future. Boys from five years old up had been confined there prior to this event, in conditions worse than those that attended the care of the swine of the state.

Would Shoot Blease

In 1917 the Honorable Messrs. Benjamin Tillman, then U.S. Senator, Manning, the Governor of the State, and Cole Blease, late Senator from that state published through the newspapers of the state that Negroes should not be trained for the U.S. Army within the confines of the State of South Carolina. I replied through the Charleston Morning American that these gentlemen were traitors and that the time was not opportune for the inciting of race against race and that should I be given a detail of soldiers I would order them to be shot. The whites of the city threatened to lynch me. I informed the then Secretary of War, Hon. Newton Baker, of the situation that surrounded me and the occasion for it. I was not molested, black men were trained in South Carolina and I am alive in 1931.

Not Barred from Nat'l Cemetery

In 1919 Dr. E. H. Colt and I were invited to participate in the memorial services to be held at the city of Beaufort, S.C., and in the National Cemetery located in that city. We attended the morning ceremonies and retired. I returned at 2 o'clock P.M. and found a detail of U.S. Marines with their bayonets fixed, on duty there. Their duty was to allow no Negro to enter. I protested. I de-

manded the immediate presence of the Commanding Officer, who came and attempted to protest that I had no business there as the "leading colored citizens" had promised that if they were permitted to have a morning service, that they would not attend the afternoon celebration.

I protested that there could possibly be no legal authority for such an agreement and demanded that the Marines should be withdrawn and the black people, assembled there, be privileged to enter. The Marines were withdrawn, the black people entered and participated with the others in the enjoyment peculiar to those privileged to be assembled with their dead.



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